



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

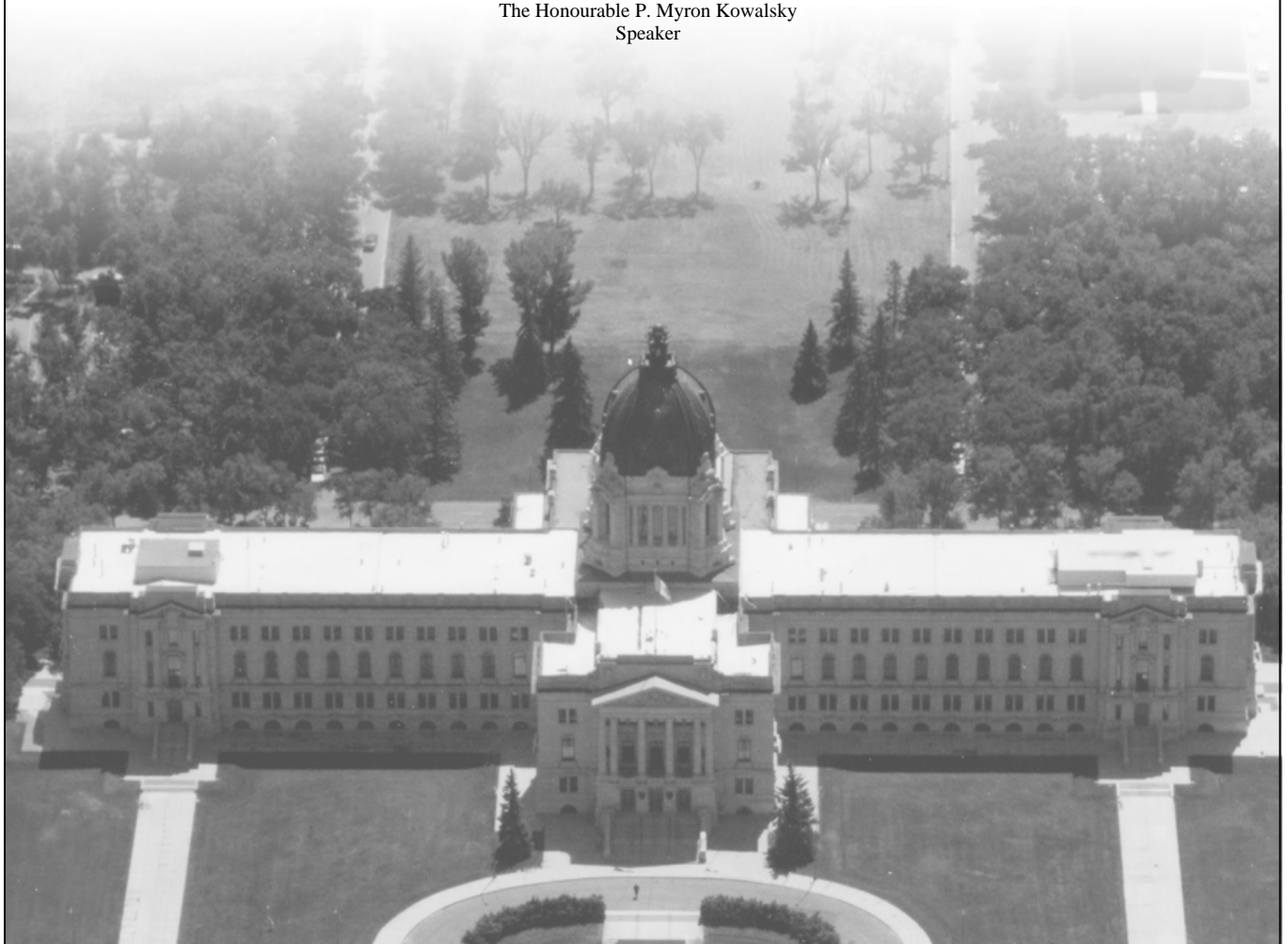
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
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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
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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
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, Hon. 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, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Martensville

[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. Welcome back. I read the prayer to a petition regarding sex offences against children:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province, and are going to be released into the province; and also take steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offenders designation process.

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

The petition I present today, Mr. Speaker, are signed by the good folks from the communities of Prince Albert, Melfort, Arborfield, and Quill Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today also to present a petition related to the dangerous offender designation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province, who are going to be released into the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correction facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the community of Maple Creek. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding tougher sentences for sex offences against children. The prayer reads as follows, and I'm going to summarize it a little bit:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website to take quicker steps for public disclosure, and to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offenders designation process.

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

This petition is signed by people from the Melfort area. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions to present on behalf of a constituent at Carnduff. 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.

These petitions come from the communities in the Southeast of Carnduff, Gainsborough, Carievale, Oxbow, Glen Ewen. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned with the need for tougher sentences for sex offences against children. The latter part of the prayer of their petition reads:

That this Assembly would lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from Melfort and Star City. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise in conjunction with my colleagues to present a petition urging the government for tougher sentences to deal with sex offences against children. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province, who are going to be released into the province; to take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

The people who have signed this petition are from Star City, Melfort, and Pleasantdale. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex offences against children. 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 create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Rose Valley, Melfort, Naicam, Quill Lake, and Brooksby. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with tougher sentences for sex offences against children. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from the correctional

facility, and review of the dangerous offender designation process.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Melfort, Tisdale, and Star City.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the release of high-risk sex offenders into their communities. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Melfort, Naicam, Prince Albert, Nipawin, and St. Brieux. I so present.

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex offenders against children. This petition I'm reading on behalf of the people from Melfort. The petition reads there:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of known sex offenders in their community; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise this afternoon to present a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex

offences against children. And this petition reads in part, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offenders designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from the town of Melfort. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition that is similar, the same as my colleagues' where it calls on the Assembly to cause the government to create a website to provide information on high-risk offenders, to take steps to speed up public disclosure. Mr. Speaker, it also asks that the government lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children.

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition come from the community of Melfort. And I'm pleased to be able to present it on their behalf.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition of citizens who are concerned about the sentences for sex offenders against children. And the prayer ends by saying:

To lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Hudson Bay, St. Brieux, Prince Albert, Melfort. And with that, I so present.

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues this afternoon on behalf of citizens to urge the tougher sentences for sex offenders against children. Mr. Speaker, the prayer has been read into the record and I would join in those words and indicate that the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Melfort, Pleasantdale, and Kinistino. And I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on behalf of those people that are concerned about sex offences against children. And the prayer includes:

Creating a website that provides information for high-risk offenders, and to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender; and also to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Estevan, Swift Current, Bienfait, Melfort, and Nipawin. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am pleased to present a petition from citizens who are wanting tougher sentences for sex offences against children. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

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

[13:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes 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 people across Saskatchewan who want tougher sentences for sex offences against children:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

The petitioners today are from Melfort and Gronlid. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex offences against children. And I will only read part of the prayer for relief, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province; and take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible.

And this is signed by good citizens of Melfort and Rose Valley. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes 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 want tougher sentences for sex offenders against children. And I will read part of the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offenders against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures of this petition are from Melfort and Star City. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to bring forward a petition urging tougher sentences for sex offences against children:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offenders, and a review of dangerous offenders designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Naicam, Melfort, and Tisdale. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also join in my colleagues with a petition to urge tougher sentences for sex offences against children. The prayer has already been read numerous times so I won't read it. I will just present it:

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from the city of Melfort. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to rise in the Legislative Assembly and present a petition on behalf of citizens worried about the safety of our children with regards to convicted sex offenders. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province; take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible; and lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the very good citizens from the towns of Melfort and Nipawin. I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise along with my colleagues that Saskatchewan people are deeply concerned about the presence of sexual predators that present a threat to our communities. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to lobby the federal government for tougher sentences for sexual offences against children, tougher measures to keep track of offenders once they are released from a correctional facility, and a review of the dangerous offender designation process.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

From the good people of Albertville and St. Brieux. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House to join with my colleagues presenting petitions regarding tougher sentences for sex offences against children. I will read only a small portion of the prayer for relief:

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

all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible.

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

I so present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition urging tougher sentences for sex offences against children. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to create a website that provides information about high-risk offenders who live in the province or are going to be released into the province.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people of Melfort, Naicam, St. Brieux, and Meskanaw. And I so present.

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

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore the petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position for the right of Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal government.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present.

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are, as others have said, very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby read and received.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Environment: when does the department expect Mount Blackstrap to resume operations?

Next question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 5 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Environment: has the department instituted a plan for Mount Blackstrap to resume operations? If so, could the minister provide a copy of the plan?

Mr. Speaker, I have further questions. I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the amount of funding the province provides for a mental health resident in a personal care home?

I also give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the amount of funding the province provides for a mental health resident in an approved mental health home?

And also:

For the Minister of Health: has the department ever received a recommendation from the auditor to bring the payments for mental health residents in a personal care home to an equal level with the payments made for mental health residents in an approved mental health home?

I so present, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Environment: what regulations are in place, if any, dealing with the transfer of fresh water by means other than natural runways from Saskatchewan to Alberta?

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, I also have a second question:

To the Minister of the Environment: what regulations are in place, if any, dealing with the transfer of fresh water by means other than natural waterways from Alberta to Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on day no. 25 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: can the minister assure the residents of the Rosetown area that the SaskPower office in Rosetown will continue customer service out of its current office for the fiscal year 2007?

And I have the same question for the fiscal year 2008.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 25 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: can the minister assure the residents of the Rosetown area that the SaskPower office in Rosetown will continue to co-operate with SaskTel and SaskEnergy to provide one-stop customer service for customers of these three Crowns in the fiscal year 2007?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the fiscal year 2008. Thank you.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Crown Investments

Corporation: to date how many Crown investments were subject to a third party external review, and which investments were they?

And I have that same question for the year 2005 and the year 2004.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Prince Albert Building Receives Certification

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I attended a ceremony celebrating the Prince Albert forest centre as the first building in Saskatchewan and one of only four in the Prairie provinces to attain the gold level of LEED [leadership in energy and environmental design] certification.

Mr. Speaker, LEED stands for leadership in energy and environmental design. It is a voluntary and international rating system evaluating projects based on points in six key areas: site sustainability, water efficiency, energy efficiency and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation in the design process.

Mr. Speaker, buildings such as the Prince Albert forest centre use 50 per cent less energy than conventional buildings. The centre also uses 70 per cent natural lighting and 100 per cent fresh air. The air quality of LEED buildings is second to none.

Mr. Speaker, our green strategy is based on the principle of combining environmental stewardship with sound economics. It is all about change, all about the development of a sustainable future for Saskatchewan. Green initiatives like the forest centre building demonstrate that economic and environmental benefits are not mutually exclusive.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating all those involved with the forest centre in Prince Albert for achieving LEED gold certification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Weyburn and District United Way Communithon

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to recognize the Weyburn and District United Way on their 25th annual communithon which took place over the last weekend in October. With a goal of \$120,025 over the 36-hour telethon, broadcast live on Access Communications, the Weyburn Legion Hall was the place to be.

As with past communithons, the entertainment lineup was second to none, ranging from school groups, seasoned pros, up-and-coming stars, and those young at heart. Co-Chair of this

year's communithon, Gary Erickson, commented that aside from reaching the goal on-air that his highlights from the weekend were the performances, notably the act by Jim Brown and John Ferrier, and the number performed from the musical, *Oliver*, performed by this year's Lady Charity and Captain United.

Mr. Speaker, to mark the 25th anniversary this year, the organizing committee made it a reunion, bringing back onstage — and for some back to Weyburn — some familiar faces from the past.

Mr. Speaker, with about 30 minutes left in the broadcast, the goal of \$120,025 was reached on-air. In all, including off-air donations, 123,000 was raised for the United Way's 16 member agencies.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the United Way board president April Sampson, communithon Co-Chairs Gary Erickson and Shelley Kievits, this year's Lady Charity, Melissa Hoffman, and Captain United, Dalton Mainil, all the volunteers and the generous donors who made this year's communithon such a tremendous success.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

[14:00]

Customer Service from SaskTel

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, isn't it ironic that the Sask Party's position on the ideological hard right pretty much always makes them wrong on issues? Take the Crowns for example. Their current leader's incessant attacks on the Crowns leading up to the last election guaranteed them to finish second. While the members opposite don't like or value the Crowns, Saskatchewan people do — and with good reason.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate SaskTel employees and dealers on another major achievement. For the second year in a row J.D. Power and Associates, a global market research firm, has ranked SaskTel number one in customer satisfaction for contract wireless services in Canada. In fact SaskTel actually improved its overall scores this year, placing first in call quality, first in service plan options, and first in customer service.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest recognition that SaskTel has earned as a result of its ongoing commitment to excellent service to Saskatchewan people. As competition in the communications industry intensifies, SaskTel will compete from strengths like their strong track record of innovation and customer service. Like Crowns or not, SaskTel employees and dealers continue to lead the way in providing excellent service to the people of Saskatchewan.

These SaskTel service providers deserve our appreciation. Join me in showing it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Students Participate in Business Competition

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, JDC West is the largest undergraduate business competition in Western Canada. The University of Saskatchewan will be represented by 45 of the finest College of Commerce students at the Vancouver event early in 2007.

Designed to test business savvy and foster a strong connection for business students in Western Canada, JDC West incorporates nine academic competitions ranging from accounting to international business. The dynamic weekend of competitive excellence also includes a parliamentary-style debate, an intense handball tournament, and seven school spirit challenges.

U of S [University of Saskatchewan] commerce students excelled at JDC West last year, winning the finance case challenge. This year's group is eager to test their knowledge, experience, and expertise against business students from other Western colleges. All aspects of the competition will embody this year's theme of ethics in business. And the winning team will take home the prestigious title, School of the Year.

Financial sponsors unite to help our team attend the event and have the benefit of showcasing economic and job opportunities within their unique industries at JDC West.

Saskatchewan's young people, Mr. Speaker, are intelligent, resourceful, and hard-working. The competition broadens their learning outside the classroom and develops their analytical and communication skills in a real-world context.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the U of S commerce team will be on the winner's podium in 2007. I ask all my colleagues in this Assembly to join with me in wishing the students good luck at JDC West.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Corner Gas Hit on International Market

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's number one comedy has gone international.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] recently announced that the smash hit comedy series, *Corner Gas*, has secured a US [United States] distribution deal with the American cable network Superstation WGN. Superstation WGN is the national flagship of Chicago-based Tribune Broadcasting Company and is available coast to coast in the United States to nearly 70 million homes via cable and satellite.

Mr. Speaker, CTV also announced that *Corner Gas* has now been licensed internationally to broadcasters serving 26

countries across five continents. Soon *Corner Gas* will be available to viewers in countries like Australia, Iraq, Finland, Morocco, and many others around the world.

Fortunately for the people of Saskatchewan and now across the globe, Regina's sound stage has been available as a service to the television and film industries in this province. Brent Butt, creator and star of *Corner Gas* once said:

It's such a perfect facility . . . Having the sound stage in Regina made *Corner Gas* possible. [And I'm] not sure how we would have done it otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating all those involved with *Corner Gas* for such a great success. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Karate Champion from Cudworth

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a constituent of mine, Jody Nidosky of Cudworth. Jody earned a bronze medal in the 26th annual Canadian karate championships held in Saskatoon in early October. Just 18 years old, Jody competed in the men's division of kata, one of the disciplines of karate. Jody holds a brown belt in karate and has been participating in karate since he was 13. He plans to continue training in St. Louis twice weekly under the accomplished instruction and leadership of Marcel Lussier. Jody is a grade 12 student at Cudworth School and the son of Michael and Jeannette Nidosky of Cudworth. Congratulations to Jodi on your remarkable achievement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

A View of History

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the last time the Leader of the Opposition's party was in power, they nearly ruined the province. As they are doing now, his party was clambering for an opportunity to take the Saskatchewan economy out for a ride and they finally got the chance. Well, Mr. Speaker, they took the province for a ride all right. They drove it recklessly and they drove it irresponsibly, Mr. Speaker, whooping it up until they finally drove it into the ditch. And then what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They walked away as if nothing had happened. I mean they weren't unscathed, but they weren't taking any responsibility either.

Did they apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for almost bankrupting them and leaving them saddled with an enormous debt? No, they didn't. Far from it. Instead of taking responsibility, they changed their name — not their philosophy or the way they do things, just their name. And now they're demanding another chance.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the province aren't fooled. The members opposite could be sitting across there wearing fake noses and moustaches for all the good it's doing them. The people of this province know who they really are, and they're not about to give them another chance. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Information Concerning Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 16, I asked the Minister of Community Resources to provide me with any records of meetings he had with the Oyate Board on March 16 and May 1 of this year. Here's what the minister's response was, there was no meeting at all.

This morning, the deputy minister told the Public Accounts there was a meeting, there was a record of that meeting, that the minister had instructed him not to release those records.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, since we now know there was a meeting where Oyate was discussed, what is this minister covering up?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a question about procedure. As House Leader, I'm happy to answer it.

Mr. Speaker, there is a long-standing tradition in this nation in the practice of parliamentary democracy. It will be not uncommon, Mr. Speaker, for ministers to meet privately with officials or with third parties. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, private meetings are just that. Private meetings are private. There is no jurisdiction in Canada, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, that has any policy to release notes from private meetings that ministers have.

Mr. Speaker, private meetings, notes from private meetings have not been provided. They are not provided. And they will not be provided, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these two meetings were on a list provided of all meetings between the board and the DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] officials and the minister. It

wasn't listed as a private meeting. It was listed as a board meeting.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has a pattern of providing incomplete information. First he says there was no meetings with the member of the board. Then we discover there was a meeting, but he's not releasing the records.

On March 15 of this year the minister stood in the rotunda and he said and I quote, "We have no evidence there has been any problems. We have no evidence they did not respond to the issues."

The minister has no credibility left. He can restore that credibility right now by standing and admitting he was wrong when he said there was no meeting. He can admit he was wrong when he said there were no records of that meeting. And he can apologize to this Assembly and the children who needed his valuable service and were betrayed. Will he do that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, when we first stood up in this Assembly to speak about this issue, I said the words that I welcome scrutiny, Mr. Speaker. And I will continue welcoming the scrutiny, Mr. Speaker, and to point out to that member and to that party that we will answer any question that he has or they might have, Mr. Speaker.

And furthermore every official meeting that we had, and there is two big binders of information, all the records made of all the meetings that we had, the official meetings in which staff were there. They were certainly talking about the issues that Oyate was involved with, Mr. Speaker. We have forwarded all that information to Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker. We've been very open.

Now what that member is suggesting is that as a minister that I certainly want to throw out the whole notion of confidentiality when I discuss issues with a wide variety of groups. As a minister he knows that I cannot do that, Mr. Speaker. The mantra of minister discussions with private groups, the basis of that, is confidentiality, and I as a minister will respect that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I know he can't do that. Because if he did do it, it'd show what he's covering up, and that's why he won't give us those documents.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — On October 5 the Public Accounts Committee moved unanimously to call the former deputy minister, Ms. Young, as a witness. The next meeting of the

Public Accounts, the government members conspired to assure that she would not directly question. And the Government House Leader who sits over there with such a smug look on his face suddenly lost the ability to say the word witness.

Mr. Speaker, time and time again, the minister has refused to table documents, refused to answer question directly, and refused to come clean. Mr. Speaker, what's going on over there? What's this government trying to hide?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, it has been said in this House by the minister a number of times — he just said it a moment ago — if you have questions, ask your questions. The questions will be answered. Mr. Speaker, there was a motion to ask the former deputy minister to be there. She was there.

Mr. Speaker, we now have an hon. member saying that if the minister does not release notes from confidential meetings he's covering something up. Mr. Speaker, notes from private meetings are private. That is a long-standing tradition of parliamentary democracy. It will be endured.

And the real question here, Mr. Speaker, the real question here is the respect for the professional, non-partisan, public service and the conduct of the members of the opposition who are provoking professional public service employees to respond to policy questions and decisions. Those are the jurisdiction of the minister. Ask the questions; he'll answer them. Allow the professional public services to reserve their position and . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What that minister doesn't understand, it's not about parliamentary procedure. It's not about ministerial privilege. It's about the kids . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — Why can't we get the minutes to the meeting the minister claimed never happened? The former deputy minister was called as a witness but can't say anything. Despite a motion from the committee calling her as a witness, the former deputy minister isn't even told to show up for today's Public Accounts meeting.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will want an answer on this, and we're not going to give up until we get it. They want to know how could things go so bad. Why did it take so long to get to the bottom of this? What are they hiding? What are they covering up? Stop stomping on this parliamentary stuff and look after the kids.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the minister, when we certainly seen the problems attached to the Oyate Safe House, we took some very decisive action, Mr. Speaker. And I want to point out that as a minister, we said we take the responsibility very seriously and that we intend to do something to rectify the problem and to fix the problem, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what we did. And it's a bit strange, Mr. Speaker, coming from that . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order please. The Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And they're asking for answers which I'm prepared to give, but they keep yelling from their seats, Mr. Speaker.

That member says it's all about the children, and yet we've been up here how many weeks now, Mr. Speaker, and we're prepared to stay here for the number of weeks as well. And not once has he touched on the solutions or the progress made on the recommendations that the all-party committee had, not once. What he's been asking for, Mr. Speaker, is for information and alleging a cover-up. It's never been about the children, Mr. Speaker. It's always been about their political agenda, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue being very open, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Supply of Endocrinologists

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May 2006 the last practising endocrinologist left Saskatoon. Dr. Tammy McNab sought work elsewhere because she didn't want to be the only doctor responsible for thousands of patients. In other words, she was overwhelmed and overworked. She was also extremely frustrated by the recruitment process of this government; she said it moved at a snail's pace. After she left, Saskatoon has no endocrinologist.

Mr. Speaker, this month is Diabetes Awareness Month. It is now been six months. Can the Minister of Health tell this Assembly how many full-time endocrinologists are practising 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. The simple answer with regards to the endocrinologist who left and for whom the position was being recruited, that position has been successfully recruited, Mr. Speaker, and the successful applicant will be in Saskatoon and practising early in the new year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — More than 50,000 people live with diabetes in Saskatchewan. There are nearly 3,000 new cases yearly. Type 2 diabetes is an epidemic amongst our First Nations community. Six years ago the Saskatchewan advisory committee on diabetes released a report that recommended that Saskatchewan need eight endocrinologists by 2004. At that time, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons also recommended one endocrinologist for 80,000 people. That would put 12 endocrinologists in our province if we followed their recommendations. Right now we have two. That's one for every 480,000 people because endocrinologists he's talking about won't be here until the new year.

Mr. Speaker, that begs the question. Does he feel the job is done? They've got one in Saskatoon, maybe sometime next year, two in Regina for a workload that we're facing in Saskatchewan. That policy is falling far short. When are they going to deal with the real situation and recruit the number of endocrinologists we need 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. The member opposite knows that over the last couple of weeks I've had a number of meetings — two in fact — with the Diabetes Association, and in fact last week I attended a rollout of the Diabetes Association's new mobile resource unit that's travelling throughout Saskatchewan working on prevention aspects of the disease, Mr. Speaker, and Sask Health is very supportive of a number of these efforts.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Health is also working very closely with the Saskatoon Health Region who is currently undertaking an entire inventory of all the specialists working within the Saskatoon Health Region. At the end of that inventory and that review, Mr. Speaker, we will have a good idea as to not only endocrinologists but other specialists serving the region and the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, the last endocrinologist left Saskatoon because she was overworked. She was expected to see thousands of patients. What will be different for the new one that's coming in?

The problem is we don't have a core nucleus. What will happen is this new person will come in, and if they're not supported with more endocrinologists, they will be overworked and burnt out and leave as well. Remember there are 50,000 people in Saskatchewan suffering from this disease, and two in Regina and perhaps one in Saskatoon will not cover the need.

Mr. Speaker, how long will it be before these doctors are burnt out because of shortages and decide to leave themselves? Since the minister has failed in recruiting more endocrinologists to meet the needs that we have in our province, what is he going to do to take the pressure off the few that we have here?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We at Saskatchewan Health . . . And I say we, Mr. Speaker, because the recruitment and retention issues are more than just one individual, Mr. Speaker. They include all of those within the regional health authority who are diligently working on recruitment and retention issues and, Mr. Speaker, on delivering services to Saskatchewan people. But we take these responsibilities very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask the member opposite to take his responsibility and explain how cutting the budgets at Sask Health — which is the policy that they've enunciated, Mr. Speaker — how that cutting the budget will assist in recruiting additional specialists to the regions across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

School Closures

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we see a real example of how the NDP's [New Democratic Party] population loss is affecting Saskatchewan families. Fewer students and fewer families means communities are forced to deal with the possibility of school closures.

But in typical NDP fashion, instead of dealing with the problem, the NDP postponed the problem. Three years ago the NDP put a moratorium in place to stop school closures. But this January will mark the end to that moratorium.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell this Assembly today how many schools she expects to close in the upcoming year when the moratorium is lifted?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just for clarification in the House and for the members' information, the moratorium was put on to stop school closures until the end of '06 for the reason that the school divisions were going through some major changes, in fact the largest changes that this education system has seen in over 60 years. The amalgamations . . . while the boundaries are drawn and the new boards are in place, Mr. Speaker, there's still a great deal of work being done by the school divisions, but the moratorium is lifted at the end of December this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — I'd like to thank the minister for explaining something everyone in this province already understands. The question was, how many schools are expected to close as a result of the lifting of the moratorium next year?

And certainly people in this province are concerned. Here's what the headlines in the media are saying: from the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], "School closures eyed in Prince Albert area"; from the *Leader-Post*, "Future of several schools in south Saskatchewan in doubt"; from *The StarPhoenix*, "School closures loom in rural Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, school divisions have real concerns over their future operations and are looking to this government for guidance, not simply postponing the problem. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us what specific provincial guidelines she plans to implement for advising school divisions on how to handle the difficult issue of school closures, and how many schools does she expect to be closed next year?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, there are guidelines clearly defined in the legislation when it comes to the tough decisions that school divisions will make. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are hollering, how many, how many. Many of the school divisions are currently going through a process of amalgamating programs from the various divisions that have come together into the larger amalgamated divisions.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have definite numbers. We don't know what decisions the school boards will make. That will be decided over the next couple of months. But, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members opposite, many of them across this province put in their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] articles, and I will quote from the member from Melfort's article from last year, "Teachers are being left behind as the NDP's underfunding of education will result in at least 150 teacher cuts."

Totally inaccurate. They were spreading rumours and fearmongering across the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a long-standing history of this NDP government of not consulting. Mr. Speaker, I fear this will continue with the looming school closures. And I'm not the only one who feels this way, Mr. Speaker. Here's a quote . . . and I'm glad the minister brought up the issue of teachers because here's a quote from the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] bulletin . . . president in the November 22 issue of the *Saskatchewan Bulletin*. And I quote, "Teachers understand . . . these conversations need to occur, but I am very concerned at the lack

of consultation with teachers in some of these divisions.”

Mr. Speaker, teachers are indeed frustrated. I'm hearing from parents and school agencies who are also frustrated. Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what she plans to do to involve teachers, parents, and school agencies in the process? Can she guarantee these stakeholders that they will have input in these decisions before they're made, not afterwards when it's too late?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, it was interesting in the quote that he read. It said there was a lack of consultation in the divisions. Well I would recommend to the STF that they speak to their boards, they speak to their members within the divisions, and address the issues that are there within the divisions because the divisions are the groups that are connected to the communities. They are well aware of the needs of their students and the communities within their divisions.

Mr. Speaker, there is a shared responsibility in the education sector in this province. It has always been so. And these decisions will rest with what the boards feel is the best service for the people within their school divisions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Highway 32

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Leader and area, specifically pharmacist Gordon Stueck, deserve high marks for creativity when it comes to bringing attention to the sorry state of Highway 32. Earlier this spring, concerned citizens launched a website complete with photos of the myriad of potholes on the highway, and then they started selling bumper stickers with the slogan, I Survived Highway 32. They've even got a DVD [digital versatile disc] featuring the trip down Highway 32. And now, Mr. Speaker, the citizens of the area have bared a bit more than their souls in a calendar featuring residents with their favourite potholes.

Mr. Speaker, why has the NDP government let this highway sink into such a state of disrepair that residents are posing nude to get the government's attention?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question, and I want to recognize the innovation and the creativity of the people who live along Highway 32 in terms of bringing this issue before the public.

But I want to tell you what is also clear. The naked ambition of members opposite to get to this side of the House means that they will promise a new road for every community in every corner of this province, knowing full well that the province can't afford it. And we will do this over a staged period, Mr. Speaker. We've got more money into this Highways budget ever than in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker — \$90 million more than in 2001, another \$55 million that we just put in since the budget was delivered — in order to prepare ourselves for an expanded construction season next year, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, virtually all of the communities along Highway 32 and other supporting groups have come together to initiate a lobby. As recently as last week, this minister said he had no plans to fix Highway 32, right here in estimates. Yet his own department has entered into a memorandum of understanding that it will work together with the communities to move the issue forward. They don't know what to believe anymore, Mr. Speaker.

Now Joe Ries, Mr. November in the calendar, seems to have devised a pretty good way of getting the attention of the Highways minister. In his photo, Mr. Ries is planting potatoes in the pothole. I guess he figures that if he can't get money out of the minister to fix the highway, perhaps he can sell him a potato pipe dream.

Mr. Speaker, which is it? Are there any plans to fix Highway 32 or not?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, we've been working with RMs [rural municipality] and with the local communities for a considerable period of time to bring the groups together with the Department of Highways to determine how fast we can manage the traffic in that area.

Mr. Speaker, that member will know that because of this government's oil and gas regime, tax regime, there's been an incredible amount of activity take place along Highway 32. You've got oil trucks. You've got water trucks. You've got service rigs. I mean it's a very, very busy place.

The member also knows it's a stretch of thin membrane road that was never designed to handle that kind of traffic. But that member should also know, as his colleagues should also know, that we've got 6,400 kilometres of these thin membrane roads, and we have to do them in a staged way. We're going to have to choose, and we have to make some choices.

But I say to members opposite, why don't you be honest with your constituents and quit promising a quick fix to every highway in the . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:30]

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, every one of the communities along Highway 32 were asked to contribute to the new hospital being built in Swift Current. Yet here's a problem. They have to drive down Highway 32, a highway that actually has more potholes than road surface. And that's the kind of road they have to travel on to reach the hospital in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, remember the bumper stickers I referred to before? Well those bumper stickers are being sold to raise money to repair the damage to the Leader and district ambulance which is commonly required to travel this dangerous highway.

Mr. Speaker, Highway 32 is really an area of significant potential. Why has the government decided to ignore the bare essentials required in this area while siphoning millions of dollars in natural resource revenue to cover its spending? Can the minister tell us the naked truth?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, allow me to give that member the bare facts. There has been a letter of understanding signed between rural municipalities, urban municipalities, and stakeholders along Highway 32. It is a letter of understanding that we had been working towards as a department for a considerable period of time. And I think now that we've got the stakeholders together we can determine where best to spend dollars in that area, where best to divert the heavy traffic to, and where best to spend money. It doesn't make any sense to be rebuilding TMS [thin membrane surface] roads when you know the traffic is going to beat them to pieces in a short period of time.

These members, though, are out offering paved surfaces from Highway 368 down to Highway 330 . . . 32 to Highway 8. There isn't a road in this province that you guys represent that you haven't . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order please. I would remind the minister to make all of his remarks through the Chair please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no wonder the people along 32 have no certainty about whether or not their highway will be repaired. This minister doesn't even know what number the highway is out there, and yet he's talking about why he can or cannot repair all the roads in the area.

Mr. Speaker, this government constantly touts the fact that no

one will be left behind. But the people who live along Highway 32 already feel that they have been left behind. Mr. Speaker, highway32.ca features 28 pages of comments from people who have driven that highway.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister has said, the area is home to the largest natural gas find in the province — the Shackleton gas field. The resource revenue coming out of the area is incredible. What kind of government would turn its back on this great potential and fail to maintain the very road that delivers that revenue to their coffers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's maybe time that members of that side of the House quit promising every road to every community. And maybe it's time they send their wish list over to the government; tell us which is your first priority. Is it 32 or 368? Tell us which it is.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Once again I remind the member from Prince Albert Northcote, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, that his remarks ought to be channelled through the Chair. The minister has 15 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I do believe it's time that members come clean. They can't have all of these roads paved in one year. But they can go out and promise them all, but they can't deliver them. Why don't they send a list, tell us what their priorities are?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — On behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I'll be tabling responses to written questions no. 150 to 155 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 150 to 155 inclusive have been submitted.

Why is the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook on his feet?

Mr. Allchurch: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member is requesting leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The member may

proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, today in the east gallery, we have a group of 11 grade 12 students that are here from Rosthern Junior College. And they've travelled down to Regina today to come to the Legislative Assembly and see how it works.

With them is teacher Brad Nichol and Jesse Wiebe, and they are here from Rosthern Junior College. They are part of the ALSO program which is alternate learning and service opportunities. They're here in Regina for one week on an inner-city service and learning trip, working in north central area. And we want to welcome all of them to their Legislative Assembly. And I would ask all members to help me join in welcoming to them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Would the Government House Leader please state his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I refer you to Beauchesne's parliamentary rules and procedures, rule no. 321. Mr. Speaker, it has been long-standing parliamentary tradition in this country that those who the rules refer to of high official station, which will include high-ranking public service employees, Mr. Speaker, are protected from attack by elected members.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very important parliamentary ... Mr. Speaker, it's a very ...

The Speaker: — Members, I ask all members just to be calm, and we want to get through this in the proper way. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, it is a very important parliamentary procedure that is essential in the delivery of good government in a parliamentary democracy that those who serve in public as public service employees are allowed to perform their jobs as professionals in a non-partisan way.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, it is in committee a long-standing expectation that members of the committee will not attack public service employees nor push them to speak to or respond to questions of policy, Mr. Speaker. Questions of policy are clearly directed to ministers who are responsible for that.

Mr. Speaker, today in the Public Accounts Committee, there were a number of examples in my view, Mr. Speaker, where specific members of the opposition, perhaps including the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, pushed public service ... at least one public service employee to respond in ways that are inappropriate for public service employees to do so.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you would review the *Hansard* of the Public Accounts Committee today ... [inaudible interjection] ... It's an interesting comment that comes from the opposition. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you would review, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you would review the *Hansard* of Public Accounts Committee today and bring a ruling to this House as to whether the conduct of the members of the opposition in their questions and comments directed to the deputy minister of the Department of Community Resources are in fact in order.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On the point of order, the Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has made a fairly serious allegation against the opposition. The opposition takes strong exception with that allegation being made. Before the Speaker makes any form of ruling on it, it would be the position of the opposition that that member opposite would be very specific and precise about which words were asked by which individual of this side of the House so that we know specifically what the allegation was.

The meeting that the member opposite is talking about is one that's recorded; it's subject to Hansard and is subject to the tape recording procedure. And we would want every opportunity to answer to and rebut the allegations that are made by the House Leader, and we would want that House Leader to come forward and specifically allege which member made which statement so we know what and where the issue is, if any.

It is the position of this side of the House that we act always in the most proper and appropriate manner, and we have considerable issues with what comes from that side of the House. And we would want every opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to try and defend ourselves and to understand specifically what the ...

The Speaker: — Order please, order please. Order. Is the member complete?

Mr. Morgan: — I have nothing further to add, other than that would be our full expectation is that before there is any ruling from the Chair, we know the specific allegations and have every opportunity to comment on it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members will come to order again please. I would like to thank both the Government House Leader and the Deputy House Leader in the opposition for their remarks with respect to this point of order.

I wish to advise members that when matters that arise in committee, procedural difficulties of any sort arise in committee, they ought to be settled in the committee and not in the House. Alternatively they could be brought to the House by a motion of the committee or an order of the committee. I refer members to Beauchesne, 6th Edition article 822.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 35

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 35 — The Infrastructure Fund Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to make a few comments on the public record about Bill 35, An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Fund.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have already spoken to this Bill, have raised a number of concerns. I understand that some discussion of this particular Bill took place in committee with the minister responsible. And so therefore, Mr. Speaker, I only have a few brief comments that I would like to make at this time because I believe my colleagues have raised a number of pertinent issues as to how the funds . . . the mechanism that should be put in place to distribute the funds under this Bill. Also they've raised some concerns about a number of other issues.

But one area, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to put forward is that I think this particular Bill and this infrastructure fund that is designed to aid our communities in the province with recreational and cultural facilities, I think this provides the government with an opportunity to incorporate some environmental standards within this program, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And what I'm speaking specifically about is perhaps using the funds within this particular program to encourage our communities to incorporate energy efficient aspects. Whether it's a new building or whether it's an improvement to existing buildings, Mr. Speaker, we need to be proactive in this area and ensure that any improved facilities or new facilities incorporate the latest design features, and particularly with regards to energy efficiency because, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we hear consistently from communities and particularly small communities, Mr. Speaker, is that they are having great difficulty looking after and meeting their energy needs of their facilities, Mr. Speaker. It is something that I believe all communities, whether they be small or large, Mr. Speaker, they have difficulty with the energy component of their operation of their facilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, so I think this particular program provides the government with an opportunity to move forward in that area, Mr. Speaker. And I speak with a bit of experience in this area. In the past I was part of my own home-community committee that worked on. And we ended up, through a great deal of work, we built a new recreational facility in our community. We looked into incorporating energy-saving

measures in that project, Mr. Speaker. And what we found is that in order — at that time at least and I believe that's still the case — in order to incorporate some of these energy-saving features in a building, quite often the capital costs are slightly higher at the time of construction. But the payback time will vary as energy prices increase. As the cost of heating and the cost of lighting the facilities increases, the payback period is quite a bit shorter, Mr. Speaker.

So as I said, this is an opportunity whereby the government can incorporate some of these requirements as part of this program, Mr. Speaker, and also incorporate the safeguards against perceived favouritism in awarding of grants and that sort of thing, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues have already outlined.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that most of the existing concerns and questions that we might have with this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, can be dealt with in committee. So at this time I would move that this Bill move to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 35, The Infrastructure Fund Act be now read a second time. 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: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that Bill No. 35, The Infrastructure Fund Act be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 35 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in order to accommodate the good work of the Standing Committee on Human Services as well as the Standing Committee on the Economy and the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, to permit them to meet later this day, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved this House be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly

to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:48.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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