



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

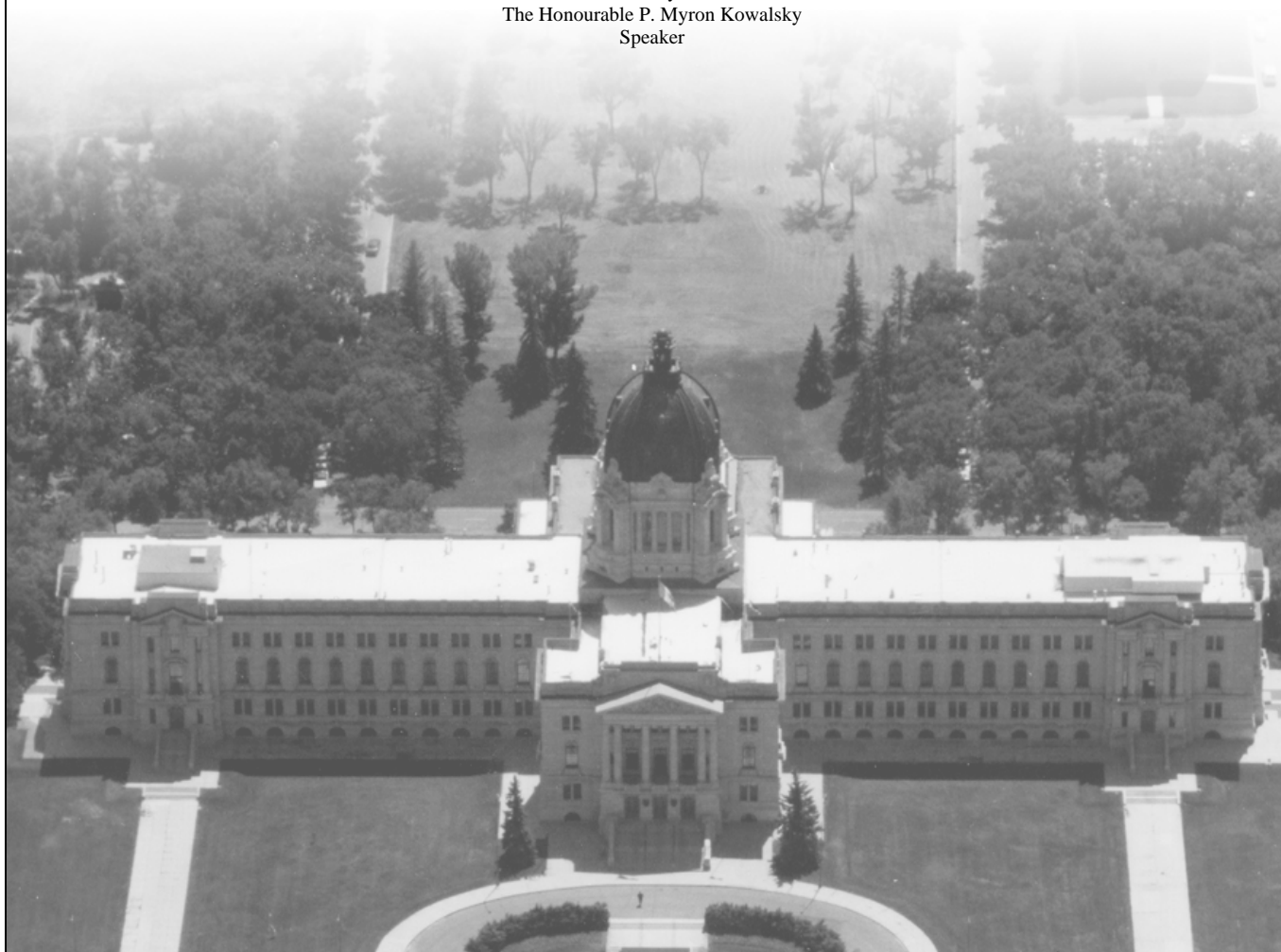
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, 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.]

Clerk: — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open this day's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Another highway in the constituency of Cypress Hills is in desperate need of repair. I present the following prayer on behalf of my constituents:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today's two pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Maple Creek, Piapot, and Claydon. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to read a petition. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The people who have signed this petition are all from Prince Albert. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I too have a petition to fund Avastin. Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition request in their prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the community of Prince Albert. I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise as well to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the lack of funding for the cancer drug Avastin. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Today I have a petition with citizens concerned about Highway No. 20. 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 steps to ensure that Highway No. 20 be upgraded to primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

And the signatures, Ms. Deputy Speaker, are from Lockwood, Saskatoon, Lanigan, Drake, Nokomis, and Semans. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today I have a petition on behalf of citizens of this province who are concerned about the government's refusal to fund the drug Avastin. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. I so present. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from citizens concerned about the lack of government funding for the cancer-fighting drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents across Saskatchewan that are concerned that Saskatchewan is the only province besides PEI [Prince Edward Island] that does not have a dedicated children's hospital. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The petitioners today live in Erindale, Arbor Creek, and Silverspring in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with Highway No. 3. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to resurface and properly maintain Highway No. 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and the Livelong access road to highway no. 795 .

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Turtleford, Fairholme, Edam, and Glaslyn. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to read a petition from concerned citizens concerned with the lack of the government's ability to finance the cancer drug Avastin. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Saskatoon, and I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous:

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 so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Foam Lake and Imperial. I so present.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Well thank you. It's a pleasure today to rise and present a petition that this is the first time in the province's history that the government has denied coverage of a cancer drug recommended by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

From the good people of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in the House today to present a petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. This petition calls for:

More behavioural therapists and coordination among the departments of Health, Learning, and Community Resources and Employment with input from stakeholders to formulate a provincial comprehensive autism spectrum disorder treatment program and to provide adequate, effective and early treatment based on intensive behavioural interaction and includes speech, communication, occupational, and physical therapy, and medical attention for ASD-related conditions.

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

This petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so present, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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:

The petition concerning surgical services in the Tisdale Hospital, that's sessional paper no. 742;

And additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 5, 27, 64, 67, 638, 639, 669.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm

River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Madam Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Wednesday move first reading of an Act respecting biodiesel.

And while I'm on my feet, I have several questions for the government. I give notice I shall on day no. 60 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: how many communities in rural Saskatchewan are without the services of a full-time resident physician, and which ones?

I also give notice on day 60:

To the Minister of Health: does the provincial government offer temporary physician services to communities that have lost their full-time resident physician until a permanent physician can be obtained?

Also on day no. 60, I give notice to ask the government the following question:

Does the provincial government offer a physician recruitment service for communities that have lost the services of a full-time physician?

Also on day no. 60, I ask:

To the Minister of Health: what assistance does the provincial government provide for communities who have lost the services of the resident physician?

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's an honour today to introduce to you and to all members in this Legislative Assembly the candidate for Prince Albert Northcote for the Saskatchewan Party in the upcoming provincial election. Kevin Shiach has joined us this afternoon.

Kevin is currently involved in the private sector in Prince Albert but has also served as a pastor as well in his community. He attracted over 100 people — about 140 people — to an uncontested nomination, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So clearly, clearly he's ready to go to work and ensure that the current member for Prince Albert Northcote has the opportunity to explore other exciting endeavours after the next election. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina

Lakeview.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce a constituent from Regina Lakeview, and he has a special status here because he's the brother of our Page, Michael Radmacher. And sitting in the Speaker's gallery in the back row is Bruce Radmacher. And he is a member of the Regina Symphony Orchestra, and he'll be performing here in the Chamber later today. So I ask all members to welcome Bruce Radmacher.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly four people seated in your gallery that are very important to me. My wife, Trish. Trish is a television anchor in Saskatoon as well as taking care of our children, Carter who's eight, and Paige who's six. And welcome her to her Assembly here this afternoon. Also my mother, Lucy Cheveldayoff, is here. Mom just completed a constitutional law class at the University of Saskatchewan, and she did very well. So if any of the members needs any advice on constitutional law, she'd be able to provide that to you this afternoon I'm sure.

Joining them here in the gallery is Ken and Merle Sawatsky, good friends of mine. Ken is one of the founding members of Junior Achievement in Saskatchewan. Merle's involved with Eastern Star and Saskatoon Family Services Bureau.

Madam Speaker, to all members, please help me in welcoming them to their Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Through you and to all members of the Assembly I would like to introduce someone special to me in my life, somebody who stands beside me in the tough times and good times. And I would ask all members to welcome my wife, Sheila Allchurch, to the Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Well, members, I would like to introduce to you seated in the Speaker's gallery my cousins, Margaret and Leif Riesach. They were here for the first time I was asked to replace the Speaker in the Chair, and as it happens, they're here today to see me try this once again. I'd ask all members to give them a warm welcome to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian

Head-Milestone.

National Nursing Week

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This week in National Nursing Week. National Nursing Week's motto is Promoting Healthy Choices for Healthy Living. Whether it is in an emergency situation, surgery, post-surgery care, comforting a dying patient or patient education, nurses play a crucial role in the delivery of health care in our province. It's important that members of this Legislative Assembly recognize and support the important contributions that nurses provide to Saskatchewan people.

[13:45]

Madam Deputy Speaker, this province is entering a crisis as more and more nurses are retiring and even more tend to leave the province for greener pastures. Those who are left behind must work harder and longer to provide care. But they're only human.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government must find ways to support nurses, provide quality workplaces, and undertake a more aggressive position in nurse recruitment and retention. This province needs more nurses.

This year Manitoba has announced that they will be having 3,000 nursing students go through their classes in Manitoba. That's twice as many as Saskatchewan, twice as many as our province which are similar in population.

So I take this opportunity, once again call upon the Minister of Health and his government to provide a clear recruitment and retention strategy that includes targets, and a timeline to fulfill the existing nursing vacancies, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, this week is National Nursing Week, a time set aside to recognize and honour the significant contributions that nurses make to the health of Canadians.

This year's theme is Promoting Healthy Choices for Healthy Living, indeed a very apt theme as Saskatchewan nurses advocate for healthy personal choices and improved community well-being and contribute greatly to public health and primary health care.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we recognize that nurses are currently in short supply around the world. Here in Saskatchewan we are addressing this issue in our *Working Together: Saskatchewan's Health Workforce Action Plan* released this past December. The strategy is a comprehensive, detailed plan designed to improve health care in Saskatchewan by keeping and attracting health care professionals and was developed in consultation with nursing organizations and other health-provider groups.

Already our workforce action plan is recognized as a national

standard and is being praised for its innovative health care planning. The workforce action plan builds on the solid work we had done on *The Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care* released in 2001.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are keeping more nurses in the province. Of last month's graduates from nursing education program of Saskatchewan, 95 per cent accepted positions in Saskatchewan. Madam Deputy Speaker, I extend a heartfelt welcome to these new graduates. At the same time I offer my sincere appreciation to all Saskatchewan nurses for their hard work, their commitment, and their compassion.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in thanking our nurses for their ongoing contributions to the health care system and in wishing them the best this week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

National Emergency Preparedness Week

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, today marks the beginning of the National Emergency Preparedness Week.

Emergency Preparedness Week is celebrated annually in every part of Canada by all levels of government. Throughout the week events and activities will be held across Canada to help individuals and communities prepare for the potential impacts of emergency situations.

Activities held during Emergency Preparedness Week will stress the importance of being prepared for any type of natural or human-induced emergency and increase Canadians knowledge of the nation's emergency management system. The week is also an opportunity to showcase the programs, training, and equipment that have been put in place to enhance the safety and security of Canadians and their physical and cyber environment.

Being prepared is an important step that all Saskatchewan residents should take because we never know when there will be a widespread power outage, a terrorist attack, a major flood, or any other type of disaster.

Emergency Preparedness Week reflects the increasingly threatening world we live in and emphasizes the importance of taking immediate steps to improve preparedness at home, at school, and in the workplace. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, last Friday evening I along with the Minister of Northern Affairs and a

large and very enthusiastic audience attended the eighth annual SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these awards are an initiative of the Wicahitowin Foundation to recognize the outstanding achievements of Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis young people. Each of this year's nominees and winners has demonstrated a commitment to their community, excellence in their academic achievements, and exemplary leadership qualities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this year's winner of the Culture Award is Sam Anderson of the Poundmaker First Nation. The Fine Arts/Performing Arts Award went to Misty Kay of Kawacatoose First Nation. Yona Jimmy of Moosomin First Nation is the award winner for education. Sweetgrass First Nation's Kendall Albert won the Sports Award, and Danielle Dupre of Lac La Ronge First Nation received the award for community service.

The Recreation Award went to Kayla Natawayes of Sandy Bay, the Spirit Award to Victoria McDermott of Prince Albert, and Dakota Creely of Regina received the award for leadership. Nikita Nelson of Pelican Narrows received the Technology and Science Award. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Outstanding Achievement Award went to Rachel Ross of the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the nominees and winners of the 2005 SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

KidSport Week

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Participation in sports and recreation by Saskatchewan youth plays a major role in the life of people in our province and is pivotal in the growth and development of our young people. On behalf of the official opposition, I want to voice our support for the declaration of KidSport Week in Saskatchewan, from May 6 to May 13.

As members are aware, KidSport is a children's charity that was developed in British Columbia in 1993 and has since expanded to eight provinces, including Saskatchewan. KidSport's mission is to increase the accessibility of sporting opportunities to financially disadvantaged children so these children can participate in community sports programs. This program makes a huge difference in the lives of our young people who are able to join with their friends in sports events. Today KidSport has raised over \$1.6 million in Saskatchewan and has helped over 18,000 kids.

I would like to take the opportunity today to thank the members of the 41 communities who provide funding to disadvantaged children, as well as provincial sponsors and national sponsors who make KidSport a success. One of the great things about KidSport is the money raised in communities stays in that

community. I'd also like to encourage members of the public to support KidSport initiatives in their communities, both during this week and throughout the year. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, the Minister of Healthy Living Services.

Credit Union Recognized for Commitment to Community

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. On April 11, 2006, in recognition of its commitment to supporting local initiatives and enhancing community well-being, Saskatoon Credit Union was presented a Building a Better Future Award from The Ethical Funds Company. Saskatoon Credit Union's submission focused on the individual development account program, which is a financial learning tool to assist youth with potential to stay in school.

The program teaches low-income youth how to manage their financial affairs, save money towards a goal, gain employment skills, and build towards completing their education or entering the workforce. As a result of receiving this award, The Ethical Funds Company will make a donation on behalf of Saskatoon Credit Union to the community first program. This program operates a community investment fund that provides non-traditional financing options for community economic development projects that in turn help reduce poverty in Saskatoon and the surrounding areas.

The award is a well-deserved recognition of the commitment to the community possessed by the management and employees of Saskatoon Credit Union, which donates funding and also provides their employees the time needed to mentor and help run the individual development account program.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Saskatoon Credit Union for receiving this award, for improving the outlook of the less fortunate youth, and for demonstrating outstanding corporate social responsibility. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon to Host International Biology Olympiad

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, this summer the city of Saskatoon will be privileged to host the 18th annual International Biology Olympiad from July 15 to 22. This annual competition which is held in a different country each year brings students together from around the world for a scientific competition that challenges their skills in tackling biological problems and in dealing with biological experiments. Interest in biology, inventiveness, creativity, and perseverance are all necessary qualities for students to succeed. And I have every confidence that Canada's students will rise to the challenge.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this competition provides an

outstanding opportunity for our province to showcase the best of Saskatoon to the world. With representatives from 55 countries in the city, students and leaders from around the world will have the opportunity to be involved in social, recreational, and cultural activities that will highlight the best of our city and our province.

I want to thank the steering committee who have put a lot of time and effort to make sure that this event is a success. And I also want to take this opportunity to urge the provincial government today to support this financially. This is a great opportunity to showcase our city and our province to the world. It's a great opportunity for the province to support the city of Saskatoon. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Property Tax Rates

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, on April 21 the Minister of Finance was asked about property tax hikes for residents of southern Saskatchewan that would result from the NDP's [New Democratic Party] failure to properly fund the cost of education in our province.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, here's what the minister had to say and I quote:

... there is no reason that residents in the ... former Sunrise School Division, including the city of Weyburn, should see any increase in their education and property tax ...

That's what the Minister of Finance had to say. On Friday last, the South East Cornerstone School Division put out their press release. And guess what, Madam Deputy Speaker? Property taxes are going up and going up significantly in most areas of that division including the city of Weyburn.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to the minister: why on April 21 then did he provide inaccurate information to this House?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member ought to know full well that it is school boards that set those rates. What we said is that there is sufficient money in this budget that there need not have been a tax increase. Now if Audrey Trombley, the defeated Sask Party candidate, and her board decide that they want to raise those rates, then that is who he should be asking his question to.

It is interesting how that party opposite says one thing in here and something different outside. You know it's just the other day they were criticizing me for running government-sponsored

advertising. What is it that I see on the news at 12:30 today? More taxpayer-funded advertising. This time featuring none other than a visage of the nicely tanned member from Swift Current. Explain that, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, explain how you're using those taxpayers' money.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, imagine the irony of that Minister of Finance, the half million dollar man raising the issue of advertising campaigns, Madam Deputy Speaker, all the while underfunding education in the province so that not just one board, but board after board and school division after school division are having to do what to make up for that underfunding? Increase taxes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that minister stood in his place and said the city of Weyburn should not, will not have a property tax increase. That's what he said, as a result of the NDP budget. We know though, Madam Deputy Speaker, property taxes will be going up for the city of Weyburn, for the residents of Weyburn by 5 per cent. Again to the Minister of Finance: why did he provide inaccurate information to this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, once again what we are seeing is a situation where the Leader of the Opposition is simply not credible, whether it's on the issue of government sponsored advertising ... which now today, he seems to have no problem whatsoever with him being featured prominently in taxpayer-funded advertising or in the issue where he is distorting what I said in the Assembly, which is that the people of Weyburn need not see any increase in their property taxes.

Now if Audrey Trombley who is a defeated Sask Party candidate would like to explain to the taxpayers there why it is she jacked up the tax rates — she should do so. But otherwise I can assure the members that there was sufficient money in this budget; there should have been no increase in the city of Weyburn.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, this is typical from this Minister of Finance to blame someone else for something that he has done — in this case, in this case property tax hikes across the province — because then, Madam Deputy Speaker, if it's the Cornerstone School Division's fault, then it must also be the Sun West School Division's fault because the district that now includes Biggar, Davidson, and Kindersley, that district is going to experience property tax hikes between 4 and 18 per cent. But according to the NDP, that must be their fault.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the Prairie South School Division,

education property taxes will be going up between 7 and 15 per cent. In the Chinook district — the budget not yet released — those property taxes will likely be going up.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, to that Minister of Finance: are all of the school boards wrong and is he right? Is that the minister's position?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, clearly the member does not seem to want to look at those school divisions that are able to hold the line or reduce. He does not take into account that in the city of Estevan taxes will go down this year. He does not take into account that under regional pooling what we will get rid of is the horrid distortion that was in place where the areas that had an oil well existing in them had paid significantly less taxes than those that could only see the oil well from where the community was. That's what those members refuse to recognize was what regional pooling was doing.

It is yet another example of them saying one thing in the House, saying something else when they're out campaigning, and looking for whichever answer works best for their own political benefit. Shame on them for playing that political game. Shame on them for voting against the budget that provided record money for education.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, shame on that Premier and that government for only a few months ago saying that they were going to do something about the property tax issue, and the something that they were going to do was to hike property taxes across the province including in the city of Weyburn.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if it's all the school board's fault, then that Minister of Finance should phone his friend John Conway on the Regina board. Their taxes are going up 3 per cent — public and separate I believe.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the situation in the Southeast, as the Minister of Finance has portrayed, apparently that while the government is prepared to cash the oil and gas royalty cheques from that district, they're not prepared to invest in education or on infrastructure, and so now the Cornerstone School Division is looking at a tax hike; in the Estevan rural, up 30 per cent.

Madam Deputy Speaker, can that Minister of Finance explain to the people of the Southeast, to the Cornerstone School District, to the people of Weyburn what he has against them, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — The increase in funding that we provided in this budget was voted against by that opposition and by that party.

The model of regional pooling was designed specifically to make sure that residents in the areas that do not have oil resources continue to benefit from the oil resources around them. That was why Midale and that area is seeing an increase. That is why Estevan is seeing a decrease. I'd be interested to know what the member for Estevan says.

But what's more interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the position of the Sask Party opposition who takes this approach, that well — you know what? — this is a huge issue. But just last week what was he saying? A \$60 million difference on the federal budget was simply semantics in terms of equalization. What was it he said when the federal budget came out? No, don't worry, Mr. Prime Minister; don't send all that money to Saskatchewan. Just send 60 per cent. What was it he said? You know they love the budget that provided a 6 per cent increase for health care funding federally, but they voted against the budget that provided 10 per cent provincially here.

It's just about cheap, cheap politics on the part of the Sask Party and the Sask Party leader, and he should be ashamed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, from a region of the province of Saskatchewan that willingly, that willingly contributes hundreds of millions of dollars over the last number of years to the provincial treasury in oil and gas royalties, to that area of the province, to Weyburn and area, that government, that Premier, that Minister of Finance, all they can offer is disrespect. All they can offer are education tax increases.

Madam Deputy Speaker, no wonder only about a half a dozen people showed up at the Minister of Finance's post-budget meeting in Weyburn. And no wonder, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Premier had to cancel his fundraising dinner with two days to go in Weyburn. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, they might get more interest in their political party if they showed that they actually cared about southeast Saskatchewan.

The question to the minister is this: why did the NDP government put forward a budget this year, why did that Finance minister put forward a budget that had all these hidden tax hikes on the property tax question, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I can think of no greater disrespect than for a Leader of the Opposition to treat so shabbily one of the members that she is forced to resign from the House and to provide no explanation and to drive us into a by-election in

Weyburn. Let's talk about disrespect, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let's talk about disrespect. I would say ask Brenda Bakken about disrespect, and we'll know exactly what we see as the member turns his back in terms of listening to this answer. That is the ultimate in disrespect when you drive them out.

There are all sorts of reasons to vote for this budget, Madam Speaker, all sorts of reasons in terms of increased education spending, health spending, in terms of money for public safety. And did the members of the opposition find any reason to support? No. Why? Because this budget is good for Saskatchewan people, but it is very bad for the Saskatchewan Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Future Changes to School Divisions

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, school boards are setting their budgets. Mill rates are rising. We're losing students, and cuts are on the horizon. I raised this issue last week in an attempt to get some real answers from the minister and, as usual nothing happened.

So again, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need clarity from the minister. To the Minister of Learning: how many schools will be closed across this province as a result of this budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we have said on a number of occasions that these decisions are made by the school divisions in their area. We respect the right of the elected members of the school boards to make the decisions for the students that they serve and the communities they serve.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this issue has come up over and over again, and I'm not sure if the members opposite are suggesting that we should become directly involved instead of leaving these decisions up to the boards of education that are elected by their communities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you. Madam Deputy Speaker, this is very simple. The Minister of Learning is responsible for leadership and providing the direction for education in this province. Madam Deputy Speaker, anything less than that is an abrogation of their responsibilities.

Once again I will ask the question. If she will not answer the question about how many schools will be closed, perhaps the minister would be kind enough to answer the question: how many teaching positions then are going to be eliminated as a

result of this budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the things that the opposition does is try to jump out in the front of every parade. Now about two weeks ago, the member was standing a couple days in a row asking the question, well we're cutting teaching positions, cutting teaching positions. And then the division put an article in the paper saying we should be able to accommodate. And we may have to move teachers between schools, but we should be able to accommodate and mitigate the losses.

Then the member stops, Madam Deputy Speaker. He should quit trying to jump in front of the parades, wait for the duly elected boards to make their decisions, and then we'll see where the school divisions are at that time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Madam Deputy Speaker, once again we hear from the minister a complete refusal to take any responsibility for the direction and the outcomes of what's going to happen in learning in this province. Madam Deputy Speaker, clearly this is a responsibility of the provincial government. Clearly this is a responsibility of that minister.

Clearly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the question deserves to be answered. How many teaching positions are going to be cut in this province? How many schools are going to be closed? The people of this province deserve an answer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with a bit of concern that I hear this question. Does the member opposite believe that everything should be directed out of this building, out of the departments within the city of Regina? They ask politicians to get involved in the justice system. They make recommendations that we should be censoring various areas.

Now the members opposite are advocating that the Department of Education, the Department of Learning and all decisions should be made affecting learning in the province of Saskatchewan centrally in Regina.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we disagree with that attitude. We believe that the school divisions that are duly elected, representing their communities, will come to the best decision for their students that they service within their school divisions, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Investment in Pangaea

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, the government makes the decision on how much money the school boards are going to get and how the money is being spent and prioritized.

I'd like to talk about another issue of government investment, Madam Deputy Speaker. On page 9 of the latest annual report from Investment Saskatchewan, it talks about recovering some money invested by this NDP government in Pangaea Systems. This company was given three and a half million taxpayers' dollars in 2003, and the company promised to create 35 jobs — 35 jobs. Madam Deputy Speaker, no jobs were ever created, and the company then turned around and left Regina without a peep.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan: how much of the taxpayers' money has been recovered, and how much is still outstanding, and has this NDP government abandoned the remainder?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'll take the question on behalf of the Minister of Industry and Resources, the minister responsible. But let me say this, first of all, Madam Speaker, Investment Saskatchewan was set up and created, Madam Speaker, as a means to ensure, as a means to ensure that investments on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan were managed, were managed by an independent board to ensure as best as possible that we could get our investment climate improved and growing here in the province, Madam Speaker.

I think that has been occurring, Madam Speaker, and we should allow Investment Saskatchewan to continue on doing its work, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The government gave Pangaea \$3.5 million or \$100,000 a job for the 35 jobs they were supposed to create which never happened. Then they turned around and sold this company to CGI Group out of Montreal. CGI bills itself as the eighth largest independent information technology firm in the world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what action has this government taken with CGI Group regarding the recovery of the money invested in Pangaea by the Saskatchewan taxpayers? Or has the NDP simply thrown two and a half million dollars down the drain?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Madam Speaker, it was well publicized several months ago that the government was taking a loss with respect to the investment in Pangaea.

But I want to say to this House, Madam Speaker, that it was a well-intentioned investment which was to create some jobs in the city of Regina. And what happened, Madam Speaker, was that that company, like other companies, was affected by the rise in the American dollar relative to the Canadian dollar. And that investment did not work, Madam Speaker, but it was entered into with the best of intentions.

Recently, Madam Speaker, some of that money was recovered. I don't know if the opposition has made reference to that or not. And yes, there was a loss, Madam Speaker. But I want to say, Madam Speaker, that overall the investments of the Crown have made money. And yes, some lose but overall they make a good return for the people of the province, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Appointment at the Labour Relations Board

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have questioned the Minister of Labour for three days on allegations of political interference in the Labour Relations Board. We didn't receive any answers from the Minister of Labour, and we received silly responses from the Deputy Premier.

On Friday, the deputy minister of Labour appeared before the assembled media, shedding no new light on this important topic. While Mr. William Craik is prepared to say his recollection of a conversation with the former Vice-Chair of the LRB [Labour Relations Board] is substantially different than Mr. Matkowski's version, Mr. Craik would offer little else.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when is this minister going to come clean? When are the people of Saskatchewan going to get the answers they deserve on this important question?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. What the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know is that this board operates at arm's-length fashion. It's independent.

Last week we covered a lot of ground on this issue. And the deputy minister did say that his recollections are vastly different than the fellow in question. And I think this is an important thing. And of course this is heading to court in the near future.

But I think what is more important, Madam Deputy Speaker, are the seeds of doubt that the members opposite are spreading about a very important institution — our labour law. We know the members opposite have an agenda. They've talked about competitive labour law. And this is a first step: cast seeds of

doubt, make people question the value of this. And I think they're doing a bad, bad service for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to quote from an article in the weekend edition of the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* with its heading that says, "Forbes's reaction hurt Sask. image." Madam Deputy Speaker, the article goes on to say:

The seeming inability of Labour Minister David Forbes to address in a forthright way the accusation that political meddling led to the non-renewal of the term of a vice-chair of the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board further solidifies suspicions of a pro-union bias in the provincial government.

It's the kind of political gamesmanship that does nothing to improve Saskatchewan's image and . . . undermines the government's effort to attract employers and investment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when will the Labour minister stop the gamesmanship and give us some straight answers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And of course we can all find articles like that, and of course that's an interesting one. I found that of interest to read. But I did find it interesting last week when we had a good-news story here in Saskatchewan, 3,700 new jobs — not a mention from these folks. In fact not quite good enough, not quite good enough.

And the week before, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was just appalled by the kind of language that's coming out of the opposition talking about . . . on Day of Mourning. What did we hear those folks say? Well accidents just happen. Accidents just happen.

Do we need occupational health safety regulations? We've had some very good things happen in this province. The Mosaic fire is a good example of how things work right when we have strong regulations and strong labour law. And they turn around and talk about competitive labour laws we need to change. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have some deep concerns about the real agenda of those folks over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Minister, I don't know where the minister is hearing the words that he claims to be claiming that we're saying, when in fact I stood in this Assembly and I commended the people that work, and the fact that we were

recognizing them in a North America safety week. For that minister to stand and say that we are not respectful of workers is wrong, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Walter Matkowski alleges the deputy minister of Labour advised him to quit immediately because his rulings were not popular with unions. That allegation, if proven to be correct, amounts to political interference in what should be an independent body — the Labour Relations Board. Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister has been aware of these allegations for several days. Will he today agree to conduct an investigation into whether or not there was political interference in the Labour Relations Board? Yes or no?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I find it interesting these comments and especially the one that the critic opposite started about last Wednesday. Here we had a situation on the Day of Mourning, the Day of Mourning, and we read 33 names into the record here. And the member opposite from the other side talked about competitive labour laws within a half an hour, within a half an hour.

And you know, another member over there talks about, well accidents just happen. If you're driving down the street, you could have a car accident. You know, I think these folks have some serious issues.

And I have to tell you this, Madam Deputy Speaker, last week was North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. Did I see any of those folks at any of those events? We had over 1,500 tickets sold to the breakfast on Wednesday. He gets up, makes a speech in the House, and thinks he's home free. That's not on, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to refer the minister to the April 2004 edition of the *Labour Reporter* published monthly by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. Let me read the headline from page number one, "Workers not well served by some Labour Relations Board decisions." The headline from page two, "Labour Relations Board rulings irk many." The heading from page three, "Labour Relations Board decisions questioned." From page number four the heading reads, "Does the LRB need a midcourse correction?"

Those are the four headings from that *Labour Reporter*, Madam Deputy Speaker. Can the minister tell us if he thinks those headlines suggest there were some concerns in some quarters with Mr. Matkowski's rulings on the Labour Relations Board?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I find it interesting when the opposition quotes from the media and wraps themselves in the goodness of they're going to protect the interests of working people.

Well here's a simple quote for the Leader of the Opposition from October 3, 2005, on CJME. The Leader of the Opposition has stated that he's going to "go to war" with the working people of Saskatchewan in the interests of the economic environment and the business climate of Saskatchewan. So what is the real agenda of the members opposite?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview, the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the government I'll be tabling responses to written questions no. 1,086 to no. 1,094 inclusive.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for being able to sift through all the noise. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, in order to prepare the House to receive Her Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:23.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard	1545
Draude	1545
Hermanson	1545
Stewart	1545
Harpauer	1545
Eagles	1545
Weekes	1545
Cheveldayoff	1546
Allchurch	1546
Kirsch	1546
Brkich	1546
Merriman	1546
Morgan	1546

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk	1546
--------------------	------

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Brkich	1547
--------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	1547
Nilson	1547
Cheveldayoff	1547
Allchurch	1547
The Deputy Speaker	1547

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Nursing Week

McMorris	1548
Junor	1548

National Emergency Preparedness Week

Toth	1548
------------	------

SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence

Iwanchuk	1548
----------------	------

KidSport Week

Draude	1549
--------------	------

Credit Union Recognized for Commitment to Community

Addley	1549
--------------	------

Saskatoon to Host International Biology Olympiad

Morgan	1549
--------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Property Tax Rates

Wall	1550
Thomson	1550

Future Changes to School Divisions

Gantfoer	1552
Higgins	1552

Investment in Pangaea

D'Autremont	1553
Sonntag	1553
Cline	1553

Appointment at the Labour Relations Board

Krawetz	1553
Forbes	1553

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Iwanchuk	1555
The Deputy Speaker	1555

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
Service Commission

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Hon. Eric Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources
Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Gaming
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Literacy
Minister Responsible for Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Highways and Transportation
Minister of Property Management
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for the
Forestry Secretariat

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Power Corporation

Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
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Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
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Hon. Maynard Sonntag
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Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
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Hon. Len Taylor
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Hon. Andrew Thomson
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