



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

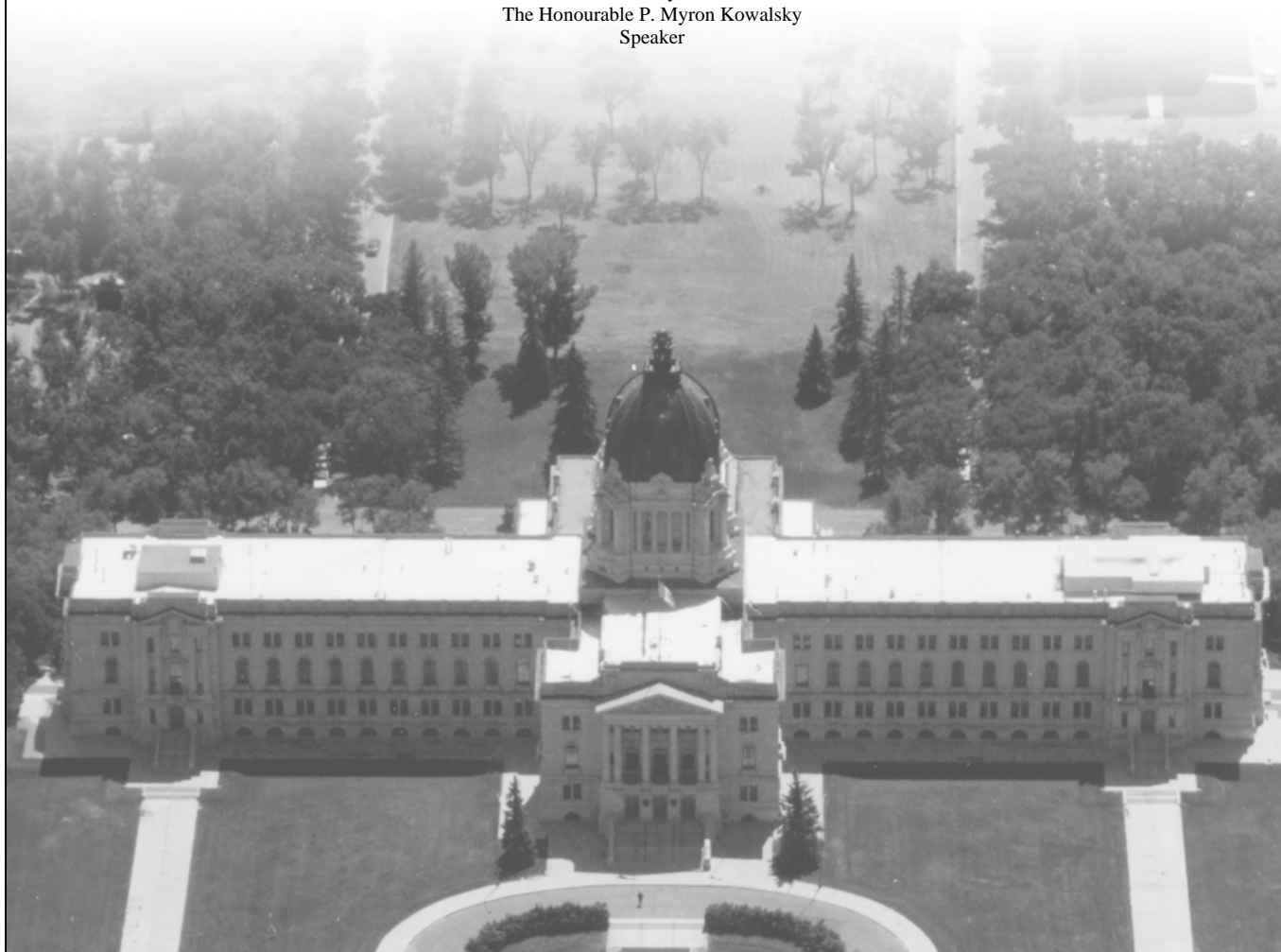
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of rural school closure has been percolating for some time. Several school closures were announced yesterday and in the week prior. I would present the following petition on behalf of constituents and other individuals throughout the province. 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 prevent imposed school closures.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the city of Swift Current, Maple Creek, Shaunavon, Eastend, Gull Lake, Tompkins, Yellow Grass, Piapot. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again this morning I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents and other citizens of this province who are very concerned about the future of 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 this is signed by people from Bienfait, Estevan, Torquay, Carlyle, and Regina. 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 concerned about lack of proper cellular telephone coverage. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the regions encompassed in the constituency of Biggar.

And 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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague earlier mentioned, people across this province continue to be concerned about imposed school closures taking place across the province. And I read this prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to prevent imposed school closures.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition I present this morning is signed by folks from the communities of Gull Lake and Tompkins and Kamsack and Regina. 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 this morning to present a petition signed by citizens of my constituency that are concerned with the health care system and the potentially dangerous situation regarding Shellbrook, Spiritwood, and Big River. 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 improve timely access to medical treatment.

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

Mr. Speaker, signators to this petition are from Shell Lake, Shellbrook, and Leask. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by many citizens from the town of Govan:

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 Govan School remain open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it's an honour today for me to introduce a very good friend of mine, Krystal Kwiatkowski. I met Krystal and her dad over a decade ago out at Porcupine Plain at a trade show, and since then our friendship has grown. And she's grown into a lovely lady that has moved from Porcupine to Regina. She's promised me all session she's going to come in to see us, and today she's here. So welcome to your Assembly and thank you for coming.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly some visitors from the beautiful constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin who are seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. We have 33 students from St. Anne Elementary School with their teacher, Mr. Denis Sanche, and chaperones Mrs. Derksen, Mrs. McKay, Mrs. Anweiler, Mrs. Dumas, Mrs. Blue, and Mrs. Carter. If all members of the Assembly will join me in welcoming them to the Assembly. I hope I can meet with them to the extent that it's possible given my obligations to committee work this morning, Mr. Speaker. Again I hope members will join me in welcoming them to the legislature and to the capital city.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also want to introduce to you and through you and the members of the legislature a group from near Saltcoats, Saskatchewan from Countryside School: 11 students with their teacher, Evan Penner, and chaperones Doug Regehr, Viona Regehr, Bonnie Penner, Val Wohlgemuth, Ray Isaac, Sheryl Isaac, and Sue Toews. And, Mr. Speaker, I welcome them to their legislature, and I'm going to meet with them later and ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Mother's Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Graycie Harmon once said that:

My mom is a neverending song in my heart of comfort, happiness, and being. I may sometimes forget the words

but I always remember the tune.

It's important for us to remember this, Mr. Speaker, since Sunday is Mother's Day. Every year for a single day in May, we make a special effort to show our mothers the appreciation that they deserve — appreciation for a life time of devotion.

Mr. Speaker, from our earliest days, mothers are the ones that provided us with comfort, guidance, education, and love. Mère in French, mother in English, nikawi in Cree — all refer to those women that shape our lives from the start. Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish all the mothers in the Assembly today, on all of Saskatchewan's mothers a very happy Mother's Day. And I would like to close with a quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes:

Youth fades; love droops, the leaves of friendship fall; A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Margaret Mead once wrote and I quote, "One of the oldest human needs is . . . [to have] someone wonder where you are . . . [and why you didn't] come home at night." Mr. Speaker, this Sunday we will celebrate mothers in our lives who, I'm sure at least one occasion and maybe more, wondered why we didn't come home at night or were late. I know my mother had that opportunity on a number of occasions.

On Mother's Day, we pay tribute to the women who brought us into this world and who nurtured us and raised us to be the people we are today. Mr. Speaker, my mother watches the legislature Assembly every day that it's on, is one of our greatest fans in here. And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to pass on to her that my colleague from Lloydminster, who backs me up every day when I'm up in question period, also wants to tell her that people of English and Norwegian ancestry is a great mix because he also has that same background.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to tell you today that my mother's greatest fear is that when I'm up in question period, that at some point I will cross the line, and you will have me removed. I have reassured her, Mr. Speaker; I have reassured her that you're a patient and understanding man and that will never happen.

Mr. Speaker, our mothers are special every day of the year, but this Sunday just reminds us how special they are to all of us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

70th Wedding Anniversary

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, May 12, is the 70th wedding anniversary of Hubert and Elsie Elkin,

constituents and friends of mine. They met and were married in Moose Jaw and have lived most of their adult lives in Regina.

Over the years, Elsie has been the strong centre of the family. She taught everyone the importance of caring for your family and looking after each other in difficult times. She encouraged everyone to do their best and to reach higher than they may have thought possible. She has made herself available again and again to provide support and direction to her children, including the member for Regina Rosemont, and her grandchildren to ensure they followed a good path.

Hub is a lifelong activist. He has never ceased caring about what is happening in this world and having an opinion and expressing it each and every day — like the member for Regina Rosemont. He has a long history of putting his mouth where his mouth is, all to the benefit of our community and our planet.

This weekend Elsie and Hub's extended family will gather to acknowledge the importance and good fortune of 70 years of health, continuity of relationship, and principled living. Mr. Speaker, Hub and Elsie Elkin epitomize a generation whose primary focus was not only on the care of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren but also on the well-being of their community. Their anniversary allows us all to celebrate those people in our lives who choose the path of working through their problems and providing continuity to our lives and our efforts to build a better world. Happy anniversary, Elsie and Hub.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Love Your Neighbour Fundraising Banquet

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night I and several of our legislative colleagues joined more than 1,000 people at the fourth annual Love Your Neighbour fundraising banquet at the Conexus Arts Centre. This was the first year the event was hosted by the new joint venture known as Souls Harbour Rescue Mission.

Last night Ken Porter, the CEO [chief executive officer] of the mission, reported on 10 miracles that have happened to that organization this past year. And they include the following: the merger of Souls Harbour and the Regina Rescue Mission in January into a larger, more effective organization, the relocation of both missions to a renovated building on Halifax Street, the paying off of \$270,000 in mortgage on the life change program building, the purchase of Sacred Heart Church, the opening of a new women's home in the rectory of that church, a new men's family wing, two new chapel ministries, the serving of more than 100,000 nutritious meals in the last year, and finally many lives changed for the better as evidenced by the graduates of the life change program last night.

Mr. Speaker, last evening's guests were also treated to a wonderful performance by Juno award winning artist Steve Bell. And I would like to ask now all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking everyone involved in the Souls Harbour Rescue Mission for the amazing and much needed work they do

in this city.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Showcasing the Talents of Young People

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's International Youth Week, a time to recognize the achievements, talents, and contributions that young people make to their communities and to the province as a whole. Earlier this week I had the opportunity to attend an event that reminded me of the wide range of opportunities available to young people here in Saskatchewan and the many areas of interest in which they can apply their talents.

For the last three years Avant-Garde College here in Regina has hosted a fashion show event as a fundraiser to provide full bursaries for students wishing to study aesthetics and cosmetology, and I had the great pleasure of attending this year's show. It was a remarkable event, Mr. Speaker, with hundreds in attendance and consisted of a fashion show featuring the work of six young Saskatchewan-based fashion designers, many of whom are already well known on the national stage, as well as a fantasy competition to showcase the talents of a team of fashion specialists.

The winners of this year's fantasy competition were the Frozen Masquerade entry by April Schoenthal, Ashley Nelson, Diana Peigan, Mandy Leonard, and Joezi Ulvild.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone involved with this year's event, in particular co-ordinators Lori Pawson and Margaret Titanich, for providing this excellent opportunity to showcase the talents of young Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Lupus Day

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the fourth annual World Lupus Day, a day set aside to increase awareness of the disease, to promote diagnosis, treatment, and research for a cure. On this day lupus organizations worldwide campaign for increases in funding for research into lupus, educational campaigns for patients, health professionals, and the general public, as well as global acknowledgement of lupus as a significant public health issue.

A complex disease affecting many aspects of life for more than 50,000 Canadians, lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can strike any tissue or organ in the body. Mr. Speaker, one of the frustrating aspects of this disease is that the symptoms of lupus can mimic other illnesses, making it very difficult to diagnose. That's why early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of lupus helps to slow its debilitating effects. Mr. Speaker, effective treatment lupus can minimize symptoms, reduce inflammation, and improve a patient's overall quality of life.

By observing World Lupus Day we can make a difference for those living with lupus by helping to increase awareness and understanding of the disease, and improving awareness of lupus symptoms that can literally save lives. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing World Lupus Day 2007.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As have been noted, today is World Lupus Day. Lupus is a potentially fatal autoimmune disease capable of damaging virtually any part of the body, including the skin, heart, lungs, kidneys, and brain. In its most severe form lupus can cause disfiguring rashes and scarring; multiple miscarriages; kidney, heart, and lung failure; and paraneurological functions — strokes, heart attacks, and even death.

More than five million people worldwide have a form of lupus. Nine out ten people with lupus are women. Eighty per cent of new lupus cases are diagnosed amongst women ages 15 to 44. Despite its enormous public health implications, lupus remains a dangerously under-recognized and underappreciated women's health issue.

World Lupus Day is observed each year to bring worldwide attention to the often debilitating effects of lupus and to act as a call to action for governments around the world to increase their financial support for lupus medical research, awareness, and patient services. Medical research efforts into lupus and the discovery of safer, more effective treatments for lupus patients are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity.

Lupus organizations around the world, such as the Lupus Erythematosus Society of Saskatchewan or LESS, are also striving for targeted education programs for health professionals, patients, and the public. I commend the organizations involved with lupus and World Lupus Day in their mission to gain worldwide recognition of lupus as a significant public health issue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Future of Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, what is going on with this NDP [New Democratic Party] government? In March the Minister Responsible for the Forestry Secretariat announced in front of a room full of people in P.A. [Prince Albert] that there was a deal with Domtar. Domtar had to clarify with the media that there was no such deal. Yesterday the minister held a news conference to say that

there was no deal with Domtar and that Domtar was selling their assets. Domtar had to again go to the media to clarify their position because the minister again got it wrong.

To the minister, Mr. Speaker: does the minister even speak to Domtar before he misinforms the public about the company's intentions?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for the Forestry Secretariat.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me say to members of the House this. I can live with a radio station inappropriately and improperly attributing statements to me, but when they mispronounce my name, I get a little bit offended, as I heard this morning.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, we have been working with Domtar since the merger to see if we can put together an agreement that will make the assets of the forest management agreement operational. We're going to continue to do that.

What I indicated to the public yesterday was the likelihood of the mill starting operations this fall were slim. And I did that because the business people in that area have a right to know. They need to make some business decisions.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, we have an industry that has seen 40 closures since Weyerhaeuser made its announcement. We're going to continue to work with the industry to see if we can find a solution. We haven't found one yet. Mr. Speaker, that is my role; that is what this government is going to do. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the community is four-square behind those efforts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Domtar shouldn't have to clarify their position every time the minister opens his mouth. Domtar said they were surprised by the minister's comments yesterday and that the company hasn't made a decision yet.

Mr. Speaker, we have a minister that makes announcements without knowing the facts. We have a minister who insults potential investors from China. We have a minister who has paid over \$417,000 of taxpayer money to Tom Waller for help with this portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, here's an idea. Why doesn't the minister just stop making announcements until there's something to announce, and then get the facts straight? Will the minister just keep his mouth quiet?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Forestry Secretariat.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is simply no. The people of Prince Albert have the right, the people of Big River have the right to know what's happening with respect to the discussions that we've been taking place with Domtar.

Mr. Speaker, Domtar had information given by this government. They saw the press release Friday. They had the press release Friday. Mr. Speaker, they knew what my comments were going to be. They knew I was going to clarify the process that had taken place.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will never apologize for informing the Prince Albert people and the Big River people of the work that's been going on by the forest secretariat, by Mr. Waller, and by myself, Mr. Speaker. We have done everything in our power to move this file forward. And I want to tell members on that side we're going to continue to do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I know why this minister won't apologize. Look what happened with SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. This minister has a track record that everybody in the province knows.

The NDP government created a completely new department to deal with the P.A. mill. The NDP government has paid Tom Waller probably close to half a million dollars by this point and Waller appears to be as misinformed about the details as the minister is. Yet after all the minister's bungling of this issue, yesterday he said he didn't see this closure as a failure. He sees it as a success.

Mr. Speaker, after all the misinformation and mishandling of this issue, how can the minister stand and say that this is a success?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Forestry Secretariat.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I read with some interest that member's press release yesterday and in it he quotes a Calgary consultant from, a Calgary consultant on the forest sector. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, this is the credibility they have. This guy's office is in a crescent. When he was charged as to where he was going to get the money from to open this mill before Christmas two years ago, he couldn't find it. Mr. Speaker, when Weyerhaeuser challenged him, he couldn't find the money. We didn't know where the Asian company came from. We didn't know that this guy had four companies that weren't registered all over North America.

Mr. Speaker, that's their credibility. They come in here wanting us to cut a deal with this backroom consultant from Calgary. And I say, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work with legitimate companies. We're going to work with the industry. And we're going to be successful. This is not over. We're only halfway through.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Child Protection Issues

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I asked for an audit of organizations caring for children in Saskatchewan, the Minister of Community Resources accused me of a witch hunt. The minister yesterday, and I quote, said that he didn't know of other concerns at other facilities.

However, now the Children's Advocate has spoken. Mr. Bernstein says that problems with the children's welfare system extend well beyond the issues raised this week with Four Directions, and they go well beyond the issues of Oyate. Mr. Bernstein said he's expressed concerns about the areas of dysfunction; he's expressed concerns about the lack of vigilance and areas of deficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate is doing his job. Why isn't the minister protecting the children under his care?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I see a disturbing pattern emerging from the Saskatchewan Party and the critic opposite, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the health care field, what are they asking for? More auditors, Mr. Speaker. Not more doctors and more nurses — more auditors.

When it comes to Indian Child and Family Services, what are they asking for? Not more workers, not collaboration with the federal government, not working hand in hand with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], not working hand in hand with the agencies that we're speaking of, not working closely with the Children's Advocate, Mr. Speaker. What do they want? They want more auditors, Mr. Speaker.

And now I'll point out I'd much rather have more child care workers, more involvement from the federal government, more involvement from the Children's Advocate, and of course more resources to finally afford the First Nations people of Saskatchewan adequate facilities, adequate trained staff, and certainly a plan to help First Nations children all across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — A pretty simple answer, Mr. Speaker. If he was doing his job, we wouldn't have to ask any of these questions. When difficulties at the Oyate Safe House came to light, the minister asked if there were any other agencies experiencing difficulties. This was while he was dealing with a serious problem at the Four Directions home.

The only reason he shut down the Four Directions was that the Children's Advocate was threatening to conduct his own

investigation and make it public. Mr. Speaker, this minister doesn't seem to know what's going on in his own department, and worst of all he doesn't seem to care.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister more interested in covering up and trying to save his personal reputation than finding out whether his department is protecting children under his care?

The Speaker: — Order please. I would ask members in their questioning and in their responses to deal with the issues and stick with the issues and leave personalities out of the issue.

The Chair recognizes the member for . . . Order. Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the minister for Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly why that member has no credibility amongst the First Nations people and amongst many, Mr. Speaker, amongst many agencies that are out there. One of the purpose I think it's really important that people ought to know is that there are many CBO organizations, community-based organizations, that do wonderful work, wonderful work. And many of the First Nations CBOs also do wonderful work, Mr. Speaker.

And every single problem area that that member identified, every single area, our department knew of some of the problems. And our department was actively working to solve some of those problems, Mr. Speaker.

And yes, the Children's Advocate certainly has his work to do. And I've stated many, many times we respect his work, and we'll continue working alongside the Children's Advocate and the First Nations people to find solutions, Mr. Speaker.

Again all that is important for them is the Saskatchewan Party politics, not the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. The minister continues to acknowledge he knew something about it, but it's evident he did nothing about it. The Children's Advocate is very clear. He says:

. . . there are "areas of dysfunction" with the provision of residential care for children.

[He said] . . . the problem is more pervasive than Oyate and Four Directions."

Any sane person would be seriously concerned about comments like this. Anyone who cared about the fate of children in their care would want to do something about it. But not this minister. All we get from this minister is arrogance and contempt.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister do the right thing? Will the minister commit today to conducting a full investigation? And is he willing to do his job? Will he at least get out of the way so somebody else can do it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. Once again, I had asked the member to be careful with his wording, not to cast aspersions on the personality of a specific person, particularly a member in the House. I'd ask him to now stand and withdraw the offensive statement.

Mr. Merriman: — I withdraw that statement.

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'll point out that one of the problems that we have is certainly trying to make sure I reach out to people and engage as many of these CBOs and First Nations CBOs as well to try and get them together to make sure we find some lasting and permanent solutions. We're able to work our way towards a very good model that all the rest of the country can follow, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll point out that I'd much rather spend my time there and the resources and my staff's time to work on solutions, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to hiring a bunch of auditors to go on a witch hunt, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't personally consider the Children's Advocate as an auditor. I pursue him as doing the job that he's so elected to do.

In his report last September, the Children's Advocate said the Oyate Safe House was putting lives at risk by failing to adequately deal with the problems. Now the minister's own report talks about safety concerns at Four Directions, problems with programming, problems with physical restraints. The First Nations child and safety agencies that the minister likes to talk about so much, they were dissatisfied with their working relationship with Four Directions and have pulled their children out.

Mr. Speaker, this minister allowed dangerous situations to continue and he doesn't even seem to care or acknowledge the seriousness of what's going on. Mr. Speaker, why is this minister showing a lack of interest in what his department is doing and what the Children's Advocate is saying?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, let me again point out to the people of Saskatchewan, that's why that member and that party have no credibility on this issue. All they're doing is playing politics. I did not refer to the Children's Advocate as an

auditor, Mr. Speaker. And for that member to get up and make that particular statement, that is absolutely galling.

And I'll also point out that if he's not able to provide some solution, if he's not able to provide some direction from their party . . . Which they have no platform. They have no idea as to what they're going to do, Mr. Speaker — hire a bunch of auditors, and oh by the way, we're going to cut \$50 million from this budget. So, Mr. Speaker, how is hiring auditors and cutting \$50 million from the social services budget and really playing politics with the First Nations people, that's going to cost the people of Saskatchewan much progress, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to keep a level head. We're going to engage as many people as we can to help find solutions and that's exactly what leadership's all about, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, the best solution I could give would be that the Premier would relieve that minister of his responsibilities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — And I'll certainly be prepared to stand on my personal record of dealing with Aboriginal children in this province at any . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. Chair recognizes the member for — order, please — Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd certainly be prepared to stand on my personal record of dealing with Aboriginal children in this province on any day of the week.

Mr. Speaker, due to safety concerns, someone's going to die because of this minister's carelessness. Lives will be damaged forever because of the minister's complete . . . [inaudible] . . . in what's going on. Mr. Speaker, kids came out of Four Directions worse off than they went in — with criminal records. That's not how the system's supposed to work.

We have a moral and a legal obligation to help these children in need. That's what the people of Saskatchewan want to see. They don't want to see these children being further harmed. Mr. Speaker, when is this minister going to start doing his job?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I'll point out is that I instruct my staff on a continual basis that they must respect the role of the Provincial Auditor. They must respect the role of the Children's Advocate. They must respect the role of First Nations people, and yes, we must engage the federal government. There are many partners, Mr. Speaker, in finding some of the solutions that we ought to find

in Saskatchewan and finally find a lasting resolution to some of the problems plaguing Indian Child and Family Services agencies throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

I will point out that as a parent that has accepted the responsibility for all children, on- or off-reserve, that it is very important that any minister realize that in order to be a good parent that you look for as many partners to share in that responsibility, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what this government is doing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Investigation into Budget Leak

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago the NDP were desperate to change the subject from the Murdoch Carriere scandal, so somebody leaked the budget. The Finance minister mustered up all the mock outrage he could find and promised an investigation. Now that investigation is done and it turns out to be a complete waste of time and taxpayers' money.

The investigator didn't talk to any of the prime suspects. He didn't talk to the minister. He didn't talk to the NDP MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly]. He didn't talk to the minister's political staff. He didn't talk to the Premier's staff. He didn't talk to anybody that would have been trying to change the subject from the Murdoch Carriere scandal, and yet the Premier sits there and natters about the soap opera. The soap opera is his government.

Mr. Speaker, who did this phony-baloney investigation, and will the minister table the investigator's report?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that the issues that the member has outlined are the reasons that this report is not yet complete, and we have said, go back and finish the report; go and finish the investigation and let us get some answers to this.

But it is interesting that the only way I can get a question about the budget is to have a question about the budget leak. Do they want to stand and ask about the drug plan? No. Do they want to stand and talk about the graduate tax credit? No. Do they want to talk about the increased spending in health care? No.

There's nothing that that opposition wants to talk about in terms of policy because they've got no alternative. And that is exactly what the game plan is for that Sask Party between now and the provincial election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Minister. The minister admits that the investigation was a complete sham, yet it was turned in to the Premier's deputy minister, Mr. Speaker. And whose fault is that? Apparently the investigator didn't get any directions. He didn't get any sort of terms of reference, and obviously seems to be unable to be self-motivated.

It's pretty clear the NDP don't really want to find out who the source of the leak is because the leak was their own idea, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister table the terms of reference the investigator received, if he received any terms of reference, and will he table this so-called investigation report?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I have said very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that the investigation quite clearly is not yet complete, because what it appears happened is that the investigator treated this as if it was a normal review of a leak of a document within a department. And that is not in fact the way that we should be dealing with a potential budget leak.

Now in this case no one got an undue access to information. But I will tell you this. I want to know who leaked that budget. And I said to the deputy minister and to the Premier that we need that investigation completed.

Now what is it that members of the opposition want to talk about? They want to talk about the leak and the investigation. Why don't we in the last five and a half minutes talk about what was contained in that budget? Why don't we talk about why it is that those members voted against the drug plan? Why don't we talk about why those members voted against the graduate tax credit? Why don't we talk about why they voted against the budget that increased health care spending and hospital spending and spending on highways and spending in so many areas of social policy? Why not talk about that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well by the minister's own admission this investigation was not complete and yet the report's been turned in to the Premier's deputy minister. This so-called investigation was a fraud from the start, Mr. Speaker. It's so bad that the minister is now asking for a mulligan. He wants to be able to go back and do it all over again. How much is that going to cost? Mr. Speaker, how much did the first phony-baloney investigation cost and how much is the next phony-baloney investigation going to cost?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well I half expect the member opposite to soon start providing advice on how the investigators should go at it. I can only imagine. Can we borrow the secret

hidden camera? That would help cut down on costs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — We're always happy to get advice from the opposition on how to investigate this. Let's let these officials conduct their investigation, conclude their investigation. If I felt the investigation was complete, I would have released it. It is not. They need to go back. They need to do their work. And why don't we go back and do some work in this Assembly debating what the real issues are?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that they need a hidden camera. They just perhaps need to set up a camera in the minister's office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, who did this first investigation, Mr. Speaker? Who did this first . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, who did this first phony-baloney investigation? Was it the former chief of staff for the NDP caucus? Who's going to do the do-over investigation? Is it the former chief of staff for the NDP caucus? He has experience and he's available now, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister table the terms of references for both of the investigations, and who did and is doing the next investigation, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the investigation is being undertaken by the investigative unit at Property Management corporation. It's their responsibility to do it.

The terms of reference are simple. Do what it takes to find out the circumstances around the leak of the budget. That was it. It was a very simple task. This is a process that has been used and when we have an answer, we will be in a position to provide it.

But I do welcome this debate in the remaining two minutes — since we are talking about the budget — as another opportunity for us to debate what the differences are between these two parties. Because there are significant differences. We believe in a universal drug plan for seniors.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — We believe in a graduate tax credit for young people. We believe in a highways program that dedicates

all the on-road gas tax to that and more to rebuilding our highway system.

What is it that members of the opposition believe? We just don't know. And that's exactly how they'll keep it until the election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, if the investigator has the ability to do what it takes and the task is simple, why does the government have to go back and do this all over again? I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, why.

Every time there's problem in this NDP government, they look the other way. When there was fraud going on in the NDP caucus, the NDP looked the other way. When Murdoch Carriere was harassing women, they looked the other way. When the safety of children are threatened in group homes throughout the province, they look the other way; the minister looked the other way.

And now the Finance minister promises to find out who leaked the budget. He doesn't really want to find out, so he gets a phony-baloney investigation done so he can look the other way. But, Mr. Speaker, he needs to be careful when he shaves in the mornings.

Mr. Speaker, when is the NDP going to stop pretending to take responsibility and actually start to take responsibility for their mismanagement and incompetence?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well this is the most bizarre assertion, that we are somehow attempting to look the other way, when I have just said to the investigators, keep looking; keep looking — that the report that was provided is not acceptable — keep looking.

And I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker. We too will keep looking for what it is that that party promises to Saskatchewan people. We will keep looking to see whether they have a true alternative to the agenda that we have presented that is helping this province create thousands of new jobs; is welcoming young people back to this province; is protecting the quality of health care for our seniors. We will see whether there is anything in an alternative from that party or if it is simply a desire to be a government. That, Mr. Speaker, is what we will see. That will be the decision.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with a wish to all hon. members that we'll have some quality time to spend with our mothers this weekend, and also in order to accommodate the good work of the Standing Committees on Human Services as well as Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before I entertain that motion, I just want to advise members that I'm going to ask Pages to distribute a little message from the Speaker. So they can pick it up before they leave. You can do that right away.

It has been moved by the Government House Leader that — perhaps you could stand at the doors — 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 Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 10:46.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard	1577
Eagles	1577
Weekes	1577
Toth	1577
Allchurch	1577
Brkich	1577

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	1577
---	------

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Draude	1578
Quennell	1578
Bjornerud	1578

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mother's Day	
Junor	1578
Bjornerud	1578
70th Wedding Anniversary	
Van Mulligen	1578
Love Your Neighbour Fundraising Banquet	
Elhard	1579
Showcasing the Talents of Young People	
Morin	1579
World Lupus Day	
Gantefoer	1579
Quennell	1580

ORAL QUESTIONS

Future of Prince Albert Pulp Mill	
Allchurch	1580
Lautermilch	1580
Child Protection Issues	
Merriman	1581
Belanger	1581
Investigation into Budget Leak	
D'Autremont	1583
Thomson	1583

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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