



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

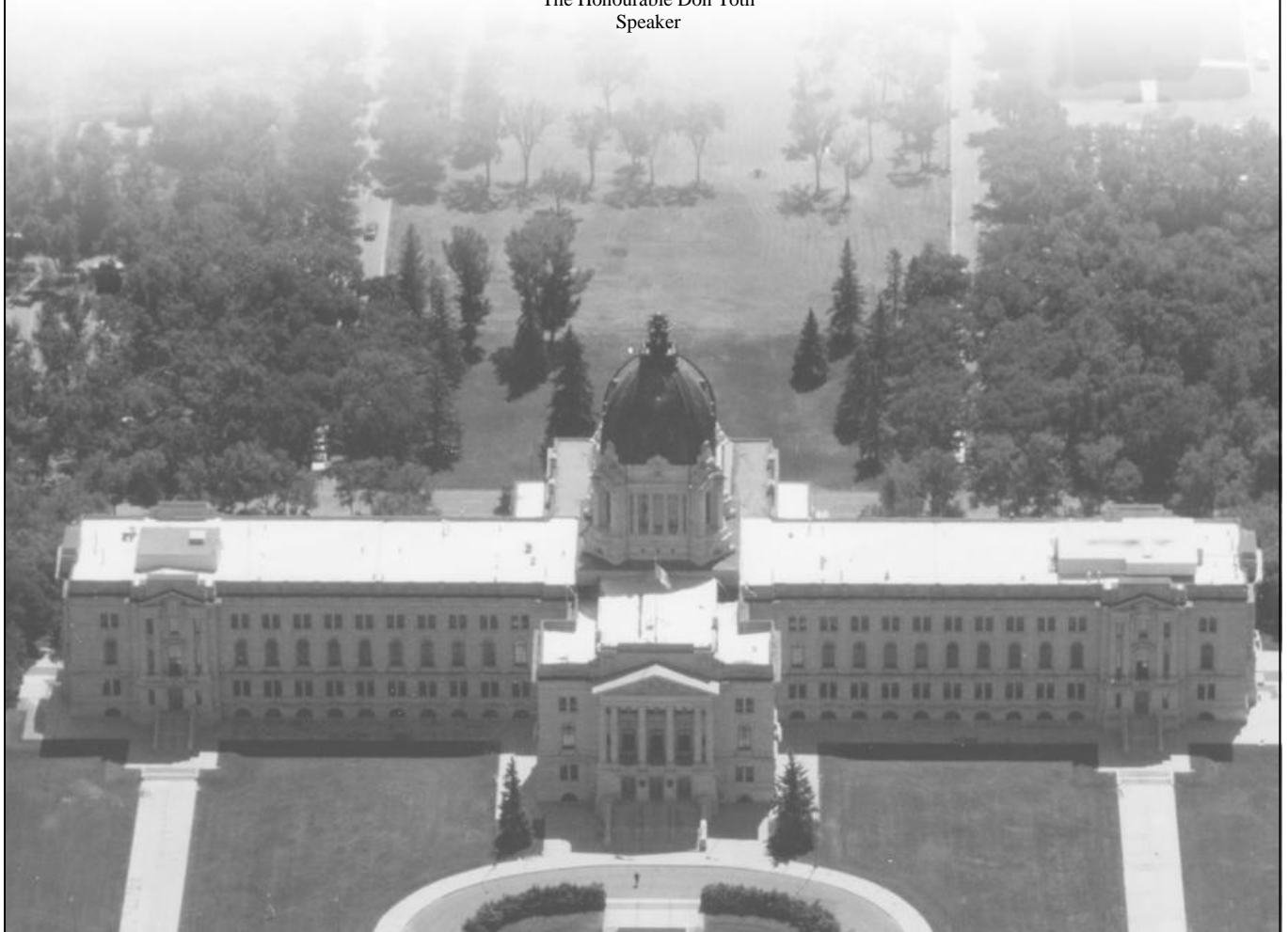
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

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Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
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Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
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McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
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Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you today, as Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, I'm pleased to welcome three students who are in your gallery this afternoon. All of these individuals are serving internships in government ministries. With us today are Jason Rumancik with Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; David Howland with Justice; and Sean Burnett with the Ministry of Health.

Now Jason, David, and Sean are in the Master of Public Administration internship program. That's a partnership between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. This program, Mr. Speaker, provides MPA [Master of Public Administration] interns with an opportunity to gain practical knowledge about the provincial public service by working directly with deputy ministers and other senior officials.

Accompanying them today are two people with the Public Service Commission, Mr. Speaker. We have Brent Young and Colleen Hawkesford. Please join me in giving these individuals a warm welcome to their Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this moment to introduce to you and through you to the rest of this House, a very special constituent of mine, Pam Bustin. Pam was in Regina this past weekend for the Saskatchewan Book Awards, and she was nominated for her novel *Mostly Happy*.

And she was nominated in three categories, won in two of them — First Book and in Fiction. Fiction was particularly a tough category. Her work was up against the novels of established and excellent writers like Gail Bowen and Art Slade.

She's in Regina. She thought she'd come by, check out . . . She's curious about the proceedings in the House, as writers tend to be.

I'd also like to note that she's joined by her good friend Lenni Frohman. I'd ask all members to join in welcoming Pam to the House. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to introduce two people seated in the west gallery. I've introduced both of them before. The first person of course is Carol Sleeva who is my constituency assistant and ministerial assistant who comes from the constituency of Canora-Pelly.

But the second individual comes from the constituency of Kelvington-Wadena. And I've introduced her before, but every time I've introduced her in this Assembly, she's been here as either a teacher or principal chaperoning a group of students. Today I want to introduce someone who is no longer a teacher, who superannuated after 36 years, and now has the ability to watch sometimes what I do — sometimes quite critical, Mr. Speaker, I might add. I'd like all the members opposite to join me in welcoming my wife, Gail, to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you someone who has also been in the gallery many days. It is my wife, Ali, and my two daughters, Reilly and Gracie. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the hon. member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce someone as well through you and to you. In the Speaker's gallery, my constituency assistant, Danielle Vasques. Danielle has a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] and speaks Spanish and French. She is very helpful and caring to the constituents. She spent a year in Mexico teaching English in an orphanage and has some very interesting stories about that. Welcome to your Assembly. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens, and it speaks to the utilization and value of the full range of professional skills offered by health care providers, and how that can be promoted through adequate staffing levels and adequate funding. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens signing this are from Herbert, Morse, Swift Current, Kindersley, Rosetown, Shaunavon, Swift Current again, sir, and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of new child care spaces. Mr. Speaker, it is well known that inadequate access to quality, affordable child care is a major roadblock for parents who want to access the labour market. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately add at least 1,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitions are presented by people of Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well to present a petition. This one is in support of affordable housing for Saskatchewan seniors. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to expand affordable housing options for Saskatchewan senior citizens.

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to present a petition concerning the high cost of post-secondary education. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to increase funding for post-secondary students and help to alleviate the large financial burden placed on students for pursuing a post-secondary education at a Saskatchewan institution.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was circulated by the Canadian Federation of Students, the University of Regina Students' Union, University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, and the First Nations University of Canada Students' Association. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Cumberland constituency. The petition reads as follows:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan asks the government to take note of the condition of Highway 123 and the need for substantial improvements to this highway. This petition asks that the government commit to maintaining and repairing Highway 123 which services the communities of Cumberland House.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first of several petitions that I will present on this important subject. It is signed by the residents of Cumberland constituency and is supported by the leadership of these communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

World AIDS Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is World AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day. This day is set aside to continue to raise public awareness of the incidence of AIDS in our world. There still is no cure for AIDS, but successful treatment with virus-suppressing drugs is allowing many people who are HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] positive or have been diagnosed with AIDS to live longer and more normal lives.

Mr. Speaker, I went to Africa a few years ago on an AIDS policy dialogue between Canada and eight African countries. In Senegal I saw first-hand hospitals that focused on treatment of people with HIV/AIDS and visited support groups for people living with the disease. The horror of the African experience with this epidemic is stunning to see first-hand.

Mr. Speaker, the effect on the African people has been described by Stephen Lewis in his book *Race Against Time* as the feminization of AIDS, as so many women and girls are being infected for reasons I cannot compress into this short statement. Mr. Speaker, many children orphaned by AIDS are the fodder for terrorist groups, as this is the only home they are given. Terrorism is touching us all. To fight this disease is truly a worldwide responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, closer to home we are not immune to HIV/AIDS. The incidence keeps rising in Saskatchewan and is particularly disturbing to see an increase in the HIV infection rates in young girls ages 15 to 19.

Mr. Speaker, today we remember those who have died from AIDS and those who are living with the disease. We thank the various agencies that support those living with AIDS and daily

fight the stigma and discrimination side by side with them. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day. December 1 is dedicated to raising the awareness of AIDS and HIV. Mr. Speaker, according to the World AIDS campaign, AIDS has killed more than 20 million people in the world with an estimated 38.6 million people currently living with the HIV virus.

In 2005 the AIDS epidemic claimed an estimated 3.1 million lives, more than half of which were children. This year the focus of World AIDS Day is on raising the awareness of impact of AIDS on children.

Our government, Mr. Speaker, is working to improve the delivery of primary care health services to help Saskatchewan people with HIV to get the care they need to protect and maintain their health. HIV virus eventually turns into AIDS disease.

Other services available to those living with HIV and AIDS include HIV counselling and testing in all Saskatchewan health regions; nurse specialists in infectious disease clinics in Regina, Qu'Appelle, and Saskatoon health regions; five community-based AIDS organizations to provide support to those affected by or living with AIDS. As members of this Assembly, we can contribute by supporting initiatives that raise awareness about this terrible disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Canada 55 Plus Games

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, every two years senior participants representing their respective province or territory gather to compete in a national competition known as the Canada 55 Plus Games. Competing in a wide range of events from Scrabble to hockey, the Canada 55 Plus Games provide an excellent opportunity for older adults to pursue and maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

The 2008 games were hosted in Dieppe, New Brunswick, where the Saskatchewan team won 28 gold medals, 24 silver medals, and 10 bronze medals for a grand total medal count of 62, thereby coming in fourth place in all.

I would like to take a moment and recognize the medal winners, including members of the Regina Walsh Acres constituency. In golf, Adele Obrigewitsch; curling, Doug Barss, Alice Barss, Roland Bachelu, Mary Ann Bachelu; ice hockey, Murray Gleim, Terry Keith, Kirk Rondeau; slow-pitch, Gary Tataryn, Laura Davies, Maureen Kwasnicki, Alice Mac Cormack, Doug Bouck, Gary Hayden, Bruce Hern, Bob Kreutzer, Lon Martinac, Lloyd Myers, Terry Salter, Richard Smith and Gero Winkler;

and finally, long jump and triple jump, gold medallist Robert Grocholski.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Saskatchewan's 55 Plus athletes for representing the province and providing leadership in living an active and healthy lifestyle.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn.

Medal of Courage Awarded to Bengough Resident

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read into the record a letter to the editor which appeared last week in the *Deep South Star*. The original letter was sent to Mr. Keith Whyte of Bengough, dated November 12, and I quote:

Dear Mr. Whyte:

It is my pleasure to congratulate you on the decision of the National Council of the Canadian Cancer Society to award you the Medal of Courage.

This is a very special award granted to an outstanding individual who in his or her personal battle with cancer has exhibited outstanding and unusual courage and has significantly helped to further the mission of the Canadian Cancer Society or that of the cancer control community.

Your generosity and dedication to the cancer cause, demonstrated through extensive and successful advocacy efforts have assisted the Society greatly in our mission to eradicate cancer and enhanced the quality of life of people living with cancer. Through your efforts, drugs like Avastin are now covered by Saskatchewan Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, the letter closes by saying:

Perhaps most inspiring is your willingness to help others, even through your own struggles with cancer. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by the volunteers and staff of the Canadian Cancer Society and all those who benefit from your work.

I understand that the Saskatchewan Division will be in touch regarding a formal presentation. In the meantime, I am pleased to once again extend my personal congratulations.

Yours sincerely,

Jimm Simon
President, Canadian Cancer Society

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

2008 Saskatchewan Book Awards

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday night the Annual Saskatchewan Book Awards were held, and this year's competition had a record number of entries with 113 titles.

Gary Hyland's book *Love of Mirrors: Poems New and Selected* won both the 2008 Book of the Year and Poetry Award

Pam Bustin of Saskatoon, my constituent, won both the Fiction Award and the First Book Award for her stirring debut novel *Mostly Happy*, a story of a young girl who carries everything that is important to her in a red Samsonite suitcase as her troubled family moves from town to town.

David McLennan's book *Our Town, Saskatchewan Communities from Abbey to Zenon Park* received both the Regina Book Award and the Publishing in Education Award. Louise Bernice Halfe was also a double winner for her book of poetry *The Crooked Good* which received both the Saskatoon and the First People's Publishing Awards.

Coteau Books also received the Publishing Award for *Passchendaele: Canada's Triumph and Tragedy on the Fields of Flanders* by Norman Leach. The Reader's Choice Award went to Janita Van de Velde for *Postcards Never Written*.

Alison Lohans, winner of the Young Adult Literature Award for *This Land We Call Home*. David Baudemont received the Prix du livre français for the children's book *Olga*, and James Youngblood Henderson received the Scholarly Award for *Treaty Rights in the Constitution of Canada*.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all the Saskatchewan Book Award nominees and winners for the recognition is truly well deserved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Maidstone Group Home Society Nominated for Donner Award

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this government values and appreciates the hard work and dedication provided by community-based organizations, I would like to draw special attention to a local CBO [community-based organization] in my constituency. The Maidstone Group Home Society Incorporated was recently nominated for a Donner Canadian Foundation Award in the category of Service for People with Disabilities. What is especially notable, Mr. Speaker, is this rural Saskatchewan CBO was recognized and nominated to run against other urban groups representing the cities of Winnipeg, Calgary, and Burnaby.

These national awards are administered by the Fraser Institute and according to their website, the Donner Awards program is

Canada's largest and most prestigious, non-profit recognition program with a total of \$70,000 available to be won. It is not only an honour to be nominated for this award, but it provides public awareness of the high quality service of the Maidstone Group Home Society.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to publicly acknowledge the board of directors and staff for their invaluable and excellent service through the Maidstone Group Home Society. Well done, you've made us all proud.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

School Closures

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are families and people across this province dismayed by this government's actions on school closures. Their reactions have not met their promises and commitments that the Sask Party campaigned on.

Over this session, over 1,000 signatures have been presented to this Assembly on a petition that challenges this government on their failed actions. The petition has been signed by residents from more than 80 communities across Saskatchewan. These communities include Biggar, Moose Jaw, Melville, Prince Albert, Carlyle, Estevan, Kennedy, Yorkton, Manor, Swift Current, Gull Lake, Weyburn, Hudson Bay, Kindersley, Creighton, Fort Qu'Appelle, St. Brieux, Regina, Rosetown, Shaunavon, Saskatoon, La Ronge, Lloydminster, Wadena, Kelvington, Grayson, Redvers, Canora, and Assiniboia. This is a mere sample, Mr. Speaker, of the over 80 communities who have spoken out with extreme concern over the broken promises delivered by the Saskatchewan Party.

I ask all members of this Assembly to thank and recognize the contribution of these concerned citizens to our political process. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Nuclear Power in Saskatchewan

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Bruce Power has started its sales pitch. It's proposing a nuclear power plant somewhere on the North Saskatchewan River. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of questions to be asked. And Saskatchewan people have the right to expect straight answers from their government, not a hard sell.

We know that nuclear power has a history of being very expensive. On Thursday the Minister of Crown Corporations

told reporters that there may be a role for SaskPower in this project saying, and I quote, “We’re looking at P3s and things like that going forward.”

To the minister: what role does the Sask Party plan to play in this project? How much public money is the Sask Party prepared to spend to make sure this nuclear plant is built?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I’ll start off by saying this: the Government of Saskatchewan will view any move towards building a nuclear power plant through the lens of public safety, environmental responsibility, and cost to consumers.

Further, Mr. Speaker, Bruce Power has done this study, this feasibility study, that shows to them that it is feasible to build a nuclear power plant somewhere in Saskatchewan. No location has been announced at this time, Mr. Speaker, just a general region that the company is looking at.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the cost to SaskPower to build new transmission lines would be huge — hundreds of millions of dollars — costs that would be borne by SaskPower consumers.

To the minister: has SaskPower conducted an analysis of how much it would cost to build the transmission lines needed to carry an additional 1000 megawatts of electricity, and further how much of this electricity is for Saskatchewan use and how much is for export?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — SaskPower is certainly studying the cost of upgrading our grid. And no matter where the power is generated in this province and no matter what source the power comes from in the future, there is going to be a huge cost to upgrade our grid.

It hasn’t been kept up to standards over the last 16 years. There has been no move away from conventional coal power production in the past 16 years. There has been no modernization carried out of the power grid in the province over the last 16 years. And so there will be a substantial cost whether the power is generated by wind, by gas, by coal, or by nuclear.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Well well, Mr. Speaker. We know that at least two of the reactor designs being considered by Bruce Power are not yet in operation anywhere in the world, the AP1000 by Westinghouse and Areva’s EPR. There’s no reliable figures on how much it would cost Bruce Power to operate these reactors.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of operating a nuclear reactor would have a direct bearing on how much Bruce Power would charge for the electricity that they generate. Since Bruce Power’s feasibility did not include their estimates of what they need to sell the power for, let me ask the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how much is SaskPower prepared to pay Bruce Power per gigajoule of nuclear-generated electricity?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank that member for the question although I’m puzzled by it. However we generate power in the future — whether it be from conventional coal which will have severe environmental penalties associated with it, whether it will be from gas which will also have somewhat lower environmental penalties or whether it will be from clean coal which is extremely expensive or whether it will be from wind which isn’t baseload power and is the most expensive of all right now — there will be substantially increased costs to the consumers of this province in the future for power, no matter how we do it. SaskPower will be negotiating a deal with Bruce Power, supposing that a power plant is built. And that work will go on as it should.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it looks like it’s Bruce Power or nothing. But let me say this. Mr. Speaker, the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] government placed a very high priority on energy conservation. We also made a substantial investment in wind-generated electricity. We also explored the potential of a number of environmentally friendly forms of energy, including cogeneration, geothermal, small-scale hydro, and more.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has shifted the focus away from energy conservation and alternative energy sources to two very costly sources of new electricity — clean coal and now nuclear power.

To the Minister of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker: can the minister provide an independent analysis of the cost of generating electricity from the various sources available?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan will do what's best for the people of Saskatchewan — for our consumers, for our environment, and for our public safety.

The union representing Saskatchewan electrical workers is welcoming a Bruce Power feasibility study that indicates the province could support a nuclear power plant. This is the quote, and I offer this to the member:

The nuclear option could help ensure future power demand is met and also be good for jobs and the environment, said Neil Collins, business manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 2067.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, on November 28 Bruce Power CEO [chief executive officer] Duncan Hawthorne told CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] Radio that Bruce Power would need a lot of water out of the North Saskatchewan River to cool the reactors. He said quote, “We take about 2.6 cubic metres a second. Of course we're circulating water and returning it to the river.”

Mr. Speaker, that would work out to more than 156 000 litres of water per minute each and every day, and the water would likely be warmer going back in than when it came out.

To the Minister of Environment: does she have information on the effect this activity would have on the ecosystem of the North Saskatchewan River?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it was the NDP who actually asked for a siting study for a nuclear power plant in this province a few years ago, I would imagine that they would familiarize themselves with the process surrounding the approvals for such an operation in any province.

It is the most onerous environmental assessment process of any industry in this country. It is done with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. There's also Saskatchewan environmental assessments that would be done. It's anywhere between a 6- to 10-year process.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague has already said today, nothing will advance in this province unless our environment is protected along with that development, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, having read that report, and

I'm sure the minister has as well, she'll know this information I'm going to provide now.

A 2007 *State of the Watershed Report*, published by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, indicates that all six of the watersheds along the proposed route are considered to be either stressed or impaired. One has to wonder what the impact would be of 156 000 litres of water per minute being drawn from the watershed already described as stressed.

To the Minister of Environment: has her department conducted an analysis of the potential impact of a nuclear power plant on these watersheds? And what is she prepared to do if that analysis finds that it would place a significant further strain on the watershed?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as the feasibility study from Bruce Power was released only a few days ago, I can tell the member opposite that considering that proposal in the last four days, we have not done the assessment and there is no proposal for a development in this province. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, this is the most onerous environmental assessment process in the country for any industry, and nothing will be done in this province unless the environment is uppermost, that the environment is going to be safe through this process, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to say that the member's questions last week about our environmental assessment processes in this province, that work is done by the amazing men and women within my ministry. And if she's questioning their ability to fulfill their job, then she should just say so.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — The only questions I have, Mr. Minister, are of the minister's ability, not the people that are working in the department, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of decommissioning these types of developments is a factor that often gets overlooked. This province has learned some painful lessons over the years of the consequences of ignoring this issue. Bruce Power has an arrangement with Ontario Power Generation, or OPG, that allows them to hand over title and liability for all the spent reactor fuel — which is the waste — in exchange for a fee. Ontario is then left with the responsibility of disposing of the spent fuel.

To the Minister of Environment: since this issue is not dealt with in the so-called feasibility report from Bruce Power, has the government determined who will be responsible for the cost of decommissioning? And who will be responsible for the storage and disposal of the spent fuel or waste?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, there are obviously some huge divisions within the NDP as to the prospect of nuclear energy in this province. And as I have stated earlier, I'm not sure what part of this process the member opposite does not understand. This can take up to 10 years for the environmental assessments to be done. And if we as a province are not satisfied that our environment is going to be protected, it will not proceed.

But I would also point out to the member opposite as she addresses the divisions within her own party, that her soon-to-be new leader, Dwain Lingenfelter, said this of nuclear energy in our province: "If Tommy Douglas were here, it would be exactly what he would be doing," Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Order. The member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — The Saskatchewan Party appointed an advisory panel to advise the government on the nuclear industry development. The minister who made the announcement recently told his Sask Party convention, and I quote: "The purpose of this particular lobby is not to advise us whether we should proceed in the full nuclear cycle. It is to help us understand how we can best do that." So we know the minister's bias.

Mr. Speaker, the Uranium Development Partnership includes three people with connections either to Bruce Power or to its owners. So three of the people who are supposed to be giving independent advice to government are now obvious proponents of a single particular project.

To the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation: what does he intend to do about this obvious conflict of interest?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member for that question. This is a question that seems to divide the NDP right down the middle. However, we on this side are on the side of Saskatchewan. Those members over there, Mr. Speaker, are going to have to ask themselves what side are they on.

It's not a realistic or honest energy strategy to be against all kinds of energy.

The Speaker: — Order. I'd ask the members to allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — To quote the next leader of the NDP

Party, Mr. Dwain Lingenfelter, who is waiting for a date for his coronation, here is one of the things he said. He said this on November 9, 2008 to the CBC. He said, "It's got to do with what's best for the economy and the environment at this moment."

That's what he said that day. Do you want to hear what he said on October 26, 2005? That day, Mr. Speaker, he said, "If Tommy Douglas were here, it would be exactly what he would be doing."

And on June 4, 2008, Dwain Lingenfelter said, "It's not a perfect energy, but compared to any other form, it will have a big role in the future of our society and [our] economy." And it likely will.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — We're not divided on standing up for the people of this province and asking questions of this government and their ham-handed ability to manage this file.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, we can all agree the province needs a fair and balanced analysis of this issue. One of the minister's hand-picked panel members has demonstrated his fair and balanced approach to this issue by stating, and I quote, "People who don't want to live near nuclear facilities should probably move."

Does the minister share this fair and balanced approach and can we expect this to be one of the recommendations coming out of his panel?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder who that member is questioning. Dr. Richard Florizone, a nuclear physicist? Is it Armand Laferrere from Toronto, of Areva? Is it Duncan Hawthorne, the nation's foremost provider of nuclear power? Is it Alex Pourbaix, TransCanada Energy? Is it Jim Hallick from Sturgis, Saskatchewan? Is it Neil Collins from the IBEW? Is that who you're questioning?

How about Dr. Ted Mathie? How about Allan Earle from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]? How about Dr. Patrick Moore? How about that? Is that who that member is questioning, Mr. Speaker? Keith Brown . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the minister to complete his response.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Grandey from Cameco, head office in Saskatoon. Or is it Ray Ahenakew from the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology? Which one of those hand-picked members is that member questioning, Mr.

Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very clear that the proposed location of the Bruce reactor, the zone which is proposed to be home to the Bruce reactor, will include significant First Nations territory. If for instance the reactor were to be built in Lloydminster, there'd be significant Onion Lake First Nations territory affected. We're aware that conversations have happened between Bruce Power and some First Nations.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind government that the duty to consult and accommodate is a duty that falls to the provincial government — not to the proponent, but to the provincial government. Therefore my question is to the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations: how does this government plan to provide the duty to consult and accommodate on this specific project?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, we have the opportunity to engage the First Nations first-hand upfront on this issue and we've been really pleased to hear what Chief Joseph has been talking about. He said he wants to be involved in this. He wants to have the opportunity to have First Nations involved in a new type of energy, where actually they can be consulted right from the very beginning.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that we have a member from the First Nations on this very important council, and their voice is going to be heard from the very beginning. Because we need First Nations to be involved in the economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that the First Nations want to be part of this process. The question to the minister was, how does this government plan to attack the issue of the duty to consult and accommodate? Now we heard no answer, but that's typical on this file again in the House this afternoon. We've had questions to ministers and no answers.

So I'm going to try, Mr. Speaker, to get some clarity. What we've heard from the ministers is a good bit of politic. I'd like to get from the Premier then some clarity on some of these questions. When the Minister of Enterprise was asked on Thursday of last week, would there be any public investment or taxpayer involvement in this project, he said all the options are on the table.

My question therefore to the Premier is: will he today categorically provide to the people of Saskatchewan an

assurance that there will be no public investment in this project?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question. Certainly all options could be on the table, supposing we ever get to the stage of building anything, member. Right from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] doing it; a CIC-government partnership; a CIC-private sector partnership; design, operate, build by the private sector; or any combination of those possibilities.

We're a long ways from laying out the financing model for this thing yet. We have years of environmental study to do . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I know that the member says, why not. Well we do things differently on this side. We're guided by what's in the interest of the province, not our socialist philosophy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I give the minister this. He's repeating in the House today what he said to the public through journalists last week, that all options are on the table, which opens the door very clearly to public involvement, public investment.

And yet isn't this a strange double standard, Mr. Speaker? Because when it comes to the forestry sector in our province, this government can be absolutely categorical in no public investment.

So my question then is not to the minister, it is to the Premier — it is to the Premier. Let him today be very clear. Will there be, can there be public investment, public taxpayer involvement in a reactor project built by Bruce Power?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. And I hope we also have some questions and some debate to ensue about what's happening in our country today vis-à-vis the federal government situation. But I'll answer the question in this way.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proceeding with electrical generation in Saskatchewan as the previous government did. The previous government engaged private sector generation in the case of SunBridge, which was private wind energy generation which SaskPower purchased.

We are also proceeding with public generation, public investment in generation. That's under way today as SaskPower is investing directly in natural gas generation.

So when it comes to nuclear power or wind power or solar power or natural gas power, there are a number of options available to our government that that government when they were in office pursued, and that is public-private partnerships, as they did in the case of SunBridge, and it's also wholly owning the generation.

Mr. Speaker, whatever we do is going to be in the interests of Saskatchewan people, in the interests of growing the economy, of low cost for electricity for our consumers, and environmental sustainability.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Premier, we need no instruction on how we worked to create wind-generated electricity in this province.

Now this is a very interesting, I think, and telling response from the Premier. He now too has left the door wide open for public investment, for taxpayers' dollars to go into a Bruce or some other reactor proposal that's privately owned. So let us try and define this.

Is the Premier then willing to come to the plate with public dollars if and when the construction has a cost overrun?

Is the Premier willing to come to the plate with public dollars when the question of the disposal of the waste is required?

Is the Premier willing to come to the plate when, about 20 years down the road, 20 to 25 years, the machine needs to be refurbished and rebuilt? Will there be public dollars?

And ultimately, Mr. Speaker, when this reactor needs to be decommissioned, will there be public dollars or will these costs be borne by the private developer who will reap the profits?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just in the preamble to his question said, if the government — a hypothetical question — if the government were to make an investment, partner with a supplier of nuclear energy that was privately owned, would that be justified? Well, Mr. Speaker, if the government's going to participate, as it is now with respect to natural gas generation, that's a publicly owned utility.

In the case of the wind generation that his government undertook, they partnered with a private sector company, provided the transmission, worked with those private sector suppliers — a company that was the product of Suncor and Enbridge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the hon. member from Nutana says, well that's just one example. Well it goes precisely to the heart of the question that we're dealing with here. Public utilities can partner with the private sector, purchase electricity. They can wholly own the

utility to generate electricity. Our government will . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I call the members to order. The Premier will be allowed to complete his answer.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that the government backed away from private partnership after their wind experience, even though it was a positive one.

As for our side of the House, we seek safe, reliable, low-cost energy that's environmentally sustainable that will also, Mr. Speaker, mean that this provincial economy here in Saskatchewan will continue to grow now and for decades into the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I call members to order.

[14:15]

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

New Security Measures for Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the tragic event that took place on a Greyhound bus in Manitoba in June of this year. This was a random event, Mr. Speaker, and STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] has had a long, safe, reliable history of courteous service. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, as minister, I immediately asked the company to review its existing security measures and to examine options for enhancing security for STC's passengers.

Today I am pleased to advise members of the Assembly concerning the outcome of that review. STC officials undertook consultations, the most important being with the drivers and other staff of the company. Members of the Amalgamated Transit Union participated in the review, and a number of the measures that I am announcing today are recommendations made by those individuals.

For decades passengers have relied on the professionalism of STC drivers to ensure their safety. STC will continue to focus on its drivers for passenger security and will be putting additional tools in place to help those drivers and have security throughout the province.

Starting today and extending over the next four months, the following measures will be implemented. Interior and exterior cameras will be installed in all buses that are not currently so equipped. To improve visibility of the passenger compartments by drivers, larger rear-view mirrors and improved interior lighting will be installed in all coaches. Larger Plexiglas shields will be installed to physically protect drivers and allow them time to address any emergencies that may arise. All buses will be equipped with global positioning devices with emergency

alert capability. With the push of a single button, police and other assistance can be dispatched to the precise location of a bus anywhere in the province. Drivers will have the explicit authority, to be used at their discretion, to restrict carry-on baggage and to inspect passengers and their carry-on baggage. Drivers will be given additional training to better identify potential security problems, how to diffuse difficult situations, and self-defence training.

The foregoing are what might be called visible measures. I am sure members of the Assembly will recognize that in order to protect the integrity of overall security measures, not all details of the measures will be publicly released.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the collaborative way in which these new measures were developed. They are practical, common sense improvements that are tailored to the circumstances in Saskatchewan. Furthermore the measures will cost the relatively modest amount of \$260,000 for one-time capital investments, and an ongoing amount of \$60,000 annually for the GPS [Global Positioning System] service and staff training.

Mr. Speaker, at this time may I commend STC's professional drivers and management for this timely and thorough review. Your professionalism is very much appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by thanking the minister for providing me a copy of his remarks early this afternoon. I appreciate them.

This is really a good news announcement and a very positive announcement on behalf of STC, particularly in the light of the tragic events that took place on a Greyhound bus in July earlier this year.

I'm glad to see the STC is recognizing the need to provide utmost safety for its riders, and I think it's also very important that we not only provide those safety opportunities but provide the perception of safety so that the riders of STC in Saskatchewan here will know that they are safe when they're riding an STC bus, and they can relax and enjoy the STC experience. There's no doubt that STC has had a long history of safe, reliable, and courteous service, and much of that is due to the professionalism of the STC drivers and their quality of service that they provide on an ongoing basis.

The improvements to the safety factor that is announced by the minister, whether it be the interior or exterior cameras, whether it be the adding of larger mirrors for the drivers to be able to see the entire bus and the interior lights to improve the safety factors there, the Plexiglas shield to protect the drivers — these are all very good measures, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to really highlight what I think is an outstanding improvement by STC is the addition of the GPS or the global positioning devices. There was a news story not too long ago out of northern Manitoba where a bus had some mechanical

difficulties and found itself broke down in a very isolated area of the province, and I believe the riders and passengers on that bus spent some 20 or 24 hours in a very cold bus and a very dangerous situation could have arose.

So this is certainly, certainly great news I think for STC to provide this type of emergency services. After all we are entering into a Saskatchewan winter, and we know Saskatchewan winters can be pretty severe at times too. So if there was an incident such as a bus breaking down in an isolated area, that help would be readily available. And I think that is very good news.

So I just want to congratulate STC on this announcement, and I think STC is providing once again a very positive opportunity for people to enjoy the ridership of the STC, but also providing the opportunity for providing that ridership, not only now but into the very foreseeable future. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Indian and Métis Relations.

Support for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the Assembly about another positive step we are taking to improve the lives of the Métis people in our province.

The relationship between this new Saskatchewan government and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan is strong and co-operative. With limited human and financial resources, it's impossible for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan to effectively engage government, its 12 regions across Saskatchewan, its more than 100 Métis locals, the Métis citizens, and industry to discuss consultations and other strategic interests.

That is why our government is today providing a \$200,000 grant to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan in response to government-initiated duty obligations. Our government has had a positive working relationship with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and we depend on their input in many areas including our draft consultation framework and the ongoing dialogue regarding the duty to consult. Building capacity is a priority of our government, and it is in this spirit that we are making this investment.

In addition to the \$200,000, our government has also provided other supports for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. The organization received \$35,000 for the roundtable conference on First Nation and Métis consultation and accommodation in 2008-2009. The First Nations and Métis Relations also has a budget of \$385,000 for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan for the 2008-2009 provincial budget for tripartite and bilateral processes.

Our government has also provided two separate \$50,000 grants for consultation to the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council and to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Eastern Region No. 3, for consultation. This is a total of \$720,000 to support Métis people and their organizations. Our government looks forward to advancing our already vibrant relationship with the Métis Nation for the benefit of our whole province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the ministerial statement I have received from the Minister Draude. So thank you for providing this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry. We're new, eh? I mean, Mr. Speaker, so cut me a little slack.

I would just like to comment about and acknowledge the funding that's been provided to the Métis Nation — and being a Métis person and proud of it — and a lot of work that has to go on and that is required by the MNS [Métis Nation of Saskatchewan] to do the business that needs to be done for Métis people of this province representing them.

I know there was a press release put out by the critic for First Nations and Métis Relations, also with the two, I guess, Métis oppositional members put out a press release demanding and calling on the government to the need to increase the funding to the MNS so the area directors and the MNS could do the business that they were asked to do on behalf of the people that elected them. So I guess I just want to acknowledge the increased funding. It's good for the Métis people. It's a start, in light of the huge surplus we have. I think there's a new budget coming up. I'm hoping that this will bring up their funding and bring more funding.

So at this time I just want to acknowledge the money and again the efforts of the minister, and hopefully those continued positive efforts and more funding will assist the Métis to go on and do the business that's asked of them, the MNS, to do.

And I guess we know that the election's over with the MNS and everything else. Everything's running smooth. They're moving in a very positive way; they've shown that. And I think at this time we hope that in April, the new budget, they will have the adequate funding that they need to do the business of the Métis people of this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Contributing to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I made an announcement on behalf of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport regarding a commitment our province is making to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games taking place in Vancouver.

The location for the Olympics may be Vancouver, Mr. Speaker, but the games are truly going to be Canada's games. And with the Olympics being hosted by our neighbour just two doors away, we have once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to stage this event and to build pride in our province at the same time. As a leader in the new West, Saskatchewan is going to play a contributing role in the games, and we are going to have a very visible presence there for the world to see.

In June Premier Wall signed a memorandum of understanding with VANOC, the Vancouver organizing committee, that formalized our agreement to work co-operatively with VANOC to profile and promote the best of our athletic and artistic talent in the 2010 games. I am proud to announce that today we signed on as an official contributing province with the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This agreement will allow Saskatchewan a greater participation and visibility at the world's most beloved and prestigious sports event. As a contributing province, we are committing, as other provinces have already done, to do our fair share in making Canada's games the best that has ever been held anywhere in the world.

Saskatchewan will contribute \$1.5 million to VANOC, and in return we will receive a number of benefits for our province. Half of the \$1.5 million investment, or \$750,000, will go towards Own the Podium program. This is a national program, Mr. Speaker, to support Canadian athletes in their preparation for the games and to assist them in gaining success at the podium. \$187,500 will offset the cost of our involvement in the cultural Olympiad. This will allow us to showcase our diverse culture to the world, and it will increase exposure and commercial opportunities for our artists.

Among other benefits we are entitled to, we are now able to highlight our province through a dedicated Saskatchewan Day. We will also have access to the Vancouver 2010 logo, the provincial athlete recognition program, and increased business opportunities. Through these avenues, we will showcase Saskatchewan products and services, our investment opportunities, and our tourism and business potential.

Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we all share in the feeling of pride at what we will accomplish at hosting this event for the world, and we will all share in the multiple legacies that will endure for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is good news for Saskatchewan, for Saskatchewan people, for Saskatchewan athletes. We have an obligation to participate in the Olympics with Canada and all of our provinces and territories because we are going to host the world in a few short months. I guess it's only about 14 or 15 months from now.

Mr. Speaker, many of us remember the Expo in Vancouver 22 years ago when Saskatchewan had a very high profile and provided a welcome to people from around the world. And, Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that we will again showcase the arts of Saskatchewan whether it's the performing arts or the visual arts — dance, music, theatre, all of those things — as well as the athletes of Saskatchewan.

Now at this point many athletes are trying to qualify so that they can participate in the Olympics, and some of the money that's announced today will go to assist those special athletes that are going to make it into the Olympics. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I have a special interest in this because my nephew, Nils Lokken, is working very hard to qualify as a cross-country skier. And we all hope to have him there in 2010. But if he doesn't make then, well he'll be trying for the next one.

But I think there are quite a number of Saskatchewan people who are in that category, but most of us will be in the category of being proud to be Canadians and proud to be from Saskatchewan. And I know that all of the athletes and the artists and the performers and the people of Saskatchewan will want to be part of this event, and show our pride in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Whip.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions no. 133 to 135.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 133 to 135 tabled.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 64

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 64 — *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to have the opportunity this afternoon to rise and make some short comments on the amendments that are proposed for *The Northern Municipalities Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I know myself and my colleagues, we have read through the legislation, through the explanatory notes. I've taken the time to look at the comments that have been made in the House by the minister as well as by my colleagues, and I know that we on this side of the House have had a real concern as to the consultations that have been done on this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, you will be well aware that throughout the municipal world in Saskatchewan there are a number of pieces of legislation that have an impact, and they have been divided into *The Cities Act*, into *The Municipalities Act*, and into *The Northern Municipalities Act*, and for a good reason. While we are all one province, we deal with many of the same situations. We have many similarities, but there are also flexibilities that are needed by the municipalities to deal with their unique circumstance — whether urban, rural, or northern.

So when we've seen *The Northern Municipalities Act* come forward, we have taken the time to look at the changes, to do some analysis on them, and more importantly to make sure that the consultations have been done, and that the changes that are

proposed are understood and agreed with by, most importantly, those that are in the northern municipalities.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of changes proposed here but I think, most importantly, it's a more provincial system of assessment and allowing that province-wide assessment system to be put in place.

I know that when *The Cities Act* and *The Municipalities Act* were changed a number of years ago to make changes for the '09 provincial reassessment, there were some concerns from the northern municipalities that they needed to have the consultations and the understanding and assurance that any changes made to *The Northern Municipalities Act* were appropriate for the situations in the North.

And no matter how often we look at the various issues in an area of the province, there are always exceptions to those rules. So it's always good to have the consultations, because I think we are often surprised by issues that may be brought up by folks that live in certain areas of the province.

And I know in the northern municipalities there's always issues of, what's a seasonal property? What's a permanent residence? What's commercial? What may be only a seasonal commercial? And how they are defined, and how those assessments will affect those areas.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoke to a number of people. I know there have been meetings held and conversations held. And while we all share this understanding of a need for a province-wide assessment system, we all know that a one-size-fits-all doesn't work. And we're fairly comfortable that the changes proposed for *The Northern Municipalities Act* really have the options and the flexibility that are needed in the northern municipalities.

So, Mr. Speaker, with the various discussions we've had, I'm more than comfortable to see this Bill move to committee where my colleagues will be able to ask the more detailed questions that are difficult to get answered otherwise.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs that Bill No. 64, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Speaker: — The Bill's referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

Bill No. 54

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 54 — *The Vital Statistics Act, 2008/Loi de 2008 sur les services de l'état civil*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the Bill to amend *The Vital Statistics Act* in our province.

There may be a few members that will be staying in the Chamber a bit longer or a few people tuning in who, seeing another piece of relatively dry legislation — very important legislation, Mr. Speaker; no doubt very important legislation as was *The Trustee Act*, Mr. Speaker, very important legislation — may be tuning in or paying attention here in the Chamber because they expect that there might be another movie review. I'm not aware of the use of the vital statistics system in popular culture. And so I can advise anyone right off the top, Mr. Speaker, that I won't be commenting on the role vital statistics has played in popular culture. Well I suppose if I had maybe given it a little bit of thought, I might have been able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, this is, as I said in my opening remarks — somewhat jokingly, but not about this aspect — important legislation. And the keeping of this vital and properly named vital information, Mr. Speaker, is very important. It's very important to individuals who are affected by it. It is an essential part of our personal record: where we were born, to whom we were born, and when. And of course, from that flows all types of rights and entitlements after a certain period of time has passed, so that even the timing of the record of the date of birth is vitally important.

And we are learning more and more about the role that inheritance plays in one's health, and maybe beyond what we had ever thought even a few years ago, Mr. Speaker. So this is information that's vitally important — not to prolong too long the play on words, but vitally important — to the individual. It's also very important to the society at large that we maintain this kind of information in aggregate so that we can properly plan around health care, around education, around other issues like that, Mr. Speaker.

As you can see from the Bill that I will probably be speaking to in a few moments — the consequential Act in respect to vital statistics — the keeping of vital statistics impacts upon any number of areas, particularly in the health care system and particularly around issues of birth and death. And those are dealt with in other pieces of legislation as well, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that this information be kept accurately, and it's important that this information be kept well. It's important to the individual, it's important to our society, and it probably has an economic importance too, Mr. Speaker, but that would be secondary I think to the areas that I've already talked about. It's important that it be kept accurately, and it's important to be kept well, and it's important that it be kept private when it's appropriate that it be private, Mr. Speaker.

And the impact of *The Health Information Privacy Act*, Mr. Speaker, in keeping people's personal private information which is appropriately personal and private — and this legislature has had over the last couple of years an opportunity to discuss and debate what is appropriately private and what is appropriately public in the case of health information — but this type of information is as a rule when it applies to the individual, Mr. Speaker, most appropriately kept private.

And when one moves to a system where it is largely recorded on paper and kept in files secured in government offices, it is maybe harder to recover, but it's also harder to unintentionally release, Mr. Speaker, than when it is kept electronically. And so as we talk about now recording information that was recorded primarily on paper, now electronically, Mr. Speaker, we have reasons to be concerned that this be done properly and that we look at how this is being done.

And we have had recent cases in the news about the release of this information because people did not appreciate what was on the material that they were putting out in the dump or a reselling or whatever, Mr. Speaker. So it's very important that as we move from a paper file to an electronic file that we have confidence in who's holding the information.

And speaking for the New Democratic Party, we are very pleased that the government is expressing confidence in the Information Services Corporation to properly hold this information, to keep it private, and have it available to whom it should be available when it needs to be available, but to no one else, Mr. Speaker. And I think anyone who's spoken on this Bill on this side of the House has expressed that same confidence that the government now has in ISC [Information Services Corporation].

And we are now willing to go over the Bill in detail, being satisfied that we, I think to a large extent, agree with the government on the principles that are being reflected in this legislation.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion put forward by the Minister for Crown Corporations that Bill No. 54, *The Vital Statistics Act, 2008* be now read the second time.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Bill No. 55

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 55 — *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act*. I had just recently concluded my remarks, very recently, on the companion Bill. And in those remarks I mentioned in passing the impact that changing how we keep vital statistics impacts across particularly the health care system. This Bill requires consequential amendment to *The Cancer Agency Act*; *The Coroners Act, 1999*; and *The Funeral Cremation Services Act*; *The Health Information Protection Act*, which I referred to in my comments on the previous Bill; *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I did want to comment on the importance of the protection of this private information and that as we make a significant change in how we keep it and how it becomes accessible and how we deliver the information when it's supposed to be delivered, it's important to keep in mind always the importance of protecting this information and making sure it's not used for purposes, either intentionally or unintentionally, purposes for which it was not provided, Mr. Speaker.

And Alexandre Dumas once said that imbeciles were preferable to rogues because at least rogues sometimes took a rest. And sometimes it's more a concern of what the unintentional problems might be, what might happen through inadvertence or carelessness than what someone would do out of malice, Mr. Speaker. And so we have to protect ourselves both against — maybe more against — inadvertence and thoughtlessness than we do against malice.

That said, I believe that the government understands those principles. And we are now prepared to send as well to committee *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008*.

[14:45]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations that Bill No. 55, *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008* be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It'll be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to allow for the Standing Committees on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice as well as Human Services to meet this afternoon, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 to enable the work of committees to proceed.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:46.]

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Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

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Minister Responsible for Capital City Commission