



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

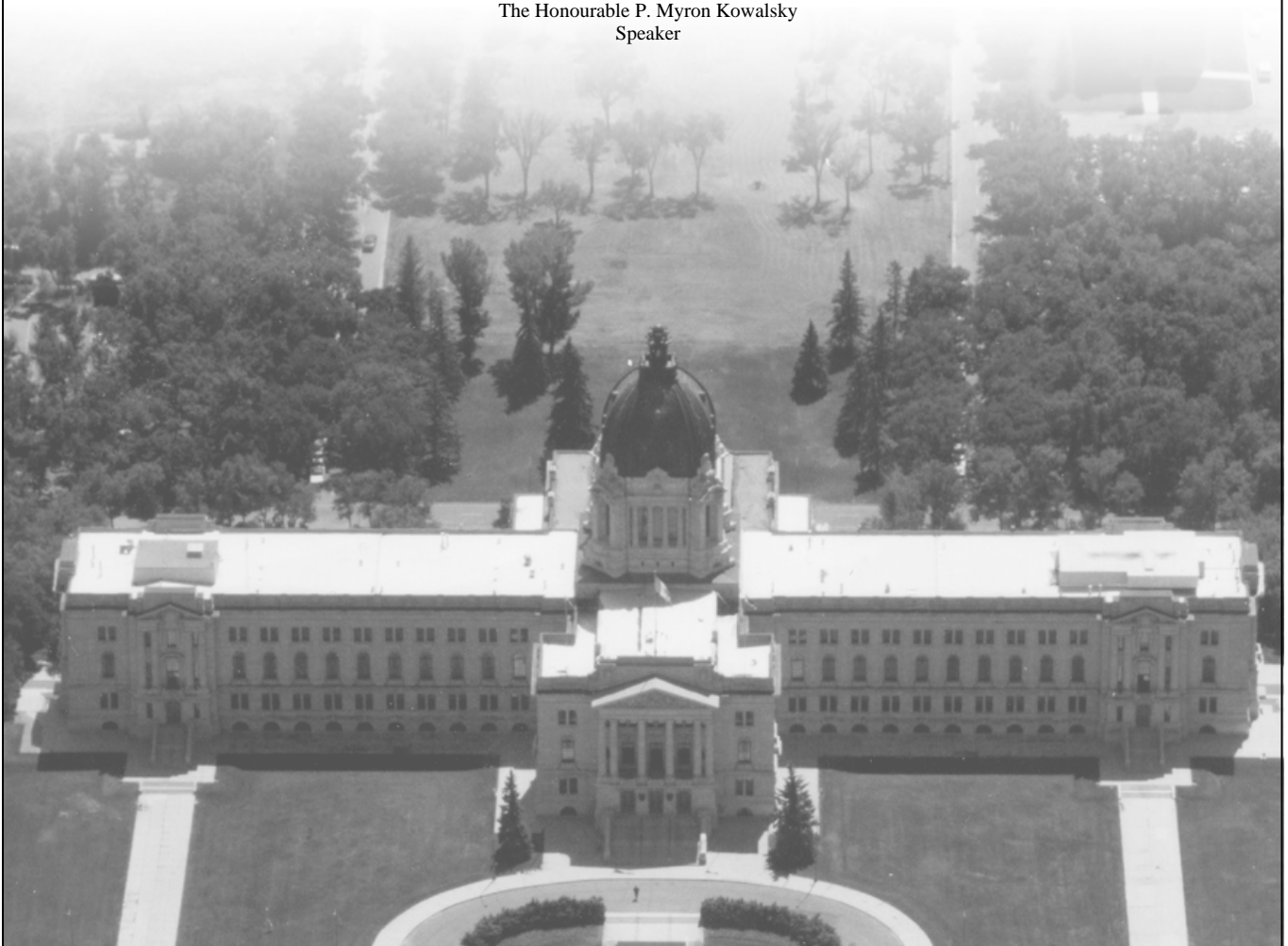
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of communities across the province faced a dark cloud yesterday afternoon as school boards across this province decided to perform the cowardly act of closing schools. And I read a petition from a number of people in regards to school closures. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Neville, Admiral, Climax, Tompkins, Piapot, and Richmond schools remain open.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present today is signed by the folks from the communities of Swift Current, Eastend, Gull Lake, Tompkins, Maple Creek, Oxbow, Yellow Grass, and Weyburn. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As indicated by my colleague, several communities and individuals have been traumatized by the announcement that their schools would be closed. I have a petition in that regard. I'd like to read the prayer which 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 Neville, Admiral, Climax, Tompkins, Piapot, and Richmond schools remain open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is not just signed by individuals from the school division of Chinook; it's signed by individuals from communities around the province including Tompkins, Shaunavon, Ponteix, Swift Current, Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency and elsewhere who are very concerned about the discontinuation of basic education classes at the Estevan campus of the Southeast Regional College. 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 ensure that basic education classes continue to be offered at the Estevan campus of the Southeast Regional College.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Estevan, Torquay, North Portal, Bienfait, Macoun, Frobisher, Carnduff, Beaubier, and Lampman. I so present.

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 upset about the closure of their rural service centre and environment office. 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 reverse the decision to close the rural service centre and environment office in Biggar.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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 southern Saskatchewan that are extremely concerned the withdrawal of lab services at the Lafleche and District Health Centre would cause undue hardships to residents, particularly seniors. 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 by the good citizens of Lafleche and Gravelbourg. 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 central Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of the health care system and the potentially dangerous situation that's happening in my constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. 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 improve timely access to medical

treatment.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures on this petition are from Leask, Shellbrook, Prince Albert, and other towns from my constituency.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today on behalf of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the undue hardships that'll be placed upon young students should their schools be closed. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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 Imperial, Govan, Nokomis, and Drake schools remain open.

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by citizens from Simpson, Lockwood, and Nokomis.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to read a petition about citizens that are very concerned with the closures that are happening of their schools. 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 ensure that Imperial, Govan, Nokomis, and Drake schools remain open.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions here with citizens that are very upset with the underfunding of the education system:

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.

These particular petitions are signed by the good citizens from Nokomis, Saskatoon, Govan, and Drake. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to present a petition requesting an allocation of funding for an elementary school in the Stonebridge neighbourhood of Saskatoon, in my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. The prayer for relief 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 Gordon Road in the Stonebridge area of Saskatoon Southeast. I'm pleased to present this on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition by people asking the government to maintain full service of the SaskPower office at 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 are from the fine community of Rosetown. And I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services is recognized.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 8, The Paramedics Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 8 be read a third time? Or when shall it be considered in Committee of the Whole? The

Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 8 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. Then when shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 8 — The Paramedics Act

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 8 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 61, The Vital Statistics Act, 2007 with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 61 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall the amendments be read a first time?

The Chair recognizes the minister.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 61 — The Vital Statistics Act, 2007

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 61 — The Vital Statistics Act, 2007

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 61 be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 62, The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 62 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of

Health.

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 62. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 62 — The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007/Loi de 2007 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Vital Statistics Act, 2007

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill 62 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 64, The Graduate Tax Exemption Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 64 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes . . .

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister for the Public Service Commission has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 64 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time?

The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Public Service Commission.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 64 — The Graduate Tax Exemption Act

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Public Service Commission that Bill 64 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is recognized.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its ninth report.

I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Walsh Acres, seconded by the member for Cannington:

That the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 13, The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 13 be referred to the Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy has

requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 13. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 13 — The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2006

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been properly moved by the Minister of SaskEnergy that Bill No. 13 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

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

[13:45]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is recognized.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 59, The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 59 be considered in Committee of the Whole?

The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for Gaming.

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

The Speaker: — The minister responsible has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 59 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time?

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Gaming.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 59 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2007

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Gaming that Bill No. 59 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 63 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: is the main access road to the town of Hanley the responsibility of the Department of Highways? If so, when is this road scheduled to be repaired?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a real privilege for me to introduce today a group of 36 students from the community of Gull Lake, the Gull Lake School. We've got 19 grade 10 students and 17 grade 4 students.

Mr. Speaker, when I was first advised of this visit, I just saw the name of one teacher associated with this particular excursion today, and I thought what a brave soul she must be. But I see she's brought reinforcements. With 36 students, one teacher would probably be badly outnumbered.

And we have today with Adele Kirwan, we've got Neal Boutin, Bev Dutton, Cheryl Thoreson, and Pam Hassard. And we've got some chaperones as well: Darren Fiddler, Candice Mortensen, Brady Olsen, and Arlene Clendening have joined the group today.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome this group and ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you

and through you to all members of the Assembly two people that are in your gallery, if they would wave briefly.

I have today as guests, Philipp Moeller, a 17-year-old exchange student from Essen, Germany. He has been living in Regina and is hosted by the Courchene family here in Regina. He's been here since August of 2006. He is a grade 11 student at LeBoldus High School and is involved in school and club volleyball, curling, rugby, track and field. He will be in Regina until mid-July. He is maintaining an approximately 90 per cent average. He is a guest today of Elaine Courchene who is a sister of my consistency assistant, Rita Flaman Jarrett.

And I'm told that he is fitting in well in with the family, well enough that he has had the nerve to ask for the family automobile, and they feel comfortable in saying no on most occasions. So I would ask all members to welcome him to the Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature 43 grade 10 social class from Melville. As many of the members in here will recognize the name of Mr. Perry Ostapowich who has been here a number of years with classes from Melville, and we all I think appreciate that. Mr. Speaker, also in attendance is Vice-principal Garth Shoemaker. And the member from Moosomin says hello to Garth; he knows him well. And also, Bob Simpson, I believe is a retired teacher but also doing double duty as the bus driver today.

So one thing I might mention, Mr. Speaker, I noted when I had my meeting with them a number of the young gentlemen up there are wearing suits and ties. And, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also saw that up there, but we look at it in two different ways. I am somewhat concerned that one of them is looking at my job. He's somewhat optimistic that the future of the Melville-Saltcoats constituency is in good hands. So would we all welcome them here today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleague, the member from Melville, in extending a welcome to the students and most specifically to Garth Shoemaker who happened to graduate from Kennedy Langbank High, and unfortunately there will be no more graduations following this year.

But I would also like to mention that his dad is one gentleman who also always keeps me on top of things. In fact he was the first phone call I received after the announcement of school closures yesterday. So Garth, your dad is keeping on top of the political spectrum in this province. Welcome Garth.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

100th Anniversary of the Appointment of the First Legislative Librarian

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A hundred years ago, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan appointed John Hawkes its first Legislative Librarian. He was responsible for the collection for the five years it was housed in the territorial government building on Dewdney Avenue here in Regina and oversaw the move to the new legislative buildings in 1912. Since the library came to the Legislative Building, it has been presided over by several passionate, committed, and knowledgeable legislative librarians including our present day Melissa Bennett.

In the earliest days, Mr. Speaker, librarian was a title that was used only as a convenience. John Hawkes had spent his career in the newspaper business prior to his appointment in 1907. Nevertheless he was determined to make Saskatchewan's Legislative Library one of the best organized and functional of all legislatures in Canada and to set it on a solid foundation.

Mr. Speaker, subsequent librarians have not only continued in Hawkes' tradition but also contributed to recording the history of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and the library itself.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating the legislative librarians of Saskatchewan for making our library such a success for the past 100 years. I would also like to thank them for their invaluable service to this province and to this legislature. As much as we all dread receiving their reminders for late returns, it is because of our legislative librarians that we can enjoy the information, the updated reading material, and the library that we do today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

School Closures

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I said it was a sad and devastating day after learning that the Prairie Valley School Division near Regina would be closing eight out of eleven schools that were up for review. I can report today that after talking to members of the community overnight that they are indeed devastated by this news.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, in all eight schools will be closing their doors. They are Earl Grey, Francis, Glenavon, Gray, Lang, Wilcox, Odessa, and the Saar School in Kronau. It should also be noted that there are also two schools — Sedley and Kennedy Langbank — will be closing their high school programs. Only one out of eleven schools up for review was spared from closure or losing any of its grades, and that was the school in McLean.

Mr. Speaker, 500 students will be affected by yesterday's announcement. Mr. Speaker, what's been extremely disappointing in this entire process is that the NDP government has failed to provide any leadership on this issue, and it has failed to provide school boards with all the tools they need to consider this emotional decision of school closure. As a result, our rural school divisions have been backed into a corner. It is absolutely shameful that this NDP government has failed to provide the tools for school divisions, and as a result school divisions' only option was closure.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, May 6 to 12 is North American Occupational Safety and Health Week or NAOSH Week. NAOSH Week is all about the promotion of injury and illness prevention at work, at home, and in our communities. This year's NAOSH theme, Start Today, reminds us of just how important it is to encourage responsible practices to prevent injuries and illnesses.

Last year more than 13,000 Saskatchewan workers became ill or were injured or killed on the job. Workplace injuries and illnesses represent a significant financial burden on individual workers, businesses, and the economy.

Mr. Speaker, while these numbers are much higher than we would like, progress is being made to address this very serious issue. This NDP [New Democratic Party] government remains committed to worker safety, and we have reduced the time-loss injury rate by more than 18 per cent since 2002. That's one of the highest reduction rates in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and it's only the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members to support NAOSH activities taking place in communities throughout the province. Strong protections for workers enshrined in labour legislation are just another example of why Saskatchewan is truly the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

School Closures

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday several communities in southwest Saskatchewan learned that the Chinook School Division will be losing the three schools in Admiral, Neville, and Piapot at the end of August.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that while other schools in the area have been spared closure this year, they were also affected by yesterday's announcement. Mr. Speaker, Richmond School will be closing next year. Meanwhile, Tompkins and Climax schools will see grades 6 to 9 discontinued this year, with Climax closing for good next year.

Mr. Speaker, we've been told by successive ministers of Education that good things were going to come out of forced amalgamation, including cost savings, improved service delivery, reduced administration, and other efficiencies. Well, Mr. Speaker, not all those good things have been realized in the Chinook School Division. What we've seen is underfunding of education by this NDP government that has essentially pitted community against community, forced school divisions into difficult and emotional decisions, and produced the devastation of school closure on too many communities.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that on one hand the Premier is concerned that the federal government is unfairly penalizing Saskatchewan when it comes to our oil and gas revenues, and yet on the other hand his government has done the exact same thing to several communities in southwest Saskatchewan. How can the Premier justify this incongruent position?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Fire in Meadow Lake

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure all members of the Assembly are aware of the devastating fire that occurred in Meadow Lake last week. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest sympathies to the business owners and tenants who have been dispossessed as a result of the fire.

Mr. Speaker, Bill and Stella Haw have been the owners and operators of the very successful Lumber House Restaurant for over 30 years. I say parenthetically it was listed as one of Canada's top restaurants a number of years ago. Overcoming their loss will be a challenge, and I know our entire community will support the Haws through this ordeal.

I'd also like to acknowledge Connie Rowland, manager of the Thrift Mission, whose facility was also destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, without the rapid response of all involved, including the tenants living in the suites above the Lumber House who detected the fire and alerted the fire department, and especially the Meadow Lake Fire Department, the devastation and loss could have been even worse. And I'd like to thank the fire department, the business owners and of course the community itself. Mr. Speaker, in all the confusion, CJNS Radio in Meadow Lake and especially broadcaster Ken Shiller provided excellent coverage, timely updates, and public broadcast announcements throughout the entire day.

Mr. Speaker, I know the community and its residents will continue to pull together to assist those who have experienced loss as a result of the fire, and I would like to acknowledge and thank our community for demonstrating strength and goodwill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

100th Anniversary of the Appointment of the First Legislative Librarian

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 2007 marks the 100th anniversary of the appointment of Mr. John Hawkes, the first Legislative Librarian at the Legislative Library in Saskatchewan. In her history of the library, former Legislative Librarian Christine Macdonald notes that Mr. Hawkes had no training as a librarian, and that during his tenure the library moved three times, it was underfunded, and there was the disaster of the 1912 Regina Cyclone.

In 1911 Mr. Hawkes went on a trip to a number of legislative and state libraries in Eastern Canada and the United States to get a better understanding of their collections. He also had a keen eye on the physical plans for the library and asked several firms to submit their ideas for the physical space at the legislature. It opened on the first day of the 1913 fall session.

Mr. Hawkes was quite a stickler for decorum and had certain ideas about the appropriate atmosphere for the library. He once wrote that the library was not, quote, “for the entertainment of people who want to pass away an idle hour over some book which happens to stimulate their curiosity.”

The Legislative Library has undergone incredible changes since the first Legislative Librarian was appointed a century ago, and it is now the third largest research library in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of our new Legislative Librarian, Melissa Bennett, I know there are more changes in store. Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Library is a place for all the people of Saskatchewan and one that we should all take pride in.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Focusing on Policy

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, despite Saskatchewan Party doom and gloom predictions over the last number of years, Saskatchewan is experiencing almost unprecedented economic growth. Job numbers are up. Population numbers are up. And Saskatchewan is once again in a financial position to put in place the kinds of legislation that make this province a great place to live, work, and build a future — initiatives like the seniors’ drug plan that will help lighten the load for Saskatchewan seniors when it comes to the cost of prescription drugs or the tax credit plan for post-secondary graduates as an incentive for graduates to take advantage of the many opportunities for young people here in the province.

It’s no surprise that the Saskatchewan Party doesn’t want to talk about jobs, population, or the economy because they have nothing constructive to offer. And because the opposition has nothing constructive to offer, they’re reduced to muckraking and smear campaigns rather than focusing on policy and recent political debate.

For our part, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to govern in a

manner that has taken this province from bankruptcy to boom times and focus our efforts on making life better for families, young people, and the working men and women of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Protection of Children

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again all roads lead to the Minister of Community Resources. This morning the people of Saskatchewan heard the Children’s Advocate express his grave concerns with Four Directions group home — inappropriate use of restraints, danger of suffocation, unprofessional treatment by staff members, lack of trained staff, limited access to educational programming, limited access to recreational programming.

Some children were removed from this facility on March 10, 2006. Other children stayed on until the minister shut the facility down on April 26, 2007, over one year later. Mr. Speaker, the minister knew all these children were in danger. Why did he wait for over a year before removing all children from harm’s way?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I’ll point out that as a government, we intended to — from day one — and we’ll continue to work with the First Nations people when it comes to First Nations children. I’ve always asserted that as a minister, Mr. Speaker.

And what I’ll point out to the people of Saskatchewan, it is only right, it is only fair that every First Nations in this province believe that they have a role to play when it comes to the well-being of their First Nations children. We’ll continue to embrace that particular aspect, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out that we also hear from the Children’s Advocate, whose office we also respect, Mr. Speaker. We will work with both the First Nations group and the Children’s Advocate and the federal government who has a responsibility that they have to own up to as well, Mr. Speaker. This is a very complex issue. First Nations people are asking for services. They’re asking for their involvement, and they’re asking for resources to do a good job when it comes to First Nations children in care, Mr. Speaker. We will continue looking at that partnership and taking the best advice from those people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the minister that he has the care of every child in this province under his jurisdiction, not somebody else's. The Children's Advocate has made his position clear. He said that children were "... leaving Four Directions in worse shape than they came in." Children referred by First Nations stayed in the group home more than a year after serious concerns about their safety were raised with the minister. Other children were removed immediately. Mr. Bernstein said it's unacceptable to have two sets of standards. All children need to be protected.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister fail to protect all children as soon as he heard about the risk? Why did he fail to protect all children who are under his ultimate responsibility?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, there's no question that I accept the responsibility for every child in care in Saskatchewan. The member's absolutely right. As the minister, there's no question that that responsibility lies with me. It lies with me on-reserve and off-reserve, Mr. Speaker.

We also have an interesting battle, Mr. Speaker, talking about jurisdictions. Many First Nations people say that through treaty they never, ever gave up the right to help develop a future for their First Nations children. We have to incorporate some of the challenges that they present to us, as a minister as well, so we're able to maximize the opportunity in the outcome for First Nations children in care. It is only fair. It is only the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

And what I'll remind that member, Mr. Speaker, the last place that we'll seek advice, Mr. Speaker, the last place when it comes to First Nations people is that party opposite and that member opposite, Mr. Speaker, because all they've been doing is using this issue for politics. And once again, what's good politically for the Sask Party is what they're after, not what's good for the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Once again the minister wants to deflect the issue. He had responsibility for these children for over a year and delayed taking action and put these children in danger. The Children's Advocate has been raising concerns about this group home for over five years. The Children's Advocate has received over 80 complaints about Four Directions and for five years the Children's Advocate said there was little improvement.

Mr. Speaker, here's what Mr. Bernstein said in an interview at noon hour. He said, some of the children were "... leaving Four ... [Seasons] in worse shape than they came in." Yet the minister did nothing until faced with the prospect that these concerns would be made public. Then, Mr. Speaker, does he take some action.

Why does the safety of children always take a back seat to the political reputation of that minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the name of the facility is Four Directions, not four winds. Would the member opposite get at least the name of the facility correct if he wants to make all these allegations.

I'll point out to that member, Mr. Speaker, and to the entire Saskatchewan Party caucus that it is incumbent upon any government to show leadership on this issue, is to involve the First Nations people when it comes to First Nations children, and we will continue doing. Many people in the First Nations community said they had made tremendous improvements to the facility. That's what they assert.

Certainly the advocate is saying well, they haven't made enough progress. Mr. Speaker, as a minister, we're going to listen to both camps to make sure that we're able to strike a balance, a balance that will ultimately lead to a better system of helping with First Nations children.

And again I'd point out to the Saskatchewan Party, I would say this to you guys, maybe it's time that you should park your politics ...

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The minister is reminded to direct his comments through the Chair. And I invite him to finish his comments.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd point out that the opposition, Mr. Speaker, they should park their politics and stop their crocodile tears and get out of the way. We will fix the problems alongside the First Nations people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, same answers as Oyate — exact same answers. He says he's going to take responsibility; they're making progress. And yet when it was going to become public, then he closed it.

Mr. Speaker, the time of this is very interesting. The Children's Advocate says there was a meeting about concerns with Four Directions on May 6, 2006. Four days later, the department removed all children under their care from Four Directions. Four days after that discussion, on March 2006, I was standing in this House asking questions about Oyate and the minister was telling me good progress was being made at Oyate. When we eventually asked if there were any problems or concerns with other facility, the member opposite accused us of a witch hunt.

Mr. Speaker, the minister was aware at that time of the

problems with Four Directions. The minister was aware that children were being placed at risk. The minister was being questioned about the safety of children within days of being confronted with the situation in Four Directions.

Mr. Speaker, when will he truly do his job and look after the children of this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, my department worked with Four Directions for the last couple of years. Initially we became involved because there was some concerns around the facility itself, Mr. Speaker. And as we became more and more involved, we found out that there were other issues such as a recreational program that was lacking, the educational program needed a lot of work, and yes, there was the concern about restraints, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not talking about, as the Sask Party might suggest, the handcuffs and chains and the whole bit. Actually the staff were physically restraining the children to stop them from doing harm to themselves or to others, Mr. Speaker.

We felt that these were issues that needed to be addressed and my department worked a full two years on trying to resolve those issues. They've identified the issues. They've done a review of the facility. There's agreed-to time frames in which we would resolve these problems. Mr. Speaker, things were not moving as quickly as we would like and that's when, as the minister, I made the decision to close the door down.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's also important is we done this independent of the Children's Advocate, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Government's Support for Education

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, the number of school closures is 15 and still counting. Some of these closures are in my constituency. The Chinook School Division says that this government's changes to the way it calculates school grants shifted an additional 2.77 million off the province to the local ratepayer. The school division also says that the NDP government's changes to small-school funding factor cost them another 1.16 million. That's over \$4 million in one division — not including all of the other off-loading from that government.

Mr. Speaker, how can this NDP government say it's supporting rural schools when it directly took well over \$4 million out of the hands of the Chinook School Division?

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, I'll repeat again that over the last 10 years this NDP government has increased the funding to the foundation operating grant by over 200 million — increased by over 200 million which is a 52 per cent increase. And during that time we have seen a 15 per cent decrease in enrolment and also correspondingly that creeping up of the mill rate right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, many believe that there needed to be something done; hence the tabling of the Boughen report and the progress that has been made to date.

The member opposite, one thing that I am pleased that he at least acknowledged the small-school factor that's been in place. And this year . . . Well the isolated schools. I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

This year the small-school factor and the geographic factor directed at rural schools will inject another over \$20 million into the rural schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, because of this government's off-loading the cost of education, the Chinook School Division has announced a mill rate increase of 7 per cent — some creep — a 7 per cent increase in mill rate the same year the division has to close down several schools.

So that government's so-called support of rural schools means nothing more but school closures and higher taxes for property tax owners.

Mr. Speaker, how could this government possibly claim to support rural schools when it has done nothing but continue to off-load the cost of education on to the backs of property tax payers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, there are many ways that we support rural education and education right across the province. You can look at the small-school factor. You can look at the geographic factor dedicated to rural schools in this province, diversity factor, technology factor, joint-use facilities, community schools, KidsFirst, pre-K [pre-kindergarten], and it goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Swift Current is beaking from his seat, and that's fine because he stands up in front of a crowd in my home community and says, well we'd keep these schools open. But do you know what? He never says how. He says, don't raise the taxes; don't make any increases; keep all the schools open; parents and communities should all be involved. But yet the other members will say, let the school boards make the decision. He owes the people of the province an explanation when all his policies point in different

directions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that sounds great from the minister of school closures. Mr. Speaker, amalgamation, according to the Finance minister, was supposed to decrease mill rates, improve services to students, and provide more funding to school divisions. But these things haven't happened. That NDP government has left school divisions with no choice but to close schools and raise property taxes. Another school division says, and I quote:

The provincial government's inability to appropriately address the funding of education in the province has contributed to a loss of over \$4 million in grant revenue compared to the combined grant totals received prior to amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, that's in one school division. The provincial government's inability to appropriately address the funding of education is causing these closures. Mr. Speaker, that's pure and simple. Mr. Speaker, why has this government failed rural schools so miserably?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the opposition gets up quite often and criticizes us for what we've put in place. But this NDP government believes that building a strong foundation for education right across the province, with equity for opportunity for education for all of students, is an important basis to build the system. Mr. Speaker, we can look at a number of comments from members of the opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition says, "There is, at some point, too few students to justify a school. It doesn't matter who the government is and we understand that." But then he turns around, and he says on the other hand, oh, I'd keep these schools open. He doesn't say how, and he doesn't put that in line with his policy which says they would streamline the education system and get rid of costly duplication. What exactly does that mean, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Performance of Government and Opposition

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked how much severance Jim Fodey is receiving, and why is he getting severance at all if he resigned. Five times in a row the minister flat out refused to answer that question.

And then the NDP caucus Chair went out into the rotunda and refused to answer that question again.

So I will ask again, but this time to the Premier. How much severance is Jim Fodey receiving, and why is he getting severance at all if he resigned?

The Speaker: — Order, order. I wish to advise the Assembly that the question is out of order. A response will be accepted if it's voluntary. The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this afternoon we learned that the Saskatchewan Party has had the illegally obtained police reports and documents in their possession for well over a year.

Mr. Speaker, we also recall on April 26 the Deputy Leader of the Saskatchewan Party indicating to the press, and therefore all to the public, that they just came into possession of those documents during this sitting of the spring session, Mr. Speaker. It took them 13 days to correct the public record, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our House Leader gave misinformation in this House, and he was able to correct it at the next day of the sitting of the legislature. Mr. Speaker, that member has called for his resignation. Mr. Speaker, has that member offered his resignation to the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know this NDP government refuses to take any responsibility for its own actions. Yesterday, yesterday the NDP caucus Chair told reporters to go and talk to the payroll office of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Members will allow the question to be put. Order. Member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, it's not up to them to decide how much severance Jim Fodey gets. I would like to quote again from the Board of Internal Economy directive passed on December 14, 2006. And I quote:

An employee's entitlement to severance is based on the advice of the respective Caucus Chair.

Mr. Speaker, it's not up to the Legislative Assembly to decide if Jim Fodey gets severance. It's up to caucus. And the Premier is the leader of that caucus. When is he going to start acting like that leader? Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: how much severance is Jim Fodey receiving? And why is he getting severance at all if he resigned?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Saskatchewan Party has called on the Premier to fire the Government House Leader because he gave incorrect information in this House, Mr. Speaker, but what's good for the goose is not good for the gander. Do what I say, not what I do.

Now the leader, the deputy leader, gave incorrect information to the press. And the Justice critic did as well. And I ask, have they offered their resignation? And has the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party accepted their resignation? Or why hasn't he fired them if they haven't offered their resignation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP caucus Chair told reporters, it's not up to me to say how much Jim's severance, how much severance Jim Fodey gets; go ask the Legislative Assembly staff. Mr. Speaker, what a statement to make. What a terrible thing to do to the Legislative Assembly staff. It's not up to them to decide if Jim Fodey gets severance.

The severance policy clearly states, and I quote:

An employee's entitlement to severance is based on the advice of the Caucus Chair. The notice that severance shall be paid to a caucus employee shall be made in writing under the signature of the Caucus Chair . . .

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: how much severance is Jim Fodey receiving? And why is he getting severance at all if he resigned?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party operatives — they're a small group of Sask Party staff that spin around the scrums; I think there's about four of them — they knew for 13 days that that member had given misinformation to the reporter out in the rotunda, Mr. Speaker. Thirteen days they did not correct that information until all of a sudden one of their operatives phoned up the press to say they made a mistake.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is this: what have they done to discipline that staff member that did not give them correct information? Have they done anything? Mr. Speaker, why did it take 13 days? Is it because the police have come calling and asked for them to give them, the police, information about how long they had these documents, Mr. Speaker? How long did they have these illegally obtained documents? What day in the spring of 2006 did you obtain those documents, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the

Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government takes responsibility for nothing, Mr. Speaker. Schools are closing. They say, go see the school board trustee. They write a cheque to Murdoch Carriere, an employee of the government who was fired for harassment, a cheque for \$275,000. And they say, it's not our fault; we got that advice from the lawyers. Then the Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker, gets caught with the truth that he didn't fully disclose an NDP caucus fraud over a number of years ago. He says, it's not my fault; it's the chief of staff's fault. Now the NDP is going to pay severance to that former chief of staff who resigned, Mr. Speaker. But that's not their fault either; that's the fault of the Legislative Assembly.

To the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan: when is he going to be accountable? When will he take responsibility for the mismanagement and the cover-ups of this government, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have said a very small group of people knew about them having that document, the illegally obtained document for over a year. Was it the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party? Did he know?

Mr. Speaker, did they decide to come clean today because they have a police investigation? Has the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party been interviewed? Who in their caucus has been interviewed? And why — if that Leader of the Opposition who wants to become the next premier — why hasn't he reprimanded his staff? And why hasn't he reprimanded his caucus critic for giving misinformation to this legislature? When did he know? Is he in the concealed . . .

The Speaker: — Order please.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government, we know, based on evidence that's been presented to this Assembly, has put children at risk. They have put women at risk, Mr. Speaker, with their handling of the Carriere affair. They have covered up fraud in their own caucus, Mr. Speaker. What's the solution they have to all of these issues? They write a cheque to someone. They try to write a big cheque and make it go away, Mr. Speaker. They don't come clean. One of the columnists in the Regina *Leader-Post* is even calling the Premier, and I quote, "Cheque Book Lorne."

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are getting sick and tired of this NDP government using their money to try to make the messes that they've created go away. Is that how the Premier handles the messes, the mismanagement, and the cover-ups of his government — using taxpayers' dollars to try to make it go away, 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 listened to the opposition deputy leader say on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] at 1 o'clock that they needed a year to verify this information, a year to verify that they really had information that was correct. Well, my question is, who verified it? Who did they get to verify that these were illegally obtained police reports?

Now the member opposite; I know what he's after, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party. He is covering himself. You know why? Because the police are investigating the fact that they had, for over one year, an illegally obtained document, Mr. Speaker. They placed people's private, personal information on the website, and I think the Leader of the Opposition, the Sask Party leader, needs to start taking responsibility. Or is it, in terms of where he comes from, deny, deny, deny?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty telling what the government opposite, who are clearly obsessed with police investigations . . . And they ought to be, Mr. Speaker, because the scandals that the province has been exposed to, created by this NDP government, are pretty clear. And they're a matter of the public record.

Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that this NDP government is such a complete wreck? Look at the front bench over there. The minister that covered up SPUDCO for six years is still in the cabinet. The minister that paid off Murdoch Carriere is still in the cabinet. Mr. Speaker, the minister that has put children at risk now twice is still in the cabinet, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for covering up an NDP caucus fraud, still in the cabinet. The only minister that ever got fired was the one that had the gall to disagree, to criticize the Premier.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The only one.

My question is to the Premier of Saskatchewan: will he stand up and explain his priorities? Will he explain to the people of the province how he has lost his way, how this government has lost their way? And they're now, Mr. Speaker, involved in mismanagement and cover-ups every day in this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — So, Mr. Speaker, if they can't get it straight that they've had this document in their possession for well over a year — an illegally obtained document, a stolen

document. They have said to the public that it came in a brown paper envelope and it just some sort mysteriously got into their office.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I believe that. I'm not sure I believe that. And I want to know from the members opposite, are they going to tell the truth to the police and tell them where they really got that document? Are they going to tell the police how they really verified the information contained in that document as they sat on it for one year? And they need to explain to the police why it is that they put personal, private, confidential information on the website. I think these men and women have something to account for.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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 1,317 through 1,479 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 1,317 through to 1,479 have been submitted.

The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in order to accommodate the good work of the Standing Committees on the Economy as well as Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure 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: — The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:30.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
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