



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

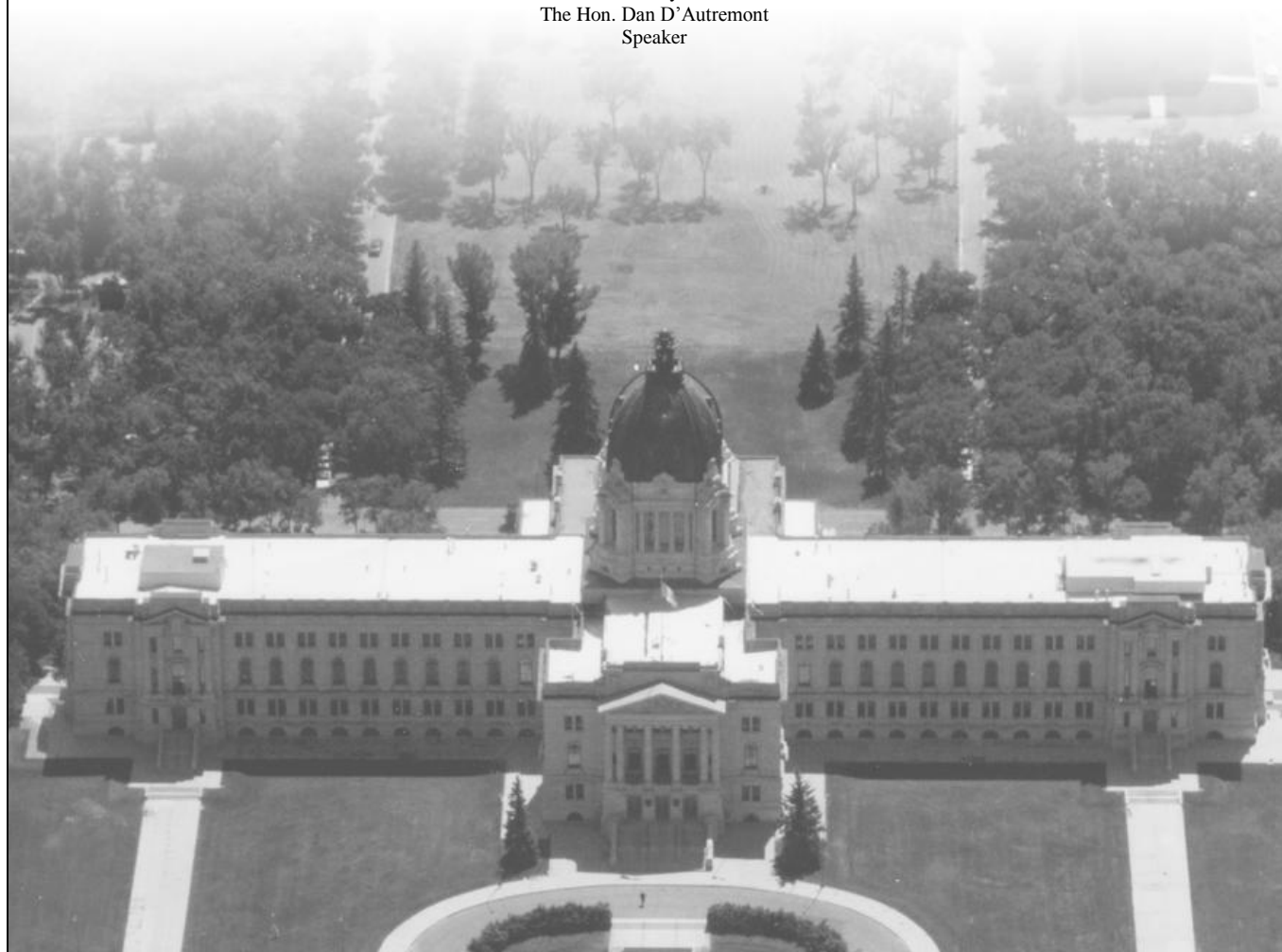
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
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Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — It now being 7 o'clock, I call this House into order. I recognize Regina Rosemont.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 69

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 69 — *The Information Services Corporation Act*** be now read a second time.]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter back into discussion here this afternoon. I enjoy the energy that I see opposite here in the Assembly here this evening.

Again we're speaking as it related to . . . I'll continue my speech that I've already began as it relates to Bill No. 69, *An Act respecting Information Services Corporation*. Now it's in fact anything but an Act respecting ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]. It's an Act in fact to sell ISC, Mr. Speaker.

Now I was speaking a little bit before about the broader context of what's causing this government to go on the hunt for cash and start looking at our public assets. And it's the budgetary pressures that have been created by the government opposite that have caused this review of assets and this hunt for cash. And now we have a government that sadly is looking to liquidate assets and in fact cause us to lose revenue streams many, many years, many decades, many generations forward. Very short-sighted approach we see from this government.

Our Crown corporations that have been built by Saskatchewan people, owned by Saskatchewan people, and deliver returns to Saskatchewan people, in the case of ISC not just the services and the information that it protects, the services it provides to the public but also the \$15 million a year, Mr. Speaker, that it provides directly back to our treasury, paying for roads, paying for highways, paying for infrastructure.

And we can talk about all those needs and all those components, whether it's in my community of Regina or whether it's in a community north there in Prince Albert, when we're talking about infrastructure. And in fact we were having a discussion here today where this government has chosen to go at trying to repair vital infrastructure in our northern artery in Prince Albert, that being the bridge, and a very piecemeal, band-aid approach where they're not willing to cover the costs of the bridge repairs that are required and not willing to give that community the piece of mind and economic certainty that they deserve to have.

And it speaks to the very short-sighted nature that a government that currently has put itself into a financial position that it can't

even provide the proper repairs to a bridge in Prince Albert is now eliminating by way of a short-sighted sell-off, an asset — ISC, one of our Crown corporations — something that delivers \$15 million to our province on an annual basis. So a very short-sighted sell-off that serves one purpose: allows this government to do its best, I guess. I don't know if they're actually, I don't think they're tricking too many people, Mr. Speaker, but in fact to continue to suggest that somehow its finances are in a rosier position than they are. Saskatchewan people recognize that our finances are anything but a rosy position when they recognize this.

Just today in fact the financial mid-year came out and shows that debt of the province is going up over \$1 billion this year alone, Mr. Speaker. When they recognize the actions of government, actions of government that includes a fire sale of assets which includes not only ISC which we speak of, a Crown corporation for which that government had promised it wouldn't sell, Mr. Speaker, and also the sale of land — assets that this government has that could be such a important tool to allowing us to do the meaningful development and address some of the pressures of affordable housing that should be a priority to this government — but also the very short-sighted, direct sell-off of over 300 affordable homes or affordable social housing units. If you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, a net loss by way of housing at a time where the current stock is inadequate and we need to be doing all we can to be increasing supply. So it's these sorts of short-sighted manoeuvres that are the context for this sell-off.

We see in the mid-year report, I guess, some other tricks, budgetary games that were put forward here today where that government has actually punted or deferred infrastructure that was supposed to be built here this year, Mr. Speaker, on to next year, just so they can manipulate and make some sort of a budgetary statement that supports their boastful ads that they ran on billboards across the province, Mr. Speaker, but taking infrastructure that's needed now, putting it onto the books next year, and then needing a way to pay for it. And that's where we see a fire sale of assets like ISC, like land, like affordable homes to try to address that problem.

So the sad reality is that something that has served Saskatchewan people very well — Information Services Corporation, a Crown corporation that's owned by the people of this province — is being sold off for nothing more than to sort of hold up the public relations lines put forward by that government, the boastful claims that they've put forward by way of a budget and really trying to just continue to manufacture a pretend balance on paper, Mr. Speaker. But of course Saskatchewan people recognize the realities before them.

Now the Bill No. 69 and the sell-off of Information Services Corporation certainly represents broken trust with Saskatchewan people. It represents a broken promise to Saskatchewan people. And I think that this is something that the government opposite should care about because it earned a mandate last year from Saskatchewan people. And instead of taking that mandate and working to deliver on the goals that it had been elected to achieve, they're now moving in a direction that is anything but what they had promised.

This is a government that had made claims for many, many, many years that that they wouldn't sell off Crown corporations. They had made claims that they were supportive of our Crown corporations. Now the record is becoming clear on this government and the record is certainly anything but that. And we've seen that over the past few years with, some call it creeping privatization that is going on. In many ways it's very deliberate, and it's really not creeping at all, Mr. Speaker. When you look at 10 per cent of the power of SaskPower now being obtained through purchase power agreements or directly through a privatized approach — a more costly approach, one that provides us less control over our future, Mr. Speaker — that's direct privatization within the Crowns.

We also see within that Crown sector — the Crown sector that this government pretended to support, that they pretended to care about, pretended that they wouldn't privatize — we've also see the direct raid on the dividends of the equity of that Crown sector, stripping that equity, pulling it from the Crown sector at a time where those Crowns needed those dollars most to expand their networks and serve our growing communities and growing province, Mr. Speaker. And of course that's in direct, in stark contrast to the proper stewardship that we should be providing those Crown corporations.

We also see the direct collaring of that Crown sector by way of nonsensical and ideological policies such as the Sask-first policy that collars the Crown corporations and prevents them from operating in an independent financial manner, from having the solid financial basis that they require to serve Saskatchewan people, and has as well prevented them from being able to divest risk and make some of the investments outside of Saskatchewan and bring back the benefit back to Saskatchewan people, which is directly at the heart of this discussion around ISC, a valuable asset to the people of the province by way of the services it provides, by way of the information that it protects, by way of the way it interfaces with business, by way of how it connects to homeowners, by way of the fact that it's a monopoly, a monopoly on something that we require, both businesses and homeowners, Mr. Speaker.

But it also gets to the point that this is something that delivers \$15 million or in fact more than \$15 million on an annualized basis to the province of Saskatchewan, being sold off in a very short-sighted manoeuvre to hold up pretend claims around budgetary balance and causing us to certainly have less, well into the future.

And when we had something that provided us both effective control of land titles in this province, effective interface with business and homeowners, some control over costs to both homeowners and to businesses, and as well the protection of that vital information that Saskatchewan people and businesses were entrusting to ISC, that's all at risk. But so is the revenues.

But so is the opportunity that's been presented, where ISC in fact is in demand by some other jurisdictions to in fact utilize our product and to contract, for us to bring that benefit back to Saskatchewan people. And I used the example recently where the minister was claiming that no other jurisdiction wanted to do business with a Crown corporation. Of course nothing's further from the truth. And if members opposite would simply have recognition of how global economics are working — our

global marketplace around the world and certainly in our province as well, Mr. Speaker — they'd recognize the role that state and Crown corporations and companies play within the global marketplace. And for government members opposite to sort of pretend that somehow, somehow that other, other jurisdictions don't want to do business with a Crown corporation is simply untrue. Simply untrue, Mr. Speaker, and not a factual representation of the balanced economy that we, that we see in our province and in around the world.

It's also directly contradicted by the fact that we have the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, and a delegation from the Yukon that were looking to do direct contracting of ISC's services here in the province, wanting to purchase services from our province, to pay money to the people of Saskatchewan for us to bring back those dollars that we could then invest back into Saskatchewan people and into infrastructure and into services.

An Hon. Member: — Sounds like a good idea.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sounds like a pretty good idea, the member from Nutana says, and I agree with her. This is sort of the approach that our Crown corporations should be able to take in an independent fashion, and one that identifies all of the risk around them and makes decisions that are in the best interests of Saskatchewan people: bringing back, being able to serve, yes, the Yukon with our land title system and be able to protect their data, but for us also then to be able to bring back revenues from the Yukon in exchange for the contracted services that we'd be providing them, and using those dollars to build the schools that we require in this province, to build the highways that we require, to work towards building the bridges that we require. And I know up in Prince Albert this is such a critical issue, Mr. Speaker. And a government that's taken either an ideologically rigid approach to selling off this asset or simply is engaged in a quick fire sale of assets, looking for all the cash that it can obtain and draining basically the assets that we have as a province to do so and giving up some of the certainty and control we have over the future.

And as I say, this represents to Saskatchewan people nothing more than a broken promise. This is a government that has gone out and gone to great lengths to pretend somehow that they weren't going to privatize the Crowns. Now they're doing it. They're doing it directly. They're selling a Crown corporation that they said they weren't going to sell.

They're also privatizing large portions of some of our Crown corporations such as SaskPower, where now a major component of our power production is private power and chosen not because it was more affordable, not because it was in our better interests into the future, but because it was an ideological decision that private power was the only way to go when we know there were better options, more affordable options, more effective options, more efficient options that retained control here in Saskatchewan for many years forward.

[19:15]

You know, in fact in many ways when I look at what's going on, not only in our Crown sector but in many of our ministries, where we have a government that's taking this simplistic approach to contracting out and privatizing, I recognize that

they're tying the hands of future governments and they're tying the hands of the public purse. And the sad reality is whoever occupies that chair of Premier into the future, whoever occupies that role as government, is going to be stuck with the unenviable task of having businesses coming forward with contracts to the Government of Saskatchewan where in effect they hold all the power in that exchange, and very limited in being able to properly negotiate effective contracts and services in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

And it's a government that's very willing to contract out and give up a lot of control that we should have as Saskatchewan people, to give up the certainty of the next generation. We see this in health care. We see this in SaskPower. We see it in the direct sell-off of ISC. We see it in the financial stewardship of this government. And it's very much this contracting-out culture that's certainly permeated those benches, and it's taken a very simplistic view of how we achieve our future, and in fact ties the hands of future governments and hamstrings, in effect, Saskatchewan people and communities.

And let's just speak about that, Mr. Speaker. Right now this government is selling off a Crown asset that returns \$15 million a year to our treasury, to the people of the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I know a lot of municipalities across this province who require infrastructure to meet the demands of aging infrastructure but also to meet the demands of growth. And we have a government who seems to pretend to promote a growth agenda but then is eliminating our ability to make the meaningful investments that we must into those communities and into the people all across our province in all regions, a government that's very much denying us of the effective certainty and control we should have of our future.

But getting back to why Saskatchewan people are so outraged with these actions, they're rightfully outraged, Mr. Speaker. And when we have calls coming in from Canora and Wadena and Yorkton and all over the province, Mr. Speaker. Rhein, all sorts of communities all across the province that we're having phone calls, Kamsack. So many communities all across the province that are phoning us and saying, where did this government earn their mandate to sell off our Crowns? When in fact did they tell us that they could, that they were going to sell off our Crowns? Because in fact they said they didn't hear that, and they've told . . . When they've called in, they've said in fact that MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] opposite and candidates opposite who earned the mandate, in fact came forward and suggested something else. They said that they wouldn't sell off the Crowns.

They looked . . . In fact we've heard from members that have looked in the eyes of members opposite and have had members opposite promise to Saskatchewan people and to their community members that they wouldn't sell off our Crown corporations. Not only did they look Saskatchewan people and their constituents in the eyes and promise they weren't going to sell our Crown assets, they also put it into their documents, their platform, making that promise and that commitment to Saskatchewan people. The reason I guess that they would be putting that promise forward would be that it's important to Saskatchewan people.

The other reason I would have hoped that they would have

placed it there was because in fact that's how they felt, because in fact it was true. And it's a great disappointment for Saskatchewan people to see the broken trust that's occurred by way of the sell-off of Crown assets, the privatization that's going on in many of our Crown assets. And certainly it represents a broken promise from a government that suggested that they certainly weren't going to be selling off our Crowns.

I can pull through this budgetary document I've flagged and in fact — sorry, it's not the budgetary document; it's the platform of the Saskatchewan Party — and I've flagged in about eight different locations where in fact that government makes claims that it wasn't going to sell off our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

So you can fault Saskatchewan people for feeling as though they've been betrayed. You can understand why they feel as though they've been betrayed because, Mr. Speaker, when you break your promise, when you break your word, you've been betrayed or you're betraying somebody. And that's exactly what we've seen here in the actions of this government.

I recognize on page no. 44 — it was referenced actually by the Minister of Highways — page 44 from the platform, it says, "Support for public ownership of the Crowns has been reconfirmed over the last four years." Now that sounds supportive. It doesn't say anything about desire to privatize, as we see this government now currently doing. In fact it says the opposite.

So you can understand why some families in Canora are rightfully upset when they went back and referenced their platform, and it says, "Support for public ownership of the Crowns has been reconfirmed over the last four years," and then this government does the opposite. You can see why they'd be upset, Mr. Speaker.

If I look back to even *The Promise of Saskatchewan*, which was a booklet put out by the then opposition leader, and I quote, "A Saskatchewan Party government will maintain Saskatchewan's four major utilities . . ." as government Crown corporations. Now that's maybe more telling because in that quote there it just lists the four utilities. Different than the message we heard in the last election where there was this blanket statement of, just trust us with your Crowns, where we go back and we see that in fact if you go back to the Premier's *The Promise of Saskatchewan* document of 2004, his commitment at that point was only SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, and SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

And so I guess on that front the Premier's being consistent. Maybe on that front he feels that he's been clear, that the many other Crowns and treasury board organizations in this province are up for sale under this government. It begs the question, what else is up for sale? What else will be liquidated by this government? A government that's put itself in a very precarious — I shouldn't say, put itself — put Saskatchewan people in a very precarious financial position and are now on this ravenous hunt for cash to simply prop up its pretend story of budgetary balance, Mr. Speaker.

So we recognize the inconsistency when we go back to 2004. When I look in this document, there's example after example of

the commitment to the Crowns. In fact it speaks on page 44 about responsible management of the Crowns. In there it doesn't say anything about privatizing or selling off our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't say a word about those actions which now this government is doing. That was only a year ago that they went to Saskatchewan people and earned that mandate, looking Saskatchewan people in eyes only to betray and break that trust just a little under a year following, Mr. Speaker.

It goes on on page 18 and speaks about what they've heard. And this is in the 2005 Saskatchewan Party policy guide. And there they talk more about our Crown corporations and a level of support towards our Crowns. Now I might go back and reference, it's a little later in this speech. But in fact there's been previous speeches as well by the Premier, back to 2002 as it relates to our Crown corporations, a new role for Saskatchewan's Crown corporations, and we can spend some time going through that document.

But what we see is a lot of inconsistency from the government opposite for many years as it related to the Crowns. In fact one election they came to Saskatchewan people and said, well we're going to privatize your Crowns, and they lost the election. And then they sort of tightened up their language and started singing a new tune. And what I think Saskatchewan people had believed was in fact the new tune they were singing was one that they believed, one that they were going to deliver on, one that they weren't going to break their word on, Mr. Speaker. But it's been anything but that.

If we continued, I can go through example after example of inconsistencies many years prior about where that government stood on Crown corporations. But I know one thing that wasn't inconsistent, and that was when this government went before Saskatchewan people last election, they made no mention of privatization. In fact they certainly portrayed to Saskatchewan people that the Crowns would not be privatized under their watch, and so you can understand why people across this province are feeling betrayed.

So we see in the sell-off of ISC, the sell-off of a Crown asset that serves Saskatchewan people, that has a public interest, that keeps information confidential, that keeps information private, and that is in fact a monopoly, Mr. Speaker, and any time a government's contemplating selling off a monopoly that impacts homeowners, that impacts businesses, the government certainly shouldn't be stepping in that direction. We should be retaining that ability to provide proper services to Saskatchewan people, ensure proper rates, ensure protection of that information, and ensure, as in this case, that we continue to derive the dividend and revenues that come on an annual basis, \$15 million a year.

In fact I would suspect that some of the members opposite who represent different parts of the province, I know all of their constituencies care about ISC. All of their constituencies have interests. Whether it's the businesses down in the Bakken field, in my good friend from Weyburn-Big Muddy's riding or whether it's the new homeowner in Canora or whether it's the new homeowner up in the member from Walsh Acres's riding, all of these individuals interface with ISC. And they care about what it costs. They care about the service they receive. They care about the information that's protected.

I also know the member from Prince Albert probably cares about the \$15 million a year that we receive as a province from ISC. And I know the reason for that is because I understand that member's been sort of elbowed out of cabinet, elbowed out of inner circles, Mr. Speaker, over there. And now the problem is, the problem, Mr. Speaker, extends beyond the fact that the member from Prince Albert is no longer in that space where he's able to offer a voice or be an advocate or speak on behalf of Saskatchewan people, but what he should recognize is those revenues are in part some of the solution to the challenges he has in his riding — by way of the bridge infrastructure that we need to be stepping up and repairing, by way of the second bridge that's being called for by his community — and we're giving up some of the revenues that are vital to us as a province to make those sorts of investments. And the members opposite, the members opposite are getting a bit worked up, so they're maybe recognizing the importance of it.

And I know, I suspect actually the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, he's probably got phone calls from some of those oil companies making some of those investments down through the Bakken Field who care very much about the integrity of that system and the effectiveness of that system and the cost of that system when they're making those investments, Mr. Speaker.

Just in following up sort of the resource sector that we . . . certainly they are a proud resource sector in this province. And highlighting a voice of those, of our resource sector, I'd like to comment on a letter that's been received from the professional surveyors of Canada to the government. And I quote, and this was received on November 9th, 2012, and:

We have become aware of the Saskatchewan government's actions in having a financial valuation prepared for Information Services Corporation. This valuation, along with proposed legislation changes, would facilitate the sale of ISC to private industry. Professional Surveyors Canada has concerns with respect to these actions by your government.

So that's a letter to the Premier of Saskatchewan, the honourable . . . I quote, "The Hon. Brad Wall." And that's from the land surveyors of Canada, the association calling on this government to hold onto this asset, to not privatize this Crown corporation, and for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

The letter goes on:

From an economic point of view, the divesting of a Crown corporation that makes money and provides income to the government raises concerns. How is the public good served in the long term by this divestiture?

And I guess I could look across to members opposite who maybe could just simply answer this question. Maybe it's a question that the Minister of Finance should be tasked with answering, Mr. Speaker. And I'll quote again. This is the comments. This is coming from the land surveyors of Canada, a national body representing many who are involved in our resource sector here in this province. And I quote:

From an economic point of view, the divesting of a Crown corporation that makes money and provides income to the

government raises concerns. How is the public good served in the long term by this divestiture?

[19:30]

You know, I think the answer is that it's not, Mr. Speaker. This doesn't serve the long term. This isn't about the best interests of Saskatchewan people. This is a short-sighted, reckless sell-off with a government that's scrambling to hold up its pretend story of budgetary balance, doing all that it can to spin a message that supports its boastful claims made at budget time, Mr. Speaker. And of course this has long-lasting consequences to the people of this province. The quote goes on:

As you know, ISC houses the land titles system and registry. It houses the survey plan processing system and the associated directory. These services and the information contained within belong to the Government of Saskatchewan and therefore belong to constituents. The sale of ISC to a private entity would adversely affect the impartiality of services to the public and to our members.

Mr. Speaker, impartiality, questioning impartiality is something that should be of huge concern to this government. Any time that you're getting into concerns around conflicts of interest, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that this is a consequence of the decision being made by government opposite, creating the lack of impartiality and also conflicts of interest should be of concern.

It also goes on to speak about the fact that this is a public asset, owned by Saskatchewan people, of which Saskatchewan people should have a say in deciding. This from a government who pretended last year and promised the Saskatchewan people that they wouldn't sell our Crown corporations, that they wouldn't privatize our Crown corporations. And now we see them break their word. We see them break the trust with Saskatchewan people, from a government that went and looked Saskatchewan people in the eyes on coffee row, on door to door and made promises to Saskatchewan people that they wouldn't privatize our Crowns, now being broken by that government opposite.

The letter goes on:

Both the controller of surveys and the registrar of titles are employees of ISC. They are also statutory positions. To paraphrase the appropriate legislations, these positions are not to be influenced in any of their statutory obligations. Within a Crown corporation such as ISC, there is public accountability over the influence of statutory positions. With a private corporation, that accountability is severely diminished at the best and non-existent at the worst.

Mr. Speaker, not only is this government privatizing a Crown corporation they promised Saskatchewan people they wouldn't, they also pretended to Saskatchewan people and promised to Saskatchewan people that they'd be accountable. And they've been anything but. We see that in our finances, the lack of accountability. Now we see it right here. And I'll quote, with a private corporation, which this government is selling, ISC, putting it into a private structure: "With a private corporation, that accountability is severely diminished at best and non-existent at worst."

Mr. Speaker, why would any government pursue an agenda that creates, as was stated in the paragraph that I stated first, that there's conflicts of interest; in the second paragraph, highlighting the fact that accountability may be non-existent, Mr. Speaker, non-existent? How is that acceptable from a government that should be expecting better transparency, better accountability for Saskatchewan people? Not to mention that not only are they creating conflicts of interest, not only are they creating a lack of accountability as stated by the land surveyors, they're giving up revenues, dividends well into the future that can fund services and infrastructure here in our province. This is a lose-lose proposition, Mr. Speaker, and one that represents a broken trust with the people of this province. I'll continue on, and I'll quote:

Selling a Crown corporation that has a monopoly over services that are being kept for the public good is always a concern. Areas of monopoly services and statutory obligation are quite correctly kept in direct control of the government.

This gets to the whole point, Mr. Speaker, that this is about a public good. This serves a purpose. This is a benefit to Saskatchewan people. It's a protection to many within this province. And the land surveyors of Canada have rightfully stated their concern with selling a monopoly that possesses information of the public good and serves the public good.

I'll continue on here, quoting:

Keeping ISC as a Crown corporation ensures that [and the list goes on] the public is upheld before any consideration of profit, and certainty of titles and property boundaries are maintained, which is one of the cornerstones of the Torrens land titles system.

Mr. Speaker, those are two very important points that were made by the land surveyors of Canada, that the public good is upheld before any consideration of profit, highlighting the fact that this does serve a public good, this corporation. And in fact these changes eliminate that public good from being served.

And then it also talks about the certainty of titles. Are titles important, Mr. Speaker? I don't know if titles are important to your constituents. I know they're important to mine. I know that when a business makes an investment — when they purchase land, when they purchase title, when they incorporate — this is important to them. What it represents is property rights in many cases. It represents investment. It represents an asset for them. And this in fact suggests that the privatization undermines the protection of their interests, their property rights. It also matters, Mr. Speaker, to the homeowners in my constituency. It also matters to the landowners all across this province.

The member from Melfort is shouting across the floor, Mr. Speaker. But it's interesting because he's shouting across the floor now, but in the fall, Mr. Speaker, he went before Saskatchewan people with a platform that promised not to privatize our Crown corporations. Now he and that government are doing something different. And they're putting at risk the lost revenues, but they're also putting at risk our land titles system. And if you think of that piece of land and what's that meant to so many families and to so many in this province —

whether it's that first home or whether it's the homestead, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the land that's been acquired or whether it's the property rights of a business — this is putting an awful lot at risk into the hands of private companies.

And I believe that at cornerstone of our economy and of our . . . what we should be providing to Saskatchewan people is certainty by way of their property rights. And to have a government that's actively, knowingly moving down a path that puts that at risk, the property rights of Saskatchewan people — their right to the title, their right to their investment, their right to their asset, their right to their business, their right to their land, Mr. Speaker — is good reason why we're getting so many phone calls from all across this province with concern, with outrage around the sale of this asset. Many are phoning in with questions. Many are phoning with questions. Others are phoning with concern.

Many Saskatchewan people are simply . . . that don't know the concerns around the certainty of their land title are simply concerned over the broken promise that they had. And promises have been broken in Weyburn. They've been broken in Moose Jaw. They've been broken in North Battleford. They've been broken in Sask Rivers, Mr. Speaker. There's been this promise to not privatize our Crown corporations have been broken in Prince Albert. They've been broken in through Moosomin, Mr. Speaker, all across this province. And that's where Saskatchewan people have concerns. Up through Carrot River, Saskatchewan people have had the promise broken that was offered by that government, Mr. Speaker. The certainty of the land title to property owners, landowners, and businesses in through the constituency of Carrot River are important to those individuals, to those businesses, Mr. Speaker. Putting that at risk is something that we should all be rightfully concerned about.

And we have an opportunity in this legislature for each of us, for each of us to weigh in to this discussion and to recognize the risks that are being put forward by this legislation. But I'll put on the record again: "The Saskatchewan Land Surveyors Association is concerned that keeping ISC as a Crown corporation ensures that the public good is upheld before any consideration of profit." Mr. Speaker, on some matters we should be focused more on the public good, and that's something I concur with.

The second point is that ". . . the certainty of titles and property boundaries are maintained." Mr. Speaker, that's important. That's about land rights. It's about property rights, Mr. Speaker, and it's about the investments made by many, the sacrifice by many. And I concur with the surveyors, land surveyors of Canada on this issue.

I'll go on and quote:

Land titles and surveying are the basis of underpinning the fabric of society for the safety and economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents. Thanks to the good governance in Saskatchewan, the public, together with the government and surveyors, have benefited from a modern, responsive, and accountable land titles and plan processing system. We feel strongly that the evolution of the system and the system accountability should remain in public hands.

I'll finish that off: "We feel strongly that the evolution of the system and the system accountability should remain in public hands." That's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker. That's strong words from the land surveyors of Canada speaking about our interests here in Saskatchewan.

It goes back, and I'm going to quote this one other item because it's so key to this debate. And it's so important that members opposite recognize these words and recognize the path their being led down by government. "Land titles and surveying are the basis of underpinning the fabric of society for the safety and economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents." The underpinning, for ". . . underpinning the fabric of society for the safety and economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents."

That's what's being placed at risk, Mr. Speaker. We're placing at risk our economic interest. We're placing at risk our land titles system. We're placing at risk property rights of Saskatchewan people and businesses. We're placing at risk or in fact simply stepping aside from the revenues that we've received on an annual basis and giving up that benefit. We're giving something up that's been built by Saskatchewan people. We're entering into a new environment that, as stated by the land surveyors of Canada, brings about a host of accountability problems, Mr. Speaker, and a host of conflicts of interest, Mr. Speaker.

Why would any government in good faith, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the land title of your home or your business, enter into some sort of new arrangement, the sell-off of our Crown asset that puts at risk that land title? That's wrong, Mr. Speaker. Why would any government, Mr. Speaker, that has a revenue stream of 15 million, \$15 million a year to reinvest back into our province, give up that revenue stream, to forfeit that revenue stream in a short-sighted, quick, liquidated sell-off, Mr. Speaker? That's wrong. And why would any government, Mr. Speaker, choose to enter into an agreement, a sell-off of a Crown corporation that brings about, with complete forewarning from the land surveyors of Canada, conflicts of interest as well as reduced accountability? Mr. Speaker, why would any government move forward in that direction? Well it's wrong, Mr. Speaker.

So on so many, so many fronts, Mr. Speaker — whether it's the forfeiture of revenues to our future to make the investments that we need in your community and mine, Mr. Speaker; whether it's the bringing, the introduction of many new conflicts of interest at a time where we should be reducing conflicts of interest at a time where we should be working towards greater accountability, great transparency — we have a government that, as stated by the land surveyors of Canada, are actually bringing on reduced accountability to Saskatchewan people and a government that's actively putting at risk the land titles that Saskatchewan people have purchased, invested in by way of homes, by way of businesses, by way of corporations, by way of farm land, homesteads. Putting that at risk, Mr. Speaker, that's wrong.

Why are they putting it at risk? Well they're tight on cash, Mr. Speaker. They're tight on cash, and they're unwilling to be straight with Saskatchewan people. They're tight on cash, and they want to continue to do their public relations spin, Mr. Speaker, to try to pretend and prop up the expensive billboards

that they ran earlier in the year, Mr. Speaker. Well those billboards are becoming pretty expensive, Mr. Speaker, for the people of this province. That continued relentless effort by this government to hold up a public relations line and to engage in budgetary games, as opposed to serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people, is costing all of us.

[19:45]

And it's evidenced in this letter right here. And I'll quote, continue to quote: "Professional Surveyors Canada asked the government of Saskatchewan to seek timely input from public and professional users of ISC's services prior to considering the sale of ISC." You know that's a fair comment, Mr. Speaker — consultation. Consultation. So what they're asking for, Mr. Speaker, is that they should consult with the people that are impacted. Well I guess that's the land surveyors, Mr. Speaker, but I guess it's also every one of my constituents and yours.

And this government's failed to consult. In fact they promised something else. You can understand many are feeling betrayed by a government that promised not to sell off our Crown corporations. And now we're doing just that, a government that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, and they joke about it as a surprise, Mr. Speaker. It's an unwelcome surprise to Saskatchewan people. A surprise that isn't wanted.

And I know my constituents, and I know folks all across this province, Mr. Speaker, are not interested in seeing their land title being placed at risk, as stated here in this letter, Mr. Speaker, from the land surveyors of Canada. They're not interested in losing and forfeiting \$15 million a year in revenues — revenues that are needed to be invested back into our classrooms, to build schools, to build bridges, to build highways, Mr. Speaker — to give that up in a short-sighted move that we currently see being contemplated or pursued, Mr. Speaker. And they're not interested, Mr. Speaker, in a government that's actively pursuing an agenda of . . .

[Interjections]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Yes. It's being increasingly difficult to hear the member speak. There's conversations on both sides of the House that's going on. If we keep ourselves to a minimum, it would be appreciated. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do appreciate, in sort of in closing in this discussion, being able to make sure we all do hear the concerns that Saskatchewan people have about the sell-off of ISC. I'll recap those for all of us.

And I think it's important for, this is an important opportunity for members opposite that occupy those backbenches to finally have a say, Mr. Speaker, to finally speak to cabinet and to government and say, listen. This isn't what we're all about. We said we were going to do something else. And this is where I call on and I urge those members opposite because I suspect there's some people back there who would be interested in keeping their word. I suspect the member from Coronation Park would be interested keeping his word. I suspect the member from Melfort would be interested in keeping his word. I suspect

the member from Saskatoon Meewasin would be interested in keeping his word. I suspect the member from Shellbrook would be interested in keeping his word. I suspect the member from Prince Albert Northcote would be interested in keeping her word. I suspect the member from North Battleford would like to keep his word. I suspect the member from Moose Jaw would like to keep their word.

And what we have here instead is a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And you know, this is an interesting thing, an interesting thing. The member from Moose Jaw North chooses to shout across and heckle again from his seat, Mr. Speaker. This is, again, the same member that sits all too quiet when the interests of Moose Jaw residents, the Moose Jaw economy are being decided. And that member doesn't say boo, but heckle from his seat . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member says, is that all I have?

Well I would suggest that without your word, without your word, to the member opposite, you have little else. And when you're a government that came before Saskatchewan people with a platform — Mr. Speaker, back just about a year ago, and went to residents in Moose Jaw and in Shellbrook and in Melfort, Mr. Speaker, all across the piece, but in Moose Jaw — and suggested that the Crown corporations weren't for sale, Mr. Speaker, that they would protect our Crown corporations, and now they've broken that trust. They've broken that trust with the members from Moose Jaw, broken their word, Mr. Speaker. I can understand why the people of Moose Jaw are upset with that member. Not just because he's a voice that doesn't speak on matters such as Valley View, Mr. Speaker, not just because he's a member that doesn't speak up on matters such as job loss in SaskPower, not just because he doesn't speak up about SaskWater, Mr. Speaker, but because he broke his word and he broke his trust with Saskatchewan people, as have all members on that side of the Assembly as it relates to the privatization of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll recap once again, Mr. Speaker, why we hear from all across Saskatchewan, people having concern and why they should be concerned about the privatization of this asset. We're forfeiting revenues well into the future, Mr. Speaker, that we need. We're forfeiting revenues that we need here in the province, \$15 million a year, Mr. Speaker. We further, as evidenced by the land surveyors of Canada, we're bringing on a lack of accountability by way of this sell-off. We're reducing accountability when we should be going in the opposite direction. That's what the land surveyors of Canada say. What else do they say, Mr. Speaker? That this creates a host of conflicts of interest, Mr. Speaker — conflicts of interest.

Further to that it speaks about, the land surveyors have spoken about the fact that it puts the land title itself that an individual, a company, or a person that they've acquired, that they've invested in, that they've purchased, puts that at risk. Mr. Speaker, that's a critical cornerstone of our economy. It's a critical cornerstone of society and to our province being placed at risk by this government because it's looking for cash, on the hunt, doing what it can to prop up its budgetary pressures, Mr. Speaker. And they're unwilling, Mr. Speaker, to be straight with Saskatchewan people about the true state of our finances and now we're on the hunt, liquidating assets like ISC.

And I guess the concern, Mr. Speaker, is that not only is this decision short-sighted, one that we'll oppose in every way we can, we'll work with Saskatchewan people; one where we call on members opposite to stand up and be heard as well and to serve their communities and to serve their constituents, but it also raises the concern about what's next? What's next when you look at the list of Treasury Board organizations, Crowns, public entities that we have here in Saskatchewan, of which that government promised as well that they wouldn't privatize? And now we see that broken trust, that breaking of that word, Mr. Speaker, and rightfully so, Saskatchewan people are frustrated. Saskatchewan people are concerned, and Saskatchewan people are worried, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be the voice for Saskatchewan people on this one. We'll be the voice for people in Moose Jaw. We'll be the voice for people in North Battleford. We'll be the voice for people in Prince Albert and in every region of this province, Mr. Speaker, because our members to date haven't said a word on this issue, something that Saskatchewan people care about very much.

Mr. Speaker. I'll have a lot more to say about this bill, Mr. Speaker, the short-sighted sell-off, the privatization of one of our Crown corporations and the broken trust that it represents to Saskatchewan people, but at this point in time I will adjourn debate on Bill 69. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved adjournment on debate on Bill 69. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — It is the pleasure of the House to . . . It has been moved by the Government House Leader, this House now stands adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the House?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 19:52.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVENING SITTING
ADJOURNED DEBATES
SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 69 — *The Information Services Corporation Act*
 Wotherspoon2249

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

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Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk
Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan
Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes
Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General