



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

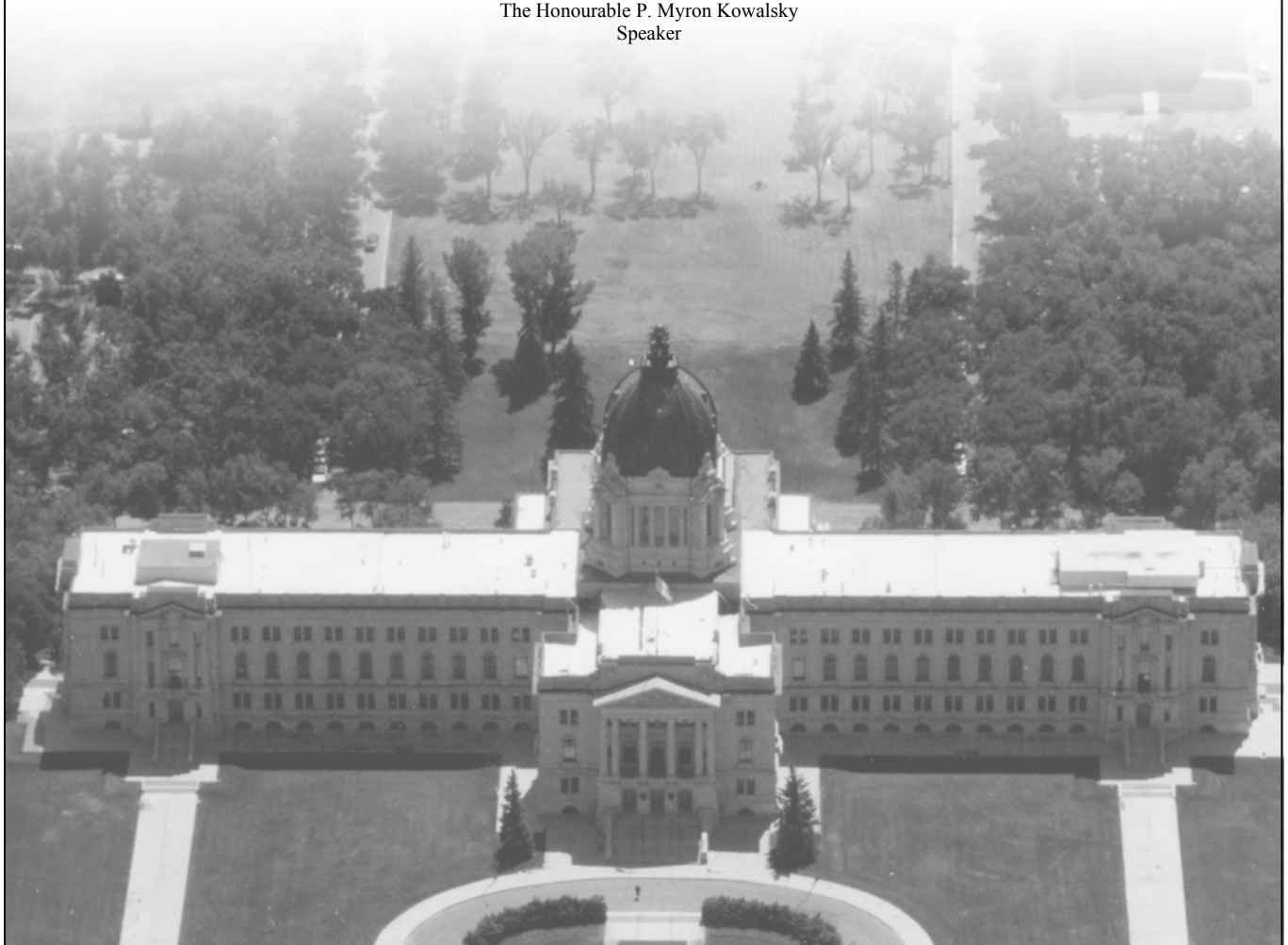
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, 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, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, 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
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
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, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, 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, Hon. 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

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to stand once again to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills — and some of Wood River as a matter of fact — concerning the hours of operation of the Climax health centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Frontier, Climax, Shaunavon, Eastend, and Bracken.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition regarding Luseland and Dodsland ambulance service. The petition states that these services provide vital life-saving services for the residents in those two areas. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of this petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Dodsland and Luseland ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures, and there's quite a number of them, are from the communities of Plenty, Dodsland, and Kerrobert. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand to present a petition on behalf of citizens around the Claybank area regarding their beautiful and historic brick plant. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider the decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in the Briercrest area.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about their long-term care facilities. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that long-term care facilities in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency are not closed or further downsized.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn and Radville.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I rise with a petition from citizens that are extremely concerned about the cuts to the environment services in the province, especially in the North. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to reduce Saskatchewan Environment's presence in northern Saskatchewan, including the reduction in forest fighting services and the closure of Environment offices.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Cumberland House.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here for citizens that want to halt crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and reduction in coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from the town of Hawarden. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens opposed to the closure of the Radisson School. 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 Radisson School fall under the two-year moratorium on school closures, and allow the community and the school division the opportunity to consult on alternatives to the closing of the Radisson School.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Radisson and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible downsizing or closure of the Craik Health Centre. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that Craik Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

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

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received:

A new petition concerning the Echo Valley Conference Centre, sessional paper 196;

A petition concerning a reduction in forest fighting services, 197;

A petition concerning Radisson School, 198;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 63, 166, 167, 170, 180, and 182.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 53 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: has the forensic audit of the MACSI Centre been completed? When will the findings of this audit be made public?

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a second question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 53 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the progress on the establishment of an emergency mattress detox treatment centre in Saskatoon?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure, to you and through you to members of the legislature, to introduce two women that are sitting in your gallery. They're here visiting today from Moose Jaw. Donna Cavanagh, born and raised in the Moose Jaw area, along with her daughter, Angie Belcher, are here to visit this afternoon.

Now I know many members of Donna's family and Angie's family from Moose Jaw and area, and it's always nice to have constituents come to the . . . for the day to visit and see what business is conducted here in the legislature.

I would also like to pass along congratulations to Angie. Now I'm told she is a real Saskatchewan girl at heart. She works in one of the dental offices in Moose Jaw as a dental assistant and is going on to school this fall to become a dental hygienist. So congratulations. And it's young people like this that we're working hard to provide a good future here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) we like to think that our constituents come to see us and we're very proud when they are here. But both of these are family members, and Donna is a sister of Rhonda Romanuk that works in your office, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask everyone to please welcome them both here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly, four grade 9 and 10 students from the Balcarres School who are seated in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Brenda MacPherson.

And since the group is so small, I'll introduce each one of the students we have with us today: Kenny Stonechild — and if you could give a little wave so we know who you are, Kenny — Howie Creeley, Josh Starr, and Justin Starr.

And, Mr. Speaker, these four students are part of an alternative education program at Balcarres. And I met with them just a few minutes ago and they tell me that every day in the Balcarres

School they operate toonie Tuesday which may be of some interest to the member from Melfort. And with the profits that they earn by operating this lunch at the Balcarres School, they used some of the money to buy lunch today at one of the pizza establishments here in Regina.

And they also are responsible for the milk service at the school and before they came to visit with us today, they had to make sure that they got the milk all in the coolers and so on.

And so I will wish . . . I'm sure they'll have an interesting rest of the day. And I'd like all members to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House, a group of 29 students from Winston Knoll Collegiate in my constituency.

And I'd like to read their names out . . . Just kidding. But I would like to welcome their teacher, Tana Mitchell. And I would also like to bring a special welcome, once again, to Tana from the member from Regina Elphinstone.

And we welcome all of them to this legislature. We hope that they gain some good experience and have an interesting time here. And I look forward to meeting with them following this session.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming them. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce 23 grade 4 students from Wadena Elementary School sitting in the east gallery.

With them is the teachers and parents: Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Achtymichuk, Mrs. Melnyk, Mrs. Prince, Mrs. Wadowich, Mrs. Statchuk; and the bus driver, Mrs. Hanna.

Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to meet with these students before. They had a number of really great questions. And I'm a little worried that some of them are going to take my job when I'm finished here. They seem very interested in the position here in the legislature.

And I would like you to welcome them all to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to introduce to you, through you and to all members of the Assembly, in the Speaker's gallery, Trevor Morin — perhaps he can stand or give a wave. He's a sessional researcher in the NDP (New Democratic Party) caucus office and providing us with excellent, excellent research and support. And I'd like to welcome him to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

McClure Place

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s McClure United Church in my constituency initiated an outreach project aimed at providing affordable housing for senior citizens. It took thousands of volunteer hours, but in the spring of 1989, McClure Place, a 109-suite apartment tower, was opened. The facility is administered by the McClure Place Association, a non-profit corporation that provides residents with a safe, caring environment where they can maintain their privacy and right to self-determination.

Now, Mr. Speaker, McClure Place is in the process of raising funds to expand its facility and its service to seniors with the McClure Place assisted living project. This project will provide resources and accommodation for seniors and others who are unable to live independently, but who, with 24-hour support and assistance, are able to maintain a good quality of life. And, Mr. Speaker, the McClure Place Association intends to make this accommodation affordable to people on limited incomes.

The new facility will house up to 24 individuals and the project will provide a daytime registered nurse, three nutritious meals a day, and programs to meet residents' physical, social, and spiritual needs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking the board and staff of McClure Place for their hard work on behalf of the community and in wishing them every success with their fundraising efforts to support and implement the McClure Place assisted living project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Radisson School

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Radisson parents continued their fight to save the school Monday night at the Radisson town hall. An overflow crowd of 200 people filed into the hall to hear its community leaders explain the options the community has. Rod Hamilton, Chair of the local school board in Radisson read a petition that was developed with legal advice, and a letter sent to the Minister of Learning, and also a petition that I presented to the citizens of Radisson to sign.

Comments from the floor included a discussion of the Radisson

School upgrade to the standards of 1991, which was part of a \$1.6 million major upgrade and expansion. These improvements included mechanical renovations to provide heat exchangers, complete with economizers, humidifiers, and modern mechanical units to create better air quality and a healthier environment for children to grow and learn.

Concerns were raised about the long-term viability of Radisson and the negative effect the school closure will have on the ability of the community to attract investment and people. It was decided to petition the NDP government first to ensure that Radisson School fall under the two-year moratorium on school closures and allow the community the opportunity to consult on alternatives to the closing of the Radisson School.

(13:45)

It was decided to petition the provincial government to change the boundaries of the Battlefords School Division to include Radisson, and to consider taking legal action to stop the closure and allow Radisson to fall under the moratorium. A delegation from Radisson will be travelling to Regina shortly to make its case in person to the NDP government.

Please join me in congratulating the community of Radisson in its valiant battle to save its school.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

World's First Facility to Recover Titanium and Zircon

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Titanium Corporation Inc. recently announced the grand opening of the world's first pilot plant facility to recover titanium and zircon from oil sands. This \$5 million facility will be at Regina's Research Park and will be made up of a wet mill separation plant built by the Titanium Corporation together with an adjoining dry mill plant leased from the Saskatchewan Research Council.

Mr. Speaker, the world titanium and zircon markets account for \$12 billion per year. The demand for titanium feedstock has tripled in the last 30 years and the demand for zircon has doubled in the last 10. And, Mr. Speaker, these substances have no known substitutes.

This project is an excellent addition to Regina's Research Park whose 25 tenant companies employ more than 800 people and contribute almost \$195 million annually to the economy of this province.

This mineral processing facility will demonstrate Titanium Corporation's technology to recover high-grade, titanium-bearing minerals and zircon concentrates from the oil sand tailings of Syncrude Canada. Titanium Corporation is the only company in the world with a patent-pending process to recover titanium and zircon from oil sands.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing Titanium Corporation for being leaders in their industry and for

choosing to utilize the talent and technology found right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Fundraiser for World Vision

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak about the recent achievements of 10 students and two teachers from the Margaret McClumb School in Semans.

On April 22 and 23, this dedicated group participated in a 30-hour famine as a fundraiser for World Vision. It began the famine at 9 a.m., then attended classes all day Thursday. They stayed overnight together in the school gym while only drinking water and juice to stay hydrated. Friday morning they attended classes and the 30-hour fast was over when classes ended at 3 p.m.

The students raised \$500 for World Vision to be used to feed and support two Third World children and their families for one year.

The students learned that living in a country as well off as Canada makes it difficult to understand world hunger until you actually face it. But they did, for over 30 hours.

I would ask that all members join me in congratulating the high school students at Semans for their contribution towards ending world hunger. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Economic Growth in Meadow Lake

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After last night's MLA hockey game I'm so pleased to be able to still rise in the legislature. I digress.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA representing the town of Meadow Lake, I'm pleased today to echo the sentiments of a local economic development officer, Barry Lewis, who has nothing but praise for the state of the Meadow Lake economy. As noted in a recent issue of the *Meadow Lake Progress*, Mr. Speaker, large construction projects and home starts are just one sign the community is continuing to grow and develop. In the last few months, Meadow Lake has also had a number of new businesses open up. And, Mr. Speaker, a number of businesses currently operating in town are looking to expand.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the Eagle Creek GM (General Motors) dealership is about to begin a \$1.8 million project that will add 7,000 square feet to the dealership and result in more jobs in sales, mechanics, and parts. As well, Mr. Speaker, the Meadow Lake SARCAN recycling facility is expanding its building as is the accounting firm Svenkeson and Johnson.

Add to this, Mr. Speaker, the grand opening of a new value-added wood products venture in my hometown of Goodsoil, and the grand opening of the Meadow Lake Oriented Strand Board plant, the largest oriented strand board processing facility in the world, I might add, and clearly we are talking about economy that is doing extremely well.

I want to thank the Meadow Lake business community for their positive attitude and entrepreneurial spirit, and I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in congratulating and wishing even more success to the community of Meadow Lake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild Annual Wood Show

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to kick off the 26th annual wood show of the Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild on Friday, May 28. Wood 2004 is a non-juried exhibition of works that runs from May 29 to June 6 at The Galleria building on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

This event showcases the talent and creativity of more than 225 guild members from across the province. The Saskatchewan Woodworkers' Guild is an organization that is very involved in the community. Members raise money for UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) through a pumpkin carving contest in October, and make toys for the Denny Carr secret Santa campaign so that less fortunate are able to enjoy Christmas.

Education is one of the main objectives of the guild, and members participate in various mentorship programs with youth. Guild volunteers hold demonstrations and classes at the Yarrow Youth Farm, Saskatoon-area schools, and various guides and scouts. These sessions are a valuable tool in reaching out to a wide cross-section of young people and adults.

Completing a woodworking project together lends a sense of pride and ownership that is important in the development and education of our youth. The education mentorship program has provided a new vocational option for some of these young people. I extend my thanks to my constituent, Walter McNabb, the Chair of Wood 2004 for inviting me to open the event, and I wish him and all guild members continued success as they share their skills in the medium of woodworking.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Students Win at National Science Fair

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to tell the House about the accomplishments of a number of Saskatoon high school students at the 2004 Canada-Wide Science Fair recently held in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, Kimberly Richards, a grade 9 student at Walter Murray Collegiate in my constituency of Saskatoon Eastview, won the overall prize at the Saskatoon Regional Science Fair for her project on wheat genetics.

This sent her on to the Canada-Wide Science Fair, where she won the EnCana Energy Platinum Award for best intermediate project, a gold medal in biotechnology, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Prize, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Peace and Development Prize, and a trip to the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Youth Science Festival this summer in Beijing.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Oleg Petelin, also a grade 9 student at Walter Murray, won a bronze medal in the earth and environmental sciences category, and another Walter Murray grade 9 student, Jennifer Wang, got an honourable mention in the category of engineering and computer sciences.

Two grade 12 students from Mount Royal Collegiate, Joel Rempel and David Barsi, got an honourable mention in physical and mathematical sciences.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of my colleagues will join me in congratulating these fine students on their accomplishments, and in wishing them every success in all their future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Crystal Methamphetamine

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since becoming Leader of the Official Opposition in March, I've had the opportunity to travel to a number of communities across Saskatchewan and talk to community groups and leaders, First Nations chiefs, mayors, parents, and young people. One concern that we do hear coming up in those discussions with the people of the province is a concern about the presence of and the very negative potential of crystal methamphetamines in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, crystal meth is a new form of speed. It's easy to make, alarmingly easy to make. It's relatively cheap to buy. It's more addictive than most drugs that are on the street, and it is used mainly by young people. Unfortunately the recipes that will tell young people how to make it are easily accessible. They are available on the Internet. If you search the Government of Saskatchewan's Internet Web site, however, you won't find any mention of crystal meth or meth as it's referred to.

Mr. Speaker, the question for the government is this: what specifically is the Government of Saskatchewan doing to educate parents and young people about the dangers of using meth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular substance has been a long-time concern of this government. As the Minister of Justice, in November 1998, I organized a conference with the Attorney General of Manitoba and the Attorney General of North Dakota called Erasing Borders. It was held in Winnipeg to educate our police officers and others interested in our central part of North America around this particular issue. It's been an issue that's been looked at from the policing side for quite a number of years.

Also on the health side, this is part of our overall education outreach as far as a substance that is of concern. Specifically we are working on even a broader education campaign for exactly the reason that the member opposite raises . . . is that it is showing up in our communities, but it's something we anticipated almost six years ago.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for that answer, and we'll maybe able to explore exactly what the government has in mind in terms of this educational program a little bit later on.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of groups and leaders within the province that are raising concern about meth. In Saskatchewan, the chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Alphonse Bird, has told us that he believes meth has the potential or is already becoming an epidemic among young First Nations people. Prince Albert Mayor Jim Stiglitz is concerned about the presence of the drug in his community, in an increase in violent crime in the city attended with the proliferation of that drug.

Parents and schools are taking it on themselves now to hold meetings. I think they've been held in Tisdale, P.A. (Prince Albert), Melfort, and Saskatoon. This is a drug that is used by young people, Mr. Speaker, in both rural and urban Saskatchewan and by those in low-, middle-, or high-income families.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question for the minister additionally is this: what is the prevalence of crystal meth? What research has the government done to determine just how widespread it is here in the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan, working within the health but across a number of different areas, we have what's called the alcohol and drug services provincial working group. And this is a specific topic that they have taken upon themselves this year to emphasize in the Substance Abuse Awareness Week, that is an annual part, because of some of the concerns that are there. Their goal is to get the information out even more broadly than it is already.

There are a number of issues around basic information, but there are also a number of things that we have been working on and doing from the Justice department side to give more tools to the police. And if another question comes, I'll let my colleague, the Attorney General, answer some of those.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the minister though will answer this question with specific reference to what exactly then the government is doing. The minister did highlight that they've been working on the issue for six years. But if you do a search of the government Web site, you won't find any reference at all to crystal meth.

And if there are some materials available right now for parents or for students . . . because what's essential here I think, Mr. Speaker, is that there's information available in our school system, available to our parents in Saskatchewan who want to talk to their kids about this particular drug and potentially other addictions.

So I'd ask the minister this, in light of his comment that they've been working on it for some time, what is currently available in terms of materials and information for parents in Saskatchewan, for schools in Saskatchewan, on the issue of meth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the outreach programs of the regional health authorities deal with a number of substances, and they work at the level around everything from alcohol to this to some of the other dangerous products, and they have information there.

But I think the point being made here, and it's there for all of us, is that something that we were concerned about arising here in western Canada, because it was such a problem in the Midwest of the United States, is now coming, bubbling up in a way that we all should be concerned. And I know that's why they have picked this topic this year for special emphasis during the Substance Abuse Awareness Week.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess we'd ask the government to highlight specifically what's available now. And is the government itself, is his department — the Health department — making some specific materials available for schools and parents? And where could they find those materials, so we can make sure that there's information and education and awareness out there?

One of the big problems with meth unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, is that it's easy to make. The ingredients can be purchased at a pharmacy or a local hardware store. They include things like cold medicine and hydrous ammonia, antifreeze, battery acid, lye, and drain cleaner. Just to list off those ingredients, Mr. Speaker, gives you an idea of how dangerous the drug is.

There is easily accessible recipes, but again I think what we don't know about . . . and would ask the minister to highlight exactly what there is available in our province right now in light of the fact that they have been working on it for six years. If parents or schools would like some information, some materials

to be able to use in terms of awareness in education about this very insidious drug, where should they call, and what is available?

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, over the last several years we have been working with school divisions in particular and working with teachers to develop an improved curriculum around these very unhealthy lifestyles and unfortunate choices that many students and children make.

The curriculum has been updated in a number of ways. This deals with not simply this particular drug, and I understand the member's concern about that. But obviously, drug usage by youth and by children is a very serious concern of this administration. As such, we have undertaken changes in the health curriculum. We have undertaken to implement mandatory AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) education in terms of promoting healthy lifestyles that way. There are a number of different initiatives that have been undertaken on that basis within the education system.

One of the things of course within the school system we are ever mindful of is needed to ensure that the curriculum and what is taught in the schools reflects the community values. And as such, while we build in those tools that they are available for our teachers to work on, we try to be mindful of how those are introduced into the school system and still allow a great deal of flexibility for teachers and the local community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister for that response. Crystal meth is not only appealing to young people because it's cheap to buy. One hit of meth, also known as a point, is equivalent to one-tenth of a gram and sells on the street for 10 bucks. According to law enforcement officers and community health workers, young people also are buying meth because the value, the quote "value" they would get for that 10 bucks. One hit for example produces a high that lasts for 24 hours, whereas more expensive cocaine produces a high that might only last for a couple of hours.

Meth is very, very dangerous. One law enforcement officer told us recently, cocaine is Girl Guide cookies compared to meth.

And so, Mr. Speaker, again to the government, and if the Education minister now has some answers, I think it would behoove him to indicate what is the prevalence of the crystal meth problem? Does the government, if they've been working on it for some period of time, do they know the prevalence of this drug in Saskatchewan? In other provinces they're doing surveys of high school students. Is that happening here? Does the government have a handle on the scope of the problem in the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I've had occasion to meet with the leadership of the police services in Saskatchewan to

discuss strategies and tactics aimed at organized crime in the province, and this particular issue and this particular drug which I can't give the member opposite any statistics, but we appreciate is a growing problem. And I say when we appreciate that, we appreciate it in Justice, and I think it's appreciated in the police services.

The provincial government, the Justice department provincially is working with the federal government on changes to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to perhaps address what is now a new drug or a new drug since that Act came into existence.

Training is being provided to police officers on how to investigate laboratory sites. And as all members of the House will know, we have introduced legislation, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, directed in part at drug laboratories and drug depots in people's neighbourhoods to address that problem. I'm hoping that the members of the opposition will support that legislation wholeheartedly as it is directed at particularly these kind of topics and has the enthusiastic support of the police services of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister is talking about enforcement. It's certainly an important part of this issue. Meth dealers, we know they'll sell to anyone. Some will even give away samples for those who wish to try it out.

One method used to sell the drugs specifically to young girls, according to the research we've been able to find, is to tell them it will help them lose weight. Sadly that might be a pretty appealing sales pitch. So the drug dealers are using it to take advantage of young people and to the extent it begins to proliferate in our province that's happening now and arguably could . . . the potential for it to happen to a greater degree is there as well.

So again, notwithstanding the minister's comments about enforcement, I think if the government has been looking at this for some period of time, there's some basics we need to understand, we need to determine, so we can make sure there is an awareness and education on this issue so no child . . . so children simply don't try it; so young people won't try it.

And so I ask again: does the government know what the prevalence of it is? If they have been working on it for some period of time . . . and what specifically do they have in mind? What materials can they help provide to municipalities or to school districts, to parents who wish to ensure that their children, the young people in our province, don't try crystal meth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I think what we need to identify here is that the issue that needs to be dealt with is the decision of young people to make an unhealthy lifestyle choice to try drugs. It is not specifically an issue with crystal meth. Crystal meth may now be the drug of choice, but there are other problems that we

have experienced — whether that is marijuana usage, whether that is the cocaine problems that we've seen, whether that is Ritalin. I mean, there are a number of different drugs, and this tends to move from drug of choice to drug of choice.

What we need to do and what we have been doing is been working with the school system to make sure children have a good understanding at an early grade about making healthy choices and healthy lifestyle decisions. Certainly there is an ongoing strategy, as the Minister of Health has outlined — as in work with the Justice community, with the Health community, with the Education partners — about how do we deal with drug awareness, how do we help make sure young people don't decide to turn to this.

So I appreciate . . . While the member raises a concern specifically around crystal meth, I think really the larger issue here is about the healthy lifestyle choices and how we promote that.

I understand that there is a concern today about the availability of crystal meth. I think the Minister of Justice has addressed that. And we will embark on retooling the curriculum to make sure it deals specifically with this particular drug. But again our focus, I think, needs to remain on making sure there are healthy choices available for young people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — I think what those in addictions counselling and those in the enforcement community are saying though in terms of, you know, in terms of this particular drug, is how easily it is to manufacture, how relatively cheap it is, and how potentially easily accessible it is to young people, and — perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker — how dangerous it is to those who would try it or, worse, get addicted to it.

Prolonged meth abuse results in psychological effects that resemble schizophrenia. The symptoms are characterized by anger and panic, hallucinations, paranoia, violent behaviour. Meth induced paranoia can lead to homicidal or suicidal thoughts. Long-term effects include fatal kidney and lung disorders, liver damage, chronic depression, brain damage, blood clots, and deficient immune systems and it's very, very addictive, Mr. Speaker.

So there is, unfortunately, some unique elements to this particular challenge. And again, what is the minister specifically proposing to do? Can he commit today that there's materials being worked on to increase awareness of this, to make them available to parents in Saskatchewan who would like to have that kind of help when they talk to their children about meth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I too and members on this side share this concern with this particular drug because of its potential linkage to increased prevalence of schizophrenia among people who have used it. This is a very troubling incident that is associated with this particular drug.

I can tell members of this Assembly that we will embark on a much more rigorous campaign, a public awareness so that people have a better understanding of the potential dangers of this. We will do that within the existing curriculum in terms of making sure that we continue to have a program within the schools. We'll do that in concert with the health districts. We'll do that in concert with the legal authorities who I know take this very seriously in an effort to stomp this out within our communities.

But it needs to be a multi-faceted approach. And we will absolutely be doing everything we can to deal with this particular drug, just as we need to do and continue to make sure that we drive home the message to young people that — whether it's this, whether it's Ritalin, whether it's marijuana — that drug usage is not a healthy lifestyle choice and has dangerous, dangerous consequences attached to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interesting that three ministers have responded. Interesting because in other provinces in Western Canada there are some interdepartmental or interministerial committees that other governments have formed to deal with this issue.

In Alberta, there was such a committee formed in July '03. The ministries include Agriculture, Aboriginal Affairs, Environment, Northern Development, Health and Wellness, Justice, Learning, Municipal Affairs, Solicitor General. There are several areas of focus for this particular group in Alberta — clandestine labs, treatment, the environment. And they're looking at Criminal Code changes, advocating for Criminal Code changes to make the precursors or the supplies to this . . . the manufacture of meth, more difficult to get. In British Columbia, the crystal meth strategy is also due out this summer.

So then, question to any of the ministers over there: is there a similar interministerial strategy being developed here? And has our province reached out to other provinces, and other states for that matter, who are down the road in terms of a strategy on crystal meth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, as I think everybody knows, the ministers — particularly the ministers involved in human services, the ministers of Health, the ministers of Learning, and the Minister of Justice — talk about all kinds of issues all the time. And there are a number of issues, and drug addiction is certainly one of them, where if it can be handled in the educational system, if it can be handled in the health system, then it doesn't fall by default to the justice system. Of course that's preferable, and certainly that's the strategy of this government, Mr. Speaker.

On changes to federal legislation, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that our provincial Justice department is speaking to the federal government about changes to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to address this problem and that we are, as part of a wide government response on drug abuse on the Justice

side, bringing before this House our Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act which will empower neighbourhoods to address the issues of drug houses in their neighbourhoods.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Severance Package for Former Deputy Minister

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Labour stood in this House and tried to justify, tried to defend a \$150,000 severance package for a hand-picked NDP deputy minister that worked in this province for less than a year and a half.

Mr. Speaker, on budget day the NDP fired hundreds of government employees. Some of those employees worked for the government for 10, 15, 20 years or more. Those employees received severance packages varying from two weeks to a month for every year of service. But not the NDP hand-picked deputy minister. This deputy minister received \$150,000 worth of severance. That works out to one month of severance for one month of service, Mr. Speaker. Is that the standard the NDP are setting for their own hand-picked deputy ministers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for the public service.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, I want to indicate to the people of this province that we believe that it's important to have employment practices that are fair to the people that we're dealing with. And what we do, Mr. Speaker, is we work to negotiate settlements based on common law.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to government in 1991, we had quite an interesting set of severance packages that exceeded industry standard, and that's why we brought into place The Crown Employment Contracts Act in the early 1990s, which set out the parameters that we deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say to the member that the former deputy minister in question has received seven months salary, totalling \$72,877. In addition, Mr. Speaker, if she isn't able to find a job by the fall, she will receive payment of three additional months for October, November, and December. And Mr. Speaker, I'll give the other details as the member gets into questions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, that's quite interesting that the government is admitting they've got some guidelines for when they sever deputy ministers. Are the guidelines really \$150,000 worth of severance for 18 months work? Mr. Speaker, that's the question: what are the guidelines, and who made these guidelines up? I would say it was the NDP government made up guidelines for their own hand-picked deputy minister, Mr.

Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's something seriously wrong with this when a person is eligible as the minister said — hasn't received yet but is more than eligible and probably more than likely — to receive up to \$150,000 worth of severance. I would ask the minister to table a copy of guidelines that she's quoting from. What can we expect for the next severance package for deputy ministers that are fired by this government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that under all senior executive employment contracts, if an employee moves to the province of Saskatchewan and if that employee is terminated within a three-year period, they're entitled to receive relocation costs relative to the relocation costs that they had prior to coming here, Mr. Speaker. Now if Ms. Tanner, if Ms. Tanner moves to Saskatoon or Regina, she will be entitled to moving costs. If she moves back to the Northwest Territories, she's entitled to relocation costs.

(14:15)

Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the members opposite is that she's received \$72,877 plus \$5,000 in career assistance. And if she requires a move elsewhere, that will be paid for, Mr. Speaker. If she can't get employment by October, November or December, she will be paid her monthly . . .

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are going to wind up paying the bill for a mistake the NDP made when they hired this person. Obviously they didn't do their research, or they didn't do their homework because shortly — 18 months later — they had to let this person go.

They paid \$80,000, Mr. Speaker, to move this woman into Saskatchewan and out of Saskatchewan. They paid 40,000 to bring her here. Now they're on the hook for another 42,000 to move her outside . . . move her back out of this province, Mr. Speaker. For just a year and a half of work — Mr. Speaker, this sounds unreasonable.

Will the minister table the document that shows they should be paying \$80,000 to move a person in and out of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the public service.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, when the government came to office . . . When the New Democratic Party government came to office in the early 1990s, we were met with some amazing sweetheart deals put in place by the former government. Let's talk about George Hill who had a \$423,000

salary and a \$1.3 million severance package. Let's talk about deputy ministers who got one year's salary plus two months for every year in service. That's why we put in place the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Our legislation beats common law and, Mr. Speaker, if they would talk to Mr. Morgan, he would tell them that that . . . Or pardon me, the member from the southwest . . . or southeast Saskatoon, their Justice critic, he would tell them that this is entirely reasonable given common law practices.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it really sounds like the pot is calling the kettle black. She likes to name off a couple of severance packages that happened back in the 1990s. But I remember a severance package that happened to a former NDP cabinet minister, Mr. Jack Messer when he left SaskPower.

It was wrong back in 1990, and it was wrong back in the year 2000, and it's wrong in the year 2004, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, will the minister stand up and admit that paying \$150,000 worth of severance for 18 months work is unreasonable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, just for the member's information, it is not a \$150,000 severance package. What we have given to the member is a \$73,000 lump payment. That's what is out today.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I like to hear from the members opposite because for many people in this province common law or the law does make some sense. And I know the members opposite don't really like to talk about legal principles that are common in this province and across the country, so it really does tell us something about the members opposite. But we do practise common law guidelines, Mr. Speaker. This kind of severance practice is set down in law, Mr. Speaker, and so we are simply following practices that exist all across the country based on judicial decisions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Rosemont, the Minister of Community Resources and Employment, has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — On a more positive note, Mr. Speaker, today we had a luncheon to recognize some special guests who were honoured for long service awards serving on housing authority boards. Today we honoured four board members who completed 25 years of volunteer service, and one board member who has the distinction of completing 30 years, Mr. Speaker. And I think they give a different gift just to show the ones that completed 25 if they do another five, then they'll have the opportunity to be in the next category.

Recognition of long service continues to be a regular initiative by the Sask Housing Corporation, and it acknowledges the many volunteers who contribute to social housing. Our gratitude is focused on our honourees who are part of the special quarter century club. And I'm going to read off the names of the honourees, and I'll ask you to please stand as I read out your name.

Mr. Larry Shaw, chairperson, Morse Housing Authority, 25 years of service.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Now we heard he's a handyman, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. James Dushire, chairperson, Wilkie Housing Authority, 25 years of service.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We weren't sure when he had time to run his business with all the volunteer work.

Mrs. Eva Wishnevetski, vice-chairperson, Kamsack Housing Authority, 25 years of service.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We heard that Eva has also served an elected life.

Mrs. Julie Gerwing, secretary, Lake Lenore Housing Authority.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thirty years of service, Mr. Speaker. And she was actually, at one time worked in an airline plant in previous years.

Mrs. Donna Selinger, chairperson, Lampman Housing Authority, 25 years of service.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And Donna certainly is a well-respected member of her community.

So I just want to say that their contribution demonstrates and reinforces this province's renown for volunteerism, but also creates a lasting legacy that benefits all of us for years to come. So thank you very much for your service to the community.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to join the minister in recognizing these five individuals for their service to the province of Saskatchewan. As the minister said, these people were officially recognized at a luncheon that was just held in Regina. And, Mr. Speaker, these distinguished guests will be touring the legislature later.

I would just like to, on behalf of the official opposition, congratulate these people for their volunteer work with the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation over the many years. It's a very important job that these people have done for the Saskatchewan people.

Also while I'm on my feet, I'd like to introduce one person in particular, Mr. James Dushire, the chairperson of the Wilkie Housing Authority, who is among the honourees today, and I'd like to thank him for his 25 years of service.

I'd like to ask the members to join me in congratulating these people here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 458 and 459.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 458 and 459 have been submitted. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable, questions no. 460 through 475 inclusive.

The Speaker: — I have questions 460 through to 475 have been converted to orders for return (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies and

the Standing Committee on the Economy, I'd move the House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 14:24.

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CABINET MINISTERS

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Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson
Minister of Crown Management Board
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford
Minister of Community Resources and Employment
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues
Minister Responsible for Gaming

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