

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



NO. 47A TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007, 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Addey, Hon. GrahamNDPSaskatoon SutherlandAllchurch, DenisSPRosthern ShellbrookBeatty, Hon. JoanNDPCumberlandBeatty, Hon. JoanNDPCumberlandBeatty, Hon. JoanNDPCumberlandBeatty, Hon. JoanNDPCumberlandBorgerson, LonNDPSaskatoon NatanaBorgerson, LonNDPSaskatobawa RiversBrich, GregSPArm River-WatronsClivet, Hon. LoneNDPSaskatobawa Rivers/BittyCheveldayoff, KenSPCut Knic-TurklordClivet, Hon. LoneNDPSaskatoon Niver SpringsCline, Hon. FricNDPSaskatoon Massey PlaceCrofford, JoaneNDPSaskatoon Massey PlaceCrofford, JoaneSPCathingtonD'autemont, DanSPKeindersleyDraudo, JuneSPKeindersleyDraudo, JuneSPKeindersleyDraudo, JuneSPKeindersleyDaradom, JosonSPKeindersleyEndersleyNDPSaskatoon Nassey PlaceCrofford, JoneSPKeindersleyLandy WayeeSPCarningtonLandy WayeeNDPSaskatoon River SettyLandy WayeeSPCarningtonLandy CliveNDPKeistornHardy CliveNDPKeistornHardy CliveNDPKeistornHardy CliveNDPKeistornHardy CliveNDPKeistornHardy CliveNDPKeistorn<	Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have today to present to this Assembly petitions regarding a dialysis unit in the Broadview Union Hospital. And I 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 a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present today is signed by folks from the communities of Grenfell, Cowessess, Neudorf, and Grayson. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today. 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 ensure that the Maryfield School remains open.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the good people in the communities of Maryfield and Fairlight. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition from people who want the government to maintain full service of the SaskPower office in Rosetown. Mr. Speaker, they are concerned that the banks cannot accept payment if the customer doesn't have documentation, a service which the office supplies. 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.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the

communities of Herschel, Rosetown, and Zealandia. And I am pleased to present this petition 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 Central Butte. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who are petitioning the government for increased signage at the junction of Highway 6 and 39. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to increase highway signage at the junctions of 6 and 39.

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

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

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to present another petition from citizens of Biggar who are concerned about their possible loss of health care services. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to once again rise today to present a petition on behalf of frustrated parents across Saskatchewan who for the past eight

years have been lobbying this government for a dedicated children's hospital within a hospital in Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

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

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

The petitioners today come from the provincial constituencies of Saskatoon Sutherland and Saskatoon Silver Springs. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Saskatchewan people who are deeply concerned about the presence of sexual predators that present a threat to our communities and:

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 known sex offenders in their community as soon possible.

And is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good people of Prud'homme and Cudworth. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 20 be upgraded to primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by good citizens from the towns Drake, Lockwood, Jansen, and Dafoe and Young. 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 on behalf of citizens from the Stonebridge neighbourhood of the Saskatoon Southeast constituency. The petition calls for a school in that area. The prayer states:

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 Stonebridge.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Stepney Crescent and Martin Crescent in the Stonebridge area of Saskatoon Southeast. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to rise a petition, or 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 Radville, Gladmar and Minton. And I'm very pleased to present it.

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 Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House on behalf of my good friend, Mr. Trew, 22 students from Coronation Park Community School with their teachers Lisa Frei and the chaperone Noreen Faulconer. The member from Coronation Park will have the opportunity to meet with them a little bit later. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the House a young lady from Regina, Nataliya Pasichnyk. She is seated in the west gallery along with Angie Merasty who works in my office. I had the pleasure of meeting Nataliya along with other members of our caucus during one of the Premier's breakfast delegations.

Nataliya currently works for the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership which is also referred to as STEP. Nataliya

is originally from the Ukraine. She has been in Regina for five years now and is a constituent of the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

And prior to the Premier's breakfast delegation, Nataliya had never visited or toured the legislative buildings, so I invited her. So she's here today and very happy to see her here, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members of this House to join me in welcoming Nataliya to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce a noted First Nations artist and a constituent of mine from Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, Willard Ahenakew is the great great-grandson of Chief Ahtahkakoop. He has just completed a commemorative portrait of his great great-grandfather at the signing of Treaty 6 in 1876. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you and all members of the legislature to give Willard a warm, warm welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Ahenakew to the House. A copy of the painting is hanging in room 2 of this building. And I understand there's copies available. And without wanting to appear that I'm being a shill for someone, I would like to encourage members to go down there and have a look at. I went down. It's Mr. Sklar's office. And have a look at the print that's there. It's an interesting piece of Saskatchewan history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Equality Day

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, today a voter's declaration that includes the words, and I quote, "That I am of the male sex and of the full age of twenty-one years, [and] that I am a British subject and that I am not an Indian or a person of the Chinese race ..." such a statement would be considered offensive, discriminatory, and outrageous.

The passage that I just read comes from the 1909 Saskatchewan statutes. We have come a long way since that time, and one of the significant reasons behind this is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which was signed 25 years ago today, April 17. Among the rights signed into law 25 years ago are the freedom

to vote; the right to life, liberty, and security; the ability to travel freely; freedom of the press; and to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure, just to name a few.

It should also be noted that the equality section of the Charter, section 15, was proclaimed two years later on April 17, 1985. Hence today is known, April 17 is known as Equality Day. That section of the Charter outlines every Canadian's right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability.

Mr. Speaker, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a document that is uniquely Canadian and one that has changed our nation for the better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

International Day of Farmers' Struggle

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, for the past decade, members of the National Farmers' Union and other farm groups have commemorated April 17 as the International Day of Farmers' Struggle.

On this date in 1996, 19 members of a farmers' organization in Brazil were massacred when police opened fire on thousands of demonstrators demanding land reform. The victims were members of the Landless Movement of Brazil where 1 per cent of land holders own 50 per cent of the land. And the landless rural people are subject to torture and violence.

This day commemorates the tragedy and restates the importance of food sovereignty, of social and economic justice for farmers and farm workers worldwide. Policies based on a foundation of food sovereignty recognized the right of farmers to fair trade, the right to own land, to earn a reasonable income, and to practice stewardship in the interest of all people. And the words of NFU [National Farmers' Union] women's president, Colleen Ross, quote:

Food sovereignty gives priority to local and national economies and markets and empowers family farms while promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when our farmers are threatened by trade injury and so-called free trade agreements, by corporate control of the food system and by a federal government that dismantles their right to market collectively, I ask members to acknowledge the farm struggles and sacrifices of the past and the right of all farmers to a just future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

National Volunteer Week

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mother Teresa once said and I quote:

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.

This week, National Volunteer Week, is one in which we recognize those who live by this statement. Were it not for volunteers in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, our communities large and small would simply cease to function. Our volunteers do us proud every year and ensure that our communities are vibrant and prosper in ways we never dreamed possible.

They are active in both rural and urban Saskatchewan and repeatedly step up to the plate to fill the hundreds of roles needed to put on large events like Telemiracle, the Junos, national curling tournaments like the Brier and the Scott Tournament of Hearts and others.

They are also always there helping with fundraisers for sports teams, charities, food drives, and other worthy causes. Volunteers play important roles in our schools, hospitals, community centres, and neighbourhoods. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to come from a province where volunteerism is a commonplace and in fact where people volunteer at the highest rate in the entire nation. Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking all of Saskatchewan's volunteers for their selfless contributions to our province and our people. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Hemophilia Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is World Hemophilia Day, a day to raise awareness and dispel misconceptions about hemophilia, an inherited bleeding disorder that affects about 3,000 Canadians and an estimated 400,000 people worldwide.

This year's slogan is Improve Your Life! and builds on the World Federation of Hemophilia's strategic vision of treatment for all — a vision that aspires towards proper diagnosis, management, and care by a multi-disciplinary health care team for all those with inherited bleeding disorders around the world.

Here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, residents with hemophilia do have access to a multi-disciplinary health care team through the Saskatchewan bleeding disorders program at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. The program provides a team approach and offers the skills of experienced hematologists, clinical nurse coordinators, a physical therapist, and a social worker. Associated services include genetic counselling and dentistry.

The Saskatchewan bleeding disorders program partners with Hemophilia Saskatchewan to improve the quality of life for all

people with bleeding disorders. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the excellent work of the staff of the bleeding disorders program and also Hemophilia Saskatchewan and their employees and volunteers who work to support, educate, and provide hope for people with hemophilia. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to please join me in recognizing World Hemophilia Day. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Consul Midget A Rockets Capture Provincial Championship

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The village of Consul has another achievement to add to a recent hockey history that includes a Bantam provincial D championship in 2002-2003 and the hosting of the Freedom Cup versus Kazakhstan in 2002. Last month, the Consul Midget Rockets emerged the victors in the provincial A category — a category for towns with much larger populations than that of Consul — without losing a single game.

The results of this season are a testament to the talent and dedication of the players and the coaches. Consul, like many small towns, struggles to keep hockey active in the community. Their team this year included players from as far away as Shaunavon. Next year, they may not have a team in Consul, but this year they decided to go for it all.

The final game in the Consul arena was packed to the rafters with cheering supporters from Frontier, Shaunavon, and Maple Creek, as well as the usual locals. With the strong coaching of Palmer Wenzel and Bevin Funk and the inspired play of these 15- to 17-year-old boys, 10 of whom are in their senior year, they did capture it all — the league championship and the provincial championship.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate each of the players and the coaches on this very significant achievement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Defining Gutter Politics

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was one year ago that the Leader of the Opposition had to answer some questions around the definition of gutter politics, and he gave an interesting definition. He basically said that it's not gutter politics to simply ask a question even if that question is loaded up with all kinds of malicious accusations.

Mr. Speaker, in this definition, that allows the opposition to get away with so many of their recent drive-by smears when it comes to Murdoch Carriere. They keep making the accusation that Mr. Carriere is an NDP [New Democratic Party] insider when they have no proof to back it up. Perhaps the Leader of Was the Leader of the Opposition an insider when his former boss John Gerich went to jail for fraud, Mr. Speaker? I'm just asking. Was the member from Martensville an insider when her former boss decided to break his equalization promise to the people of this province? I'm just asking. Was the Leader of the Opposition an insider when he sent a memo for liquor to the civil service? I'm just asking.

The problem with dressing up drive-by smears as questions, Mr. Speaker, is that when it comes to being judged by your friends, the members of the opposition are at a significant disadvantage.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Public Response

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Premier doesn't agree with the cards the Sask Party is sending out on the Murdoch Carriere scandal. Based on the nearly 4,000 responses we've received so far, it appears that the Premier is in the minority.

I'd like to share some of these with the House today. Quote:

As a government employee who has been harassed sexually and emotionally by several directors, this is an outrage to all women, especially those that are brave enough to stand up for themselves.

Quote:

I work for the Department of Environment and did at the time of the "scandal." I saw first-hand how this rolled out and affected staff, then to hear what he received, JOKE!!! What does this say to the victims?

From Regina, quote:

This is a black mark against women employed by the NDP government. It shows that anything goes, as long as the employee is an NDP supporter.

From Saskatoon, quote:

As a retired woman in the workplace, this really concerns me. Regardless of what your lawyers tell you, Open Season has now been declared on working women.

From Regina, quote:

Rewarding a convicted person with this settlement is reprehensible. It clearly reflects the biased treatment of long time friends and colleagues, while the victims in this case were slighted. I look forward to the next election so I can express my feelings on the ballot.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on for an entire day sharing these

similars, but I'm out of time for today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Saskatchewan Government Insurance Rebates

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to bring forward a problem that is affecting people in this province and it's about SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] rebate cheques. Mr. Speaker, it appears that Community Resources regards the rebate cheques as income. This means that those that can least afford it are having money clawed back from them.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why this is happening and what he plans to do about it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously one of the things we want to point out to the people of Saskatchewan is that the Department of Social Services obviously looks at all incomes of all people. And what's really important is we want to make sure that the people that are receiving support in the province are able to adequately meet their needs but, quite frankly, that we have to make sure that to protect the taxpayers' interest is to make sure that there's no income coming from other sources.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that we're going to make sure that this doesn't create any undue hardship on the people, and we'll certainly take advice from the officials on what you'll do in the future when you get the SGI cheques as such. And I'll take notice of the question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how you take notice of an answer you've already given, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is completely unfair to the people receiving government benefits or assistance. For one, according to the NDP government, people receive this money because they were overcharged, using after-tax dollars. Now the government is calling it income. Yet these same people have no choice regarding the SGI's overcharging or the rebate. For instance we received a call from an individual on federal disability who is having the money clawed back because of the SGI rebate cheque.

Mr. Speaker, what does the minister plan to do about this problem and when will this government stop overcharging and taking money from people who can least afford it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I pointed out, I'll take notice of the question and I'll certainly get more specific answers as to what we'll do in the . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Minister for DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] can't answer the questions and is taking notice, perhaps the Minister Responsible for SGI would like to try answering this question because it's obvious this government rushed this political decision through and never gave any thought to how the SGI rebate cheques were going to affect people on assistance. They were more concerned about how to try and buy votes for the upcoming election with people's own money. Now those on assistance are suffering from this hasty and politically motivated scheme.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today that anyone on assistance will not have their money clawed back because of the government's initial overcharge and resulting SGI rebate cheques?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member opposite makes it very, very clear what the perspective of the Saskatchewan Party is on Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, SGI is a well-run Crown corporation that realized greater revenues than it needed in order to provide stability for rates — the lowest rates in Canada. The lowest rates haven't changed since the year 2000 except for to provide safe driver discounts and now the rebates and on top of that a rate reduction. That's a well-run Crown corporation.

But what does the opposition say about SGI — the Finance critic for the opposition on budget day and then he repeats it after. Surely I found it hard to believe that there was anybody in this entire legislature that didn't understand that the money that comes in to SGI for the Auto Fund come from only one source — from payment of fees — and can only go to one source. He says that they would not do it. If it was the Saskatchewan Party, if they had their way, there would be no rebates for the people of Saskatchewan, and this company is going to continue to operate in the best . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Saltcoats.

Crop Insurance Premiums and Coverage

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're getting calls from farmers all across the province that are very unhappy with the amount of premiums that they have to pay this year for crop insurance compared to the amount of coverage they have. Mr. Speaker, hard red spring wheat and canola are by far the largest two crops produced in Saskatchewan, yet Saskatchewan farmers are paying a lot more for less coverage than their Manitoba counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, our farmers have had to deal with world subsidies. They've had BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy]. They've had low commodity prices and now they're having to deal with an NDP government in Saskatchewan that really doesn't care about Saskatchewan farmers. Can the minister explain to the farmers of Saskatchewan why they have to pay more in Saskatchewan for less coverage than their counterparts in Manitoba?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very important that, I think, in talking about this issue that the member opposite should become informed about the process around crop insurance rather than just bowing to the lowest understanding and then try to perpetrate his story based on that lowest understanding.

He should know that with crop insurance, it has to recover its costs. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance has paid out significantly over the years and as a result of that we're in cost-recovery mode, Mr. Speaker. And in cost recovery we have seen this year that we have been able to also provide new programs, new opportunities in crop insurance, variable price program, Mr. Speaker, that is going to provide a benefit to farmers. And we think that crop insurance provides great service and will continue to, Mr. Speaker. And it will over the years — as we get good years — recover and rates will show correspondingly. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture minister doesn't have to tell farmers there's a variable price. There's a variable price and there's a variable coverage for the two provinces. Saskatchewan has high premiums and low coverage. Manitoba has a far superior program and by the way, that's also an NDP government. Isn't it funny how that works, Mr. Speaker.

Let's do a comparison, Mr. Speaker. In Manitoba, premiums for canola are about \$11 an acre for the farmer that called in and in Saskatchewan that same farmer is paying 12.50 an acre. In the event of a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, order. I would ask members to allow the member who's got the floor to put the question without interference. The member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba a premium for canola is about 11 bucks an acre; in Saskatchewan it's 12.50. The coverage in Saskatchewan is about \$148 per acre but in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, it's \$224 an acre. What does that tell you? It tells you the farmers on the Saskatchewan side are getting rooked by this NDP government.

What farmers are asking is: when will they make a parity between the two neighbouring provinces and put crop insurance on a level playing field?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there are a number of factors here, and certainly one of them is the amount of money that Crop Insurance has paid out to farmers over the last few years — significant dollars, Mr. Speaker. And in order to operate, this program has to recover its cost over a 15-year cycle, Mr. Speaker. And in order to do that the rates show what those cost recoveries are.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say clearly that this program that we have in the province, despite all of the money that has gone out over the years, has shown a creativity in trying to respond to the needs of the farmers in Saskatchewan.

As I said, we've got the variable price option. We have been expanding coverage to new crops. We've been responding to needs in southwestern Saskatchewan for establishment benefits, Mr. Speaker. This is a good, solid, responsive program, and it is federal-provincial, Mr. Speaker. These programs are comparable across the provinces.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture minister is not listening. There is no comparison in coverage, and there's no comparison in premiums. I'll give you another example, Mr. Speaker. The premium for hard red spring wheat in this province is 8.24 an acre for this particular farmer. For the same farmer on the Manitoba side, his cost is about \$4.85 an acre. That's almost half the premium that the same farmer is paying on one side from the other.

In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan farmer is paying about 40 per cent more for less coverage, Mr. Speaker. And when the case of drought or floods ... It happens on both sides of the border. It just isn't in Saskatchewan, and the Agriculture minister must be aware of that.

Mr. Speaker, how can our farmers compete with world subsidies and all the other things that have gone on when they have a government that doesn't care about them, when they have a government that wants to fill the General Revenue Fund on the backs of Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there are again a number of factors that impact, but we have to start with the base that this program has to recover its costs. And in this province we have paid out significant dollars over the last few years for frost, for all kinds of damage to crops, Mr. Speaker, and it has provided the service that farmers have needed.

Now it has to recover, Mr. Speaker, and the premiums reflect the fact that it has to recover. These are the federal-provincial rules that we have to live by, Mr. Speaker, as Manitoba has to live by, as Alberta has to live by. That's the way the program is structured.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we were going to talk about fairness across the country and we were going to talk about the situation in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, let's talk about equalization: \$2 billion, \$2 billion into Manitoba; next year here, nothing; this year, \$226 million. There's got to be a . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'm glad the minister brought that up because that reminded me of something else. When we have less coverage in the province of Saskatchewan, we're sending federal dollars back to Ottawa compared to what Manitoba gets put in from the federal government. If you want equalization, prop up crop insurance and the feds will put more dollars into Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, what we're dealing with here is one farmer, Mr. Speaker, one farmer on both sides of the meridian — Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The coverage on this side is far less than on the farmer's same land on the other side. Land quality doesn't change. The drought doesn't stop at the border. Frost in 2004 didn't stop at the border; it froze on both sides. And yet in Saskatchewan we cut coverage because we've had so many things go wrong. What on earth are they doing in Manitoba that we can't do in Saskatchewan, except neglect our Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well again obviously the member opposite is just trying to twist the situation here because, Mr. Speaker, this obviously is a situation where Crop Insurance must recover its costs. And in order to recover those costs, it's reflected in the premiums. That has been the way of crop insurance since it was developed. But I can tell you clearly that we have paid out significant dollars over these last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, since '03 the province, \$99.3 million in '03; 96.2 in '04-05; 78.3 in '05-06; 63.2 in '06-07. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at, when we look at that, Mr. Speaker, we can see that there has been huge, huge dollars put out into the farming community which we do care about and which we are trying to support by developing solid programs that they can count on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Environmental Issues

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday we saw the Premier and members of the cabinet at a glitzy launch for the province's green strategy. The announcement was a great photo op, but it lacked substance.

In Friday's *StarPhoenix* the headline read, and I quote: "Environmentalists slam province's green plan." Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Environmental Society thinks this green strategy is flawed because it lacks any targets.

My question is for the Premier: why does his green plan lack targets, goals, deadlines, outcomes, or any measurability?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the member opposite wasn't listening to the whole afternoon when she was there because what we've announced is that the green strategy sets the overall principles and we'll be setting out our targets around climate change and our sustainable energy policy very shortly.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a process that's involved many people across the province as we've developed this particular policy, and I encourage that member and her colleagues to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, this morning there was another article in *The StarPhoenix* again slamming the NDP's green strategy. The headline states, and I quote: "Gov't needs real green strategy." Mr. Speaker, the article goes on to say, and I quote:

If the goal of last week's announcement was to give the people of Saskatchewan the impression that the government is doing something meaningful to build a green economy, perhaps it is a strategy. But if the goal is actually to build a green economy, the strategy is a non-starter.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has a plan with real targets. Industry is required to start meeting these targets in July of this year.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier disagree with these environmental groups who condemn his green strategy?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this article that the member refers to also recognizes that my colleague, the member from Saskatoon, has been working on many of these policies. He's set out some very good information in his first report and we'll be looking forward to his second report.

But, Mr. Speaker, the real question for Saskatchewan people is: what does that member say about Kyoto? What's the position of that party? What's the position of the Leader of the Opposition? We have never heard anything from them about this, and we look forward to hearing as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what the minister's opinion is on Kyoto considering that, under the NDP watch, emissions rose by 62 per cent in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said that clean coal would be one of the most important ways the province would reduce its carbon emissions. But it seems that the Premier and SaskPower are not on the same page. SaskPower is the third worst polluter in all of Canada, but it doesn't even know if clean coal will go ahead.

Here's what the Leader-Post reported:

Despite the roughly \$20 million in work that's been spent on the project, Youzwa stressed that . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. Far too many side conversations going on makes it very difficult to hear. I ask the members to allow the member for Martensville to continue. The member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — And I quote the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker:

Despite the roughly \$20 million in work that's been spent on the project, Youzwa stressed that SaskPower is not committed to going ahead with clean coal.

That's coming straight from the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. His green strategy has no targets, no goals, no measurability. His Crown has no idea how to reduce carbon emissions. So I ask him, why is SaskPower now backing away from clean coal?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears that since the member from Weyburn left the research department over there, they haven't been able to replace anybody to actually do some research other than the *Leader-Post* or *The StarPhoenix*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can read that information too, and we are. But, Mr. Speaker, what we have been doing is working with the people of Saskatchewan, the experts, and also all of us across the province who have . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we've been working with the people of this province. And I ask that member and her predecessor as Environment critic, where is your position on all of these things? What is your plan? We look forward to receiving it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Heppner: — Well if the minister wants some help on this, I'd be happy to help him. But as the Government of Saskatchewan, it's his obligation to provide the people of this province with a plan.

Mr. Speaker, here's how out of touch this NDP government is. They say they have a strategy, but the province's foremost environmental groups slam it for not having targets. The province's largest emitter of carbon has no idea how it's going to reduce emissions.

The people of Saskatchewan need answers. Right now the NDP government's federal cousins are retooling clear air legislation that will affect this province, its industries, and its taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, without a real plan this province will be caught flatfooted.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain his inaction on this file to the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, stay tuned for the plan of this government as we will lay out.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have answered my own question that I asked a little earlier. There is no plan on that side. They don't want to reveal that there is nothing there, and so therefore I understand that they've changed the colour of the fruit in their

backroom. It's now green, lime. It's just as sour but it's not yellow like the old lemons.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Management of Harassment Complaints

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair would like to recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, after nearly six weeks of stubbornly defending Murdoch Carriere, the Minister of Public Service Commission has decided it's time to try to change the focus to bullying and intimidation in the workplace.

The Murdoch Carriere scandal is not the first case of harassment and bullying that's happened in the public sector under this NDP government. In December 2004 two employees from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region came forward with their stories of bullying in the workplace and how it was ignored even though it was brought to the attention of their supervisors as well as to the government MLAs and to cabinet ministers.

A supervisor in the health region continued in a supervisory role despite an external report that concluded he had harassed and bullied several employees. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party called on this government to act then on harassment in the workplace and nothing was done. Mr. Speaker, why has it taken this government so long to say they're finally going to work on this issue?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the members will know, if you look at the definition of harassment in the workplace, it is along the grounds that are contained in the Human Rights Code. And if you go across the country, all provinces with the exception of Quebec have definitions that are similar.

What the province is presently looking at is a strengthened definition of harassment so that issues around abuse of authority, intimidation, and so on could be contained within the legislative provisions of The Occupational Health and Safety Act, Mr. Speaker. At present, as I understand what employers look at when there's a case of an allegation of harassment, they look at the provisions of the present occupational health and safety harassment definition, and there are no provisions at the moment to protect the people that the member speakers of.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

April 17, 2007

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the members opposite about the case I'm talking about. Kevin Albert and Deseri Cooper worked as security guards for the health region. They and several other employees filed complaints with supervisors about on-the-job harassment and bullying in 2002.

An external investigation found out that harassment did take place. Yet the supervisor who was identified as a harasser continued in his role and continued to supervise those he had harassed. In this case, like the Murdoch Carriere scandal, the health region did have zero tolerance anti-harassment policies in place, and they were simply not followed.

If this government was truly committed to making changes, it would stamp out bullying and harassment in the workplace. Why didn't they do anything as a result of this serious case in 2004, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated to the member, if you look at the legislation it is clear that the definition is along the lines of the human rights provisions which deals with age, race, sex, religion, background, weight, and height.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think we have an opportunity as legislators in the province to seriously improve the definition of harassment in the province. And obviously, through occupational health and safety legislation and in terms of enforcement in the workplace, we have the Department of Labour with occupational health and safety people who are there to enforce occupational health and safety. But I would say this: that I do recall the member from Kelvington saying that we have too much red tape and regulation in the workplace when it comes to enforcing labour protection in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the bullying Kevin Albert suffered in the workplace drove him to a mental breakdown. He disappeared for two days and then left his then fiancée a suicide note. Deseri Cooper was on stress leave for at least four years as a result of the bullying and the region's failure to deal with it. We called for an external investigation into how harassment complaints were handled, but the Premier simply asked the health region to investigate it itself.

Mr. Speaker, we don't believe it's a good idea to send the same people back to investigate the work they've already done, and that is why — like in 2004 — we are calling for an investigation into the Murdoch Carriere case to find out exactly what went wrong so the problems can be fixed. The question is: why is this government refusing to hold an all-party investigation into the current scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the floor of this Assembly, members of the legislature heard that member refer to labour legislation as job killers. I think that we have heard the Leader of the Opposition refer to labour legislation — which protects all workers in the province whether they work in the private or public sector — they referred to that as job killers. And in fact the Leader of the Opposition went into Calgary to his business dinner and talked about the need to change labour legislation in this province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we look at labour legislation in this province, it is there to provide protection for workers that work both in the private and public sector, Mr. Speaker. What is their position? Should labour legislation only apply to the public sector or should it apply to the private sector as well? Put your position on the line, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I'll be tabling responses to written questions 1,105 through 1,116 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1,105 to 1,116 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 47

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 47** — **The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

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 participate in the debate and the discussion regarding The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, through the years, our courts have been called upon to . . .

The Speaker: — Are we ready? I ask members to come to order, please. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today to enter the debate regarding The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act. Through the years, we have well established jurisprudence dealing with tort law and entitling individuals to compensation where wrongful death has been caused through the actions or omissions of another party, usually referred to as the tortfeasor.

Compensation by the courts is restricted usually to whatever financial compensation is appropriate. The courts are unable to bring a person who is deceased back, and there's little else that the courts can do but offer financial compensation to the individual and the family members that are affected by this.

Unfortunately over the past number of years in our common law system, the jurisprudence has developed around what the economic loss is sustained by a family member regarding the death of another family member. And usually it's directly tied to the amount of money that that person had earned and what kind of financial support they were giving to other members in the family.

I'll give a few examples, Mr. Speaker. A dependent child in the early years may have a very large claim where a parent has been killed because that child will be looking to that parent for support for the rest of their growing years until they reach adulthood. So they will have lost all of the companionship, guidance, plus the financial support that that deceased parent has given them. And that is how the system is supposed to work.

The unusual situations are when the death occurs where a family member is not the breadwinner or a significant breadwinner. In the situation where a dependent child dies, the actual financial circumstances, when you look at it in the most callous way, is that the family unit is better off with the loss of a child because they do not have the cost of that upbringing. The courts do not wish to have a situation where there would be a reverse onus or something where the loss of a child would be regarded as something that would be regarded as desirable from a financial point of view.

Same situation happens where you have an adult that is dependent on, for whatever reasons, dependent on a parent or a child and may look to that person for ongoing financial assistance. So this Act sets out to deal with that by recognizing a specific set of damages where the courts will be entitled to award damages for — and I use the words — grief, loss of guidance, care, and companionship without having to prove specific economic loss or loss of income into the family unit.

This Act prescribes a specific sum of \$30,000 that would be payable to minor children in the unamended portion. This amendment really does only one thing. It removes the word minor so that damages would be payable to adult children as well in the event that they lose a parent through a set of accidental circumstances where there is somebody that is liable for having caused that accident, Mr. Speaker. So this is a relatively small amendment but does enlarge the group of people that will be entitled to receive damages as a result of the wrongful death of a family member.

Most MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and most of the people in this room are now at an age where they have lost one or more of their parents by natural causes, and most of us are at a situation where we have gone through that type of difficulty within the family. And as tragic and as difficult as that has been for many of us, it is even more tragic and more difficult to go through where the death is caused through the actions of another person through a motor vehicle accident or some other type of situation where there is a tortfeasor involved.

This Act will allow for some recovery, and it states that in the absence of being able to prove a specific financial loss, there would be a \$30,000 death benefit payable by the tortfeasor, the person that's responsible for this. This is a progressive piece of legislation, and similar legislation has been passed in other jurisdictions. It allows for a statutory benefit to be payable by the tortfeasor without proof of psychiatric harm or other loss by a psychiatrist or other health care professional. It recognizes what has really taken place and what trauma goes through a family when there's a death of a family member.

It may, Mr. Speaker, do lawyers out of some work. And in the view of many of my colleagues, they may regard that as a good thing. And I hear them saying, right on.

Some of the issues that arise around this legislation will be that it is retroactive to deaths that have occurred on or after August 1, 2004. There will be discussion about this when this Bill proceeds to committee, Mr. Speaker. And this is the type of legislation that we see coming in from other jurisdictions. It's something that our province has to look at as it brings itself into line with other jurisdictions and we try and have a court system and jurisprudence that is fair and representative of the current realities in our society.

So this is something that the opposition will be generally supportive, but we will have questions as we go into committee and in particular — and I want to make sure that we give the government reasonable and adequate notice — would be the timeline for when the retroactivity comes in to place. Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to allow this Bill to go to committee at this time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 47, The Fatal Accidents 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 Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that Bill No. 47, The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2007 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 47 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. Bill 47 is referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:30.]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Toth	
D'Autremont	
Hermanson	
Stewart	
Eagles	
Weekes	
Cheveldayoff	
Kirsch	
Brkich	
Morgan	
Duncan	
READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS	
Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
Yates	
Beatty	
Lautermilch	
Morgan	
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
Equality Day	
Morgan	
International Day of Farmers' Struggle	
Borgerson	
National Volunteer Week	
Eagles	
World Hemophilia Day	
Junor	
Consul Midget A Rockets Capture Provincial Championship	
Elhard	
Defining Gutter Politics	
Morin	
Public Response	
D'Autremont	
ORAL QUESTIONS	
Saskatchewan Government Insurance Rebates	
D'Autremont	
Belanger	
Hagel	
Crop Insurance Premiums and Coverage	
Bjornerud	
Wartman	
Environmental Issues	
Heppner	
Nilson	
Management of Harassment Complaints	
Draude	
Atkinson	
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	
Iwanchuk	
GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 47 — The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2007	
Morgan	
Quennell (referral to committee)	

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