



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

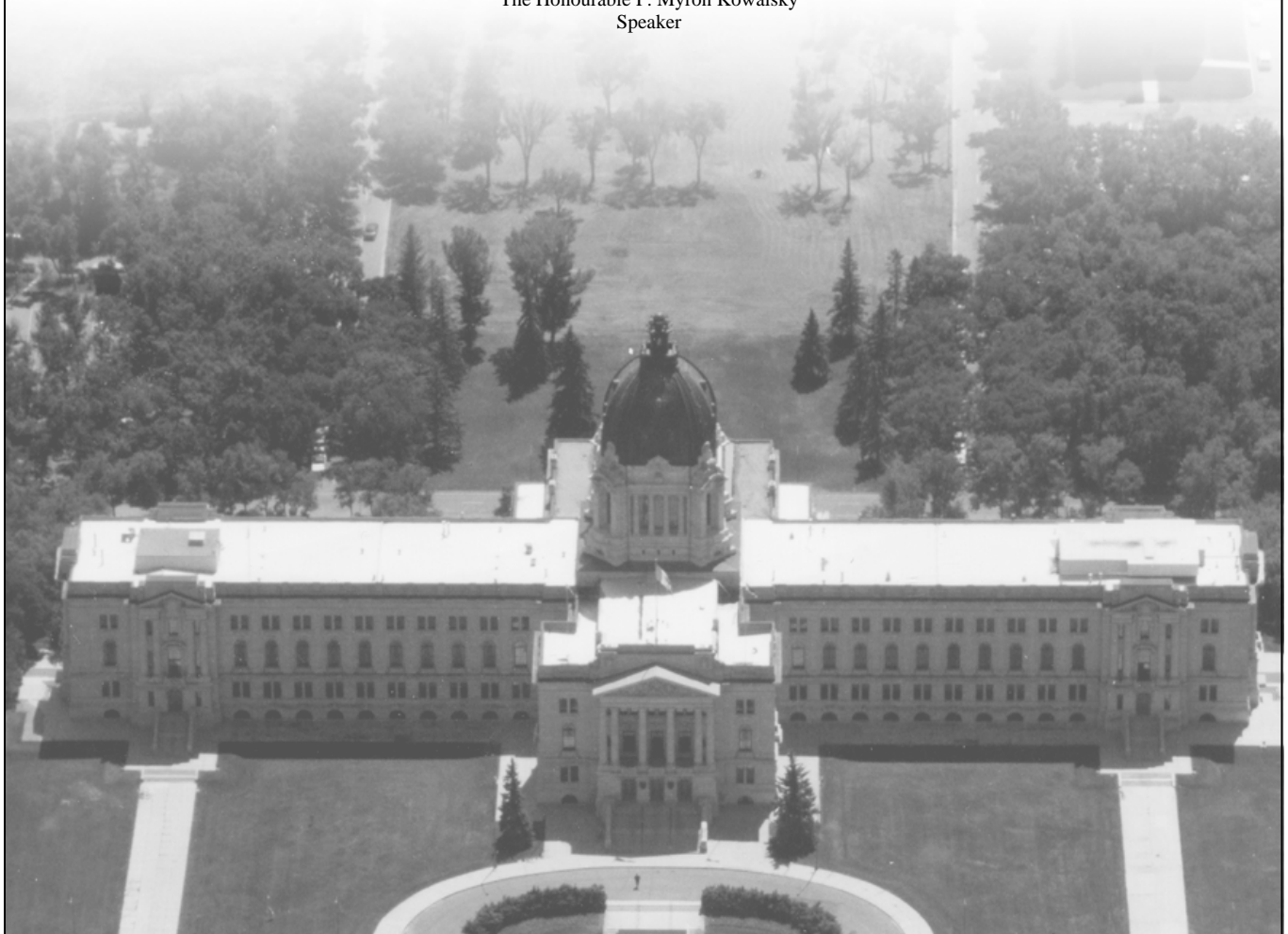
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to the Assembly today regarding autism. And I read the prayer, or part of the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendation made February 25 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services to the Saskatchewan Minister of Health, the Hon. John Nilson. The presentation from Saskatchewan families for effective autism treatment concerned issues surrounding the support of autistic children and adults that need review, one in particular being the availability of behavioural therapists.

And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer continues, goes on to list a number of other areas that need to be addressed. And so on behalf of these petitioners, I present.

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

The petition is signed by people from the communities of Saskatoon. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition. There seems to be a growing concern among the residents of Saskatchewan regarding the lack of autism spectrum disorder capacity. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

The prayer goes on to read:

Of some of the things desired, a 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.

An additional point:

To increase the early diagnosis of children with ASD and to have respite and family support accessible based on need.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this three-page petition is signed by individuals from communities around the entire province but most specifically by two individuals from the community of Shaunavon who have first-hand knowledge of autism related to their families. I so present.

The Speaker: — 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 drug Avastin and the fact that this NDP [New Democratic Party] government is not funding Avastin, which puts us squarely into a two-tier medical system. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows, the prayer says:

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, the people that believe that we're in two tiered health care right now in Saskatchewan on this petition are signed from the 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 rise on behalf of people in the Tisdale area who are concerned about the cutback in services in their area. They no longer have surgeries being done in Tisdale and that's added another 100 surgeries to the waiting list. The prayer reads as follows:

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

The people that have signed this petition are from Tisdale, from Ridgedale, from Sylvania, from Porcupine Plain, Crooked River, Zenon Park, Bjorkdale, Archerwill, Martensville, Swift Current, and Yorkton. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition. This one is signed by people who are trying to survive the harrowing drive down Highway 5. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to upgrade and widen Highway 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these people are from a number of communities. They include Prud'homme, Saskatoon, Humboldt, Wadena, Clavet, Preeceville, Bruno, and Meacham.

And I'm pleased to present every one of these signatures to you in this petition.

The Speaker: — The member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the 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, it appears that this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, I also rise this afternoon to present a petition requesting the government to fund the cancer 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 action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signators are from the city of Saskatoon.

The Speaker: — Member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition calling on this government to fund the cancer 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 action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition come from the great city of Saskatoon and I'm proud to be able to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of petitions today of citizens that are concerned about 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 Bruno, Dana, Aberdeen, Warman, St. Denis, Biggar, Vonda, Hague, Prud'homme, Cudworth, Humboldt, Watson, and Saskatoon.

And I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — Member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of this province who have concerns regarding two-tier health. 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, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Halbrite, Weyburn, Fillmore, and Yellow Grass. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise again to present a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the lack of funding for the drug Avastin:

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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Weyburn and district. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years old and their parents in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitioners today live on Wright Crescent, McFarland Avenue, and Forsyth Crescent in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today with a petition from citizens that are extremely concerned about the NDP's two tiered health system. 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Weyburn. 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 that are concerned with 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, signatures to this petition are from Lloydminster and Livelong. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I once again rise to bring a petition forward from my neighbouring constituency, 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 the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous, Saskatchewan remains open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan highway employees who would be affected by such possible closures.

As is duty bound, your petitioners would ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Watrous, Humboldt, Simpson, and Nokomis. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition calling on the government to maintain the Department of Highways section shop:

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 at Watrous remains open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan highway employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by citizens from the good town of Imperial. I so present.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on autism spectrum disorders. And I'm glad you're listening, Mr. Speaker. Whereas the 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 [autism spectrum disorder] is high and the rate of increase is alarming. The prayer reads:

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

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

From the good people of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. I so present. Thank you for listening.

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House again today to present another petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. This petition calls for a number of things pursuant to the caucus committee on human services in February 2005 and among those things are included:

A continuation to provide intensive behavioural intervention and other therapies for as long as an individual's lead medical profession deems them to be required; to increase the early diagnosis of children with autism spectrum disorder; and to have respite and family support accessible based on need; and to make access to specialized equipment and supplies based on need; 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 good citizens from Saskatoon. I so present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — Member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens of the province who are concerned about the deplorable condition of the south access road from Highway 22 leading into the village of Zenon Park, Mr. Speaker, and that it has become in such poor condition. And they're also asking the government to repair that while a repair crew is in the immediate area. And I read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain the south access to Zenon Park so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by citizens of Zenon Park, Arborfield, Saskatoon, Ridgedale, and Beechy. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby received as follows:

Petition concerning acute care beds in Melfort Hospital, sessional paper 756;

Petition concerning upgrade to Highway 27, that's sessional paper 757;

And additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 4, 5, 42, 67, 638, 639, 669, 742, and 753.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Economy Committee to report Bill No. 28, The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005 with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 28 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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 amendments be read for the first time? I recognize the minister.

[13:45]

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 28 — The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I move that the amendments be read now a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 28 — The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005

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

The Speaker: — Leave is required. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 28, The Veterinarians Amendment Act 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: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee in the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its fifth report. I move, seconded by the member from Biggar:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre, seconded by the member for Biggar:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy now be concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce today in your gallery, Ms. Noreen Neu, executive director of SaskMusic. And with her is Mr. Terry Mayer, vice-president of SaskMusic, and Ms. Vesti Hanson, secretary-treasurer of the Saskatoon Musicians' Association.

Mr. Speaker, these will be some of the folks I'll be relying on to

assist in the task that the Premier has given me today to examine the music industry in Saskatchewan. I think we all believe that there's huge opportunities during 2007 with the Junos and the Country Music Awards to help take our music industry to the next level. And I'll be listening very carefully to the advice that these people and others have to give me as we go down that road. So would you please join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce today a group of students from the community of Hague — Hague High School — on behalf of my colleague, the member from Rosthern, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce 48 grade 11 and 12 students from Hague High School. They're accompanied by Margi Corbett, Russell Dyck, Andrea Woods Fehr, and Keith Wagner. I had the privilege of meeting with the students earlier, Mr. Speaker, and I know that it's quite an interesting group of students that have come here. And I want to invite you and the members of this Assembly to welcome this group of students to the Assembly here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, je veux vous présenter et aussi mes collègues 47 étudiants de l'École St. Mary à Regina. Les étudiants sont dans les 3ème et 4ème années. Ils ont étudié les structures du gouvernement en Saskatchewan.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to you and also to my colleagues 47 students from St. Mary School in Regina. The students are in grades 3 and 4. They have studied the structure of government in Saskatchewan.]

These St. Mary School students are accompanied here today by their teachers, Madame Kari-Anne Ellery and Madame Jamie Marchand. Maybe the two of you could stand and wave so that everybody knows who you are. Merci beaucoup.

The official photographer with them is my constituency assistant, Sharon Lindgren; perhaps you could stand and wave as well. And the official government cheerleader in the front row is none other than my daughter, Morgan Morin. Perhaps you can stand as well.

These students have done extensive studies about this great province of Saskatchewan by engaging in various interesting projects. One of these projects, Mr. Speaker, is a quilt of Saskatchewan which was made by each of the students, by receiving a quilt square and creating something of significance about Saskatchewan on that square. Now I have to tell you, this quilt gave me great anxiety when it was initially sent home, in terms of a project, because sewing is not one of my strong skills. Matter of fact my husband would say, it's not one of my

skills at all. But I was quite pleased when I found out that we could simply iron on the decorations and didn't have to actually sew them. So merci beaucoup for that as well. The squares were then sewn together to form a beautiful quilt and will be on display hopefully sometime in the future in the legislature.

These teachers are a fine example of creativity and dedication of the educators of this province of Saskatchewan. The students of École St. Mary are currently involved in a community fundraising program and are a great asset to the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres.

And I would like the colleagues and the Assembly to welcome them to their legislature today and wish them a very fine time in learning about the legislature of the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Merci, Monsieur le Président. Just for my French guests as well, I want to join . . . quote a little French.

I want to point out there's a very special guest in our gallery today. It is often, Mr. Speaker, that we sometimes hear of our idols. Some of them are rock stars. Others are hockey players, and others are engineers and so on and so forth. But, Mr. Speaker, once in a while a politician becomes a rock star of sorts, and he does have a fan base.

And I mentioned to the Minister of Industry and Resources several weeks ago that you have one really strong fan in my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. The member from Massey Place is of course who I'm making reference to.

This guy, almost every week comes in and says, boy did the minister ever tell those guys off. And so I told the minister about it. And the minister should be pleased today that his fan travelled all the way from Ile-a-la-Crosse to see the minister in action hopefully today. But none other . . . I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to please welcome my neighbour, a very close supporter and a very, very good friend, Mr. Dale Desjarlais. So please welcome Dale.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great privilege to introduce two members in the west gallery to you and to all members in the Assembly. Way at the back is Jennifer Soloway who works in my office here. And beside her is Jillian Gebauer who's one of the summer students here.

And Jillian is just finished her first year of university and hopes to become a pharmacist one day. And she's done an excellent job so far in the office and look forward to having her work throughout the rest of the summer. And if I could ask all members to welcome to the Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all of my colleagues in the House, I'd like to introduce two young people who are sitting in the west gallery.

Amanda Fink has worked in my office here for two to three months. And she's settled right in, got us all under control. And things are running along wonderfully. And sitting with Amanda is Kevin Meacher. Kevin, this is his second term as a summer student in my office here in Regina. Kevin resides in Moose Jaw, and I've known him for many, many years, and we'll leave it at that. Kevin's an outstanding young man and a credit to all young people here in the province of Saskatchewan. He was one of the coaches that took the little league team to the world little league series last year — the team from Moose Jaw. He's just a fantastic young man, and it's a privilege to have him in our office and look forward to working with him for the rest of the summer.

So I hope all members will join with me in welcoming them to the House.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Supporting Troops in Afghanistan

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The day after the tragic loss of 26-year-old Captain Nichola Goddard, the first female soldier to die in Afghanistan, and the day after the very close vote in the House of Commons to extend Canada's mission there, this is the day to send a strong message to our troops in Afghanistan that they have our support. And for the record, I offer that support for both our troops and their mission.

Mr. Speaker, let us never forget for what they are fighting. They are fighting the Taliban who, as a theocratic dictatorship, brutalized women and minorities. Prior to the Taliban in Afghanistan, 70 per cent of the teachers, 40 per cent of the doctors, 10 per cent of elected officials were women. Under the Taliban, women were not allowed to go to work, go to school, or even to go outside without being accompanied by a male relative. Women who violated these laws were sentenced to public lashing or even death by stoning.

Nichola was in part fighting for these women, and I note that today her grieving husband is asking Canada to support the Afghanistan mission. Our troops are also fighting those who conspired in the terrorist attack that took the lives of 25 Canadians on 9/11. I am proud that my country has committed to rebuild Afghanistan and to permanently defeat the terrorists in that country and the danger that they pose to the entire world.

While there are not adequate words to express our gratitude to our troops there who are today grieving the loss of a hero, Captain Goddard, still we say, thank you. Our hearts are with you, and Godspeed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Regina Dewdney.

Code of Ethics

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. There's a tradition that government's performance are judged by its first 100 days in power. The members opposite will never achieve power, so let's judge their performance since they adopted their code of ethics.

By our count in the 63 days that the House has been sitting, the Saskatchewan Party has breached its code of ethics 16 times. That's an average of one every 3.9 days. But who's counting, Mr. Speaker? Here's the first three in the top 10 list of the Saskatchewan Party's most blatant breaches of its code of ethics.

Ten, the Saskatchewan Party claims that highways were closed when they weren't and that four highways maintenance shops were being closed when they were not.

Nine, the Saskatchewan Party leader refers to an article about oil sands development in Saskatchewan and characterizes it as — here's a surprise — completely negative, when the article is actually very positive and recommends investment in the province.

Eight, Saskatchewan Party members wrongfully but repeatedly claim that the Premier and another cabinet minister wrote a particular letter when all the time they knew the real author was not a member of the government at all. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Tap Communications Wins Award

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the talent we have in this province. Tap Communications, based in Saskatoon, has been recognized globally in a recent awards ceremony. The Summit International Awards recognize the best in the advertising industry. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce Tap Communications won the bronze award in the self-promotion category.

Here's what Summit International Awards had to say about Tap Communications, and I quote:

“Congratulations! Tap Communications Inc. is a winner of the 2006 Summit Creative Awards Competition. Among the thousands of submissions from twenty-six countries, your creative scored amongst the very best.”

Mr. Speaker, this award is the latest in a string that Tap Communications has received. Earlier this year Tap Communications won the prestigious Silver Leaf Award of Excellence. Only six of the 178 entries from across Canada won this award, Mr. Speaker.

The results of these awards are also causing benefits to the economy of Saskatchewan. Ray Penner, president of Tap Communications, said his company needs to expand to address the current demand. That's good news for Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Penner plans to add more staff and more people.

Congratulations to Tap Communications and Ray Penner for an outstanding job and proving that Saskatchewan can compete globally and proving that the entrepreneurs in this province are amongst the best and brightest. Congratulations again to Tap Communications. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Code of Ethics

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, number seven on the top 10 list of the Saskatchewan Party breaching their code of ethics: the Saskatchewan Party continue claims that an individual of the Labour Relations Board has been terminated when actually his term has simply come to an end and he isn't reappointed.

Six, the member from Saskatoon Northwest tells reporters a young Saskatchewan man must go to Alberta for addictions treatment because Saskatchewan has no beds available. Later in the same interview he is forced to admit that this was actually the parents' choice and that there may have been beds available in Saskatoon and that young man actually goes to a joint Saskatchewan-Alberta treatment facility. The Saskatchewan Party leader defends him, saying he's only guilty of a confusing scrum.

Five, the member from Saskatoon Southeast claims that a former member of the Assembly is a victim of a political vendetta. The claim is made in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. When asked about it by reporters outside the Assembly, the member can not only not substantiate the remark, he can't even remember saying it.

Four, Mr. Speaker, the member from Melville-Saltcoats claims that the Minister of Agriculture made up a quote from federal Ag minister, Chuck Strahl, telling Saskatchewan farmers to buck up. The member knew full well that Mr. Strahl had said exactly that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — The member for Wood River.

Vultures in Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well. Mr. Speaker, today we could actually credit the NDP for instituting policies that are bringing new residents to rural Saskatchewan. These new residents have been moving into abandoned farmhouses across our great province and have been doing a great job at removing dead weight from rural areas.

The only problem, Mr. Speaker, is that these new residents are not taxpayers, but they are turkey vultures. Now normally these vultures nest in caves. But since we don't have all that many caves in Saskatchewan, these birds have adopted nicely to moving in to some of the many abandoned farmhouses that dot our prairie landscape.

Dr. Stuart Houston, a well-known ornithologist, has been studying these birds as of late and has noted the birds' sharp population increase in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we can all thank the NDP's policies for allowing rural Saskatchewan to go to the vultures.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Code of Ethics

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, number three on the Saskatchewan Party list of ethical breaches, the member for Carrot River Valley claims that he and his wife are very upset that because she is a teacher, they are forced to donate money to the NDP through the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Except — except — the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] does not donate money to the NDP. Even the Saskatchewan Party House Leader admitted that they were wrong on that one, although no one bothered to apologize for the statement.

Number two, the member for Humboldt takes a comment from the government member completely out of context and uses it to accuse the member of trivializing a patient's case in the House. She then refers to a tape that does nothing but prove that she has quoted him out of context, which isn't so much unethical as it is unsensical.

And number one, Mr. Speaker, number one, Saskatchewan Party political advertising, paid for by taxpayers' dollars, that claim tuition fees are going up when they are not, and that Saskatchewan is losing jobs when we are not. When asked about the job numbers, the Saskatchewan Party defends the claim but admits it's technically, mathematically incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, the list of Saskatchewan Party breaches of their ethical code is long and undistinguished. It's as if they think that having a code of ethics is the same as actually having ethics, when clearly, Mr. Speaker, it's not the same at all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning the federal Minister of Agriculture announced details of how the federal government is listening to and addressing the needs of Canadian producers. This morning the minister announced there will be \$900 million flowing through the federal government to Canadian producers to address changes to the federal government's CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program regarding inventory valuations. There will also be another 50 million to address negative

margins from past years.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has shown that they understand the problems facing Canadian agriculture and are prepared to work with our producers to return profitability to Saskatchewan agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sharp contrast to what we have seen from this NDP government who has cut millions of dollars from the Ag budget this year. In fact, the NDP has been ignoring agriculture so long, they forgot how to spell agriculture, Mr. Speaker. This morning the NDP government put out a news release from the minister of agriculture and food. But, Mr. Speaker, I guess that's not too surprising from a government that has ignored farms for 14 years.

There's a old adage, Mr. Speaker. Those who live in glass houses should not cast stones.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I guess we all make the odd spelling mistake, but every farmer in this province knows how you spell disaster. It's NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Nursing Shortage

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, a recent letter copied to me by SUN, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, asserts, and I quote:

This government appears to have made a deliberate decision to use the growing nursing shortage to control health care costs and restrain services.

Mr. Speaker, last year the government eliminated more than 125 vacant RN [registered nurse] positions instead of filling them with nurses.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Saskatchewan has the worst RN retention rate in the country. Still that minister refuses to set a goal. That minister refuses to sit down with the stakeholders and develop a plan and execute a plan for retention and recruitment.

To the Premier: how long is he going to put up with that kind of incompetence from the Minister of Health?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that members of the public as the opposition knows . . . is that this government has acknowledged for some time the nursing shortage in the province of Saskatchewan. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we have referenced on several occasions that just a few months ago we released a report, the workforce action plan. Mr. Speaker, that action plan, produced in consultation with nurses in this province and other professionals, will ensure that this government will address not only the shortage of nurses, but physicians and other professionals in the system.

Mr. Speaker, that workforce action plan which is now in the implementation phase, when it's fully implemented will improve Saskatchewan's self-sufficiency and training, will create employment opportunities, will improve our ability to recruit needed professionals, and will continue to build a more representative workforce in this province. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to dealing with this and we've got the money to do it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister lacks credibility when the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses in their letter go on to say, and I quote:

The province is facing bed closures in intensive care units, surgical units, pediatric intensive care, and emergency departments, as well as temporary or permanent closure of rural facilities — a direct result [this is a quote from SUN, a direct result] of government inaction regarding the nursing shortage.

That's what SUN is saying — government's inaction. According to the union, Saskatchewan already has the shortest acute length of stay of any province in Canada and readmission rates that are higher than the Canadian average.

Again to the Premier: how long will he endure, will he force Saskatchewan to endure his minister's incompetence on the important issue of nurse retention and recruitment?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again I acknowledge that the province of Saskatchewan has a shortage of nurses of all classes, Mr. Speaker. And we've got a plan in place that we will work in consultation with the sector to improve the circumstances in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, we introduced a budget in this session, this sitting of the legislature, that called for a 10.2 per cent increase in health spending — \$300 million, Mr. Speaker. And it is becoming harder and harder to recognize why the members opposite continue to call for additional spending in health care, Mr. Speaker. But they refuse to support the budget which put that money in place to support not only retaining and recruiting of nurses, but improving bed care, patient care throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members opposite to reconsider their

budget vote and support the new money for health care that will allow us to do some of these things.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the nursing shortage does not just affect patients in the province. It also, of course, affects the nurses themselves.

Rosalee Longmoore, the president of SUN, in a letter this week said this, and I quote:

Every day, nurses in Saskatchewan are facing the consequences of government inaction regarding the nursing shortage — the shortest length of stay, the highest re-admission rates, chronic understaffing which is jeopardizing patient safety, excessive overtime, cancelled vacations, high injury and illness rates.

Mr. Speaker, she goes on to say that this Health minister has, and I quote, “. . . demonstrated a profound lack of respect for nurses.”

Again to the Premier: how long will he put up with that kind of management of the health care system, with that sort of treatment of our nurses by that Health minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the last few months, I've had the opportunity to work very closely with nurses and other professionals in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have general support from many sectors on the implementation process for the workforce action plan. And, Mr. Speaker, that workforce action plan has been reviewed by a national audience, Mr. Speaker. And that national audience has said this is the premier working plan for workforce action in the entire country, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — But let's have a look at how it is we can't jibe the fact that they will not vote for a budget that puts \$300 million worth of new health care with their plan, Mr. Speaker, to reduce health care spending in this province, Mr. Speaker.

In 1995, then member from Kindersley — the guy who thinks he's going to be the next member from Kindersley — called for a 5 per cent reduction in health care spending, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, let's not forget what the Canadian Institute for Health Information has said about this province under that NDP government and that minister — that under his management we have the worst nurse retention rate in the

country, Mr. Speaker. That's his record.

Mr. Speaker, there are some specific examples of how the situation is hurting right here in the capital city of Regina. According to Beverley Miller, the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses Local 105, the Pasqua Hospital ER [emergency room] has an over reliance on overtime to support the department. She states that units are often just robbing Peter to pay Paul and she goes on to say, and I quote: “There is a correlation to adverse outcomes and patient safety is compromised.”

Mr. Speaker, can the minister then tell this Assembly, can he tell Beverley Miller, what he is going to do specifically about the fact that nurses are telling him from the city of Regina that patient care is being compromised by his inaction?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as I've indicated not only today but in previous days as well, the word inaction is entirely inappropriate. Mr. Speaker, this government is taking action and we're taking action very quickly.

But, Mr. Speaker, I take a look at what the members opposite have been saying about health care over the last few years and it makes sense now why they're not supporting a budget that calls for a 10 per cent increase. In 1995, they called for a 5 per cent decrease. In 1999, Mr. Speaker, they called for a freeze. And subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, they called for any increase to be tied to the rate of inflation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've seen 7, 8, 9, and 10 per cent increases in health care from this side, this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We're proud to be able to put additional dollars and to work with health care professionals to ensure that we are building the best possible system within the resources available to us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about the system and the processes and the resources. He apparently is completely deaf to what the people of the province are saying, to what the Hansens from Humboldt have said, Mr. Speaker, to what Emily Morley's family has said to that minister, and now to what nurses are saying, and specifically the union leadership of nurses are saying.

Beverley Miller, again with respect to what's happening in Regina, notes that the union's nursing advisory committee has recently filed 26 work situation reports, the majority of which that have not been dealt with. She states that if no solutions are forthcoming from this government, there will be continued leakage of emergency RNs as well as a continued shortage of nurses in O.R. [operating room], critical care, and emergency.

Perhaps the most damning indictment that the Saskatchewan

Union of Nurses brings forward is that the viability for the Pasqua Hospital is in question because of this government's inaction.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this minister do what Manitoba did to resolve the problem? They sat down with the union, the nursing college, the employers, and they hammered out a solution long ago. Mr. Speaker, why the inaction from this NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The inaction that the member talks about opposite again, Mr. Speaker, completely inappropriate to this debate. This department has met with the province of Manitoba on their nursing strategy. The province of Manitoba is indicating they can learn something from us.

Mr. Speaker, we have sat down with the nurses in this province and other professionals and developed a working plan that we are now in the process of implementing. Mr. Speaker, that inaction that the member opposite is talking about is completely inappropriate.

Let's take a look at some of the things that members opposite have said recently — 1999, Mr. Speaker, not that long ago, the member from Melville-Saltcoats said it would be a mistake to throw new money at the health care system. Mr. Speaker, again in 1999 the member from Rosetown-Elrose talked about freezing the funding and indicating any new money would come in at the rate of inflation.

We can't finance new recruitment and retention efforts freezing the health care budgets.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Waiting for Angiograms

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Valerie Paterson was here on Monday to tell that Health minister about her experience in the health care system, Mr. Speaker. And yes, he says, I am pointing at that Health minister. It's appalling, her treatment in the health care system.

Valerie's 47 years old and a grade school teacher from Saskatoon and was told she'd have to wait six months for an angiogram. While she was on that waiting list, waiting six months for an angiogram, she started to have heart-attack-like symptoms and was rushed in to the emergency. This is what Valerie had to say about the emergency waiting in the hospital, and I quote:

You're lucky to be in the hospital because there's only 30 [people are] ahead of you . . . If you're outside, there are

500 [people] ahead of you waiting for an angiogram.

Well Valerie was pretty close to the mark. We talked to the Saskatoon region yesterday and there are 472 people waiting in Saskatoon alone for an angiogram. That's absolutely appalling.

Mr. Speaker, what is this minister going to do to address the problem of a lack of angiogram space in Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly what we are doing is a lot more than what has been advocated by members opposite who would freeze or decrease the amount of money available in health care.

Mr. Speaker, on this program while the members opposite are talking about what should be done, maybe they should take a look at and send their researchers out to find out what's been done, Mr. Speaker.

In March of this year the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority recognized that there were challenges within the cardiac cath unit. Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with this government and this budget, \$650,000 of brand new money, one-time money, was put into the Saskatoon Health Region.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen under this plan in the next few months? We will increase the number of recovery beds for cardiac services. We will provide 600 additional procedures to be done, 1,100 procedures overall each and every year. We have hired two new cardiologists, Mr. Speaker. They will be arriving in September and October and they will be working to reduce these lists.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, even when Valerie Paterson was admitted to the emergency room in Saskatoon with symptoms of heart attack and stroke, it still took four days to get an angiogram. On Monday, this Health minister said that having to wait four days in the hospital for a diagnostic test after coming in with heart-attack-like symptoms was, and I quote, "does sound [a little] ridiculous."

Mr. Speaker, we now know that there are 472 people like Valerie Paterson in the Saskatoon Health Region. Mr. Speaker, waiting six months sounds more than a little ridiculous for an angiogram in this province, Mr. Speaker. What is the target from this NDP government that a person should have to wait for a diagnostic test after they've had heart-attack-like symptoms?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And indeed, as members opposite continue to call for more spending by this government while not voting for the spending that we're

committed to, Mr. Speaker, let's keep in mind that each of their members goes home and talks about how the health care system cannot have more spending. The latest, Mr. Speaker, in 2004 from the member from Martensville who said, "Saskatchewan cannot afford to spend a higher percentage of . . . tax dollars on [our] health [care system]."

Mr. Speaker, what does that mean in terms of the commitment of the members opposite to the health care system? This year, Mr. Speaker, we recognize some difficulties within the cardiac cath unit. Mr. Speaker, we put 650,000 new dollars into that unit. It will have an impact on the numbers coming down, Mr. Speaker. We have hired two new cardiologists, Mr. Speaker. We have added the capacity. We are doing more cardiac angiograms in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. The referrals are going up and we are addressing that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps talking about why we don't support a budget. We don't support a budget because it has people lined up on the front steps protesting about Avastin, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — We don't support the budget because we have people coming into this legislature every day pleading their case because they're not getting proper health care in this province, Mr. Speaker. You can throw \$3.3 billion at a problem but it's not fixing it and that's the problem with this NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when they have more interest in self-promotion of a Finance minister to be leader than putting funding towards a neonatal unit in Saskatoon, we'll vote against that budget every single time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when will the minister start doing the right thing, managing the funds that they're putting into the system, and making sure patients get care?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as the member knows, he'll have another chance to support the budget and the extra dollars for health care tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow when we deal with appropriation.

The Speaker: — Order please. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the members of the public are going to be more satisfied with comments about the health care system in Saskatchewan from those from outside who look at it and not from the

members opposite who have an agenda of deliberately decreasing and undermining confidence in the public health care system.

But, Mr. Speaker, when the Conference Board of Canada takes a look at Saskatchewan's health care system and rates us number three in the country, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that we've got 35, 37,000 people working within the system — people who care, who are compassionate, who want to provide good care. Mr. Speaker, we will manage the system to support those people and for those who need care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Humboldt.

Construction of New Humboldt Hospital

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the residents in my constituency are being forced to pay an NDP rural health premium. They have to pay this premium because the NDP government dragged its feet for so many years that the cost to build a hospital in Humboldt has almost doubled. Now each homeowner in Humboldt will have to pay an additional \$100 a year for the next decade. Businesses, Mr. Speaker, will have to pay up to \$600 per month for the next decade. This is because the NDP has reannounced this hospital for a decade now but done absolutely nothing about building it.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Order. Order. One at a time, members. One at a time. Member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How can the Minister of Health justify this unfair rural health care premium?

The Speaker: — Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite may have read the news release that was out a day or two ago, Mr. Speaker, a news release that included comments from her own mayor in the town of Humboldt.

Agreements have been reached, Mr. Speaker, between the municipalities and Saskatchewan Health and the Saskatchewan health region to ensure that the dollars go forward for the development, further development in the Humboldt hospital. Mr. Speaker, we've been working closely with the municipality. We are going forward with that project. We are committed to it. We have reached agreements to carry it forward.

Mr. Speaker, how do we continue to justify the call for more spending and the members opposite refusing to add dollars to the provincial budget as we have brought forward, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister is right in one thing: the people of Humboldt have stepped forward yet again. And yet again they will pay this unfair premium because they

know how important the Humboldt hospital is for their community. But they're tired of waiting for this NDP government. And it's time that the minister steps forward.

Last month after a public meeting that drew only 12 people, the Minister of Industry and Resources told the *Humboldt Journal*, and I quote:

When asked about a construction start date, he would only say that it's moving along in terms of planning, and he certainly hopes construction will be started this year.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Humboldt answered with putting forward their cash. They want more than hope from this Health minister. Will the Minister of Health today have the courage to stand up and guarantee construction will begin this year?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority will be the ones who ultimately determine the process and the timeline. But, Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased with the progress that has been made on the Humboldt hospital to date, and this government is completely committed to that project. And it would be our desire and hope that indeed that project is able to get under way before the course of this year is over.

And I would urge the members opposite that tomorrow when the appropriations motions come before the House, that they will support it so that we have the dollars on this side of the House to support that project as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Condition of Highways

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the state of highways in this province is downright dangerous. I'd like to quote from a letter I received from a constituent of mine. And I quote:

I drove over a pothole and a large piece of asphalt kicked up and damaged the undercarriage . . . [of] my car. It was a large enough piece [of asphalt that it hit] with enough force to set off the airbags in the car, which in turn bruised my wife's arm and knocked her unconscious for a moment.

Mr. Speaker, what does the Minister of Highways have to say about this, that his highways are in such a disrepair that people are getting seriously injured?

The Speaker: — Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite and to the people of Saskatchewan that obviously safety is a major concern with respect to the Department of Highways employees and to myself as the minister responsible. The members opposite will know that

every spring in this province we have frost heaves; we have potholes on some of our roads. This year has been particularly difficult based on the high moisture levels over the course of the winter and the fact that we didn't have a sustained period of 30-below weather which generally helps to stabilize those roads.

Our officials have their crews out working on a daily basis. The weather has been supportive in that it's been warm, it's been drying out the roads so that we can get out and so that we can repair them. Mr. Speaker, no one will argue that there are potholes in TMS [thin membrane surface] roads here in Saskatchewan. We know that. We've got 6,000 kilometres of them. We can't get to them all at once. Thanks very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, Robert Istace was simply driving with his wife on Highway No. 45 and the next thing he knows a piece of asphalt heaves up large enough to set off the airbags and render his wife unconscious. Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Istace went to investigate what had happened, he found the piece of asphalt and I'd like to quote from his letter again.

I stopped in the middle of the highway to look at the damage and [it was] . . . caused . . . [by] a piece of asphalt about 8 inches by 12 inches.

Mr. Speaker, what explanation does this minister have for Mr. Istace? Can he explain why he allows Saskatchewan highways to be this unsafe?

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's obvious, and certainly it's obvious to members on this side of the House, that we have some roads in this province that are at this point in a state of disrepair. And the crews are out; they're filling the potholes; they're working within our different communities across this province to attempt to make our roads as safe as we can.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say it's been an extraordinarily difficult year. Our maintenance budget is going to be up. I believe it will be up over what we forecasted, frankly. But I think it's also important to say to members on the opposition side who keep telling us that the economy of this province has gone to hell in a handbasket, frankly, Mr. Speaker, that we've got record activity in oil and gas which means more semis on the roads. We've got more grain being hauled on our roads based on the fact that the Crow rate and rail line abandonment has taken place — supported by those guys, by the way, Mr. Speaker. Those are some of our challenges, but we're dealing with them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

The Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, not only did this piece of asphalt cause Mr. Istace's wife to become unconscious, it also caused serious damage to his car. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Istace is on the hook for a repair bill well in excess of \$2,000, all because this minister's highways are falling apart and left in a state of terrible disrepair. Now SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] claims it was his fault.

Mr. Speaker, can this minister set the record straight? Can this minister tell the Assembly why Mr. Istace and his wife were forced to live through the stressful and damaging incident and will he commit today to compensating the Istace family for any damage done to the vehicle?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member opposite that I'm unaware of the circumstance but I will give my commitment to look into this today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there are times when road conditions create circumstances that we would rather not have. We've got, it needs to be remembered, more highways on a per capita basis than any jurisdiction in Canada. What we also have, Mr. Speaker, in this province and in every other province in Canada, is the lack of a national highways infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that members opposite could certainly help their constituents, they could help the people of Saskatchewan if they would join with us in lobbying the 12 Conservative members of parliament — who they helped to elect — to work towards a national highways infrastructure in this country, Mr. Speaker. That would be the biggest help that they could do to their constituents and to mine as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Healthy Living Services.

New Seniors' Gold Plan

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have just come from the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism where I was very pleased to make an announcement of interest to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, our province is fortunate to have such an active and involved seniors' population. Indeed Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of seniors in Canada. One of every seven persons in Saskatchewan is over the age of 65.

As a way of recognizing seniors' valuable contribution to the province, I'm pleased to advise you of the seniors' gold plan. As a gesture of our appreciation, this gold plan is available to all Saskatchewan residents 65 years of age and older. The first gold plan benefit is free entry to provincial parks. This benefit allows seniors free access into provincial parks beginning May

18 for the 2006-2007 year.

Another benefit, free fishing licences. These licences will be available by early June from any of the more than 1,000 angling licence vendors across the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Addley: — We're also pleased to offer seniors a significant discount when they travel by bus on routes served by Saskatchewan Transportation Company. As of June 1, people age 65 and older can go to any STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] depot or agency and receive a total discount of 30 per cent on fares from Saskatchewan Transportation Company. STC will continue to offer a 10 per cent discount for customers between the ages of 60 and 65.

Another benefit, free photo identification from Saskatchewan Government Insurance. This allows seniors who do not have a driver's licence the option of obtaining a photo for ID [identification] purposes free of charge. This benefit will be available June 1.

Mr. Speaker, we may consider adding small benefits of this nature to the gold plan in the future. As we head into the May long weekend, it's my hope that these benefits, as a gesture of our appreciation, will help seniors enjoy our gorgeous Saskatchewan summers and travel our province year-round.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly owe a great deal to the people who built this province, and I thank all seniors for their part in making our province the place we're proud to call home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as maybe the only senior that's in the legislature, I would like to respond to the Minister of Healthy Living Services. Well ever since we first learned about the seniors' gold plan during the Throne Speech this spring, I'm sure the seniors have been waiting in silent anticipation for whatever that could be.

So what is this seniors' gold plan? Could it be, they thought, an initiative or an opportunity to address such things as reducing the waiting lists for medical assistance? Could it be addressing the seniors housing and long-term care accommodation? Or maybe they thought it could at least reduce the taxation on property tax for those on fixed incomes.

Now don't me wrong. There's I'm sure much appreciation for such things as free entry into the provincial parks, for free fishing licences, for a 30 per cent discount on STC. And even a free SGI photo, I'm sure is much appreciated.

Actually I'm anticipating about the same enthusiasm as when we received letters from seniors, when they received the last handout, the free handout from the NDP government, the free centennial pin with the word seniors written on them. These were the letters we received along with the question, wasn't

there a more effective way to spend the \$400,000 that'll actually help us?

With population out-migration, seniors are proportionately one of the fastest growing demographics in this province. Anything further we can do to assist the seniors . . . those are the people that helped develop this province, and the more we can do, the better. We owe it to them. The seniors' gold plan seems to be the very least this government could do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

New Entrepreneur Category in Immigrant Nominee Program

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak about a new program to increase the number of immigrant investors to our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Today I attended a luncheon with members of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce to announce the introduction of a new entrepreneur category within the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Effective immediately, the entrepreneur category replaces the business category and one criteria of the farm owner/operator category of the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program]. Potential immigrant investors now have greater access to business opportunities throughout Saskatchewan and additional incentives to stay in the province.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our bold strategy to attract 5,000 annual immigrants to Saskatchewan by 2008, we expect that 100 to 200 new entrepreneurs will come to our province. Mr. Speaker, immigrants are crucial to the continued prosperity of Saskatchewan. Our province's economy is booming. This near unprecedented pace of growth fuels the demand for skilled workers that continues to accelerate as birth rates decline and baby boomers retire.

The introduction today of the new entrepreneur category will help us attract the immigrants that we need while providing incentives for them to stay in our province. In this new category, immigrants can establish businesses in all sectors of our economy, unlike the previous category which was limited to certain sectors.

Investors are now required to post a \$75,000 good-faith deposit to strengthen their commitment to live and work in our province. The deposit will be held by a private sector trustee. It will be refunded with interest once the applicant has established a viable Saskatchewan business within two years of arrival in our province. Should the investor default, the deposit is entered into Saskatchewan's General Revenue Fund.

The good-faith deposit is a feature of other similar immigrant

investor programs throughout Canada and has proved to be an effective incentive in staying in the province. The deposit is also available to immigrants wishing to own and operate a farm in Saskatchewan in lieu of a signed offer to purchase land prior to entry. Investors will now be able to research the market before they buy that farm.

Nominees in the entrepreneurial category must have a minimum personal net worth of \$250,000 Canadian and be willing to invest at least \$150,000 into a new or existing Saskatchewan business. Entrepreneur immigrants must maintain an active role in the operations of the business and retain at least one-third ownership. Exceptions may be made in cases where the investment exceeds \$500,000. Pooled investments are not permitted in this category as every investor is assessed on individual merits nor are passive investments considered, such as property rentals and leasing or loan companies.

The province will maintain its right to refuse entry if we believe the applicant does not truly intend to live in Saskatchewan or plans to flip a business and relocate elsewhere. Nor does the category allow so-called investors of last resort, where unknowing immigrants are led to business opportunities that non-immigrants would never consider.

Prior to acceptance, immigrant applicants must make a minimum five-day exploratory visit to Saskatchewan so that they can meet with immigration officials and research their planned business. It also gives them the chance to get a glimpse of the new place that they may call home.

We believe the contribution of entrepreneur immigrants to Saskatchewan is crucial to the continued health of our communities. And without a talented and expanded population our province will not be able to achieve our strategies for innovation and growth.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome this announcement today. We think it's good for our province given the business taxes that were included in the last provincial budget, where there will be significant reductions. We think that this is another way to attract investment capital to our province. Mr. Speaker, this is a continuation of our government's commitment to stand up for something positive in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for a copy of the statement just before the House sat. The Saskatchewan Party has been urging the NDP government and certainly, and pushing, and certainly agrees with their initiatives in the immigration file. We on this side of the House recognize for a long, long time that immigration needed to be a very important part of the growth agenda for Saskatchewan, and we have been listening to the stakeholders in the province.

We've been listening to businesses and industry and farmers and other people in Saskatchewan. And they've been saying that immigration certainly was needed to take place in this province considering the demographics of the population of Saskatchewan and because of the loss of our young people to

other economies around Canada and around the world. So immigration was certainly needed in Saskatchewan to make up the difference for the loss of workers, and especially skilled workers and trained workers in the economy of Saskatchewan.

We have been listening to the private sector for quite some time and urging this government to bring in an entrepreneur category. This was obviously something that was needed for a number of years to bring investment dollars into this province. Investment dollars naturally will create jobs and create opportunity and attract more people and keep our young people in the province instead of having to go out of the province to make their way in life and find opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly interesting to see the government, how they operate as we get closer and closer to an election. They start making baby steps in the right direction. And this is another example of this, of them finally, finally moving in the right direction to get the economy of Saskatchewan growing. And it's too bad that this government didn't take the advice from entrepreneurs and citizens of Saskatchewan and the official opposition a number of years ago and get moving on this file a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker, certainly this is a very good announcement. But we always temper our enthusiasm of the NDP government's announcements by what they're actually going to do, what the results of their programs and their initiatives. And we certainly have concerns about the massive growth of the Immigration department, the number of people that they have hired. They claim to need these people to work on files and cases. But as we know, this minister and this government would certainly like to push the private sector out of the way and do a lot of the consulting work on their own. So we're very suspicious of some of their intentions.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will be watching the government in the future in seeing how this plan works, and certainly we'll be interested to watch the results. Hopefully they will come in as predicted. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — On behalf, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of government, I'll be tabling responses to written questions 1,102 to 1,151 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1,102 to 1,151 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the House to move a motion related to procedure regarding government business.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That pursuant to rule 4 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* and notwithstanding rule 3(1), that this Assembly shall recess until 7 p.m. later this day in order to facilitate the meeting of the standing committees on Human Services, Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, and the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, member from Moose Jaw North, seconded by the member from Melfort, the Opposition House Leader:

That pursuant to rule 4 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* and notwithstanding rule 3(1) this Assembly shall recess until 10 p.m. later this day in order to facilitate the meetings of the Standing Committee on Human Services, Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, and the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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 House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in recess, I would . . . do I need a motion to deal with these in recess? Then we'll just simply direct, Mr. Speaker, that the Human Services Committee, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Crown and Central Agencies shall proceed to their business.

The Speaker: — Thank you, members. The House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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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

Hon. John Nilson
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General

Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
Co-operative Development

Hon. Maynard Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
of Saskatchewan

Hon. Len Taylor
Minister of Health

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Minister of Finance
Minister Responsible for Information Technology
Minister Responsible for
SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Hon. Kevin Yates
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety