



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

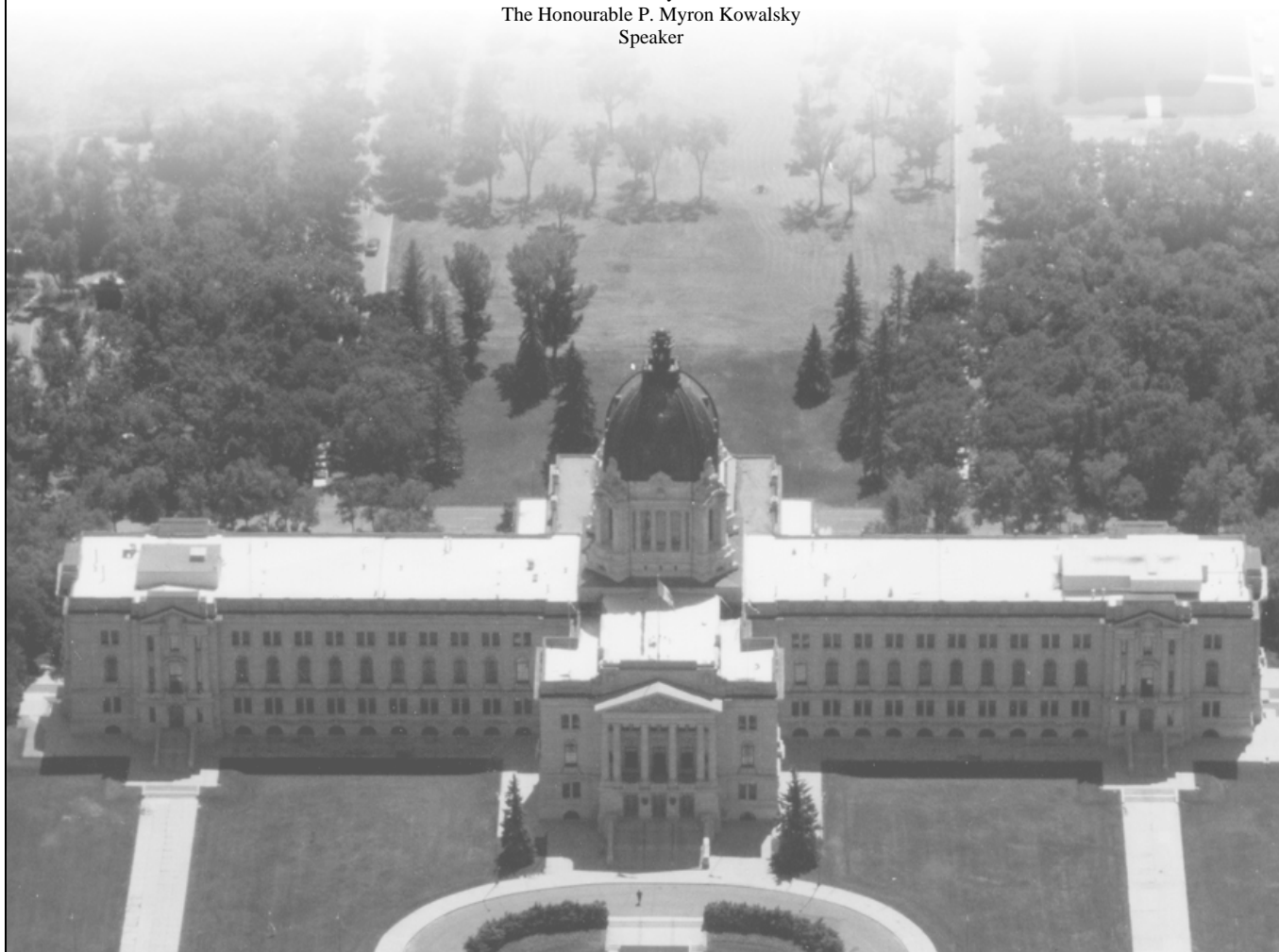
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
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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
Gantfoer, 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.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to present a petition once again on behalf of constituents primarily in the southern part of the constituency of Cypress Hills concerned about the condition of Highway 18, especially the section from Claydon to Robsart. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that 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.

These two pages of petitions today, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Maple Creek and Fox Valley, as well as Piapot. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the funding of the drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition, the number of pages on this petition are signed by people from Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to read a petition on behalf of people who are concerned about the surgical services at Tisdale Hospital. And 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 ensure that surgical services are reinstated in the Tisdale Hospital.

People have signed this petition from Star City, from Melfort, from Pleasantdale, from Macklin, Saskatchewan, and from Tisdale and from Sylvania. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Rosetown Biggar.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition regarding autism spectrum disorders. Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from people who are concerned that the number of children being diagnosed with ASD [autism spectrum disorder] is as high as 1 in 251. The prayer is long so I'll just read a portion of it. It says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendation made February 2005 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services to the Saskatchewan Minister of Health.

And, Mr. Speaker, two of the recommendations include:

Increasing the early diagnosis of children with ASD, and also having respite and family support accessible based on need.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of pages of signatures. They are primarily from the community of Outlook, although I see Saskatoon and Macrorie represented as well. I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with lack of provincial 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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition appears to be signed by individuals from the communities of Weyburn and Yellow Grass. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a number of petitions of citizens concerned with the deplorable and unsafe condition of Highway No. 27. 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 Highway No. 27.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Cudworth, Saskatoon, Vonda, Prud'homme, and Aberdeen. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some

petitions today of particular interest to the Minister of Health by people in the Melfort area who are concerned about the possible reduction of the number of hospital acute care beds in the community. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to stop the loss of acute care beds by converting the second floor to office space.

Signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the entire Northeast of this province. There's thousands of them. And I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to present petitions from the citizens of Biggar who are concerned about a possible reduction of health care services. 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 Biggar and district. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to present a petition on behalf of the Saskatchewan Retirees Association. Many hundreds of people that weren't able to join us in the galleries yesterday have signed this petition, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to initiate measures as required to bring parity to all provincial employee pensions and benefits.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signators to this petition are from across Saskatchewan, mainly in Prince Albert and North Battleford and Saskatoon, those that weren't able to join us yesterday. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Livelong and Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to read a petition from my neighbouring constituency of Arm River-Watrous, and the petition reads as follows:

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

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Imperial. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens that want to improve SaskTel cellular service in rural Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to install the technical equipment to ensure that residents along Highway 19 and the Outlook area in Saskatchewan are protected by reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Strongfield and Elbow. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise today to present a petition on autism spectrum disorders. The prayer is rather lengthy. I'll read a portion:

Whereas people who have autism spectrum disorder are some of the most vulnerable in our province;

And whereas in Saskatchewan the number of children being diagnosed with ASD is high and the rate of increase is alarming;

And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendations made February 2005 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee of human services to the Saskatchewan Minister of Health.

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

From the good people of Saskatoon Sutherland. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present a petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. Mr. Speaker, this petition has a lengthy preamble and a lengthy prayer for relief and I'll only read a small portion.

It makes reference to the high number of children being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and notes that there is 159 per cent over six years up to 2004, and it calls upon the government to coordinate among the departments of Health, Learning, and Community Resources with input from stakeholders to formulate a provincial comprehensive autism spectrum disorder treatment program and to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of citizens of the province who are concerned with the reduction of surgical services at the Tisdale Hospital and feel that that will contribute to the current problems of lengthy waiting lists in that area, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take necessary action to ensure that surgical services are reinstated in the Tisdale Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by citizens from Tisdale, Arborfield, Crooked River, Aylsham, Mistatim, and Sylvania. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

A petition concerning provincial employees' pensions and benefits, sessional paper 753;

And additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional papers 638, 639, and 741.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 48, The Parks Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When will Bill 48 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 48 — The Parks Amendment Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 48, The Parks Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure today to introduce to our Legislative Assembly His Excellency, David Wilkins, the United States ambassador to Canada who, Mr. Speaker, is joining us in the gallery this afternoon.

He is accompanied by Mr. Naim Ahmed, who has served the last number of years as our consul general of the United States in Calgary. He is also joined by Ms. Kim Klassen, economic and political specialist with the consul general's office in Calgary. And they are being hosted today by Ms. Debbie Saum, our chief of protocol.

Mr. Speaker, we are very, very pleased to have the ambassador here in Saskatchewan. He has a very, very, very full day of activity. He has had opportunity already today to meet with a number of ministers, to meet with myself. He has engaged with the press now, I believe twice. He has been to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] depot. He has given a major

address at the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. He is joining us here in the House. Later this afternoon he will be visiting the PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre], and I am aware meeting with yourself, Mr. Speaker, I believe Her Honour, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition.

We very, very much appreciate the ambassador's willingness to provide this kind of an intense opportunity to learn of our province and our people and to build a relationship between our province and the United States of America.

I want to, before I ask all members to greet our guests, also to recognize that while this is the ambassador's first official visit to Saskatchewan, it may well be Mr. Ahmed's last official visit as his tour of duty in the consulate in Calgary is coming to a close. And I want to thank Mr. Ahmed for his support of our province, for the many times that he has visited Saskatchewan and worked with us on issues of mutual concern. I want to thank him and wish him well in his future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members to greet our guests who are in your gallery today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to join on behalf of the official opposition to join with the Premier in welcoming Ambassador Wilkins to this Legislative Assembly. I will have the opportunity to meet with him a little bit later on and I'm very much looking forward to that discussion.

Also I want to welcome, together with the Premier, Mr. Ahmed and Ms. Klassen. We welcome them to this Assembly and wish Mr. Ahmed all the best in his future endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, in 1947 Harry S. Truman said:

Canadian-American relations for many years did not develop spontaneously. The example of accord provided by our two countries did not come about merely through the happy circumstance of geography. It is compounded of one part proximity and nine parts goodwill and common sense.

Well, Mr. Speaker, after over 50 years obviously since 1947 when President Truman said these things, proximity hasn't changed between us and I think it's important that we commit mutually as friends, through respect, that neither will the goodwill or the common sense.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we welcome His Excellency to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce three guests in your gallery today. Brian Graham is here with his mother and dad, Mr. and Mrs. Graham. Brian is president of the Pleasant Hill Community Association. He's deeply committed to public safety and strong communities and he's making a real difference. So I'd ask all members to welcome our guests here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was remiss while I was on my feet to not also introduce Mr. Graham to the Legislative Assembly and would like to do so in addition to welcoming his mom and dad, and on behalf of the opposition to thank him for the leadership that he's showing in the inner city in Saskatoon with the Pleasant Hill Community Association. And we wish him well in his endeavours to ensure that that community and the inner city in our province are safe places for the residents that live there.

So on behalf of the opposition, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you 30 grade 8 students seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are accompanied by their teacher, Brian Lewis.

It's good to be able to return some of the hospitality. I've had many good visits to St. Dominic School over the years, and at one point read to many of these students during Education Week and can't believe how quickly they've grown into mature young men and women. As they mature for their high school years, I wish them all the best in future endeavours.

They're not able to stay for a visit and for me to tell them about question period although I know that they've had a chance to visit with the member from Indian Head-Milestone. There's a very special person to my colleague in the number of students, a son. And I'd ask all members to join in welcoming the grade 8 students from St. Dominic Savio, wish them all the best, and a special welcome to a young Mr. McMorris.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Regina Wascana Plains and welcome the grade 8 class from St. Dominic Savio, the home of the Sharks, for being here. They walked across, well not across the city, but from St. Dominic in University Park, over to the legislature on this beautiful day, had a bit of a game of soccer out on the front lawn, and then had to come in and sit around in our boardroom table for a little while and listen to me talk. I think they enjoyed

the soccer game quite a bit more than the talk that I was giving.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — But I would like to welcome them here. You know they're much better on the courts and the gyms at school. The school was able to win the city championship in the Catholic schools sports league this year in volleyball and basketball this year, which is quite an accomplishment and certainly a credit to the teachers and coaches that they have in that school. That's enough of that.

Now while I'm on my feet though, I would like to also introduce a group of 24 grade 3, 4, and 5 students from the Wilcox Elementary School. Their teacher is Sarah Kennedy and they're chaperoned by Jana White. They've made the trip in from Wilcox today, again on a beautiful day, but they came by bus which I would strongly advise.

Sarah has a strong connection with one of the security guards. Don Maloney is her dad and is one of the guards that we see each and every day in this Assembly.

So I'd like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. I'll be visiting with them right shortly after question period and hopefully can answer some of the questions that they have after seeing question period.

So I'd like to ask all members to welcome both school groups, from St. Dominic and also Wilcox.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Qu'Appelle.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the legislature, Dr. Curt Hagele who is in the west gallery. Dr. Hagele is registrar for the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association and has worked very hard on issues around scope of practice to try and help educate the public and the stakeholders. There's more work to be done on that front, but I commend him for his work. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in welcoming Dr. Hagele on behalf of the official opposition and as a cattle producer to express my appreciation for the good work veterinarians do in this province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and members of the Assembly as well, two individuals seated in your gallery — if they'd give a little wave when I introduce them.

First of all, Mitchell Villeneuve is our summer student this year. Mitchell comes to us from the community of Meadow Lake. He's taking commerce presently at the University of Saskatchewan. He's planning on majoring in finance and then taking law. He has always been extremely interested in politics.

When I spoke to Mitchell for the first time in his class, he was in grade 6. And he expressed an incredible interest — sorry, Mr. Premier — in being premier of our province but since then has always been keenly interested. So having now the opportunity to work in the legislature this year, he's, I think, really finding it thrilling, and he's looking with interest to watch the proceedings today.

Also with him, seated beside Mitchell, is Nicole Foraie. Nicole has been our summer student for the past three years, and now she's on a work term in our office during the summer months and into the fall for a little bit. Nicole is in her fourth year of French education at the University of Regina. This is, as I said, her fourth summer in the building, and she's enjoyed the politics in Regina and has enjoyed the politics very much as well. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all to please welcome these two young, enthusiastic students to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure to meet this morning with 21 grade 7 and 8 students from Quill Lake School. And they were most interested in being able to see question period before they had to leave at 2:15, but with all these esteemed guests in the House today that we need to introduce, they may not make it.

However I'm sure that they will remember their visit. They are brought here today by chaperone, Lori Yaworski, and their teacher, Stephanie Weiss. They are a great bunch of young men and women who believe quite passionately that the future of this province means that they're going to stay here and develop careers and lives, and we really encourage that. So thank you for coming to your legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to introduce a school group today. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Assembly I would like to introduce eight grade 8 students from the school in Cabri. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery, I might add.

The occasion of this visit is an annual affair and I don't get that many school groups driving all the way in from Cypress Hills. So when they make an effort to arrive here to make this annual pilgrimage, I'm happy to welcome them to the legislature. I understand that they were a little bit late today because of a flat tire. However they've arrived, it looks like, in good shape and full of enthusiasm. We'll have an opportunity to visit with them after question period today. I'm looking forward to that time with them as well.

So would the members please join us in welcoming the eight grade 8 students accompanied by Denise Andreas and Marj Cator from the Cabri School.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, at this time I would like to introduce and acknowledge somebody who is here on the floor in the Chamber today, and actually she's here every day, and that is Margaret Woods, who's our Clerk Assistant. Margaret is leaving tomorrow to compete at the Canadian masters swim meet in Calgary.

Margaret, we want to wish you well. We understand it's going to be hard to outdo your performance of the year 2005. Last year she won six medals in the World Masters Games in Edmonton. I know members will want to recognize your outstanding accomplishment and wish you the best of luck in your masters events this year.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Norwegians Celebrate Constitution Day

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — [The hon. member spoke for a time in Norwegian.]

Today is Norwegian Constitution Day, Norwegian National Day, and the national anthem of Norway is sung right across the world, but especially in western Canada, in Saskatchewan, and also in many places in the United States because we have as many Norwegians in North America, descendants, as they have in Norway. And what I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that we all are very pleased to celebrate with Saskatchewan Norwegian descendants across our province. And there are parties big and small that are happening here.

I want to especially point out that my parents, Tom and Randi Nilson, are celebrating Syttende Mai in Norway this year, and they're both 80 years old and so that's a big event in our family.

Also this is an Olympic year, and we want to say thank you to the Norwegian coach, Bjørnar Håkensmoen, who gave his ski pole to Sara Renner so she could win a silver medal for Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — So in many, many ways there are connections between Norway, Saskatchewan, our American friends — where many of us come from. But I think all of those in the Assembly, the members from Regina Coronation Park, the Battlefords, Rosetown Biggar, Saltcoats, Saskatchewan Rivers, and Lloydminster, all of us wish to say, celebrate with us Norwegian National Day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Swift Current.

Swift Current Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night in Swift Current at the Royal Canadian Legion hall, the community gathered together to celebrate business excellence, not just in Swift Current but in southwest Saskatchewan. The Minister of Learning attended what was an excellent evening. And if I may, Mr. Speaker, pay tribute not only to those who were nominated but specifically to those who won in a number of categories at the Swift Current Business Excellence Awards last evening.

The New Business of the Year was Southwest TV News, Mr. Speaker. For customer service, Canada Safeway won the award. For community involvement, Wellington West was the recipient of the award. The Southwest Award — award now for the entire region for southwest Saskatchewan — went to Bono Holdings.

The Young Entrepreneur Award — and there were four nominees in this category and a number of young entrepreneurs there last night — The Young Entrepreneur Award went to Arid Sea Films.

And then, Mr. Speaker, last night the chamber of commerce inducted a number of businesses officially into the hall of fame. They honoured previous Heritage Award winners Stark and Marsh, Kurt's Take-out & Catering Service, Standard Motors, Creative Video, Armstrong Implements, Treen Packers, MacBean Tessem.

And they inducted a new heritage member into the Swift Current Chamber Business Excellence Hall of Fame. That was Kruse Glass & Aluminum. Congratulations to John and Kay Froese of Kruse Glass & Aluminum who have contributed mightily to that business and indeed to our entire community.

And, Mr. Speaker, last but not least, the Business of the Year Award went to L.R. Truck Centre/Tillage Village. Congratulations to the Raynards, Lyndon Raynard and their family, their team, their staff at that business.

And congratulations to the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce and the Southwest Credit Union who were again a major sponsor of that event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Legislative Interns' Study Tour

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our four legislative interns have just returned from a 10-day comparative study tour that took them to Ottawa and London, United Kingdom, and I'm sure provided them with invaluable first-hand knowledge of both parliamentary systems.

While in Ottawa they met with a wide array of politicians, jurists, officials, and journalists, including NDP [New Democratic Party] leader Jack Layton; Speaker Peter Milliken; Clerk of the House of Commons, Audrey O'Brien; Justice Marshall Rothstein of the Supreme Court; United States Deputy

Chief of Mission, Mr. John Dixon; and Mike Duffy of *CTV News*.

[14:00]

Then, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of the program, the interns travelled to the UK [United Kingdom] where they had the opportunity to learn about the origins of our democracy and state of political affairs in that country.

While in the UK the interns met with MPs [Member of Parliament], visited the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, toured the Palace of Westminster, held informative discussions with government and legislative officials on a variety of current issues.

They were particularly impressed with the openness and hospitality they were shown in London, and by the eagerness to talk about politics in Canada and Saskatchewan, something our interns were more willing to share. Maybe they'll tell us what they said.

Mr. Speaker, our legislative interns want to express their great appreciation to the members of the Assembly for their continuing support of the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. The knowledge and experience gained on the study tour and here at the legislature will be invaluable to them as they pursue their personal and professional goals. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Child Find Saskatchewan Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, May 25 is National Missing Children's Day. On behalf of the Saskatchewan Party, I want to express our support for Child Find Saskatchewan and the organizations in this province who work to keep our children safe.

Each May Child Find organizations across the country host the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign. Our green ribbon is the symbol of hope expressing our thoughts for missing children's families and friends. Wearing the green ribbon demonstrates our commitments as parents, grandparents, members of our community, and legislators to do everything possible to keep our children safe.

In this province Child Find Saskatchewan has continued to take the lead in protecting our children. Established in 1984, Child Find Saskatchewan is a charitable organization whose programs and services are funded through individual and corporate donations and delivered mainly by volunteers. With provincial offices in Saskatoon and volunteers active in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Humboldt, Kindersley, Prince Albert, Wakaw, North Battleford, Yorkton, and Rosetown, Child Find not only locates missing children, it delivers educational programs and raises awareness about missing children.

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Party I want to thank all the staff and volunteers of Child Find for their important work, and express our support for the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Awards

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network [SALN] recently held its first ever Aboriginal Literacy Awards in Saskatoon. The awards were presented during the Pathways to Future SALN Gathering 2006.

Mr. Speaker, the SALN had three objectives for the awards: no. (1) to honour and recognize individual and organizational efforts in the development, enhancement, and promotion of Aboriginal literacy in Saskatchewan; no. (2) to further promote Aboriginal literacy by acknowledging and celebrating achievements; and (3) to help fulfill the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network's public awareness mandate.

Mr. Speaker, awards were presented in four categories. Lisa Marie Bird was presented the award as Learner and Mrs Bertha McKay was given the Literary Practitioner Award. The Elder Award was presented to Irene Jacques, and the Battlefords Family Health Centre Circle of Learning won the Business/Organization Award.

Also, Mr. Speaker, a special honour went to Donna Woloshyn. And Geordy McCaffery was presented an honorary award.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the winners at the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Awards and the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network for organizing such a wonderful event in tribute to the hard-working literacy advocates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Cypress Hills.

Hockeyville 2006 Competition

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The search for Canada's most spirited hockey town is now under way. And I believe that Cypress Hills is the only constituency to have not only one, but two communities advancing to the third round in the Kraft Hockeyville 2006 competition.

What is Hockeyville? It's a contest designed to bring communities together in a demonstration of community spirit in the quest to win the title as Canada's greatest hockey community.

On June 11, nationally televised final voting and judging will determine which community will receive the grand prize. Included is the opportunity to host a live NHL [National Hockey League] game and funding for upgrades to their local arena and equipment.

Shaunavon's Marcia Lind and Maple Creek's Connie Burton spearheaded their individual projects but they're quick to acknowledge the local volunteers stepping up to showcase their communities which have contributed to their respective successes. Key people have prepared video presentations, rallied the troops, challenged businesses and residents to sport colourful costumes, and have organized specialty events in each community. Enthusiasm and spirit are everywhere.

The CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] has travelled to both communities to document their activities with portions to be aired on June 6 when the 25 finalists will be narrowed down to 10.

Needing to remain impartial, Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the best efforts put forward by both communities. Is it possible to have two communities representing southwest Saskatchewan in the national finals? Well we'll see, but by my count to achieve this degree of success the constituents of Cypress Hills are already winners.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Saskatchewan Party Advertising

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other night I couldn't find the remote control and had to watch a less than accurate Saskatchewan Party political advertisement in its entirety. I feel compelled to set the record straight. In the ad the leader of the Saskatchewan Party asks, is the government shortening health care waiting lists?

Some Hon. Members: — Yes.

Ms. Morin: — Well I'm happy to tell the people of this province that we are investing \$9 million in this budget to help the health regions do just that. He asks, is university more affordable?

Some Hon. Members: — Yes.

Ms. Morin: — Obviously he's forgotten that last year we announced a tuition freeze and that this budget continues to freeze for two more years. He asks, are they helping you cope with higher energy costs?

Some Hon. Members: — Yes.

Ms. Morin: — This government helps residents with their home heating bills through the Saskatchewan Energy Share plan. This shows the Leader of the Opposition why we are investing time and resources publicizing this budget. Based on his new ad, he doesn't know anything about it except that he voted against it.

And, Mr. Speaker, his ad begs one last question. Does the official opposition even know how to spell Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Ms. Morin: — I ask this because Saskatchewan's spelled

incorrectly in one of their new TV ads. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, they are simply not credible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Education Property Tax

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier of the province whose name was spelt wrong in a NDP video at a recent convention of that party, Mr. Speaker. The question relates to the Minister of Finance's leadership campaign that he's continuing to fund at the taxpayers' expense. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that this Minister of Finance is spending a half a million taxpayers' dollars to advertise his budget.

Mr. Speaker, what you will not find in that ad though is the hidden agenda of this NDP government to hike school taxes after they have promised, the Premier promised, to lower school taxes.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the latest budget from the NDP means 63 out of 81 former school divisions will see a property tax hike as a result of this Premier's budget. Mr. Speaker, the question to the Premier is this: why months ago was he promising meaningful school tax relief, and in this budget he's increasing school taxes in 63 of 81 former divisions?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, if the Leader of the Opposition voted for this budget, he would have voted for 67 million new dollars to rural property taxpayers in this year's property tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — He'd have voted for 9 or 10 million new dollars to the funding of education, to the largest education budget in the history of the province.

But that said, Mr. Speaker, I can't resist in referencing some other comments I've just heard in this House. Can you believe it? He asks the question about the need of government to tell the people of Saskatchewan about the budget. Because what do we get from that Leader of the Opposition? Taxpayer ads, taxpayer-paid-for ads that are totally wrong, totally wrong in their fact. And then we find out today the Leader of the Opposition cannot even spell the name of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And now, Mr. Speaker, get this. I'm handed a whole selection of MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] reports from members of the opposition. I'll just quote the first one. It's headed here, I'm quoting, "About Dan." It says something here

about the NDP government. They can't even spell government in their MLA news releases. Mr. Speaker, if you can't spell government and you can't spell Saskatchewan but you want to be the Government of Saskatchewan, you'd think you'd at least get one of them right.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe this Premier who obviously has a spell-check ought to get a truth check because here's what he said, here's what he said in Birch Hills. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that that Premier went to Birch Hills to announce school tax relief for the province. Here's the quote:

Three years ago I very . . . publicly . . . stated that the level of education tax being taken from farmland . . . was both unfair and too high — a problem that has been with us for decades.

He went on to say, "We are in a . . . position now, after a lot of hard work, to offer this . . . [long-term] solution." What is that government's long-term solution, Mr. Speaker? Sixty-three former school divisions, 63 of 81 are going to see a school tax hike. That Premier has no credibility. Why has he broken now only a three-month-old promise, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, what I said in Birch Hills, I'll say in this House, say on any platform in the province. We made a commitment to bring to the proportion across the province, 60/40 funding. We've done that, Mr. Speaker, with 67 million new dollars. We also made a commitment, Mr. Speaker, to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the property taxpayers, that we would seek fairness and equity in the funding of education and we're doing that, Mr. Speaker, we're doing that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in reference again to the opposition leader's first remarks to the House this afternoon. He's talking about individuals who may or may not be interested in the Premier's chair. Well, I'll tell you this, I'll tell you this, there'll be a member from this side of the House in this chair long before the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently the Premier has just confirmed that he is stepping down before the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Because that is the only way any other member over there will sit in the Premier's chair, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Premier. He went to Birch Hills. He had a big press conference. He promised to do something meaningful about school tax. Unfortunately what he's done is increase school taxes in 63 out of 81 former school divisions. And in the bargain now we know, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be losing teachers — 152 teaching positions lost because of this Premier's plan.

Why did he break his promise on school tax, Mr. Speaker? And what does he have to say to the teachers — 152 positions of which will be deleted by his budget with only 7 of the current 34 school divisions reporting — what will he say to the teachers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I say to the general public, we have sought to bring fairness and equity to the funding of education in this province. We have invested in this budget, Mr. Speaker, 67 million new dollars to bring relief to the farm families of Saskatchewan and what do we see? A leader and an opposition who vote against it, that's what we see.

And now we learn today, Mr. Speaker, we learn something about the opposition's ability to spell. They cannot spell the name of the province in their televised ads. They cannot spell government in their MLA reports, Mr. Speaker. And now we've learned from the Leader of the Opposition they can't spell and they can't add because, Mr. Speaker, I think it's about 20 years before the young men in the gallery or others may occupy this chair and even then it'll be before the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there's an easy way to determine if the Premier is right. He has not had the courage yet to call the by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. He could forego the by-election and call a general election in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

Mr. Wall: — And we'll find out if he's right. We'll find out if he's right.

Mr. Speaker, 150 teacher positions have been eliminated already with only 7 of 34 school divisions reporting. We have an email to quote from, from a teacher in Sunwest School Division, Gordon Waldner, who wrote, "The process of forced amalgamation has led directly to a wholesale reduction of teaching positions across the province." He has been teaching in

Saskatchewan for 30 years, and he's never seen his colleagues more worried. That's what he says. He goes on to say:

This weekend I know of four young, talented and skilled teachers heading for job interviews in Alberta. They're afraid of losing their jobs . . . [they] want to be proactive in making sure they have employment . . . [this] year.

Why under this government's plan are we seeing massive property tax hikes across the province and fewer teachers, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, again let me repeat. This government over a period of years has sought to address the unfairness of the education property tax on farm land and farm families in our province, Mr. Speaker. To do that, to do that, we have seen the reorganization of the delivery of education in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system, the most significant reorganization since the 1940s or the 1950s, Mr. Speaker, that to ensure there is fairness and equity for property taxpayers right across this province, right across this province.

This has not been . . . It is not an easy transition, Mr. Speaker. Educators know that. Our school boards and regions know that. It is not an easy transition but one that was essential.

Then, Mr. Speaker, after hard work, after the hard work of this government, over a decade and more, to put together a financial picture in this province after the ruination of that party in government, after that hard work, Mr. Speaker, we begin to have the resources where we can put those resources to education. In this budget, \$67 million for the relief of property tax and, Mr. Speaker, the largest budget for K to 12 education in the province's history.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Rosthern-Shellbrook

Investment in Northwest Communities Wood Products

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs. Can the minister tell us the total government investment in Northwest Communities Wood Products so far? And can the minister tell us how many jobs have been created in northern communities as a result of this investment?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. And one thing that I want to say first of all is that this government is committed to working with northerners that they ensure they participate in any kind of northern development that's happening in our area of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — And this includes the First Nations and Métis communities. The Northwest Community Wood Products are in Métis communities on the northwest side of the province, and this department has committed to working with them by giving them financial support. And they will continue to work with them in the future as well to ensure that they are part of the development and economic activity that's happening in the North, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we all agree that there should be investment in northern Saskatchewan for the communities there. But to my calculations, Mr. Speaker, the total government investment has been over \$3 million. The number of full-time jobs created so far is 12. That's \$250,000 per job. This is not acceptable.

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: what is the minister going to do about this sorry record?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, like I've said before, we will continue to work with northerners to ensure that they are part of northern development.

One of the keys to success in ensuring that all people, especially the Aboriginal people, have access to the opportunity that's available in the North is through education and entrepreneurship. Those are facts Mr. Speaker, and this government is committed. We will continue to work with northerners, whoever they are — and in particular the First Nations and Métis people — that they are part of development that's happening in the North, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to that and will continue to do that, unlike previous governments that were there in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Northern Affairs about a news release that was put out May 12, 1999. That document says, Northwest Communities Wood Products "will create 500 direct and indirect jobs."

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: 12 is a long way from 500. What happened?

The Speaker: — Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, like I've said already, we are proud of the work that northerners and this government are doing together in partnership to create job and education opportunities for northerners. And some of the opportunities are in the forestry area.

And a lot of the folks in the North don't have access to equity or training or the expertise. And that's what Northern Affairs and this government is continuing to provide and investing in the future of northern Saskatchewan and in the future of young people in the North, Mr. Speaker.

We are committed to ensure that they are a part of what's happening in the North, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have spent over \$3 million in northwest wood products, and all we have is 12 jobs to show. There's something wrong with that.

Last Thursday I raised these matters in committee with the Minister of Northern Affairs. I quoted from a progress report dated February 18, 2005. The report raised important questions about this project as how it is being managed. It spoke of a loss of control. It spoke of an upheaval with stakeholders. Neither the minister nor her deputy minister seem to know anything about the report.

Mr. Speaker, has she now seen the report? Does she know what's in the report, and are these important questions being addressed?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I guess one of the questions that I have for the member across is that why they are so opposed to helping northerners participate in northern development, in this case forestry development?

Like any other business and in particular where there's vulnerable . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. I'm finding it very difficult to be able to hear the responses. The Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Like any other businesses, sometimes there's expertise and supports needed. And this goes for all areas, whether you're talking about agriculture, whether you're talking about forestry. You know, there is enhancements and tax benefits in a lot of case that are needed. In this case we are talking about the most vulnerable group in society in Saskatchewan here, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to working with northerners like I've said before, working with young people in terms of training and access to jobs, Mr. Speaker. They want to be business partners, not only employees. And that's what this government's committed to doing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Effects of Summer Vacation Scheduling on Health Facilities

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every summer as health care professionals take vacations, surgeries are delayed, beds are closed, which increases waiting lists and increases delays on surgeries, Mr. Speaker. This is just another symptom of the health care understaffing problems that we have in this province. It's depressing. For example when nurses take holidays, beds must close because of the chronic shortage of nurses in Saskatchewan.

Can the minister tell us in this Assembly today: will any rural facilities be asked to discontinue emergency room services this summer? Can the minister also tell us how many beds will be closed in the tertiary centres of our major centres, Regina and Saskatoon, over the summer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. I think the member opposite knows that the regional health authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the facilities across this province and staffing. And, Mr. Speaker, every single one of those health authorities recognizes the pressures that they feel during holiday time and summertime, and they put in place mechanisms to ensure that the public health of the people of Saskatchewan is taken into account.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite spend a great deal of time trying to undermine the health care system, and they don't take into account the many hours of work that individuals within the system are providing to ensure that care — quality care — is provided to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we put in place a budget this year that allows the health regions to do that. The members opposite did not support that budget. Mr. Speaker, how can they pull together the idea that you can do more with less and not care?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it is no doubt that the health care professionals, the ones that we have in this province, do an absolutely marvellous job. The point being is there's not enough of them. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses are saying that. There's oncologists that are saying that. Endocrinologists are saying that. We don't have enough health care professionals in the province. And as a result, because of this NDP government, patients are suffering. That's the problem, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has said that we need 600 new nurses to fill the vacancies. This government has done absolutely nothing on that, Mr. Speaker, and as a result this summer we're going to see bed closures because of the inaction from this NDP government. When will they start taking the job of recruiting nurses seriously like SUN

[Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] has asked them to and meet the demands that are out there in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want the people of Saskatchewan to know that they can have confidence in this health care system in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, since my appointment following the very good work of the previous minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, since my appointment here I've taken a look at how many services have been provided to Saskatchewan people during that period of time.

If we assume, Mr. Speaker, that I've been on this job for just 60 working days, Mr. Speaker, 744,000 visits to physicians have taken place. 5,420 surgeries have taken place. 3,480 MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] have been done. Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of those people realize there's quality care provided to the people of this province, and every person in Saskatchewan should have confidence in the system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Allegations of Financial Irregularities

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. When did he personally become aware of the alleged financial irregularities at the Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services agency?

The Speaker: — The Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can inform the Assembly that the Yorkton Tribal Council contacted our department. Many people don't realize that the Yorkton Tribal Council provides services to 10 First Nations in child and family services.

We are one of the partners with the Yorkton Tribal Council. I believe we have a \$300,000 agreement, a service agreement with them. And the Yorkton Tribal Council contacted us to work with them in terms of looking through how their business practices were and looking for any type of financial challenges and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted according to many of the media that the Yorkton Tribal Council gets approximately \$5 million from the federal government. That is their primary focus. They work with many First Nations, but they do have a partnership with us. It is important to point out that they contacted us to help them solve some of the challenges that they may have. And we're going through an intensive look at how they're doing business and the success of the Yorkton Tribal Council.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we've been informed that the Deputy Premier met with Byron Yuzicappi at his Yorkton office January 19 of this year. Mr. Speaker, Byron Yuzicappi was dismissed from the Yorkton Tribal Child and Family Services agency January 4. He went to visit the RCMP one week later. Now he's making some very public and troubling allegations about financial allegations.

Mr. Speaker, did the Deputy Premier meet with Byron Yuzicappi on January 19, and what did Mr. Yuzicappi tell him on that date?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that we allow the process to proceed. As that member fancies himself a lawyer, there are many, many allegations made against many, many people, and it is important to take the allegations seriously. But allegations are allowed due process.

And, Mr. Speaker, the important thing to point out here is that while the vast majority of the Yorkton Tribal Council work is with the federal government, we do have partnerships. And it is the Yorkton Tribal Council that approached us and asked us, could you help us solve our problems and go through the process of making sure that we do an audit to make sure our performance is there and so on and so forth.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that this is a third party that has a responsibility to 10 First Nations. They have asked us to help improve accountability. We will assist in every way, shape, or form that we can. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Deputy Premier. We want to know what happened in that meeting, if that meeting took place, what information Mr. Yuzicappi gave the Deputy Premier, what his responses were, what undertakings the Deputy Premier made to Mr. Yuzicappi, and what came out of the meeting as a result of that meeting. What steps did that Deputy Premier make?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again, as I had pointed out, there are probably thousands of accusations made and allegations made every year. There are many, many allegations made. The appropriate response is to put it to the proper process and to ensure that you have a timely process to investigate all the allegations.

Mr. Speaker, I'll point out again that the Yorkton Tribal Council showed leadership in asking for our participation, even though we're one-fifth of the partnership that they have with the federal government. They are responsible to 10 First Nations on Indian and family services. That is their true partnership in terms of working with many of these First Nations.

So I'll point out again. They had a problem. They came to us to help them go through an intensive look at how they do business, the progress that they have made. And, Mr. Speaker, they should be commended for that, even though we're a small partner in the big scheme of things. Mr. Speaker, that shows leadership.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, one thing we agree with the minister is the good work that's being done by that agency.

Unfortunately there's some allegations of fraud and things that took place in that agency, and we have questions to the Deputy Premier about a meeting that took place. Will the Deputy Premier admit whether a meeting took place? Will he tell us what went on in that meeting? Will he tell us what advice he gave Mr. Yuzicappi?

Mr. Yuzicappi states he did not receive follow-up after he came to the Deputy Premier with information. He states he did not receive a letter from the Deputy Premier. He has no idea whether his allegations were discussed any further. He has no idea whether those allegations were addressed in any fashion.

Mr. Speaker, what steps did the Deputy Premier or any of his cabinet colleagues take to examine these allegations or deal with this matter? Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll point out again, Mr. Speaker, that one of the things that's so very important and the hallmark of this government is the fact that we had a lot of financial mess to clean up when we assumed government. We had to pay down a whole whack of debt, Mr. Speaker, and we are making good progress on that.

Now we have to make sure that in the whole process of rebuilding Saskatchewan, left by that conservative mess over there, that we have quite a bit of work that we need to do. So I'll point out, when the Minister of Finance put in all the internal controls to ensure that we strengthen the accountability of this government, we did that.

And that example, Mr. Speaker, is certainly being spread out throughout Saskatchewan. And many groups are looking at us for leadership, and we'll provide that leadership. In this instance, the Yorkton Tribal Council asked for our assistance. We'll work very . . . [inaudible] . . . to see if there is any truth to the allegations.

But, Mr. Speaker, any allegations received by any member of

this Assembly . . . There is a process, and there is time to investigate, and we are doing that work, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Government's Response to Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In November 2001, this government established the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform.

The commission was established with a genuine desire for reform and with the knowledge that government cannot accomplish that reform that is needed alone. The commission made more than 100 recommendations — recommendations echoed by the report of the Stonechild inquiry.

The government wholeheartedly endorsed and accepted the themes of the commission's recommendations: dealing with the underlying causes of crime; increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people and groups in justice processes; using alternatives to court and incarceration; and improving justice system responses. Throughout its report, the commission acknowledged the work that is already under way.

In May 2005, my colleague, the former minister of Corrections and Public Safety, and I released the government's action plan to respond to the recommendations of the commission.

I would like to remind members of the reactions of the commission Chair, Chief Willie Littlechild, to our action plan. I quote:

"There is reason to celebrate and be optimistic about the future as a result of the response to the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform," said former Chairman, Chief Willie Littlechild. The Action Plan that increases the number of partnerships is a very pro-active strategy.

In congratulating Premier Lorne Calvert, Minister Frank Quennell and Minister Peter Prebble for the Governments expressed commitment, Littlechild calls and encourages all partners to continue working together to ensure the three year strategy achieves the desired outcomes that will create the desired healthy, just, prosperous and safe Saskatchewan.

"I am very personally encouraged by the serious consideration and planning implementation of our recommendations. Immediate follow up was always a personal goal as Chairman and also that of my fellow commissioners," said Littlechild.

The thematic approach adopted by the Government of Saskatchewan response is a very effective way to address the challenges and dealing with the underlying causes of

crime as a priority. It will secure increasing involvement, use of alternatives and improve justice system responses.

While there's no implementation mechanism, implementing the Action Plan with regular progress reports by two implementation tables will be the critical next steps. "Using existing strengths to build on with the announced new initiatives are very encouraging, however, it will call for longer term strategy and sustained effort by all to ensure a hopeful future for our children and youth," concluded Littlechild.

Perhaps the most important feature of the action plan is that it is multi-departmental. It reflects the recognition that changing the circumstances that put individuals at risk of contact with the justice system cut across many government services and programs.

Mr. Speaker, the action plan is a three-year strategy that maps out comprehensive long-term initiatives to help meet the needs of Aboriginal children, families, and communities. In 2005-2006 more than \$48 million was committed to the action plan. For 2006-2007, significant new funding in the order of \$31 million is being invested. This is the sustained effort to which Chief Littlechild referred.

While some of this new funding is directed to new initiatives, some will be directed to enhancing or expanding existing programs. A number of the initiatives outlined in the action plan are targeted specifically to First Nations and Métis peoples while others, though not targeted, will have a significant positive impact on Aboriginal people.

To deal with the underlying causes of crime, this government implemented the Premier's Project Hope, continued to implement initiatives such as SchoolPlus and expanded the new student data system. We supported economic development for First Nations and Métis communities and supported training efforts through the forestry training strategy and the multi-party training plan III for the northern mining industry.

We provided quality affordable housing by adding 600 new housing units and renovating up to 700 low-income houses. And changes to the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement benefited 10,000 low-income people and up 3,000 individuals with disabilities.

We've provided increases in the basic allowance and earning exemptions for the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and provided an increase in the Saskatchewan employment supplement to enable clients to keep pace with inflation.

For 2006-2007 the focus in new initiatives is on crime prevention and further strengthening supports for families and individuals coping with substance abuse and its results. To increase the involvement of Aboriginal people and groups in justice processes, there were 20 new police positions in 2005-2006 — 16 of these new positions involved Aboriginal recruits.

We implemented a Cree court, a court where the use of Aboriginal languages is welcomed, a court that has a high degree of sensitivity to Aboriginal people. We are continuing

our efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal persons working throughout our criminal justice system as judges, lawyers, police officers, and correctional workers.

The province is supporting an additional 29 new police positions and developing a province-wide Aboriginal police recruitment strategy. Last week Don Bird was appointed a judge of the Provincial Court of Meadow Lake. Judge Bird is a member of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation and speaks Cree. He has extensive experience in many aspects of the justice system as a probation officer, a police officer, a corrections worker, and a Crown prosecutor. Since 2001 Judge Bird has been a member of the Cree court party and will now move on to establish an Aboriginal provincial court party in Meadow Lake which will travel to a number of court points in northwestern Saskatchewan.

To provide alternatives to court and incarceration, the drug treatment court in Regina will be fully operational by fall of 2006. A domestic violence court was implemented in Saskatoon in October 2005. Victim services programs have expanded to the North, and a domestic violence court will be established in Regina. To improve justice system responses, work began to build a new provincial correctional centre in Regina. A chief coroner, deputy chief coroner, and chief forensic pathologist were recruited.

The Police Act amendments that came into force in early April established a new public complaints model that operates under the direction of the five-person Public Complaints Commission. Beginning early this year we are increasing resources . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Ordinarily ministerial statements are to take from three to five minutes. I notice the minister has gone to about six. I would ask if he . . . He should request leave if he wishes to go on further. The Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this is the promised statement, annual statement to the legislature on progress on implementing the strategy plan in response to the recommendations of the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform. It is an unusual circumstance, and I request leave to finish the statement.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to finish the statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The minister may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the House.

The Act, The Police Act specifically requires the Public Complaints Commission to include First Nations and Métis members. The commission has ensured there are similar representation among investigative staff.

Beginning earlier this year we are increasing resources to solve historical and current cases of missing persons in Saskatchewan

and enhance police and community responses to cases of missing persons. We want to ensure we are doing everything we can to help solve cases of missing persons and provide families with answers about their missing loved ones.

We are also significantly expanding suppression of gang activity through the addition of police and prosecution resources coupled with funding for stepped-up surveillance and intelligence gathering. While we are putting more resources into enforcement and prosecution of gang activity, it's also important to identify and understand the causes behind it. Our historical failure to include Aboriginal people in our social and economic institutions has created deep and troubling social problems that the justice system alone cannot possibly heal. To solve these problems will require the efforts of the entire community. The full participation of First Nations and Métis people is critical to the health of our communities and the future of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government is acting to create a healthy, just, prosperous, and safe Saskatchewan for all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports the ongoing reform of the justice system as a response to the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform. The Saskatchewan Party's policy is that we need to restore trust and confidence in Saskatchewan's justice system which we have indicated would happen with a comprehensive review of the justice system by a Saskatchewan Party government.

Clearly the more than 100 recommendations that came forward from the commission and the recommendations that came forward out of the Stonechild inquiry echo the need for such a comprehensive review. Along with the government we are supportive of measures that will deal with the underlying causes of crime. Most notably we need to address the issues of poverty, education, and drug addiction.

Right now there are 44,000 children living in poverty in Saskatchewan. If the Premier is serious about leaving no child behind and addressing the underlying causes of crime, he should start by addressing the needs of those 44,000 children.

We have also urged the government to take action on the issue of addictions which we know is directly responsible for crime rates in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we support some of the recommendations that are here. We are troubled that the minister has not yet completed his initiatives for additional police officers. We are troubled that we do not have long-term addiction beds. And we are troubled that we have not adequately dealt with the needs of our most impoverished people.

We see a great deal of work left to do and we look forward to a Saskatchewan Party government that will do that work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the House to move to motions for returns (debatable), return no. 574, and then to return to orders of the day.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to proceed to motions for return, return No. 574, and then back to orders of the day. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

[14:45]

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

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

Return No. 574

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member of Saskatoon Silver Springs, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 574 showing:

A copy of the highway equipment storage strategy for both the north and south regions.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Biggar, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return 574 showing:

A copy of the highway equipment storage strategy for both north and south regions.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I would like to table return no. 574.

The Speaker: — Return 574 is hereby tabled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I

would table responses to written question no. 1,100 and 1,101.

The Speaker: — Responses to both 1,100 and 1,101 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in order to accommodate the work of the policy field committees on the Economy as well as on Crown and Central Agencies, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:47.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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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
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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

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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Minister Responsible for the
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Hon. John Nilson
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Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General

Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
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