



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

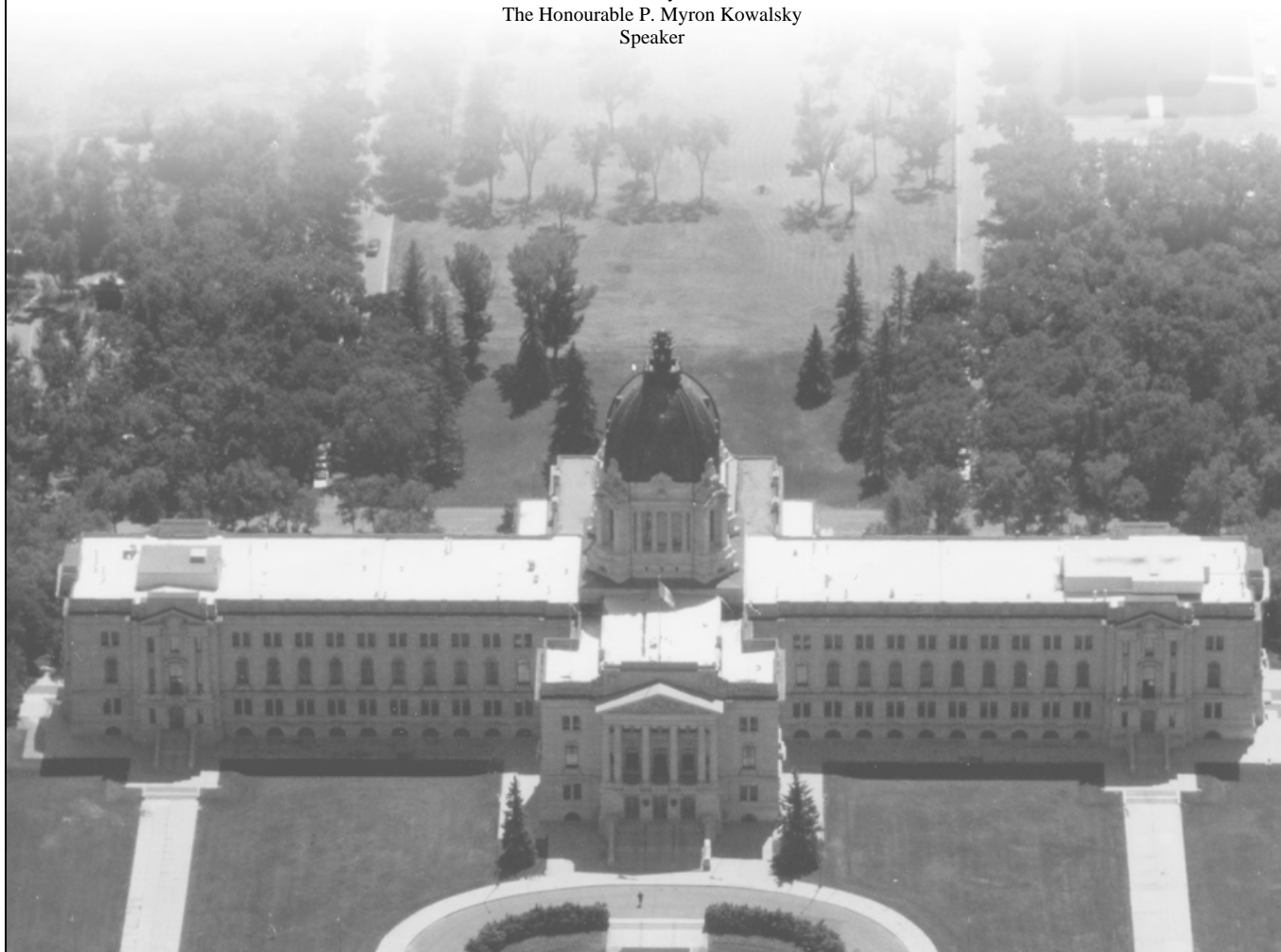
of the

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, it's my pleasure today to present a petition in regards to the out-of-country medical costs of Doug Bonderud. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed today by the good folks of the community of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition today also with relation to the effort of the Bonderud family to have their medical expenses reimbursed. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding reimbursement of out-of-country medical costs for Doug Bonderud. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many people in the Saskatoon area. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have many petitions to present today on behalf of a constituent 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, Mr. Speaker, come from communities across Saskatchewan including Carnduff; Calgary, Alberta; Earl Grey, Regina, Kelvington, Saskatoon — across the province, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the treatment received by the Bonderud family from their provincial government. 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today all hail from the great city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today again on behalf of people in my constituency and beyond who are concerned about Highway 49. Your prayer reads:

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

The people that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, Nut Mountain, from Okla, from Medicine Hat, from Wadena, right across my constituency. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a

petition today to do with the drug Avastin:

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.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are all from the city of Saskatoon.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the refusal of this NDP [New Democratic Party] government to fully cover the health care costs of the late Doug Bonderud. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Hanley and Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise this afternoon to present a petition to reimburse the out-of-country medical costs of the late Doug Bonderud. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signators to the petition are from the city of Saskatoon.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned with this government's addiction to gravel highways. I have a number of petitions, Mr. Speaker, but I'll read one of them, and it deals with Highway 22 between junction 6 and junction 20. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and maintain Highway 22

so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey and area families and businesses.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray, Mr. Speaker.

Signatures to this petition come from the communities of Imperial, Strasbourg, Southey, Earl Grey, Regina, and Craven. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will come as no surprise that I again today have a petition 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, are from Saskatoon, North Battleford, St. Denis, Humboldt . . . [inaudible] . . . Bradwell, Naicam, Kelvington, Bruno, Preeceville, Kamsack, Delisle, Canora, Cudworth, Carlyle, Lumsden, Lloydminster, Sunset Estates, LeRoy, Meacham, Waldheim, Martensville, and Archerwill, as well as from Alberta — Lacombe, Edmonton, St. Albert, and Strathmore.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of this province, namely the Bonderuds who are concerned about out-of-country medical costs for Doug Bonderud. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communications and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Warman, Saskatoon, and Delisle. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise again and present a petition from citizens of Biggar who are concerned about reduction of health care services 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 Kinley and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition surrounding the truly tragic circumstances of the death of Doug Bonderud and the lack of acceptance of responsibility by this NDP government:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

The petitioners today live in the constituencies of Saskatoon Sutherland and Saskatoon Silver Springs. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens that are getting more and more upset with the NDP's two tiered 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Saskatoon. 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 very, very concerned with the government's two-tier health system and the handling of the Doug Bonderud family. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are all from Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I bring forward a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex offences against children. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of known sex offenders in their community as soon as possible, and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, they're signed entirely by the good people of Cudworth and Wakaw. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous, Colonsay, Manitou Beach, and also Regina. I so present.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens urging for tougher sentences for sex offences against children. Mr. Speaker, it is a rather lengthy prayer, so I shall shorten parts of it:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good citizens of Viscount, Saskatchewan. I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege today to rise to present a petition that Mr. Bonderud's surgery at the Mayo Clinic was deemed emergent and therefore should be covered under Saskatchewan Health policies. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all patients.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today these petitions are from the good people of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to present a petition regarding the unacceptable conduct of this NDP government regarding reimbursing the Bonderud family for their out-of-country medical costs. Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from a number of neighbourhoods in Saskatoon as well as Tisdale, Watson, Naicam, and Spalding. I so present on their behalf. Thank you, 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 in the Assembly to present a petition calling on the government to fund the cancer drug Avastin. And 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by people from Saskatoon and Martensville, and I'm very pleased to present them today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Yorkton, the Deputy Premier.

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

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

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have signatures here from Saskatoon, from Elrose, from Cut Knife, from Fort Qu'Appelle, from Assiniboia, from Moose Jaw, from Eyebrow, from Waldeck, from Regina, from Edenwold, and from Oxbow; from all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I present the petitions, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan who are very concerned about the opposition's position on this issue and who are equally 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 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.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are from Lancer, Pennant, Waldeck, Success, Lucky Lake, Cut Knife, Kindersley, Saskatoon, Lumsden, Herschel, Kamsack, Langenburg, Biggar, Hagen, Birch Hills, Weldon, and other places. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased 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 Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are from Wynyard, Cudworth, Delisle, Colonsay, Allan Kelliher, Lanigan, Spruce Home, and Maccowall, to name a few. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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: — For introduction of guests, members, I have a lengthy list of introductions it's my pleasure to do today. There are many, many special guests who are here to observe Gwenn Ronyk and the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] — and to observe the MLAs — this being Gwenn Ronyk's final day as Clerk at the Table. And first, I want to introduce the family of our Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk. As I introduce you, would you mind just either waving or standing up so people can recognize you.

First of all Gwenn's husband, Reg; their children, Evan, Brittany, and Keith Ronyk; Gwenn's mother, Ms. Ida Harris; Gwenn's sister and brother-in-law, Michel and Dale Milne; Barry and Fay Harris and Nathan — that is a brother, sister-in-law, and nephew to Gwenn; Don Harris and Carla Harris, a brother and a niece to Gwenn. I would like the Assembly to welcome these very special guests of Gwenn Ronyk, her family, to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Also in their legislature are former members who served as Speakers, and some of their spouses are here as well. Mr. Herb Swan and Anita Swan; Mr. Arnold Tusa and Larissa Tusa; Mr. Herman Rolfes and Ms. Myrna Rolfes; Mr. Ron Osika, also now mayor of Fort Qu'Appelle; Mr. Dale Flavel, former Deputy Speaker, and Mrs. Flavel. Would you, members, please welcome these people back to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — There are people who are here from out of province: Clerk Assistant of British Columbia, Craig James who is a former Saskatchewan Clerk Assistant and Legislative Assembly reference librarian; also Clerk Assistant of Alberta, Louise Kamuchik. Would you welcome Craig and Louise, please.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The MLAs might notice that there is a large group of people in the gallery who are ordinarily in the building where Hansard is housed. There are about 20 or more staff here along with Lenni, their boss. And when I asked them who's minding the shop, Lenni assured me, says not to worry; they're

planning to use a text from last year's *Hansard*.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would also like to welcome former librarian, Marian Powell, and former archivist, Trevor Powell; former security, second-in-command, Ben Block and his good wife, Marlene. Debbie Saum is also here. She's the director of protocol. All people . . . And there may be others who I'm missing, who I have missed. But all here, welcome to this Assembly for this afternoon's procedures.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Are there any further introductions? The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the House, a couple who are here today from Australia — Kathy From and her partner, Peter Dennis. Kathy's originally from here and is daughter to my constituency assistant, Donna From. Kathy's been living in Brisbane and working for the Sisters of Mercy in a girls' group home, and Peter is a mechanical engineer.

In order to show Peter a real Christmas, the whole family went out to the Come See-Come Saw tree farm at Moose Jaw and cut their own Christmas tree on Sunday. The hot chocolate and the cookies afterward were great, and I think Peter's getting a good sense of what winter in Canada is like. We hope he enjoys it. And I'd ask them to wave to the House so you'll know who they are, and we ask all to welcome them here to the Chamber and to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this last day of the Assembly, one of our Pages, Michael Radmacher, this will also be his last day as a Page. And to honour him, his parents, Gordon and Marion Radmacher, are seated in your gallery in the back row, and I'd ask them to acknowledge the legislature. They're here to help him celebrate the fact that this is his last day but also to see an important milestone in his career as we know that we'll all be watching how he does from this point onward. And we look forward to seeing him in many successful ventures in the years to come.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the Assembly, my uncle, Ed Morgan who's seated in your gallery. And I'd like to say that he taught me everything I know, Mr. Speaker, but I know that that would embarrass both him and me.

But seriously, I do want to say that my uncle spent his career with the provincial archives. He retired some years ago. And I had believed — until I heard the maiden speech of the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy who said that Halbrite, Saskatchewan was the centre of the universe — I had been raised to believe that Colonsay was the centre of the universe. But I'd like members to join me in welcoming my uncle here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, today is the national day of remembrance and action on violence against women. On this day we remember the 14 students in Montreal who were murdered in 1989. They were slaughtered simply because they were women. We mourn their loss and the loss of all women and girls who have fallen victim to the scourge of violence.

And so, Mr. Speaker, today is indeed a day of mourning. Today we grieve for the grandmothers, mothers, and sisters who have been taken from us. Today our heartfelt sympathy and prayers are with all those who daily suffer the pain of knowing their loved one will never come home again.

Mr. Speaker, today is also a day to renew our commitment, our commitment to ending violence against women and girls everywhere. Our commitment to work for the day when every woman and girl will be free from the fear of violence in all aspects of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, today there are ceremonies across Canada marking the tragic events in Montreal 17 years ago. I know that all honourable members will find the time to attend one of these remembrance ceremonies. We cannot bring the victims who have lost their lives back to life, but we can honour their memory by doing everything we can to prevent such violence from claiming even more victims into the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Christmas Greetings for Canadian Troops in Afghanistan

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ten to seventeen per cent of the Canadian military contingent in Afghanistan is made up of reservists. These part-time soldiers, and I say part-time because they are civilians who have trained part-time, have volunteered to go overseas to defend Canada's interests and to help rebuild a war-torn country. These soldiers will not be home for Christmas, Mr. Speaker. They will not see their families. They will not see their friends. They will not be in the comfort of their own homes.

I rise today to bring awareness to a very noteworthy project. Former lieutenant governor and honorary reservist Jack Wiebe is spearheading a project to send Christmas cards to soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Our party in the opposition wholeheartedly supports the idea.

[14:00]

Our Canadian troops are bringing peace to a country where war and strife have been the reality for all too long. Because of the work of Canadian troops, women are now allowed to vote; they're in places of leadership in Afghanistan; classrooms include girls; and many, many more Afghani people can now drink clean and safe water. Mr. Speaker, in addition to that of course they're helping to fight the war on terror on our behalf.

Cards and letters can be mailed: To Any Soldier, TF Afghanistan, Box 5068, Station Forces, Belleville, Ontario, K8N 5W6. People can also send Christmas greetings, Mr. Speaker, through our caucus website where there is a link to our Canadian troops.

We need to send them a message this Christmas that we are thinking of them. They are truly Canadian heroes. And on behalf of the official opposition, we wish them a very, very merry Christmas and a safe Christmas, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Film Financing Company Launched in Kipling

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night the community of Kipling, a town of about 1,100 people, launched a film financing company and began accepting investments in the company.

Mr. Speaker, you will all be aware of the Red Paper Clip Day back in July and the fact that Internet blogger Kyle MacDonald, through a series of Internet trades, traded up a red paper clip for a house in Kipling.

Kipling mayor says he expects 200 people to chip in between 350 and \$400,000 in total to finance the film *3 Day Test*. He says:

“This is one of the most positively received projects I've seen for a long time . . . Everybody seems pretty gung-ho about putting money . . . [into it] and seeing it happen in Kipling and [he says] this is thought to be a first in film, to have a community that works together to fund a film . . . [project].”

The film, written and directed by former *L.A. Law* star Corbin Bernsen, is to be produced by Bernsen's Public Media Works and the Saskatchewan-based production company Angel Entertainment. Shooting is to begin in March and *3 Day Test* is expected to be released next Christmas.

“In a nutshell it's [about] a father who gets frustrated with

the rat race of everyday life so they see how the family can do by cutting themselves off from the world [stage] for three days.”

Mr. Speaker, the movie will be shot totally in Kipling. Many locals will be debuted on the silver screen movie. Congratulations to the community of Kipling and their film financing company.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Challenges Faced by First Nations and Métis Women

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Nowhere are the challenges greater than amongst First Nations and Métis women. There are too many Aboriginal women and young girls today who face sexual violence, exploitation, poverty, lack of access to adequate housing, overt racism, and chronic health problems. They have been excluded from their home communities, from decision making, and from having a say in their futures and the future of their children.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also want to honour the strength and courage of these Aboriginal women today for their determination to create a better and safer future for their children, for their families, for their communities, and indeed for this province.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges are huge. There is no one right answer. It will take all of us to resolve the issues of violence and gender and equality. But most of all we must never forget all people have the right to protection and safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Energy Industry in Saskatchewan

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Industry and Resources was asked why Saskatchewan doesn't have a membership on the energy council. Saskatchewan is a major producer of energy and should be a major player when it comes to international forums on renewable and non-renewable resources and the security of supply. However the minister indicated that rather than take a leading role in an international organization, he would prefer to be like an uninvited guest at a garden party. He wants to show up, eat the food, enjoy the beverages without paying or contributing to the planning of the event.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that's how the people of Saskatchewan want their province represented. We have an opportunity to be part of an international discussion on the development of the energy industry and carve our place in international markets, but the minister would rather play the role of a freeloading neighbour.

Several energy-producing provinces are members. A number of the states of the United States are members, and even Venezuela is a member of the energy council. Our Canadian counterparts are wondering why Saskatchewan isn't a contributing member of the council considering our vast energy resources. The minister's response was that he was quite comfortable attending events without paying his membership dues. He is quite comfortable being in the shadows as opposed to being a full participant engaging in discussions and setting the agenda.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this situation is all too familiar to a freeloading neighbour who has overstayed his welcome and the other neighbours on his street can't wait for him to leave. People of this province can't wait for that NDP government to leave.

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

Addressing the Issue of Violence Against Women

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, as we've heard this week in Canada we pay particular attention to the issue of violence against women. It is now 17 years since the awful event at the École Polytechnique in Montreal but clearly this is an issue that is not going to go away. And I think we have to ask ourselves what are we missing.

Mr. Speaker, it's my view that we have to get away from the concept of what is called gender mainstreaming where women's issues are folded into the mandates of agencies or buried under government ministries. This is not working. To quote Stephen Lewis when he was a UN [United Nations] AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] envoy, "Once you have mainstreamed gender issues, they are everyone's business, and no one's business. Everyone is accountable and no one is accountable."

Mr. Speaker, violence against women is everywhere in the world, and governments and leaders need to focus on the solutions.

Dismantling supports for women is not the answer. Prime Minister Harper's decision to close Status of Women offices across the country, including the one in Saskatoon, is precisely the wrong thing to do and the timing is ironic.

Recently in Abuja, Nigeria, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, who represent 52 Commonwealth countries of the world, asked the United Nations to create a women's organization within its umbrella to deal with issues affecting women worldwide — particularly violence against women. In a separate action, the business and professional women of Canada have done the same. Clearly, women of the world are speaking out.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to refocus our efforts and look at solutions that will give women the tools to live their lives free of violence and fear. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Head Coach for Saskatchewan Roughriders

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always good news when a former Saskatchewan resident returns to our province. But we have to ensure that they have every opportunity to succeed and that usually isn't the case under this NDP government.

Today Kent Austin is returning to Saskatchewan to become the new head coach of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. It's not going to be an easy job but I believe he can succeed in turning Saskatchewan into a winning team. I believe he's up to the task but there's one thing that he's going to need help with from every Rider fan in Saskatchewan, and that of course is the curse of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, in the 46 years the NDP has been in power in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Roughriders have never won the Grey Cup. The Riders' only two Grey Cup victories came at times when the NDP has been kicked out of office. In fact every other team in the league has won the Grey Cup at least three times while the NDP was in government here, while Rider fans were forced to suffer year after year under the NDP curse.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Kent Austin and the Riders can win the Grey Cup next year. But the most important play of 2007 is going to be a punt — when the voters punt this NDP government out of office and get rid of the NDP curse once and for all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Communication Training for Minister

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, media reports today indicated that taxpayers in Saskatchewan had paid roughly \$8,000 for special remedial training for the Minister of Community Resources. According to the documents released under a freedom of information request, this NDP government spent \$8,000 on media training so that the minister could answer questions about his mishandling of the Oyate Safe House.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister spend \$8,000 on special media training? Mr. Speaker, why is spinning the story always more important to the NDP government than fixing the real problem and helping vulnerable children?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, let me be clear that it is often the opportunity that cabinet members have to go through

media training, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that as a minister, I wanted to make sure that we were very effective — not only to the media, but to the public as well — that we're able to communicate the facts and to make sure that we are very clear on what we're trying to do to resolve the issue. What we wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, is to not have that party opposite misconstrue everything, not come out with the complete facts, and to begin their process of not only being political but being critical.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, as indicated, from time to time cabinet ministers have the opportunity to take media training to make sure that they answer questions as concisely and factual as possible. And I had that opportunity, Mr. Speaker; I took it and, Mr. Speaker, it certainly helped.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly a debatable fact. The NDP paid \$4,000 of taxpayers' money to a company called Gryphon Reputation Management, Gryphon Reputation Management, Mr. Speaker. Why on earth should the government, taxpayers be spending their hard-earned dollars to fix the minister's reputation? And I don't think the people of Saskatchewan got good value for their money. And I know for sure the young women who went through Oyate didn't get a safe house or help they needed from this minister.

Mr. Speaker, government spending on communication has gone up \$4 million in the past two years. Why did this government have to spend even more money in a failed mission to save this minister's reputation?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is really important is that this money was not added nor was it taken away from the Oyate budget, Mr. Speaker. What that member ought to know, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that Oyate was shut down at the time, and any money that we used to prepare ministers to make sure they were able to effectively communicate with the public, with the media, and many other groups out there, is to make sure that they know that this money did not come at the expense of the children. That member knows that very well, Mr. Speaker. And I want to point out as well what's important is that, yes, the \$8,000 was a valuable commitment that we made, a contribution that we made, and I think it's going to pay off.

But that member likes to use fairy tales in some of his analogies, Mr. Speaker. I heard him on the radio today. And let me point out the \$50 million that that party cut, Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of the fairy tale of Robin Hood. And the Leader of the Sask Party, he's the perverse Robin Hood with his band of cranky merry men that can't get their act right when it comes to the good work that's needed to help the poor people of . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. Order. Order. I just remind the members that they are not to use other member's names either directly or indirectly by insinuation in the

Assembly. Next question.

The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, this minister has been a minister within cabinet since 1999. All of a sudden a file comes along that's a contentious file and he needs help. I think he needs a lot more than the \$8,000.

The minister's handling of the Oyate file has been a disaster. He's contradicted himself and when he doesn't contradict himself, his answers are incoherent. I think whoever ordered the training should ask for their money back, first of all.

Mr. Speaker, who ordered this training for the Minister of Community Resources? And why was it felt to be necessary to train a veteran cabinet minister on a subject he should be on top of and well aware of the facts?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, again I would point out that this has got to be the worst critic I've ever met in my entire political career, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't have any of the facts right. And all he does is rant and rave, Mr. Speaker. And so much for their code of ethics of using the correct information to make their points.

Again I'll reiterate to the people of Saskatchewan, he's got to be one of the worst critics I met in my entire political career, Mr. Speaker. And I would point out unsuccessful as well, Mr. Speaker, because what is he focusing on, Mr. Speaker? He is focused on the negative doom and gloom.

In the meantime we're building a brand new model to make sure that we help the people, the children that are being supported on our streets. We have more police officers, Mr. Speaker. We have Ranch Ehrlo involved, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue building on the First Nations strength.

All the good things that we're doing, Mr. Speaker, to move forward and to finally solve this problem, he's not paying any attention to that work, Mr. Speaker. And that's perhaps maybe where he should pay attention to. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, that might have been a good answer to some question, but it certainly wasn't an answer to the question that was asked. You know, the question is — and I'll put it very simply for him so he can understand and put some of that training to work — who gave this minister the order to get the special training? Did he ask for it himself or was he ordered by someone from the Premier's office, an office that already spent \$1.8 million taxpayers' money on communications?

Mr. Speaker, who gave the order forcing this minister to get training on the Oyate file?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is really important is that it is not unusual, and ministers from time to time may get professional media training, Mr. Speaker. What I'm not known for, Mr. Speaker, is to give very concise answers. At times I tend to ramble, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes a simple answer can take five, ten minutes.

What's important is, as a media tool, we wanted to make sure that we're able to effectively communicate with the public of Saskatchewan so that they know (a) what the problems were, and (b) what the solutions are, Mr. Speaker. We want to do that as effectively as possible.

What we didn't want to do, Mr. Speaker, is allow the rhetoric and the doom and gloom and the accusations and the personal attacks, Mr. Speaker, and their ranting and raving, Mr. Speaker, to colour what is going to be one of the most exciting opportunities for us to help children off the streets, Mr. Speaker. And they refuse to recognize that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Oyate file, the history of this minister's conduct is pretty much a fact. It's a fact of the record, the public record.

Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate has weighed in and talked about what a negligent job this government has done with respect to vulnerable kids. The auditor has weighed in, Mr. Speaker.

The minister hasn't been able to answer questions correctly. The minister, when he has answered questions, has had to change his mind. We've had government members stifle witnesses at the committee of the legislature to get answers as to the government's accountability on this issue. And the answer, Mr. Speaker, the answer is they don't want to get to the bottom of the issue; they want to use 8,000 taxpayers' dollars for spin training for the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, yes, there is a question. The question to the Premier is this: will he finally do the right thing and fire that incompetent minister, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, let me tell you and tell the House and tell the people of Saskatchewan precisely what this minister has been doing. When this minister became aware of the circumstances at Oyate, what did he do? He closed it down. He closed it down to find solutions, better solutions for these young people that are being sexually exploited on our streets.

What has he done? He has created a model, Mr. Speaker, that I think stands national attention. He has taken this circumstance; he has engaged the people of Ranch Ehrlo, the most professional people in our province. He is providing now with a new Oyate, when everything is ready and people are trained, an opportunity for First Nations people to remain engaged with essentially First Nations young people. Mr. Speaker, this is a minister who cares about the young people of Saskatchewan — not about his political future; not about some political gamesmanship. And if anybody should ought to be asked to resign, it is the member from Saskatoon who was abusing public servants in public in this legislature. That's who ought to be asked to resign.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Health Care Issues

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week in Health estimates when I asked the minister questions about long-term care beds, he said and I quote: "We have the correct number of beds." Well, Mr. Speaker, in response to a freedom of information request from every health region in the province, the Saskatchewan Party has learned that there are 136 fewer beds today than in the year 2002-2003. And, Mr. Speaker, there are currently today 557 seniors on waiting lists for long-term care beds provincial-wide. It is clear the NDP government is on the wrong track as hundreds of seniors are being left behind.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why he said we have the correct number of beds when we see 557 seniors waiting to get into those beds?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The average number of long-term care beds in Canada is 97 per 100,000 population of people aged 75 and over. In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the average number of beds per 100,000 people aged 75 and over is 111. Mr. Speaker, we have higher than the national average number of long-term care beds in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the data that the member opposite is using is data that's collected over the course of a year. He's not taking into account the length of time that individuals might be waiting or whether they're waiting for beds in their community as opposed to a bed that might be open and existing in another regional health authority. Mr. Speaker, once again the member opposite is using data to his and the Sask Party advantage and not paying attention to the circumstances in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what the minister continues to fail to notice is that we have the highest proportion of seniors per capita of any province in Canada, so it only stands to reason that we have far more beds — long-term care beds — far more than what we have. The minister quoted in estimates this last week, he said, "We can't be overbuilding long-term care beds so that . . . [they] have empty beds waiting for individuals who may come along at any one given time."

Mr. Speaker, the minister claims we have the correct number of beds, and he doesn't want to build beds to sit empty. And I would agree with that point. But how are they going to sit empty when we have 557 seniors on waiting lists, Mr. Speaker? There's 113 in Saskatoon, 105 in Regina, 74 in Prairie North, 55 in Kelsey Trail, and the list goes on and on. Why would he say we have the correct number of beds when we see so many seniors waiting on lists to get into those beds?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite knows that he asked the question, how many seniors were waiting in the year '04, '05, '06, Mr. Speaker. He knows that the number that he's quoting are the number of seniors who may have been waiting during the course of the year. He does not recognize or acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that some of those seniors may have been waiting for a very short period of time or may be self-imposed waiting because they want a very specific bed in a specific location.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to do what that party did in the 1980s and build long-term care beds in every community in the province, Mr. Speaker, because some of those facilities today, Mr. Speaker, have empty beds in it looking for support from this government, for continued support.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the seniors of this province. We are committed to the long-term care beds that we have this province, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to be committed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it's getting harder and harder to believe this minister. The entire session the Sask Party has been raising concerns about rural hospital closures throughout this province. Well last week, Mr. Speaker, the minister went on to say that he didn't think it was any worse this year than it was any other year, but now he's changed his mind. Now it seems that the minister was wrong on his statement last week. In the *Leader-Post* headline, and I quote, it says: "Taylor concedes hospital closures is a serious issue." Far more than

over the past number of years.

Finally on the second last day of session he admits that rural hospital closures are a huge problem in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally admit that he's on a roll with his incorrect statements and start acknowledging some of the reports that are put out by other organizations — whether it's SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses], whether it's the Health Quality Council — that there are huge problems in our health care system under his administration?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's no question in my mind or in my statements that in fact, Mr. Speaker, hospital closures at any time are a serious issue.

The member opposite is aware from questions that he's raised in this House and answers that have been provided, Mr. Speaker, that indeed these are temporary closures. And if the member would care to take a look today at the number of closures that exist, he'll notice that the regional health authorities have in fact reopened a lot of those facilities, Mr. Speaker. They were temporary. Officials took action, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, that action has proved to be successful in those locations.

He talks about reports that are coming forward. Mr. Speaker, last week there was a report on the national stage, the Canadian Institute for Health Information that the member likes to quote, . . . missed one last week, Mr. Speaker. The report was *Understanding Physician Satisfaction at Work*. The report shows in Canada 68 per cent of family physicians are happy; in Saskatchewan, 77 per cent are happy, Mr. Speaker — the highest rate in all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is on the wrong track when it comes to nurses as well. Yesterday the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses reported that provincial-wide there are 599 RNs [registered nurse] and RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse] short. There are that many vacancies, Mr. Speaker, in our province.

Nurses right now that are working the wards are getting burnt out because overtime is needed to cover those vacancies. They can't take vacation time, injuries are skyrocketing, and the morale is low. The minister has only targeted to recruit 400 new nurses. Mr. Speaker, that is 200 short of what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is saying. Because of this 200 shortage, can he please explain to this Assembly and tell the public, the rural public, how many hospitals he plans to close because the shortage of nurses because of his government?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The

legislature has been sitting since . . . over the last five weeks, five working days per week, Mr. Speaker, five days a week. We've actually been sitting over 29 working days . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They talk four days in this Chamber, but the health system, Mr. Speaker, 29 days.

If we take what the health system has done while the member opposite has been crying gloom and doom . . . Let's look at some real numbers: 7,800 surgeries since the member first got up to ask his first question; 359,600 people have visited a physician since the member asked his first question; 7,250 calls have been managed by HealthLine, Mr. Speaker, since the member asked his first question; 8,352 CT [computerized tomography] scans, since the member asked his first question. Mr. Speaker, 72,500 people have visited a specialist since the member asked his first question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, not only have they failed people in rural Saskatchewan with hospital closures, they've failed the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses with a shortage of nurses. They're failing people living with cancer.

Today people like Terry Rak have to pay thousands of dollars out of their pocket so that they can access the drug Avastin. Crystal Bonderud is still waiting for answers as to why her husband, Doug, died needlessly before he was treated properly for the cancer that he was suffering under. Cancer patients are still waiting three months for their first visit to an oncologist — people like Emily Morley — which is three times the national average.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit, like he did with rural hospital closures, finally, begrudgingly, that he is failing cancer patients in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Every question that the member has raised opposite has received an answer. Every request for an investigation from the public has received a response, Mr. Speaker. We've taken a look at every issue. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we've not been afraid to talk to the public and the media about the issues that have been raised, either in the public or across the way.

Mr. Speaker, the other day in this Chamber, in a speech to this Chamber, the member opposite talked about report cards and this government's not being willing to go forward with our report card. The member opposite is quoted as saying that if he ever got an F on his report card, maybe that report card wouldn't have got home. It doesn't mean, I didn't get an F, it means my mother didn't see it.

Mr. Speaker, we're honest, we're straightforward, we're forward with everything that we've got to say. The member opposite was not willing to stand by his own marks, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Government's Performance

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well this government has got a failing grade on its report card and it will not be able to hide that report card from the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. You can have assurance of that.

Mr. Speaker, after the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election — the shocking, blowout loss that the NDP suffered, finishing third in the home of Tommy Douglas — the Premier said it was a wake-up call. But apparently, Mr. Speaker, he just rolled over, hit the snooze alarm, and went back to sleep as a tired, old government is wont to do. Because, Mr. Speaker, while this government has set aside a billion dollar slush fund for its own electoral prospects, consider what we've learned about health care. Consider the fact that over 550 seniors are waiting for long-term care. There are 500 unfilled positions for nurses, according to SUN. We have too-long waiting lists for cancer treatment — among the longest surgical waiting lists in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

This is the record of this NDP government here in the birthplace of medicare. Will the Premier answer this question: why have they lost their way so badly? Why are they so clearly on the wrong track, Mr. Speaker, and letting the people of Saskatchewan down?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, here is a government and here is a province who has not lost its way, Mr. Speaker. Here is a government and here is a province that's moving into its future with confidence, with optimism.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of this session — just note — during the course of this session, 21,000 new jobs created . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, during the course of this session, 18,000 new jobs created in the course of this session.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, that may not mean much to those members opposite but that means a lot to the young people of Saskatchewan. That means a lot to the families of Saskatchewan. That means we are making Saskatchewan a better place for today's Saskatchewan family and a better future for our young people here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, note this. I recall the spring session. I think members recall the spring session. Each day the Leader of the Opposition got on his feet. What did he say? How can you be losing jobs in an oil boom, he says. Well he's not saying that today, Mr. Speaker. Why isn't he saying that . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the other symptom of a government that's clearly very, very tired and old and past its stale date is that it is unable to focus on the issue at hand.

The question for the Premier is about health care. Here's what Rosalee Longmoore, the president of SUN, had to say in today's *StarPhoenix*. She said, quote:

Saskatchewan's health care system is in serious trouble, and it is going to get much, much worse.

We would only differ in one way with this quote, Mr. Speaker. It'll only get much, much worse if that Premier and that Health minister remain in charge of this health care system, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Waiting lists are getting longer, Mr. Speaker, for cancer treatment, for surgical care. We have a long-term waiting list of 500-plus in the province. We're short 500 nurses. And what the Premier offers them is what exactly? He doesn't even answer the question.

He's sitting on a billion dollar election slush fund while there are real needs in health care — for long-term care patients, for people that need health care from this Premier and this government. Why won't he act? Why has his government lost its way, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is noteworthy of course to the people of Saskatchewan is that one day we have the opposition talking about health care and how much more should be spent in health care. But do you notice, Mr. Speaker, not one, not one idea from that opposition around what might be done in health care different than what's happening today. Not one idea. Now one day it's on health care, the next day they want us to spend on highways, yesterday spend on agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Well I know that's what got us into the trouble with these people before, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan are not going to make that mistake again.

But here's what's most interesting. The Leader of the Opposition and that Saskatchewan Party caucus came into this legislation, this sitting of the legislature, saying the number one issue, the number one issue is jobs and labour market issues. The number one issue. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, in terms of question periods, we've virtually had more questions about coyotes than we've had about jobs in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Increasing the Monetary Limit for Small Claims Court

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to announce yet another measure this government is taking to make Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and build strong futures.

I am pleased to announce that once again we are improving the public's access to justice by modifying the Small Claims Court system. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to the ongoing operation of a Small Claims Court that is accessible to the average person. To do this we are increasing the monetary limit for cases that may be heard by Small Claims Court from \$10,000 to \$15,000 effective January 1, 2007.

We will continue to review the limit with a view to raising it in stages to \$25,000. Mr. Speaker, the Small Claims Court is intended to operate as a court for lay people rather than lawyers, and is a low-cost method of dispute resolution. These further changes to the limits will greatly improve the accessibility of this court, and are another concrete example of our government's commitment to making life better for Saskatchewan families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning we received a copy of the minister's ministerial statement, and about an hour later we received version 2.0 of the same statement. And I looked at the two statements and compared them, and the difference was, in the first paragraph he added the comment about making Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and build strong futures.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Morgan: — And while I have, Mr. Speaker, some issue with how raising the Small Claims Court limit may make it a much better place to live, work, or build strong futures, I really was surprised to see where this was another concrete example of our government's commitment to making life better for Saskatchewan families. So maybe this is part of a greater plan, to have family-friendly courthouses with a children's room like they have at McDonald's. Maybe instead of going for a family picnic, you go for a family lawsuit.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I was amused and would suggest to the minister that he not make the job too difficult for lawyers, because he may well find himself back in private practice in the near future.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is supportive of the raise to the limits in Small Claims Court. We recognize and commend the judges that work very hard to try and mediate and resolve these disputes. And the opposition will be watching to see . . . This is a shift in workload from the Court of Queen's

Bench to Provincial Court and we will be watching where our raises go, where our resources are spent and where . . . I will be interested to see what happens as this unfolds and want to see how this works out for Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Regina Walsh Acres on her feet?

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to ask leave of both sides of the House to make a statement regarding the murder of 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6, 1989.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres has requested leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Remembering Victims of Montreal Massacre

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this day all across the country, Canadians will gather to commemorate the lives and deaths of the 14 women engineering students killed 17 years ago at École Polytechnique in Montreal, an event that's a particularly horrific example of the reality that women and girls all around the world here in Canada and here in Saskatchewan have to live with every day — the possibility of being subjected to violence, abuse, or even death simply because they are women.

Mr. Speaker, in a few moments I am going to read the names of the 14 women killed in Montreal into the record. But before I do, I want to say this. The Montreal massacre changed the way Canadians think about gender-based violence because it brought home with terrible clarity the realization that gender-based violence is uglier, deeper, more pervasive, and more destructive than we had ever known.

Mr. Speaker, to me these 14 names have come to symbolize the names of all of those women from all over the world and here at home who have been victimized by violence or are forced to live with the spectre of violence in their daily lives. Mr. Speaker, after the member opposite has spoken, I ask that the House observe a moment of silence. I will now read the names of the fourteen women killed: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Natalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Marie Klueznick, Maryse Leclair, Annie Saint-Arneault, Michelle Richard, Maryse Laganière, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Annie Turcotte.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted for a statement and to observe a minute of silence after?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes

the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to join with the hon. member opposite and all members of this Assembly to recognize this day, December 6, as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The day was created to honour the memories of the women murdered 17 years ago by Marc Lepine at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal. As the member has quite rightly pointed out, the only reason these 14 women were murdered was because they were women. Unfortunately violence is still very real for many women in our country, in our province.

December 6 allows Canadians the opportunity to reflect on this needless violence against women in our society and to resolve to do something about it. This day also provides the opportunity for us to think about the women in our own lives and the difference they make in our homes, in our communities, in the workplace, right across this province and this country.

All women deserve to be treated with respect and with dignity. Violence against women is simply unacceptable in our country, in our province, in our communities. Saskatchewan and its communities should consider ways and act on ways to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

As we approach the Christmas season, it becomes increasingly important for us to reflect on the many good fortunes that we are blessed with, the loved ones that surround us. Everyone should be — will be — reminded of the impact that all women have in our communities, in our families, in our individual lives.

Today we should reflect and resolve to act, to do what we can do to help end violence against women and girls. And if the memory of those 14 women is not motivation enough, then it's easy to reflect on women and girls in our own lives for that motivation.

And so I join with my hon. colleague in requesting that all members would recognize a moment of silence out of respect for the victims of that terrible day, and to remind each of us of the importance and the impact that women have right around this country, and the importance to end violence against women.

The Speaker: — Would all members please rise for a moment of silence and reflection.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Speaker: — Thank you. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'll be tabling responses to written questions no. 329 to 342 inclusive. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 329 to 342 inclusive have been submitted.

Why is the member for Estevan on her feet?

Ms. Eagles: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly I'd like to introduce two people that are very, very special in my life. Seated in the east gallery are my daughter, Trisha Duckarmie, and her son, my grandson, Beau. Beau is up here today for an orthodontist appointment so they stopped in to visit me for a while. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Supply

The Chair: — The business before the committee is the resolutions for appropriations. And I would now recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This Assembly has had the opportunity during this session to undertake some significant new programs and new measures to benefit ordinary Saskatchewan families, not the least of which have been the tax reduction measures that we have undertaken and of course the increases that we have been able to provide to the training institutions to help young people make a stronger future for themselves and their families here in Saskatchewan.

What we are asked to do today is to approve two motions and, later this day, a Bill to approve the expenditures that have been under debate in this Assembly. I would therefore move resolution no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, the sum of \$351,055,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

The Chair: — The motion before the committee is, no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, the sum of \$351,055,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The second motion reads:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, the sum of \$32,000,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

The Chair: — The second resolution before the committee:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal ending March 31, 2008, the sum of \$32,000,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Opposed? Carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Madam Chair, I would move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for a leave to sit again.

The Chair: — Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Opposed? Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Chair of committees.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the resolutions be now read a first and a second time.

The Speaker: — It has moved by the Minister of Finance that the resolutions be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the resolutions.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Later this day. Once again the Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Bill No. 41 — The Appropriation Act, 2006 (No. 3)

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly, I would move that Bill No. 41, The Appropriation Act, 2006 (No. 3) be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — Is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 41, The Appropriation Act, 2006 (No. 3) be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 57(2), I move this Bill be now read a second and

a third time.

The Speaker: — Once again, is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 41, The Appropriation Act, 2006 (No. 3) be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second and third reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I'm advised that His Honour, the Administrator, is prepared to enter for Royal Assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

[At 14:51 His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills.]

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly in its present session has passed several Bills which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour, which Bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — The Bills are as follows:

Bill No. 2 - The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006
 Bill No. 16 - The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006
 Bill No. 35 - The Infrastructure Fund Act
 Bill No. 36 - The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)
 Bill No. 34 - The Labour Market Commission Act
 Bill No. 1 - The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006
 Bill No. 29 - The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Labour Standards Amendments Act, 2006

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly accorded additional supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 41 - The Appropriation Act, 2006 (No. 3)

to which Bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

[His Honour retired from the Chamber at 14:55.]

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the Assembly to introduce a motion regarding the intersessional conduct of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested to introduce a motion. Leave has been requested by the Government House Leader. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader, the hon. member from Melfort, by leave of the Assembly:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, pursuant to rule 3(3), it shall stand adjourned until March 7, 2007, unless earlier recalled by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and if recalled, Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice if possible of such date and time.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member for Moose Jaw North, seconded by the member for Melfort:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, pursuant to rule 3(3), it shall stand adjourned until March 7, 2007, unless earlier recalled by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and if recalled, Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice if possible of such date and time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave of the House to make a few comments about our Clerk who is spending her last day in the House today.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to make comments with respect to the Clerk who is leaving the House today. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Recognition of Clerk of the Legislature

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And at the close of my remarks, I would want to move a formal motion of appreciation which will be seconded by the Leader of the Opposition.

This is an occasion of some significance, Mr. Speaker, to this legislature and to this province, Mr. Speaker, as we mark the occasion of the retirement of an extremely distinguished record of service to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly by Ms. Gwenn Ronyk. The motion, Mr. Speaker, that I will make will identify that.

It is my pleasure, I know, speaking on behalf of all members — and I'm certain the Leader of the Opposition will say the same — that we speak not for ourselves but on behalf of all members to recognize Gwenn Ronyk's outstanding service to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I am one of those in this legislature.

[15:00]

We sometimes describe ourselves as the class of 1986. That's 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that some of us were first privileged to sit in this House. And in thinking about Ms. Ronyk's 32 years of service, she had provided 12 years of service to this legislature before 1986. And I daresay, Mr. Speaker, that there will not have been a member elected in those 32 years — and I can say for certain in the last 20 — there has not been a member who has not benefited, learned from Ms. Ronyk's work at this Table. I venture to say that Gwenn Ronyk knew more about parliamentary procedure and the procedures of the Legislative Assembly in 1986 than I do today. We have all, as members, benefited from Gwenn Ronyk's service to this House.

She was first appointed First Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in 1974. She was appointed Deputy Clerk in 1981, and then Clerk on December 6, 1989, which is 17 years ago; she has served as our Clerk. Without doubt, Mr. Speaker, during that time, Ms. Ronyk has been a model of calm, reliable, professionalism. Her presence at the Clerk's Table has not only helped uphold but indeed has added to the dignity of this House.

Ms. Ronyk's service and leadership has also extended beyond this Chamber and beyond the borders of this province. As past vice-president and past president of the Canadian Clerks Association, member of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group, member of the Society of Clerks at the Table in Commonwealth Parliaments, and honorary secretary to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Saskatchewan branch, Gwenn Ronyk has represented Saskatchewan with grace and distinction.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just say, democracy depends on many things. Parliamentary democracy, which in my view is the best expression of democracy, depends on many factors, many

people. But, Mr. Speaker, this democracy we so treasure — this parliamentary democracy that we so treasure — depends on those I call its officials. The officials of democracy in a society preserve for us our democratic freedoms. They preserve the traditions. They preserve the rights of free speech. They preserve process that leads to good governance, Mr. Speaker.

Gwenn Ronyk has been, in a Canadian context and — I would argue — in a Commonwealth context, a model officer of democracy. You have given the people of our province the right, through your work, to choose their own future, to choose their own society. And no amount of thanks, no amount of thanks can be offered to share the importance of that role in our democracy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity afforded to me on behalf of members past, members present, Speakers — eight of whom I believe, Gwenn, you've served with. We learned at lunch that some of them improved. I think all of them improved actually. And let me just conclude by saying this: in about five years time or thereabouts, we'll need another Lieutenant Governor. It seems to be good training.

Gwenn, our very, very best to you in your retirement, to your husband, to your family. Enjoy the years ahead. And we have this formal parting today with deep, deep thanks for your work.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me make a formal motion. I move, seconded by the member of Swift Current:

That the members of this House, desiring to record their respectful appreciation for 32 years of distinguished service rendered by Ms. Gwenn Ronyk to this legislature, including 17 years as Clerk, and acknowledging the dedication and dignity she brought to that office, designates her as honorary officer of this Legislative Assembly with an entree to the Chamber and a seat at the Table on all ceremonial occasions.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — By leave of the Assembly, it has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Riverdale, the Premier, seconded by the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition:

That the members of this House, desiring to record their respectful appreciation for the 32 years of distinguished service rendered by Ms. Gwenn Ronyk to this legislature, including 17 years as Clerk, and acknowledging the dedication and dignity she brought to that office, designates her as honorary officer of this Legislative Assembly with an entree to the Chamber and a seat at the Table on all ceremonial occasions.

The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, it's a pleasure for me to offer a few words today on this very special day.

It's a near impossible task, I'm sure the Premier would agree, to

try to do justice to these 32 years of amazing service in just a few brief remarks.

It should be noted, obviously, that there isn't one current sitting MLA that was here when Ms. Ronyk began working in the Assembly as a Clerk Assistant in August 1974. Not only are none of them here, Mr. Speaker, but the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy was not yet born, I would point out, Mr. Speaker. But I hasten to add that speaks more to his age than yours, Madam Clerk.

1974 was a pretty interesting year, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of political intrigue stateside with the Watergate scandal. Gerald Ford became the president. It was a year of new beginnings here in Canada. In that year, females were first allowed to join the ranks of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The band ABBA was topping the charts. I'm not . . . *Happy Days* made its debut on TV, and Global television just had begun broadcasting. The prime minister was Pierre Trudeau, and the premier was Allan Blakeney. And a young woman named Gwenn Ronyk was beginning what would be a very successful career and years of contribution to this Assembly and to this province.

During her time, as the Premier has alluded, Ms. Ronyk has worked with eight Speakers. There were also four premiers and eight lieutenant governors. Those are many people to help train and help in the ways of procedure of this Assembly. And we are so pleased today that the Clerk you first served with was able to join us for lunch to also pay tribute, His Honour, Dr. Barnhart, our Lieutenant Governor.

And of course in 1989, Ms. Ronyk officially became the Clerk of the Assembly. The responsibilities of the Clerk of the Assembly are many, and they're varied. And you know, there's a long list of those duties that political science students will study in our two universities. But what is not quantifiable, I don't think, what may not be in the list are the intangibles: the integrity that's brought to an office and the passion for this institution and for what it should stand.

It is important also that the public of Saskatchewan understand the Assembly's role and operation. And I know first-hand that Madam Clerk has worked hard to make sure that has been done.

The Legislative Assembly has not only kept pace here in Saskatchewan with other Assemblies; we've led in so many ways. I think of broadcasting in that time, television broadcasting, and I know in addition to the dozens that watch this every day on TV, it's been very important that broadcasting has for reportage of public affairs and a provincial government and opposition activities.

Another very important initiative of this Assembly can mark under the leadership of the Clerk is the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. Our Clerk's role in its establishment and continuing to foster and develop that program and the young women and men who have benefited from that is very significant and should be acknowledged as well today.

I just have a few very brief personal remarks. They go back to 1999 when I was first elected. And I remember there was an

MLA orientation set up for us rookies in one of the rooms here at the Legislative Assembly, and I saw the agenda. I was, as new members were, we were very excited at the new roles and the prospect. And I have to admit to you, Madam Clerk, as I looked at the list when it came to your presentation, I thought well, she must go over all the details, all the procedures, the things that we must know but will I be as uplifted as I was going in, having just been elected?

And the truth of the matter is, you should know, that that was exactly the case. I'll not forget your presentation because you did cover all the details, the procedure, all the things that we new MLAs needed to know. But you also communicated to us the honour that had been given us by our constituents, the honour of working here in this building and representing Saskatchewan taxpayers in the affairs of the province of Saskatchewan. And I felt better after your presentation, even better than I felt going in. And we were all, us rookies, on a bit of high I would say on both sides of the House.

I also remember the strong admonition from you that should we lose our mace pin, it would not be replaced. As you may know, I am not wearing my mace pin today. But there is an excellent cardboard likeness of it at home that I haven't yet had the courage to wear into the Assembly.

We don't know what your future plans are, Ms. Ronyk, but we wish you the very, very best. And we do thank you for the amazing contribution you have made to Saskatchewan's public life, specifically to this institution, to the integrity that is its stock-in-trade.

And I'll leave you with this quote from a retiree I found this morning. She said, "We have no porch, no rocking chair — and no time. My biggest need is a calendar because there are so many things to do." And I don't know what your plans are, but I'm sure that quote would apply to you. And in all of those things that you choose to do in the future, we want to wish you the very best.

We want to thank you for your service. We also want to thank your family for sharing you with Saskatchewan. Congratulations.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — With leave of the Assembly it would be my privilege today to bring a tribute to the Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk, from the point of view of the Speaker. As has been mentioned Gwenn has served under . . . Perhaps I should more accurately say Gwenn has trained and coached eight Speakers altogether. Her Speaker bosses were, starting with Fred Dewhurst and John Brockelbank, followed by Herb Swan, Arnold Tusa, Herman Rolfes, Glenn Hagel, Ron Osika, and myself, Myron Kowalsky, all of whom are here today.

Then of course, there were a number of Deputy Speakers: Bev Dyck, Auburn Pepper, William Allen, Lloyd Muller, Harry Van Mulligen, Dale Flavel — who is here today — Kim Trew, Lindy Kasperski, Graham Addley, and Doreen Hamilton. Eight different Speakers and 10 Deputy Speakers add up to quite a group of bosses to adjust to, or should I say, quite a group of bosses just to adjust.

In the course of managing with, or more accurately, managing, eight Speakers and 10 Deputy Speakers, Gwenn Ronyk also served or advised at least 10 government House leaders, seven opposition House leaders, 10 government Whips, and 10 opposition Whips, plus their House business staff. That's a lot of advice to give. How remarkable that in 99 per cent of the time her procedural advice was taken with confidence and gratitude. Is there anyone else in this province, let alone in this legislature, who can claim such a record of being listened to?

Many of us politicians have a willingness to give volumes of free advice in our fields of endeavour, but it is rarely taken. Regarding the ratio of advice given to advice taken, it can be said that we all have Clerk envy.

However, Gwenn's lifestyle is about to change. Retiring Clerks sometimes go through "advice dispensing withdrawal syndrome." Brace yourselves, Reg and family, because you may well be the ones advised starting on January 1.

The professional relationship between Gwenn as Clerk and her eight Speakers is theoretically similar to that between deputy ministers and the ministers of the Crown, only better. Total professional trust is paramount. Gwenn Ronyk is unfailingly dedicated to building and to keeping this trust. She does this because she is passionate about the importance of this legislature as an institution.

Her efforts are consistently focused on what is best for our democratic system of governance. In a letter of December 4, 2006 former Premier Romanow says:

[15:15]

Throughout the years Gwenn and her hard working team advised us on procedures and rules so as to ensure that the democratic process would work more efficiently and effectively: that the public's support for our democratic institutions be protected and enhanced.

Another major responsibility which Gwenn has is acting as head of the entire Legislative Assembly Service. This implies directing all operations of the Legislative Assembly Service and being boss to approximately 130 employees. It was my observation as MLA and now as Speaker that our Legislative Assembly employees like and respect their boss. Her thoughtful actions and natural sincerity have strengthened everyone who worked with her. Every member of the Legislative Assembly Service has grown, learned, and matured during Gwenn's tenure. The confidence and high esteem that the Legislative Assembly staff have of themselves and their performance at work is a reflection of the high esteem in which they hold Gwenn Ronyk.

Another former premier, Mr. Allan Blakeney, says this in his letter of congratulations on November 23, 2006:

I would like to add my appreciation to Ms. Ronyk for outstanding performance during a stellar career in the service of the people of Saskatchewan. They owe a great deal to Gwenn Ronyk. On a more personal note, I found that in my dealings with Gwenn she was unfailingly helpful and graciously courteous.

Former Premier Grant Devine also relayed good wishes to Gwenn by telephone.

I also want to speak briefly to the role Gwenn played nationally and internationally through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Association of Clerks-at-the Table. I was very proud to experience first-hand, as did the other Speakers, the high regard other jurisdictions had for the Saskatchewan branch of the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association]. Much of that high regard is attributable to the emphasis Gwenn put to cross-jurisdictional relations.

Gwenn's poise and her elegance was evident on the many occasions she served as an ambassador for our Legislative Assembly through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. She encouraged all of us to take advantage of every opportunity to host parliamentarians from away, through the CPA, so we could interact and influence at national and international levels. We admire the dignity with which she enabled Saskatchewan MLAs to meet people and explore ideas from beyond our borders. We all benefited from this, and for this we are truly thankful.

Thank you also to Reg, Evan, Brittany, and Keith Ronyk for sharing Gwenn with us for 32 years. Your support of Gwenn as Clerk made it possible for her to enjoy a remarkable career.

In summary, I wish to say that Gwenn Ronyk is recognized and admired for her expertise and commitment to excellence in parliamentary service. She is held in high esteem by her peers both nationally and internationally during the years of service to the legislature and to the people of Saskatchewan. We have been exceptionally fortunate to have Gwenn as our Clerk of the Assembly for over 32 years of dedicated service.

In the coming years we wish her all the best. We wish her good health and good times with her family and friends.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, as one of the eight Speakers trained by Ms. Ronyk it gives me a very distinct pleasure to ask for leave of the House to do something that to the best of my knowledge a House has not given leave in over a century of function of the Saskatchewan legislature. I would ask leave of the House to permit our Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk, to address the House.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave of the Assembly to permit Gwenn Ronyk to address the House. Is leave granted.

Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I invite Gwenn Ronyk to address the House.

Ms. Ronyk: — I thought this was going to be a lot easier but after that you've made it very difficult. Thank you so much for your generosity and your kindness and your wonderful remarks.

It's quite overwhelming.

Mr. Speaker, all hon. members, after hearing all that I'm beginning to wonder if I should talk to the Speaker about changing my mind. But having sat at this table for and served this legislature for my whole career — I never did anything else — 32 years, I am very much aware of the honour that you have bestowed upon me today by inviting me to address this Assembly. This is an exceedingly rare privilege for a non-elected person, and I am deeply appreciative.

And it is so fitting today that this is my last day at the Table of this Assembly, as it was exactly 17 years ago today, December 6, 1989, that I was appointed Clerk. So things come around, I guess. And it has been an amazing run. I started work here, as some of you have said, as assistant Clerk in 1974, recruited by Gordon Barnhart, and appointed by Speaker Fred Dewhurst, who was a wonderful character.

I came directly out of university and very soon I found out how little I knew, and I have been learning ever since. And that's one of the most wonderful things about this job, has been the opportunity to learn. Tradition and precedent play a very important role in parliamentary life, but it's also a place of constant change and challenge.

There have been some very exciting days, tremendous opportunities to learn, and some very interesting characters to work with. And I know that's a preposition ending my sentence. Hansard can fix it up for me.

One of the very first things I did when I started work, the very first week in fact, was to attend a conference of Canadian Clerks in Nova Scotia. It was then that I wondered what I had gotten into when I entered the room there to discover that I was the only female Clerk in the whole group. And not only were they all men, but they were all very senior men. The oldest being a 91-year old Clerk from the BC [British Columbia] legislature. But now I'm pleased to tell you that when the Clerks meet, there is a good mixture of men and women Table officers in Canada and across the Commonwealth.

From my vantage point at the Table, I've seen many changes and as some of you have noted I've had the privilege of working with so many different members and Speakers and premiers and lieutenant governors. And we all know that there is apathy and there's cynicism out there, and some of that for good reason. But from my direct knowledge of the many men and women who have served here over the last 32 years that I've been here, I can clearly say that the people of Saskatchewan have been very well served.

When members look back, they probably will think about the programs and the public policies that they were involved in. But when I look back as a Clerk, it's the procedural highlights that come to mind. And I think the Speakers will understand that and will sympathize.

There were things such as filibusters, many filibusters: the potash Bill, the oil Bill, oil revenue tax filibusters, the SaskEnergy Bill, GRIP [gross revenue insurance program], petitions, notices, and first readings of Bills. And that delayed things for days sometimes. We had a tie in opposition parties

that someone mentioned, the expulsion of a member, privileged cases, suspensions, bell-ringing for hours and days and even weeks, and mass demonstrations — all sorts of excitement.

And sometimes sittings — at least one — that ran over 100 days and into the summer including sitting the whole month of August from 8 a.m. in the morning until 11 p.m. at night, five days a week.

But I also remember and think about the very positive things that I've seen that have strengthened and developed our democracy: establishment of our Board of Internal Economy that gave the Assembly the mechanism for financial independence; introduction of televised House proceedings and committee proceedings; *Hansard* that progressed from being a six-month affair to now it's available everywhere within hours; other transformations in our work due to computer technology and even now online access to live House proceedings on the Internet from anywhere in the world so that dozens can really watch it anywhere.

Also exciting times were the rules reforms and especially now this new committee system, an amazing potential there. And now that I'm finally leaving, we get . . . Well now that I'm leaving, we finally get a calendar for House sittings. There's no justice.

And of course there are other highlights, things like royal visits and successful conferences and seminars that we've hosted. My involvement with the independent officers of the Assembly has been very important and rewarding, and just being a part of the maturing of the Legislative Assembly Service into a modern, professional, and service-oriented organization.

And it has been rewarding to be involved in things like the renovations to this Chamber — by the way, they're needed again — operation of the internship program and finally to see a gift shop in the building.

One thing that I did want to mention that has been important to me, to continue, was the tradition of Saskatchewan's active involvement in national and international parliamentary activities, as the Speaker mentioned. My predecessors in this office — George Stephen, Bev Koester and Gordon Barnhart — were all committed to this work, and they were known throughout the Commonwealth for their dedication. Everyone knew where Saskatchewan was. Gordon instilled that interest in me. And over the years here, we have hosted seminars and study programs and attachments for members and Clerks from many parts of the developing world including South Africa, Malaysia, Russia, Zimbabwe, the Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Botswana, the Ukraine, and Sri Lanka. And most recently, this year we provided technical assistance to the legislature of the Free State in South Africa through a CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] funded program. Now these were a substantial undertaking for our very small staff.

By now you are probably beginning to recognize the danger of allowing a departing Clerk to speak. She just might speak her mind. And at the risk of filibustering my own tea, I do want to leave a couple of thoughts. And I think you'll be glad you gave me the standing ovation beforehand.

We have a very vibrant parliamentary democracy in Saskatchewan, but there's room for improvements. So my parting plea to you is risk more democracy, risk more democracy.

Some very significant reforms have recently been done, especially the new committee system that was designed to strengthen the role of private members and to increase citizen participation in the legislative process. But now you have to make those reforms work. You have to let them work. You have to use those committees. Use them to involve the public and to enhance the roles of members and to strengthen the accountability of the legislature.

And for our committees to really work, they must have more resources. One of Chief Justice Gomery's chief findings in his review of the sponsorship scandal in Ottawa was that parliamentary committees needed to have more resources if they were to be effective in holding government accountable. That was his first recommendation. And if it's true there, it's very true here. And this is an area where we do need to risk more democracy.

And while it may be heresy to say what I'm going to say, I believe strongly that our legislature is too small. We need more members to have an active committee system and to have a strong and an inclusive legislature. And this isn't just my opinion; there's lots of sound research to support the idea that a critical mass of legislators is needed in a modern and effective legislature. The taxpayers association may not understand this, but you don't get smaller government by weakening the legislature; you only get a weaker watchdog. And that is not in the public interest.

[15:30]

And I have to say that it is the government and the cabinet who bear the burden of responsibility for letting parliamentary democracy work the way it is supposed to. In another area, the administration of the Assembly and the administration of members' expenditure of public money, we've improved greatly in accountability and transparency. These were hard-fought changes. Don't let them fade.

And lastly, remember to take care of this institution. Enrich your vision with a broad view beyond our own borders. Remember to take a long-term view when you make decisions and take time every day to remember why you ran, and then you will risk more democracy. And there — I'm done preaching. Thank you. I think my kids thought I only did that at home.

In conclusion now I do want to take a moment to thank a great many people. And I want to start by acknowledging my family and thanking them for their love and support and patience on what was sometimes a rocky road. I have been very fortunate, and I thank them so much.

And here at work I owe so much to my team, the staff of the Legislative Assembly over the years. Some of my former employees are here as well as current ones. The staff always came through for me — always. These are people who take a great deal of pride in their work for the Legislative Assembly,

and I very much appreciate their dedication and their competence and their loyalty and their hard work. And I especially need to thank the direct staff in the Clerk's office over the years who had to deal with me every day. Members of the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan are very well served by the staff of the Assembly.

And I want to thank my colleagues here at the Table for their commitment and their very sound work. They have carried a heavy load in last year or two, but I know I leave the office in good hands. And I also extend my appreciation to my colleagues in other legislatures who have always been willing to share their ideas and their experiences and their advice and to help when called upon. And lastly, I do want to recognize that special relationship that must exist between Speaker and Clerk. All eight Speakers that I have worked with have been very special members to me, and each one of them has proved to be a strong supporter of parliamentary institutions, and they deserve our appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and all of the members of this House. It has been a great privilege to serve the servants of the people. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been duly moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier, seconded by the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition:

That the members of this House, desiring to record their respectful appreciation for the 32 years of distinguished service rendered by Ms. Gwenn Ronyk to this legislature, including 17 years as Clerk, and acknowledging the dedication and dignity she brought to that office, designates her as honorary officer of this Legislative Assembly with an entree to the Chamber and a seat at the Table on all ceremonial occasions.

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

Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that that motion be recorded as *nemine contradicente*.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we end the session, this fall session, with full appreciation to the many, many who are involved in supporting the function of this Legislative Assembly and with wish for all of the members as we return to our constituencies that we'll have opportunity over the Christmas season to spend some valuable time with those who are closest to us and for safe travels, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The motion shall be recorded as *nemine contradicente*.

It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member

for Melfort, the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before we adjourn, I would like to join with the Government House Leader in saying a couple of thank yous.

First of all to everyone in this building, to both of our caucus staffs and all the legislative staff, to thank them very much for making this session very productive. To all of our colleagues in the House, our gratitude and the support and appreciation for all that you've done to make this first new calendar session I think a tremendous success.

I want to also wish everyone in this Assembly, in this House, and in this province a very Merry Christmas. You know, I think it's appropriate that the message of Christmas, of love and peace, was brought to us by a child. And sometimes we forget that we too have to remember the message given to us by that very special child some 2,000 years ago.

So as we adjourn from this House and go to our communities, to our families and friends, we would certainly wish everyone a very Merry Christmas with their families and their friends. And a final comment would be when you are enjoying your family and friends, please be safe.

The Speaker: — On the motion by the Premier, seconded by the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition, the motion has been carried.

The motion is now that we do adjourn, moved by the Government House Leader. 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 March 7 or the call of the Speaker. I would like to invite all guests, MLAs, Legislative Assembly and building staff to tea in room 218 in honour of the retirement of Gwenn Ronyk. This House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:35.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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