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DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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Bill No. 69 – The Information Services Corporation Act, 2012

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to enter into the second reading debate on Bill No. 69, An Act respecting Information Services Corporation. And of course this is one that really underlines what this government is all about in so many ways, in so many ways, in terms of saying one thing and then doing another, and having this idea of accountability to the promises that they made during the campaign, this last campaign a year ago in the fall of 2011, and going back even further.

And so this is one where we see the government communications, the high speed when it comes to spin, trying to convey a story that this makes some sort of sense when it makes absolutely no sense, when you have a profitable Crown like this, that when we see just recently, yesterday, an update, a mid-year update with a razor-thin amount that every penny counts to this government.

And when they're selling this off, they're looking for everything. And as I think, as our critic has said, it really has been a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul. And here they're going to the extreme where they're going to sell off a significant Crown that is doing well, and we can only think it's because of ideological factors. To many folks, they did not see this coming. And even in the last question during question period, Mr. Speaker, we saw the question about the land surveyors who didn't think this made any sense at all. And then the minister is quite happy that one land surveyor has phoned back and said, I see your survey says one surveyor says it makes sense.

How can he feel that that reassures the public that, you know, that it's the right thing to do, that it makes any sense at all that one surveyor phoned back to say, hey, I think you're on track? But I don't think that really holds a lot of water because clearly there's too many questions and people weren't looking for this.

Quite often this fits into the pattern of this government who will do anything with their work, with the budgets. I won't use that word balanced because I think it's become a

different word on that side of the House. Clearly this government is looking after any rock for anything it can sell, and promises it made during the campaign and the previous campaign are not on. And they're working very hard to whatever they can do to spin that into some sort of story that people at home might buy, but I don't think people are buying it.

They're saying, hey, this has become a significant Crown and it's one that people value. They value the idea of an Information Services Corporation that has become to be known as a good provider of important pieces of information — whether it's titles or reports, birth certificates, a whole range of maps and surveys — that it's seen to be the right thing because these folks are impartial. They are professional and there's a sense of accountability because it's a public Crown. And if this all becomes back into the private hands, then we're not sure what may happen, what might happen. I mean, clearly we have a way of ensuring accountability because it's a Crown, and people feel safe with that. And there's a public integrity aspect to it, and I think that people have come, have really come to support that.

And we have serious, serious questions about this. And we will ask more questions as it goes along. And I know in the media, the media's even asking questions about, you know, the way that this piece of legislation is laid out. Are we really going to get the value that makes it even worthwhile? And why is this? And it seems to be more driven by ideology and perhaps testing the waters for bigger sales as that may come along.

And so they're testing the waters, and if they can spin it in a way that seems to make people believe it's less what it is, then they will push the envelope. But I don't think people are buying that. They're not buying that at all. They're saying we'd like to keep our Crowns intact. We are seeing that in the budget, a government that relies so heavily on commodities that it's important to diversify. And we've seen that yesterday, the role of the Crowns being a strong part of making us, making the government be able to make ends meet. And so when this kind of thing comes up, I think people have a lot of questions. They have a lot of questions.

And one of the questions they have is, this is a bit of a surprise. They did not campaign on this. They did not campaign on the fact that they will be, within a year of being elected, that they will be offering up a significant Crown, one of the major Crowns, for sale and they would be starting that process. And people did not know this, and I'm sure out in the public there are many folks may not even know it today. And so, Mr. Speaker, this is just one more of those surprises. And we've known for sure, that we've seen over the last few months since the last election, some major surprises foisted upon the people of Saskatchewan, not the least, not the least is the three more MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

Again these folks did not campaign on having increasing the number of MLAs in this legislature. That would've been a very interesting debate on the hustings, but this government instead chose to be quiet on that and announce that shortly thereafter. And we have some real concerns about what that really, really means. They did not campaign on it. And is this the tradition that this government will have in the next campaigns? Will

they not really release the main parts of their platforms because they will do it anyways and they'll wait until after the election?

So you have the three more MLAs, and what the implications of that are: costing millions of dollars when we have other things that are much more important, you know. And a second bridge to Prince Albert comes right to mind because I know the folks . . . And so when we talk about the bridge, we know that that's something that's critically important to the people of Prince Albert, and they're not hearing anything from that government over there or the members over there. But what they are hearing is three more MLAs, five more dollars on drug costs for seniors, the elimination of the film tax credit.

And of course we have yet to see, we have yet to see the labour, the new employment code that they did not campaign on. Where is it? We're in the dying days of the winter sitting and we're not seeing it. We're not sure we're going to see it. Is the minister retracting that or what's happening with that? We have how many, five more sitting days? Five more sitting days, three more government days, three more government dates — just three days next week — and we have not seen the employment code.

And clearly that was something that while a major, major surprise to the people of Saskatchewan, major surprise when that was announced on May 2nd in the spring because again these folks did not campaign on their massive overhaul of 15 pieces of labour legislation. And they said that it would be delivered . . . Now they did say sometime in the fall sitting, in the fall sitting. But it's going to be pretty close to the end.

And you know, ironically, this is what happened last year if I'm not mistaken. I believe that the three more MLAs legislation came . . . And it would be funny if it came on the same, the last Tuesday or the last Wednesday, yes. Now I understand actually there's only two more days this bill can be delivered — next Tuesday or Wednesday — and so I don't know what the odds are.

So, Mr. Speaker, and when we talk about the labour piece of legislation, this clearly, clearly fits the bill, about Bill 69, in that it seems to be ideologically driven. Here you have a Bill 69, and I don't know what the number of the employment code will be if it is actually delivered, but both are ideologically driven. Nobody asked for them, and they did not campaign on them. And here we have this, and this could be the beginning of major changes about how we do things in Saskatchewan, how we do things in Saskatchewan. And I think that it's alarming for people.

You know, when you look at the labour bill, the lesson the government should learn was around the consultation process that was involved. Now I do have to say it's somewhat ironic that the ministry of workplace relations is claiming that they've spent something like \$525,000 on consultations for the labour review. I find that . . . I don't know how they could have spent \$500,000 on consultations or the meetings. I mean these folks are in the province. And I don't know how many have, but if they've had 10, that's like \$50,000 a meeting. I don't know if they're paying per diems or what would be the costs.

And when we asked about this in the spring, about how much would this cost, because

we didn't see it in the budget. There was no budget increase for the Ministry of Labour. And we asked about that and they said, well it's going to be able to be done all in-house and there would be no extra costs. And now we have a situation that the costs are half a million dollars. And a half a million dollars for that kind of surprise is quite something else. It's quite a surprise that they hadn't planned for. So here we have a situation with Bill 69, with ISC. Was this planned for? Did they know about this several years ago?

And we can look back, and we can look into their past annual reports. And in fact, I'll read one. This is the 2008 ISC annual report. And at that time the Minister of Crown Corporations and I believe it was the minister from Silverwood and I would quote him directly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Silver Springs, Silver Springs. Thank you for the corrections. Not Silver City. This is what the minister at the time said and I quote:

My priority for the future remains the same: to ensure that Saskatchewan's Crown corporations remain publicly owned and provide high quality service at a low cost. This is a promise our Government made to the people of Saskatchewan, and it is a promise we will keep.

So that member from Saskatoon, in 2008, that's what he had said about this. Our word is our bond — maybe — until it's not.

And here we have the situation . . . just a few short years how things change. So was this planned or not planned. And that's what I say about the labour review. Was that planned or not planned? You know, you have a minister who will say in the spring, we have the resources. We can do this. It's all well-planned out. And then just a few short months later, we get the bill — a half a million dollars. And I don't know how they could have planned so badly. How did they plan so badly on that? And so here we have a circumstance very parallel to this, not campaigning on it. All of a sudden this comes out and they have their spinmeisters working full-time, probably overtime. But they must have a lot if it's going to cost a half a million dollars for this. And we don't know what the costs of readying the people of Saskatchewan for the sale of ISC, what that's all about.

So clearly a broken promise and clearly a surprise and clearly something that the people of Saskatchewan don't want. And clearly something that they should have campaigned on, they should have campaigned on.

So the list is growing. The list is growing, Mr. Speaker, of things that they did not campaign on but that will change Saskatchewan fundamentally. And whether it's the three more MLAs where we now become the most, if not one of the most, highest ratio between the number of people . . . or the lowest number of people, the lowest number of people per MLAs. We were already quite low, and we see that Manitoba was way above us, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario. Ontario's something like 100,000 people per persons, and now we're going to be something like 12,000 people per MLA.

Clearly that was a surprise. Clearly the employment code is a surprise. Clearly the film tax credit is a surprise. I haven't talked about the film tax credit, but even again, Mr.

Speaker, when the numbers come out . . . And we saw what happened with the chamber of commerce actually saying this costs us, I think the number was just over \$1 million a year in terms of net costs. That clearly is something that is affordable. And yet we'll see no more films made here in Saskatchewan, no more films of the kind of stature that we had seen in the last few years, which is really, really sad, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it was interesting this summer. I was on a Canadian Parliamentary Association meeting in Quebec City, and we were doing a tour around the historic buildings, which are phenomenal. And one of the guides said, oh Saskatchewan, we love that Corner Gas. In fact they had a connection with Saskatchewan. They loved watching it. It was a sense of humour. It was about who we were as a people with our own unique, quirky ways. But it really spoke in a humorous way about us and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It sure is. It's all about surprises. It's all about how you guys are a surprise. Surprise, surprise. It has everything to do with this bill, everything to do with this bill. They should listen, they should listen a little bit. Come on.

Let me, let me start from the beginning. Let me start from the beginning then. If they don't see the connection between ISC and the long list of surprises this government is laying out, laying out, well it's like you guys are an episode of Corner Gas. The government is becoming an episode of Corner Gas, Mr. Speaker, for sure.

Mr. Speaker, it's a long list of initiatives that this government did not campaign for, did not campaign on, the film tax credit. And maybe that struck a nerve over there, struck a nerve . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And there you go, there you go. When you kind of do that kind of stuff, it does kind of come back to bite you, you know, when you start surprising the public of Saskatchewan. And the list is growing, and ISC is part of it. ISC is clearly a part of it, Mr. Speaker. So here we are. We see a pattern. We see a pattern of a government that is being driven by ideology that won't campaign on their ideology, that will lay low and make sure nobody asks any questions.

And, Mr. Speaker, Corner Gas has got an awful lot to do with ISC. And I know the Minister of Finance doesn't want to draw, connect the dots, but it sure, sure does. Because people know it and they see it. And they're asking about these things all together: ISC, selling the Crowns, cutting the film tax credit, adding three more MLAs, and this new employment code. Four things, Mr. Speaker, and we could go on.

We could go on at length, go on at length about the surprises these guys have launched on the public of Saskatchewan, the things that they've launched but under the cover of getting re-elected, under the cover of being re-elected, but not mention what they really . . . what is the real agenda of the Sask Party. What is the real agenda of the Saskatchewan Party? The Sask Party is to govern by surprises. And I think sometime next week, we'll get another surprise when the employment code comes forward that cost us over half a million dollars in consultations in which no one from the public could actually come and speak. They had to write it in. They had to write it in . . .

The Speaker: — I'd like to remind the member speaking that the bill before us is Bill No. 69, the Information Services Corporation. And I wonder if he could address the bill,

please.

Mr. Forbes: — Well absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate because it is about connecting the dots for the people watching and people in Hansard. And I really think it's important to reflect on Bill 69 because it really does show what this government is all about.

It's about broken promises, broken promises, selling a profitable Crown and just because of being driven by ideology and something that is trumping common sense. Why are we selling, why are we selling something that is turning a profit? Now apparently it made \$17 million last year. Clearly it's having a return. And the question is, is it worthwhile? So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to be part of this debate today and talk about the issues at hand. So as you know, Mr. Speaker, and I will talk about how this government . . . And this is I don't know if it's the biggest surprise because I know I'm the critic of Labour, and I keep going back there, but I do have to draw the parallels.

But I will reflect on this, and as I talked earlier, I'll read this into the record once again because this is a message from the minister, the 2008 ISC annual report, about what they really believe. And I would assume that their word is their bond when they put this out. I mean we didn't write this. I'm reading directly from a quote. It might've been . . . I don't know if the minister actually wrote it. I hope he read it before he signed it. It actually has his signature at the bottom. But this is what he said. This is what he had said, Mr.

Speaker:

My priority for the future remains the same: to ensure that Saskatchewan's Crown corporations remain publicly owned and provide high quality services at a low cost. This is a promise our Government made to the people of Saskatchewan, and it is a promise we will keep.

And now we're seeing that promise being broken. Now we see this promise being broken. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not been many years since 2008, and clearly Bill 69 is the breaking point of that promise, that sacred vow the Sask Party made to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I think that's an important point, that's a critically important point for people here in Saskatchewan because, you know, when we do have elections and when we have all the things that happen between and we have these annual reports, people read them and go, okay, we take them at their word. This is what they say. They're not hedging their bets; they're not saying utility Crowns. They didn't say anything, they didn't say anything about utility Crowns in that promise. They talked about Saskatchewan Crown corporations. They didn't talk about page 44, wait till page 44 in the upcoming election. There was no asterisk. It was pretty, pretty straightforward. So what changed? What changed between then and now? What changed between then and now?

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of concerns about this Bill 69 because we think it really is indicative and it fits the behaviour pattern. And you know, it's often said, what predicts future behaviour is past behaviour. And you're seeing, Mr. Speaker, past behaviour of

surprises, whether it's a film employment tax credit, three more MLAs, where they don't campaign on those things and all of a sudden they happen. All of a sudden they happen. And so we have some real concerns about this.

And it's not just ourselves. It's other folks. You know, I wouldn't mind reading parts of Murray Mandryk's column into this. This is what Mr. Mandryk said in November 20th, 2012. And you know, I think he offers some points that we should be thinking about reflecting on here, Mr. Speaker, because clearly . . . And I think the headline, it says it all: "ISC privatization case not compelling." Not compelling. It's not worth the breaking of a promise. It's not worth the big surprise.

These folks, if they really believe in their ideology of privatization, should go out and campaign on it, should campaign on it and not be secretive about it and wait until after the election and then say, surprise, you know that promise that we've been making about not selling off Crowns or privatization? That's not true. That's not true. We actually are . . . We do have a plan, and we were just waiting until the right moment. So clearly that's what Bill 69 and . . . You know, it's funny how bill numbers stick in our mind, like Bill 5 and 6, Bill 80, and now 69 will join that, icons of famous bills that really showed what Sask Party was all about.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is what Murray Mandryk had to say, and I'll quote extensively from this because I think this is very relevant, salient to the bill at hand. I quote:

The problem with the Saskatchewan Party's argument for privatizing Information Services Corporation (ISC) is that it's . . . [not really] that much stronger than its argument to keep it in its present, wholly owned public state.

In fact, it would probably be more to the benefit of the average Saskatchewan taxpayer to keep . . . [it] as it is. Here's why:

The obvious benefit of selling 60 per cent of the Crown corporation through a stock offering is that we'll reap \$90 million to \$120 million that ISC Minister Don McMorris says can be put . . . [forward to the] provincial infrastructure work.

Or maybe not. One of the more interesting observations about the share offering came from NDP critic Kathy Sproule, who asked: "What happens if this (new) company turns out to be like Facebook?"

And I'll continue on, but I think this is a . . . I think that's really important. Now I don't know if the Minister of Finance hates Facebook like he hates Corner Gas. He seems to have a real problem with Corner Gas. But I've got to say, we've seen what happened to Facebook. We've seen what happened to Facebook.

And you know, when you look at corporations like Facebook, and it was an amazing show of entrepreneurship when somebody had an idea . . . And of course if you've seen the movie, it's a fascinating movie about entrepreneurship and how ideas come to reality and who really has the idea and the kind of work that happens, but at some point some things happen. There's a very interesting life history to most corporations, and it was a

fascinating film.

And of course the second part, which was after the film was made, is their share offering, where everybody thought that their shares would go through the roof, would go through the roof. I think they were offered \$38 a share or something like that. They started at \$38, and of course the owner of Facebook actually was just married. Mark Zuckerman was just married before the share offering came forward and was in Europe when they did the big launch. And it crashed. And I think the shares are now in the 10 or \$13 range, something like that. About half price anyways.

And clearly who could have predicted that? I mean there were a lot of people in the know, a lot of people who make this their business to know what to do in these kind of situations. But clearly people were hesitant about it. They were hesitant about it because, you know, the question was, does this make a lot of common sense? Should I be buying something ... They weren't seeing the real tangible returns, I suppose. And for some reason they decided that they would hang tough, not invest in Facebook.

What would happen if that happened in this circumstance here? And this is what our critic asked, and I think it's a straightforward question. And the minister's not been really straightforward about this in terms of, are there people out there who would snap this up right away? And if they've been shopping around, then clearly they've been working on this for a bit. So I think this is an interesting question that we have to ask because, you know, when we get to keep 40 per cent of the stocks, we want to make sure it's a viable corporation. We don't want to be sunk or tied into something that's not going to work very well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to ask, wouldn't it make more sense to keep a corporation that has a return in the 15, \$17 million range per year than selling something that we might get 90 to \$120 million, that we would make in five years, just by holding the whole place, keeping it? What kind of sense does that make? What kind of sense does that make? I'm not sure.

I mean it makes ideological sense to all those folks over there. All those folks understand that because it's their ideology of privatization that's at work. That's what makes sense to them. It's not the dollars and cents that makes sense to them.

Well let's continue. The problem in an ever-changing technological world is that investors might be somewhat hesitant to plunk down their cash on a company in need of upgrades, especially if that company has only one catered provincial government client and has never really made a sale outside its jurisdiction. And that's the case, that we're going into some really uncharted waters. We're not sure what's out there.

We know the business case works well in Saskatchewan and does a good job and is meeting the marketplace needs, and the people of Saskatchewan feel very good about that. It's a one-stop shop in terms of information services, places where you can go to get your birth certificate, titles, you know. You know everything is secure. You know that there's a sense of accountability, that in Saskatchewan the tradition of public Crowns is a

strong one and you can trust it.

But you're really going into some uncharted waters here, Mr. Speaker, and I think that clearly we have questions. We have a lot of questions about that and, Mr. Speaker, and if it's just . . . again whether it's the Minister of Finance looking for some ways to get some quick cash and as we see that happening both with . . . And from my background, I've been listening to the Minister Responsible for Sask Housing and selling off acres of land around Regina.

Now the answer is that she says all of that money will go into housing. And we're not sure. And we know for sure that it won't go all into housing in Regina that's for sure. The bureaucrats in the Sask Housing answered that question clearly, that Regina should not be expecting money from the sale of the northwest parcel of over 300 acres. That's going to benefit all of Saskatchewan.

So we see this liquidation of assets as a pattern for this government. They're looking for things to sell, and as my colleague from Athabasca said, if it's not nailed down or bolted down, it's going to be up for sale. We see that happen. We're starting to see that happen more and more. So it's the land. It's ISC. Now we're seeing houses for social housing up for sale. It's really a bit alarming about the kind of directions that we're going.

I'll continue here:

Moreover, if McMorris is right that other governments were frightened off from doing business with ISC because it was a 100-per-cent Saskatchewan-taxpayer-owned company, wouldn't a 40-per-cent Saskatchewan-taxpayer-owned company still be problematic?

I think that's a fair question. That's a fair question. They think they've struck this balance. But is it really going to solve the problem for someone in an ideological driven who really wants a privately owned and run company similar to ISC? Why would they be looking for a partner with the Government of Saskatchewan? You know, I mean that's an odd thing. Like who would be looking for that?

And so we have a lot of questions about that and so do other observers, and I think that's a fair question. There is another ... and I quote:

There is another aspect of this government ownership that potential investors might see as even more of an issue. Those investors might see this 40-per-cent government ownership — and likely four . . . [of] the 10-person ISC board — as hampering them if they exercise political influence on key corporate decisions like staffing and future rate increases.

That's something to reflect on. So you've got four members of the 10-member board and a golden share, and you're not . . . I think it would be only reasonable to think that the four board members are going to be acting on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. And when it comes to determining what the future rate increases are, I sure hope that the Government of Saskatchewan is saying, keep them low; keep them

low. But that may not be the case with the other folks on the board, and say listen, it's about making a profit. It's about turning a profit here, and a significant profit. Because clearly in their private world, there is that profit motive and that's what keeps the business going. If there's no profit, then you wonder why are you doing this. And so I think that that's a fair, fair question.

And so some of these things are just not making a lot of sense. And I'll continue:

Government officials speculate that ISC might be more attractive for "safe" investors, like pension fund managers or insurance companies trying to offset riskier investments.

But lest anyone think that a privatized ISC under a 40-per-cent government ownership structure is a great deal for Saskatchewan taxpayers or consumers, think again.

To begin with, there is the discussion of additional rate hikes for land titles transactions that might be required more frequently to meet investor demands, meaning that there's little to indicate Monday's privatization bill will offer users much of a break.

So this is where we see another perspective on this story. Not only do we sell off a profitable Crown and we see a reduction in the return — that as Saskatchewan citizens, we might see rate increases. So here we have this problem, and we have very little control over it. We have very little control. So I think there's a lot that we need to be thinking about here, Mr. Speaker. And I think that, as I continue through this, it's important to really reflect on what's at stake here and is this wise for us to be going down the road.

Now as we take our Christmas break in the next few days, I know we will be talking to a lot of people about this. And maybe that lone surveyor will be out there telling us that it's the right thing to do. Maybe he'll come and visit us. I don't know. But I think that the government needs to hang their hat on more opinions than one surveyor.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will continue here from the article:

For taxpayers as a whole, there is the temptation of recouping some of the . . . investment the previous NDP administration poured into ISC. And there is the notion of having money for capital projects, although there is reason to doubt it will be the \$90-to \$120-million the government is now speculating. But with a mere 40-per-cent ownership, there will be likely less dividends unless a privatized ISC far exceeds financial expectations.

Then there will be added costs of having to administer vital statistics through executive government — a cost that will have to be subtracted from the profitability of this privatization.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can just remember just a few short years ago when vital stats went over, left Health and went over to ISC. And we had concerns about that because you

know, traditionally when you have that kind of change, we ask a lot of questions because we want to make sure that there are no unintended consequences. But nobody saw, nobody saw that in a few short years that vital statistics would be rebounding, bouncing back to Health. And now we heard about the land titles will be coming back to Justice.

All these things . . . And there will be costs. There will be costs. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's critically important that we take that into account. And I don't know if the minister has taken that into account because we've not heard a lot about it, and particularly when this government has gone through a lean initiative and has taken on that mission. I don't know if there is a spot within Health where it can fit into in a neat way already, if they can just plug in and everything's ready to go, or will there have to be significant infrastructure developed so that it can be part of the provincial government yet again? So there are questions we have about this.

So people were getting used to the new changes over there and were thinking of it as a valuable addition. And in fact, I was even thinking about some of the things that ISC could be doing that would be of value, you know. Mr. Speaker, as you may remember, I've raised often questions around photo ID [identification] and how SGI is the only place, I believe, that you can get photo ID from the government. And I was thinking, wouldn't it be interesting for ISC to do that? But now I think that'll be out of the range. Because we've had people come and say, listen, I don't have any connections with SGI. And for whatever reason, they may not like SGI for some reason.

But I think that it would be appropriate to have two or three points within the government where you could get ID, especially now when we've seen the changes in election processes where you need ID. And I think it's only fair that people have more than one choice within the government range of services. And when you have a monopoly like SGI on that little thing, and particularly when ISC has all the data, it would have made sense. But clearly now that's out the window because it's going to be for sale and this government seems to be heading down that road.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of questions about this, and I'm only just partially through this editorial. And I'm not sure if the members opposite have had a time. And I appreciate the opportunity to read through this, because I want to make sure . . . There's some very good points that are made and, you know, I think that's important that we cover this. I quote:

So, lower dividends, possibly less money from the sale of ISC than the government is suggesting and more costs to both users and taxpayers? Why would the government even bother?

Well, there is considerable logic in the notion that ISC is destined to stagnate under its current format. A decade of no out-of-province sales would seem to suggest that.

But there is also a significant statement for Premier Brad Wall in this first sale of an entire Crown corporation in a considerable amount of time.

A quiet, incremental — and most importantly, successful — privatization would do wonders to change the narrative about the need for the Crown corporations in this province. That, in turn, would be a huge victory for the conservative philosophy of smaller, less-intrusive government over the NDP/left notion favouring government delivery of services.

And that's why I'm thinking, it's a testing the waters. It's a sticking the toe in the tub to see, can they do this; can they pull this off; can they go to the electorate, get elected, and then surprise people by doing this kind of thing? Clearly they were mum, you know. And as I've read several times . . . And that's not the only one, you know.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a 75-minute debate and we had members from all over that side of the House saying all sorts of different interpretations of page 44. We've heard them say, no, it's only the utility Crowns; no, it's the only one in the Act; no, it's every one of them. I think every one of those folks have a different interpretation of what it means to protect the Crowns. And to them, what it means is just getting re-elected so they can actually sell the Crowns. That's what it really means to them.

So, in closing, this is the last paragraph: "Privatizing ISC hardly seems worth the fuss and bother. Or it would seem that way if you don't look at it from the perspective of the bigger fight."

And clearly, Mr. Speaker, when I raise Corner Gas, that's the bigger fight. Now, Mr. Speaker, clearly some members over there don't see the connection between Corner Gas and they must really hate that show. I didn't realize that they had such a dislike for it. I actually think it's kind of an interesting show. But that's the bigger fight. That's the bigger fight — the change of what Saskatchewan landscape is and what it really means in this province to solve our own unique challenges when we have a growing population.

But we need to be able to provide services in a way that people feel confident, and it's affordable and it's modern and it's up to date. There's been ... I've not heard, I've not heard any complaints about ISC as a service provider and that it needs to be done in. In fact, people think of it as a very top-notch, state of the art corporation.

And while there were challenges . . . And, Mr. Speaker, I was a member of that committee and I remember some of the questions from the Sask Party at the time when they were in opposition about the value of it. But clearly, clearly it's come a long way. It's come a long way. And it has really fulfilled its niche in the marketplace in solving so many of the needs that people have. And I think there is ways for it to do more. But to do this kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, is very, very wrong-headed, but not surprising, as I said, with this government in terms of the way it operates.

So I know many of my friends will want to get into this debate and will want to talk about this because it is one that we feel very, very strongly about when we see . . . And I think that in the column I read by Murray Mandryk from the 20th of November, that we are worried about what this really means. And is this a Trojan Horse? Is this much more than just one sell, one sale? We see it with the sell-off of the lands, the Sask Housing

lands, the social housing, and under the guise that it will refresh the inventory, refresh the inventory. But really, clearly, when you're asking people to move out of their homes they've lived in, many of them for several, several years in strong, safe, vibrant communities and into apartments, I have some real concerns. I have real concerns.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that the whole idea that this government, as I said, to me... Now I know others will get up and have a longer list but, you know, as I've said, we've had four major surprises from this government that they did not campaign on, did not campaign on. And people are wondering what else, what else is going to happen. And whether it's the three more MLAs they didn't campaign on, the film employment tax credit they didn't campaign on, the sell-off of the houses, and the employment code . . . And now actually, Mr. Speaker, there are five — five — and the fifth one is the ISC. And the fifth one is ISC.

It's a pattern. It's a pattern, and it's one that's indicating that what they've done in the past, and if they can get away with it, they'll continue to do with it. And these clearly have been shown. They're more ideologically driven, ideologically driven than driven by common sense.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that, I know other members will want to get up and speak a bit about this and other bills that are before us today, but I'm glad that I was able to get on record my thoughts that I will not be supporting this bill, that there will be lots of questions on this in committee. And we will be talking to lots of people over the months ahead about Bill 69 that now joins the infamous ranks of Bills 5, 6, and 80. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of Bill 69, an Act to request Information Services Corporation. Thank you.