



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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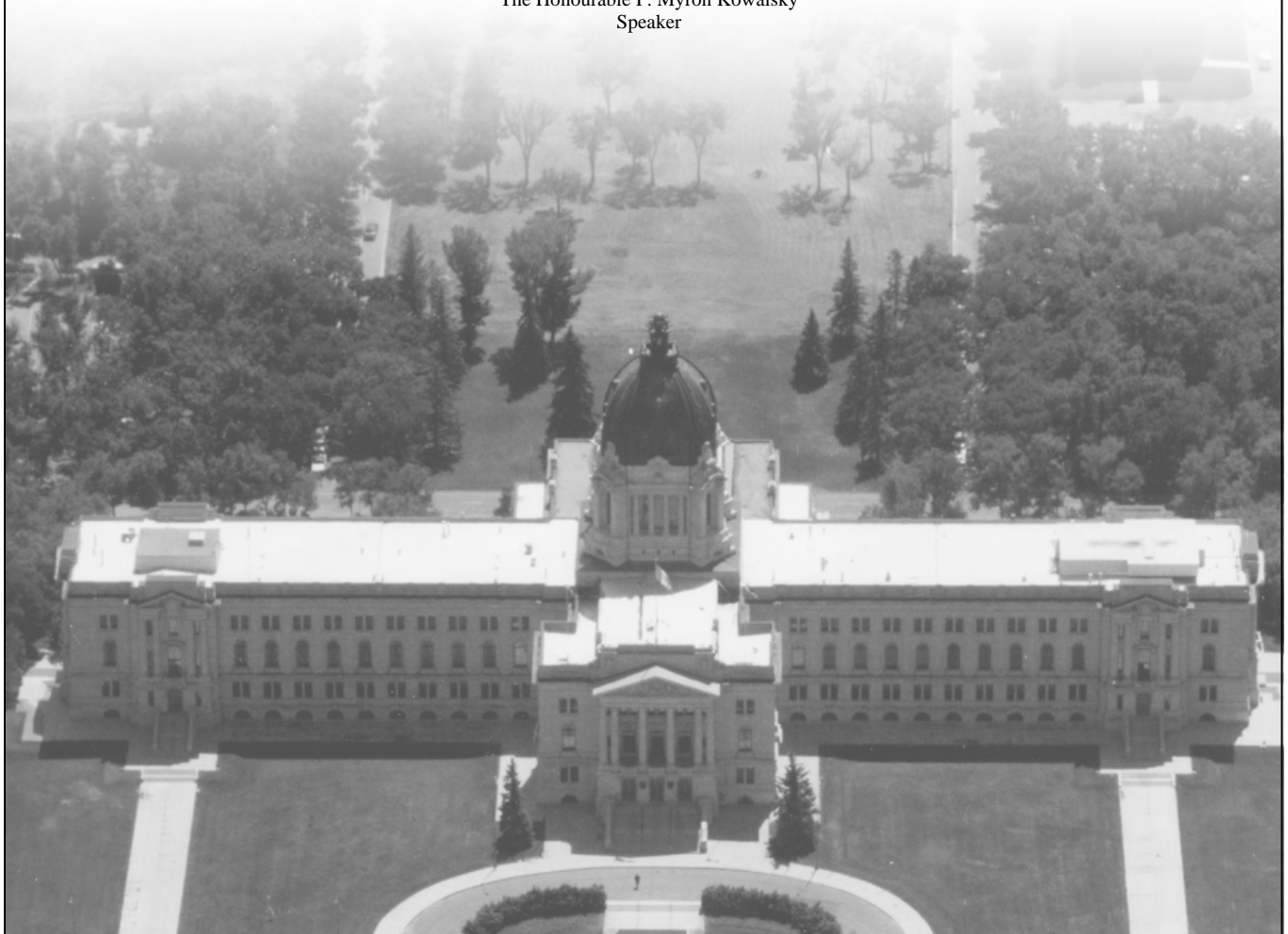
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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, Hon. 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, 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, Hon. Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

**Deputy Clerk:** — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker is not present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise again to present a petition on behalf of constituents from Cypress Hills concerned about the condition of Highway 32 running from the community of Cabri to Leader. 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.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by people from the communities of Leader, Liebenthal, Prelate, Lancer, and other communities in the immediate area. I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition with citizens concerned about the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And there's a number of pages here, Ms. Deputy Speaker. And the signatures are from Semans, LeRoy, Humboldt, Anaheim, Muenster, Lanigan, Lake Lenore, Carmel, Watson, Burr, and Bruno. I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you. I also have another petition from constituents who are opposed to any possible reductions to their health care in Biggar. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Perdue, Asquith, and Biggar and district. I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens calling the government not to close any of the highway section shops.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways' section shop in Watrous remain open as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Sask Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Watrous, Young, and Simpson. I so present.

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I have a petition to present regarding the widening of Highway No. 5. I will read from the prayer for relief, Madam Deputy Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Humboldt, LeRoy, and Middle Lake. I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of citizens who are concerned with the condition and the narrowness of Highway No. 5 between Humboldt and Saskatoon. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

Madam Speaker, signed by good citizens of Humboldt, Meacham, Carmel, Englefeld, and Anaheim. I so present.

## 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:

Petition concerning repairs to Highway 32, being sessional paper no. 64;

Petition concerning upgrade of Highway No. 20; that's session paper no. 65;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 5, 7, 8, and 27.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Madam Speaker, I give notice I shall on day no. 26 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister for SaskTel: how many towns and villages in Saskatchewan currently do not have access to SaskTel high-speed Internet?

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you and to all members in the House a group of 35 grade 5 and grade 8 students seated in the east gallery. They've made their way to Regina.

I know that the teachers involved have been very active in ensuring that discussion occurs about democracy and levels of government. So I want to thank, first of all, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Dean Turchinetz for ensuring that these students are here. And of course I want to thank all 35 students. But I understand that the group of students needs a fair number of chaperones, so I'd like to introduce Mrs. Strand, Mrs. Wilgosh, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Karcha, Mrs. Olson, Mrs. Townsend, Mrs. Walker, and Mrs. Englot.

So I hope you've enjoyed your trip thus far and that you enjoy the proceedings in the legislature. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier, the member from Riversdale.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this is a very exciting day in the province of Saskatchewan. This morning the province of Saskatchewan and our capital city of Regina was awarded the bid to host the Canadian Country Music Week in 2007.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — And it is my privilege, Madam Speaker, to introduce to members of the legislature the people who made this announcement possible. Seated in the west gallery, Madam Speaker, we have Heather Ostertag, who has many years of

experience working in the not-for-profit sector of the Canadian music industry. She is currently the Chair of the Canadian Country Music Association.

Heather is also the president of FACTOR, the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent On Records. Heather is a respected leader in the Canadian music industry, having twice been voted one of Canada's 30 most influential music executives. Heather is the recipient of many other music industry awards. Her work has also been acknowledged by her appointment as a member of the Order of Canada in 1993.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Also seated in the west gallery is Jan Cody. Ms. Cody has been involved in the music and entertainment industry both in Canada and the United States, including projects such as the Calgary Winter Olympics; the live stage show, *Today's Country*; and the television series, *Inside Country*. Jan is the president of the Canadian Country Music Association. We welcome Jan Cody to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — But of course the success of the Saskatchewan bid is due to hardworking Saskatchewan people who devoted a great deal of time and effort in this project. Some of them are here today. I'd like to introduce them.

First of all, J.P. Ellson, president of the Saskatchewan Creative Music 2007 Inc. and the Chair of the Conexus Arts Centre. J.P. is also Co-Chair of the host committee of the 2007 Country Music Week and the CCMA [Canadian Country Music Association] awards. J.P. Ellson.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Ken Taylor is with us. Ken will now co-chair the host committee of the 2007 Country Music Week and the CCMA awards. He is also the general manager of the Craven Country music. Welcome to Ken.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — And three, not strangers to this province or to many of the members — Steve McLellan, executive director of Tourism Regina.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Wayne Folk, a host committee member.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — And one of Saskatchewan's best talents, Saskatchewan recording artist, Marney Duncan.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure on behalf of all members we thank the Canadian Country Music Association for choosing Saskatchewan to host next year's Country Music Awards and to thank those who have worked so hard to make

this event possible. Thank you very, very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to join with the Premier, if I may, to welcome our guests to the Legislative Assembly and also to thank them for choosing Saskatchewan to be the host community in September '07 for these very prestigious awards, and congratulate Tourism Regina and the local host committee. This will be a very, very significant event for the province.

And while I'm on my feet, I think I'd like to thank, on behalf of the official opposition, the CCMA for the work that they have done historically to further and foster the development of Canadian country music. Obviously their work has really paid off as you look internationally at the impact that Canadian country music artists and songwriters and musicians are having, both as solo performers . . . And I know recently even at a Brad Paisley concert, I think almost half of his band were from Canada, many from Saskatchewan. I think there was some from Prince Albert as well.

So we're grateful for their work in that regard. And we're also grateful for the work they do to ensure that the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame is open to the public and available for people to go and check out the history of Canadian country music there in Calgary.

So on behalf of the official opposition, congratulations to the host committee. Welcome to our guests, and a pre-emptive welcome for the September '07 CCMA Awards.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to introduce to you and through you to members of the House a number of guests that we have sitting in your gallery. Later today we will have a debate on early learning and child care in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm very pleased that our early learning and child care partners — so many — could join us this afternoon from right across the province.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that our guests just give a wave when I introduce them. We have Lance Bean, president; Bill Wells, executive director; and Ardith Stephanson, from the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

Sue Delanoy, executive director, Communities for Children, Saskatoon Day Care Directors Association; John Ellis, Success by Six; George Folk from the Prairie South School Division, Denise Fields from the Regina Daycare Directors, Elaine Fisher from Turtle Park Day Care, Leanne Friedenstab from Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, Roger Gauthier from Fransaskois Parents Association, Joan Hoehn from Prince Albert Daycare Directors, Shirley Humphries from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Bev Leung from the

Saskatchewan Family Child Care Home Association Inc., Patrick Lewis from the Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Anne Luke from Early Learning Centre.

Tanya Mazurek from Northeast Directors Association, Charlene Mironuck from the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Directors Association, Kay Molnar from SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], Shondel Neithercut from Kids First Daycare Centre, Linda Nosbush from the Minister's Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Board, Jennifer Petracek-Kolb from the South Saskatchewan Early Education Centre, Anne Rodgers from the Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Coalition, Lois Saunders from the Holy Trinity School Division, Gail Szauner from the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, Debbie Thompson from the South Saskatchewan Early Education and Care, Robyn Torrie from the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] Child Care Centre, Dolores Wagner-Owens from Holy Trinity School Division, and also Leane Zborosky from the Wascana Daycare.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that all members in the Assembly welcome these partners from across Saskatchewan that contribute so much not only to children but to families right across the province.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to join with the minister in welcoming all these many people and the organizations they represent who are here today to witness a debate on the delivery of child care services.

Madam Speaker, I think it is a great tribute to the fact that all of us here in this House, in this Assembly, and in this province indeed recognize that our most precious resource in this province are not the material things but are our children and that a commitment to their welfare and well-being and their opportunities to succeed in life are paramount priority for all of us. So thank you folks for being here today. Welcome to your legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Thank you. I ask the members' indulgence as I introduce a few guests I have with me today and in doing so I didn't invite them but it's just by chance that it's also on a day that's very historic for me as well.

In the Speaker's gallery I have Joan and Ralph Wood that have come from Kitimat, BC [British Columbia] to support family members but also to take in the Brier. As you can see Joan has been to the Brier and collected some Parti Gras . . . and if you'd give a wave to the Assembly. When my husband and I lived in Burns Lake, they were our nearest relatives, and they were so good to us there. I hope I can in some way repay that warm hospitality.

Also in the Speaker's gallery Margaret and Leif Riesach who moved to Regina within the last year from the member from Melfort's constituency, and before from Saskatoon, I am appreciating the time that we've had to get to know each other a bit better and become friends. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to give a warm welcome to the guests in the Speaker's gallery.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Holy Cross Crusaders Senior Boys' Basketball Team Wins City Championship

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the legislature today to congratulate the Holy Cross Crusaders senior boys' basketball team for capturing the Saskatoon city high school basketball championship this past weekend.

The Crusaders claimed their third straight city title by defeating the Evan Hardy Souls 86-54 Saturday night at the University of Saskatchewan PAC [Physical Activity Complex]. With a season of 16 wins and zero losses, the Crusaders captured the league and city titles and now advance to the provincial 6A championship which begins today in Moose Jaw. Under the strong leadership of coaches Barry Rawlyk and Brett Czarnota, the skilled Crusaders team, many of whom are proud constituents of Saskatoon Southeast, will represent Saskatoon's Holy Cross High School well at this tournament.

Once again, congratulations for winning the city final and I wish the entire Holy Cross Crusader basketball team good luck at the 2006 Hoopla provincial basketball championship. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca, the Minister of Community Resources.

#### Oilsands Quest Inc.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I bring good news today, good news for the people of northern Saskatchewan and good news for our province's booming resource sector, Madam Speaker.

This winter Oilsands Quest Inc. has been doing some drilling in the Clearwater River area, about 60 miles east of Fort McMurray. There was exploration in the '70s that indicated that we have oil sands in this province, and the drilling results released by the company today confirmed that this is the case. Madam Speaker, in fact the Oilsands Quest results show the quality of the oil sands from the core samples is better quality than the Alberta deposits. We don't know the quantity yet, and that will be a very important factor yet to be determined.

Madam Speaker, the company is doing it right. It has been

working closely with the First Nations and the village of La Loche, providing opportunities for jobs and businesses in the area. Oilsands Quest is drilling 25 wells, investing about \$10 million, and is employing about 40 local people this year. Next year, Madam Speaker, the company will hire 100 people, spend about 20 million, and drill 150 other wells.

This is really early stages for this project, but we're all very encouraged about the drilling results released by Oilsands Quest today and yesterday about the potential for jobs, for revenues for the provincial economy, and new hope for the residents of Saskatchewan's North. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Batoche.

#### Saskatchewan Party Nominations

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today with a good-news, bad-news story. The good news is the Saskatchewan Party has nominated two new candidates.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kirsch:** — The bad news is for Mr. Speaker. It is one of them that is in the P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton constituency. Mr. Darryl Hickie won the P.A. constituency nomination of Carlton, and he is a proud member of the Prince Albert police force. He would like to be part of the change that is needed in this province, and he believes that his background and experience will help the Saskatchewan Party make that change.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kirsch:** — The second candidate is Mr. Kevin Shiach, and he would nominate for P.A. Northcote constituency. Mr. Shiach is an ordained clergy in P.A. and feels that really to help the families of P.A. Northcote there have to be some changes made in government policy. Mr. Shiach would like to work through the Saskatchewan Party to address family issues, youth crime, and gang issues.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to congratulate these two fine gentlemen and wish them well in the upcoming election.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Regina to Host Country Music Week and Canadian Country Music Awards

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the stars shine brighter under a prairie sky.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Morin:** — And so Regina has been chosen to host Country Music Week and the Canadian Country Music Association Awards in September 2007.

Country music has deep roots in our prairie province. We have

been graced with the talent of so many artists and performers: Brad Johner, Mark Smith, Debra Lauren, Freddy Pelletier, Sean Hogan, Tara Lee, and Tom Jackson just to name a few. Country Music Week is another great opportunity to showcase Saskatchewan talent at one of the country's most exciting national events.

And the CCMA Awards will be televised internationally to the United States and Australia. Not even the Juno Awards, also being hosted by Saskatchewan in 2007, can boast that kind of reach. In addition to the obvious cultural benefits and the national-international exposure, hosting Country Music Week and the CCMA Awards will bring significant economic benefit for our accommodation, service, and tourism industries.

I want to extend thanks and congratulate the bid committee, Saskatchewan Creative Music Inc., and the committee Co-Chairs, J.P. Ellson and Neil Donnelly, as well as the Co-Chairs of the new host committee — J.P. Ellson and Ken Taylor. Thank you.

I know 2007 Country Music Week will be a tremendous week for Regina, for Saskatchewan, and especially for Canada. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatchewan Centennial Baby Award

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. On February 6 at the band office of the Kawacatoose First Nation, I had the honour to present the Saskatchewan Centennial Baby Award to Taron Ashton Desjarlais. The award, recognizing all Saskatchewan residents born on September 4, 2005, is the historical honour due to those born exactly the same day as the province was constituted a century ago.

There were only 27 children born across Saskatchewan on this date last September, and Taron is the only one in Arm River-Watrous constituency. On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I presented the award to Taron's mother, Gwendolyn Vanessa Worm, of Kawacatoose.

The award consists of a gold medallion, an official certificate signed by Her Honour Lieutenant Governor Dr. Lynda Haverstock, and as well as a \$100 Saskatchewan savings bond. Assisting me during the presentation was Kawacatoose First Nation Band Councillor Edward Poorman.

I spoke about the province's centennial celebrations in 2005 and their historical significance. I talked of Saskatchewan's centennial celebrations as a tribute to the people who first set out to build this province 100 years ago. Then as now, our vision of Saskatchewan was an act of partnership with the First Nations people. Together we have worked hard to develop our province and share in its prosperity.

The birth of a child on the day Saskatchewan became a province is a significant symbol of a bright new future for our province, working together for new generations. I would ask all

the members join me in congratulating Gwen and Taron of Kawacatoose First Nation on receiving this centennial award.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

#### IPSCO Retiree Honoured

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recently had the pleasure of attending a recent surprise retirement party for Peter Susa.

Peter retired from IPSCO after 34 years with the company. During those 34 years, Peter's work record was second to none. He proved to be a very conscientious, dedicated, and loyal employee.

Peter was also a very proud member of his union, the United Steelworkers of America, Local 5890, where he served as president for nine years as well as holding other positions in the local executives for another nine years. During his leadership, Peter was able to build a strong relationship with management which was based on his reputation for being straightforward and honest. Those who sat across from Peter at the negotiating table soon found him to be a strong supporter of the rights of working people but also found him to be fair and reasonable.

And the large number of people who turned out to help Peter celebrate his retirement was a testimony to the way he touched so many. Peter has always been ready to give a helping hand to those who may need one.

Peter and his wife, Elizabeth plan to travel and visit with friends and family in various parts of Canada while continuing to live here in Saskatchewan. Madam Speaker, I want to wish them both many years of happiness and health in their retirement. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

#### Congratulations to Winter Olympians

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today I wish to highlight two former constituents from my riding of Canora-Pelly. They are held in high esteem because they were participants in the 2006 Winter Olympics.

The first I wish to congratulate is Ken Kotyk, the son of Alfred and Grace Kotyk of the Rama area. Ken is a member of the Canada 1 four-man bobsled team. Although he is from the Rama area, Ken graduated from Invermay School.

Olympic fever touched the entire communities of Invermay and Rama on February 24 and 25. Students and staff at Invermay School wore red and white on Friday. And on Saturday, TVs and a satellite dish were installed in the Rama skating rink for all to follow the bobsled events.

There was only one-half second difference between the gold medal winning German team and Ken Kotyk's fourth place team — the same time it takes to blink an eye. For that, we should all feel proud.

The second former constituent I wish to acknowledge is a woman who was born in Norquay and attended grade 1 in Pelly. Shannon Kleibrink is the skip for Canada's bronze medal winning women's curling team. Although Shannon's parents Tom and Mabel Getty moved to Alberta while she was quite young, her aunt and uncle continue to live in Pelly.

Despite battling a nasty flu bug during their time in Turin, the Kleibrink team still managed to bring home the bronze medal. For that, all Canadians are quite proud. Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask you and all members to join with me in congratulating our winter Olympians, Ken Kotyk and Shannon Kleibrink.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

#### Plans for Population Growth

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the Premier. I wonder if the Premier would please tell this Assembly and the people of the province what his goal is for population growth in the province of Saskatchewan for 2006.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I will return that question to the Leader of the Opposition. When the member of Rosetown was the leader of that operation, they had a plan. I think they called it Grow Saskatchewan — Grow Saskatchewan. And they put some very specific population targets within that plan. I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition what's happened to that plan.

In fact, I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition what's happened to any semblance of policy from the Saskatchewan Party. Some of us hearing the news today understand why the policy director of the Saskatchewan Party caucus office has flown the coop and gone to the Conservatives in Ottawa, Madam Speaker. The fact of the matter is there's no policy over there to debate or to formulate. Madam Speaker, this government has set out a plan for this economy and this province which will see economic growth, job growth, and population growth that comes from within. We've set forward an immigration policy. Madam Speaker, we are seeing this province prosper today and will prosper in the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The goal that we have set for this province has never changed. One per cent a year is the national average. It's eminently achievable and we'll hear more in a moment about what the NDP [New Democratic Party] think of that particular goal.

You didn't hear the Premier answer the question. It's pretty simple. Does he have a goal in terms of population growth for the province of Saskatchewan? It was a rare moment of truth that he didn't offer one, though. And we saw again another rare moment of truth, frankly, yesterday when the NDP Health minister was asked what's his goal for a number of new nurses we need in Saskatchewan. Here's what he said. Even if we put a number on it, there's no guarantee we would be able to meet that number in any case. Doesn't that tell you all you need to know about this NDP government, Mr. Speaker? They're so used to failing they've even stopped trying.

What is the goal for population growth for our province set by this Premier and his government? Will he tell the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Madam Speaker, contrary to the opposition who will set out plan with no detail, who will set out policy that has no connection to reality, this government through our Throne Speech, through economic development plans, have put in place some very specific, tangible plans and targets.

Let me refer, Madam Speaker, specifically to the issue of immigration. We began a focus on immigration two to three years ago now, when a former member of this House conducted for this legislature a study as a legislative secretary, set out a plan. Ms. Lorje set out a plan for immigration.

We have now established a ministry of Immigration and we have put the support in place to develop this policy, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have said as recently as the Throne Speech — if the Leader of the Opposition would care to read the Throne Speech — we have set some very specific targets for ourselves in terms of immigration. Over the next several years we will grow the immigration to this province with a target towards 2008-09 of 1,500 to 2,000 nominees. What that represents, Madam Speaker, is an average immigration increase to the province of Saskatchewan by 2008-09 of between 4,500 and 6,000 new people each and every year, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well then, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier has all that information with respect to immigration, why won't he answer the question? What are his goals to grow the population of this province in 2006 . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — He did.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well no he didn't, as a matter of fact, if you were



listening.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, when the Premier and the Minister of Industry held their press conference after the congress that was held last year to unveil their new plan with their targets, there were no targets at all. There was just sort of general platitudes. You remember that — 80 of them or so, I think. They wanted there to be more jobs and for there to be more investment and for it to be less windy and for winters to be shorter. I'm not sure what else was in there.

But it was widely panned by pundits and those in economic development alike because there were no targets. There were no measures and I think the reason is because this NDP government is tired of failing by its own targets so it's stopped even trying. The Premier's own target for youth in-migration — he said in 2001 that we would be in a net position by 2005. What's happened? We've lost 8,800 people in their 20s in that time period.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is the Premier's goal for population growth in the province of Saskatchewan for 2006?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, it is of note that the Leader of the Opposition today would stand in this House and refer to the centennial economic summit that was held in Saskatoon last January.

The only group of men and women in Saskatchewan who boycotted that Centennial Summit was the Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Party. As we sat down with industry leaders, with business leaders, with leaders from the trade union movement, with young people, with Aboriginal people, with people from across the province to build a plan for the future of Saskatchewan's economy, there was one notable absentee — that was the Leader of the Opposition. And his entire caucus boycotted Saskatchewan's economic summit.

Out of that summit, out of that summit, Madam Deputy Speaker, arose the recommendations and the plans of Saskatchewan people working in partnership with their government. I think there were 81 very specific plans that came directly from that economic summit. One of the plans talked about immigration. We've taken that plan, we've given it meat and bones, and we are seeing people coming to this province today in new and record numbers. And we've set some very ambitious targets for the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can kind of piece, you can kind of piece together this NDP government's hidden agenda. Unfortunately it's an agenda for mediocrity. It's a plan for mediocrity. They don't set goals because, as the Minister of Health said quite candidly yesterday, they're not able to reach goals so they've stopped setting them. They don't want to grow the province, as the Minister of

Highways and Transportation said, because when people leave there is more left for the rest of us. The former minister of Finance said, you don't talk about tax hikes during an election campaign because people might not vote for you. Another NDP member said that she believed it was statistically impossible for this province to even grow at the national average of 1 per cent a year.

It all adds up to a lack of vision. There is no economic plan. What there is is a plan for mediocrity, evidenced by the fact that the Premier is unable to articulate a goal for population growth for the province. Will he not do that? Will he stand in his place and give hope to the people in Saskatchewan that he at least has a goal, a target in mind to grow this province in 2006?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said, the action plan that we released — based on the summit that the Leader of the Opposition did not attend — to listen to Saskatchewan people, set out 81 specific goals. And you know, Madam Speaker, it's not enough, it's not enough just to pick numbers out of the air. You actually have to have a plan.

What is the plan of the Leader of the Opposition? When asked for his plan last year, Madam Speaker, his answer was, I'm going to appoint a committee if I become premier to tell me what to do. That was his answer, Madam Speaker. And what does he say this week when asked what his plan is? He says this: elect me because I am a different brand. That's what he says. Well you know what, Madam Speaker? The brand maybe has a little bit of sizzle but there's no steak.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

### Recruiting and Retaining Nurses

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I understand yesterday that the new Minister of Health had quite a bit of difficulty answering the question, articulating the goal of the number of nurses that we need in the province of Saskatchewan. He had about four questions in this Assembly to try and answer the question. He had 25 minutes out in the rotunda answering questions and not once could he ever articulate a goal.

But this is what he did have to say — and we've heard it once before; we'll hear it many times again, I think: even if we were to put a number on it, there is no guarantee we would be able to meet that number in any case. What is the minister saying, Madam Deputy Speaker? Don't set goals because we can't meet them — is that what the minister is saying?

Is that the strategy? The strategy is give up because we can't meet any particular goal. If the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses' number of 600 more nurses was too many, will the minister please stand in the House today and tell us what his number is?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. If there's any shortage of anything in this Chamber today, Madam Speaker, it's credibility.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I ask the members to come to order and respect the member that's on his feet.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I don't mind being quoted in this Chamber, Madam Speaker. I very much appreciate it. And the members opposite, the members opposite are quite used to — we know from past experience — quoting members of this House without fully extending the language that was used in those quotes.

Madam Speaker, members of the media who did talk to me yesterday for about 25 minutes on this issue know that the context of the quotation used on the opposite side signifies that there is a significant challenge North America wide concerning the recruitment and retention of professionals in the health care field.

Madam Speaker, if we set targets, if we set targets, Madam Speaker, the target is the issue of building a nursing and physician base in this province that meets the needs of Saskatchewan people. And, Madam Speaker, when we looked at the needs of Saskatchewan people in 2001, this government set a target of addressing the issue. And, Madam Speaker, the results have been quite impressive.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. He refuses to set a target or a goal, a number that we should be reaching.

And it reminds me of a story. A number of years ago when I used to play hockey, an old hockey coach would come into the room before a big game and he goes, boys, they're keeping score tonight; we better darn well win. That's what he would say. And when you think about it, it makes a lot of sense because if they're not keeping score, if you don't really matter whether you win or lose, if you don't have any goals, if you don't have an end goal to get to, it just doesn't matter.

What the province needs right now from that minister is leadership in this area. He needs to set a goal, a target, and work with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, work with the health authorities to reach that mark. No mark, no success. He doesn't have a clue where he's at. He's floundering. Why won't this minister set some goals, work with the organizations to meet those goals?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Madam Speaker, I'll discuss a very specific number right now, and I think it's a very important number. Currently, based on the job postings that exist throughout the province, there are 251 nurse job postings in the province at the moment. This adds up to approximately 190 FTEs [full-time equivalent] that are going unfulfilled. We have committed to work with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and other professionals in the province to ensure that goal number one, step number one, is to fulfill the unfulfilled jobs that currently exist in the system.

Now, Madam Speaker, this is a very complex and broad issue, which is why our consultation with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and other professionals is so important. Madam Speaker, we currently have, in the last budget, \$700,000 allocated for bursary money for nursing graduates. Madam Speaker, 185 undergraduate nursing students are currently in line to receive those bursaries, 38 primary care nurse practitioners. And, Madam Speaker, I want to indicate to the members of the opposition . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McMorris:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister does not have any strategy to reach any goal that he hasn't set. That's his whole game plan. This is what he had to say outside the Assembly yesterday — for a young nurse coming out of school in Saskatoon, having a chance to work for higher wages in a first-class facility is an attractive proposition. What does that mean? What is he saying? That our facilities are second-class? That people have to go outside of our province to work in first-class facilities at higher wages? Is that what he's saying, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's bad enough that the work environment is chasing nurses out of our province. Now the minister stands up and calls our facilities second-class and tells about how there's higher wages in other jurisdictions. Why doesn't he sit down and work with the organizations to come up with a game plan to retain nurses in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. And we talk about credibility. The members of the media that were a part of that discussion yesterday know exactly what I was referring to when I was asked the question about, is it wages that are moving people away from the profession? Madam Speaker, there are a whole lot of issues that are wrapped up in the recruitment and retention issue. All of them are addressed in the action plan, workforce action plan, prepared by this government in consultation with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and others, and is the game plan for the future of this province.

And, Madam Speaker, to continue my answer previously where

I indicated 185 undergraduate nursing students, 38 primary nurse practitioners in line for bursaries — every one of them will be offered jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

### Eligibility for Subsidized Child Care Spaces

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Community Resources. Can the minister tell this Assembly who subsidized daycare spaces are specifically designed for?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just to inform the members opposite, when the Premier made the cabinet shuffle on February 3 of this year, there was a division within the Department of Learning. There is now the Advanced Education which includes training and that aspect along with post-secondary education. And the Department of Learning now has responsibility for early childhood development and child care.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Well again, Madam Deputy Speaker, that really wasn't an answer. Does the minister know how many working families and low-income people now earn too much to qualify for subsidized child care spaces?

In order for a family of one to qualify for any subsidize, pre-tax, monthly income cut-off of families with one dependent child is \$640 or less. For two dependent children, it's \$1,740 or less. For three dependent children, it's \$1,840 or less. A working family where both parents earn minimum age brings home just under \$2,400 before tax, and they don't even qualify for a subsidy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this gross family income cut-off below which families actually qualify for fully subsidized spaces hasn't been raised since the 1970s. This government is essentially discouraging working families from seeking opportunities that would improve their situation. Why is this government leaving working families behind by cutting off their access to subsidized child care spaces?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is why we have many of our partners here with us today and why we have a debate that is slated for later this afternoon, is to talk about child care in the province of Saskatchewan, and early learning, and to look at the Saskatchewan plan and the areas that we have worked with our Saskatchewan partners to develop

a blended method of dealing with early childhood development and child care.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is not one thing in this province that operates in isolation. When we talk about child care, it also affects so many things. It's important to children in our community to be given a very good start in life, but it's also good support for families. Madam Deputy Speaker, when we talk about labour force and shortages in the labour market, for parents to be able to enter the workforce they also need supports that are there and provided to them so that they are free to enter and advance their careers.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Well thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Since this has been going on since the 1970s, I'm glad today we're finally going to have the debate. The NDP government always claims that it cares about working families when in reality it's shutting the door on many of them when it comes to accessing subsidized child spaces. Even the government's own commission into improving work opportunities for Saskatchewan residents made note of this unfair practice. Recommendation 21 in the final report calls on the government to, and I quote: "... raise the gross family income level below which families are eligible for subsidy."

This afternoon the Saskatchewan Party will be adding an amendment to the motion in the emergency debate on child care. We'll be calling on this government to stop leaving working people behind by raising the income cut-off for subsidized child care spaces so that many people earning minimum wage can actually qualify for these services. Then on a go-forward basis this could be extended to ... indexed to inflation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I ask the member to put his question.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Will the minister support this amendment?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are aware Child Care Saskatchewan has been working in a number of areas, not only in commitments to expanded child care spaces, but also commitments to increased wages for child care workers. There was a number of announcements that were made. This is something that we believe in and we have committed resources to.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is also a number of improvements and reviews that are under way, and one of them is the subsidy issue. Because this is something that we have heard often from families, as to where the turning point is, there has been increases made to the subsidy rate. And with the previous federal government when they had been making commitments toward the national child care program, that was one of the main areas that we were looking at, as to increase the

subsidy and have it go out farther so that it covered more families because, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's important.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cannington.

### Written Questions

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Government Whip rose in the House and ordered two more written questions. That means in his infinite wisdom, the Government Whip thinks he needs 180 more days . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member on his feet would like to place his question before the Assembly.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Needs 180 more days to respond to these simple questions.

Madam Speaker, these questions were asked on Thursday, December 1, 2005. That means that this government has had 105 days to figure out the answer to them. Now they want another six months — 285 days they want. It's totally unreasonable.

Madam Speaker, what are they hiding? To the Government House Leader, what is the NDP government hiding by not answering these questions?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader, the member from Moose Jaw.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Madam Speaker, I said it the other day and I say it again today: the world has changed. The world has changed substantially since the Leader of the Opposition served as a staffer in a cabinet minister's office in the Devine government. It was a time in this province, when I served in opposition, Madam Deputy Speaker, that questions were not answered.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there were an avalanche of questions that were asked in the fall session. I said the other day that those questions . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Members have expressed a desire to hear an answer to a question. I'd ask them to respect that.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, it does kind of defy credibility, does it not, when they ask a question and then don't want an answer?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I made a commitment to this House the other day, and I stand by my commitment. We take the questions very seriously, and they will be provided to this House and they would be provided substantially before the deadline as required by the rules of the

House.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Speaker, there are 566 questions that remain unanswered because of this government hiding the answers. Madam Deputy Speaker, while the government chooses not to answer the questions, this hiding has become a pattern of financial incompetence.

Madam Speaker, there's no excuse for this delay. In last year's budget, the Premier increased his staffing budget by 60 per cent, almost half a million dollars in extra taxpayers' money, for more communication staff. Last year the Premier said during the Premier's estimates, and I quote from *Hansard* of May 25, 2005. Quote:

. . . the need . . . [of] greater staffing resources in Executive Council, to provide accurate, timely responses to the written questions provided by the opposition . . .

Madam Deputy Speaker, why do these written questions continue to go unanswered when the necessary staff and resources have been put in place? To the Premier: do they have one staffer for each question and they have to take a year to answer them so they can keep their jobs, or are they just political hacks that are in there not doing duties in the legislature?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Madam Speaker, credibility is strained yet again. Here we hear, out of the mouths of the opposition, the basic position that they have about people who work for the people of Saskatchewan in the administration of public service.

**An Hon. Member:** — Hacks.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Hacks. In fact I think . . . Was it skunks and deadwood was the phrase that was previously used by the Saskatchewan Party in referring to the people who work in the public administration?

Madam Deputy Speaker, what we are seeing here is purely and simply the expression of attitude. This is attack the public service. It's not about putting forward your policy alternatives.

Heaven only knows, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they have no need for a director of policy because they sent him off to Ottawa with their cousins with whom they are not related, as they sent him away today. Madam Deputy Speaker, credibility is strained yet again.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Requesting to introduce a guest.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has requested the Assembly to introduce a guest. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Madam Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, in your west gallery I'd like to introduce a former friend or . . . no, a former co-worker and friend I hope still — I hope now a close friend, Madam Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you Jim Holmes. Jim is a trade unionist who had a very successful career with the Canadian Union of Public Employees as a staff representative and as a director. And I think Jim has achieved respect and that has been through his work and his passion for fighting for the working people of this province, Saskatchewan. And throughout the province all people hold Jim in high respect. So I'd ask all members to welcome my friend and former co-worker, Jim Holmes.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 30 — The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006 be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

##### **Bill No. 31 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accounting Professions) Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accounting Professions) Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 31, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accounting Professions) Amendment Act be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

##### **Bill No. 32 — The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les victimes d'actes criminels**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 32, The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 32, The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2006 be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

##### **Bill No. 35 — The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi d'interprétation de 1995**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 35, The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 35, The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2006 be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

**Bill No. 36 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)/Loi corrective (indemnisation et assurance au profit des administrateurs et dirigeants) de 2006 (n° 2)**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 36, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 36, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act (No. 2) be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

**Bill No. 37 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 37, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

[14:30]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 37, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act (No. 2) be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

**Bill No. 38 — The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act/Loi sur le règlement des différends internationaux relatifs aux investissements**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 38, The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 38, The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

**Bill No. 40 — The Income Trust Liability Act**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 40, The Income Trust Liability Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 40, The Income Trust Liability Act 2006 be introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

**Bill No. 41 — The Partnership Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 41, The Partnership Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 41, The Partnership Amendment Act, 2006 be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House. Why would the member be on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to honour the memory of Senator Allan Bird.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member asks leave to make remarks to honour the memory of Senator Bird. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the leave?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Granted.

**STATEMENT BY A MEMBER**

**Remembering Senator Allan Bird**

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday was a very sad day when we learned of the passing of Senator Allan Bird. And some of us just saw him yesterday at the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] assembly.

Senator Bird was a well-known and a well-respected First Nations elder and leader in Saskatchewan and Canada. He was also a recurring war veteran and member of the First Nations Veterans Association.

Senator Bird was a strong believer in First Nations treaty rights. He was a strong supporter of First Nations self-government, in particular in areas of education. He often said, it is for our grandchildren so they may have a good future.

Senator Bird was a strong family man, a community man who taught his children well. His teachings and guidance led to his children taking on many high-profile leadership roles of First Nations people, including Alphonse Bird, the grand chief of the

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Senator Bird spent his entire life in the service of others, and his efforts will never be forgotten.

Like me, Senator Bird was a devoted Maple Leafs fan, and he loved to golf. And he had a great sense of humour. Personally, Madam Deputy Chair, Senator Bird was like a second father to me. I will miss him and his guidance. Please join me in offering our prayers for his family and friends.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current.

**Mr. Wall:** — Madam Speaker, I would request leave to also offer remarks of condolence.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Leave has been requested to offer remarks of condolence. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Okay.

**Mr. Wall:** — First off, Madam Deputy Speaker, let me thank the hon. minister for her obviously very heartfelt remarks about the passing of Senator Allan Bird. If I may, I just have a few brief remarks of my own. And some of it will repeat what we've just heard, but I think the time of the legislature is certainly worth it.

Senator Allan Bird's life was one of service and belief. He served his First Nations community. He served this province, and he served the country. He had strong beliefs in terms of right and wrong, in terms of guiding our youth — First Nations and non-First Nations. Senator Allan Bird had made many contributions to our province. He was an elder and a teacher and a mentor to countless young people on the Montreal Lake Cree Nation.

He was active in First Nations politics. He served for a time as the chief of his First Nation at Montreal Lake. He was a vice-chief of the PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council]. He served because he wanted to improve the lives of First Nations people, both on his own First Nation at Montreal Lake, within the P.A. Grand Council area, and across Saskatchewan. He wanted to leave things better than he found them.

Senator Allan Bird instilled this sense of service into his sons. Former Chief Ritchie Bird went on to follow in his father's footsteps in leadership at the Montreal Lake Cree Nation, and of course his son, Alphonse, is the chief of the FSIN.

He was a Korean war veteran and he served honourably and courageously with Tommy Prince, the decorated First Nations war hero. And after his service in Korea, as the hon. minister has said, he dedicated much of his time to furthering the cause of First Nations veterans. In fact he was even doing that a couple of days ago.

I had the chance this morning to talk with his son, Chief Alphonse Bird, and offer the condolences of the official

opposition on the passing of his father. And Chief Bird indicated that just, well a couple of days ago during the presentation of the national chief, Chief Fontaine, it became evident that Senator Bird wanted to offer a few remarks. And Chief Bird reminded me that that isn't the role of senators at an assembly for them to speak. And so, he actually stood up and went around to, you know, ask his dad what it is he wanted to say and he just said, I have something to say. And according to Chief Bird, it was a former FSIN chief and now senate Chair Roland Crow who said no, let him speak and so they did. And he offered some comments to the national chief.

The national chief had been talking about the importance of the residential school issue and the settlement of that issue and Senator Bird encouraged him in that. He encouraged him to continue with that work, but he also reminded him to not forget about First Nations veterans. True to his passion, he wanted to talk about the importance of First Nations veterans and encourage the national chief to make that a priority. And according to Chief Bird this morning, he had said to him and if the national chief wasn't prepared to do it, then he, Senator Bird, would do it because he said, he ended his comments by saying, that he was rough and tough and took no guff.

And Chief Bird recounted that and other stories of his dad and how he felt about his father and the role model that he was. And obviously there was a major impact there on the lives of two sons who went on to be First Nations leaders, but on the lives of so many other First Nations and non-First Nations.

I think specifically of Senator Bird's passion for the treaties, that both non-First Nations and First Nations would realize the importance of respecting those and that they're absolutely foundational and elemental to our economy, to really everything that is Saskatchewan.

So on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party, the official opposition, we want to join with the hon. minister and the government in passing on our condolences to the family and the friends of Senator Allan Bird and indeed to the entire FSIN, the senate who have lost an excellent First Nations leader with the passing of Senator Bird.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to ask leave of the Assembly to introduce a motion appointing the Deputy Chair of committees.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that he have leave to change committees appointment. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

## MOTIONS

### Deputy Chair of Committees

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, by leave of the

Assembly I move, seconded by the Government Whip:

That Mr. Peter Prebble, member for the constituency of Saskatoon Greystone, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of committees of this Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member from Moose Jaw North, and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Fairview:

That Mr. Peter Prebble, member of the constituency of Saskatoon Greystone, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of committees of the Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Is the Assembly in favour of the motion placed before you?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

#### Early Learning and Child Care

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to make some statements and then read a motion into the record concerning early learning and child care.

Children are born with great potential. Their first five years set the stage for health, behaviour, and learning for the rest of their lives. And that's why early learning and child care is so very important.

Last April this government signed an agreement in principle with the Government of Canada to develop a system of early learning and child care in the province of Saskatchewan. We committed to developing a plan, Madam Speaker, that would make quality early learning and child care more accessible and affordable for families. And the Government of Canada committed to providing us with \$146 million over five years to make this plan a reality.

That window of opportunity now appears to be closing. The federal government has advised that it will not proceed with the five-year funding agreement and will terminate funding by next spring. In its place they are introducing a community child care investment program that would appear to be based on a tax credit for creation of child care spaces in workplaces.

As well they have established the Choice in Child Care Allowance where parents will receive a taxable benefit of \$100 a month for every child under the age of six.



Madam Deputy Speaker, this government understands that families need money to help care for children and give them opportunities. In fact we've come out and stated that we will not count this money as income for families on social assistance. But we also understand something else, Madam Speaker. We understand that you can't have a plan of choice when there are no choices. You can't buy something that isn't available.

When about 70 per cent of mothers of young children are working and there are only licensed child care spaces for 7 per cent of those children, there's a service missing that most parents can't buy. When there are over 11,000 four-year-olds in the province and our current pre-kindergarten is targeted at only 1,600, there's a service missing that most parents can't buy. There are preschools in the province that are filling this gap to some extent, but in many communities, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's still a service parents can't buy.

Sometimes services are available, but parents don't know about them. Sometimes the services aren't connected, so you have a parent driving all over the place putting children in this program or that program.

What Saskatchewan needs, Madam Deputy Speaker, is to develop more early learning and child care services so that families will truly have a choice. We need a system that works, and we have developed a plan to get us there. What we're missing is the federal funds that the Canada-Saskatchewan funding agreement was to provide. We will take every opportunity to talk to the federal government and help them understand why it is so very important for Saskatchewan to move forward with a system of early learning and child care. And we want the people of Saskatchewan to know just what that system would look like.

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will share with this House the made-in-Saskatchewan plan for early learning and child care. This plan was based on two things. First of all, it was based on the needs and wishes of the people of Saskatchewan. Over the last two years we have talked with parents. We have talked with early childhood educators. These are people who run child care centres and work in them: teachers of kindergartens and pre-kindergartens and preschools. We have talked to people in communities all across the province: First Nations, Métis, francophones, urban, rural, northern, the disability community. Madam Deputy Speaker, our plan is based on those discussions.

[14:45]

Secondly the plan is based on research and expert advice. As a result it's a plan that blends early learning and care together. The experts confirm what parents know instinctively, Madam Deputy Speaker, that children learn best in a loving, caring environment. Our plan is based on a vision, a vision that states all Saskatchewan children enjoy a good start in life and are nurtured and supported by caring families and communities. And these are our goals that accompany the vision: children have the best possible early learning and child care experiences and are safe and secure, families have support and assistance from the people and communities around them to raise healthy children, and families have practical solutions to barriers.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, here is the plan that was developed and would be under way if the federal funding were still available. We would introduce a new pre-kindergarten program and expand the existing one. The pre-kindergarten program we already have is targeted to vulnerable children. The educators who work in this program have told us that it is a very effective program and is making a huge difference in children's lives. However the number of children who qualify for this program exceeds the number of spaces. We want to change that and would increase the number of spaces.

We would also phase in a new voluntary pre-kindergarten program over the next five years. The new program would be available to all four-year-olds in the province. It would be regulated and linked to schools and would be available through child care centres, community preschools or schools, and classes would operate at least two half-days per week. In a classroom of 20, there would be two qualified pre-kindergarten teachers, one with a minimum designation of early childhood educator 2 and one with a minimum designation of early childhood educator 3.

Madam Deputy Speaker, pre-kindergarten would be phased in as boards of education and communities decide together how and when to launch them locally. Developmental funding would be available to school divisions so they could begin working with their communities to build on existing services and establish new pre-kindergartens where needed. Parents would pay a small fee with the opportunity to access a subsidy based on their income level. Some of these pre-kindergartens would have been available by September of this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in our plan we would also develop an early learning guide. This guide would be for use in all pre-kindergartens and child care centres, and it would also be available to families. The guide would provide a standard curriculum, so children across the province would receive the same benefit. Educators and parents would be able to use the guide to lead children in play-based learning activities that would encourage development of age appropriate skills.

Capital funding would be available, Madam Deputy Speaker, to help with the development of new and existing facilities for expansion of early learning and child care services, including schools and child care centres. The priorities for this funding would focus on ensuring health and safety standards are met and increasing spaces where most needed.

We would expand and enhance the early childhood development sector in many ways. But first we would add 1,720 more child care spaces. And this is in addition to the 1,200 spaces that are already being added as part of the Child Care Saskatchewan. This past year, we've added 250 of the 1,720 planned spaces. And those 250 spaces will remain, as will the 1,200 Child Care Saskatchewan spaces.

But if the federal funding were available, Madam Deputy Speaker, we could have increased child care spaces in Saskatchewan by 40 per cent between the years 2003 and 2010. We would also enhance grants for licensed family child care homes by introducing a new grant for licensed family child care homes to help them with the cost of buying nutritious food. In addition the start-up grant for these homes would increase from

\$1,400 to \$2,000.

We would develop a strategy to attract and retrain early childhood educators. Madam Deputy Speaker, there are some wonderful professional people working in child care centres, people who really care about kids and who understand how to help them learn and develop. And the quality of a child's early learning and child care experiences are directly connected to the training and the wages of educators.

For this reason, we have already made three commitments to increase the wages of staff in child care centres — 3 per cent as of April 2005, another 6 per cent in November of 2005, and by 9 per cent in April of 2006. The Saskatchewan government made these commitments in good faith, based on the funding that was coming from the federal government. And we will not break those commitments, even though the federal government may end their funding next year. They are too important to our children and to the people who work with them.

But there are other commitments that we have made, Madam Deputy Speaker. We want to attract young people to early childhood education. And we know that there are people who have been working in the field with a minimum of education, people who do the best they can and who would do an even better job if they had more training opportunities. We would have worked with SIAST to add 100 new training seats this year, complete with bursaries to make the training more affordable.

Enhancing, measuring, and reporting on quality is vital. It makes sure that we are actually doing the good for our children that we intend to. And we would continue to define quality with input from our early learning and child care partners. This would help ensure that all programs are built to respond to the family's needs.

Throughout the province, community preschools and playschools provide an important learning and developmental opportunity for three- to four-year-olds. We would work more closely with preschools, Madam Deputy Speaker, to provide better access to professional development and networking. Families would have more information about preschool in our province.

We would also make services more affordable, Madam Deputy Speaker. Many parents have told us that they can't afford regulated, licensed, early learning and child care services. And while it's good that subsidies are available for those with the very lowest incomes, those subsidies need to be available to more families. And low-income families need even more assistance.

And based on this input, we would develop a new subsidy structure for licensed child care and pre-kindergarten. We made a step in this direction last spring by increasing child care subsidies by an average of \$20 per child per month, and we will keep this commitment.

Now federal funds were in place. The subsidies would have increased again in January of this year and that would be just the beginning. A complete review of the subsidy system was planned with the intent that we would significantly increase

both the dollar value of child care subsidies and the number of families who qualify. Some families would also qualify for subsidy to pre-kindergarten. Administrative processes would also be reviewed and simplified wherever possible.

We would improve access to services. Early learning and child care has to be inclusive with opportunities for all. We've had initial discussions with First Nations representatives, Métis organizations and our francophone community. And we also recognize that in rural and northern areas, people often live farther apart and child care needs can be seasonal based on a parent's peak work times.

Families of children with disabilities also have unique needs. We would like to see these children fully participating in early learning and child care programs. For example, that would mean a child in a pre-kindergarten or child care setting could have access to speech language supports so that he or she could get the best start possible.

This is such an important area, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have already taken vital steps. Kids who have a high-impact of disability, who were having to wait for child care spaces because of a shortage of funding, that wait list has been eliminated and we plan to keep it that way.

And for all families, we would pilot parent resource centres. These centres would be places that families could go to access programs and services for young children to learn new skills and to build relationships with other families. Communities would develop these resource centres with different combinations of services depending on what is already available and what new services are needed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a very good plan. And it was developed thoughtfully with input from many people. It recognizes that we have many types of families in Saskatchewan with different needs and preferences. It creates the base for a system of early learning and child care in Saskatchewan.

Without federal funding, our ability to make progress on early learning and child care will slow down significantly but it will not stop. We will look at available resources and set priorities so that we can move, at least some pieces of the plan forward. And while we will take what steps we can, Madam Deputy Speaker, our children need these services now.

We will continue talking with the federal government about the need for a quality system of early learning and child care in Saskatchewan because we want to give our children the best possible start in life.

With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would put forward the motion:

That this Assembly recognize that in today's communities and workplaces, parental supports and assistance are of utmost importance in contributing to the caring and nurturing of children, and that high-quality early learning and child care plays an integral role in supporting and nurturing the social, emotional, and cognitive development of a child's life; and further,

that this Assembly express dissatisfaction with the federal government's announcement to withdraw that support to families and cancel early learning and child care agreements with the provinces, and not fulfil commitments made by the previous federal government, which were to provide \$146 million over five years to Saskatchewan families.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning, the motion before the Assembly. Would the Assembly take it as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Seconded by the member from Regina Rosemont. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And if not to be considered to be currying favour of the House, the fine Madam Deputy Speaker, if I might say.

You know I want to start today in my seconding of this motion to just say a few words about Ken Dryden. I have to admit to a little bit of feminine bias when I was surprised that a hockey-playing hunk would take up the charge for child care in Canada. And as I got to know Ken Dryden, I realized he was deeply passionate about this issue.

And when I walked into my local library one day I bumped into a book on the shelves there written by Ken Dryden about children in the schools today. And I think if one tracks back one could understand why this particular individual was such a good ally in the national parliament for all of the community organizations, women, child care providers, early childhood development people who had been working hard for the past 25 years to have the issue of child care be valued in our society and to care about the way we care for our children. And I will have deep respect for Mr. Dryden in the work he does because his resolve was very genuine and he pushed hard to have all of the provinces and territories realize that we needed to work together on a national child care program.

And so we made a great deal of progress over that year in our federal-provincial-territorial meetings and constructing a national vision. And I'm very glad that my very able colleague has taken over the work in that area because there's much more left to do unfortunately. We thought we were well on the road.

But one thing that was interesting, as I attended those meetings nationally, was that there was no province that didn't think that that early learning and child care was an important issue today.

[15:00]

And I think it's great when a whole society says our children are important, as well as discussions about the economy and all the other things we talk about. At the end of the day who is it we look forward to see? At the end of the day it's our children, our grandchildren. And this is really where the important work takes place, and the need for children to have quality care.

Now I found in our national discussions there might have been differences in what people thought was needed to solve that need. But there was no question that people thought it was needed and that every province was looking so forward to having these additional resources dedicated to this particular area.

In Saskatchewan today, we have the highest number of women with children working of anywhere in Canada, so we certainly have one of the highest needs to address this issue. And I don't have statistics on this, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I do know that way more families today live without the supports of extended family. So people's theories about who might look after your children tend to be a bit theoretical in the absence of those extended family networks.

People work both because they want to and because they have to. And I think the whole discussion around choice in child care and early learning is whether in fact there is a choice. And I'm going to talk a little bit today about whether this national plan really leaves us with a choice in child care.

We do have a lot of children around us today with kind of haphazard care arrangements. And I think the school system is seeing the results of some of that haphazard non-system that there is for looking after our children. I was actually a bit surprised — I guess I shouldn't have been, given the discussions I was involved in — but I was a bit surprised to see the way that the school boards embraced the need for pre-kindergarten.

They're working with the kids that are coming into the school system and not having as successful an experience as they might because they haven't had that early preparation. They haven't had maybe the quality child care. Maybe mom is a single parent, has to go off to work, is just struggling to make ends meet, perhaps working two jobs, not having the time to play with her children, read to them, do all the other things that are an important part of developing good, healthy children who are ready for school.

And I know that we see the school boards supporting this today. Some of them, and some jurisdictions, supporting resolutions on behalf of keeping the national child care strategy going.

I had the pleasure of meeting Fraser Mustard a few times in this. And I don't know if you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, but children, actually in their development, literacy has a strong role in the neural pathways that are developed in the brain. This is a physical fact as well as an educational fact.

It's not only that literacy is good for you; it's that it actually affects the development of your brain. So if children don't get that kind of attention from their parents, from their family, from the community, from good early learning and child care, then in fact we're missing a developmental opportunity that that child will never have again. You never are zero to five years old again, no matter how much people who observe behaviour in the House sometimes might disagree with that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — So I think that we know that just as education

is critically important to older children, it's also important for early childhood development.

So we ask the question, how will children get that good start? And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it's very good that we've come together in this legislature today to talk about this and made it a priority. It's encouraging to me even that we have members of the opposition putting forward a motion of support for the fact that we need to make sure parents can afford early learning and child care. And I will be looking carefully for the wording of that motion.

It's encouraging to me that this whole topic has come to the fore in the way it has in the national election and will, I think, remain an issue for quite a while to come.

Now I'm willing to . . . I know that during the whole year we discussed the shaping of this child care plan in Canada, when I had the joy of question period, that I was never asked a question on this by the members opposite. But that's okay. We're willing to take support at any time. It didn't come then but it's here now, and that's great.

And I just want to acknowledge all the work that took place with national and provincial organizations, with CBOs [community-based organization], with educators, with early childhood development specialists, with families and home child care providers. And I think we have some work to do there as well to make sure that home care providers are adequately supported with the resource and materials that they need to work with children so they're not working in isolation, because they provide a very important part of the network as well.

But today I'm urging this House to work to ensure that the federal government honours its promise of a national child care program, and the place to start is to honour the early learning and child care agreements that were signed by the provinces and that were supposed to go into their next phase of signing as soon as the plans were in place that the minister announced today.

And so my view would be we're ready to sign this agreement. And just in the same way the federal government honours programs and activities begun by the previous government, I think if they're going to pick one to honour, this would certainly be one that we'll all support here today. It lays the foundation for a national system.

And you know, there was a time when we didn't have a national education system, but we have one today because people understood the importance of it. And this is just another piece of that. This is the early part of that learning system that is so important. And to cancel these agreements now will set back the development of so many children.

When you're out in the community and you see the specialized needs — children from different language groups, the amazing cultural work that's been done by the francophone community in integrating early childhood with the rest of an education continuum, the immigrants that come to Saskatchewan today where the children have to struggle with so many language issues; we have children with learning disabilities, children with

physical disabilities — I have to say that these issues are not going to be dealt with with \$100 a month subsidy to children under the age of six.

I want to look at the dollars for a minute, Madam Deputy Speaker. Because, you know, what does \$100 buy? Well I know if someone offered me \$100 today I wouldn't turn it down. I think we can all think of a use for another \$100. But I can tell you that it does not buy a child care system any more than it buys a school system.

What does it really cost to have a child in quality child care? The average cost per child care space in Saskatchewan is about \$5,000 per space, and that is made up half of money that comes from the public purse and half of money that comes from the child care, the families, fundraising, those kinds of things. An average subsidy in a low-income space is 1,500 a year. So right now we're up to 6,500 per child per year to create a quality space with subsidy at the level it's already at. And if we were to talk about improving the subsidy, as I think we'll have that discussion today, then that would be an additional cost.

And I found it very strange that if this \$100 was really about child care, why wasn't it added to the child benefit, which is already a structured program, to put money into the pockets of families to improve their ability to make decisions and have sufficient money to live? And the way this money is being delivered makes you wonder what its purpose is. It is kind of money in space. It's not really attached to the adequacy envelope, and it's not firmly attached to a child care envelope too because there's no guarantee to that child that that \$100 will actually contribute to their early childhood development. The same children that need early learning and care today will likely need it tomorrow.

You know, when we look at our society today, we look at the children involved in crime, the children dropping out of school, the children having very poor experiences with their development, we have to say there's something we have to do differently. And I think that thing that we have to do differently is support children in families, understanding that if the economy demands that people participate in the labour force, then that same economy should support people. I'm a little concerned . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you. I'm a little concerned that about the . . . I think it's important for workplaces to have child care, but personally and in our child care plan, we believe a more appropriate place is the school system. Because you also want those children to be around their brothers and sisters, the other people in the community. And as a parent who was a single parent and had to run one kid to one daycare home, run another kid to another place, often those folks . . . Certainly myself I was fortunate to have a car, but I had a girlfriend who gave up her child because she didn't have a car and just finally just couldn't do it any more.

These programs belong as part of the continuum of early learning and child care. They belong in the community with School<sup>PLUS</sup>, with the range of supports that a thoughtful and caring community provides to the people that support the

economy of this province.

So I will say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I intend to support this motion today and I intend to continue working with the early learning and care coalition. And, you know, these folks they've got a website and if you want to sign a petition to keep national child care going in this country you can go to [www.buildchildcare.ca](http://www.buildchildcare.ca) and you can be counted as one of the people who care about child care in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond to this motion.

Early childhood development, as the previous minister of Community Resources talked about, is an extremely important function in our society. It's probably one of the most critical from the years of zero to five. I also have spent some time with Dr. Fraser Mustard and visited his facility, as well as expand and develop and meet with the people on the Hawaiian model to see how that that works. And we know that it works because there are models in this world that are working today in the betterment of children. We know that inclusive works for people with disabilities.

We also know when the minister talks about this program of \$100 a month and trivializes it, when this government only raised the food allowance to \$10 a month for people in this province, when we have 44,000 children in this province living below the poverty line . . . Sorry, I wasn't sure of your title, Mr. Speaker.

You know our first priority when it comes to evaluating any child care agreement with the federal government is whether it's in the best interest of all Saskatchewan children and their families. The Saskatchewan Party believes that we need to support enhanced child care services and that early childhood and childhood development should be a priority in our province, with community-based organizations, cultural-based organizations also being a preferred vehicle for delivery of these services.

We recognize that the current child care and early learning agreement signed between the province of Saskatchewan and the previous federal government has led to a modest increase in child care spaces in Saskatchewan and has gone to increase wages for licensed child care providers. The Saskatchewan Party supports these initiatives.

The provincial government has also indicated that they support an expansion to pre-kindergarten programs in this province. And while we are still waiting for the government to reveal their plan for pre-kindergarten in this province, we agree in principle that early learning should and must be a priority, and that regardless that if the money to do that comes from the federal government or from a massive surplus that the NDP government has accumulated over the past year from oil and

gas revenues, this is a good investment for the province of Saskatchewan's children.

But in recognizing and voicing our support for the current agreement between the province and the federal government, it is also important to note that many children are left behind by the deal signed last year by the NDP government. Does the member opposite know the agreement signed between the NDP government and the previous Liberal government did nothing to acknowledge the needs of tens of thousands of Saskatchewan children whose parents choose to care for them at home or have friends or relatives care for the children in their home?

[15:15]

Sadly the deal signed by the NDP does nothing for the children, for the child care needs of these parents. Nor does it address the needs of parents who many choose to use neighbourhood child care in their communities. And so when we consider this motion, we must also consider that these children are left behind, many of whom are part of more than 40,000 children in Saskatchewan who live in poverty or comprise the 50 per cent of food bank users who are children.

Mr. Speaker, amongst the children left behind by this government are those whose parents are no longer eligible for child care subsidies, or have seen their child care subsidies greatly diminish under this government because the income threshold under which they can qualify for full daycare subsidies has not been adjusted in over 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I think members of the public would be shocked to know how low this threshold is. Currently the maximum amount for a family with one dependant can earn before taxes or deductions in order to qualify for a child care subsidy is \$1,640 a month. When you consider that even the maximum subsidy only covers an average of two-thirds of the cost of child care and that this NDP government claws back 25 per cent of that subsidy for every \$100 earned over that threshold, it is clear that most low-income families are finding themselves too rich for subsidized child care under the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier and his NDP government that brags about leaving no one behind justify the fact that a two-income working family, working full-time at minimum wage that earns \$2,448 a month before taxes, is considered too rich for subsidized child care? How can the Minister of Learning and Community Resources talk about the importance of licensed child care in our province or the help it provides to low-income families who need child care to participate in the workforce or go to school, when they know full well that many of these families can't even access that child care?

Mr. Speaker, once again this government talks about the importance of children, but they continue to leave many behind. Supporting the deal is best for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party believes that to properly address the child care and early learning needs of children in this province, we should support all federal government programs, both current and future, that put the best interests of Saskatchewan children first. That is why in voicing our support for a continuation of the current five-year early learning and

child care agreement with the federal government, we think it is also important that this Assembly voice its support for the proposed new child care plan being proposed by the federal government that will reach tens of thousands of children left behind from the previous deal.

As the members opposite know well, the federal government proposed child care allowance will reach every child in this province under the age of six. That's 72,000 children whose parents will receive \$1,200 a year to assist in their child care needs. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite may not understand how \$100 a month will assist in the cost of child care, but the members of the Saskatchewan Party on this side of the Assembly understand the impact that \$100 a month will have for low-income families who are struggling under this NDP government.

While licensed child care provider provides a child care option for parents, it is important to note that this government only created 250 new child care spaces with the \$22 million received last year from the federal government. That brings the total number of licensed child care spaces in Saskatchewan to 8,600 by the end of this year, a good start but a far cry from the 72,000 children who will benefit from the federal government proposed child care plan.

We believe that the current child care agreement between the Saskatchewan government and the federal government together with the new proposed child care allowance for children under six will benefit all Saskatchewan families. And that is why we urge members of this Assembly to voice their support both for the federal child care initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk to parents about their child care needs, it's clear that each family has unique and specific child care needs, different ideas on how best to meet them. What this means is that parents want a choice and a voice in child care. When I look at the previous deal signed by the NDP government, the one major thing that is missing is parental choice and parental voice. The deal between the NDP and the previous federal government is a deal between governments that completely ignores the needs of stay-at-home parents or parents who may want to opt for the child care in their own homes.

What's ironic about the fact that this government would sign a child care deal that ignores the child care preferences of parents, it is that the Department of Community Resources conducted a survey on this very issue in the year 2001. If the government had bothered to visit their own website or read the survey they commissioned, they would have read the following facts: 60 per cent of the parents surveyed preferred child care that is provided in their home, whether that child care is provided by a spouse, a relative, or someone who comes to their home; 80 per cent of working parents surveyed felt that infants were best cared for in their home; and only 8 per cent of parents chose daycare as the best option.

These, Mr. Speaker, are the government's own survey numbers. That's what Saskatchewan parents say, and it's one of the main reasons that the Saskatchewan Party believes that this Assembly should not be discriminating against parents who choose care at home or neighbourhood child care when it comes to signing

child care deals with the federal government or undertaking future provincial initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party believes that we need to put the well-being of children first. We have argued over and over again in this Chamber for the need to increase the food allowance for social service recipients to fight child hunger in this province. We have also urged this government to make sure that the proper checks and balances are in place when children are referred to safe houses. It is that reason why we again demand that the Premier come down from his mountain of money and invest in our children. Let's surely make sure that no children is left behind.

That is why, in the interest of children in Saskatchewan, we propose the following amendment to the motion. I move that the second paragraph be deleted and the following be substituted:

That this Assembly recognize the importance of quality child care, support an increase in the income threshold for eligibility to receive subsidized child care; and

that this Assembly, recognizing that parents are the best judge of quality child care for their children, shall urge the government not to discriminate against parents who choose to stay at home with their children when negotiating agreements with the federal government or when implementing provincial child care initiatives; and

that this Assembly urge the federal government to continue to fund the current child care agreement with the province of Saskatchewan in addition to its plan to implement a new child care allowance.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — We have an amendment to the main motion that has been moved by the hon. member for Saskatoon Northwest, and is seconded by the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena. Will members take the amendment as read? I recognize the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chair. I'm very delighted today to be part of this discussion about choices, choices when it comes to raising our children.

When my children were little, and that was a few decades ago, I didn't really have to make that decision. Child care wasn't something that we discussed a lot in our lives. If I needed someone to look after some of my five children, there was usually a neighbour or a family member that was around to help me out.

But later on, and when I became a grandmother, I realized there was a whole new world opening out there that had a lot of . . . that my children were faced with making decisions that I never had to make — something that they learned from their family life — that their children are the most important part of their life, and they had to decide where they were going to leave that child when they went to work. Most families are forced to have

two members working to provide an income but from the moment the woman is pregnant, they have to start thinking about where they are going to leave that child.

The member from Regina Rosemont spoke a few minutes ago about her surprise when she first learned that Ken Dryden was going to be looking at an issue like this and when she learned that he really had a passion for children.

And I have to tell you that I was really . . . I learned a lot from the member for Saskatoon Northwest when he became a part of our group, and he started talking about issues like Care & Share. And I learned that in his life before he came into politics, he dealt with a lot of children in need. And in fact right now the organization that he helps fund deals with 7,000 to 8,000 children a year — they feed them. He was given Citizen of the Year for his work with children. And he also knows that in that community they donate about \$200,000 a year, not from government but from parents and people who care about the young people in the constituency.

There's no special group of people that have a monopoly on who cares about children, but there are a group of people that decide that there should be choices when it comes to who looks after our children. And I think that's the thing that most parents and grandparents are asking for today.

It's important to the Saskatchewan Party that there is no discrimination against parents who choose to stay home to care for their children or maybe even have the luxury of having their grandparents look after these children. Many of us would find it an honour when we have the opportunity to spend a few hours with them and long for the days when maybe we could spend more time. But yet too often when it comes to this government, the majority of parents' voices are not heard. Mr. Deputy Chair, every family is unique, and no two parents look after their children the same way.

I know that regardless of where we are in Saskatchewan it's very difficult to get 24-hour care for our children, and I know that because I have a daughter who's a nurse. And when her kids were little, it was very difficult to find somebody to look after that young person. It wouldn't matter how many daycare places there were, you'd have to be pretty unique and pretty lucky to be able to find a place that would look after my granddaughter. And that's when I had the opportunity, and her sisters and brothers took time to look after them. And that was an important part of our lives. And we didn't give up anything; we gained because we had the chance to look after family members.

And in rural Saskatchewan we often, very, very often don't have the luxury of having a daycare. There isn't that choice. Again we rely on somebody who is in the community, somebody we trust, somebody who makes similar parenting decisions to us. And maybe we're fortunate. Maybe we are fortunate in some way. It takes a lot to have this person look after the people that are so very important to us.

And I also have had the opportunity in the last number of years when I've given the real honour of talking to a lot of First Nations people and dealing with their home lives to realize that looking after their children is a huge concern for those members

as well. Daycare subsidies aren't often in place for them. And a lot of young mothers who need daycare spaces or somebody to look after the child they love are still going to school. And those, I do understand why the government has decided to combine daycare and early learning and a K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education because I agree. I think that's something that works very well together. But we still have to decide . . . We have to realize that the choices of where our children and grandchildren stay shouldn't be lying with government. We still believe that parents have the right to make these choices, and they are the best people to make the choices.

[15:30]

I had the opportunity just lately to talk about daycare funding to a group in Prince Albert who look after a number of young people, and one of their concerns is the core funding. The core funding isn't available right now to help them over seasons like the summer season where many parents, especially young parents, may decide to take their kids home for the summer. And in order to continue the funding, there would be empty spaces. And it doesn't work for them. But at the same time there isn't a realization that there has to change. What we have as programs today isn't working for everybody.

So I listened with interest when the minister spoke about some of the work they had done, and I didn't hear her talk about the idea of core funding for daycares; a realization that even if the place isn't full, the lights still had to be kept on, and the building may still have to be heated.

There has to be decisions on KidsFirst and the Head Start program. How are we going to combine those programs? Those decisions are huge, and they impact a lot of people. Those are choices that are made right now by government, and we don't always see the parents involved in it.

We support a continuation of the existing agreement with the federal government. And the amendment that was put forward by my colleague would ensure that the Assembly recognizes the majority of Saskatchewan parents are not discriminated against when it comes to future or federal-provincial initiatives.

I believe that if this Assembly truly supports quality child care, we have to realize that parents are not only the best source of quality daycare, they're really in the best position to determine the form of child care that is best for their child. We can't have someone in government, regardless who the government is, make that decision. We believe that parents not only have the right and the responsibility but the loving care and understanding to make sure they have that choice.

The minister stated earlier that children learn best in a loving, caring environment. We agree with that. And where can you better identify a loving, caring environment than in the home? We know that often this will mean a licensed daycare will be chosen by parents, and we support the decision of parents who decide that is where their children should be. But we also know right across Saskatchewan, especially in areas like rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan, licensed child care is often not available. And parents don't have any choice but to find another form of care.

It simply is not fair to parents to discriminate against them when negotiating a deal with the federal government or designing a new provincial program. We have to realize that everybody in this province cares about their children, and we can't design a program that's going to work very well for some city areas or specific groups of people. It has to work for everybody.

The member for Saskatoon Northwest has already noted that the NDP's own survey of parents indicate that the majority, by far the majority of working parents prefer to have child care in their own home. It simply is not right that these parents are being ignored by this government when child care deals are negotiated with the federal government.

Too many children in Saskatchewan are already left behind, including far too many of our Aboriginal children. There are 44,000 children living in poverty under this NDP government, and far too many of these children and youth are waiting for treatment beds because this government has cut back treatment services over the past decade.

Last year when this government decided to give an extra \$10 a month to people who are receiving social services, they were very, very proud of themselves. It was like the biggest gift that ever happened. And yet just a few minutes ago I heard one of the members boo-hooing about the \$100 a month that they would get from daycare. Now it doesn't make any sense to me, and it seems like there's different rules when it comes to federal money or provincial money.

People with young children have a right to decide how to spend the money. That's why I'm very pleased to second the amendment put forward by the member from Saskatoon Northwest. This amendment speaks to the need for all of us in this Assembly to put the welfare of children ahead of politics, to support the federal government's investment in early learning and child care, to ensure that parents are not discriminated against, and to increase income eligibility threshold for subsidized child care to ensure that low-income families can access subsidized child care.

I support the amendment put forward by my colleague from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — Members of the Assembly, we have before us then the government motion that I want to read, so I want to ensure there's clarity with respect to the motion and the amendment. The motion reads:

That this Assembly recognize that in today's communities and workplace, parental supports and assistance are of utmost importance in contributing to the caring and nurturing of children, and that high-quality early learning and child care plays an integral role in supporting and nurturing the social, emotional, and cognitive development of a child's life; and further

that this Assembly expresses dissatisfaction with the federal government's announcement to withdraw that support to families and cancel early learning and child care

agreements with provinces, and not fulfill commitments made by the previous federal government which were to provide \$146 million over five years to our Saskatchewan families.

And then we have the motion put forward by the hon. member for Saskatoon Northwest, seconded by the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena. And the amendment reads:

That the second paragraph of the government motion be deleted and the following be substituted:

That this Assembly, recognizing the importance of quality child care, support an increase in the income threshold for eligibility to receive subsidized child care; and that this Assembly, recognizing that parents are the best judge of quality child care for their children, shall urge the government not to discriminate against parents who choose to stay at home with their children when negotiating agreements with the federal government or when implementing provincial child care initiatives; and that this Assembly urge the federal government to continue to fund the current child care agreement with the province of Saskatchewan in addition to its plan to implement a new child care allowance.

Now debate will continue simultaneously on both the motion and the amendment. Is the Assembly ready for the question on the amendment? I recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to be able to enter into this debate this afternoon. I think this is a debate that has needed to occur in this Legislative Assembly for some time. And in fact, there are some members of this Legislative Assembly that have been working towards a national child daycare policy and early learning and care policy for over 30 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when the member from Regina Rosemont talked about her work that has been undertaken with the previous federal government over the last couple of years to get to a national child daycare agreement and the work of literally hundreds and hundreds of organizations and literally tens of thousands of citizens to get to the point where every provincial government in this country entered into an agreement with the previous federal government, she is absolutely correct. And there is no question that women in this country and organizations in this country are now busy getting together to lobby the new federal government to change their mind and not do in the agreements that were agreed to by every province and territory in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition have submitted an amendment to the resolution, and I want to say to the members that I think it's agreed on our side that we need to improve child daycare subsidies in this province. We have no disagreement with you on that particular element of your argument.

And if you listened to the Minister of Learning you would have heard her say that as part of our agreement with the federal



government we were going to rework our entire child daycare subsidy program in this province in order to ensure that more families were eligible for the subsidy, that the subsidy was larger, and that the subsidy was deeper in terms of addressing middle-income families who did not have access to any type of subsidy. So we agree with you on that notion.

Madam Speaker, as part of the work, the policy work that has been done by the government in the last year with the former minister of Learning, the policy and planning committee of cabinet, the Treasury Board of cabinet, various policy committees of the government, we've spent an incredible amount of time on this subject trying to figure out how we linked early learning and care to our school system, to our preschools, to our family child daycare centres that are run by, for the most part, women in our community to ensure that we could create a system of early learning and care. And we have a plan that for the first time in this province will create an actual system and linkage of early learning and care. And what's so problematic about the federal government's decision is that we had a five-year plan to get us to a system, and people have been calling for a system for over 30 years.

Now what I also want to say to the members opposite is that we absolutely agree that parents need to have choice. And if you look at the work that has been done by the department in terms of the polling that's been done, but also work that's been done by Statistics Canada, if you were to ask any young mom in this province . . . And by the way, we have the highest labour force attachment of women with children under the age of six of any jurisdiction in Canada. And if you were to ask those young mothers and young fathers, where do you want your children to be cared for? They will, a vast majority of them, will answer, we want our children to be cared by me or the grandparents or an aunt or a family member in my home.

But if you follow that logic and find out where children are actually cared for, the vast majority of children are not cared for in their own home. And they're not cared for in a child daycare centre. There are various arrangements that parents have to put together in order to support their children.

So once again when we were doing our policy work around this, it was not about choosing one way of caring for children over another — not at all. But we were faced with the reality of many young families in this province where the vast majority of those families have to have access to a workplace in order to make a go of it, in order to afford a home, to afford the cost of living in this province. The vast majority of young people who have children under the age of six are attached to the labour market or attached to the labour force.

So when the members opposite say that parents are the best judge, and you say that we need to take that into consideration, what I want to say to you is that we have taken that into consideration in terms of our early learning and care policy. But the reality is that the vast majority — and I am not sure the member opposite was listening — the vast majority of young parents say, we want to look after our own children in our own home or have our families. But if you follow that and find out where they're really being cared for, they're not being cared for by a family member, and they're not being cared for by people in their own home, they're being cared for outside of their

home.

So when we were thinking about this policy, one of the things that we've started in the province is pre-kindergartens. And I have to tell you that when you look at the development of the pre-Ks [pre-kindergarten] since 1995, we have over 100 of them in our province and they are tremendous. And if you ask early learning people in the school system and the kindergarten system, they will tell you that this province has a highly developed pre-kindergarten program for vulnerable children.

But we need to extend that to everybody. And parents obviously would have a choice whether or not they wanted to have their children, their four-year-olds, in a pre-kindergarten program. But our plan was to extend our pre-kindergarten program all across the province. And our plan was to eventually get to a linkage between early learning and care in the schools with family daycare homes pre-schools, because there's all kinds of bits and pieces to the system. And we would have a system that would support children, would support early learning and care providers, would support grandparents and would obviously support children. And that was our vision, that children would be raised in a loving and caring environment and obviously parents would have choice.

[15:45]

Now we have an opportunity here as a Legislative Assembly . . . And I'm really pleased that the female members of the Legislative Assembly have spoken to this issue, because I think that we have some understanding of the kinds of difficulties it is that we have as young parents trying to juggle work, care, and learning. And one of the things that we try . . . when we thought about the system that we were wanting to create was that eventually we would get to early learning and care in a school. So that you would have early learning and care centres; where you would have the infant centre, the child daycare centre for toddlers, the pre-K, the kindergarten, and then up to grade 8.

And there would be supports for the pre-schools, the child family day homes and parents living at home . . . or working at home with their children so that they too could participate in the pre-kindergarten program if that was their choice. And we understand from the work that was done with parents, particularly at-home parents, there are a lot of parents that want to have the support, in terms of early learning, of the pre-kindergartens and the child daycare centre.

The member opposite from Kelvington also talked about rural child daycare and remote or northern child daycare. And we know there has to be flexibility because a child daycare centre in northern Saskatchewan, when you might have seasonal work, you might be trapping, doesn't necessarily make sense. And in our plan was flexibility around how you might approach early learning and care, particularly the care part in rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to just note, when the members opposite have talked about the federal government's commitment in the last federal election for \$100 per child allowance for each child — and I just want to make this point because I think it's really important — that this is money that's going to be taxable. And if you think about when we were . . . I

think, obviously no one is going to turn down the \$100. But what people need to understand is the biggest losers in this situation will be those modest-income families earning between 30 and \$40,000 a year. That if you are a high-income earner and you earn over \$75,000 a year and you've got one person, or \$100,000 a year and you have one parent at home, you will get the maximum advantage of the \$1,200. But if you are a dual income earner and you're earning between 30 and \$40,000 a year, you will be the biggest loser. And that is the group of people that we particularly want to target as we redesign our child daycare subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this Assembly go on record as indicating to the federal government that we are disappointed. I mean we have spent decades working to get to a national child daycare program and early learning and care program in this country. Women who are now grandmothers, women who are now making their way to retirement, have been at this issue since the '60s. And they were so delighted that for the first time in this country's history we had the beginning of a national child daycare program in this country.

And I can't say enough to our federal colleagues in the new House of Commons that please pay attention to what the vision was for a national early learning and care program in this country. It was not about saying to parents who are at home with their children, you don't count. That wasn't it at all. But what it was doing was looking at the reality of where young parents are at in this country, where there is a huge labour force attachment because of the nature of the economy, and the need to have dual income earners or the reality that the family has changed, where there are lots of single parent women or single parent dads that are trying to make a living.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to leave time for some of my other colleagues to address this issue in our Assembly. But I want to say very clearly that we have a plan. It is a plan that addresses the many challenges that we've been working on for the last 30 years. It addresses the challenges that have been raised by the member from Northwest, where he talks about subsidies. We're going to redo the subsidies in the province to get at the very issues he talked about. It addresses the issue raised by the member from Kelvington where there will be flexibility for rural and northern and First Nations. We're working with First Nations and Métis communities on the child daycare program and early learning and care program.

And most of all, Madam Minister, what it did was it allowed for a universal pre-kindergarten program where parents would make the choice whether or not they wanted to put their children in pre-kindergarten. But it would be available for everybody, Madam Speaker.

So it's \$146 million over a five-year period. We really want the federal government to honour the commitment, the written commitment that they made with every province and territory in this country. And we think that it begins to address some of the very real early learning and care issues that children in this country are facing; whether they live in the province of Saskatchewan or whether they live in Alberta or Manitoba or the territories. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Last

Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to enter into the debate on this motion. And perhaps I could enter into the debate from the viewpoint of a grandparent who has grandchildren. And my wife and myself are very integrally involved in our grandchildren's lives and we see the effects of early learning programs and see the challenges that our grandchildren's parents face accessing quality daycare and those sorts of things.

The speakers before have said we need a whole range of options available to parents to look after their children. The world has certainly changed from the days when we were raising our own family and particularly raising a family in rural Saskatchewan where the mothers didn't work or the fathers didn't work off the farm. Quite often, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, those people that lived in our small communities operating a business or working at a business, quite often one of the parents were at home looking after the children. The demands for a daycare and babysitting services, as the term is quite often used, the pressure wasn't there or not to the extent it is today.

But in today's world young families, parents of young children, face many pressures that those of us in our generation did not face. And therefore they require, in my opinion, more services so that the children are looked after in a safe and proper fashion and so that they have access to all those things that many families do provide to their young children, the stimulus, the early training, the sitting down and reading, and those sorts of things.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a number of single-parent families in today's society, I think more so than what we had in our generation. And these young families, these young single parents have their plates full. They work to provide a living for themselves and their children. Quite often they are also taking some additional education so that they can improve their job prospects and so on and so their lives are very full. And their children sometimes, Madam Deputy Speaker, through no fault of their own sometimes do not receive the attention and the proper nurturing and stimulus at an early age that other families are able to offer their children. And therefore I think it's important that we make sure as legislators, not only on a provincial level but on a federal level, provide the resources so that those things can happen.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we in our family have seen the results of early learning and pre-K, as our granddaughter calls it. We have one of our granddaughters in pre-K in the Carlyle area. And this young granddaughter is . . . well I as a grandpa, and I have to admit I'm bragging a little bit here, but I think she's as smart as a whip. But she's a very active young girl who when she's at grandma and grandpa's place keeps us busy at all times. And we're amazed every time she comes to visit at the things she has learned and the knowledge that she has.

And frankly her parents are busy and they don't have the ability and the time to perhaps guide her in the way that she needs to be guided. And so we've noticed some significant developments in her life since she's been attending pre-K. And to give you an example of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, at

Christmastime grandma asked Alyx, did you learn any songs at pre-K? And she says, yes, Grandma, I did. Well would you sing this song for me? And she says, Grandma, we have to stand up. So grandma stands up with her and they stand up straight and she sings *Oh Canada* from beginning to end without missing a word or missing a beat.

And these are things, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I know if she hadn't been in pre-K she wouldn't have learned. And her energies need to be channelled in positive directions. And those are some of the positive results that we as grandparents see, and I think other people also see those things.

But also, Madam Deputy Speaker, many families are able to look after their children with a bit of additional help. And so this new federal government's plan of additional \$100 per month for children under six years of age is of significant importance to them and will allow perhaps one of the family members to stay home or at the very least work part-time so that the children don't have to go to — the commonly used term is — the babysitter's and so on. So we need to have the whole range of plans, Madam Deputy Speaker, that will allow for child care in whatever fashion is needed that suits the family's needs.

And it's somewhat ironic. Today is our third day of special debates in this House since we've resumed the spring sitting. On the first day of sitting we had the emergency debate on agriculture. Yesterday we had a debate on the shortage of health care workers. Today we have the debate on child care and early learning.

And this leads me to think that we have to put all these things in a broader context and look at the broad picture, Madam Deputy Speaker, because as speakers before me have said, we cannot just necessarily look at issues in isolation because there is an interconnection between agriculture and health care and education.

The provincial government does not have unlimited funds and neither does the federal government. And so therefore we need to make sure that we do a number of things correctly — that government does run effectively and efficiently; that we are getting maximum value for the dollars being spent; and that we have a plan in place to generate those tax dollars without unduly burdening the citizens of our province and our country.

And those are things we need to look at in context because if we use the tax dollars effectively and efficiently in one area, that leaves dollars to be used in other areas such as child care and early childhood learning, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And these programs do not only affect the parents of the young children and the grandparents and the extended family, but it affects all of us. If young children are not channelled in the right direction at an early age and receive the services that they require, whether they be speech therapy or other programs for learning difficulties, or if their energies are not channelled in the correct direction and they get left behind in our education system, we will find — and I think statistics show — that eventually a number of these children will end up in our justice system and in our health system and in our social services systems, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And if we can have programs in place that will prevent those children from falling through the cracks, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we need to do our utmost in ensuring that we have effective and efficient and the correct programs in place for our families and for our young children, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[16:00]

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I too am pleased to be able to speak in support of the government motion. As a female member of the House who is not removed from the situation by a few decades but rather is someone who actually has a daughter in the care of a child care service, this is a topic of great reality in my daily life. As a matter of fact that is where my young daughter is at this very moment.

Other members have stood in this House and told you about the policy background on the early learning and child care agreement. Other members have told you about interprovincial relations and transfer payments and equalization. Intergovernmental transfers and multilateral, intersectoral agreements make my constituents' eyes glaze over for the most part. It's sort of like what happens with most people when a computer programmer starts talking about what they write, how they write up a computer program, or how it works. Most people, they just want it to work.

My constituents don't have the time to spend learning the internal workings of intergovernmental, intersectoral agreements on multilateral cost sharing. On a side note, I suspect many would rather walk on hot coals. They just want it to work. They want to hand the job off to us.

They want quality child care for their children. They want quality child care that meets their needs and time demands. They want to have that child care to be reasonable enough in terms of cost that they can afford to use the child care and still work for a reasonable wage. It has to be accessible, accessible by regular people not just those wealthy enough to have those options. They want their children to be safe and happy.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk about child care. I want to talk about children. And I want to talk about parents and caregiving and about the future. I want to talk about what the early learning and child care agreement means to my constituents and to their vision of Saskatchewan. I want to address what the early learning and child care agreement would pave the way for in terms of a society my constituents would like their children and their grandchildren to grow up in.

Child care is expensive, not in terms of the value we place on our children who are priceless, but in terms of the proportion of personal income that child care costs a family. If a parent stays home it costs a full wage. If a child is in child care it can cost a significant proportion of family income, especially if there is more than one child in care. Two children in care can easily cost over \$1,000 per month. That's significant dollars in

anyone's books. It's more than the mortgage payments that most of my constituents pay.

Now think about a low-income family or a single parent, not even one earning a decent wage. That kind of cost structure is absolutely crippling. And remember, Madam Speaker, not everyone has an extended family structure to fall back on. Finding adequate child care is also an issue. By adequate I mean safe, secure, and most of all positive for the child.

Most people use what I call the piano teacher model in finding child care. They check word of mouth, they look in the paper and in the phone book, they look on the church bulletin boards and on community association bulletin boards. They listen for what they can find and they check a few places and a few people out. In many cases they have the nagging feeling that they haven't been able to do the perfect search they would like because there is no structure to find child care providers. It's a hit-and-miss process.

Licensed spots are hard to get and often more expensive. Unlicensed child care is often cheaper but lacks adequate quality assurance. The provider may be unknown to the parents when they are making their choice. There is not an adequate screening and oversight process for non-family, unlicensed caregivers. Choosing a caregiver often takes on a leap of faith and, Madam Speaker, parents don't like taking leaps of faith when it involves the lives of their children.

People don't always want to or may not be able to rely on the charity of their parents and aunts and uncles. There also may be issues of family members' health in a family care provision. Madam Speaker, I experienced that very anxiety first-hand. No extended family structure, a mother who was reliant upon me for her assistance in her battle with breast cancer — and ultimately succumbed to it — and having a young child to be responsible for. I was practically doing cartwheels just last year when my daughter's school implemented a before-and-after-school child care program. For me this meant quality, accessible, and a safe environment for my daughter, Morgan, and peace of mind especially for my husband and I, Jeff.

When we discuss policy and transfers and programs and agreements, we always have to keep our heads and our eyes focused on the people that really matter — the children ultimately and their parents.

Let's review: safety, security, cost, quality. What other issues arise for parents? Availability and flexibility. Not everyone works a 9-to-5 job or even consistent hours from week to week. So traditional daycare models don't cut it either.

Our policy, our policies — they must reflect real need. They can't reflect a rigid ideological view of how the world should work. They have to reflect how the world really works. We can't build a model around the so-called traditional family. You know, June Cleaver, *Leave It To Beaver* type thing because the stay-at-home mom model doesn't work.

We can't build around a 9-to-5 model either. We can't build around a nuclear family because there are so many single parents. A single approach won't work. Our policy and our

approach must reflect the wide variety of needs. Madam Speaker, I also would like to make the point that like health care and like our education system, the profit motive does not serve child care well.

I know the members opposite agree with their federal counterparts. They think that setting up a child care system is government interference in the choices of parents. They think that everything should be left to the wide open with no system and no oversight and no licensing. Think about what would happen to our education system if it were solely a for-profit structure, if it were a hodgepodge of licensed and unlicensed providers, if there were no global system of screening and listing, no standards. My word, Madam Speaker, we require mandatory classes and inspections for restaurants, and I think we can require such for a third party, that is, non-family child care providers. If we can require health and safety regulations and building codes, we can sure build a system that would try to ensure the safety of our children.

The members were on their feet asking about the safety for at-risk youth in safe houses. They ask about the safety of foster children. They need to wrap their heads around the need for safety of all children. And they need to understand that the free market won't do that with . . . [inaudible] . . . when it comes to child care.

Now, Madam Speaker, I want to make sure that the members opposite do not take my words out of context. Just like our educational system and in fact to a higher degree, we need to build flexibility into any system as we as a society create. A system does not mean one size fits all.

And I'd like to provide examples of this by quoting from the agreement in principle between the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan entitled, *Moving Forward on Early Learning and Child Care*. So:

At their February 2005 meeting, the Ministers Responsible for Social Services recognized the urgent need to accelerate development of quality early learning and child care across the country. To address that need, Quality, Universally Inclusive, Accessible and Developmental [which is the acronym] (QUAD) principles were developed for early learning and child care.

And I'd like to just give examples of how this is not meant to be a one-size-fits-all system. It is to be a system of choices in terms of individual situations. Let's just look at, for instance, universally inclusive. The points are to:

Develop and strengthen programming and supports for children's cultural, linguistic and/or special needs.

This recognizes our Aboriginal cultures, our special needs children, and all sorts of other issues in terms of immigrant languages, etc. And the next point:

Support the development of education, supports and resources for early childhood educators and child care providers which recognize children's cultural, linguistic, and/or special needs.

Then if we look at accessibility. The points are:

Develop innovative approaches to service provision in rural and underserved areas.

Surely to goodness this is something that the opposition would endorse and approve of and encourage.

Enable flexible approaches that address a range of family and employment circumstances.

Which addresses the issue of various working situations, flexible hours, irregular hours, salaries, etc.

Enhance operational funds and/or fee subsidies; and Increase early learning and child care opportunities.

Those are just a few examples that I wanted to point out. Just like with home-schooling, Madam Speaker, there are options. Just like with special schools, there are options. With child care, there can be many options. But we can't use the model espoused by members opposite and their federal cousins, the Conservatives, and just leave the people of Saskatchewan to their own devices.

The people of Saskatchewan are asking for a systematic approach to child care that provides us for as many circumstances as possible — a system that they can trust and a system that they can ultimately rely on; a system that recognizes the value of stay-at-home parents, family care, and third-party care; a system that also reflects parental and societal concern for all children; a system that recognizes at risk youth.

The people of Saskatchewan want us to begin building our structure on the basis of need, on targeting our initial efforts toward those who need help the most. They want to appropriate measures for all families, and we are attempting to address as many needs as possible. The people of Saskatchewan recognize that our common values demand that we shelter those least able to care for themselves: the children, especially at risk children. That was a major building block of the early learning and child care agreement we used to have with the federal government.

The beginning of our plan, Madam Speaker, would see extending pre-kindergarten services to all four-year-olds in the province, adding hundreds of new licensed child care spaces, expanding subsidies, and increased professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

I would also like to note the announcements that the province has made to date about early learning and child care that will be honoured. These include wage increases for staff in child care centres, existing grants for child care centres in homes, the child care wait-list that has been eliminated for children with a significant impact of disability, the subsidy increase of \$20 per child per month on average announced April 4, 2005. Child Care Saskatchewan's commitment to add 1,200 child care spaces from 2003 to 2007 is on track, and 250 new child care spaces announced April 4, 2005 will be in place by March 31, 2006.

That's targets and we're meeting them. That's absolutely right. In closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, our government has spent a

lot of time working with a variety of people in Saskatchewan, and we are confident that we understand the early learning and child care needs of Saskatchewan families.

We believe the province needs a made-in-Saskatchewan system of early learning and child care, and we want to work with the federal government to realize our vision. I will therefore also support the government motion on this issue. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? I'll call the question on the amendment. The amendment before us, would the members take as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Agreed. Those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Those opposed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Recorded vote has been called. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 16:14 until 16:22.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would ask all those in favour of the amendment to please rise.

[Yeas — 24]

Wall	Toth	Elhard
McMorris	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart	Wakefield	Chisholm
Hart	Harpauer	Gantefoer
Eagles	Weekes	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Allchurch	Kirsch
Brkich	Merriman	Morgan

**The Deputy Speaker:** — All those opposed to the amendment, please stand.

[Nays — 28]

Calvert	Lautermilch	Van Mulligen
Hagel	Serby	Atkinson
Cline	Sonntag	Wartman
Forbes	Prebble	Crofford
Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Taylor
Junor	Harper	Iwanchuk
McCall	Quennell	Trew
Yates	Addley	Morin
Borgerson		

**Deputy Clerk:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 24; those opposed, 28.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I declare the amendment lost. I would ask those in favour of the main motion to please stand. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — All those in favour of the motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Those opposed, say no. I declare the motion carried.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Chair. By leave of the Assembly, I move:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, and the leaders of the federal opposition parties.

I so move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The motion has been placed before the Assembly. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

## MOTIONS

### Transmittal of Tributes

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to move, by leave of the Assembly . . . Did the Chair wish to revert to the previous procedure? No. Then I'll proceed.

Madam Chair, by leave of the Assembly, I would move that the oral tributes made this day with respect to the passing of Senator Allan Bird be transmitted to the bereaved family by Mr. Speaker. And that is seconded by the hon. member for Cumberland.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The motion of transmittal is before the Assembly. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved that the Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:27.]



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard .....	617
Harpauer .....	617
Weekes .....	617
Brkich .....	617
Morgan .....	617
Kerpan .....	617

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk .....	617
--------------------	-----

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Brkich .....	618
--------------	-----

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Krawetz.....	618
Calvert .....	618
Wall .....	619
Higgins .....	619
Gantfoer .....	619
The Deputy Speaker .....	619
Iwanchuk .....	627

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### **Holy Cross Crusaders Senior Boys' Basketball Team Wins City Championship**

Morgan .....	620
--------------	-----

##### **Oilsands Quest Inc.**

Belanger .....	620
----------------	-----

##### **Saskatchewan Party Nominations**

Kirsch.....	620
-------------	-----

##### **Regina to Host Country Music Week and Canadian Country Music Awards**

Morin .....	620
-------------	-----

##### **Saskatchewan Centennial Baby Award**

Brkich .....	621
--------------	-----

##### **IPSCO Retiree Honoured**

Harper .....	621
--------------	-----

##### **Congratulations to Winter Olympians**

Krawetz.....	621
--------------	-----

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### **Plans for Population Growth**

Wall .....	622
Calvert .....	622
Cline.....	623

##### **Recruiting and Retaining Nurses**

McMorris.....	623
Taylor.....	624

##### **Eligibility for Subsidized Child Care Spaces**

Merriman .....	625
Higgins .....	625

##### **Written Questions**

D'Autremont .....	626
Hagel .....	626

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 30 — The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006**

Quennell.....	627
---------------	-----

##### **Bill No. 31 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accounting Professions) Amendment Act, 2006**

Quennell.....	627
---------------	-----

##### **Bill No. 32 — The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2006/**

##### **Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les victimes d'actes criminels**

Quennell.....	627
---------------	-----

##### **Bill No. 35 — The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi d'interprétation de 1995**

Quennell.....	627
---------------	-----

##### **Bill No. 36 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment**

##### **Act, 2006 (No. 2)/Loi corrective (indemnisation et assurance au profit des administrateurs et dirigeants) de 2006 (n° 2)**

Quennell.....	628
---------------	-----



<b>Bill No. 37 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Directors' and Officers' Indemnification and Insurance) Amendment Act, 2006</b>	
Quennell.....	628
<b>Bill No. 38 — The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act/ Loi sur le règlement des différends internationaux relatifs aux investissements</b>	
Quennell.....	628
<b>Bill No. 40 — The Income Trust Liability Act</b>	
Quennell.....	628
<b>Bill No. 41 — The Partnership Amendment Act, 2006</b>	
Quennell.....	629
<b>STATEMENT BY A MEMBER</b>	
<b>Remembering Senator Allan Bird</b>	
Beatty.....	629
Wall.....	629
<b>MOTIONS</b>	
<b>Deputy Chair of Committees</b>	
Hagel.....	630
<b>Transmittal of Tributes</b>	
Hagel.....	644
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>GOVERNMENT MOTIONS</b>	
<b>Early Learning and Child Care</b>	
Higgins.....	630
Crofford.....	633
Merriman.....	635
Draude.....	636
Atkinson.....	638
Hart.....	640
Morin.....	641
<b>Recorded Division (amendment).....</b>	643
Higgins (Transmittal Motion).....	644

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---

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