



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
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Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
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Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
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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]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before routine proceedings, I wish to table the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan — volume 1, year 2007.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today again to present a petition on behalf of residents of the province of Saskatchewan regarding health care, and more specifically the need for dialysis services in the Broadview area. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitions I present today are signed by the folks from the communities of Broadview, Grenfell, Whitewood, Regina, Cowessess; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Ochapowace. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise concerning the lack of cell coverage in Fishing Lake community. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to ensure that SaskTel provides access to cellphone coverage in the Fishing Lake community area.

The people that have signed the petition are from Yorkton and Springside. And I present it on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who are very concerned about the discontinuing of the 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 citizens of Estevan and Bienfait. 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 a petition for fairness with Crown leaseholders. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land leases maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

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

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years of age and their parents in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek, Willowgrove neighbourhood of Saskatoon. They are hoping this will be their year. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek and in Willowgrove.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today come from northeast Saskatoon, Peters Cove, Lashyn Cove, and Wright Crescent. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of individuals and communities whose schools are under threat of closure. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed exclusively by

individuals from the community of Tompkins. 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 that the withdrawal of lab services from the Lafleche and District Health Centre would cause undue hardship 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 folks of Lafleche and Glentworth. 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 my constituency that are concerned with the health care system and the potentially dangerous situation that's looming in that area regarding recruitment and retention of physicians. 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 to this petition are from Shellbrook, Leask, Deer Ridge, Spiritwood, Big River, and Victoire. I so present.

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Duval, Strasbourg, and Nokomis. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the House to present a petition calling for mandatory drug and alcohol testing in fatal motor vehicle accidents. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the public is protected from operators of motor vehicles who are involved in an accident causing injury or fatality and that those operators be required to undergo mandatory drug and alcohol testing.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are many pages to this petition. They are from North Battleford, Saskatoon, Wilkie, Unity, Leask, and elsewhere throughout the province. I'm pleased to present it on behalf of all of those citizens of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and present petitions calling on the government to make a commitment to the community of Coronach on a clean coal power unit. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to commit to building a second clean coal power unit at the Poplar River power station.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by people from Coronach, Fife Lake, Assiniboia, Willow Bunch, Radville, and Big Beaver. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Chair of the Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure Committee to report Bill No. 37 with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 37 be heard in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration

in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for Bill No. 37. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 37 — The Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2006/ Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that the 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. 37 — The Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2006/ Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for third reading now. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 37 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: — Chair for the Standing Committee on the

Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been instructed by the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure to report Bill 43 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 43 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of this Bill. 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. 43 — The Payday Loans Act

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — 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 Justice that Bill 43 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 the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been instructed by the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its eighth report. I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina

Northeast, seconded by the member for Kelvington-Wadena, that the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure be now concurred in.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Douglas Park, the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce His Excellency, Ihor Ostash. He's the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada. And he's seated in your gallery, and he's now standing.

This is His Excellency's first official visit to Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has cultivated an important friendship with Ukraine, with the help of our strong Ukrainian community. This visit provides an opportunity for Saskatchewan to better understand the current political environment in Ukraine and for us to provide an update on the development of Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations.

I know that the ambassador has met with a number of ministers and other members of the Assembly. It's a real privilege and pleasure to have him visit us. I would ask all the members to join me in extending a very warm welcome to His Excellency.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.]

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition it is my pleasure to welcome His Excellency to the Legislative Assembly and to the province of Saskatchewan. We have a great many Ukrainian-Canadians throughout Canada but a large percentage of Ukrainian-Canadians in Saskatchewan. And we had an opportunity to discuss many of the contributions of Ukrainians, but we also had a chance to discuss a lot of the relationship between Saskatchewan and Ukraine. And we look forward to a long-lasting relationship, both for Ukrainians and for people in Saskatchewan. So again on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to Saskatchewan and have a great time. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana, the Minister for Advanced Education and Employment.

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

It's my distinct honour to introduce to you and to all members of the House 23 public servants that are visiting the legislature today. Mr. Speaker, these individuals provide valuable services on behalf of the public day in and day out in the province of Saskatchewan. They're here today to have a behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of the legislature, to observe the proceedings in the House, and to visit with you, Mr. Speaker, and other members.

I'd like to take a moment, if I could, on behalf of all members of the legislature to thank these public servants that dedicate their working lives to the service of our citizens, Mr. Speaker. The individuals are seated in your gallery. They work in the departments of the Environment; Government Relations; Health; Culture, Youth and Recreation; Industry and Resources; Justice; and the Legislative Assembly. I look forward to meeting this afternoon. I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these public servants to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the 23 public servants who are visiting with us today and taking time out of their busy schedule to see how the legislature indeed functions.

Many of us that sit in this Chamber are deluded by the fact that we are the real engines of making change in this province. The fact of the matter is the public servants are those who really deliver these changes and services to our citizens, and we're very much grateful for all the work that they do in our province. And I look forward to meeting with you later on this afternoon for a bit of a discussion on how this whole Assembly works.

Mr. Speaker, I would like everyone to join with me in welcoming these public servants to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, j'aimerais vous présenter 45 étudiants de la quatrième et cinquième année de l'École St. Mary dans la circonscription électorale Regina Walsh Acres. Ma fille, Morgan, est une étudiante à la quatrième année. Elle est ici aujourd'hui avec sa classe et leur enseignante, Mme. Linda Michaud — s'il vous plaît. Nous avons aussi la classe de la quatrième et la cinquième année avec leur enseignante, Mme. Stéphanie Dufour-Jerrett. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Speaker, École St. Mary a la meilleure augmentation de toutes les écoles de la division scolaire catholique élémentaire de Régina. Presentement l'École St. Mary a une population de 369 étudiants, et les nombres d'augmentations à l'automne continue à augmenter.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you 45 grade

4 and 5 students from St. Mary School in the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres. My daughter, Morgan, is a grade 4 student. She is here today with her class and their teacher, Mme. Linda Michaud — please. We also have the grade 4 and 5 class with their teacher, Mme. Stéphanie Dufour-Jerrett. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, St. Mary School has the biggest increase of all the Catholic elementary schools in Regina. At present there are 369 students registered at St. Mary, and registration numbers for fall continue to increase.]

Mr. Speaker, these students are the proud creators of the beautiful, beautiful Saskatchewan centennial quilt on display in the legislature gallery. These students are excited to be here today because each student was assigned to research an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] so this visit provides them with the opportunity to see the MLAs that they've researched in action.

It gives me great pleasure to have them visit the legislature today, and I'd like to ask all of my colleagues to welcome them here today and wish them much success for the completion of the school year.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly two people sitting in your gallery, Walter Dutchak and Michael Androff, who are here today not necessarily to watch the proceedings during question period, but more importantly to see a Bill go through or not through committee, the regional health authorities Act, and the impact that that Act has on their business, the ambulance business.

Walter runs an ambulance service out of North Battleford, and Michael has been very involved in the industry for many, many years. The impact of such a Bill could be devastating to their industry. I think you'll see a number other operators coming into the Assembly over the next couple hours to witness the . . . Hopefully the government realize some of the impact it is having with the Bill that they have introduced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask members to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the gallery, the east gallery is a group of students. This particular class I think has been visiting the Legislative Assembly for as long as I've been a member of the Legislative Assembly. In this particular case it's a group of five students. They are from the grade 12 Social Studies 30 class at Balfour Collegiate. They are accompanied by their teacher, Karen Jackson. I look forward for the opportunity again to meet with this group following question period. I would ask all members to extend them a very warm welcome today. Thank

you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my huge honour today to introduce someone who is no stranger particularly to members on the government side, but seated behind the bar is a former member of this Legislative Assembly, in fact a former minister in the Blakeney government, Mr. Clint White, who represented the constituency of Regina Wascana. And Clint pops by about once a session. I encourage him to come twice a session or three times because he's always fun to visit with and we always learn something important from this gentleman. I ask all members to join me in welcoming my friend and our friend, Clint White.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw North, the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I see in your gallery today, four people who are prominently involved in the arts here in the province of Saskatchewan and take a strong and enthusiastic interest in the well-being of professional artists. I'd like to introduce them to members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members, and just ask them to wave as I introduce them. I see in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Marnie Gladwell, who is the executive director of the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. And also in your gallery on the other side of the bench is Patrick Close, who is from CARFAC, the Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens; and with him is Mike Burns from ACTRA, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists; and widely known actor and also member of ACTRA, Kent Allen. I'd ask all hon. members to welcome these prominent artists to their gallery here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Massey Place, the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce, sitting in your gallery, Boris Kischuk, who is accompanied by Ms. Wojcichowsky, and I believe they were here having lunch with you, Mr. Speaker, and the ambassador from Ukraine. And I know Mr. Kischuk better.

Boris is an engineer in Saskatoon, and he served as head of the public utility rate review committee and also has provided distinguished service on our public school board in Saskatoon. And I'm not as familiar with Ms. Wojcichowsky, but I know that both of them are involved in the Ukrainian-Canadian community. And I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them to the Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Green Ribbon of Hope

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The month of May marks the 16th annual Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign by Child Find Canada. Every parent's worst nightmare is to have a child go missing. Unfortunately this nightmare is a reality for thousands of parents across Canada, as thousands of children are reported missing each year, nationwide.

According to Child Find, the Green Ribbon of Hope is recognized as a symbol to remember children who have gone missing and to seek their safe return.

Sixteen years ago students and teachers at Holy Cross Secondary School in St. Catharines, Ontario launched the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign following the abduction and subsequent murder of their fellow student, 15-year-old Kristen French.

Mr. Speaker, during the month of May, Child Find organizations across the country will sponsor a number of activities, including fingerprint clinics and other community fundraising events. During the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign, May 25 is recognized as Missing Children's Day.

Proceeds generated by the campaign will help Child Find Canada and its provincial offices, like the one right here in Saskatchewan, continue their efforts in helping search for missing children, as well as educating children and adults about personal safety.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank everyone involved with Child Find Saskatchewan, headquartered in Saskatoon, for their tireless efforts during the Green Ribbon Campaign, and all through the year to find missing children and their compassion in dealing with families who face uncertainty and unimaginable feelings of loss and hopelessness.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Pink Ribbon Day

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Pink Ribbon Day here in the legislature. Many of us will be dressed in pink or wearing a pink ribbon in support of breast cancer research.

Mr. Speaker, there are three important aspects to every breast cancer ribbon. First, they're pink in celebration of the courage of thousands of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Secondly, they're lined with black in honour of the memory of the thousands of women who have died from the disease. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the pink ribbon is shaped like a teardrop for the many tears shed at the time of every diagnosis.

Mr. Speaker, breast cancer is the most common cancer among

Canadian women, affecting one in nine at some point in their lives. An estimated 22,300 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year alone, and more than 5,000 will die as a result. Breast cancer affects us all, Mr. Speaker, whether we are unfortunate enough to contract the disease or not. In 2004, after years of brave struggle, I lost my own mother to this disease, and my daughter, Morgan, lost her Oma.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that one day there will be a cure for breast cancer, but until that day it is the responsibility of every one of us to help raise the awareness of Saskatchewan people and to ensure that research continues. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing as many pink garments and ribbons in this Assembly as possible during tomorrow's Pink Ribbon Day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Royals Junior B Hockey Champs

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Royals Junior B hockey team had a fantastic season this year, and I would like to share some of the highlights with members of this Assembly.

Under the guidance of coaches Ray Hudson, Jim Peichel, Al Paquin, and trainer Don Brickner, the Saskatoon Royals finished first in the North Sask Junior B league play. Mr. Speaker, the team then went on to defeat the Saskatoon Westleys in the semi-finals, and later edged out the Saskatoon Quakers to win the North Sask Junior B playoffs. From there the team continued its winning streak by trouncing the Pilot Butte Storm to win the Provincial Junior B Championship.

But the Royals' success doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the season, the Saskatoon Royals competed in their very first ever Western Canadian Championship. At this level, the team systematically eliminated the provincial champions from northern Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, and the host team Fort Knox, to win the Western Canadian Junior B Championship.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to the players of the Saskatoon Royals on a season that was both exciting and rewarding. I would also ask members to join me in congratulating the coaches, trainer, equipment manager, parents, billets, volunteers, as well as Saskatoon Royals vice-president, Bill Fitzsimmons, and general manager, Robert Renneberg, on such a successful season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Prince Albert Women of Distinction Awards

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday evening I, along with my colleague, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, and a capacity crowd, had the pleasure of attending the 19th annual Prince

Albert YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] [14:00]
Women of Distinction Awards.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the award organizers and the volunteers for what was a very enjoyable evening, and I want to congratulate each and every one of the nominees for their ongoing contributions to our community.

Mr. Speaker, this year's YWCA Women of Distinction are Gloria Mahussier for the community enhancement; Debbie Roy for business and entrepreneurship; Donna Brooks for recreation, sport, and active living; Gillian McCaffery for the arts. Holly F. Young was the winner in the professional series category and, Mr. Speaker, this year's winner of the SaskPower Roberta Bondar Scholarship is Rebecca Gustufson, a grade 12 student at P.A.C.I. [Prince Albert Collegiate Institute]. And, Mr. Speaker, the winner of this year's distinction Lifetime Achievement Award is Tena Bannerman.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join with me in congratulating these nominees and the winners of this year's Prince Albert Women of Distinction Awards. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Montmartre Student's Prize-winning Essay

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce to this Assembly today that the town of Montmartre is celebrating the achievement of Marley Kotylak, a local grade 8 student. Marley is the author of an essay entitled "The Meaning of Freedom." Her essay was submitted to the Royal Canadian Legion Remembrance Day contest and won first place at the branch level, first place at the district level, and first place at the provincial level. At the national level Marley received an honourable mention for her essay. She will appear with the other national winners in the *Legion Magazine* published in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the Remembrance Day contest is one of the contests the Royal Canadian Legion sponsors every year in order to foster the tradition of remembrance among Canadians. Marley's essay is a well written and thoughtful expression of a teenager's perspective on the meaning of freedom. She notes that in Canada there are a variety of freedoms we take for granted — such as the right to an education and the right for a woman to be outdoors without a male escort.

At a time when some Canadian youth are becoming less and less engaged, we have a young woman in the town of Montmartre who not only appreciates the struggle for freedom but who also has been able to articulate her appreciation in an award-winning essay.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to congratulate Marley Kotylak on her achievement and to wish her well in her future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Salute to Saskatchewan Farmers

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, in the words of the late Stan Rogers:

For the good times come and go, but at least there's rain
So this won't be barren ground when September rolls
around
... watch the field behind the plow turn to straight dark
rows
Put another season's promise in the ground.

Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend I had the opportunity to drive through a good part of rural Saskatchewan — from here to my home near Macdowall, and from Choiceland and Smeaton to my hometown of Rockglen. And everywhere there were visual reminders that while we have been engaged in the theatre and theatrics of this Assembly, farmers are out seeding this year's crop.

This in spite of accelerating input costs, uncertain and volatile commodity prices, escalating freight rates, negative net farm incomes, federal sabotage of collective marketing, and of course the vagaries of weather from drought in the Southwest to flooding in the Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, the good life we lead in this province is derived in great part from our long and continued history of farming the land. Our economy and the livelihood of most of our communities depend one way or another on the soil. And most of us, Mr. Speaker, have no more than one degree of separation from the family farm.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of the spring session, I ask that all members join me in saluting the farmers of this province as they put another season's promise in the ground. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Responses to Mailer

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month the Saskatchewan Party launched a postcard campaign asking Saskatchewan residents to weigh in on the NDP [New Democratic Party] government's decision to reward Murdoch Carriere with \$275,000 and a generous top-up to his government pension. This is a former senior government official who was fired for harassment and convicted of assault.

Our office is still getting responses a month and half later, and I would like to share some more of those responses with the members opposite. From Prince Albert, and I quote:

This decision is SO wrong! IF Carrier was threatening to

sue, it should have gone to court where 12 responsible, intelligent jurors would have made the right decision. Shame on you, NDP. I can't believe you could have made such an asinine decision.

And from Regina, and I quote:

One more example of the lack of moral fibre displayed by NDP leaders. We have, unfortunately, come to expect this type of performance.

From Saskatoon, and I quote:

What has this come to? When did harassment in the workplace become a way to become rich on our tax dollars? All this is utterly disgusting. The NDP show no respect for how our hard earned tax dollars are spent. Think about it Mr. Premier, do you really mean you would do it again?

Mr. Speaker, to date we have received almost 7,500 responses to this campaign and 92 per cent of those who responded expressed similar sentiments of disdain.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Shortage of Nurses

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government we have the worst nurse retention record in all of Canada. The NDP government is working on passing a deficit budget that puts the people of Saskatchewan \$700 million in the hole, but with all that spending, all they could muster was 18 new training seats for nurses next year, Mr. Speaker. That's a shame.

Now we have the largest health district in the province using paramedics to cover a shortage of nurses in intensive care units. The Royal University Hospital is short five full-time nurses as well as six temporary nurses in ICU [intensive care unit]. The head of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says that using paramedics to fill for nurses is not an ideal situation.

Why is this government continuing to fail when it comes to introducing a comprehensive strategy for nurse recruitment and retention in our province? Why is this minister continuing to manage in crisis mode?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this question. The member opposite, as members of the public are aware, last year we put in place \$25 million recruitment and retention strategy. Mr. Speaker, that strategy is already having . . . It's already making significant progress, Mr. Speaker. We're having

significant success with that strategy.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we recognize — that's why we put the program in place — that health workforce requirements, Mr. Speaker, this is a very competitive environment. And we have to continue to be very creative in the efforts that we make to ensure that all of our operating rooms, emergency rooms, acute care facilities, and long-term care facilities are adequately staffed, Mr. Speaker, for the care of the individual . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has known about the nursing shortage for years. They created it. And they still fail to work effectively with front-line workers to find solutions.

In the 2006 report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, it highlights this problem. For a fifth year in a row, only 50 per cent of registered nurses have full-time employment. Roughly one-third of nurses educated in Saskatchewan, PEI [Prince Edward Island], and Newfoundland no longer work in the province where they were trained.

When will the minister begin working with the health care professionals to come up with mechanisms that will ensure we keep most, if not all, of our graduates in our province? That is the solution. When will he start working with the front-line workers and ensure full-time work for our graduating students?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comment of the member opposite that the NDP created this crisis. And I'm sure that the 2,000 vacancies in British Columbia, the 900 vacancies in Calgary, the 1,000 vacancies in Ontario . . . I'm sure that those health care human resource managers, Mr. Speakers, are looking at Saskatchewan at having created this crisis right across the country.

But, Mr. Speaker, we put in place, this government put in place a program that this year is going to devote \$6 million alone this year, Mr. Speaker, \$6 million alone to deal with retention initiatives, Mr. Speaker. The application deadline for those workplace applications closed just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker. In the week prior to that, we had more than 30 applications for those retention programs, Mr. Speaker. Those programs will be effective . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time is elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The difference between the other Western provinces and Saskatchewan is Alberta increased the number of training seats for registered nurses by 400. In Manitoba they have twice the number of training seats than we do in Saskatchewan. But under this NDP government, what they've decided to do is \$700 million deficit and create 18 new training seats for nurses, Mr. Speaker. You're never going to fix the problem when we've have 400 vacancies and up to 500 retirements looming in the next year or two. How in the world will 18 seats fill that void?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Interesting use of numbers. Let's go back to the election of this government in 2003, Mr. Speaker. Fifty-five per cent more registered nursing seats in this province today than there were in 2003 — 55 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. For LPNs, licensed practical nurses, Mr. Speaker, the number of seats since 2003 is up 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to increasing the number of seats for health care professionals across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, today as we speak here, there are close to, there are more than 1,500 students in nursing seats in this province, Mr. Speaker — 1,500.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this minister identified the problem. Yes, they've increased the number of training seats by 70 per cent. But when you knock it down to less than 100 training seats in this province under that NDP government, that's why we have the crisis we're facing in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we have an NDP government that is pushing for a deficit budget. We have an NDP government that's only increased the number of training seats by 18. We have hundreds of vacancies around the province. Now the government's solution is to manage some of these vacancies by bringing in paramedics.

Mr. Speaker, when will he start dealing with the real issue? It's the number of training seats, the number of full-time positions, the number of retained graduates. When will he deal with that situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A couple of things — first and foremost, paramedics are trained to deal with issues in the emergency room and in acute care facilities, Mr. Speaker. And we are happy to work with

paramedics to the full scope of their capacity, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite does forget that on the retention side of things with graduates, we were able to announce 90 per cent of last year's graduates are working in the system in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And finally, Mr. Speaker, the only advice the members opposite have given us so far this year, Mr. Speaker, the only advice is more auditors or freeze the budget at the rate of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, if they had been elected in the last election, Mr. Speaker, the health care budget this year would be \$200 million less than it is today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week it was learned that the maternity ward at Weyburn General Hospital is going to close June 1 for the summer. And an official from Sun Country Health Region said the closure may even go further into the fall, all because of a shortage of nurses.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of maternity services is a serious concern. It's one that I've heard from constituents over the last week and over this weekend. Can the minister explain to the expectant families of Weyburn and area why they will not have a maternity ward for potentially many months?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite will know that I answered this exact question for him in estimates just a week ago, Mr. Speaker — the exact question. And at the time, I very specifically said this issue was not specifically to do with the nursing shortage, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite heard me say that. He thanked me for my answer, and he didn't pursue the question any further.

Mr. Speaker, this matter is not a matter of dealing with, on a political basis, across the floor about a nursing shortage. This is a matter about managing all the health resources within a facility to ensure the safety of the patients and the individuals who reside within that health region, Mr. Speaker. The health region is working very hard to manage the human resources — all the human resources — in the Weyburn area, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite knows that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister last week said

he was confident that this temporary suspension of maternity services would end by the summer. Now Sun Country Health Region officials say that it could go in to the fall. Families will be forced to travel to Regina or Estevan to have their babies in facilities that are already facing nursing shortages. This will add uncertainty and extra cost for families from Weyburn and area during a very emotional time.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe it's acceptable that a city the size of Weyburn cannot offer this important health service?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite knows that I indicated to him in committee, Mr. Speaker — I indicated to him — that emergency room services would be able to provide any emergency deliveries that needed to be made, and that physicians were going to work on the planned deliveries, Mr. Speaker, the non-complex deliveries in other facilities in order to ensure that the health region could manage the human resource capacities within the emergency room, the acute care units, the ICU [intensive care unit], Mr. Speaker, and the other units within the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Weyburn can have confidence that the regional health authority is taking this issue very seriously and they're taking the steps that they have in order to protect the safety and security of the people who need the services in Weyburn.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, let's hope there are no emergencies over the summer while this government can't offer maternity services. Mr. Minister, on CBC's [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] *Morning Edition*, this morning an official from Sun Country said this nursing shortage goes even deeper, and it's affecting other services at the Weyburn hospital. When asked if it was possible that, beyond maternity, this nursing shortage could lead to other bed closures or other areas of treatment in the Weyburn area being shut down, the response was, and I'll quote:

It is very tight. There is no doubt about it. And we have had some shifts where we weren't able to cover our intensive care unit. So, yes, there are vacancies throughout every department.

Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of NDP government, why hasn't this NDP government, and this minister been able to address the nursing shortage? Why have they allowed cities like Weyburn to reach crisis situations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And

to clarify one more time — because the member opposite by the introduction to his question proves that he did not hear what he said or chooses purposely not to understand what I had to say, Mr. Speaker — emergencies will be dealt with in the emergency room at the Weyburn hospital, Mr. Speaker. Emergencies will be dealt with; the capacity exists.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I have answered on the floor of the Chamber. I have answered to the public through the media, and I have answered in committee where the member was present, Mr. Speaker, exactly the same answer I gave the member earlier. We have increased the number of nursing seats in this province, Mr. Speaker, by 55 per cent since 2003; for LPNs, Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent. Our retention rate is now 90 per cent for new graduates. And, Mr. Speaker, we are working every single day with health professionals in this province to ensure that we can deal with nurse . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Disciplinary Process for the Judiciary

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in 1992 the NDP government appointed Terry Bekolay as a Provincial Court judge. According to news reports, Terry Bekolay was unassigned from the bench in early December, 2005, six months before a formal complaint was lodged against him.

Mr. Speaker, to the Justice minister: who made the decision to remove Terry Bekolay from the bench, so he cannot preside over any cases six months prior to an official complaint that was lodged against him, and why?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little shocked that the member from Saskatoon Southeast could be compelled by his colleagues to ask this question. As he well knows — and there were some written questions from the opposition which the members opposite wouldn't read out loud — as they well know from the answers to those questions and from other sources, the discipline of judges is within the control properly of the judicial council, a non-executive council of government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it has been a year and a half since Terry Bekolay hasn't been able to hear any cases in court, yet he has been collecting his judge's salary the whole time. Mr. Speaker, how much has Terry Bekolay been paid since December 2005, and why has it been one and a half years and the council has yet to conduct their inquiry?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there are three branches of the government. There is the Legislative Assembly, in which we sit. There is executive government, Mr. Speaker, and there's a judicial branch. And the judicial branch is not only independent of the executive branch, Mr. Speaker; it's independent of the Legislative Assembly and has its own processes for discipline. And these kind of questions that the member is asking could properly be directed towards the judicial council. I believe the judicial council will answer the member's questions if he asks them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, according to The Provincial Court Act, the Justice minister is one of the individuals who receives complete details about complaints against judges. It has been 11 years since a judge has been suspended in this province, so the complaints against Terry Bekolay must be very serious. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what is the nature of the complaint against Terry Bekolay?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, if the legislation required complete details to go to the Legislative Assembly, it would, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, The Provincial Court Act states that the Justice minister takes part in selecting two individuals to represent the public on that council. They're appointed by order in council. Mr. Speaker, the Act also states that such hearings are to be held in public unless otherwise ordered.

Mr. Speaker, last week a city police officer was put through a very public process because of alleged misconduct. It would seem appropriate that any judge who has presided over the judging and sentencing of individuals should be subject to a public hearing when a serious complaint is lodged. And given the fact that Terry Bekolay is the former president of the NDP Party, this NDP government must take steps to remove any possible appearance of partisan politics.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister today commit to ensuring that Terry Bekolay's inquiry be held in public? Will the inquiry be held in public? When will the hearing be held? And who will be on that hearing committee, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this government will not compel to direction to any members of the judicial council how the judicial council proceeds in this matter. Judicial council will proceed according to the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Education Portion of Property Tax

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many schools all across this province are closing. At the same time, most property owners are seeing their tax rates go up significantly. In the Good Spirit School Division, some areas are seeing their mill rate go up by as much as 20 per cent. Some in the Prairie Valley School Division are seeing mill rates rise by over 10 per cent. Others in the Living Sky Division are facing mill rates increases of approximately 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, where is the long-term property tax relief that this NDP government promised as a result of the much vaunted amalgamation of school boards process?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we've seen over the last three years is some drastic changes in the education system in the province of Saskatchewan, starting with the Boughen report when it was tabled in May 2004. Since then we have seen a major overhaul of the school divisions. We have gone from 82 divisions down to 28. We are seeing those divisions begin to settle in and make the changes that they need. Mr. Speaker, we will continue on with education reform in the province of Saskatchewan so we see a good system that sees good results and good outcomes for students.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has promised property tax relief for years. Tommy Douglas even promised it in 1944 when he promised to do away with educational property tax because he said it was a regressive legislation. Instead mill rates are going up in the following school divisions: North East, Northwest, Prairie South, Chinook, Creighton, Englefeld, Good Spirit, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic, Horizon, Living Sky, Northern Lights, North West Roman Catholic, Prairie Valley, Prince Albert Roman Catholic, Regina School Division, Regina Roman Catholic, Saskatoon, South East Cornerstone, and Saint Paul's Roman Catholic School Division.

Mr. Speaker, when is this NDP government going to stop offloading the cost of education onto the backs of property taxpayers and live up to its promise to provide meaningful, long-term property tax relief?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, during these last number of years when we have seen a majority of the changes in the system within Saskatchewan, and previous to that, over the last 10 years we've seen an increase of \$200 million into the foundation operating grant. We have seen an increase in the number of teachers in the system, but we have also seen during that decade a drop of enrolment of almost 27,000 students.

Mr. Speaker, there is some changes that need to be made, and we know that. And we'll continue working through the recommendations to provide that good system for students in Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, we don't have to go back to Tommy Douglas. We just have to look at the member from Canora and he said in 1992:

The province is too small in terms of population for all the educational facilities it provides. There must be less duplication and a greater sharing of services, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister should understand and know that when you lose students, you don't lose nice, even blocks of 20 students per classroom so that the actual expenses of school divisions can be minimized. The minister should know that, even though enrolments are decreasing, expenses for many school divisions are increasing. And as a result, we see this phenomena where school divisions and citizens are getting fewer educational services and are paying more dollars for it.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister deliver on long-term property tax relief and higher quality education in this province for our citizens?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, during the last couple of years also we have seen the education portion property tax credit on each and every one of our tax notices as they come out — 38 per cent on agricultural property and this year increased to 10 per cent on residential and commercial.

Mr. Speaker, it's fine for the opposition to stand up and criticize. But we have the Leader of the Opposition; he stands up and says well we'd keep the schools open. Then we have the member from Melfort, he stands up and says well we should have schools of necessity and then says in the paper in Tisdale, well that may not work, may not work in many cases, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, then they stand out in front of the Save Our Schools rally and say everyone needs to be involved in this decision. Then they say on the media that — on the CBC radio, the member from Melfort said — well the school boards need to be left alone to make the decisions. Mr. Speaker, this group is all over the map on this one, and they continue to be.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has been entirely consistent when it has said there has to be a greater commitment for the funding of educational funding from the province. We've been absolutely consistent when we say that more people in communities need to be involved with school boards in the decision about the future of their schools. We've been absolutely consistent when we say there are circumstances where schools of necessity apply. We've been consistent in saying that there should be consideration of schools of opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, as opposed to that government, the official opposition at least has a plan that people of this province can rely on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, when will this government take responsibility for its botched leadership and admit to the fact that there is no long-term property tax coming under this government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what plan he's talking about. It depends on odd days of the week or even days of the week what proposal he's putting forward.

This government, this NDP government over the past 10 years has put an additional \$200 million into the foundation operating grant. That's a 52 per cent increase when we have seen over that time a drop in enrolment of almost 27,000 students.

Mr. Speaker, And then we have to look at the Sask Party. This is their big plan, Mr. Speaker, the big plan. What they say in their policy document is that they want to:

... encourage increased cooperation between all publicly funded school systems in an effort to streamline both systems and eliminate unnecessary and costly duplication.

What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? And then the Leader of the Opposition says well we'll keep those schools open. But yet the decade that he worked for the Grant Devine . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't have to take my word for the fact that school divisions do not think there is a plan. The Good Spirit School Division says, and I quote:

The provincial government's inability to appropriately address the funding of education in the province has contributed to the loss of over \$4 million in grant revenue

compared to the combined grant . . . received prior to amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister said amalgamation was necessary to, quote, “provide long-term sustainable property tax.” The current Minister of Learning says the same thing, but clearly it’s not happening.

When is the provincial government, this NDP government going to live up to their commitment for long-term sustainable property tax relief in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government supports education and knows the value of education, and we will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Sask Party platform and their policy book, they want to encourage “. . . co-operation between all publicly funded school systems in an effort to streamline both systems [what does that mean?] and eliminate unnecessary and costly duplication.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, when he’s out and about in the public, says well we’re going to keep these schools open. It sounds good when you’re in front of a crowd. But when you look at the Conservative record during the 1980s, it was the worst decade on record in this province for school closures — 162. Now he forgets that, doesn’t he?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I wish to table a letter from the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner dated May 14, 2007.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 68

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hagel that **Bill No. 68 — The Status of the Artist Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to stand in the House today to participate in the debate on Bill No.

68, An Act respecting the Status of the Artist and Professional Relations between Artists and Engagers in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it’s a Bill with a fairly lengthy title, reminiscent of course of the amount of time that has been used in discussing this particular piece of legislation. I think at this point we’ve probably spent more hours going over some of the nuances of the proposals from the government, listening to various artists’ associations, engaging the public in public hearings and conversation. We’ve probably spent more time trying to get a grasp on what this particular piece of legislation means to the community of artists in this province and what their expectations and hopes are as a result of this piece of legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I don’t want to belabour the topic much today. My colleague from Moosomin spent a considerable amount of time last week putting on the record the position of the official opposition and some of our areas of support and some of our areas of concern with this particular Bill. But I think that we need to, for the record, once again enunciate some of the, some of the areas of discussion, maybe repeat just a little bit of the history of this particular piece of legislation, and then make the appropriate decision as to what to do with it a little later on.

As the Speaker will know, this Bill has grown out of a previous piece of legislation introduced in this House by the government, Bill No. 40, regarding the status of the artist. That particular Bill was considered to be incomplete and not substantial enough to meet the needs of the artistic community and some of the, some of the topics that had been covered by a committee struck by the minister to look at issues relating to financial security for artists in this province.

And when Bill No. 40 was sent to the Standing Committee on Human Services, the minister sent with it a challenge that he asked the committee to address. In fact he specifically asked us to look at three questions. The questions are as follows, Madam Deputy Speaker: number one, under what circumstances and using what processes should artists be able to enter into collective bargaining? How should they select their representative association? And what would be the scope of that representation?

Question two, how should current national collective agreements, bargained through voluntary collective bargaining processes, be handled in a provincial labour relations system?

And question number three, how should disputes arising from collective bargaining between artists and engagers be adjudicated?

Madam Deputy Speaker, these three questions formed the basis of considerable discussion within the committee. The members of the committee were simply unable to come to grips with the questions that were being asked by the minister, and so it was resolved by the committee to basically say to the minister, look, we’re dealing with an issue that is too broad in scope and really too undefined for us to attend to adequately. And we recommended that the committee invite the minister to present a mock piece of legislation that we could evaluate — something that we could get our heads around; something that we could sit

down and read and hopefully understand.

The minister was good enough to do that. And as a result of the committee process — and I think we spent something like 20 hours in public hearings and debate in the public domain, and several hours in addition to that in the in camera sessions of the committee, but having gone through that process — we finally as a committee came up with a number of recommendations.

There were five recommendations that the committee brought back to the legislature upon which broad consensus and agreement had been reached. And I won't bother reading them into the record now, Madam Deputy Speaker, but nevertheless I think that those five recommendations indicated a preparedness of the committee as a whole, who were looking at this legislation, to deal with some of the issues of primary concern to the artistic community in this province.

I don't think there was a moment in all of the discussions and all the attendant hearings that went into this particular piece of legislation, at which time any one of the committee members could say to somebody else, you don't seriously take the concerns of the artistic community at face value. Or you don't understand the importance of this issue to the artistic community and ultimately to the people of the province; you don't, you aren't interested in the issues facing this community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that as a result of this fairly comprehensive exercise, the one common element that came out of this was a very broad understanding by the members of the committee that there is a thriving arts community in this province. There is a very creative group of people operating in this province. They contribute in significant and substantial ways to the life of this province and that they, in every way possible, should be recognized both officially and unofficially. And I think that the members of the committee were agreed that there are certain fundamental principles that ought to be incorporated into the legislation.

And there were one or two very pragmatic areas that really should be addressed. And to the credit of the government, we've seen those particular two specific areas referred to in this Bill, and let me just bring them to the attention of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The first most pragmatic element that this particular piece of legislation addresses is found in section 3 where it says, and it's very simple but it says clearly: "The Crown in right of Saskatchewan is bound by this Act." Why is that important, Madam Deputy Speaker? Well for one very clear and specific reason. Even though the Crown might have said it was bound by this Act previously in some of the pieces of legislation that represented status of the artist concerns, in fact the policy of the Crown being bound by the Act was undermined by the fact that Executive Council didn't think that it had to pay any attention to the legislation.

And in fact, when photographers in particular brought their work to Executive Council or to Crown agencies or government departments for use in promotional or advertising venues, artists who are photographers in this province were told that they weren't even allowed to bid for work on behalf of the government unless they gave up the right to their intellectual

property. And in fact, that obligated these artists, these photographers, to give up what is most fundamental to any artist. The most important element any artist has ownership regarding their work has to do with the intellectual property.

And when Executive Council insisted that photographers in this case give up their right to hold on to their intellectual property as part of an agreement to even be allowed to bid on work, not only was the law of the province being violated, the very spirit of the legislation was being violated.

And I think that in this particular piece of legislation where it says here that "The Crown in right of Saskatchewan is bound by this Act," this is an admission, this is an admission by the minister and by this government that they have failed to act honourably in dealing with artists, and particularly photographers in this province, but maybe other artists as well. So there was a clear agreement on the part of all members of the Human Services Committee, when we looked at this legislation, that this is an appropriate part of this Bill.

The other pragmatic element that comes in this legislation is found in section 9 dealing with individual contracts — goods or services from professional artists. And here it says:

9(1) Subject to the regulations, no engager shall contract with, or retain the services of, a professional artist for a purpose mentioned in subclause 2(e)(i),(ii) or (iii) without having entered into a written contract with that professional artist.

And subsection (2) of section 9 says:

Every written contract entered into for the purposes of this section must contain the elements prescribed in the regulations.

What this clearly says, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that before an artist produces work or provides work for a display or a show of some sort, a written contract must be entered into by the artist and the engager or the company or organization that is going to show the art. And while that might make common sense from a business perspective in the rest of the world, it doesn't appear that a written contract was a formality or a requirement previously in this province, and for many artists they found themselves on the short end of the stick, so to speak, when it came to being remunerated or rewarded or paid for their artistic work.

And I think it only makes common sense in this day and age that before an artist puts a work on display that there be some clear-cut written contract that will assure the rights to the artist that are necessary and will assure the rights and benefits to the engager. But not only that, not only the rights and privileges of both parties, but the obligations of both parties. And so, a written contract forms part of this piece of legislation.

But what's interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that this Bill runs about 55 sections, I believe, over 24 pages. And the two most pragmatic and important parts of this legislation — both of which would make a significant impact and be of real import to the artists of this province — are taken care of in just the first couple of pages in very brief articles within this piece of

legislation.

And the vast majority of the Bill has to do with how artists can form associations and how engagers must form associations and all the attendant rules and regulations surrounding, basically, negotiations. And I think that this particular element of the legislation is the part that has probably caused the official opposition members on that committee the most difficulty, because we weren't at all certain or clear how this would work. And we're still not absolutely certain, Madam Deputy Speaker, how it will work.

The fact of the matter is, however, that in the public hearings, even though several hundred invitations were sent out to artists and organizations around the province, of the number of groups that appeared, the vast majority of them said that they felt that this particular arrangement — allowing artists' associations to come together and to bargain collectively on behalf of their members with engagers — was something that they wanted.

And I think they recognize, and we certainly recognize, that this is a tool. But it's not the only tool that is going to advance the cause of artists, the financial cause of artists in this province. We think there's much more that can and ought to be done in order to achieve the goals that we're all looking for, and that's basically financial stability on behalf of the artistic community in the province.

However, having said that, I think while there's some element of disagreement on the virtue of this particular element of the Bill, I don't know that the official opposition would see it as being so pivotal and so significant that we would want to duke it out with the government — can I use that expression? — on this particular issue.

I think that there are questions that need to be asked. We need to be absolutely comfortable that this is the appropriate way to deal with this area. We also need to have an opportunity to discuss with the minister and his officials some of our questions. We need to put some of our concerns and objections on the record and I think the best place for us to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, would be in committee, the Committee on Human Services. So it's my pleasure now, Madam Deputy Speaker, to suggest that this Bill move forward to committee. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 68, The Status of the Artist Act, 2007 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 68, The Status of the Artist Act, 2007 be referred to the

Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 68, The Status of the Artist Act, 2007 be now referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, in order to accommodate the good works of the Standing Committee on the Economy as well as the Standing Committee on Human Services, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House does now stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:48.]

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