



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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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
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
Heppner, Nancy	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, 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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 310:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 310 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from North Dakota, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Wynyard, Foam Lake, and Quill Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan asking that the government maintain full service of the SaskPower office at Rosetown. 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 action to keep the SaskPower office in Rosetown open to provide full service to the community and surrounding areas.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

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

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 dangerous practice of transferring patients from one ambulance to another on the highway. 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 cease the transfer of patients from one ambulance to another while en route.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Chaplin. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I present a petition with citizens concerned of the safety when driving on Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Watson, Muenster, Humboldt, Saskatoon, and Rosenfeld. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the condition of Highway 18. 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 invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 18 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and business.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Radville, Gladmar, and Minton. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I rise with a petition from citizens of the Southwest that are very concerned that the withdrawal of lab services at the Lafleche and District Health Centre would cause undue hardship to residents, especially our senior citizens. 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 actions to ensure that lab services are continued at the Lafleche and District Health Centre.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Lafleche. 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 southwest Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of the rural school closures. 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 actions to ensure that the Limerick School remains open.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Lafleche, Assiniboia, and Limerick. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring forward a petition from citizens concerned with Highway 368, starting 4 miles south of Lake Lenore to 4 miles south of St. Brieux, and it has seriously declined over the last number of years and endangers the safety of drivers and harms economic growth in the area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 368 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

And is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Lake Lenore, St. Brieux, and Prince Albert. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition of citizens urging government to keep rural schools open:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Imperial, Govan, Nokomis, and Drake schools remain open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present a petition regarding the new neighbourhood of Stonebridge, a neighbourhood in my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. This petition requests an allocation of funding for an elementary school in that neighbourhood. I will read the prayer:

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 the Stonebridge neighbourhood.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Stepney Crescent in Stonebridge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the Assembly to present a petition calling on the government to fund the cancer drug Avastin. And I'll read the prayer:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Weyburn and from Radville. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my distinct honour to introduce to you and all members of the Legislative Assembly a very large group of 23 public service employees who are visiting our legislature today.

These individuals are involved in doing valuable public service on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan and they also assist elected officials in moving public policy forward in the province of Saskatchewan.

They're here today to have a look at the behind-the-scenes inner workings of the Legislative Assembly, to observe the proceedings in the House and to visit with you, Mr. Speaker, and to visit with the Government House Leader and myself.

I want to take a moment on behalf of all citizens in our province to thank these public servants for the work that they do each day in the province of Saskatchewan on behalf of the Saskatchewan public.

Mr. Speaker, we have individuals who are from the Departments of the Environment, Government Relations, Health, Highways and Transportation, Industry and Resources, Justice, Learning, and this Legislative Assembly. I look forward to meeting with this group of public servants after question period. And I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome the public servants to the legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with the minister in welcoming this contingent of public servants to their legislature this afternoon. I look forward as well to meeting with them later on this day to face the scrutiny of the public servants which are so integrally important to our province and to the delivery of programs in our province. I look forward to the opportunity to meet and discuss the role of the official opposition with the members of the public service. And I'm glad that this program is available to our public servants to enlighten them as to what happens in the marble palace. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House a couple of new constituents who have just moved to Regina Qu'Appelle Valley from Saskatoon Northwest, Richard and Joanne Lepp. And Richard is a retired Saskatoon city police officer and Joanne is a retired RN [registered nurse]. And they have come here; they're establishing a house of prayer, and will be keeping members of the legislature in their prayers — along with others who are part of their community. And so I'd like all of us here to welcome them and also to thank them for their prayers. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly my pleasure today to introduce 14 lovely ladies that are seated in your gallery. They are the Southey Red Hat Beauties. And they're here with us today to observe the proceedings in the House and they will be touring the building after they witness our proceedings here. And I will be meeting with them later, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this group initially formed back in September 2004 with 11 members. They currently tell me they have 20 members and each month two of the members take on the responsibility of coordinating activities. And the two members that are responsible for April thought it would be great to come and see what their elected members do, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask all members to help me welcome them to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Everybody knows me for prowess in hockey, but today we have a very special guest that's joining with us, who's also a

well-known, famous northern hockey player. In the east gallery is Louis Gardiner. Mr. Gardiner played many, many years in hockey throughout the North and was also a member of the Flin Flon Bombers when they were with the Western Hockey League.

And Louis, of course I asked him to sit in the Speaker's gallery, but Louis's so used to being behind me in hockey where I have, where I . . . He's used to my drop passes, Mr. Speaker, so he sat behind me. So I just wanted to ask all members to welcome Mr. Gardiner to the Assembly today and hope he enjoys the proceedings. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Yom haShoah

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, today is Yom haShoah, the Holocaust Memorial Day in Saskatchewan. This day is recognized in provincial statute as a result of legislation I introduced on behalf of the Jewish Congress and citizens of this province in 2001.

On this day we remember the millions of people whose lives were ended by the event of the Holocaust under the Nazis during their reign of terror from 1933 to 1945. This is a day for all of us to reflect on the systemic destruction of human life because of the hatred and the intolerance of the Nazi party, and in reflecting on those events, to consider the factors that led to such a horrific evil being visited upon humanity.

For those of us who live on these prairies so far from the killing camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek, it's hard to imagine the scale of the inhumanity that wrought itself into our civilization. But for those Canadian and Allied soldiers who helped liberate the camps and indeed any of us from later generations who have stood about the piles of ash and bone, I think we will never shed the images of such a despicable act. The pure banality of the camps, the simplicity of the plan, the ruthlessness of the barbarity belies the fact that these horrors, like so many since then, are simply a result of hatred and intolerance that today continues to live in the hearts of too many people around our world.

I would ask that all of us in the province today take the time to remember the 6 million Jews, the Gypsies, the disabled, the gays, and others that were killed by the Nazis' campaign of hatred, and reflect on what it is that we can do here at home to ensure the values of tolerance, multiculturalism, and freedom continue to prevail in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[13:45]

Blacksburg Massacre

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was with great shock and sadness that all of us have heard on the news today that a lone gunman has shot and killed at least 31 students and others on the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University campus in the town of Blacksburg. Police are reporting dozens of others are injured and the lone gunman is among the dead.

Mr. Speaker, although this tragedy has happened in another country and a state far from Saskatchewan, I want the people of Blacksburg, Virginia to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them as they struggle to make sense of this senseless and devastating act of violence against so many innocent people.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of this Assembly join me in sharing our deepest condolences with the students, professors, staff, families, and the citizens of Blacksburg. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of Saskatchewan Volunteers

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April 15 to 21 is National Volunteer Week. Volunteers grow community and in Saskatchewan that is especially true. As we look back on the proud history, we see very clearly that helping others is something that just comes naturally to the people of this province.

These volunteers are the foundation for more than 5,000 incorporated charities and 12,000 cultural and recreational organizations here in Saskatchewan, and represents over \$3 billion annually in delivery of services and programs to Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, it's the enthusiasm, energy, and commitment of our volunteers that enables these thousands of community-based organizations to provide services and support to hundreds and thousands of Saskatchewan people.

As Chair of the Premier's voluntary sector initiative, I am extremely proud of the work that has been done by the members of the joint steering committee. They are strengthening the relationship between government and Saskatchewan's voluntary sector to assist volunteer organizations in effectively fulfilling their mandates. By engaging the voluntary sector we lead the nation as a provincial example of how to bring government and voluntary sectors together. By fostering a greater and richer understanding of each other's processes and challenges, we create yet another innovative first.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing our volunteers and their enormous contribution in making Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and build a future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Panther Drilling Launches New Rig

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday of last week the member from Estevan and myself had the pleasure of attending the launch of Panther Drilling rig no. 2. Mr. Speaker, the opening took place at Panther Drilling's shop yard a few miles east of Weyburn on Highway 39.

Mr. Speaker, Panther Drilling is a locally owned and operated drilling company, but what sets Panther apart is the fact that they built their rigs at Weyburn. Mr. Speaker, Panther rig no. 1 is already hard at work in the patch, having been launched last October.

Mr. Speaker, Panther is owned by a number of local investors and is operated by co-founder and president, Bob Schad. The completion of rigs no. 1 and no. 2 speaks to the hard work, ingenuity, and entrepreneurial spirit of so many people who call Weyburn and area home, and who have for more than a half a century worked so hard to develop our oil resources in the Southeast.

Rather than wait the 12 to 18 months wait for a rig to be built in Alberta, these local investors decided to build locally using local workers and suppliers including but not limited to Demby Trailers, Southern Industrial & Truck, Myrglod Steel & Metals, T S & M Supply, Jerry Mainil Ltd., and others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today in congratulating Bob Schad, his partners, employees, and suppliers of Panther Drilling on the launch of rig no. 2.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on Friday evening I, along with my colleagues from Regina Elphinstone-Centre and Meadow Lake, had the pleasure and the privilege of attending the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network or SALN Spring Gala.

Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure you're aware, literacy means much more than the ability to read and write. It is the ability to understand and to use written information, whether at home, at work, or in the community. Literacy helps build a healthy province with a skilled workforce and a strong economy.

Mr. Speaker, all across the province the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network is enabling literacy programs, connecting with decision makers to garner support for literacy, and providing new opportunities for learners. Their work is exemplary, Mr. Speaker. Through their efforts, the SALN is elevating the discussion and activity in First Nations and Métis communities across the province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, cuts to the federal literacy project funding have made the future of this valuable organization uncertain. For our part, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of literacy and is working closely

together with partners like the SALN to help equip Saskatchewan people with the skills and abilities to build strong futures here in the province.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the SALN for their ongoing dedication to the promotion, development, and delivery of literacy programs and services for First Nation and Métis people in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Country Music Awards

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a night to polish up your cowboy boots and put on your cowboy hat while listening to the best country music west of Nashville. I am speaking of course about the 18th annual Saskatchewan Country Music Awards that took place last night at TCU Place in Saskatoon. I had the privilege of attending the event along with the Premier.

The awards provide an opportunity to support the talented musicians and performers we have in our great province and recognize their achievements. Congratulations to Brad Johner, who picked up five Mikees including the Humanitarian Award. Donny Parenteau won four categories including Aboriginal Artist of the Year. My good friend Jessica Robinson was named Female Vocalist of the Year. Rising star was Kal Hourd and group of the year, The Poverty Plainsmen. CJWW's Dawn Woroniuk was recognized with the Achievement Award and very deserving artists such as Codie Prevost, Blaine Yandt, and Bart McKay also took home awards.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that the Premier was there. I caught him singing along to several songs when Jessica Robinson played her hit, "Smoke and Mirrors." I'm sure the Premier was thinking of the Finance minister's budget. When Brad Johner played "Hard work [ain't] never hurt nobody, but I would rather be lucky," I'm sure the Premier thought of the last election.

The sad Dierks Bentley ballad summed up the next election for the Premier, "It's a long . . . [long road] alone," when he finally goes to the Lieutenant Governor to call the election. But that's okay because the Saskatchewan residents singing Paul Brandt's "Alberta Bound," they will soon be singing Martina McBride's "Independence Day" under a Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Premier's Regina Business Dinner

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday night well over 1,000 people gathered together to hear the Premier talk about this government's vision for the future of this province. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was record-breaking attendance at the Premier's Regina Business Dinner.

The Premier talked about how exports are up. Oil production is up. Capital investment is up. Farm cash receipts are up. Urban housing starts are up. Value of building permits are up and retail sales are up. He went on to talk about how the average weekly earnings of Saskatchewan citizens are up, how jobs are way, way up. And of particular note was the fact that youth employment is up over 11,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — All of which goes a long way towards explaining why Saskatchewan population is going up, Mr. Speaker.

There was applause from the business community when the Premier talked about the business climate here in the province with a reduction in PST [provincial sales tax], reduction in business taxes, reduction in personal taxes, reductions in small-business taxes. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the business climate that this government has helped to create and all the people that are moving here to take advantage of it, the room could only nod in agreement when the Premier's statement that the focus of this government was to make Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing missing from the great dinner was the attendance of the members of the Saskatchewan Party. But then again, they wouldn't have liked the menu. They are only hungry for power.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Former Minister's Relationship with Murdoch Carriere

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from one of the victims of the Murdoch Carriere case, and it's dated April 13, 2007. The letter describes first-hand knowledge of a close relationship between Murdoch Carriere and the former minister of the Environment. And I quote, "... the relationship between Mr. Belanger and Murdoch Carriere was clearly a close friendship."

The letter says the former minister was a frequent visitor to Mr. Carriere's office and that the two of them had frequent conversations about personal topics. The letter states that many others besides the victims were aware of this close friendship. Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister for PSC [Public Service Commission] repeatedly deny this close, personal friendship?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I have said in this Legislative Assembly, ministers of the Crown come to know the public service in the province of Saskatchewan. You come to know people who work at senior levels of your department, and you do have conversations with them about various public policy issues. Now does that mean you have a close, personal friendship? It does not. What it

means is that you have a professional relationship.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have tried consistently to indicate that Mr. Carriere was some sort of NDP [New Democratic Party] insider. In fact I believe that they are running ads on television indicating this, and I want to say to the public this is simply inaccurate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, let me quote again from the victim's letter. And it says:

We felt it was important to clarify this point because the Minister for the Public Service Commission continues to say that Murdoch Carriere wasn't a friend of the government. This isn't true.

These women know the truth, and they want the truth to be made public. So I ask the minister, why is the minister continually downplaying the friendship between the former Environment minister and Murdoch Carriere?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Obviously the member will want to table that letter since she's read from it which is proper protocol in the House. But I will say this, that one of the things that we're looking at in terms of amendments to occupational health and safety legislation is what I call abuse of authority or intimidation tactics, where people use their position to intimidate others by saying well I know so-and-so.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the occupational health and safety legislation at the moment only applies to those grounds as defined in the Human Rights Code. We believe that the anti-harassment legislation needs to go much farther so that no one in the workplace can be engaged in what I call abuse of power or bullying tactics or intimidation tactics. And I would urge the members opposite — particularly that member — to support any amendments that we bring into this House so that we really do protect workers in this province from abuse of power.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the victims are listening to the minister's responses very carefully, and they're angry with those responses. Mr. Speaker, let me quote from *Hansard* from April 11 when the minister says, and I quote, the members:

... of the opposition continue to insinuate that Murdoch Carriere was the buddy of people in this cabinet. I want to say to the public — because I think it's important to know that it is a continuation of misinformation that is coming from members of the opposition — there isn't one person

on this side of the House that was a buddy of Murdoch Carriere.

Mr. Speaker, the victims disagree. Is the minister accusing the victims of spreading misinformation?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I know this. I regularly get telephone calls into my constituency office and my cabinet office from citizens who indicate to my staff that I am a friend. Mr. Speaker, I know what a definition of a friend is. A friend is someone that you might go on holidays with. You might invite them to your home for supper. You might visit with them. You have a relationship between their family and your family. That is a friendship, Mr. Speaker.

Now we have professional relationships that take place in government between ministers and senior officials. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that what this really speaks to is people who abuse their power and authority in the workplace by indicating that they know people in high places, and that is an intimidation tactic, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we have to end in this province, and that's why we need to amend the legislation to protect the very people who believe in that workplace that somehow Mr. Carriere had a relationship with the government that he clearly did not.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, either the minister is spreading misinformation or the victims are. The victims say that Murdoch Carriere was a close friend, had a close friendship with the former minister of the Environment. That's not me; that is the victims of this man who are saying this. The minister said that he didn't.

Mr. Speaker, the women are watching question period daily. They're likely watching today. Will the minister admit that she is wrong?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again. People who use their position in management to intimidate workers by saying they know people in high places, that's intolerable, Mr. Speaker. And workers need to be protected from that. And that's why we are seriously considering amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation so that that kind of behaviour would clearly be harassment and so that those workers would be protected.

I say this again, Mr. Speaker. It came to our attention. We read it on the front page of *The StarPhoenix*. And we fired him, Mr. Speaker, because behaviour like that is unacceptable in a free and democratic society, and we need to protect those workers. And I ask the member opposite, do you concur?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I just wish to remind the minister of maintaining all of her remarks through the Chair. The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Response to Harassment Complaints

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the very same letter points out another issue: the women believe Murdoch Carriere was rewarded for harassment. Let me quote from the letter: "... we believe giving Murdoch Carriere \$275,000 plus lots of money added to his pension is REWARDING harassment."

Another victim on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] last Thursday said, and I quote, "They paid Murdoch \$275,000 for assaulting women. That just gave him all the more power."

Mr. Speaker, these are the words of the victims, not of the official opposition. Why does the NDP government continue to deny that they rewarded harassment?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I can clearly understand why someone might think that \$275,000 is an outrageous amount. I concur. But the reality of the matter is this. Mr. Carriere had been punished for his behaviour by being demoted and suspended for three months. When the government learned of his behaviour, he was fired. He was punished twice for the same event.

Mr. Speaker, clearly Mr. Carriere had a cause of action against the government for not only dismissal but also, Mr. Speaker, because of defamation of character. His personnel file ended up on the front page of the newspaper. Mr. Speaker, he sued *The StarPhoenix* and other media. They settled for a substantive amount, not for harassment but for what they reported on the front page of the newspaper. And the Government of Saskatchewan settled with him, not for harassment but because we fired him incorrectly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the letter states, and I quote:

Murdoch Carriere should have been fired with cause many years ago. If he would have been fired with cause, he would not have received a penny in compensation. This is what SHOULD have happened.

The letter goes on to state that there are more than just nine women in the Gillies report who were harassed by Murdoch Carriere. Mr. Speaker, will the government admit that their inactions on this file has resulted in more women being harassed?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Carriere should have been fired by the deputy minister. He was not. He was suspended without pay and sent to Regina. Mr. Speaker, when the government of the day learned of this, we directed that he be fired. Anti-harassment policy is to be enforced. There is no tolerance for harassment in the province of Saskatchewan in our public service workplaces. We have changed the policy. It is zero tolerance for harassment.

But I want to ask the members this. Are they prepared to support the government's introduction of amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation so that we have the best anti-harassment provisions in all of North America, Mr. Speaker? That's what I want to know. Put your money where your words are.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the victims also say they were insulted by the Premier's response to their concerns. Again I quote from the letter, "We could not believe that even the Premier turned his back on us in March of 2003."

Mr. Speaker, I've read the letter the victims wrote to the Premier on March 10, 2003, and there is no way anybody could have claimed they didn't understand the seriousness of the complaints raised. Yet the Premier, in his famous do over scrum after hours on March 16, claims he had no idea about the extent of the allegations raised until he read the April newspaper story.

The victims said the Premier turned his back on them again when he made that claim. Mr. Speaker, why has the Premier repeatedly turned his back on women and Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, surely the opposition raises these issues in the Assembly to affect public policy, to lead to public policy change. Mr. Speaker, we are going to introduce amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation to go further than other jurisdictions in North America to protect workers from abuse of power.

Is this, Mr. Speaker, about the opposition's caring concern for workers in the province, or is it about their own bottom line? Are they wanting to protect workers and affect public policy or are they not?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister wants to know what this is about. Well yes, it's about the things the minister has highlighted. But it is also about getting answers

and some justice for nine victims of harassment done by this gentleman, Mr. Murdoch Carriere, Mr. Speaker. That's what it's about. This letter from victims utterly and completely contradicts the statements that have been made by that minister and by that Premier about the closeness of the former minister and Mr. Carriere, Mr. Speaker. It highlights completely and utterly the disappointment on the part of the victims and that Premier's lack of response to the issue.

Will he now agree to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker? Will he call an inquiry by the appropriate committee of the legislature into this scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we need to affect change in this province so that people cannot use their authority in the workplace to intimidate workers, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that there are some people that use their knowledge of knowing someone as an intimidation tactic, Mr. Speaker. That is clear.

Now what I will say to the members opposite, is this about affecting public policy? Is it about changing public policy, or is it about ads on television, pamphlets on your doorstep to try and enhance their own political hides, Mr. Speaker? I think, Mr. Speaker, it's about the latter. It's not about affecting public policy and having the best occupational health and safety legislation when it comes to harassment in North America. That's what I think.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Here's what it's about for this particular victim — the minister is asking some rhetorical questions — she writes:

We ask that the details of this harassment be brought to light. We feel we do not have to testify about what was done to us by Murdoch because some of that is already known. We do want answers from people who ignored us for years and did nothing to stop the harassment. Many people know the truth. We support an independent inquiry or some sort of process that will get to the truth because people deserve to hear it.

Close the quote, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier agree with this victim?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if you have an inquiry, you call all of the people involved to testify before an inquiry. That's sort of how it works, Mr. Speaker. You can't

have half of an inquiry.

Now I'll say this. In 1993 there was no protection for workers in this province when it came to sexual harassment. We introduced amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation on human rights grounds. But, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity here to go beyond and to develop good public policy where managers cannot use abuse of power and authority on workers, Mr. Speaker. They can't intimidate them or bully them.

And I guess I ask the members opposite, do you in principle agree that we need to amend the legislation so that no other member has to stand in this House and talk about some manager that used his authority to intimidate workers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, even more important — as important as it is — than the proper legislation and the proper regulated protection for all workers in the workplace against harassment, is a government, Mr. Speaker, that's prepared to enforce it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — This government, this government, this government failed in this case back to 1994, Mr. Speaker, 1994. The member for Kelvington has asked some very basic questions on this count. When these instances occurred back in 1994 the question that has been asked of this minister and never answered is, will she conduct an investigation into why nothing was done back to then? Better yet, again to the Premier, will he do the right thing and hold a special inquiry into this scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2002 an official complaint was launched. It was investigated by Mr. Gillies. He was suspended without pay on February 12. That was unacceptable to the Government of Saskatchewan and he was fired, Mr. Speaker. He was fired.

Mr. Speaker, the anti-harassment policy was changed, and the anti-harassment policy has led to significant improvement in terms of how workplace harassment is dealt with in the workplace. But, Mr. Speaker, I find one of the most difficult questions is this whole abuse of power and authority to intimidate workers, and I find that unacceptable. And I ask the members opposite: we are going to introduce some amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation to protect workers; will they support it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Here this minister and this government are unable or unwilling to enforce the protection that is already there. Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier of the province, will he direct his minister, the Minister of the Public Service Commission, to hold the proper investigation to direct her officials to find out what failed these women back to 1994? And again to the Premier, will he do the right thing in light of the utterly contradicting evidence presented in this letter from what his own ministers have said, will he hold an independent inquiry, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, there are events that unfold in the province of Saskatchewan and elsewhere that none of us like, none of us like, Mr. Speaker, but we have a real opportunity here to go beyond the existing provisions of the legislation and protect workers, Mr. Speaker. We have that opportunity as legislators.

Mr. Speaker, why would they raise these issues if they don't support changes? We need to change the legislation, Mr. Speaker. Will the members opposite support those changes that further protect workers in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to those changes, what is being proposed. We look forward to looking at them to see if indeed they can strengthen protection for workers. But even more important than that, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of the province — these victims and other folks in the public service — look forward to a change in a government that's actually prepared to enforce the protection that's there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And on that note, Mr. Speaker, on that note it was interesting. I understand that just before question period the Minister of Finance has ruled out, has all but ruled out a spring election. Isn't that interesting? The Minister of Finance earlier this day apparently all but ruled out a spring election.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Is he still in charge of things over on that side of the House, and will the Premier, for the people of this province, rule out dragging this term out into its fifth, tired, old year, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition has spent over a month on this subject. And, Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition have spent, I would suggest, over \$100,000,

probably hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money on ads and newspaper ads and stuff in our mailbox — lots of trees going to waste, Mr. Speaker. They're using taxpayers' money. But this is my question: why would the opposition sit on their hands when they continue to raise this issue, when they have a real chance to bring . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order. Once again the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, why would the members of the opposition sit on their hands when they have a real chance to protect workers? Mr. Speaker, is the limit of their concern to harassment in the workplace really about the Sask Party's bottom line? And if it is, I say shame, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Election Timing

Mr. Wall: — What a really ridiculous answer, Mr. Speaker. It's difficult for the opposition to react to changes that the minister's proposing until they're actually proposed and laid on the Table, Mr. Speaker. I would point that out to her.

I would also ask the Premier to answer the previous question. His Minister of Finance has apparently decided to call the next election. The Minister of Finance has all but ruled out a spring election. The Premier and the Minister of Finance are now talking a lot about dragging this tired, old NDP government into its fifth year. My question to the Premier is this: will he commit to an election within the four-year term of this government, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition and all members, yes, I'm still in charge of calling the election in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, when that election is called and the results are tallied, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The deputy of the opposition doesn't want to hear this answer, Mr. Speaker, because what I'm going to tell him is this. When I call that election and the votes are counted, you know what, Mr. Speaker? I'll still be in charge of calling elections in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier just said was true. After the next election you see, Mr. Speaker, a brand new Saskatchewan Party government is going to bring into effect in this province set election dates so all of the taxpayers and private citizens will know when and be in charge of when the election is going to be held in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, importantly to the Premier, importantly to the Premier. He has mused increasingly of late about dragging this government into its fifth term, and we could go through all the times, all of his . . . into a fifth year, Mr. Speaker. All of his quotations prior to the election in 1991 were about the importance of a government not dragging things out into a fifth year. He said he was opposed to that. Is he still opposed to that? Will he commit to having an election within four years of the previous election in '03, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is clear I think to all members that the Leader of the Opposition's feigned interest in public policy soon, soon resolves to an interest about electoral politics, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker, my confidence about the future of the New Democratic Party government in this province grows on a daily basis. I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker: because here's an opposition who sees themselves slipping in the polls on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker.

What's the proof of that? What's the proof of that? Mr. Speaker, any opposition that raises its funds through trips to Augusta, Georgia, sends its leaders over to Calgary and Edmonton so they can scoop up all this money so they can begin to run negative ads way before the election campaign — that, Mr. Speaker, is a political party that's in trouble. This opposition's in trouble.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that's going to continue to govern for good public policy for the benefit of Saskatchewan people because, Mr. Speaker — let me say this again — our interest is in Saskatchewan people; their interest, in the Saskatchewan Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — For ministerial statements, the Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would seek leave of the House to make a statement of condolence, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to make a statement of condolence at this time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

CONDOLENCES

The Honourable J.E.N. (Jack) Wiebe

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness today that we mark the passing of the Hon. Jack Wiebe, former lieutenant governor, great friend to the people of Saskatchewan.

John Edward Neil Wiebe was a Saskatchewan-born farmer and politician. He served as our 18th lieutenant governor from 1994 to the year 2000. As members well know, and so do the people of Saskatchewan, during his time as lieutenant governor he embodied the very essence of what we have come to expect from the position of lieutenant governor. He represented the Crown with dignity, grace. He represented the people of this province well, displayed the fundamental spirit of what it means to be from Saskatchewan.

Jack Wiebe's trademark was his great affection for people. He brought the viceregal role alive for everyone he met, from schoolchildren to farm families to senior citizens. He never seemed to tire of meeting with people from around the province, and he was always willing to spend time with our citizens.

Jack often said that as he travelled this province, he was constantly amazed at the resourcefulness of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Wiebe was also one of those remarkable and resourceful people who never forgot his Prairie roots.

In the year 2000, Mr. Speaker, he was appointed by then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to the Senate representing the senatorial division of Saskatchewan. He resigned from the Senate in 2004. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wiebe made a better life for others through his service and dedication to the role of lieutenant governor and senator. He was truly a role model for this province and a champion of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Wiebe was inducted into the Order of St. John of Jerusalem on October 21, 1994, and he holds the grade of Knight.

Mr. Speaker, our prayers and our sympathies go to Jack's family, to Ann and their entire family. And I would ask that all members join with me today, perhaps following a comment from the opposition, from the leader, for a moment of silence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to offer comments of condolence.

The Speaker: — Granted. Leave has been granted.

Mr. Wall: — I also want to thank the Premier for sending this over prior to question period. And when I just read the heading, I was shocked and surprised. I hadn't heard the news yet. And it is truly sad news, not just for this Legislative Assembly and for the entire province but, I think, in a particular way for the city of Swift Current, for southwest Saskatchewan. Mr. Wiebe and Ann are constituents, or Mr. Wiebe was; Ann is a constituent living in the city of Swift Current. And it's truly a shock.

The last time I had a chance to visit with Jack was at the Remembrance Day ceremony, and it was a time that Jack, that Mr. Wiebe, I think, looked forward to. He was an honorary colonel — and I'm going to forget, Mr. Speaker, the regiment — but he was an honorary colonel, and he was there in full dress visiting with everybody that was waiting for the parade as he was certainly wont to do in all of his different public roles in the province. He was visiting with the firefighters that were there, members of the Legion of course, and cadets, making a special effort to do that, to visit with the cadets that were there getting ready to assemble for the Remembrance Day parade.

Both Jack and Ann have been leaders in southwest Saskatchewan and in the city of Swift Current in particular. Jack of course served as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in this Assembly, as the Premier has noted. The constituency, I think, was Morse. And the deputy leader has just commented to me while the Premier was making his remarks that Jack had told him once that he won his first election by 12 votes and earned the nickname Landslide Jack after that. And of course went on to various levels of great public service for the province. I would just simply, on behalf of the opposition, again thank the Premier for this chance to make a few remarks, and on behalf of all of us to offer our condolences to Ann and the family.

Ann, in and of herself, is a dynamic leader, a very strong lady. I know she was instrumental in helping get the safe shelter, crisis services line going — worked with my dad actually on some of those committees, and he would comment about Ann and the couple. So as strong as she is, this will be a very difficult time for her, and we offer her our condolences, and through her to the family. We thank them for the great sacrifice they made by sharing Jack Wiebe with all of us in as many roles of serving this Legislative Assembly, the Senate of Canada, and the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — By leave of the Assembly, at the request of the Premier and Leader of the Opposition, I would ask all members to rise at this time in memory of late Jack Wiebe, former lieutenant governor of Saskatchewan.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Speaker: — Thank you, and please be seated.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment.

Announcement of Green Strategy

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, April 12, Premier Calvert and I had the pleasure of releasing Saskatchewan's green strategy.

The Speaker: — Once again, order please. Order please. Just a reminder to the member about the use of other members' names in the proceedings of this Assembly. The minister.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The Premier and I had the pleasure of announcing Saskatchewan's green strategy. The green strategy is about making life better for Saskatchewan families by

conserving, protecting and, when necessary, restoring the air, land, and water of this great province.

The green strategy provides our province with a solid foundation for wise resource use, conservation, job creation, and building wealth. It's a vision for a greener future — a framework that sets out our long-term goals, our strategic outcomes, and the actions we will take.

The green strategy describes and builds on the things we already have in place such as the Office of Energy Conservation, our work on water conservation, the biodiversity action plans, SaskPower's wind energy development, and the work on carbon sequestration. We also have effective, province-wide recycling programs for beverage containers, used oil, scrap tires, waste paint, and end-of-life electronic equipment.

Our government recently committed \$5 million to protect the environment and address the effects of climate change. On Thursday, in support of the launch of the green strategy, we announced \$7.5 million in this year's budget's funding; \$4.9 million is for the Green Initiatives Fund, which through three strands will support the development, implementation, and promotion of environmental innovation. The fund will help communities adapt to climate change, conserve and protect water, and develop green agriculture and sustainable projects.

The green technology commercialization portion will help small- and medium-size businesses develop and sell green technologies. The green energy and energy conservation thread will directly assist homeowners and home buyers, agricultural producers, community and non-profit organizations produce alternative energy and reduce energy consumption.

We are also supporting a number of other projects. We are creating a Minister's Council on Sustainability and Climate Change that will be made up of leaders from across Saskatchewan. While much work has already been done, it will be helpful to have their advice on developing a sustainable future and on initiatives dealing with climate change as we move forward.

Saskatchewan students and schools will be able to compete for energy efficiency prizes by taking part in the climate change education challenge. We will work hard to have the people of our province understand what they can do and what others are already doing to help build a sustainable future.

We are providing funding to help communities safely collect and dispose of unwanted pesticide containers and other hazardous materials. We are enhancing the collection of air quality data from anywhere in the province accessible by roads. We'll be providing new funding to the Prairie Adaptation Research Centre for research on the impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies.

And we'll incorporate innovative green technology into provincial park facilities, showcasing green solutions for park visitors and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of park operations.

[14:30]

Recently the federal Environment minister and I announced \$44.4 million in funding for Saskatchewan for projects related to clean air and climate change. Within the next few weeks we'll be unveiling our sustainable energy strategy which will lay out our targets and describe our long-term plan for dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change.

Saskatchewan's green strategy is a solid platform to deliver our vision of Saskatchewan people working together to achieve improved human health and education and a thriving, sustainable economy all supported by a diverse and enduring environment. Each of us has a role to play in shaping our future, and each of us will benefit from the successes that a clean, healthy environment and a sustainable, vibrant economy offer. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On the ministerial statement, the Chair recognizes the member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was able to attend the green strategy launch last Thursday, and while there are some good initiatives that were outlined by the government, my concern is that there's no measurability in this document. There are no targets, no deadlines, no measurability. The announcement was a reannouncement of some initiatives from March and a pre-announcement of more announcements to come later this month. The NDP have announced in the last few weeks over \$12 million for initiatives and, as I said, a lot of these initiatives are very good, but they're not announcing what results they expect to achieve at the end of all of this.

We know that they are liking photo ops lately, and the NDP are bringing Al Gore to town apparently to educate people in Saskatchewan. Yet only a handful of people will be able to hear his message because the NDP agreed to Mr. Gore's media ban on the performance.

The minister's statement today says that the green strategy includes, and I quote: "a framework that sets out . . . long-term goals" except we have been unable to find out what those goals are. The document contains no specifics, no targets, and, like I said, no measurability.

Ann Coxworth, the program director for the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, had this to say about the green strategy, and I quote:

. . . I wouldn't describe it as a strategy. I think for a strategy, you need to have targets — 'This is what we're going to accomplish' — and then a road map as to how — 'This is how we're going to get there.' And I'm not seeing the targets . . .

The NDP have had 16 years to address climate change and environmental issues and have done very little. I found it interesting that the Premier was handing out energy efficient light bulbs the other day. And although the light bulbs are a very good idea, people had to get in their vehicles and drive down to the store to pick them up, so the Premier's photo op actually resulted in even more emissions going into our air.

Under the 16 years that this government has been in office, greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 62 per cent above . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the member for Martensville. Please continue.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the 16 years that this NDP government has been in office, greenhouse gas emissions have gone up by 62 per cent above 1990 levels — 62 per cent. It's staggering. It's one of the worst records of any province in this country.

And I found it interesting, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, in response to the non-aggression pact between the federal Liberals and the Green Party, the NDP leader, Jack Layton, said that he was shocked that Elizabeth May would support Stephane Dion. He was shocked because under Stephane Dion and the Liberals, when they were in power, greenhouse gas emissions rose by 30 per cent in Canada. I wonder if the NDP still has Jack Layton's support provincially considering their completely dismal record.

Mr. Speaker, we wait with great anticipation for the next . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. I'm certain that all members have some very important things to say. Member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We wait with great anticipation for the next round of NDP environment announcements, and hopefully they are more detailed, contain some goals and direction and targets and measurability, because this green strategy does not. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 63 — The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 63, The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 63, The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I will be tabling responses to written questions no. 1,100 through no. 1,104 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1,100 to 1,104 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 54 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel very honoured to be able to rise in the Assembly today and speak on Bill 54, The Labour Standards Amendment Act. This Act will give protection to reservists who choose to serve our country.

Mr. Speaker, I was very, very happy to see that this idea is being moved forward by the Government of Saskatchewan at the urging of people who are reservists in our province and also by the official opposition who in early, I believe it was early January, called on the government to bring forward legislation to protect reservists who choose to serve our country. I recall quite clearly the day that that press conference was held. There was the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Canadian Legion and active and former reservists who were calling on the government to support such legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think this legislation is very important. As an elected official in the province of Saskatchewan, I am aware that my previous job is protected, is guaranteed for me should the day come where I'm not an elected member of this Assembly. And I think that it just makes perfect sense that this should be extended to those who choose to fight for freedom and fight to protect our country in the name of the Government of Canada under the Canadian Armed Forces.

I briefly — I won't speak very long to this, Mr. Speaker — but I briefly want to mention a couple of people from the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency who I think deserve our protection in the province of Saskatchewan. The first is James Richards, Mr. Speaker. James was here in the legislature on

April 3 when this Bill was read for the second time. He was introduced by the Minister of Labour.

James is actually a college buddy of mine. He lived a couple doors down in residence at the University of Regina. James I believe is originally from Moose Jaw but he now lives in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. He works for the Southeast Regional Library. He supervises the rural library branches in the southeast system. James Richards is a sergeant and he is preparing to depart for Afghanistan with the Saskatchewan Dragoons and I wish Godspeed upon James and hope for his speedy and safe return.

And I also want to speak a little bit about . . . Mr. Speaker, I have a nephew. Well he's my wife's nephew. He's in his early 20s and last year he decided to — he's a reservist — and he decided to go overseas and serve his country. And he served with honour and distinction and I know our entire family is certainly very proud of him. And he came back home safely and we're certainly thankful for that.

Mr. Speaker, we, in preparing to bring forward our own legislation on this prior to the government's, we held our own consultations with reservists and former and active reservists and business groups, and we certainly would support this legislation. We do want to see what will come forward in the regulations as that will be certainly meaningful.

And I do also want to extend to the minister appreciation for allowing a staff member from the official opposition to sit in on, participate on a few meetings that were held in concert with his office. And we certainly appreciate that opportunity.

And I just personally want to thank the reservists in Saskatchewan who choose to serve our country, to go overseas and fight in the name of Canada and the name of freedom. It certainly takes a lot of courage. And we also express our condolences to our Armed Forces families who lost I believe eight members of the Armed Forces last week. And it's been an honour to speak on this Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am honoured to be able to participate in this debate on Bill 54. Mr. Speaker, I was surprised just prior to the end of this last year to learn of the holes in the protection that exists for reservists who wish to serve our country, both either in responding to domestic issues or to serve our country on an international basis.

As you will know, Mr. Speaker, there is a protection there. There's an employment protection for reservists when they are called to serve. But of course that is a rare, rare occurrence. Generally speaking, reservists are volunteering to perform duties on behalf of all of us domestically and internationally, and in that situation there is no protection.

And I was surprised to learn of that in a letter that I received from a reservist who wrote to myself and the minister, I believe, and I corresponded with him. We contacted those reservists and indicated that I personally would be interested in sponsoring a private member's Bill and/or working with the government on a

Bill that would achieve this kind of protection.

Specifically we wanted to look at issues of preserving tenure in education programs, tenure in unions, and of course employment protection. This Bill represents some progress — significant progress — and I congratulate the minister for his work on this, his earnestness to try to deal with this situation. And I agree with the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy. We appreciate the fact that our office has been included in the consultations that have occurred.

Mr. Speaker, lest anyone have a doubt at all, you don't have to do a lot of research to find out about the amazing impact that Canadians, that reservists have had here in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and around the world. You don't have to do a lot of research to find out the impact that reservists and regular Armed Forces are having today in Afghanistan.

You can measure that impact in the number of schools that are open, the number of young girls that are going to schools, the number of women professionals who now practise to the great benefit of society in Afghanistan, and even I would argue, Mr. Speaker, you could measure it in the number of terrorist training camps that are closed for business as a result of a presence there. The presence does not come without great cost to our country and, more significantly, to families of Armed Forces personnel, as the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy has pointed out, eight of whom passed away, died in action just last week in Afghanistan.

So we are very mindful of the sacrifice that reservists and others are prepared to make. The very least we can do is afford them employment protection so that while they serve in Afghanistan, while they serve elsewhere around the world or domestically, to the benefit of all of us, that they would have a job to come back to, that they would have protection in student tenure and some of the other issues that we raised.

So I'm pleased to support this Bill, to speak on the record on Bill 54, to congratulate the government for bringing it forward.

I would say this. One of the challenges of an opposition private member's Bill is that we're not obviously allowed to attach any expenditures of public purse to those Bills — understandably so. And so when we were contemplating our own private member's Bill, there was an element to it that would have . . . that we would like to have written into the Bill but couldn't, based on those rules. And that is the provision for some sort of an initiative, some sort of a program that would compensate employers, both public sector and private sector, co-operative sector employers who wish to obviously comply with this legislation, wish to support reservists, but who have some attendant costs with that, be they training, be they even succession planning, whatever it might be.

And we think because the numbers are relatively small, the number of Saskatchewan reservists who would be serving and who would be away from work, it would be very affordable. It would be achievable for the province of Saskatchewan, even perhaps to take a percentage of their salary — a small percentage of their salary — and provide that benefit to employers, public and private, and co-operative sector employers to provide for the training that's required for a

replacement and any other costs associated with this.

[14:45]

If there's even one concern I've heard from reservists — and I have fielded them; I'm sure the minister has as well, other members of this House — it's been that, if this protection is in place, will there be a reticence, a hesitancy on the part of employers who know that this Bill is in place to go ahead and employ a reservist?

I, Mr. Speaker, have a great faith in all of the employers of this province, both in the public sector and in the private sector. I believe that this protection will be supported by them, that they wouldn't even hesitate at it. However, Mr. Speaker, for those reservists who have raised that with me, one area, one advancement the government could take would be to provide some sort of perhaps training compensation when those reservists leave. And I'm thinking of, today, constituents who are in the provincial civil service who are . . . I also think of private sector employers. I think it would represent an improvement to this initiative.

Still, as it's written, as it stands before the Legislative Assembly, we support this Bill and we are grateful it's come forward. We think it's a good example of an idea that's brought forward by reservists, by those affected directly by their families, that find support from MLAs of different ideological beliefs and party stripe. It's how the system should work. And in this case, it's working for those among us who are prepared to sacrifice, who are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in the interests of freedom, in the interests of our nation of Canada.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, we will be certainly encouraging that this Bill move to committee and that it could be passed then as speedily as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Labour, Bill No. 54, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007 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: — Motion is carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I move that Bill No. 54, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 54 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: — Motion is carried. Bill 54 stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in order to accommodate the good work of the standing committees on both Human Services as well as Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, as well as the Board of Internal Economy, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:48.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
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Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
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