



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

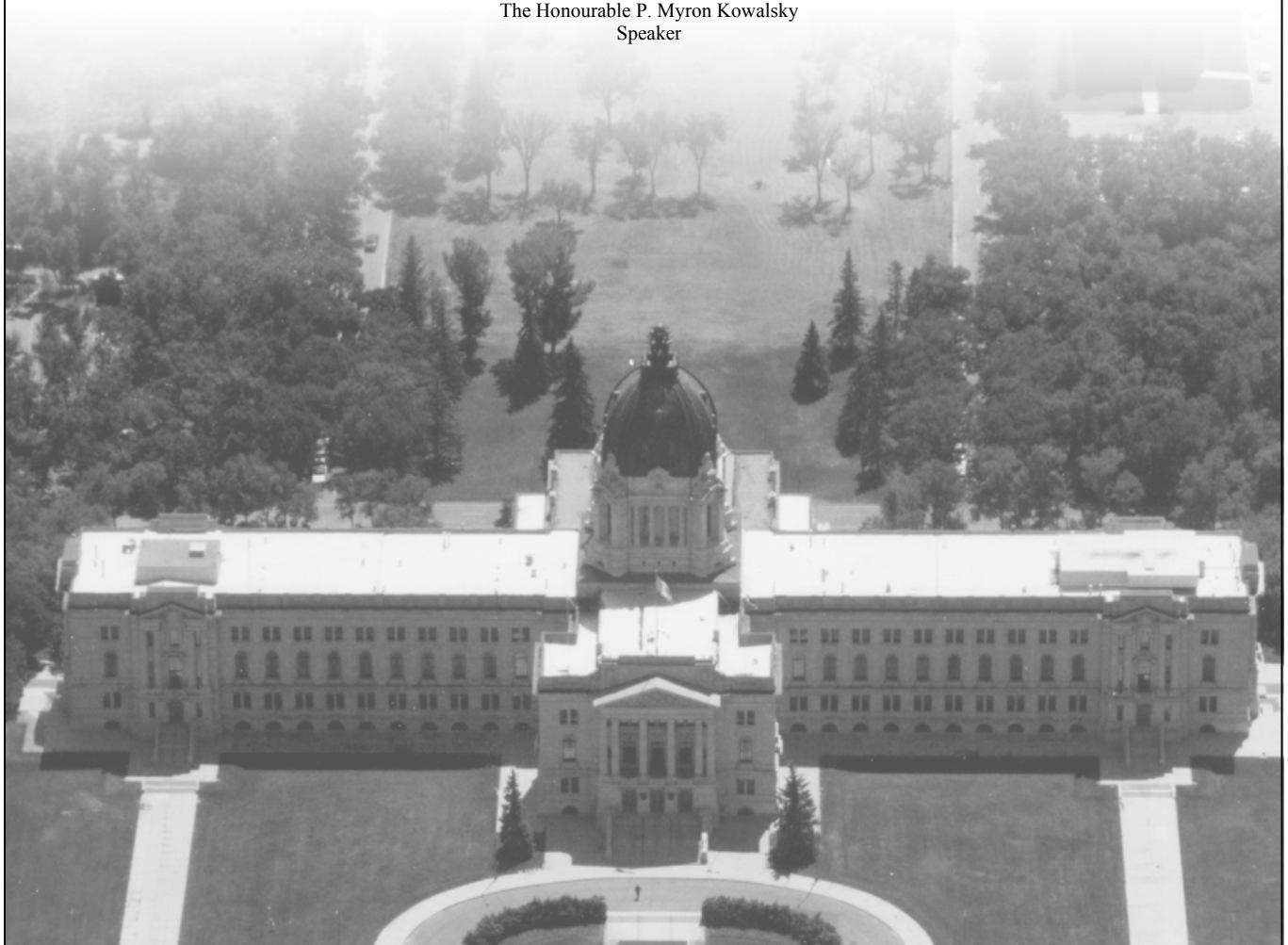
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to present a petition regarding a new hospital in Humboldt. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Humboldt and Quill Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After numerous promises, the people of Humboldt are anxious for their hospital. The prayer reads as follows on this petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of the community of Humboldt, as well as Archerwill and Muenster. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. 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 fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And these signatures, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Lanigan, Muenster, and Bruno and Humboldt. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of petitioners from the Humboldt constituency concerned about the need for a new hospital in Humboldt. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital.

And the petitioners today are from Humboldt and Englefeld.

I'll also table a petition with respect to group home spaces in Swift Current. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of the people from the Humboldt area who are asking that the government look at their hospital:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the necessary funding for a new hospital in Humboldt.

The people that have signed this petition are from Humboldt, Englefeld, and Naicam.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from signatures here in the province of Saskatchewan. These are from people who are concerned that forced amalgamation will not achieve any cost savings and therefore will not result in any reduction of property tax. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to rescind its decision to force school boards to amalgamate.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the community of Dinsmore, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with this government's lack of commitment to the Humboldt hospital. 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 fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Humboldt and Muenster.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding the hospital in Humboldt and a petition by the citizens of Humboldt area. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and to provide funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt, Mr. Speaker.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by people from Watson.

And at the same time I also have a petition I'd like to present regarding the brick plant in Claybank. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of those people concerned about the lack of commitment from this government regarding a new hospital in Humboldt. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the necessary funding for a new hospital in Humboldt.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Humboldt. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to rise today with my colleagues in asking the government to keep their commitment in regard to the construction of the new hospital in Humboldt. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

The people signing this petition are from the area, certainly in my constituency, from the community of Watson. I'm pleased

to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition with people in Humboldt and surrounding community who are waiting for the long promised funding for the new hospital. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And the signatories, Mr. Speaker, are from Lanigan, LeRoy, Humboldt, Quill Lake, and Englefeld. I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens living in the area of Humboldt who are asking the government to honour their commitment to a new hospital. 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 fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of St. Gregor, Humboldt, Bruno, and Englefeld. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of the fine constituency of Humboldt. It's a petition for a new hospital in Humboldt. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

The signatures for the petition are from residents of Pilger, Benson, Fulda, and Humboldt. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am pleased to rise on behalf of the citizens of the Humboldt area that are petitioning for a new hospital. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by good citizens of Humboldt, Muenster, and Carmel. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of citizens from the Humboldt area who are asking the government to live up to a commitment to provide funding for a hospital. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

Mr. Speaker, signed by the citizens of Quill Lake, Muenster, Naicam, Lanigan, Guernsey, Humboldt, and Annaheim, Mr. Speaker. Not the Anaheim in California but the Annaheim in the Humboldt area. Thank you.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today on behalf of the citizens in Humboldt and area, and actually extending as close to Saskatoon which is adjacent to my own constituency. I will read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Humboldt, Muenster, and Lanigan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a petition for a new hospital in the Humboldt area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Humboldt, Wakaw, and Watson. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens who are looking for a new hospital in the community of Humboldt. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the necessary funding for a new hospital in Humboldt.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Muenster and Humboldt. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to offer a petition on behalf of the Humboldt hospital, which the Batoche constituency, the southern half, would be using this hospital. So the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the funding necessary for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And it is signed by the good people of Humboldt, Fulda, and Burr. Thank you.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received:

A petition concerning a new hospital in Humboldt; that's sessional paper no. 718.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 180, 637, 640, and 715.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 82 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources and Employment: what is the Department of Community Resources and Employment's policy and procedures for following up on a complaint made by a child against a parent whom the child is living with?

Second question:

Is it common practice for the department to place a child with a person who was involved in filing the complaint against the child's parent and, if not, what is the common practice for placing a child in foster care?

And:

When a child is placed in foster care and the department then learns that the child has become suicidal, what step does the department take to ensure the child's safety?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members, today I have the honour of introducing to you some special people who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They've gathered here today to participate in a tea and to honour Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen upon the completion of her appointment as Children's Advocate for Saskatchewan.

Seated in the front row of the Speaker's gallery, first of all, our Children's Advocate for the province of Saskatchewan, Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen. I wonder if you could indicate . . . Thank you. Deborah's husband, Rob Loewen; Deborah's father from British Columbia, Ed Parker; Deborah's sister, Lin Gallagher; and Deborah's parents-in-law, Jake and Marie Loewen, are here as well.

And seated directly behind her are other family, friends, and Children's Advocate staff. In addition to these guests, we also have some of the legislative officers of the Assembly, independent officers of the Assembly, here to join with us to honour Deborah Parker-Loewen — and I would ask them to indicate as well — the Chief Commissioner for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, Donna Scott; Information and Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Gary Dickson; the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Fred Wendel; Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Jean Ouellet; Provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Kevin Fenwick.

Would members please join me in extending a warm Assembly welcome to Deborah Parker-Loewen and to all of the guests that have gathered in her honour here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of government — I expect the Leader of the Opposition may want to do the same — I would also want to recognize in your gallery the presence of Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen, our Child Advocate. I know that we are setting some time aside later this afternoon to formally recognize her pioneering work over 10 years. But here in the context of the Assembly, I want to welcome her to this Assembly, perhaps for the last time in her capacity as our Children's Advocate, but I hope certainly not the last time over the years to come. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure on behalf of members of the official opposition to also recognize Dr. Parker-Loewen here today and to congratulate her on whatever is coming next in her life and to thank her for 10 years of service to the people of the province and to the children of Saskatchewan. We also want to acknowledge and thank Rob for sharing her with the children of the province and with the Legislative Assembly and many of us will look forward to the opportunity to say hello more informally a little bit later on.

Thank you for your service to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, I'd like to join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming Ms. Parker-Loewen. And certainly I've had opportunity to work with Ms. Loewen over the last number of years. We have agreed to disagree on one topic — we won't mention that — to spank or not to spank; I think that's what it was.

Regardless, Mr. Speaker, a number of guests have joined us in the gallery and last summer I had the pleasure of joining together with Muriel Parker and a number of her family members, and Muriel is here with us today. And it was interesting, as I drove into the yard, Ms. Parker-Loewen and her family drove in and, you know, for some reason I never drew the connection. But we celebrated that special day, the centenary farm family award for the Parker family.

And I want to congratulate the Parker family, and welcome Muriel. As well we have Garry Parker with us, Wesley Parker, Irene Regier, Heather Berlin, and Rosa Parker. Welcome to each and every one of you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the House a very talented group of 13- and 14-year-old baseball players from Moose Jaw.

These young athletes earned the right to represent their city, the province, and the country at the Junior Division World Little League Championships in Taylor, Michigan last summer. The Moose Jaw Little League Junior Division All-Stars won the provincial title, then the westerns, to advance to the national championships in Coquitlam, BC [British Columbia]. There they played a very thrilling final to win the Canadian title and the opportunity to compete against some of the best teams in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce each of the players: Adam Baer, Dustin Caplette-Tarrant, Jordan Colquhoun, Julio

Colquhoun, Jon Cotter, Justin Gibney, Dillon Hauck, Boyd Holland, Mike Holland, Joel Kot, Regan Kuzek, David Slack, Bryce Warner, and, Mr. Speaker, the head coach Kevin Meacher, and the assistant coaches, Mark Gould and Cody Murdock, and the manager, Al Cotter.

Mr. Speaker, this team is the only Saskatchewan Little League team to ever win a game at the world series at any age level. And at 20 years old, the youngest coaches in the tournament were there, but also set a record: they were the youngest to ever coach a Little League World Series game. And, Mr. Speaker, I hear that when they went to the coaches' briefing before the tournament started, these three young men were actually asked to leave because they thought they were ballplayers just kind of putting on a bit of a prank, that they weren't actually the coaches. But they're three very fine young men.

Mr. Speaker, these all-stars represented their country and city with class and honour, and made us all very proud. It takes hard work and dedication and skill to compete at this level, and each Moose Jaw player did his part to earn the team a spot at the Junior World Series. Mr. Speaker, the Junior All-Stars instilled enthusiasm in the people back home as sports fans, parents, and friends rallied behind these players.

And I'm sure my colleagues will join me in recognizing the Moose Jaw Little League All-Stars' achievements; the three coaches and their manager Al Cotter for their leadership; and all the volunteers and parents for their undying support which wouldn't have been possible without that. Congratulations to the Canadian Junior Little League national champions, the Moose Jaw All-Stars — and best of luck.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow in recognizing and congratulating the Moose Jaw Little League All-Stars and their families — many of whom are in attendance today — for a truly remarkable run that included a provincial championship, national championship, and the opportunity to participate in the world championship in Michigan last summer. The achievement and ability of this team to play together and to overcome obstacles is a great Saskatchewan story, Mr. Speaker. They are a great example of the determination that makes Saskatchewan people special, particularly Saskatchewan athletes.

I'd like to recognize all of the players and their coaches, Kevin Meacher, Mark Gould, Cody Murdock, and manager Al Cotter, for proudly representing Saskatchewan on the national and international stage and demonstrating that Saskatchewan's young athletes are world-class. And best of luck to all of you in the future.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations, the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, members of the advisory committee on Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations, who I met with earlier this morning and who are with us today sitting in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could signal to our guests to wave when I mention their names. The Chair of the advisory committee on Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations, Christine Devrome; Vice-Chair, Gerald Luciuk; committee members, Paul Ortynsky, Tony Harras, Nadia Prokopchuk; and secretary to the committee, Danylo Puderak.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, welcome these people to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the six individuals just introduced in the gallery, the advisory committee for Saskatchewan-Ukrainian relations.

I want to specially introduce a constituent of mine, Mr. Paul Ortynsky. Paul is a former mayor of the town of Canora and is a very active individual in my community and in my constituency.

I also want to pass, not to mention all of the six names, but I also want to extend a welcome to Gerry Luciuk. Gerry and I spent a little bit of time together back in university just a short while ago.

So I want to join with the minister in welcoming all the members to their Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As usual, my light didn't go off quite as quickly as I'd wished it had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . a nice easy one for the opposite members.

I would just like to also recognize Christine Devrome. She's a constituent of mine. She was a very proud participant in supervising the elections in Ukraine and I know that was something that was very powerful for her.

She's also a very talented artist and we're very proud to see the work that she's displayed. And also, she's the mother of my dentist. So would you please welcome Christine Devrome here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Regina Elphinstone.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, two individuals seated in the western gallery. They hail from the fine province of Alberta, from Burnstick Lake which of course is down the road from Caroline. They are Georgina Woodward-Fay and Darrell Fay. If you could just stand up there for us; give a little wave.

They're presently honeymooning in the fine province of Saskatchewan. They were out to Moose Jaw, good reports from Moose Jaw. They went to the spa, to the tunnels. They've been to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Museum. And now they're capping things off at the legislature.

But in particular, why they're coming to Saskatchewan was Saturday night out on Okanese First Nation they were in attendance for the graduation of the wellness team out there. And certainly both individuals are active in the field of addictions. But Georgina in particular spent six weeks with the people of Okanese, and they think she's fantastic. And they did a lot of great work out there, Mr. Speaker. So please welcome them to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 21, 1960, a group of demonstrators gathered in the town of Sharpeville, South Africa to protest the so-called pass law that restricted their freedom of movement under the apartheid regime of that time. The demonstrators were neither violent nor threatening, and yet police opened fire on the crowd. Sixty-nine people were killed and 180 wounded. Among the victims were many women and children.

Mr. Speaker, to remember the Sharpeville massacre and what should be learned from it, the United Nations proclaimed March 21 as International Day for the Elimination of Racism. Canada was one of the first nations to support this proclamation. And now 45 years later, we continue to dedicate March 21 to all past and present victims of racism, prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, racism in many of its forms is still a tragic reality in societies around the world, including our own. But we do know that as racism grows out of ignorance and fear, that it can be dispelled through education and understanding.

To that end, let us continue to work together here in Saskatchewan to eliminate racism, celebrate diversity, and make social justice and equality a reality for all people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Day of Mourning for Missing Aboriginal Women

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise in the Assembly as we join people around the world in celebrating today, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Six years after the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, the United Nations declared March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Today we commemorate the 69 demonstrators, including 8 women and 10 children who were killed when 7,000 anti-apartheid demonstrators assembled to march to Sharpeville police station in South Africa. That demonstration marked the beginning of the end for that country's apartheid regime.

In Saskatchewan we know there is much work to do to end racial discrimination and enhance appreciation for the cultural diversity of our province. One of the organizations in this province making a difference on this issue is Speaking for Our Silent Sisters. This North Battleford's women's organization has declared March 21 a day of mourning to recognize the more than 500 Aboriginal women who have gone missing in Canada in the last 20 years.

This year they're organizing a candlelight walk to promote awareness of violence against women, especially First Nations and Métis women. We congratulate them, all community-based organizations and individuals that are leading the fight against racism in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The city of North Battleford mayor, Julian Sadlowski, has proclaimed today a day of mourning in recognition of the more than 500 Aboriginal women who have gone missing from their communities across Canada during the last 20 years.

March 21 was proclaimed day of mourning to coincide with a candlelight march planned for the local community organization, Speaking for Our Silent Sisters, to honour the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The candlelight march will be held in North Battleford, from the library to the Chapel Gallery, tonight.

Speaking for Our Silent Sisters is a newly formed committee of many proactive, local organizations who have come together to heighten the awareness of the safety and well-being of First Nations and Métis women to reclaim their rightful place in society.

The Government of Saskatchewan has joined the First Nations leaders of this province in proclaiming 2005 the Year of the First Nations and Métis Women. I would like to extend my sincere respect and appreciation for the Speaking for Our Silent Sisters committee for coming together to celebrate Aboriginal

women and to educate our community on the barriers of discrimination and violence that are regrettably still imposed on First Nations and Métis women of Saskatchewan and Canada.

I ask all members of this House to join me in honouring these women of Saskatchewan, and I thank all members of the Speaking for Our Silent Sisters committee and the city of North Battleford for having the courage to bring this appalling reality of violence against First Nations and Métis women of all our communities to the forefront for discussion, reflection, education, and action.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Regina Bull Sale Celebrates 100 Years

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A congratulations to the Regina bull sale on 100 years of service to the cattle industry. Yesterday there was an official ceremony including dignitaries, past presidents, and many of the families that have contributed over the years.

The Regina bull sale has always been an event in my life and for that of my family. I recall growing up in the country north of Pense several years ago, Mr. Speaker, when the municipal roads weren't as good as they are today and it seemed that the winters in those years, there was a lot more snow and the road was blocked. But the Regina bull sale was such an important event that the municipality would open all the major roads so that producers could attend that sale, and that would sometimes be the first time we'd get out by motor vehicle for more than two months.

The sale has dropped since then from a maximum of 1,000 bulls to about 200 this year because of the advent of Internet marketing, the tendency for larger producers to hold their own sales, as well as the cost to fit and show cattle, sometimes hundreds of miles from home, in these difficult times.

Many more years of service to the cattle industry to the Regina bull sale, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Swift Current Student Wins Divisional Spelling Bee

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride that I rise today to congratulate and honour one of my young constituents. Thirteen-year-old Kaleb Adam won the southern Saskatchewan division of the CanWest CanSpell competition on Saturday. He was competing against 30 other students, Mr. Speaker.

Kaleb is in grade 8 and attends Fairview Middle School in Swift Current. It's a great school; our oldest daughter goes there. And

he correctly spelled the word orthodox. And when he did that at the end of the competition — it was his last word — he took the top prize and will now go on to compete in spelling competitions in Ottawa and in Washington, DC (District of Columbia). The top prize in the Ottawa competition is \$10,000 in an education award, Mr. Speaker.

It's inspiring to see a young person like Kaleb understand the importance of words and of literacy. I wish him the very best of luck and hope that he will be bringing back the grand prize to Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, additionally I heard it promoted today on the famous morning show in Swift Current, on The Eagle 94, that a couple of the personalities on that morning show have challenged Kaleb to an on-air spelling bee sometime this week. People in Swift Current and others from across the province will want to tune in. And Kim Johnston and John Keene of The Eagle morning show are bright young men in Swift Current, but the smart money's on Kaleb. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Okanese First Nation Community Healing Project

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday evening the Premier and I attended the graduation ceremony for the Okanese First Nation community healing project, a health and wellness initiative done in conjunction with the Nechi healing institute and with various partners. Also in attendance were FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) Grand Chief Alphonse Bird and Vice-chief Morley Watson.

Mr. Speaker, 12 people received diplomas, star blankets, and a sacred eagle feather apiece to mark their graduation as members of the first Okanese wellness core team. The celebration marked their graduation from a year-long intensive course and their certification as counsellors in a variety of areas including addictions, family violence, and critical incident stress management. Mr. Speaker, this core group of trained counsellors will now work with others from within the community, take them through a similar program, and they will in turn become trained counsellors to work for the healing of their community.

During the evening, the Premier also presented Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier with the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal. Mr. Speaker, Chief Day Walker-Pelletier has been a chief of Okanese First Nation since 1981. She has demonstrated outstanding leadership and has always emphasized the importance of education. It's not surprising that she was instrumental in bringing about the wellness program.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier, the council for Okanese and the people of Okanese First Nation, and of course the graduates of the community healing project, and to wish them well on working together, healing together. Kamamawih-atoskeyak, Kamamawih-miwayayakk. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of Learning Disability Month

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March is Learning Disability Month across Canada. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to acknowledge the thousands of people across Saskatchewan who face the challenge of a learning disability and whose daily efforts to overcome these challenges are an inspiration to us all.

Learning disabilities can affect anyone from the very young to senior citizens and is a serious problem in our society where learning is from the cradle to the grave. These disabilities can range from minor inconveniences to very serious physical and psychological conditions. Our duty as a society is to provide recognition, acceptance, and assistance to aid in overcoming these life challenges.

As we know from experience in our schools, learning disabilities like ADD [attention deficit disorder], dyslexia, or FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder], are often the root of behavioural problems that underlie the problems children and youth face in the classroom. We also know that with recognition and treatment, these same kids have an opportunity to go from being problems in the classroom to high achievers.

As we recognize Learning Disability Month across Canada, we need to commit to providing solutions which aid those challenged, and need to recognize the important contribution of health care workers, care providers, and educators who assist persons with learning disabilities and their families. I would encourage the provincial government to make a concerted effort to assist those with learning disabilities, especially children and youth in the education system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Budget Commitments Regarding the Provincial Sales Tax

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is budget week in the province of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan families have some tough questions for this government in advance of the budget.

Mr. Speaker, last year was the budget of broken promises. The election before that budget, the NDP [New Democratic Party], the Premier of the province, the Leader of the NDP, had campaigned on lower taxes for Saskatchewan families, but that budget brought in a PST [provincial sales tax] increase.

Mr. Speaker, the question today is to the Premier. Can he inform this Assembly and Saskatchewan families if he will now keep his commitment to lower taxes? Are they prepared to address the increase in the PST from last year's budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I want to thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker. The member will know that during the course of the last year the government committed to ensuring that Saskatchewan families would have the lowest cost utility bundle in all of Canada, and the government delivered on that promise.

The government also at mid-year made the commitment that we would be setting aside funds for property tax relief for the next two years, and we intend to honour that commitment, Mr. Speaker. So if the member is looking for relief for families in Saskatchewan, I can assure the member that relief will be there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, that Minister of Finance and this Premier justified last year's tax grab by saying the times were tough, that the cupboard was bare. Well we know that's not the case any longer, Mr. Speaker. We know that from the third quarter report last year. Nothing has changed since then. Arguably the position of the government in terms of finances has gotten even better as the price of oil has stayed above \$50 a barrel.

So the Minister of Finance, the Premier asked Saskatchewan families to help them deal with what they termed as a challenging situation. That situation has been alleviated. Can the minister simply tell this Assembly whether or not the NDP will be able to keep their promise for lower taxes. Will they address the PST increase from last year's budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member bringing us up to date as to what's in our third quarter report. And the member is quite correct that we did have a very good year last year. But as to what will be in this specific budget and what the assumptions are, whether it's respect to oil or heavy oil or the exchange rate, those are the things we'll have to wait for until the budget itself, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's a simple proposition, really, in our province. When times are bad, when times are difficult, people understand that they need to make sacrifices. That's the kind of spirit we've seen in Saskatchewan for the last 100 years.

But there is an expectation then, Mr. Speaker, that when times are improved, especially the fiscal state of the province, when

it's improved, and it has improved significantly thanks to the high price, thanks to the high price of oil and natural gas . . . The government asked those people to sacrifice. Even though they promised lower taxes, they increased taxes and said everyone needed to sacrifice. Will they now commit to the people of the province that they will also share in the gain? Will this government address its tax increase, \$140 million worth in the last budget on the PST?

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I've noted over the years that — to go back to what the member is saying — that for members in the opposition, everything is a simple proposition because the opposition members, Mr. Speaker, never really have to make any choices, never really have to make any decisions. For them, everything is possible.

I would just wonder, Mr. Speaker, did the Leader of the Opposition have the opportunity this last weekend to go to the theatre? I wasn't; I was prepping for the budget. But maybe he was at the theatres. Maybe he saw this movie starring a Mr. Ice Cube called *Are We There Yet?* Well we're not there yet. We've got two more sleeps, and then the member will see what is in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance talks about the choices that are important to . . . that the government must make, that opposition must make. Here's a choice, Mr. Speaker, that the government could make: this government, this NDP government, that Minister of Finance and that Premier could choose to keep their promise, Mr. Speaker.

They campaigned during the last election across this province saying apparently absolutely anything that came to mind in order to get elected. They promised lower taxes, and in their first budget after that election, Mr. Speaker, what does this Premier do? He increases the PST. He increased the PST by a point and 140-plus million dollars.

The question to the Premier is, is that the kind of choice we could expect him to make, that he would break promises he made in the campaign? Or will this budget keep the promise that he made to keep taxes low? Will they address the PST in the budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, during the course of the last election the government party made a number of commitments to the people of Saskatchewan with respect to a green and prosperous economy, making sure that we had the best quality public health care system in Saskatchewan, to create a future here for our young people, and to make sure that Saskatchewan families have an affordable climate for their homes, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you that with respect to the commitments that we have made, we have acted on many of these commitments. Have we done all of them? Not yet. But, Mr. Speaker, we're midway through a four-year term, just about mid-way through. Give us time. We will deliver on all of those commitments, Mr. Speaker. People will say promises made, promises kept.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Negotiations with Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Across Saskatchewan, today and tomorrow, teachers are conducting a sanction vote which could result in strike action. They're tired of being undervalued. They're tired of the minister of Education calling on them to hold the line on salaries. And they're tired of being blamed for high education costs.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister of Education: when is he, his government, going to abandon their 0, 1, 1 wage guideline and get back to the bargaining table and start treating teachers with the respect that they deserve?

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that one of the biggest challenges that we have in dealing with public sector negotiations — whether it's with the teachers, with nurses, with others throughout our . . . who provide front-line public services — is trying to find a way that reflects within the wage grids the value that we obviously place on the services they provide, at the same time making sure that we can balance off the interest that taxpayers have raised.

Today in this House the members have raised, in their first set of questions, a number of the pressures that taxpayers have brought to us about high property taxes. Now the member's arguing, as I appreciate opposition members want to do, that we need to continue to increase the costs and the spending that we have in order to provide better public services.

Our challenge, our challenge is to try and balance these competing interests. And indeed I am interested in us finding a negotiated settlement with the teachers as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:15]

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, teachers made it clear right from the beginning of negotiations that they were not accepting a contract that was dictated to them by the provincial government. They made sacrifices in the '90s when times were tough. They were told last year that times were tough and there needed to be a mandate. And now this government has run into a windfall of riches, and they are saying that the same

conditions apply for teachers as did before that. Mr. Speaker, teachers understand that when you tell them that they're going to be held to a zero mandate, it means you have zero value for the work you do. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Murray Wall has said that collective bargaining is just that: it's bargaining. It's not a mandate. My question to the minister is this: teachers are ready to bargain seriously and openly. Is the minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well very simply, Mr. Speaker, the answer is obviously yes. But let me also say this to the member in reference to his comments. We need to understand that when we talk about where we are at in collective negotiations, collective bargaining discussions, that the resources that have been available to every other group of public sector workers — child protection workers, social workers, and others — those same resources, those same values are available at the teachers' table as are the specific resources that we need to achieve an agreement to deal with the situation with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]. That has been our approach in each and every table and will continue to be such in our discussions with the STF.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I suspect today and tomorrow teachers across this province are going to voice their concerns with the direction and the mandate that this minister of Education has laid on the table. Mr. Speaker, they're going to speak very loudly about the determination . . . resolve they have to be treated with respect and dignity and fairness around the bargaining table. Mr. Speaker, we are going to lose trained professional people in this province if this minister thinks he can insist on a 0, 1, and 1 mandate when in neighbouring provinces settlements are happening much larger than that.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister admit that in order to respect the value of teachers in this province, he has to open up the negotiations and open in a fair and open way with the teachers of this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that we will reach a negotiated settlement with the teachers. This next couple of days, I too agree with the member that we will see a very large number. I suspect more than 95 per cent of teachers will vote for some kind of sanction in order to press home their point that they want and deserve higher wages. Our challenge is to balance out those competing demands in a way that makes sure that we can also meet the requests the Leader of the Opposition has raised today, to keep taxes down.

This is not a complicated formula, but it is a very challenging issue for us to resolve. I can assure members of this House that we are interested in a negotiated settlement. I can assure

members of this House that we will make sure not only the same resources that have been available at every other table that we've negotiated with, but the specific resources that we need to resolve the STF situation will be made available, and in due course we will have a collective agreement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Revenue-Sharing Agreement for Municipalities

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, local property taxpayers are getting hosed in this province. Regina says it needs 4 per cent increase to maintain current services. Saskatoon needs a 7 per cent increase. The mayor of Regina says the only way to fix it is to provide more revenue sharing to local governments. Idea no. 70 of the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas addresses this very issue.

My question is very simple. To the Minister of Government Relations: when is he going to stop the downloading and start negotiating a realistic revenue-sharing agreement with local governments?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question that's being raised here.

I can say to the member opposite and to all municipalities across Saskatchewan that the co-operative and collaborative approach that we began with them a number of years ago, and has continued through my appointment last year to resolve municipal issues in the interests of all provincial citizens, will continue. That collaborative and consultative approach has come to a municipal forum, a table in which urban and rural governments and Government Relations sit down.

We agreed, Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago to discuss together a new revenue-sharing formula for the municipalities, to put options on the table, and to discuss it. This does not mean of course that we will reach a consensus on the issue, but we've agreed to discuss the options, and we will be proceeding with that, probably within the next two weeks.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we get this from this NDP government all the time. They're going to discuss it. They're going to review it. They don't put a deadline. They don't put a time frame on it.

We know, we know for an example that in this province if the province is going to grow, it's the province and Ottawa that are major winners, and it's the local governments that are losing

out. To give you an example, about 20 years ago Regina received \$16 million in revenue, and by the late '90s they had dropped to \$6 million. And it hasn't caught up yet. That's because the province has taken all of the cash.

Mr. Speaker, with the oil revenues up as they are right now, there is an expectation of a fair share of dollars being returned to the municipalities. So, Mr. Speaker, it's when, it's when will this NDP government start giving a fair share to the local governments, a time frame of when?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, as do most municipal leaders across the province . . . that this government is committed to building prosperous communities throughout Saskatchewan, both rural and urban. Over the course of the last year, last three years, Mr. Speaker, this government has increased revenue sharing to our municipalities by \$10 million per year — 10, 20, 30. Remember, Mr. Speaker, this goes up and stays in the system. We have \$60 million of revenue sharing of new dollars in the system today than we did three years ago, Mr. Speaker. This is a very strong commitment that this government has made to improving the ability of municipalities to deliver services to their people.

A year ago at our budget table, we indicated that we wanted to work with communities to ensure that they're able to deliver on infrastructure commitments to their communities with new federal dollars coming forward, Mr. Speaker. And in this budget we are going to see committed some . . . Thank you . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about prosperous communities. It's the old question is, how's he making out on it? The communities that I visit are not very prosperous at all, and it's because of the downloading from this NDP government.

On one hand we have a government that goes to Ottawa, and we agree wants an equalization that's fair — fair for Saskatchewan. Then they come back and they sit in their little circle, and they're not fair to the municipalities.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment where the Premier in 2003 in Yorkton, he had told voters that the NDP election platform, and I quote, "provides the room to receive the recommendations of the Boughen Commission." Mr. Speaker, the Boughen Commission, as we know, recommended a 1 per cent PST hike to be used for property taxes. Well we saw the NDP raise the PST by 1 per cent and renege on the property tax.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask whoever is in charge over there, why hasn't the PST money been used to reduce property taxes?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize if my answers are way too long. I'm just trying to get the same amount of time in as the member opposite gets.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to providing municipalities with the ability to respond to their citizens. Mr. Speaker, we know that the city of Regina has raised the issue of an escalator formula in revenue sharing. Mr. Speaker, he compares that to the early 1980s. One of the reasons that we've decided to sit down and talk with the municipalities about revenue sharing and the go-forward is that the positions that are being argued now, currently, go back to the early 1980s to a revenue-sharing formula that only lasted for two years, Mr. Speaker, two years, because it wasn't sustainable, and it wasn't predictable. Two of the key factors that the municipalities want to put in place.

So we believe very strongly in predictable, sustainable funding for municipalities. The money that's in place today is certainly sustainable, and we're willing to work with the municipalities to ensure that these pieces are going to fit together in this big puzzle.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Funding for St. Elizabeth's Hospital

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Humboldt serves at least 20,000 people. Over a decade ago the city of Humboldt and surrounding area asked this NDP government to help them with the much needed renovation. At that time it was decided that building a new hospital would make more sense.

Mr. Speaker, Humboldt has had its share of money for a new hospital — \$8 million — in place since 2002. Now they're waiting for the ground to be broken. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they're tired of an annual photo op with the minister, and what they want is action. Can the minister tell us today that the funding for St. Elizabeth's Hospital will be announced in this week's budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's only 48 hours until the Minister of Finance will be answering that question specifically. But, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work very carefully with the Humboldt area and community as they work on their hospital project. We've set out our goals as to how we're going to do this, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, when you build a facility which is to serve for 50 years, you want to make sure that it's planned appropriately and that everything that you need over the next 50 years is going to be included in what you do. We've been doing that, Mr.

Speaker.

It's very curious today to see how one member stands up and says spend more, the other one says tax less. That's very much the reason why those people opposite will never be government in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, quite frankly that's the problem. They continue and continue and continue to talk about it, but they never do anything. On September 18, 2003, the Health minister held a news conference at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and told the people of Humboldt that a new hospital was coming, and I quote, "in the next couple of years." Five months later, in September 2004, Bob Bundon with the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority advised the community that the project was still on schedule and he said, and I quote, "The hospital has raised their part of the money. Now we need to lobby to keep the hospital on track."

The schedule that was promised was that by October 2004 the project would go for tender, and construction would start in 2005 and an opening in 2006. Mr. Speaker, we know that schedule is way behind. The tendering process has not even begun. When can the citizens of Humboldt and area expect ground to be broken for the new hospital?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was present when I met with the mayor and many of the leaders from all the surrounding communities, and we set out our goal for how we're going to complete this project. And, Mr. Speaker, we're continuing on that plan. And we will continue to work with the community to make sure that the projects that we have set out in our plans are completed.

Mr. Speaker, this is about providing accessible health care to Saskatchewan residents right across the province. And we will continue to make sure that we provide those funds in a responsible way which also balances the concerns around the taxpayers and how much money they will be required to pay in taxes. Mr. Speaker, we have a good record of doing this over a long period of time. And Mr. Speaker, we will continue to operate on our balanced approach.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the minister is talking about providing acceptable health care. Does he think this is acceptable? St. Elizabeth's Hospital was built in 1955, which was 50 years ago, and faces a number of safety and accessibility issues. The hospital hasn't always met the fire code and has had to ask for an exemption from the fire commissioner's office on more than one occasion.

There is no wheelchair access to the hospital's front doors, Mr. Speaker. The doors to the ambulance entrance are too small for today's ambulances to fit through, so they have to unload the patients outside — it doesn't matter what the weather is. There are wild swings in the building's temperatures. There aren't enough electrical outlets. You can't fit a stretcher in some of the rooms on the surgical ward. And the hospital cannot accommodate a major trauma in its own ER [emergency room] because it's too small.

Mr. Speaker, the minister just spoke about what was acceptable. Does the minister think that it's acceptable that the citizens of Humboldt and area are forced to rely on an out-of-date hospital year after year because of his government's inaction?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I have been working very carefully with the leadership in her new community; it's a part of her riding that was added in the last election. And I've been working with these people prior to that time on this project.

And, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we do have a project that works for that whole area because we know that there's good, solid citizens working in the community. We know that there's expanding businesses. We know that the commercial opportunities are very great, and providing a good health facility along with other educational facilities, good roads, and other telecommunication opportunities is what provides a good solid base for the economy.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things working together have to be done in a balanced fashion. Mr. Speaker, in two days I think you'll see our Minister of Finance bring forward such a balanced prospect for our whole province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, you know who's worked together? The community of Humboldt has worked together. Humboldt and the surrounding community have worked very hard to raise their share of the cost of building a new hospital — \$8 million to be exact. And as I said this money has been in place for three years now.

The people of Humboldt are tired of waiting. They're tired of the schedule being pushed back. They're tired of their hospital being announced again and again and again by the NDP government. And in short, they are tired of this NDP government's broken promises.

Mr. Speaker, the longer we wait for action, the more that the building is going to cost. Can the people of Humboldt expect the NDP government to keep its promise and announce the funding for the hospital in this budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's two more sleeps for that member and for all of her colleagues so that they can wait and see what kind of positive things we're going to do for the province. The people in the Humboldt area know that we have a commitment to them to work towards providing this hospital. We're going to make sure that we provide the best facility possible based on all of the planning of the local people, together with the Saskatoon Health Authority and the provincial health officials, because we know that when you do good planning and you work at building things in a very careful, consistent way, then you can build buildings that will provide services for five decades.

Mr. Speaker, that's our intention — to be a good government for many years to come. And I ask the members opposite to think about voting for our budget this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Highways and Transportation.

Support for Education Programs on Treaties

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in my capacity as Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations and say that it's my honour and pleasure to stand in the legislature to inform you of an important initiative announced today by the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations.

First let me tell you that today, as others have indicated, March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day was designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1996 when the assembly called on world leaders to increase efforts to eliminate all forms of racial intolerance and discrimination. Our government supports, of course, this proclamation.

Mr. Speaker, this government wants to build bridges between different people and between different groups. We are committed to raising general public awareness of issues such as treaties, First Nations and Métis culture, and the need to eliminate racial discrimination. Much is being done but we all have much, much more to do.

I'm pleased to tell you that the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations is doing more on this particular day. Today we are contributing, Mr. Speaker, \$100,000 to the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to enhance its public education programs on the treaties and their meanings and the general cultural awareness. It was my pleasure to make the official announcement to the public this morning along with Saskatchewan's Treaty Commissioner, the Hon. David Arnot.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have the largest per capita Aboriginal population of any Canadian

province and that population is growing quickly. As a province, we simply cannot ensure our future success if Aboriginal people continue to face a lack of understanding and awareness about their history, their culture, and their Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, our department has a long history of working with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner is mandated to educate the public about treaties and the treaty relationship. It is also playing an instrumental role in trying to help Aboriginal people and other Saskatchewan citizens gain a better understanding of each other with a view to creating and promoting good relations.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that through this public education we will be helping to create an atmosphere of racial harmony and of respect. We will be helping to build a province that respects diversity and the rights of all, not just today but into our future. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner are working together in this very important fight. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for his statement on this very important issue. I'd also like to applaud the government for taking a step in the right direction when it comes to enhancing the understanding of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal culture in our province.

The Saskatchewan Party has a great deal of respect for the important work that has been undertaken by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner — and I might add, very hard work. We are certainly supportive of this government's efforts to provide funding to the office to increase awareness about treaty issues. The Saskatchewan Party believes that all people in this province deserve to know more about treaties with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and the best way to enhance understanding is through the school system.

That is one of the reasons that the Saskatchewan Party last week included as part of our 100 ideas that will get Saskatchewan ready for the next 100 years, idea no. 26, which would make instruction in the history and content of the treaties signed between First Nations and the Government of Canada a part of the provincial core curriculum.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite chose to vote against making instructions in the treaties part of the core curriculum in Saskatchewan, just as they voted against partnering with First Nations to increase participation rates and improve communication outcomes for First Nations students.

Mr. Speaker, these are exactly the type of steps we need to provide to build a strong province. So while we congratulate the governments for supporting the excellent work of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, we certainly encourage the government to take the next step to ensure that all children and youth in our schools have the opportunity to learn about the

treaties and gain a better understanding of the foundation that joins First Nations and non-First Nations together in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member for The Battlefords on his feet?

BILLS WITHDRAWN

Bill No. 81 — The Municipalities Act

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to rise in the Assembly and ask that Bill No. 81, The Municipalities Act, currently item 3 under adjourned debates on the order paper, and the order for second reading, be discharged and the Bill withdrawn.

The Speaker: — Order, please. The Minister of Government Relations has requested leave to withdraw Bill No. 81, The Municipalities Act, which is under adjourned debates, no. 3. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. This Bill stands withdrawn and will be removed from the order paper.

I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Bill No. 82 — The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2004

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I also request leave of the Assembly to rise and ask that Bill No. 82, The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2004, currently item 4 under adjourned debates on the order paper, and the order for second reading, be discharged and the Bill withdrawn.

The Speaker: — Order. The minister has requested leave that Bill No. 82, the miscellaneous municipal . . . Order please . . . that Bill No. 82, The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes and Amendment Act, 2004, which is item no. 4 under adjourned debates, be withdrawn. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. This Bill stands withdrawn and will be removed from the order paper.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions 897 to 905 inclusive, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 897 through to 905 have been submitted.

I recognize the minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], the Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the government Deputy 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 14:41.]

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