

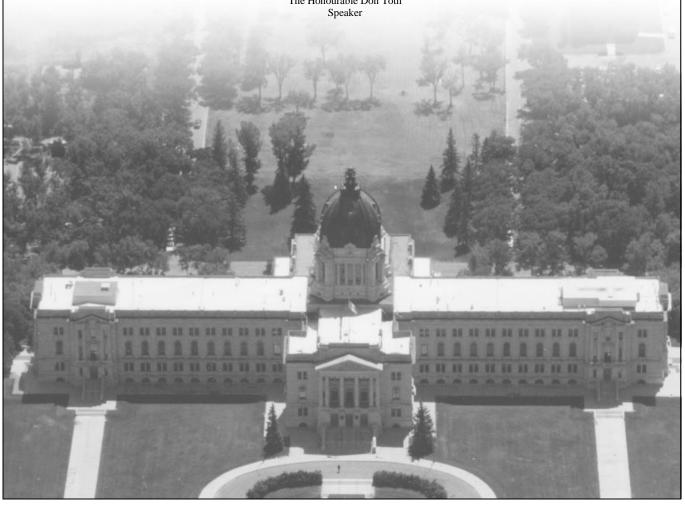
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)
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The Honourable Don Toth



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN April 27, 2009

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members, before I recognize other members, I would like to introduce a group of teachers who have joined us today, and I would ask leave of the Assembly for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's my honour today to introduce to you a group of teachers who are here in the Legislative Assembly to attend the 11th annual Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. The institute began on Saturday and will conclude on Wednesday.

This group has already met with a number of people including members of the judiciary, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, the Clerk, and several MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Earlier today they observed the mock parliament presentation in the Legislative Chamber. They have scheduled to meet with the House Leaders, caucus Chairs, caucus Whips, cabinet ministers including the Minister of Education; the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition as well as government caucus and legislative staff.

I would ask as I introduce these teachers that they might wave as I mention their names. Ms. Jestina Beskowiney, Milestone School in Milestone; Mrs. Beverly Bzdel, Wynyard Elementary in Wynyard; Ms. Amanda Christensen, École Vickers School in Prince Albert; Mrs. Candy-Lyn Chuckry, Wynyard Elementary School in Wynyard; Mr. Brandon Doom, Marshall School in Marshall; Mrs. Cecile Elliott, École Vickers School in Prince Albert; Mrs. Sandra Hamp, Hepburn School in Hepburn; Mr. Michael Horgan, Lashburn High School in Lashburn; Mrs. Mauri Ingham, Columbia School in Yorkton; Ms. Erin McIvor, Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary Community School in Fort Qu'Appelle; Mr. Raymond Michaud, École secondaire Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg; Mr. Murray Neudorf, student, University of Saskatchewan; Ms. Michelle Schaff, Warman High School in Warman; Ms. Brittany Thies, student, University of Regina; Mrs. Angela Thiessen, Debden School in Debden; Mr. Greg Walker, Prince Albert Collegiate, Prince Albert; and Mr. Paul Weiman, Holy Family School in North Battleford.

And I would also like to mention our steering committee, composed of three teachers who attended past institutes and officials from the Ministry of Education. From the Ministry of Education, Gerry Craswell, Anna Schmidt, and Brent Toles; and Ms. Delores Syrota from Elfros, Larry Mikulcik from William Derby School in Strasbourg, and Delise Fathers from Riverview Collegiate in Moose Jaw.

I ask the members to welcome this fine group of teachers to their Legislative Chamber.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of victims services volunteers and would request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members. Mr. Speaker, this is Victims of Crime Awareness Week in Saskatchewan, and seated in your gallery are 10 individuals who have served with police-based victims services programs in Saskatchewan. A bit earlier today, I had the pleasure to present each of them with a gift commemorating their long services as victims services volunteers. I'd ask that they wave when I call their name.

Bill Heard has been a victims services volunteer in Regina for 20 years. Jill Hay is the Regina victims services coordinator. She has been both an employee and a volunteer with this program for 20 years. Adrian Walker of Yorkton, Dale Ebert of Prince Albert, and Glen Herman of Swift Current each have 15 years of volunteer service. Those here today who have given 10 years of volunteer service are Diane Loewen of Lloydminster, Judy Hughs of Yorkton, Irene Nowosad of Marcelin, and Joann McKay of Regina.

Also honoured today who are volunteers and support workers with 10 years of service — who are not here but I would like to recognize them in any event — are Sandy Rediron of Beauval, Wanda Bouvier of Cole Bay, Theresa de Both of Hudson Bay, Bertha Gowen of Carrot River, Rheta Renwick of Milestone, Beth Goeres of Weyburn, Phyllis Smith and Caroline Ratt-Misponas of Pinehouse Lake, Ida Cook and Lena Young both of Pakwaw Lake, Hilda Thommes of Cumberland House, Pat Balon of Wakaw. And also two that have recently passed away: Jean Babchuk of Regina, Betty Heil of Smeaton.

Mr. Speaker, as our victims services programs have evolved over the years, dedicated volunteers have given of their time and energy. They have connected with their victims and their communities and supported them throughout the criminal justice process. I would ask that all members join me in expressing our appreciation to these dedicated individuals and to all of our victims services volunteers for their years of service to the people in their communities. And I point out to them that this is not a retirement. This is merely marking a milestone, and they are expected to continue to work. I thank them and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Minister of Justice and on behalf of the official opposition welcome the victims services volunteers that are here in the gallery today. If one has an occasion, as some of us have had, to visit a community perhaps in an official capacity following a particularly horrendous and high profile crime, one quickly learns that the circle of victims is much larger than is readily apparent through reading the newspaper or listening to the radio or watching the television.

And in these communities, I have seen victim services volunteers lend the strength and support that can never make the trauma go away, but it does so much to mitigate it, and I know families and communities in Saskatchewan in which this has made a tremendous difference, Mr. Speaker. So I want to join with the minister, on behalf of the official opposition, in welcoming our guests here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly, Mr. Terry Drabiuk and Mr. Gerald Proctor from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Mr. Drabiuk, a SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] alumni, has been with NAIT [Northern Alberta Institute of Technology] since 2003 and oversees all of their corporate client relations in Canada and over 23 countries. As well, Mr. Proctor, a established and well-recognized athlete and scholar — previously worked for a number of years in the cabinet policy coordination role in the Alberta government — currently is the director of government relations at NAIT where he works to enhance NAIT's reputation at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have these gentlemen with us today. NAIT is currently engaged in a successful partnership with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, our own North West Regional College, and Shell Canada, to deliver employment readiness and trades for Aboriginal peoples.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these gentlemen to the Saskatchewan legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 43 students from the great school of Henry Janzen in my fine constituency of Regina Walsh Acres. They are here today to participate in the legislative mock parliament and also to visit with us here in the Chamber today and view question period. And then we'll get together and have a chat afterwards and I'll answer any questions that these students may have.

They are accompanied here today by teachers, Betty Elliott —

and perhaps you could give a wave — and Vic Stevenson, as well as Nora Semchuk who is their teacher assistant. We would like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly today. We hope you've enjoyed your experience so far in the mock parliament, and I look forward to meeting with you after question period. And perhaps I could get all my colleagues to welcome you to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my honour to present petitions in support of changes to *The Highway Traffic Act*, to be referred to as the Gallenger amendment. Mr. Speaker, the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to enact changes to *The Highway Traffic Act*, to be referred to as the Gallenger amendment, which would require all vehicle traffic to slow to 60 kilometres per hour when passing a snowplow with their warning lights activated on Saskatchewan roadways.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present these petitions from Qu'Appelle, McLean, Regina, and Balgonie. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that speaks to the inadequate access to quality and affordable child care, and that it's a major roadblock for parents who want to access the labour market or further their own education. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, through consultations with the daycare community, to immediately invest in growing the capacity of the early child care community to enable new child care spaces. And this investment must include infrastructure funding for new facilities and expansion funding to significantly increase the number of early childhood diploma and certificate training seats and funding to ensure that the sector is able to increase its wages and benefits to attract and retain the needed personnel.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of Saskatchewan families.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of indexing the minimum wage. And as we all know, indexing the minimum wage would ensure that minimum wage earners would be able to maintain a standard of living as the cost of living increases. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to indexing Saskatchewan minimum wage to ensure that the standard of living of minimum wage earners is maintained in the face of cost of living increases.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Regina. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that research demonstrates those working for community-based organizations are paid on average 8 to \$10 per hour less than employees performing work of equal value in government departments. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

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

And these citizens come from the cities of Regina, Melville, and Weyburn. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake, Prince Albert, Rosthern, and Wakaw. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for graduate students here in the province through the expansion of the graduate retention program. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are students at the University of Saskatchewan as well as the University of Regina. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to repair Highway 123 that goes to the community of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. This petition is signed by the leadership and community members, village of Cumberland House and Cumberland House First Nations. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Saskatchewan Party government to stop denying the money that was allocated to this highway and commit to immediately providing the repairs to this highway that the people of northern Saskatchewan were promised.

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

It is signed by the good people of Cumberland House and area. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Holocaust Memorial Service

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I along with members from Greystone, Southeast, and Sutherland attended the Holocaust memorial service at Congregation Agudas Israel in Saskatoon. Agudas Israel annually invites a survivor of the Holocaust to bring their story to the congregation, invited guests, and many interested citizens.

Yesterday survivor David Shentow shared a powerful, emotional account of his life in three concentration camps — Auschwitz, Warsaw, and Krakow — during World War II. His story is told through his 17-year-old eyes — his very words "an idea of what hell is all about." This brutally graphic recount of his experiences shocked and saddened the audience. There were not many dry eyes in the packed hall.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot forget the Holocaust and its warning to the world. This is what can happen, does happen, and still continues to happen when the world community is indifferent. We all need to be witness to the Holocaust. Strong, brave men and women like David Shentow need us to carry their story forward. The stories cannot die with the survivors.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to Agudas Israel for being witness to the Holocaust and never letting us forget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn.

Remembering Keith Whyte

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to speak on the passing of Keith Whyte of Bengough. Keith became well known for his courageous and tenacious advocacy on behalf of cancer victims like himself to secure funding for the cancer drug Avastin. And while his personal battle came to an end late last week, it did with him knowing two things: that he was successful in helping to increase drug coverage for others, and that he beat every estimate on how much time he really had left.

Mr. Speaker, this past January I had the great privilege of joining with Keith's family and friends in seeing Keith recognized by the Canadian Cancer Society with the 2009 National Medal of Courage for exhibiting outstanding and unusual courage during his battle with colorectal cancer.

While Keith was pleased to be recognized for his work, I know that he was very humbled by the attention. And you knew full well that he was building on the work done by people like Terry Rak and Bob Loeppky before him, and so many others.

Mr. Speaker, Keith Whyte was many things. He was a farmer. He was an unrelenting advocate, a storyteller, a constituent, and, Mr. Speaker, he was a friend.

Mr. Speaker, as a newly elected MLA, I first met Keith when he came to my constituency office in his fight against the Government of Saskatchewan. At the conclusion of that first meeting, he said with a smile, you probably didn't know Keith Whyte when I walked through the door, but when I leave, you'll never forget me. Mr. Speaker, Keith never knew how right he was. Rest easy, Keith.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Northern Saskatchewan's Curling Champions

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I speak of northern Saskatchewan's ice man today. He is Lawrence Corrigal from Ile-a-la-Crosse, and at the age of 51 and in his 37th year of curling, Lawrence skipped his team to win the men's 2009 National Aboriginal Championships in Saskatoon. In the winning team were third Chad Sahyes; second Tavio Mori; and lead David Corrigal, who is Lawrence's nephew.

However the celebrations for Lawrence did not stop here. Lawrence's daughter, Danielle, is a high school graduate and also a curler. Her team won the 2009 Junior Mixed National Aboriginal Curling Championships this same year. Lawrence's son, Evan, a grade 10 student, placed first at Lloydminster's curling regionals to win a berth at the high school provincials. And, Mr. Speaker, with two more years left of high school competition ahead of him, we are sure Evan, with his sister Danielle, are this province's rising curling stars. Evan is also a very good hockey player and plays at the midget level.

Lawrence credits his devotion to the game of curling to the northern school leagues where his passion for curling began, and where his children began their own successful venture into the ice sports.

Lawrence is the iceman of the North, since Lawrence is also the ice technician at the local curling rink. And finally, Lawrence is as steady and sure as the ice that must come every year to a wintery North. Lawrence has served as the manager of the local housing authority for 21 years.

Mr. Speaker, Lawrence, Danielle, and Evan truly make me proud they are from northern Saskatchewan and are great curling champions. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Victims of Crime Awareness Week

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to inform this House that April 26 to May 2 is Victims of Crime Awareness Week in Saskatchewan, proclaimed as such to coincide with National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. This week's an opportunity to raise awareness about victim issues and about the programs and services in place to help victims and their families in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is Supporting, Connecting, Evolving.

Victims of crime and traumatic events can feel overwhelmed, isolated, and unable to cope with what has happened. They may need the help of a volunteer victim services worker who can offer information and support immediately after the event and throughout the criminal justice process. Victim services volunteers also connect victims and their families to other programs and services for help.

Mr. Speaker, with the expansion of the Prince Albert regional victim services program to Spiritwood, we have almost 300 victim services volunteers operating out of 18 police-based programs which are available to 87 per cent of our province's

population.

I ask that all members join me in expressing our appreciation of our victim services volunteers for their service to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Local Area Planning

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Local area planning is an initiative of the city of Saskatoon that puts citizens at the forefront in determining the future of their neighbourhood. It involves individuals, community groups, business owners, and other local stakeholders working closely with the city of Saskatoon personnel. Together they identify specific goals and strategies to strengthen the neighbourhood economically, socially, and environmentally. The result is a comprehensive local area plan that guides development of the neighbourhood for many years to come. Approximately 10 neighbourhoods in Saskatoon have developed local area plans.

City Park is a neighbourhood mostly in my constituency, the beautiful Saskatoon Meewasin, and its residents have been working diligently with the city of Saskatoon for two years towards finalizing their local area plan. Like all local area plans, City Park's plan is wide-ranging in scope, including land use, parks and recreation, traffic, municipal services, neighbourhood amenities, and neighbourhood safety. I congratulate the residents of City Park and particularly the City Park Community Association for their participation and leadership in this process.

I also commend the city of Saskatoon for enabling extensive and thorough citizen input into neighbourhood planning. This provision for active citizen consultation and participation is something which governments at all levels should ensure.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

Humboldt Broncos Win Anavet Cup

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago it was my honour to rise and acknowledge the accomplishments of the Humboldt Broncos, who had just captured their third consecutive SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] championship. The next step towards the national championship for the Broncos was a best of seven series with Manitoba champions from Portage. They competed for the Anavet Cup, which was played out over the past few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, it was looking like the Broncos were in some trouble. Down three games to one, it looked like their season was coming to an end. However, in game five, Mr. Speaker, the Broncos proved their skills in scoring 12 goals for a win of 12 to 2. In game six on the road in Portage, they battled hard and once again won, 4 to 3 in overtime.

Game seven was played last night, Mr. Speaker. Trailing 4 to 1 in the third period with less than 12 minutes to go, Humboldt scored three exciting goals and sent the game into overtime. This was the fourth overtime game of the series. At 5:56 of overtime, Nick Kalnicki scored for the Broncos to complete the tremendous game and series comeback. The Broncos were once again champions.

Mr. Speaker, there were times when many doubted that the Broncos could win the Anavet Cup again. There should have been no doubt. These young men have over and over again shown their resilience, toughness, and pride. They have once again made the town of Humboldt very, very happy and proud.

The Broncos will now move to the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] Royal Bank Cup, to be played in Victoria later this week. So I ask all members to please join me in congratulating the Humboldt Broncos in their season thus far and extend their support for the Broncos in their pursuit of the second consecutive national junior A championship.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from the Battlefords.

Battlefords Community Players

Mr. Taylor: — I would like today to draw members' attention to the great work of the Battlefords Community Players, who have once again presented themselves very well at the provincial community theatre awards festival, TheatreFest, held recently in Prince Albert. Battlefords Community Players' exceptional male lead Jim Walls for the second year in a row won the award for best actor at the festival. The Players' production of the play *Trying* won the award for best visual and was named runner-up in the best play and best director categories. It's also interesting to note that this year's director Donna Challis, last year at TheatreFest, won the best director award.

Mr. Speaker, the people of The Battlefords are very proud of this incredible, non-profit, community-based theatre company that continually provides great local entertainment throughout the year, but also performs at a level that produces awards and recognition at competition events throughout the province.

To quote executive producer Donna Challis in a recent news story: "People always know that our standard is going to be among the best and I'm very proud of that and I think all the Community Players' members are proud." Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say that all residents of The Battlefords are proud of the work done by and the accomplishments achieved by The Battlefords Community Players. And I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me today in offering our congratulations and best wishes for continued success in their future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Review of Hospital Policy

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Late last week, the Saskatoon Health Region issued a statement regarding an incident at Saskatoon City Hospital that contradicts comments made earlier in the week by one of its own spokespersons. Not only does it contradict one of its own spokespersons; the statement specifically contradicts the version of events originally put forward by one of Saskatoon's good Samaritans, Mr. Ken Olson.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Minister of Health has been in touch with the Saskatoon Health Region. And I'm wondering if he can confirm today, does he believe Mr. Olson's accounting of this incident, or is he accepting the Saskatoon Health Region's statement that implies Mr. Olson is not telling the truth?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when this came to light last week, we were very concerned obviously when we heard of the report. That's why we acted immediately and asked all health regions to review their policies as to what would be the situation where people would react to people found on the grounds. That review has certainly been conducted.

What I was certainly satisfied with when I talked to many of the people in the Saskatoon Health Region was that, you know, certainly common sense will apply because that's what I had asked all health regions to look at — through the lens of common sense when they write policies such as that.

In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I think there's still some evidence being gathered. I will not comment on that until I get a full report from the Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker. But what I will say is that the health region has looked into it, and they've taken this situation very serious, which I compliment them on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week before the health region put out its official statement, the minister said he had reviewed the case in question and subsequently called for common sense to prevail.

After the minister's hasty review in his letter to the region, the Saskatoon Health Region released its statement contradicting its earlier description of the events, indicating that a triage nurse had attended the individual in question. Mr. Olson says this is fictional and calls the Saskatoon Health Region's statement "an affront to my credibility."

Mr. Speaker, the minister's credibility on this file is also in question. The minister needs to clarify today: did he speak to the Saskatoon Health Region before he called for common sense to prevail in matters like this, or was he simply basing his

first response on media reports?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I think if you review the *Hansard* from last week when I answered the question, unlike what that member just accused, I didn't say that I had reviewed the case extensively. I didn't say that at all. What I said was, I'm going to ask the health regions to look at their policies to make sure that common sense prevails.

I would ask that member to at least be sincere when she's asking a question like that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, there are three different versions of this story. There's the first-hand report of the good Samaritan, Mr. Olson. There's the first response from the Saskatoon Health Region. And finally there's the official statement from the region.

Mr. Speaker, there's no reason to treat Mr. Olson's comments as untrue. The minister responded with his common sense request based on the region's first response; therefore it must be surmised that the minister believed that common sense had not been used in this case. Contrarily the health region's official statement suggests that common sense was followed.

Given that the minister has called for a province-wide review of the policy in question, we really must ask today: how is the minister going to treat this case now that it is clear that he has either been misled by the region in the first incident or he's being misled in the second incident?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said last week and I just finished saying this afternoon is that we need to make sure that all the policies that we have set up through the regional health authorities are through the lens of common sense to ensure that staff safety, health and safety, is certainly looked after but also that the patients who need to be first and foremost in our health care system, their needs are looked after as well, Mr. Speaker.

And so what I did is I asked the health regions not necessarily to change the policy that they had because if the policy is already set up looking through the lens of common sense, Mr. Speaker, then I think it will be meeting their mark. And that's certainly what I've asked the health regions to do. They have been doing that work. There had been a meeting conducted on Thursday discussing the various policies because policies do vary from health region to health region to health region, Mr. Speaker. The work is being conducted and I'm satisfied with that work.

[14:00]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Controlling Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the member for Carrot River Valley unveiled the Sask Party's latest excuse for their broken promises on climate change: it's just too expensive. The Sask Party dismantled the \$320 million Green Future Fund we established from the sale of the NewGrade upgrader, and now they complain they have no money to address climate change.

The member claims we need to choose between lower SaskPower rates and higher climate change targets. But, Mr. Speaker, last week the Sask Party told Saskatchewan people to expect neither.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party more interested in making excuses for climate change than keeping their promises to reduce it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you what our government is interested in, and that is keeping life affordable for the residents of this province. Apparently the NDP [New Democratic Party] did not have this consideration in place. The last NDP Environment minister, the member for Regina . . .

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last NDP Environment minister, the member for Regina Lakeview, said, and I quote, "And this is one area where people can contribute, is to actually pay for new production which is near zero emissions." Mr. Speaker, the NDP's plan all along was to pass the cost of their emissions on to SaskPower ratepayers without any consideration of what that cost is. Our plan is to balance the economy with environmental protection, and that also includes looking out for SaskPower ratepayers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Looking out for SaskPower ratepayers meant that they had the guarantee of a lowest cost utility bundle, which they no longer have under the Sask Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, this minister will say anything to

excuse this government's lack of action on climate change. What's not clear is what the minister believes. Twice last week she hinted that she might reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, but she didn't say whether they will actually adopt the proposed American targets which use the 2005 as the base year.

To the minister: what year will be used as the base year against which absolute reductions would be measured?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear. hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I can guarantee the member opposite is that the action taken by this government will have greater results than the inaction by the NDP. Mr. Speaker, if the NDP were in government, their plan — and it's on page 4 of their green energy plan — was to, and I quote, "... complying with industry's mandatory emissions reduction obligations under the federal climate change plan."

Mr. Speaker, there is no federal climate change plan that's in effect in this country at the moment. The regulations are not enforced. So if the NDP were on this side of the House, they would be doing absolutely nothing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — I suggest that the minister start reviewing her file a little more in depth because clearly she's not that familiar of it. So, Mr. Speaker, last week the minister couldn't tell us what year those emissions would stabilize. Without a stabilization date, reduction targets simply aren't credible. She's had nearly a week to think about it and come up with an answer. So we'll try again, Mr. Speaker.

Once and for all, will she tell us what year greenhouse gas emissions will stabilize under the Sask Party government, if ever?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear. hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as I stated in a scrum last week — and I also answered the member's question in committee last week — that we will be announcing our plan in May, and all those details would be announced there.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the member from Regina Walsh Acres who says, and I quote, "Hypocrisy on the environment . . . cannot be covered up with glossy print." Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more because that's all this is, from the NDP. We will have a plan next week that lays out targets for our province, that lays out a . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I hate to say this, but you haven't

disappointed me as what I explained to the students. But I would ask members to be mindful of who's in the Chamber and the role of question period and allowing the minister to respond. I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I pointed out, the member opposite agrees that a glossy brochure does not necessarily guarantee action. Mr. Speaker, we will have our plan announced next month. I ask the member opposite to be patient. We waited for 16 years for the NDP to do anything. I think they can wait a few more weeks.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Since the minister is so unclear as to what the NDP did, let me give her a real quick overview: \$320 million of which 100 million was for conservation and efficiency, 125 million for carbon capture and storage in the oil and gas sector, 75 million to increase the use of renewable energy, and 20 million to reduce methane from oil and gas and agricultural sectors. That's what the NDP was doing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has no credibility on climate change. They promised to implement the NDP's climate change targets and squandered the money set aside to meet those targets and now complain that they can't meet the targets because it's too expensive. They claim their desire to protect our economy is why they're breaking their promises on climate change, but the health of our economy is the very reason that they should be keeping them, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — And they can't answer basic questions about how or even when they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To the minister: why is the Sask Party dragging its feet on climate change when Saskatchewan could be a leader in the green economy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to have a discussion on the green economy, perhaps she can explain why she said on March 23 this year in this House, "... carbon capture and storage, a technology the Sask Party claims to be cost-effective ... is a claim that is simply dubious ..."

Mr. Speaker, they have completely turned their back on clean coal. The member opposite has clearly turned her back on carbon capture and storage even though according to her glossy brochure, on page 11, that carbon capture and storage is . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Some members on the opposition side of the House that are really interfering with the . . . And it's not

all the members. The public needs to be aware of the fact that sometimes it's just a few. But I want to ask members to allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, if the member opposite is absolutely concerned about a green economy for our province, perhaps she can explain why she, speaking on behalf of her party, has completely turned her back on carbon capture and storage for our province. She said it's not cost-effective. The little glossy brochure, page 11 says it is a cost-effective alternative for our province. So perhaps they could explain the complete hypocrisy of their position today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

2010 Winter Olympics

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are properly excited about the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. They want Saskatchewan athletes to be showcased and foreign tourists and TV viewers to learn more about Saskatchewan. But Saskatchewan people are asking why our province appears to be spending up to \$4 million or more on the Olympics while Manitoba spends 1.5 million and Ontario, a province with more than 12 times our population, spends just 5 million.

At the same time, Saskatchewan families will be paying more this summer to camp in our provincial parks. To the minister: what is the total amount of money from all sources that Saskatchewan is spending on the Vancouver Olympics, and why are we spending so much more per capita than other provinces?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I think we'll all agree here today that participating as a contributing province in the Vancouver Olympics is absolutely essential to showcasing this province and what we are as a people. Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to what the members opposite refer to in the other provinces. We are spending the amount of money which includes . . . [inaudible] . . . a contributing province to the Olympics and monies associated to operating a pavilion at the Olympics, Mr. Speaker.

We're very proud of Saskatchewan. We believe this money, along with the contributing province, will give us the ability to showcase Saskatchewan in the most cost-effective way. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps I'll help the minister. We know that the Sask Party has allocated 1.5 million for the Own

the Podium and the Cultural Olympiad; 405,000 for the torch relay; 187,000 in administration costs; and \$700,000 to take pictures of Saskatchewan. That's still leaves well over 1 million out of about \$4 million for which there is no explanation — so 1 million with no explanation.

To the minister: can she provide Saskatchewan taxpayers with a complete breakdown of how their money is being spent at the Vancouver Olympics?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear. hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure the members opposite and the people of Saskatchewan that we are well positioned to showcase Saskatchewan at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, Mr. Speaker.

Plans are under way with respect to how we're going to present Saskatchewan, and when those plans are ready to be unveiled, Mr. Speaker, we will unveil them. Rest assured we will showcase Saskatchewan in the most cost-effective, efficient, and best way known possible. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the 2010 Winter Olympics will be proud days for Vancouver, and Saskatchewan should be part of that. But we're spending more than \$4 million on an event in Vancouver, and it's not clear what the benefits are to Saskatchewan taxpayers. Saskatchewan people are also wondering how much they will be spending to send the Premier, the minister, and other Sask Party bigwigs off to Vancouver and Whistler to take in the Olympics and maybe get a free photo op with an Olympic champion or two.

To the minister: how much will Saskatchewan spend for travel and accommodation for government ministers and officials during the Vancouver Olympics?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I don't know. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure who the member opposite is referring to when he says the word bigwigs . . . [inaudible] . . . However these Olympics are to showcase Saskatchewan, to showcase Saskatchewan athletes. This is the best time for Saskatchewan to stand apart from other provinces because, Mr. Speaker, we are apart from other provinces.

With respect to the member's specific question, we have no plans or intentions unless there's a purpose, a bona fide business purpose, for government officials to attend, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the minister may not like these questions, but Saskatchewan people do have the right to question how their money is being spent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nilson: — And they're growing concerned about the culture of entitlement that seems to be gathering around the Sask Party after just 17 months in government. They don't understand why Saskatchewan families are paying more to camp in provincial parks while the Premier and minister get free tickets to the Vancouver Olympics. To the minister: why are Saskatchewan taxpayers shelling out more than \$4 million for the Vancouver Olympics while families pay more to camp in Saskatchewan parks?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, all we have to do is look at 1986 Expo. The Government of Saskatchewan spent over \$6 million to have Saskatchewan House at the Expo and the pavilion, Mr. Speaker. We are talking more than 20 years later, Mr. Speaker, and we are putting, we are putting our best foot forward...

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — 20 years later, Mr. Speaker, and we are spending less money. With respect to the member's question with the camping rates, Mr. Speaker, our camping rates are the second lowest in Canada. All monies that are used for camping rates are turned back into the parks to continue with park improvement, Mr. Speaker.

What is the member suggesting? What is the member suggesting, Mr. Speaker? That we continue to keep the park rates at a certain level so that monies can be paid out of the GRF [General Revenue Fund]? Mr. Speaker, they are speaking out of both sides of their mouth again, Mr. Speaker, and we are satisfied that we have the answers required with park fees. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Rate Review Panel's Recommendations for SaskPower

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for SaskPower has repeatedly said that power customers should pay 13 per cent more. He's said repeatedly SaskPower needs 13 per cent rate increase. Earlier today the rate review committee looked at it and recommended an eight and a half per cent

increase would be plenty enough.

To the minister: there's a 5 per cent discrepancy here. Why the difference?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much to the hon. member for that question. I'd like to begin by thanking the Saskatchewan rate review panel — members that have served for quite some time, as well as new members appointed by this government — for doing a great job, a comprehensive job of looking at SaskPower, and also with meeting with corporations and businesses and organizations across the province to hear directly about their wants and needs going forward.

Indeed the Saskatchewan rate review panel is operating as it should. It is not a rubber stamp for what is put forward by the Crown corporations. It's an independent review that takes place, a comprehensive review that brings witnesses forward. In this case they've done some very good work and put forward a recommendation of 8.5 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know for nine months now the world has watched while natural gas prices have been falling. The rate review panel earlier today recognized more than \$11 million in natural gas savings for SaskPower, that cost savings — they recommended — be passed on in the form of a lower rate increase, from 13 to eight and a half per cent.

Why did the minister ignore the reality of the world until the rate review panel stated the obvious?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the rate review panel made 11 recommendations. One of them was that SaskPower should work closer with SaskEnergy and the good work that SaskEnergy is doing. Both corporations are committed to keeping natural gas rates and rates used in power generation as low as possible. And that's indeed what the work has already begun, and we concur with that statement.

Some other recommendations that were made by the rate review panel include . . . Regarding pension liabilities, for example, the corporation was wanting to take a charge right now because of losses that have happened on the pension side. The rate review panel suggested that be deferred and that that not be undertaken right now but that indeed it's an idea that'll have to be addressed in the future. Similarly the corporation wanted

automated meter infrastructure so that could be more efficient. There was a \$16 million charge associated with that. The rate review panel said, again, that that should be maybe deferred and ensure that Saskatchewan residents get the lowest possible rate today. And we agree. The good work will be well respected.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, indeed one of the recommendations to save money was to — get this — to do a cost-benefit analysis before spending \$16 million on automated meter technology.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Spend it before . . . To the minister: can he tell me if they did any work at all on this file before they asked for a 13 per cent rate increase?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I can assure the member opposite that a lot of work has been done on the SaskPower file, mainly because of the infrastructure deficit that was left by members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — We will provide safe and reliable power, sustainable power to Saskatchewan businesses to ensure that we continue to have the fastest growing economy in the country. We will do so in a way, Mr. Speaker, and I've always said in this House, we will do so in a way that's a cost-effective manner to ensure that Saskatchewan residents pay the lowest cost possible. That's indeed the case that's true for SaskEnergy, and it's true for SaskPower as well.

If a body like the rate review panel says that things should be deferred, that's indeed what will happen. We'll ensure the strength of the corporation. We'll ensure that their balance sheet remains positive. And we will ensure that the days of infrastructure deficits are behind us, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we find out that, for as long as most natural pregnancies last, the price of natural gas has been dropping for nine months now, while they ignored it, while they ignored it. The rate review panel cited more than \$11 million in natural gas savings earlier today and asked that those be passed . . .

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And of course the rate review panel did its job. They recommended that it be passed on. The rate review panel also recommended that before they spend \$16 million on automated meter reading technology, they actually do a cost-benefit analysis. Well I say congratulations to the rate review panel.

Can the minister tell us about the \$750,000 the panel recommended that they not spend on the president's responsibility centre? Just what in the world is that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much. Since becoming government, we've encouraged SaskPower to reach out to other corporations to look at partnering, to look at strategic partnerships going forward. That can be done within the corporation. We've asked them to streamline the operations of SaskPower International to bring that work into . . . And the president has made the assurance that she will take direct responsibility for that operation.

There were additional dollars that were asked for in that regard, Mr. Speaker. Again the rate review panel said that that good work should be deferred, and right now we should concentrate on providing the service at the lowest possible cost until things improve as far as the capital markets go, and indeed that's what will be done. That commitment was made we became government. That commitment remains today. And that commitment will ensure that we have a growing province going forward.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order for the standing committees on Human Services and Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to do their important work, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that in order to facilitate the work of committees, this House do now stand adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:24.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
The Speaker	2851
Morgan	
Quennell	
Norris	2852
Morin	2852
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Trew	2852
Higgins	2852
Iwanchuk	
Forbes	
Morin	2853
Broten	
Vermette	2853
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
Holocaust Memorial Service	
Junor	2853
Remembering Keith Whyte	
Duncan	2854
Northern Saskatchewan's Curling Champions	
Belanger	2854
Victims of Crime Awareness Week	
Harrison	2854
Saskatoon Local Area Planning	
Quennell	2855
Humboldt Broncos Win Anavet Cup	
Harpauer	2855
Battlefords Community Players	
Taylor	2855
QUESTION PERIOD	
Review of Hospital Policy	
Junor	2856
McMorris	2856
Controlling Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Morin	2857
Heppner	2857
2010 Winter Olympics	
Nilson	2858
Tell	2858
Rate Review Panel's Recommendations for SaskPower	
Trew	2859
Cheveldayoff	

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