



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

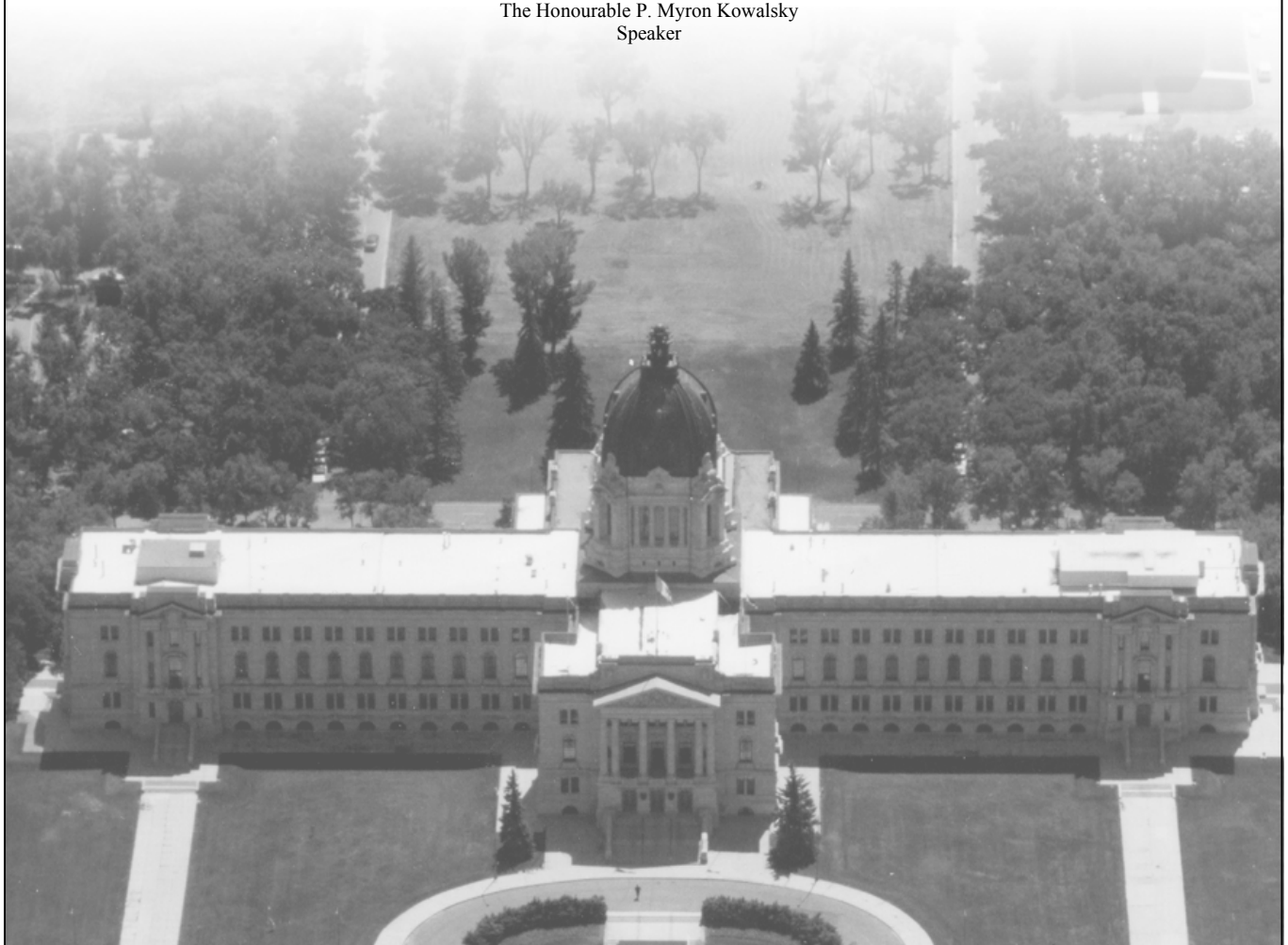
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise again to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Pennant, Abbey, Cabri, Lancer, and one from a community I can't recognize. And here's another one from Hazlet. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I rise on behalf of constituents of mine as well as a number of other members representing people who are concerned about the deficiency in residential support for individuals with long-term disabilities. And 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 steps to provide the funding required for additional residential spaces for Swift Current residents who have lifelong disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the city of Swift Current, and the communities of Hazlet, Herbert, and Beechy, Canada. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I again rise today on behalf of people who are very concerned about the total devastation that crystal meth brings, not just to users, but to families. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

The people that have signed this petition are from Wadena, Elfros, and Kelvington. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition to halt the forced amalgamation of school divisions signed by people who think the proposed changes to amalgamate 59 school divisions by January 2006 will not prove to be cost-effective. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, all of the signatures on this petition are from the fine community of Rosetown. I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition from folks in my constituency regarding the forced amalgamation of school boards. 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 rescind its decision to force school boards to amalgamate.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the folks from Radville. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes 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 the spread of crystal meth. 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 implement a strategy that will deal with crystal meth education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Radville, Ogema, and Bengough. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from parents in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today live on Wright Crescent, Overholt Crescent, and Guenter Crescent in the northeast part of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with the people that are still concerned about the available hours legislation since it has come forward.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that section 13.4 of The Labour Standards Act will not be proclaimed and that it will be repealed.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Grandora and Asquith. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the forced amalgamation of school divisions. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial

government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the very good folks from Coleville and Kindersley, Saskatchewan, as well as Kerrobert. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the concern continues by citizens of this province with the government's plan to force the amalgamation of school divisions. The petition prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Strasbourg, Southey, Earl Grey, and Goodsoil. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14 are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 637, 640, 647, 666, 715, and 720.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 101 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: what is the total cost to the University of Regina for each student per year per faculty?

Further, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister of Learning: what is the total tuition cost that students pay for full-time enrolment in each faculty per annum at the University of Regina?

Further, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister of Learning: what is the total tuition cost that foreign students pay for the full-time enrolment in each faculty per annum at the University of Regina?

And finally, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister of Learning: how many foreign students were enrolled in each semester in each faculty at the University of Regina in the year 2004?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for the years 2003 and 2002. I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, 19 students from Thomson Community School, seated in the western gallery. They're in grade 6, and they're accompanied by their teacher, Heather Walton, and teacher assistant, Wendy Cowan.

And I think it's important to note that Thomson Community School was one of the first schools in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the most diverse, certainly. It embodies our provincial motto, "from many peoples, strength." For history buffs in this place, it's interesting to note that Clarence Fines was once a vice-principal there, Mr. Speaker; M.J. Coldwell was a principal there, Mr. Speaker. And they keep up that excellent tradition to this day.

The Minister of Learning had opportunity to visit there last week, and he informs me it's one of the most favourite schools for him in all the province. So good work to them. I look forward to meeting them later, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask colleagues in the legislature to join me in welcoming two young gentlemen seated in the west gallery.

First of all I would like to introduce Nicholas Stulberg. Nick's mother, Carol, works in the deputy minister's office in the Department of Highways and Transportation. Nick is currently attending the college of Lethbridge, taking environmental sciences, and he will be returning to Regina next year to finish his biology degree here at of course the University of Regina.

I should also add that his mother tells us that she's quite worried about his interest in politics and fears she may have an aspiring politician on her hands. I can tell his mother that our province would be in very good hands if he actually decided to enter into politics, and I encourage him to do that.

With Nick is Ken Prokopetz. Ken is a friend of Nick's who has joined him here this afternoon to watch the proceedings. He's also a student and is currently finishing up his second year of studies at the University of Regina as well.

So please, colleagues, join with me in welcoming Ken and Nick

to the Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery today, I'd like to introduce Alyssa Fullerton, a friend again of our Page, Arielle. We're getting the impression that she has lots of friends and family.

Alyssa is a theatre student at the U of R [University of Regina]. And I'd like you all to join me in welcoming her to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Volunteer Recognition Awards

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, last night I, along with the Premier, had the privilege of attending Saskatoon's third annual Volunteer Recognition and Awards celebration. This event was sponsored by Volunteer Saskatoon and presented by SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, these awards celebrate individuals who have made a significant contribution to their community and whose time, talent, and energy have helped make Saskatchewan a better place for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, this year's recipients are: in the arts, Jeanne Walters; for community development the winner is Sergeant Keith Briant. The award for cultural diversity went to Barbara Spurr. In the family category, the winner is Del and Rosella Grise. For human services, Miko Hirose. The Spirit of Volunteerism Award went to Ron Brown. For sports and recreation, the recipient was Garry Harder.

The Workplace Volunteer Program Award went to Sandy Wasylyniuk. The winner of the Youth Award is Roxanne Bilodeau. The President's Award of Distinction went to Lisa Lambert. And the first ever recipient of the Environment Award is Dr. Lynn Oliphant.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all the nominees and winners. Their benevolence and dedication have contributed to the quality of life we all enjoy, and for this we are most appreciative.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Undefeated Season for Humboldt AA Bronco Midgets

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it

gives me great pleasure today to stand and congratulate the Humboldt AA midget Broncos for their undefeated season of 44 wins and 1 tie. This team of great athletes between the ages of 15 and 17 years are from Humboldt and the surrounding communities of Guernsey, Lanigan, LeRoy, Jansen, and Watrous.

The AA midget Broncos were the champions in the midget hockey tournaments held at Edmonton and Regina, as well as capturing the championship for the Centre Four League playoffs. No doubt, however, Mr. Speaker, the greatest accomplishment this season came when they were declared the AA midget champions for the province.

I want to extend a congratulations to all the players and a huge thank you to their coach, Tim Klimosko; assistant coaches, Roy McNally and Floyd Bartel; and their manager, Shelly Klimosko.

This team are great ambassadors for the Humboldt and surrounding area, and they have done their community proud. Congratulations to the Humboldt AA Bronco Midgets.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Yorkton Terriers Win Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Final

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've had this member's statement prepared for a couple of days now. I want to say this, that all of Saskatchewan is talking about the Yorkton Terriers defeating the North Battleford North Stars in the seventh and deciding game of SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] final last night, Mr. Speaker, in Yorkton. And as I told my colleague, the member from North Battleford, yesterday that the North Stars had their work cut out when they went into Yorkton last night and that he would need to have his chequebook ready as well, Mr. Speaker.

And as the Hounds and the Bruins and the North Stars can attest, it was very difficult to take a bite out of the Terriers on their home turf. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Terriers were victorious in 10 of 11 post-season home games. And as a result of their territorial instincts, the Terriers have claimed the Credential Cup, the symbol of supremacy in the Saskatchewan Junior A Hockey.

And what's next for the Terriers, Mr. Speaker? Well let me tell you. On Friday the boys are off to Portage la Prairie to muzzle the eastern Terriers in what I anticipate to be a hard-fought, but very short series. And from there our Terriers will advance to the Royal Bank Cup Tournament which will be held in Weyburn from May 7 to 15.

And, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members and the member from North Battleford to make his donation and all hon. members to extend their congratulations and best wishes to the Yorkton Terriers as they continue to demonstrate to the nation that the

best hockey players are found in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Tribute to Rosetown-Elrose Centenarians

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to pay tribute to the final two of six centenarians from Rosetown-Elrose.

Helen Erickson was born in Russia in 1902. Her father passed away just before she was born. Helen's family immigrated to Canada and settled in Manitoba. She married in 1921 and with her husband and daughter, Loretta, moved to Yorkton. Helen's first husband passed away in 1924, and in 1926 she, Loretta, and a second daughter moved to Sanctuary, near Kyle. Here she met Leity Erickson, and they were soon married and had a son in 1927.

The Ericksons lived in Sanctuary and Saskatoon before Leity passed away in 1954. Helen then proceeded to travel the world, often living out of a suitcase, until she settled in Vancouver in 1966. Her daughter, Loretta, moved her back to Kyle in 1988.

Helen Erickson has lived in the Kyle Health Centre since 1992, and I was pleased to present her with her medallion and certificate on March 4.

Myra Berndt of Lucky Lake passed away on February 20. She would have been 100 years old on July 19, so she was the sixth person from Rosetown-Elrose to live into our province's centennial year and qualify for a medallion and certificate.

Myra came to Canada from England in 1906. In 1931 she married Carl Berndt and they raised five children on their farm near Lucky Lake. Carl passed away in 1949 so Myra moved into town, and in May 2000 she moved into Lucky Lake Health Centre.

I invite all members to join me in paying tribute to two special people, Myra Berndt and Helen Erickson, centenarians who have contributed greatly to our province over the past 100 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Regina Police Service Half Marathon

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday in Regina over 900 participants took part in the Regina Police Service Half Marathon and it was my extreme pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to have been one of them. I completed the 21.1-kilometre run and I am very pleased to be able to stand in the House today, period.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second year of the RPS [Regina Police Service] Half Marathon. It is organized by volunteers from both

the community and the police service. The race offers half marathon distance to both competitive and recreational runners, and it is also open to people who wish to walk the course or complete it as part of a relay team. It promotes healthy and active lifestyles and, Mr. Speaker, it promotes positive engagement between members of the Regina Police Service and the community. As a friend of mine observed, Mr. Speaker, it's always better to be running with the police.

Participants were also encouraged to take part in a Walk a Mile in My Shoes program. There was a booth where gently used runners were collected for donation to Souls Harbor Mission.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all participants but in particular Gilles Demers, who had the fastest time among the male runners at just under one hour and 20 minutes, and Jorja French, who was the first among female runners with the time of one hour and 28 minutes.

I thank the hard-working volunteers, the race sponsors and partners for putting on a very enjoyable and successful event. And I can say unequivocally that I am looking forward to participating in the RPS Half Marathon again next year, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Birch Hills Man Completes Roman Marathon

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this evening both sides of the House have been invited to a reception by the Diabetes Association of Canada, so today I would like to relate the story of a constituent of mine from Birch Hills.

On March '04, David Newhouse at age 52 was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. He decided he had to do something, so he started to run and run. Now Newhouse has just returned from Italy where he travelled with Team Diabetes to participate in the Roman marathon. The 26-mile course started and ended at the coliseum. Dave hoped to finish the race in under six hours. His official time — five hours, 59 minutes and 29 seconds.

Newhouse has once again proved diabetes is not a life ending disease, just a life changing disease, as many in this House already know. Congratulations to Dave on a job well done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Pilot Butte School Heritage Fair

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Celebrating our heritage is a big part of celebrating our provincial centennial. Last week I had the privilege of attending a heritage fair at Pilot Butte School where students displayed the results of months of research, writing, and project development on a heritage topic of their choice.

Mr. Speaker, the fair was both informative and entertaining. There were 48 volunteer judges representing the community, parents, the school board, central office, and school staff — and they had their work cut out for them. There were over 150 projects on display representing the work of almost 250 grade 4 to 8 students, and they were exceptionally well done.

The heritage fair organizers also brought in people from outside the school to speak with students about Saskatchewan's rich cultural history. Bill Barry spoke to students about Saskatchewan place names. Elder Isadore Pelletier did a presentation for the grades 6 to 8, and Ian Brace and Eunice Tanner of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum presented to the grade 4s and 5s.

I want to offer congratulations to the participants and the organizers of the Pilot Butte School heritage fair. It was a wonderful event and a great learning experience for both the students and members of the public who had the good fortune to attend. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Crystal Methamphetamine

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question's for the Premier. When will his government establish a specific treatment program with specific treatment beds for addiction to crystal meth?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in the budget this year there's a plan for the building of the Hantelman facility in Saskatoon. That is going to have 12 specific beds to deal with youth addictions, and that's intended to be used for crystal meth and other related kinds of problems. In Regina we're also working on a project there as well.

So those are the plans, Mr. Speaker. We do have 200-plus beds across the system for addictions in 13 different facilities, and those beds do provide services for adults and for youth.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we would ask then the minister to provide some more details, both to this Assembly and to the families in the province of Saskatchewan who have been waiting for some months. You'll remember, Mr. Speaker, this official opposition has been raising the issue of meth for a year now — well over a year.

When we first raised this issue, the current Minister of Learning and even the Minister of Health said there didn't need to be a separate program. There didn't need to be special attention paid

to crystal meth. It looks like we're making some progress in that regard. But we also know from those on the front lines of addictions in this province that, because of the uniqueness and the insidious nature of crystal meth, the 28-day intake period that's normally available isn't long enough.

So we want to ask the minister this question: do these beds that he speaks of anticipate the unique nature of crystal meth addiction? And give us a date, please. Will he give us a date in terms of when these beds will be available to Saskatchewan families?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, what the member said about us only being involved in this recently is not true. What we do know, I as the attorney general . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Might I suggest the words as contrary to the facts. Would the minister continue.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I accept the Speaker's wording; they're contrary to the facts.

Mr. Speaker, as attorney general quite a number of years ago, this problem was identified to me and to our officials and to the people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have a system for addictions in Saskatchewan that has 244 alcohol and drug treatment beds. There's 160 in-patient beds, 75 detox beds, and another 9 long-term residential beds. And these are provided at 13 facilities. We have 50 intake positions, places across the province where people can go for addictions help and talk to addictions professionals.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with crystal meth as a specific problem, and we're continuing to work with this. We will be working with all of the people, and we have been and are providing services now.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, for a year we've been hearing from community leaders, the mayor of Prince Albert, the chief of the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. Yesterday the mayor of the city of Regina, joined by the Regina Police Service, indicated that this drug is gaining in popularity, that this drug is getting cheaper. It's driving the cost down of other drugs.

Now it's important for the people interested in this issue, and there are many across the province. Many of them have a lot at stake. For example their children are at stake for many of the families that we're taking about. It's important for them to know when. Right now parents are having to send their kids out of the province for treatment for this crystal meth addiction. So we need a specific date as to when.

And again we would ask the minister to clarify whether or not whatever number of beds he's highlighting for Saskatoon will provide for a longer intake period. Twenty-eight days isn't long enough, if he's been listening to those on the front line. Will he confirm those facts for the Assembly today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be working with many competent professionals across this province. And as this crystal meth problem has been identified over quite a number of years, they have been working to redesign and make sure that our programs do meet those needs. What we have is . . . Working together, DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment], the community resources, and Sask Health working with Ranch Ehrlo Society to service high-risk children and youth, where they do have that long-term treatment and also where they require specialized treatment services for addictions in other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, the Calder Centre in Saskatoon, working together with the psychiatric in-patient mental health services, are continuing to make sure that their effective integrated treatment that can deal with these complex health issues that relate to crystal meth and other challenges. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to provide services for Saskatchewan people with the advice of the professionals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the minister or this Premier is hearing what Saskatchewan people are saying. They're saying they need some action, and they need it immediately.

We know that treatment facilities in places like Lloydminster are having to turn significant numbers of people away because there simply are no beds. We know how long it'd take for this Premier to deliver on his promise for mattress detox, Mr. Speaker. We know it was this government years ago that closed down the only youth addictions treatment facility that we had in the province of Saskatchewan. So I think they will forgive the people of the province if the people are a little bit skeptical about when this government will take action.

Yesterday we heard from moms who are very concerned. We've heard from families. Again to the minister, this is an unique addiction. We finally appreciate the fact that this NDP [New Democratic Party] government understands it, something we've been saying for a year. It's an unique addiction. Twenty-eight days isn't long enough. What kind of treatment, what kind of specific treatment is the minister talking about? When will it be available in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — That member's comments about us coming onto this whole problem in the last while is absolutely contrary to the facts. Mr. Speaker, in 1998 when I was in Durango, Colorado, with the Conference of Western Attorneys General of the United States, looking at this problem, I don't know where that member was. I think he was out with some country western hall of fame kind of operation or something like that.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have been working at this very carefully. We are working with the professionals. We're making sure that we provide the services that are needed across . . .

[14:00]

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I just was unable to hear. And I asked for order, please. I ask for order. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the members ask about the duration of these programs. Mr. Speaker, they are extended to deal with the particular challenges around crystal meth. We brought in one of the world experts to Saskatchewan, Dr. Rossen, to talk about his sort of leading treatment program. And that is the kind of advice we're getting to make sure we do this properly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Amendments to Labour Legislation

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again we have an NDP government that says one thing and does another. On October 24, 2003, during the last election campaign, the Premier wrote the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. He wrote this, and I quote:

Our New Democratic government is always open to considering the concerns raised by the business community. However no legislation changes would occur without extensive consultations.

Mr. Speaker, if what the Premier wrote was indeed the case, then why is the NDP pushing through with legislation to give expanded powers to the director of labour standards and the Chair of the Labour Relations Board?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member has been for the last number of months, but we have gone through some very public consultations on various pieces of legislation.

He refers to two in his question. One of those is labour standards, and we're looking to address some definitions within the Act, and section 74 of labour standards which has been a fairly public case that is now being decided upon by the

Supreme Court of Canada. Mr. Speaker, that's appropriate to address this situation which has been commented on, that it is inadequate and not fully described or articulated in the legislation or the regulations.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is a variety of issues that are also being addressed with The Trade Union Act. And consultations have been going on, Mr. Speaker, and we have received much feedback from people right across the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Premier dated yesterday from the Saskatchewan Business Council, they have some serious questions about the proposed amendments, and they do suggest that there has not been the consultations with them regarding Bill No. 86 and Bill No. 87. Their questions are these: why are they needed? What problems will they fix?

These amendments would give the Labour Relations Board the same powers as a court. The board could make its own rules. They could make their own regulations. There has been no demonstrated need for such powers. Mr. Speaker, why are these powers needed?

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, we have had various communications with representatives from the Business Council. There were three meetings that were set up and three meetings that were cancelled by the representative of the Business Council. Mr. Speaker, this was ample opportunity to provide some feedback and we have since sent a letter, Mr. Speaker, saying that if they do have comments please get them in as soon as you can.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government says one thing and does another. The Premier promised in this letter under New Democratic stationery that says there will be no legislative changes without consultation. Then it proposes massive new powers for the director of labour standards and the Chair of the Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Speaker, why on earth would the Labour Relations Board need the authority to enter a place of business and conduct a search for evidence? Mr. Speaker, what kind of police state is the NDP government trying to create?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, here we go. The member one day is almost standing in his seat singing "Solidarity

Forever”, criticizing 0, 1, and 1 and talking like he is there to save the lives of working people. The next day he’s up on his feet criticizing The Trade Union Act, criticizing the changes and improvements to whistleblower’s legislation. Mr. Speaker, when you talk about saying one thing and doing another, well, Mr. Speaker, the opposition has said something different, said something different, said something different, depending on who the audience is.

We can go from *The Way Up*, just believe, Mr. Speaker. Then we go into Enterprise Saskatchewan. Then we go into the *100 Ideas*, Mr. Speaker. These opposition, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, this opposition had said on one thing, said another thing, said another thing, said something different. Mr. Speaker, this government is taking action and improving things.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, one need only look at the news release of the Government of Saskatchewan dated February 18 to see how the NDP can say one thing and do another. Reminds me, Mr. Speaker . . . with any luck this minister will have the same revelation she had on February 18 and forget the whole idea.

While we’re on the topic of section 13.4, Mr. Speaker, the commitment to repeal this section is now two months and two days old. If this government can write miles and miles of new labour regulations in short order, why is it taking over two months to draft a one-clause amendment? Has the minister lost her resolve, or is she going to say one thing and do another?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I know the member may have lost his sense of time, but I will remind him that we aren’t even two years into a four to five-year term. And we still have two months, we still have two months probably sitting in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. As I said to him the other . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member opposite, we are normally here till June, sometimes into July. It’s early April. Mr. Speaker, we’ve still probably got two months left in this session, so there’s plenty of time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, businesses and employers across this province and the workers as well will be pleased to hear this minister say we’re here for five years. We’re here for five years. We might make those changes in five years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the letter . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. The member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I will read from the letter to the Hon. Premier, cc’d to the Minister of Labour. It is dated yesterday, and I’m sure she has had a chance to read it. From page 2 it says this:

It is our fear that if your government proceeds with Bill 86 & 87, you will undoubtedly confirm Saskatchewan’s reputation as an anti-business jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, that’s the kind of belief that there is outside of Saskatchewan, that this minister and this NDP government have produced a situation where we have an anti-business climate. When will the minister introduce her proposed legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — It’s amazing how the member forgets the words to “Solidarity Forever” that quickly. A couple of days ago he’s supporting workers. He’s criticizing the mandate, he’s criticizing the way collective bargaining is going because, Mr. Speaker, good news for the province, good news for the New Democratic government, bad news for the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

SaskPower’s Profits and Dividends

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, they just can’t help it. They say one thing and then they do another. The NDP government promises the people of Saskatchewan the lowest bundle of utility rates in Canada. Now the Minister Responsible for SaskPower says he’s not ruling out a rate increase. So why do we need a rate increase, Mr. Speaker? Well I’ll tell you why, Mr. Speaker, it’s . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please members. Order. Order. Order. The floor is . . . Order. I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I’ll tell you why we need a rate increase. Mr. Speaker, it’s because this government continues to play politics with our Crowns. And I want to ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, why does this government keep stripping money away from our power company for their own political purposes and then raising the rates?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the return on equity for SaskPower in the last year as put in today's annual report released today was 4.8 per cent. The return on equity is spent by any business in three different ways: a dividend to the shareholder, in this case really to the people of Saskatchewan, to be spent on health and education; secondly to pay down debt; thirdly to make new investments. Those are all good purposes; that's what's done.

Now how we balance those three, Mr. Speaker, on the revenue of the company? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what we don't do. We don't take over 100 per cent like they did in the second-last year of the previous administration, and we don't take over 200 per cent like they did in the last year of the previous administration, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk. Let's talk about the debt for SaskPower. And here's a coincidence, Mr. Speaker. The long-term debt for SaskPower's up by \$252 million. Mr. Speaker, the coincidence is that dividends paid over the last two years were almost \$230 million. And last year this government forced SaskPower to pay more dividends than it could afford. Now ratepayers are likely going to have to pay more.

Mr. Speaker, why is this NDP government running Crown corporations into the ground to try to balance its own books? Why is this government playing political games with the Crowns, and then they leave the ratepayers to clean up the mess?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower continues to make investments. They make investments in refurbishing generation of plants, cogeneration of plants. There's a major wind facility being built this year south of Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. That's at a cost of the \$250 million that the member mentions, Mr. Speaker.

The debt/equity ratio of SaskPower is the best for any Crown utility in the country, Mr. Speaker. It's far better than in Manitoba. It's far better than New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker. The debt/equity ratio of the Crown corporation under this administration is of assistance to the debt rating of this province or the credit rating of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the fact, the

idea that the minister had a minute ago about a previous administration that actually took more than 100 per cent of profits out of SaskPower one year.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower made over \$100 million in foreign currency exchanges. And what did this NDP government do with that paper gain, Mr. Speaker? It's not a net profit. It's a paper gain. They took it out and borrowed cash. A one time unexpected foreseen windfall and they took it out in cash.

Now the minister says he's concerned about the balance sheet, and he's concerned about SaskPower's debt, Mr. Speaker. So when is this, when is this government going to start to translate that concern into some sort of positive action?

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would ask members to allow the hon. member to put his question. Member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. When is this government going to stop playing political games with SaskPower and all the Crown corporations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, again the facts are one thing, and what the members opposite want to say is something else.

[14:15]

The total public debt of this province is the lowest, and that includes Crown corporation debt, Mr. Speaker, is the lowest it has been since 1982. The Crown corporation debt, Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporation share of that is lower than it was in 1982, Mr. Speaker.

This administration has not played politics with the Crowns. This administration has not charged over 100 per cent, 200 per cent dividends on income in the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. That administration, the administration that the opposition represents, that they're the inheritors to, they did that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this government across the way took over 100 per cent of the net profits out of SaskPower last year as a dividend to Crown Investments Corporation in order to balance a budget that they claim is balanced and is nowhere near balanced. They continue to hamstring Crown corporations like SaskPower and SaskTel and SaskEnergy in order to try and meet their overspending habits.

Mr. Speaker, here's a suggestion, and it's idea no. 56 from the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas. Why wouldn't the government

implement a Crown dividend policy that establishes net return levels adequate to meet reinvestment requirements and then dedicate excess profits to infrastructure renewal?

Mr. Speaker, will the minister stop the asset stripping that just hurts customers and it hurts the people at SaskPower?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I just want to report to the House that the Crown debt in this province, the overall Crown debt in this province has been reduced by \$2.026 billion since 1991. Mr. Speaker, as well, as well, Mr. Speaker, consolidated net income from our Crowns has been \$3.478 billion since 1991. And, Mr. Speaker, net profits have been three point four two seven point one billion dollars.

The Crown corporations in this province have been able to provide good jobs, Mr. Speaker, good dividends to the people of this province to pay for important public services like health and education. And, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker — the Crowns have been able to lower the debt that was rung up by members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 205 — The Water Quality Recognition Day Act

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 205, The Water Quality Recognition Day Act be introduced and read the first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that Bill No. 205, The Water Quality Recognition Day Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Comments Regarding Member's Remarks

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would just like to

bring to the attention of the member for Indian Head-Milestone that on page 2604 of yesterday's *Hansard* he did imply wrongdoing on the part of another member. And I just want to bring that to his attention for the future.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand once again and table on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan a response to written question . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I started to say a minute ago, I'm extremely pleased to once again stand on behalf of the government and table a response to written question 997.

The Speaker: — Response to 997 has been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure Committee, and the Crown and Central Agencies Committee, I 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 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:21.]

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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
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Hon. E. Cline
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