



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

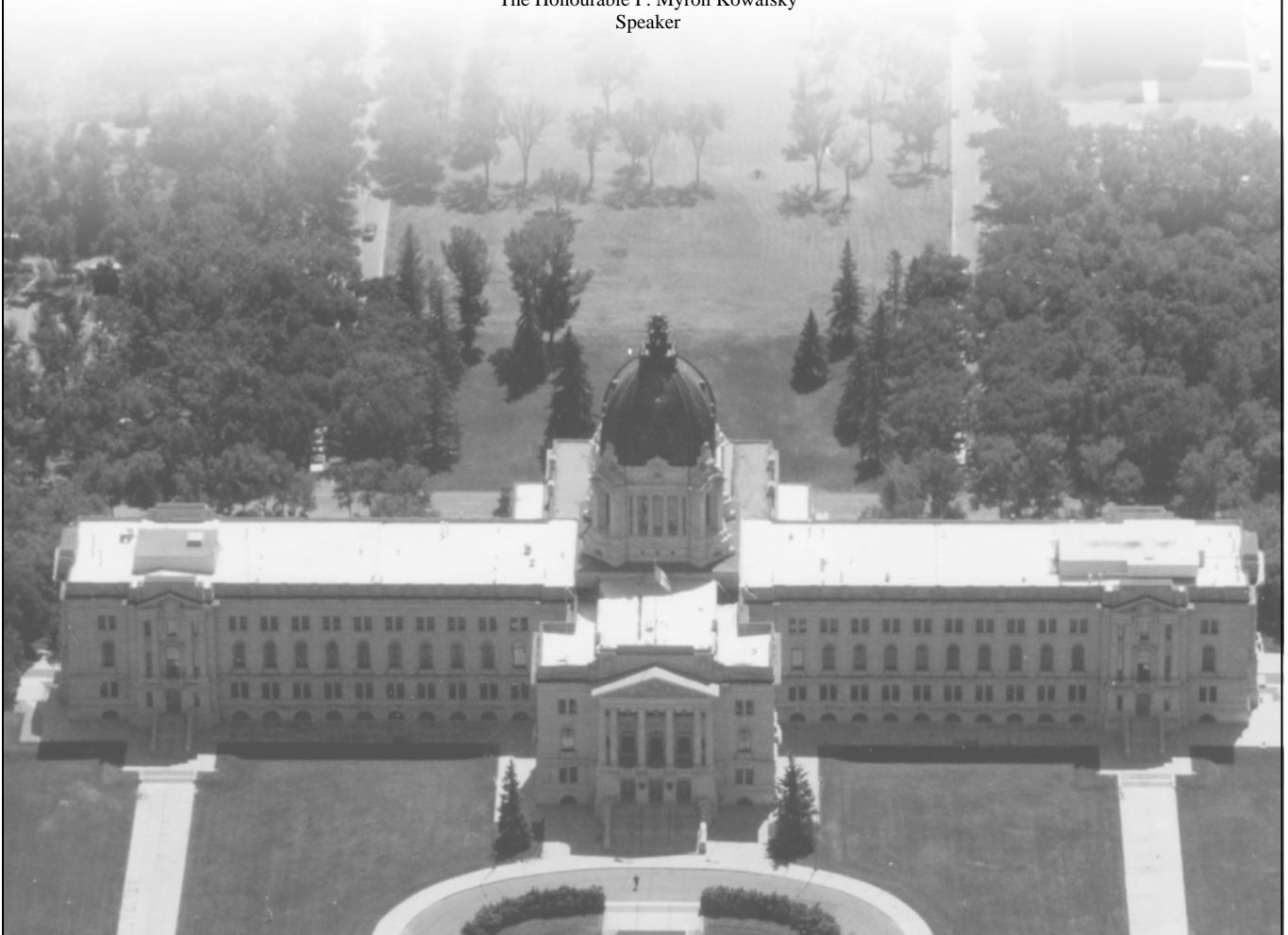
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Hon. Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Martensville

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have petitions today to present to the Assembly in regards to dialysis availability in Broadview Union Hospital. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in the Broadview Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present today is signed by the good folks from the communities of Broadview and Whitewood. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I present a petition returning to the topic of highway repair in southwest Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this page of petitions is signed by individuals from the communities of Maple Creek and Claydon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 49. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington and Lintlaw and Preeceville and the surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, from Saskatoon, from Lintlaw, from Okla, and from Hazel Dell.

I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I have several petitions of citizens concerned with the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, again demonstrate how well-used this particular corridor is. They are from St. Gregor, Viscount, Prud'homme, Wadena, Rose Valley, Carmel, Saskatoon, Humboldt, Kelvington, Quill Lake, Fulda; Sylvan Lake, Alberta; Vegreville, Alberta; Morden, Manitoba; Wainwright, Alberta; and Calgary, Alberta. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine and others who are very concerned about the condition of Highway 18. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 18 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and business.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Estevan and Alameda. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to present another petition from the citizens of Biggar concerned about possible health care service cuts in their community. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Perdue and Biggar and district. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to once again rise in this House and present a petition on behalf of parents across Saskatchewan who for the past seven years have been lobbying this government for a dedicated children's hospital within a hospital in Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources this year to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the constituencies of Saskatoon Eastview, Saskatoon Sutherland, and Saskatoon Silver Springs. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's two-tier health system. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from Carnduff. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens calling on this government to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As is duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous and Wakaw, Regina, Simpson, and Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present yet another petition requesting an

allocation of funding for a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon. I will read the prayer for relief, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Osler, and Big River. I'm pleased to present on their behalf. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have petitions to present on behalf of constituents from Carnduff. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

These petitions come from the communities of Carievale, Carnduff, and Bellegarde. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to join my colleagues to present a petition requesting allocation of funding for a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon. And I'll read the petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people of Saskatoon, Vanscoy, and Martensville. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to be able to present a petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal

government.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so submit.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — I'm proud to stand in the Assembly today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the government's failure to fund cancer drug, specifically Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from the city of Regina and the town of Balgonie. And I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And because members opposite are so curious, Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that the . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Order please. Order please. I would . . . Order please. I would like to advise the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley that the switching system had cut him off before he was able to finish, and I would invite him to read the names into the record.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from Regina, rural route 3, Mossbank, Alameda, Hodgeville, Mortlach, Mankota, Herbert, Kamsack, Consul, Arcola, Cardross, Lestock, Benson, and Tyvan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. And now I would like to remind the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley that during his remarks he ought not to engage in debate.

The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hereby present a petition for a private Bill on behalf of petitioners from the Full Gospel Bible Institute of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the gist of the petition is that the Full Gospel Bible Institute is desirous of amending the said Act to change the name of the institute and provide for clarification of the definition, roles, and appointment of members, trustees, and directors of the institute.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the president of the college, and I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I hereby present a petition for a private Bill on behalf of petitioners from the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan of which they ask a name change of the association to the Saskatchewan Hotel and Hospitality Association:

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

[13:45]

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby read and received.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce some students seated in the west gallery. These students — their teacher is Brian Marin — they're from Archbishop O'Neill High School in the constituency of Regina Coronation Park.

I'm delighted to report that I'll meeting with this group after

question period. We'll have pictures and then an opportunity to have an exchange of, presumably, questions from them and hopefully answers from me. I'm sure we have some orange fruit drinks lined up as well.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the Assembly to welcome this fine group from Archbishop O'Neill.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly I'd like to introduce five constituents of mine in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're here representing the Southwest drought disaster committee. And we have Eileen Davidson, Vern Davidson, Orin Balas, Laurent Thibault, and Doug Davidson.

They're here to watch the proceedings today, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully there's some answers that come from the proceedings. And I would like to ask all members to please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to welcome those who are here from the Southwest drought committee. I had opportunity to meet with them some time ago. But I also want to particularly congratulate the Davidsons for their excellent showing at Agribition with their cattle this year and welcome them and ask all members to welcome them and congratulate them today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, four individuals seated in the western gallery. If they could please rise as I call their name. They are Brian Seidlik, Brian Novak, Scott Zepick, and Kirby Benning.

Mr. Speaker, these are four members of the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association. Kirby is the vice-president of said association. They're in the Chamber today as part of the after work, I guess, of their very informative and interesting lobby. Certainly it's an event that is always looked forward to on the legislative calendar each year, and this year was no exception.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in thanking these members for the work they do in terms of serving and protecting the people of Saskatchewan, and to welcome them to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our firefighter friends as well and join the minister and invite members to extend another warm welcome to those who represent us and protect us through the firefighters' services. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the member for Coronation Park in welcoming the students from O'Neill High School here today. It was the high school that I attended. And you've picked the right high school; it's the best one in the city. So congratulations and welcome to the Chamber today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

Definition of Community Support

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have some sad news and some good news for Saskatchewan today.

I have a constituent, Mr. Speaker, who suffers from melanoma and did manage to make it into Regina to have his cancer operation. But, Mr. Speaker, this person is not employed, and there is a cost associated with staying in Regina at the cancer clinic, and he was struggling with this and was having difficulty.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when one of his former employers found out about this, they volunteered to pay for his costs to stay in Regina here, including his transportation to Regina and back. You know, listening to some of the members and their supporters talk about greedy corporate hucksters, here's an example, Mr. Speaker, of someone, an entrepreneur who takes his community service personally and commits himself and his financial resources to aid those that are not able to help themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Fast Trucking from Camduff, Tony and Vi Day, Dennis and Linda Day are very community concerned, very conscious. And this person was a past employee of theirs, and provided for that gentleman even though they had no reason to do so other than the fact that they knew him. That's community support, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to Fast Trucking.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Judge Appointed as British Columbia's Representative of Children and Youth

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce that Saskatchewan Provincial Court Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond has been appointed to act as British Columbia's representative of child and youth.

In her new position, Judge Turpel-Lafond will review, investigate, and report on the critical injuries and deaths of children in the child welfare system in British Columbia. She will also collaborate in research to improve services and address the needs of children and families.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Turpel-Lafond is a distinguished academic. She holds a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts], a Bachelor of Law, and Master of Law degrees, plus a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in law from Harvard University. As a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Mr. Speaker, she became the first First Nations person appointed as judge in the history of Saskatchewan. Before appointment to the bench, Judge Turpel-Lafond practised law in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, representing both First Nation individuals and organizations.

She has said that she believes the future of our country will be built through the involvement of First Nations in all facets of Canadian society as equals and with recognition of this distinct heritage and rights of all peoples.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our government, I would like to congratulate Judge Turpel-Lafond on her appointment and wish her the best in her new position. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

LeRoy Resident Recognized for Great Volunteerism

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to pay special tribute to Bev Thoen, award winner of the SaskEnergy Recreation Award of Merit.

Bev was born in LeRoy and raised on a farm south of Romance. She received her education in LeRoy and participated in almost all school activities. After graduating high school, she attended St. Peter's College for office education. She married in 1977, and her and her husband began their life together as residents of LeRoy.

As her children grew, Bev was involved in almost every aspect of her community. To list a few, it didn't matter if it was skating or dance costumes to be sewn, music to be played, snacks for the hockey team, snacks for the volleyball team, helping with babysitting courses, or family Christmas. She's always made herself available on the executive of the curling rink, the memorial rink, school of dance, recreation board, and skating club.

She's the organizer of the Terry Fox Run for nine years and raised money for cancer research, has been involved in the LeRoy leisure lotto. She's involved in the planning of dinner theatres at her school. She's been involved in skating

competitions, winter games, and Sask open skating competitions since the 1990s. She's been involved with the Saskatchewan Winter Games, Saskatchewan co-op youth parliament in Candle Lake, the LeRoy enhanced school project. She's organized inheritance days and has been involved in almost every aspect of her community — too many to mention.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Bev Thoen and ask all members to recognize her great volunteerism in the community of LeRoy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Improved Road Access for Big River First Nation

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 16 I had the pleasure of attending the signing of a historic partnership agreement between Big River First Nation, the RM [rural municipality] of Canwood, and the province to pave Cyr Road, the 11-kilometre road into Big River First Nation and improve access for the 2,200 residents who live there.

Saskatchewan will fund the project, and the RM will administer the road building contract on behalf of the province and, Mr. Speaker, work has already begun. And, Mr. Speaker, the province and First Nation have signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] to seek federal funding to pave the remaining 8.5 kilometres of gravel road into the heart of the First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this partnership to pave Cyr Road will result in greater economic development and tourism opportunities, as well as easier access for ambulance and health care services, and it will allow all residents to play a bigger role in the social and economic life of this province. Mr. Speaker, we believe that all citizens of Saskatchewan deserve safe and reliable access to vital services. By improving roads leading into First Nations communities, Mr. Speaker, we're making life better for children and families while paving a brighter future for our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chief Bruce Morin and the Council of Big River First Nation, and Reeve Richard Porter and the RM Council of Canwood for their hard work and leadership in making this historic agreement possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Record of a Meeting

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his famous book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell explained the meaning of the word doublethink. He said it is the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them.

This week, the Minister of Community Resources took the concept of doublethink to a new and never before imagined height. For weeks, the opposition has been asking for any minutes or notes taken at meetings between the minister and members of the Oyate Board. All have been provided save for two meetings — one in March, the other in May.

Two weeks ago, the minister rose in the Assembly and said: "... the minutes of that meeting are mystical, Mr. Speaker, because there was no meeting." When questioned again, the minister said:

... this has got to be one of the worst critics I've [ever] met in my entire life, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't get it at all ... So I'll say [it] again: there was no meeting at all ...

The deputy minister however promised to search for any record of a meeting. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? He discovered there was a meeting between the minister and some of the Oyate Board, and he found there was a record of that meeting.

However there is more. This minister placed his senior bureaucrat, his partner in developing and delivering assistance to the neediest people in Saskatchewan, in the most uncomfortable situation. The poor man was instructed to tell the Public Accounts Committee that yes, there was a meeting even though the minister denied there was a meeting and yes, there are notes taken at that meeting.

But here's the kicker, Mr. Speaker, the poor man was instructed to say that he couldn't release the nonexistent minutes for the nonexistent meeting because the minister told him not to. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we say shame on the minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Policy Development

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Last week something kind of funny happened to the Leader of the Opposition on his way to a scrum. He had to stop for a minute to make up some party policy.

Let's review. On Thursday of last week the member from Kelvington-Wadena noted the NDP [New Democratic Party] accepted end-prohibition-of-marijuana advertising in one of our party's publications. However as the Minister of Healthy Living Services pointed out in his scrum, the Saskatchewan Party took a \$10,000 donation from Imperial Tobacco. The member from Kelvington-Wadena was struck by this fact, and she tried to tell us that this all changed back in 2003 when they had their old leader and their old policies and now, according to her, everything is different.

But the problem is that they were still accepting tobacco money in 2005. So the question was asked of the Leader of the Opposition, when did this policy change? And he told us it happened when he found out about the \$10,000 donation, but he admitted he only found out about that donation when the

Minister of Healthy Living Services pointed it out to him.

So let's review. So basically in between the time of our minister's scrum and time the Leader of the Opposition's scrum, he just made up that policy. No messy democracy for that party. No consultation with their party members. No voter discussion of their party executive. Just leader's fiat, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition's way or the highway. No wonder they oppose the right of farmers to vote on the fate of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker. They've forgotten what democracy looks like.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

New Democratic Party Leadership

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago a number of the members opposite, such as the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, were leading a movement to dump their leader and bring back Dwain Lingenfelter to replace him.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it turns out there's two problems with Dwain Lingenfelter leading the NDP Saskatchewan. Number one, he doesn't live in Saskatchewan. Number two, apparently he's not even an NDP. According to a caller on the Dave Rutherford show on CJQR radio in Calgary, Dwain Lingenfelter is now actively working for Jim Dinning in his bid to become leader of the Alberta Conservative Party.

Mr. Speaker, it must be looking pretty bad for the NDP these days when so many of their own members think the best person to lead the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] is an Alberta Conservative.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Support for Farmers in Southwest Saskatchewan

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a group in your gallery who have come to their legislature today to seek fairness. This group is from the southwest disaster assistance committee, and I had introduced them earlier. They have come here today expecting to have their case heard.

Mr. Speaker, the drought in the Southwest is real and significant. For most of this year and last there has not been a decent rain. Can the minister please tell these people here today why he will not recognize the southwest drought and declare the area an emergency.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of

Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have clearly recognized the drought and extra damage that there is in the Southwest. I have met with the group, the southwest drought group. And we have also pursued with the federal government what potential avenues there might be to be able to provide support for these folks in the Southwest. And certainly they're facing issues, from drought to a large infestation of gophers. And we are pursuing support on a number of fronts. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister has recognized that there's a drought in the Southwest, and he believes the farmers and ranchers in the Southwest, why will he not move ahead on this file himself? Why doesn't he let the farmers and ranchers meet with the farm support review committee? This way the southwest drought disaster committee can at least have a vehicle for their concerns to be heard. And also this way maybe some solutions will surface on how to handle the problem.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister set up a meeting between the southwest drought disaster committee and the farm support review committee? Will he commit to that today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to that is no, I will not.

Mr. Speaker, I have met personally with the drought group, and we have heard clearly from them what the issues are. I have also met with the farm support review committee and talked to them about this situation.

There are also a number of avenues, which the members opposite should know about, for speaking to the farm support review committee, and those have been used through members on the farm support review committee from SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and from APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] and also just the farmer representatives. So it's received thorough discussion there. And in the meantime we have been moving ahead on a number of fronts. One of them is in relationship with crop insurance. We have also been pressing on issues of trying to get support for further work around the Canada-Saskatchewan water programs. Thanks.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this spring farmers in

the Northeast were devastated by flooding. That was declared an emergency. Mr. Speaker, the group here today are seeking the same status. All they want is to be treated fairly. It was the farm support review committee that recommended a payment to be made to farmers in the Northeast for flooding. Why hasn't the same committee heard the concerns of the farmers and ranchers in the Southwest? Can the minister please tell the people here today why that is?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I just finished indicating, the case of the southwest drought situation was presented to the farm support review committee. We have talked about that. And as I've also indicated we have been, as a department and a government, moving forward on this front to see what levels of support we can get.

One of the things that is coming forward as well is the disaster program, the federal disaster program which though, at first indication, looking at the framework this fall, does not look like it would apply as fully as we had hoped. I have asked the federal minister if we can use this situation in the Southwest as a pilot project, and in that we would be able to analyze whether or not it's going to be effective as a disaster program and provide the support that's needed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there are 19 RMs in the Southwest who have declared themselves an emergency due to the drought. These farmers and ranchers have come here today hoping to have their questions answered. These farmers want to know if the minister will treat them fairly and treat the drought with as much concern as he did with the floods.

Will the minister do the right thing and treat these farmers and ranchers with respect? Will he give these farmers and ranchers some answers on how to handle a disaster in the Southwest? Who best, who best to talk to the review committee, than the people that are being affected? Will the minister reconsider and have this drought committee meet with the farm review support committee?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I've already answered that question, Mr. Speaker. And so I want to also point out that as we move forward on this it has been very clear in our discussions with the federal government that they are no longer interested in any kind of ad hoc programs. They are working to build program with us, working to build program that will help through all kinds of circumstances, whether it be disaster, whether it be a drop in income, whether it be an item that is needful of very

good crop insurance. We're trying to develop program that will work across the board.

At this point clearly they have said there is no ad hoc program. And I would like also to be very clear in noting that the members opposite have also said on numerous occasions, they recognize clearly farms are private businesses. And including the leader opposite, Mr. Speaker, they have made very clear that they don't think direct investment in private businesses is the way to go.

They have also made clear, Mr. Speaker, they have also made clear, as the member from Melville-Saltcoats said when asked should the government step in and help every time there are weather-related production problems, he said, I quote, "No, I don't think . . ."

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Poverty and Food Bank Usage

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, in 1991 this NDP government promised to eliminate the need for food banks in Saskatchewan. Also in 1991, the NDP government promised to work to end child poverty in Saskatchewan. Yesterday the Canadian Association of Food Banks released its 2006 hunger count.

Nationally the number of people using food banks is dropping, yet here in Saskatchewan, where this government is experiencing unprecedented prosperity, the increase in food bank usage is the second highest in Canada. Per capita food bank usage in Saskatchewan was the fourth highest in the nation. Mr. Speaker, why has this NDP government failed to deliver on its 1991 election promise?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is really important is that this province and this government knows that we have to work very careful and very clearly to meet some of the objectives of Saskatchewan people.

And, Mr. Speaker, any increase in use of food banks is something that many provinces do not accept. And it's not acceptable as well, Mr. Speaker. What is important is that we have put a plan forward, Mr. Speaker, to reduce poverty. This government is leading that particular file, Mr. Speaker. It is not uncommon for many jurisdictions to come to Saskatchewan to see how we are doing, Mr. Speaker. We are a model.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, that being said, what is important, does that mean we have more work that needs to be done, Mr. Speaker? We fully acknowledge that. So again I'd point out that there's been good progress made. More progress will be made. And every time, Mr. Speaker, we have an increase in minimum

wage, every time we have support for certain groups, they vote against that, Mr. Speaker. Every time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what's really important to members on this side of the House is the children in Saskatchewan are hungry. Mr. Speaker, in 2006 the hunger count contains another alarming statistic. Despite the NDP's promise to work to end child poverty, the number of children who are food bank clients continues to increase. Saskatchewan has the second highest rate of children as clients at food banks.

Mr. Speaker, why has this NDP government again failed children in Saskatchewan? Why have they failed to live up to the 1991 commitment to work toward ending child poverty in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister of community services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, that is why the people of Saskatchewan do not trust the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. The reason why they don't trust them, Mr. Speaker, is they say one thing outside the Assembly and they vote against the budget that really increases some of the support mechanisms that this government has put in place, Mr. Speaker.

Let us go down that list, Mr. Speaker. Minimum wage that helps families. They voted against that, Mr. Speaker. Their taxation policy that they have for lower income actually hurts the lower-income people, Mr. Speaker. Housing, they vote against every budget that we have to increase housing, Mr. Speaker. Health benefits, the child care program that their federal cousins cut, not a peep from them, Mr. Speaker. Talk about literacy, Mr. Speaker. Not a peep from them when their federal government cuts literacy programs, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point out every time, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan and we want to increase benefits, they vote against that budget. So I would say, park your crocodile tears. People know what you're up to, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter how much the minister stands up and screams about what they think we should be doing or what they have done, there is a fact here. And that is the number of people using the food bank is increasing in this province under this NDP government regardless of what he says.

Mr. Speaker, the 2006 hunger count shows Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of food bank clients with social assistance as their primary source of income. That's their

record, Mr. Speaker.

Wayne Hellquist is the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina and District Food Bank. He says, despite an increase in support, demand for services at the food bank remains very high. Mr. Hellquist says some of this demand is driven by problems in the rural economy, which we have all talked about in this House.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government continuing to force the poorest of the poor people in Saskatchewan to use food banks more and more often?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister of community services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this government will stand with the poor of the poorest, Mr. Speaker. We will stand to make sure that we stand up and we vote to make sure that the people that have low income and the least advantaged in this province, that this government will support them, Mr. Speaker.

And I will point out that from 1994 to 1995, if you take, Mr. Speaker, after-tax income into account, our province of Saskatchewan has seen a decrease in poverty from 14.1 to 10.1, Mr. Speaker, under this government, Mr. Speaker.

And 10.1 is still too high. We're going to continue moving, and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we have done everything from increased social assistance rate, the highest in many years last year. Not only are we helping with lower bus passes, Mr. Speaker, we've announced PST [provincial sales tax] cuts and we've had a rental supplement and employment supplement and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. We are going to help the poor people. That's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — None of the children that are waiting for food at the food bank feel any better because of the stats that that minister just quoted.

This is a quote that we found that was stated in this Assembly on June 7, 1988. And I quote, Mr. Speaker:

... I think of the hundreds of families that have turned to food banks in this province. Are they a priority of [this] government? No, they are forgotten by this government.

Mr. Speaker, do you know who made this quote? The person who made this quote is the Premier, and that quote was made 18 years ago in this very Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Why has this NDP government forgotten about children and families that are poor, for 18 years?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister of

community services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, it is really odd coming from that party, Mr. Speaker, that last election they proposed a \$50 million cut to social services, Mr. Speaker — \$50 million cut — and they can't deny it, Mr. Speaker. They can't deny it. And that member stood up right next to her leader at that time and saying, we support it. So my question to her is, where are you going to rip out \$50 million from social services? Which groups are going to suffer, Mr. Speaker?

And most recently now they said, we're going to make sure that the people that get the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. The minister of community services.

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd point out, Mr. Speaker, their most recent position is now, well we're going to make sure that the people that deserve the money get it. So who are they going to cut out, Mr. Speaker? Who are they going to decide who gets help and who doesn't get help, Mr. Speaker?

On this side of the Assembly it's very important to note that we are building independence. And there's always improvements made. We continue to work very hard, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Teacher Staffing and School Closures

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in question period I asked the Minister of Learning about the approximate number of schools she expects will close in the coming year after the government-imposed moratorium is lifted at the end of this year. In addition to failing to answer the question, the minister accused me of providing factually incorrect information. She quoted an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] report that I wrote earlier this year. In it I said that, quote, teachers have been left behind as the NDP's underfunding of education will result in at least 150 teacher cuts. Can the minister explain how this statement was inaccurate?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, there was not 150 teacher cuts.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Well once again the minister shows her ability to make inaccurate assessments of information that she should have. I agree that the statement was indeed inaccurate but not for the reason that the minister noted. In fact, in fact there weren't 150 teacher cuts. According to the media reports today there were 204 teacher cuts. And according to . . . The

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation *Bulletin* says that there were 260 teacher cuts.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers are accurate. Which number will the minister accept responsibility for and accept that she's blatantly wrong in her statement?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last spring in this House the members from the opposition got up day after day and talked about at least 150 teachers being cut and why were we doing this to the education system in Saskatchewan. I said then to the members opposite, please wait. Don't be using scare tactics. Wait until the school divisions have had a look at what changes would be made. The school divisions took great care to manage vacancies, there was retirements in the system, and there was nowhere near a loss of 150 teachers in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the official opposition indeed waited and instead of things getting better from the estimates I had of 150 positions being lost, they went up to 260, Mr. Speaker. And that begs the original question and an answer that the minister never provided yesterday and hasn't provided today. The question was, how many further positions are going to be lost? How many schools are going to be lost? How many classrooms are going to be closed as a result of the decreased enrolment and the government-imposed moratorium that expires on January 1 of next year?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is typical of the opposition: scare tactics; we're losing teachers, losing teachers, losing teachers. Now the member gets up and talks about losing positions. There's a big difference, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite know that and people within the system know that.

The members on the school boards across this province have managed vacancies. They have looked at retirements. And there was 227 positions that were managed through retirements and vacancies — not positions, not teaching positions or teachers. It was vacant positions and through retirement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort. Order please. Order. Order. The member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well once again, the minister fails to understand the impact of these decisions on people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we also asked the minister yesterday if she would make the commitment, at the request of the teachers of this

province, that they be intimately involved in any discussions involved with the closure of schools and the decreasing of teaching positions. She failed to make that commitment.

We've asked that communities be involved in any of these decisions involving the future of the schools and the education of their children in their communities. And she failed to give that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, if this minister will not indicate how many schools she expects to be closed in the new year as a result of the lifting of the moratorium, will she at least commit to the fact that parents and teachers and communities are going to be intimately involved in the discussions about the future of their schools?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now the member said it's nothing to smile about. Now we all know that that member sat on a school board for many years and was a member. And, Mr. Speaker, now he has the nerve to stand up and say, you should put in this, this, and this rules and the Government of Saskatchewan should be responsible for the decisions that are made at the school board level. He would've flipped through the roof if I'd tried to do that when he was on the school board.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this government has always believed in shared responsibility with the school divisions. The school divisions are elected locally. They understand the communities that they represent, and they are quite capable of making the decisions that affect their school division.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Coyote Depredation in Saskatoon Southeast

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise an issue in my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. Ruth Baker manages a large herd of cattle which is being preyed upon by coyotes. The problem is so severe that she has lost more than 100 animals to date. Last week alone, five calves fell prey to coyotes. Mr. Speaker, what does the minister plan to do to resolve this problem?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a couple of ways that I can respond to this. One is that the member opposite does have an expert on coyotes, cougars, and wolves in his caucus, and if he would talk to the member for Rosthern Spiritwood, he would give him lots of advice on how the procedures work.

But practically, what we have in a number of different aspects, the initial response for coyotes and predator control is through the Sheep Development Board. They have specialists who work

on this particular area, and I encourage the member opposite to have his constituent contact them. I know that the member opposite from Rosthern Spiritwood would be of great assistance, and I will assist him as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mrs. Baker did exactly that. In a letter sent by the Minister of Agriculture to Mrs. Baker, he says, “To learn more about these management practices [concerning, regarding coyotes] see enclosed publications.” And what she got, Mr. Speaker, was a booklet from the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, aside from the obvious fact that this booklet is from a different province, many suggestions in this book do not even meet with Saskatchewan rules. For example, the Alberta booklet has an entire chapter telling farmers and ranchers how to poison coyotes. In the Agriculture minister’s letter he said, “As mentioned in my previous letter of June 22, 2006, only Conservation Officers have the authority to poison coyotes and this option is used only as a final resort.”

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what Mrs. Baker should do. Should she follow the recommendations in the Alberta booklet, or should she listen to the Minister of Agriculture? Can the minister please explain this?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a typical question period exchange. I answered the question that he asks the second time already in the first question. So I guess I’ll just have to repeat it.

Mr. Speaker, we do have methods of dealing with predators in Saskatchewan. The member from Rosthern Spiritwood and I met with a number of his constituents around this very particular issue. We responded in that area with a very I think innovative way to deal with predators. And, Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite should have his constituent do is work with the Sheep Development Board and their specialists on predators there, and we can respond. But, Mr. Speaker, there are different issues in different parts of the province. And we have methods of responding, and we will.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mrs. Baker has already had two visits from conservation officers to try and solve the problem. She still continues to lose cattle to coyotes. She has lost over 100 cattle to date. Mr. Speaker, this is an indication of how out of touch this NDP government is with the ag sector of this province. They sit over . . . They make light of it. This is a humorous thing. It’s not a humorous thing to Mrs. Baker. This is the type of thing that bankrupts farmers in our province.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: what is Mrs. Baker to do with her business? Is she to follow the Alberta recommendations or is she to try and work with the minister who is doing absolutely nothing to deal with what to her is a very serious problem? Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think when the member who’s asked this question had his seatmate as his research person, they had some better questions. And so I think that in this particular situation the member has asked the same question three times. I responded the first time by saying that we do have predator control methods that are very clear in the province. They work through the Sheep Development Board. They also work with the Sask Environment people.

Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is allow these professionals to do their job. I know that some of the members opposite don’t like working with civil servants but, Mr. Speaker, we rely on them because they do a very good job for all of us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] and First Nations and Métis Relations.

Lowest Cost Bundle of Utility Rates in Canada

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am so pleased to be able to rise today to announce that our government has once again provided Saskatchewan families with the lowest cost bundle of basic utility rates in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

For the third year in a row, we have beaten out our neighbours in all other provinces by providing the lowest cost for a bundle that includes home electricity and natural gas, basic phone services, and auto insurance. Mr. Speaker, this is just one of the many reasons why Saskatchewan is a great place to live, to work, and to raise a family.

Our total bundle costs for 2006 is projected to be \$3,418. That’s about \$35 lower than Manitoba’s cost, Mr. Speaker, and — get this — a whopping \$1,080 lower than Alberta’s costs. I am also pleased to say that we have kept the commitment this year without needing to provide a year-end utility rebate as we did in 2004 or to subsidize rates as we did last year with the SaskEnergy rates.

We kept the commitment, Mr. Speaker, this year because the Crowns managed their rates very well. I commend officials in SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], and SaskTel for those efforts.

While having the lowest cost bundle of rates in the country, our Crowns also continued to provide safe, reliable, high-quality products and services to all Saskatchewan people in 2006. And that will make . . . And they will, I should say, make profits

again this year which the province will in part reinvest in health care, education, and other important public services.

Mr. Speaker, when the Premier made the bundle commitment in 2003, he said achieving it would be a key performance measurement for our Crown corporations. Our Crowns have achieved that goal for the third year in a row, and Saskatchewan families have once again enjoyed those benefits. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to join today with the minister in commending the employees of our Crown corporations — SaskPower, SaskTel, SGI, and SaskTel — for the great and very critical job that they do particularly on a day such as today.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should all have an extra acute appreciation of the reliable service that we get from SaskPower and SaskEnergy because we're going to need that service for a few months when we live in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the minister can stand in his place today and announce that a rebate is not necessary this year says far more about the managers and the management of our Crown corporations than it does about the Premier and his government. At least with the Crown corporations in control, fulfilling one of the Premier's election promises, at least this will be one of the few promises that have to date been kept. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I table responses to written questions no. 156 through 197.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 156 to 197 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Would the Government House Leader state his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, there's a long-standing principle in the conduct of the members of the House that members are not allowed to do from their seats what they're not permitted to do on the record while on their feet. And during the

question period, Mr. Speaker, in the exchange directed to the Minister of the Environment in response to one of the questions, the minister referred to members on the opposite side having expertise regarding . . . was it cougars and wolves, and something, anyhow. Okay.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is this, is that the hon. member for Kindersley from his chair uttered a remark that several in this House, Mr. Speaker, found personally offensive. The phrase that he used was this: you have all the cougars over there, pointing, in the opinion of members, female members of our caucus, Mr. Speaker, in ways that were . . . It was received and considered to be disrespectful. And, Mr. Speaker, I would simply ask that the hon. member for Kindersley be asked to withdraw the remark and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, during the exchange, I didn't hear the comment made by the member from Kindersley, if in fact a comment was made. But what I did hear was the Minister of the Environment making comments talking about wild animals and making reference that they were attributed to members on this side of the House. And I think that's what — if you will examine *Hansard* — was the comment made by the minister referring to members on this side of the House as either coyotes or something else. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you examine *Hansard* . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member ought to deal with the point of order that's at hand. He's raising actually a second point of order. But before it goes any further, I think I would just like to deal with this matter raised by the Government House Leader.

It has been a long-standing practice that any name-calling of any type is not allowed in the Assembly in this . . . But this did not go on record. I was not able to hear the remark, so I was not able to call it. But I will provide the opportunity, if the member from Kindersley feels he wishes to stand up and apologize for this remark, I would ask him to take this opportunity to do it, and let's leave it at that. The member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to apologize, and if I have offended anyone, to apologize, and to this House.

The Speaker: — I thank the member for his voluntary response. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to now, in order to accommodate the good work of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies as well as the Standing Committee on the Economy, move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:33.]

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Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
Service Commission

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Hon. Eric Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources
Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Gaming
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Literacy
Minister Responsible for Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Highways and Transportation
Minister of Property Management
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for the
Forestry Secretariat

Hon. Warren McCall
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. John Nilson
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General

Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
Co-operative Development

Hon. Maynard Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
of Saskatchewan

Hon. Len Taylor
Minister of Health

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Minister of Finance
Minister Responsible for Information Technology
Minister Responsible for
SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food