



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

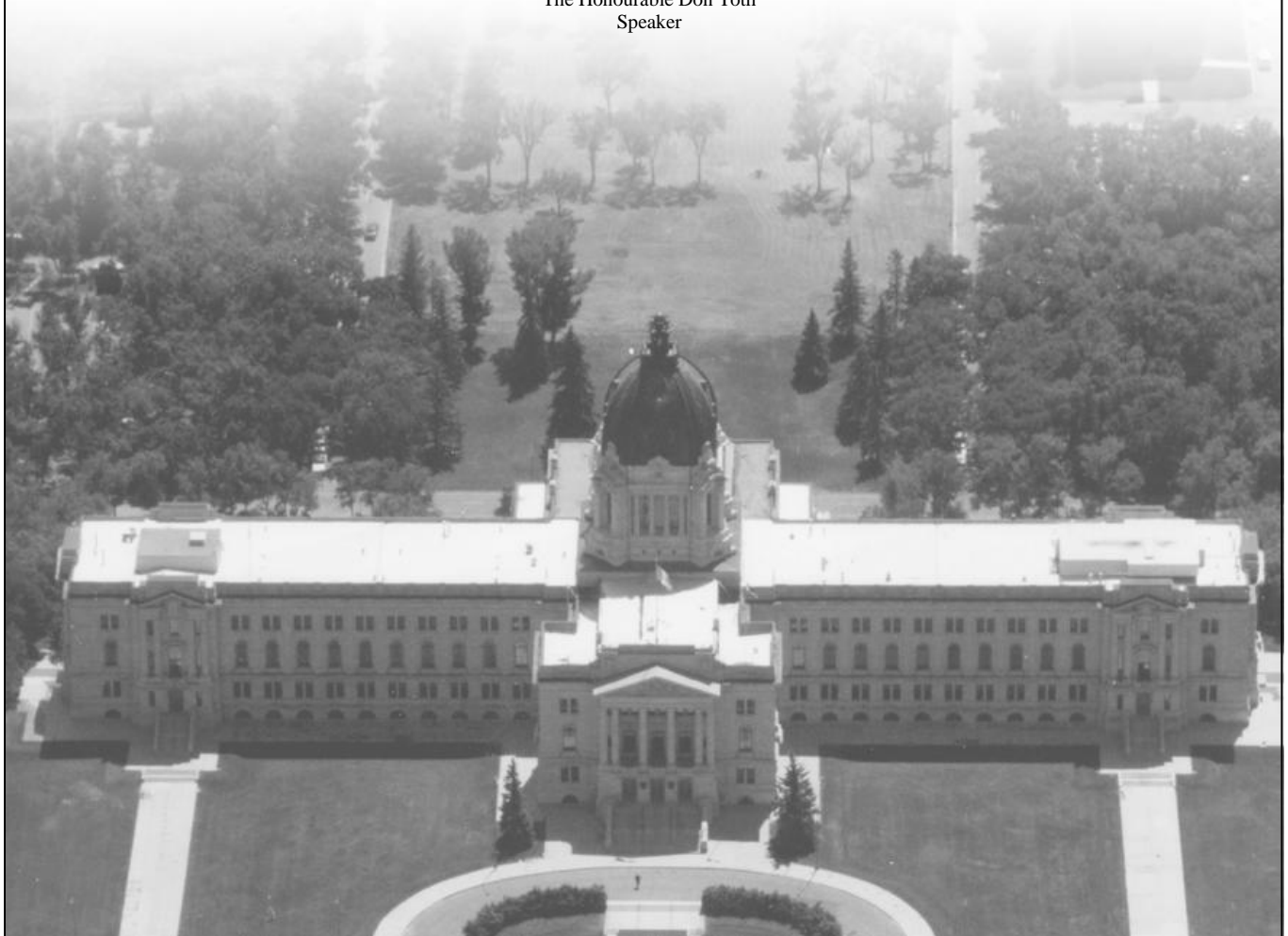
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Cumberland

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

Clerk: — I wish to advise members of the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be here today to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, thank you. Through you, to you, and to all the members of this Assembly I would like to introduce two special people to me, two special guests today, my wife, Leone, and my youngest daughter, Rayanne, in the Speaker's gallery. They're visiting the Assembly today after spending the night. Rayanne competed last night in the last of the semi-final of the 31st annual CKRM Big Country talent shows. I believe this is the longest-running talent show in Canada, if I'm not mistaken.

Three girls successfully made it through to the finals, to next Sunday: Kelsey Fitch, Megan Lynn Nash, and my little girl, Rayanne. They will be performing at the finals along with nine others next Sunday, and some other venues over the next little while.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, I know what you're thinking — Rayanne's a pretty girl just like her dad. But I can assure you her looks and her talent come from her mother. I would ask all members to welcome two of my three favourite girls in the world to this Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this legislature two individuals seated in the east gallery, Nancy Broten and Matt Johnson. They came down for the day to see the activities of the legislature.

Nancy is my sister. She has a B.Ed. [Bachelor of Education] from the U of R [University of Regina] and currently works at the University of Saskatchewan in the language centre. And Matt Johnson is from Saskatoon as well. He holds a Bachelor of Science in land use, environmental studies and was most recently working for Saskatoon Curbside Recycling. But he's headed to Calgary for the summer to work at the U of C [University of Calgary] as a guide in their outdoor canoeing program. He's an experienced whitewater paddler. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the

member for Regina South.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker. Boy that's a long title, isn't it? It's a great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Legislative Assembly Sharon and Bernie Grebinski in your gallery. I'd like them to stand and take a brief bow if they could, please. These are long-time residents of south Regina, and they're great community builders. So a warm welcome to them to their legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a group of young visitors with us today. They are seated in the west gallery. They're a grade 4 class from St. Gabriel School here in Regina in my constituency of Regina Wascana Plains. With them is their teacher, Yvonne Reding.

They're going to be observing our procedures here today and I will be joining them later to discuss their impressions. I really want to see if we do get a passing grade. Please join me in welcoming these young folks here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to present a petition on behalf of South Hill businesses in my community of Moose Jaw, and it has to do with the closure of our South Hill liquor store. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reassess its decision to close the South Hill liquor store, allowing it to continue to serve the people of Moose Jaw and provide valuable revenue to the people of this province.

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too rise to present a petition today and it's a petition in support of Station 20 and the concerns that many people in Saskatoon and across the province have about the taking back of \$8 million funding for this project. I'll read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately restore funding to the Station 20 project.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these folks come across the city of Saskatoon. Thank you very much. I do so present. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present petitions in opposition to the government's Bill 5, The Public Service Essential Services Act, and Bill 6, An Act to amend The Trade Union Act. And the prayer reads as follows:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the new government to withdraw both Bills and hold broad public consultations about labour relations in the province.

And as duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

The petitions are signed from people in Watson, LeRoy, Lake Lenore, Quill Lake, Spalding, Saskatoon, and Englefeld. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, April 28 is recognized in Canadian law as a National Day of Mourning for persons killed or injured in the workplace. An initiative of the Canadian Labour Congress in 1984, this day is marked by unions, governments, and concerned employers who recognize that any workplace death or injury is preventable.

While the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board reports a reduced injury rate for the year 2007, we are mindful that 40,000 injured workers a year and 37 deaths from job-related injuries or illness is by any account unacceptable. Members of this House know that much more must be done to ensure that no one in this province suffers injury or death as a result of providing for themselves and their loved ones. This goal of zero loss can only be achieved through strong labour laws and proper enforcement of existing laws that are designed to help workers.

Day of Mourning ceremonies will be held across the province today, including a vigil hosted by the Regina & District Labour Council to be held at 5:30 p.m. this evening in front of the cairn in the city hall courtyard here in Regina. It is my sincere hope that next year no other names will have to be read into the

register of workers injured or perished on their job.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Wood River.

2008 Snowbirds Acceptance Show

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the distinct pleasure, along with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, of attending the formal acceptance show for the 2008 Snowbirds. The show was performed for the approval of the commander of 1 Canadian Air Division, Major-General Marcel Duval, as well as Canadian and US [United States] air traffic regulators.

431 Air Demonstration Squadron, better known as the Snowbirds, represent a tradition of excellence as ambassadors. This group demonstrates the skill, professionalism, and teamwork of the men and women of the Canadian Forces. While not a combat unit, the Snowbirds exhibit the skills and courage that Canada's combat forces count on and contribute to world peace and security.

The Snowbirds are a Canadian institution, flying Tutor jet aircraft adorned with the colours of the Canadian flag. The team represents the vibrant spirit of this nation, thrilling audiences across the continent with precision formation flying and crisp solo acts. Now in their 38th season, the Snowbirds have flown in well over 2,000 shows for more than 125 million spectators. The 2008 team will fly 65 shows at 45 locations across North America from May until October.

I would like to congratulate Major Rob Mitchell and his 2008 team for an excellent acceptance show demonstration, and would ask all members to join me in congratulating the 2008 Snowbirds and wishing them a successful season.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to join with the member from Wood River and really talk about what a great pleasure it was to be in the audience this morning at 15 Wing Moose Jaw and announce that the Snowbirds air demonstration team is truly set to take to the skies for their 2008 show season.

And the team recently put finishing touches on their manoeuvres by practising over water, mountains, and other diverse terrain while in 19 Wing Comox, BC [British Columbia].

The show's format for the 2008 Snowbird season will be slightly different from previous years. The duration of each show has been shortened slightly while still performing the same number of manoeuvres and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this means that they will be flying tighter patterns and closer to the crowds.

The Snowbirds will do 65 performances in 45 communities right across North America. And the team is especially looking forward to the Quebec City shows on June 14 and 15 where they will be one of five aerobatic demonstration teams from across the world to participate.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to attend the team's annual acceptance show this morning along with the member from Wood River being held at 15 Wing Moose Jaw, which is situated in the constituency of Moose Jaw Wakamow. And although the acceptance show was not open to the public, Moose Javians will have a chance to see the Snowbirds in action on Armed Forces Day on August 23.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members join me in congratulating Major Rob Mitchell and wishing the Snowbirds a successful 2008 season.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Volunteer Week

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to let members of this House know that this government has proclaimed April 27 to May 3 Volunteer Week in Saskatchewan to coincide with National Volunteer Week.

Canadians' spirit of volunteerism is renowned by far beyond our borders. Saskatchewan in particular is recognized for its extraordinary high rate of volunteering. Those visiting Saskatchewan have been astonished by the volunteer-driven events we have hosted — events such as the Scotties Tournament of Hearts and the Grey Cup.

Volunteers are active in all Saskatchewan communities. Our soccer and hockey coaches are volunteers. Our neighbours who shovel seniors' walks or help them buy their groceries are volunteers. Saskatchewan's volunteers help to raise millions of dollars a year for worthwhile causes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when fires or floods force people from their homes, volunteers help distribute food, blankets, and arrange shelters. We all know who they are and no doubt each and every one of us or our families have benefited from their goodwill.

The theme of this year's National Volunteer Week is From Compassion to Action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what an appropriate theme. This province's volunteers are famous for springing into action to make a difference in the lives of others.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this House to take a week of heartfelt thank you to our volunteers who are truly making Saskatchewan a greater province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Youth Art Exhibit in Saskatoon

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today and to extend my congratulations to Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Inc., more commonly known as SCYAP, on another successful project.

On Friday, March 18, I attended SCYAP's newest exhibit called Urban Messages. This is SCYAP's first project that has focused exclusively on graffiti-style art. Mr. Speaker, the quality and diversity of the artwork on display was indeed impressive. Judging from the reactions of other people attending the opening and judging from the number of art pieces that were already sold, I think others agree.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, the artists in Urban Messages had to compete with other applicants to be accepted into the program. While participating, the individuals agreed to refrain from tagging in the community. This format allows participants to further develop their artistic ability in a supportive and constructive environment. It also helps put some money in the pockets of the participants through the sale of their artwork.

Mr. Speaker, there are nine artists participating in Urban Messages. I would ask the Assembly to join me in congratulating Tyrone Whitehawk, Alex Mann-Keufler, Spencer Robinson, Kris Moffatt, Lukas Broste, Nick Racine, Cody Watier, Riley Frank, and Jesse Zabos for a successful show and wish them the best as they continue to grow as people and artists.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the staff and board of SCYAP who continue to do a fine job of providing leadership to the program. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Corporation Supports Weyburn Community

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I rise in the Assembly to recognize a great Canadian company that is an important employer and community partner in the Weyburn area. Mr. Speaker, the company I speak of is EnCana.

Mr. Speaker, EnCana Corporation, headquartered in Calgary but with significant operations in the Weyburn area, is a leader in corporate Canada and beyond for its environmental stewardship, community giving, and industry-leading use of new technologies. Named this past year as one of the most admired companies in a worldwide survey by *Fortune* magazine, EnCana has played an important role in Weyburn and area as a major employer, a good corporate citizen, and by putting southeast Saskatchewan on the map due to their world's largest carbon sequestration project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, employees of EnCana's Weyburn operations are well known throughout the community for their

many hours of volunteer work and for the financial support they and EnCana donate to so many worthwhile community organizations including the Youngfellows' TV auction, local sporting teams, and other organizations focused on serving the youth of Weyburn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Friday various EnCana officials from Calgary joined with employees from the Weyburn operations to announce a donation of \$100,000 to the city of Weyburn that will go towards the outdoor pool reconstruction project. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy I want to offer my congratulations and thanks to EnCana Corporation and, in particular, operations superintendent for the Weyburn field, Darcy Cretin, and community relations manager, Twila Walkeden, for this incredible level of support they continue to show in Weyburn and area. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Prince Albert Sports Official Recognized

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, recently the Saskatchewan Sport Awards Banquet was held at the Conexus Art Centre and recipients in each category were announced. Mr. Speaker, David Dice from Prince Albert was the recipient in the volunteer recognition category.

In 2007 Mr. Dice officiated at track and field meets as a level 5 track referee, a level 5 umpire, and a level 5 horizontal jumps official. He also managed entries and results for the '07 SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] provincial cross-country championship, served as a jury member for the Western Canada Summer Games, was the coach of the CC Track Club in Prince Albert as well as head coach of Carlton Comprehensive High School Track Club. In '07 he also assisted schools across Saskatchewan with use of Hy-Tek meet management software.

He also has served as Chair of the Saskatchewan athletics officials committee. Closer to home he's the Chair of the committee pursuing the rebuilding of the Harry Jerome track in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in recognizing the hundreds of hours of time Mr. Dice donates for amateur sport and in congratulating David Dice on being the Saskatchewan Sports Award recipient in volunteer recognition category. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Assistance for the Livestock Industry

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, all members of the House have heard first-hand about the economic crisis facing the cattle and

hog industries. The high dollar, low-market prices, and skyrocketing input costs are hitting the sectors hard. And while prices have started to inch back up, our hog industry is still wondering if it will even be around at the end of the year.

Shortly before Christmas, the minister unveiled a short-term hog program . . . or loan program. According to the minister, of the \$30 million set aside for the hog industry, one-third still hasn't been used. What's more, I've been told by producers and industry players that the cap on payouts is limiting the program's ability to really help.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is, will he consider extending the program, given that much of the funds are still unused, and will he consider lifting the cap?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member. I haven't had that many opportunities to actually stand. Mr. Speaker, the member asks some very important questions. We met with the cattlemen, as she may well know, the second day I was Minister of Agriculture. We also met with the hog industry the second day, and they asked for a short-term loan. And, Mr. Speaker, we delivered on that very quickly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — \$60 million for the cattle industry, \$30 million for the hog industry.

And as she talked about in her question, the hog loan is ongoing. The cattle one has just come to an end, and the uptake was fairly decent on that. The hog industry is by formula of how many dollars there actually is per 100 kilograms, and that's an ongoing process into June, Mr. Speaker. So those programs are up and running.

We've also dealt with the federal government and talked to them on a number of occasions and got the TAP [targeted advance payment] program approved for 2007 — but, Mr. Speaker, not only that, but for 2008.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — While I understand and can appreciate that the minister has a very close relationship with the federal government, producers are starting to wonder how far this special relationship is getting them. It certainly doesn't appear to have made its way into their pocketbooks. In addition to the cap placed by the minister on the short-term loan program for hogs and livestock, producers also have to deal with the cap placed on payouts from the AgriStability program. I'm told that the cap on federal payouts is particularly unhelpful as it relates

to the cattle and hog industry facing severe uncertainty over its long-term viability.

To the minister again: what has he done to lobby his counterparts in the federal government to increase the cap, and what exactly is his new relationship doing in terms of getting actual help to producers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we've also been contacted on many occasions by producers on both the livestock and the hog industry out there, wanting the caps raised. We're in the process of working with the federal minister as the member has talked about. We feel that's a worthwhile thing. And as times have changed and costs have rose dramatically in both those industries, we feel that that cap also should be raised and are working with the federal minister.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the relationship we have with the federal minister, contrary to where we were before when that government was in, or that opposition was government. The minister at that time wouldn't deal with the federal minister, whether he was Liberal or Conservative or whoever he was, and we're paying that price. Our producers are paying that price.

If we'd have got to the table and designed the programs like AgriStability, AgriInvest, and AgriRecovery properly, we wouldn't be running out to try and find an ad hoc program. Those programs would have dealt with it. We're dealing with the federal minister, no matter what government's in power, for the best to the advantage of our producers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I do know that the minister has spoken a lot in committee on his new relationship with the Minister of Agriculture, and I know the Minister of Agriculture comes from Saskatchewan, as does the minister. And I know that he is negotiating a program at present.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the major problems facing the cattle and hog industry is input costs. Fertilizing prices are up. Feed costs are going up. And as we all know, the price of diesel and gas is spiralling up, and it seems to not be showing any signs of stopping.

I remember hearing from the minister in his days in opposition when he asked the government to step up to the plate and help out Saskatchewan farmers. I guess my question to the minister: is he willing to look at providing assistance to our producers to help them with their input costs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, as I informed the member opposite in committee and here again today, that when the cattle industry and the hog industry came to meet us the second day I was Minister of Agriculture, the first thing they asked for was a loan program. And why that was, because they were very worried about countervail with the US. What we did was honour that commitment. We did what they asked us to do. We provided a loan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that things are still tough out there in the livestock industry both on the cattle side . . . We know that in the hog industry they are really up against it. The little bit of positive things that are coming out of the hog side are the prices are starting to improve, very small, but I think it's a step in the right direction.

But as I said, Mr. Speaker, what we should have done years ago is dealt with this problem, genuinely at the table with the federal government. And our producers are once again paying the price for the inadequacies of that opposition when they were the government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, the Conservatives have been in office in Ottawa for over two years, and they have the ability with the minister to renegotiate these programs.

But as I have mentioned earlier, a major problem facing the cattle and hog industry is growing input costs. The province of Alberta has gone much farther than just offering a loan program. They have made a direct offer of \$165 million to make up for rising fuel and input costs. The funding is meant to inject immediate funds into the cattle and hog industry in order for them to adjust to short-term economic strain, and the payments have already begun. Further east, the Ontario government announced shortly before Christmas an additional \$100 million for the cattle and hog industry.

To the minister: we have a province with a billion and a half dollars in the kitty, and with the cattle and livestock industry in trouble, isn't there anything more that he can do than offer short-term loan programs with a cap, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe what the member opposite is asking me to do is to undo what they've done in 16 years and for us to do it in five months.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on these programs. As I told her on the hog industry, we've dealt with the 2007 TAP program. They come to us and ask us if we could do anything about the 2008 program. That's in place by dealing with the federal minister and the federal department. That's in place. They ask for a hog loan; we provided that. They asked for a cattle loan; we provided that. We promised a crop insurance review on the grain side; we've provided that.

Mr. Speaker, we've also made the commitment to look at bringing the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] administration home, something that opposition wouldn't do when they were in government because they actually might be responsible. We want to bring it home, so it's reactive to the needs of our farmers, Mr. Speaker. And in our department, farmers come first.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Release of Confidential Documents

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has been caught a half a dozen times or so making statements on the public record with respect to the unlawfully obtained police files, which later turned out to be not true. I am hoping that concern about being caught out again might have forced that minister to be more conscientious. To the minister: he has had the whole weekend to review his files and the weekend newspapers; does he still deny holding a media event with the individual who gave him the police files?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Thursday the member for Saskatoon Meewasin made very serious and false accusations about me. He said, and I quote, that I “. . . was very involved in the arranging of these police files to end up in the Saskatchewan Party caucus office.”

Mr. Speaker, that is not true. The member knows that. He has accused me of criminal wrongdoing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot and will not allow those allegations to stand. Sometimes in the heat of a scrum people say things they later regret. I would like to give the member opposite the opportunity to rise in the House today and unconditionally withdraw the allegation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, as the Premier surely knows, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner legislation sets out strict

guidelines for what members of the legislature can call on him to investigate but much wider parameters for the Premier.

When the NDP [New Democratic Party] was in government, our premier called for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to investigate a member who had put conflicting statements on the public record.

Now the Premier's Justice minister has been caught putting conflicting information on the public record with respect to his relationship with a suspect in the unlawfully obtained police files. To the Premier: will he show that he truly has nothing to hide and ask the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to investigate the activities of his Minister of Justice?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Premier.

[14:00]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, regardless of who is requesting anything to be looked at, whether it is the member opposite or my office, this request to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and his response — which is now public today — I'm not sure that the facts would change. The facts, as has been pointed out by this independent officer of this Assembly, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, is that there are no facts to support the claim. There is no factual assertion in his letter.

These are quotes now from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner: “There is no detail given as to what misstatements, if any, were uttered . . .” And “There is no assertion that this conduct was done in the execution of the office.”

Moreover the letter sent by the former premier to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner asking him to look into the NDP fraud scandal centred on the fact that it involved the misappropriation or the disappearance of taxpayers' dollars.

It also involved — that scandal, if you remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker — involved the assertion by a then sitting member of the NDP caucus that it was the intent of the NDP caucus to conceal fraud. And I think that last part's a quote. I think there's a material difference between that and the recollections of a phone call versus a meeting four years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier set a precedent. The Sask Party government's called on the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to continue his investigation into a member who is no longer an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], suggesting it is in the public interest to continue. He has said he believes in accountability and transparency, but it

now seems that those values do not apply to him and his own ministers.

To the Premier: will he do the right thing and ask the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to conduct a special investigation into the actions and statements of his Justice minister with respect to the unlawfully obtained police file suspect? If not, why the double standard?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on last Thursday the member opposite released two letters he had received as minister of Justice. Obviously he didn't just keep those two letters. He must have kept all letters while he was the minister of Justice, and now he's prepared to release those private and confidential letters when it suits his political purposes.

Mr. Speaker, under The Archives Act passed by that former government, all ministers' records including correspondence are to be sent to the provincial archives once a minister leaves his office. So, Mr. Speaker, why does that member still have ministerial correspondence? Why hasn't it been archived as the law requires?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Casino Profits and Ministerial Documents

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming once said in this Assembly: "... accountability only happens in here under the auspices of the legislature and its committees ..."

My question is quite simply for the Minister of SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. Does he still support his statement that a true accountability only exists here before the Assembly and its committees?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Liquor and Gaming.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this floor of the Assembly is the accountable portion of government to the people of Saskatchewan. That's why I wonder, Mr. Speaker, why the members opposite haven't returned their cabinet papers and turned them over to the archives, the provincial archives. That individual member, Mr. Speaker, when she was a minister received ministerial correspondences which have not yet been returned as the legislation demands to the provincial archives.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as part of the Sask Party government's unaccountability Act that they introduced, Bill No. 32, this is definitely not a piece of housekeeping legislation. And according to the Bill, a section of The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act will be repealed. This section is the provision that requires the government to receive the approval of cabinet and to issue an . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Order. Order. I'm having trouble hearing the question. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, the section that's being repealed is a provision that requires the government to receive the approval of cabinet and to issue an order in council for all expenditures of casino profits. No longer will the government be required to disclose these expenditures to the public, the media, or the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why does the Saskatchewan Party intend to withhold disclosure of casino profits and erode government accountability to the public?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the holding back of information and the non-disclosure of information is being carried out by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there clearly is The Archives Act in Saskatchewan which demands that previous cabinet members return their files to the Archives Board when they're no longer ministers. Virtually every one of the members that sat in cabinet on the opposite side have failed to do so, Mr. Speaker. The hidden information, the information that that government has, that previous administration has, is now being used, Mr. Speaker. That private information is now being used for partisan political purposes, not what it was . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Order. Order.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I'm finding it difficult to hear the questions or the responses. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well it's nice for the nice rant that the minister is giving us, but he's not even coming close to answering the question as to why they are again trying to bury spending of this government.

Last week the Sask Party government was substantially raising the threshold for disclosure expenditures. It was pointed out to them that the potential existed for money to be spent inappropriately and that the public, the media, and the opposition would have no way of knowing. Now we see the Sask Party intends to remove any requirement to disclose expenditures of casino profits of any amount.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the Saskatchewan Party removing the requirement to disclose how the profits from casinos are spent, and what do they want to conceal from the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming.

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to non-disclosure, when it comes to breaking the law of this province, it's the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that are in contravention of The Archives Act. They have retained their ministerial papers, their ministerial correspondence. Much of that is private information, Mr. Speaker, that was related to the business of government and to individuals contacting the ministers at the time, Mr. Speaker.

Those members opposite, including the member asking the question, are in contravention of The Archives Act, have failed to return those papers. They're property of the province of Saskatchewan. It's not their personal property. It's not their personal information, and when will they come into line with the law, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I'd like to remind members that rule 19(3), that the responses to questions must be relevant to those questions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Minimum Wage Indexation

Mr. Iwanchuk: — A bit of amnesia, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these past few weeks have been a study of contrasts. We've learned about a series of mean-spirited cuts to Station 20, the dental sealant program, and the vulnerable workers benefit, all while the government was busy giving their friends raises.

We learned that a party which promised open and accountable government has a Premier who wants to be able to spend taxpayers' dollars without impunity and a Justice minister who changes his story more often than he changes his socks. Mr. Speaker, we learned that while the Minister of Labour is quite happy collecting an indexed salary, he's not quite sure that the minimum wage earners really deserve that security.

To the minister: why is he even reviewing government plans to

index the minimum wage? And can we assume that his review also covers his own salary?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate that question. When it comes to reviewing minimum wage, what we said, Mr. Speaker, is we would go forward on our campaign commitment to keep in consistent step with the previous government. That's in the midst of rolling out. I said that we would do a review as part of due diligence. Mr. Speaker, as a new associate deputy minister came on, he's now taken that on. And, Mr. Speaker, that work continues.

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is I hope the member opposite is also asking some quiet questions to the former minister of Labour about where his archived papers are.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, back when the minister announced that he was going forward with the NDP increase to minimum wage, his news release conveniently neglected to mention indexation. An enterprising reporter asked him what happened? And he said it was being reviewed, with a view to making a decision in 2008. He's now saying the review will take longer than planned.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is taking so long. It's not like this minister has been busy reading his own pieces of legislation. You know, if the minister wants to review indexation, maybe he should open up his wallet and look at his most recent paycheque.

To the minister: what's taking so long? Is he putting off making this decision until the dog days of summer in hopes that nobody will notice?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, once again I appreciate the question. We're moving forward as we said that we would with the review, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the issue of the timing, Mr. Speaker, I was a little bit optimistic. I thought the work might move forward. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, as the associate deputy minister came into that position a little later than we had anticipated, that work's taking a little longer than we'd first thought, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I have every confidence in the work that's under way.

But, Mr. Speaker, I guess what's most troubling, Mr. Speaker, relates to this fearmongering, Mr. Speaker, that is as if there's something going on. Mr. Speaker, the great fear is that people of this province are going to be concerned that their private correspondence with their former government is going to be used for political purposes that we've seen.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a bit lame. But, Mr. Speaker, the minister tells us he is reviewing the situation with a view to making Saskatchewan minimum wage quote, "more predictable." I certainly hope again that he does a better job of reviewing this than he did Bills 5 and 6, and particularly, particularly his work around the Labour Relations Board.

The way I see it, there are really two main ways to make minimum wage more predictable. He can either go ahead and index it as the Sask Party promised, or he can freeze it altogether. That would certainly be predictable, and I wonder if he wouldn't be closer to his ideological preference.

To the minister: will he skip the review? Will he act? And will he bring predictability to Saskatchewan's minimum wage?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, once again I appreciate the question. It's important for the people of this province. What we've said, Mr. Speaker, is we're keeping our promise. The schedule as far as the rollouts are proceeding as planned, Mr. Speaker. We said that we would review it. That review is underway, Mr. Speaker. What we said is again, the assistant deputy minister would actually take the lead on that. It took a little longer as far as getting him into position, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, the question as it was asked also noted an element of predictability. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, it relates to Bills 5 and 6 and what's been going on in committee, Mr. Speaker. And perhaps there's a new question, Mr. Speaker, a new question that we can ask because it seems that not everyone on that side, Mr. Speaker, shares this common view. And that is, Mr. Speaker, perhaps there can be a question raised there and that is, will the members opposite agree to have a free vote on Bills 5 and 6, Mr. Speaker, a free vote? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Why is the member standing?

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave of our Assembly to make a statement of remembrance and reflection on this National Day of Mourning.

[14:15]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Leave is granted. I recognize the member for Advanced Education and Labour.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Mourning, an important and solemn day in which we honour and recognize the women and men who have lost their lives or have been injured on the job.

The day is an annual event. First declared in 1984, it takes place each year on April 28, recalling the anniversary of the federal government's final reading of Canada's first comprehensive workers' compensation Act in 1914. Today workplaces across the country are observing this day through moments of silence, candle lightings, and similar acts of remembrance. On Parliament Hill today, as at our own legislature, Mr. Speaker, flags fly at half-mast.

The names of those who lost their lives in the last year are being read into the official record and inscribed in the national registry at the Canadian Labour Congress in Ottawa. Here in Saskatchewan, we acknowledge the women and men who lost their lives building a strong and prosperous future by reading their names into the provincial record.

It saddens me, Mr. Speaker, to report that in the last year, the Workers' Compensation Board has recognized the loss of 36 Saskatchewan people in the course of this work. Each loss is a poignant reminder that one death is too many. It is the loss of a family member, a co-worker, a member of our community. One loss remains too many.

I would ask on this day, Mr. Speaker, that all members renew their commitment to ensuring that health and safety in the workplace always remains a priority. As recent tragedies have reinforced, we must continue to strive for fewer workplace injuries and deaths, recognizing our shared responsibility to build a healthier, safer Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please rise. When I have read the names of those who have died on the job this year, I ask that we also observe a moment of silence in the House, Mr. Speaker.

Nathan Adrian
Cory Braaten
Arthur Dale
Walter Essar
David Gonor
Terry Grohn
Byron Gwilliam
Garth Hamilton
David Knorr

Peter Boersma
Ross Castle
Terrance Donaldson
Alfred Genereux
Scott Greenham
Edgar Guillemin
Melvin Halfe
Jeffrey Johnson
Frank Krieger

Stuart Lord	Vernon Lund
William Maves	Lyle Myrheim
Ivan Mykytyshyn	Rudolph Nienaber
Gudmund Nordal	John Oxtoby
Shawn Parker	Stanley Pinnell
Terry Riley	John Russell
Matthew Scharf	Spencer Skagen
Henri St. Pierre	Darren Stone
Richard Stone	James Wightman.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Leave to make a statement of reply.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Every year on April 28, a National Day of Mourning is observed to commemorate those killed or hurt by workplace injuries or disease. The date of April 28 was chosen in 1984 when the Canadian Labour Congress proclaimed the date to coincide with the day third reading took place for the first comprehensive workers' compensation Act in Canada back in 1914.

The workers of Canada are not alone in their observance of this special day. April 28 is recognized and observed in 100 countries worldwide, making it truly a global event.

Since 1984 the Day of Mourning observances have become more widespread across the country as they are led by unions and labour councils in many communities. The labour movement across the country has made great strides in raising awareness of the importance of safety on the job.

Today as the Minister of Labour read the names of the workers who lost their lives through workplace accidents, my thoughts turned to the families — the tragedy and the pain they have endured.

The numbers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, speak for themselves and reflect the need to draw attention to this important issue. We must continue to build on the improvements that have been made, while pressuring all levels of government to enforce the laws and regulations there are in place. Lives are not saved by governments simply adopting legislation. Lives are saved by governments enforcing legislation.

We continue to see alarming numbers of deaths in certain industries. Manufacturing and construction top the list. A study done earlier this year points to the significant increase in fatalities caused by occupational disease, mainly asbestos related. Asbestos-related deaths alone account for a significant percentage of the increase in occupational disease, with the fatality rate continually rising.

The time has long come for us as members of the Legislative Assembly to enforce the laws that are in place to protect workers from making the ultimate sacrifice. All workers, their families, their communities, and the public are directly affected by workplace death, injury, and diseases. Each of us must continue to fight.

April 28 is a day that we join together in our commitment to eliminate all workplace injuries and fatalities and to strengthen our resolve to establish safe conditions in the workplace for all.

Across the country, workers will light candles, don ribbons and black armbands, and observe moments of silence to publicly renew their commitment to health and safety in the workplace. On this day we mourn for those who have lost their lives. However it is equally important that we continue to fight for the living. It is as much a day to remember those who have died due to workplace accidents as it is a call to protect the living.

This evening I will be speaking at the Yorkton and District Labour Council commemorative ceremony, and I'm sure many of my fellow colleagues in our Legislative Assembly and many other legislative members throughout Canada will also be attending ceremonies throughout our province and our country. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — To request leave to introduce guests.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Martensville.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I would like to introduce to you and through you Deb Grey, who is seated in your gallery.

I had the absolute honour of working with Deb while I was in Ottawa. Deb was the first Reform MP [Member of Parliament] to sit in the House of Commons, and she sat as a caucus of one for a while. And throughout her career in politics and before that as a teacher, she showed her dedication not just to her constituents and her students, but to the country as a whole and is a role model not just to women in politics — although she certainly is that — but to all of us.

Deb, I'm sure, wouldn't mind me calling her opinionated because I think we're aware of that, but it is based on a set of principles and beliefs that she holds dear. And you don't ever have to question where you stand with her, which is something that I certainly appreciate.

And in my role in Ottawa I helped out with question period a little bit and I have to say that Deb was an absolute superstar.

And I value her friendship and I'm honoured to know her and I welcome her and I ask that all members of the Assembly welcome her to this Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. With leave to introduce guests.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join with the member from Martensville in welcoming Deb Grey to the Legislative Assembly.

I have watched Deb Grey in the House of Commons for a long time. And in fact I was sorry to see her go. She was able to ask questions and she did it with lots of wit. And I particularly remember the binder boy response to, I think it was the House Leader on the government side. And I remember that because I carry around a lot of binders, or have in the past, and thought at one stage someone in the opposition was going to call me binder girl.

Anyway, Deb, it's wonderful to see you here in Regina. You really are an inspiration to women from all political parties and we hope you have a nice time. The weather's getting a little nicer. Enjoy your stay here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Harrison: — Leave to introduce guests.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's also my honour to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a Canadian political legend, Deborah Grey, who I've had the great honour of knowing since I've been about 18 or 19 years old, who's been a great inspiration to me and an encouragement to me — who was first elected in 1989, sat as a caucus of one for our party for four years, was re-elected in 1993 with a whole bunch more people that followed along largely because of the work that she did.

Truly one of the finest questioners that ever graced the floor of the House of Commons, and somebody I'm honoured to call a

friend. Welcome to Deborah Grey.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I do now leave the Chair.

[14:30]

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — I now call this committee meeting to order. We're in Committee of Finance dealing with interim supply. I would ask the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to have with me from the Ministry of Finance this afternoon Doug Matthies, to my left, who is the deputy minister of Finance; Kirk McGregor, directly behind me, who is the assistant deputy minister in charge of taxation; Karen Layng, assistant deputy minister responsible for treasury board; and Joanne Brockman, who is the executive director of the economic and fiscal policy branch.

The Chair: — Question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just received a summary from the ministry for two-twelfths interim supply, and I've not been able to analyze it in the few moments that I've had this information. But essentially what I want to ask the minister, does this interim supply provide for anything other than two-twelfths? And if so, could he indicate what those circumstances are.

The Chair: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize in Committee of Finance I think I'm supposed to be standing for the response, so I apologize to the House for that oversight.

In response to the member's question, there are some changes to the, actually, two-twelfths that are provided for in this interim supply. There's one-twelfth is provided for within the budget vote for one-twelfth, and then another one-twelfth is required to finance the month of May. And then when we bring this forward, we actually lump it together to get approval of the House for the entire two-twelfths.

Over and above that mathematical two-twelfths, there is an addition of \$20.703 million for the Ministry of Education, which represents two-tenths of the operating grant for K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools instead of two-twelfths. And the reason for that, member, is that the school system works on a 10-month basis, and so to properly fund the months of April and May, they are allocated two-tenths of the total allocation. So that's an addition.

There's an addition of \$8.944 million for the Ministry of Government Services, and that's for the end-of-the-model-year purchase of vehicles that are required. Normally there is an additional amount of purchases of vehicles at this time of the year. Last year this additional amount wasn't required because there was a rail strike and the models could not be delivered. So this is to provide for that recognition in Government Services that there are additional vehicles that are coming on in this two-month period of time over and above an even 12-month distribution.

And there is an exclusion from the one two-twelfths formula in the amount of \$1.397 million for the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation which would represent the grant to Enterprise Saskatchewan. And this is in recognition of the fact that the legislature has not approved the legislation in order to create the entity Enterprise Saskatchewan. So that amount was excluded from the estimates of Enterprise and Innovation.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm just looking at the allocation for Municipal Affairs and I don't see here if there's any additional funds that are proposed to be allocated to Municipal Affairs. Taking into account the announcement by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier that additional funds would be allocated to municipalities this year, can you enlighten us as to when that money will in fact start flowing to municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, member. The funding that's allocated and requested two-twelfths of is the base budget funding. There will have to be introduced incremental monies from further estimates that will be introduced, I believe, Wednesday of this week that will provide for the extra money that was referred to in regard to the top-up money for revenue sharing to the municipalities. And so that is the way that issue will be handled as opposed to adjusting the two-twelfths as existing budget.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — The proceedings here are probably somewhat arcane for people who are watching this on television. But if I might try to explain that the budget, the government cannot spend money unless it's approved by the Legislative Assembly. Pending the approval of the budget — and we have not had that final budget vote yet — the government nevertheless needs money to operate on starting April 1, which is the start of the government's fiscal year. And so the government needs to come to the Legislative Assembly for approval to spend money, pending the vote on the budget and the approval of the budget.

Speaking of which, I note that in estimates, the detailed estimates for the government under Finance is a subheading called servicing the public debt. And I'm wondering why, given your commitment as a government, you've indicated that — and also as a party — you've indicated that you would pay down \$250 million in debt this year, why there's no allocation on a monthly basis here for paying down that debt.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm advised that, as opposed to a family's household mortgage where there may be monthly mortgage payments on their long-term debt, the province's debt is not treated in that same regard, and so we will make payments as it's appropriate as the maturity of bonds

will mature and then need to be replaced. So the \$250 million payment of long-term debt will be cycled in at the appropriate time within this fiscal year as the commitment indicated in the budget.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I understand that, and that certainly has been the practice. But I just want to say that your government has signalled a whole new approach and has set out specific debt reduction targets unlike the previous government that reduced debt in a major way. But you say that you want to improve on that. Wouldn't some allocation on a monthly basis at least give the public some assurance that you're serious about reducing the debt?

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you to the member. Certainly I think that it's important to reiterate that we do have a special long-term commitment to pay down the public debt. In this fiscal year and in this budget, we committed to making a special payment of \$250 million. And it is fully our commitment to make sure that happens at the appropriate time when the bonds mature and it's appropriate for us to do that.

Over and above that, we have on the floor of the legislature the growth and financial security legislation that will dictate as we go forward that surpluses in the provincial budget, one-half of those surpluses will be allocated against long-term debt reduction. And as those surpluses are declared and accumulate, I'm very, very optimistic that indeed that'll be the case going forward. We certainly are intending to make a major commitment on using 50 per cent of those surpluses in the payment of long-term debt.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — So just as I understand it then, Mr. Chair, what we have is a government that says they have a long-term commitment to reducing debt, but there's no short-term indication of that commitment in the interim supply estimates that are before us. Is that correct?

[14:45]

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — That is correct, but again the member has to remember — and he did a pretty good job of explaining what the purpose of interim supply is — interim supply is to provide operating funds for those ministries of government that need to operate on a monthly basis as the requirement for funds to outline and to initiate their programs are expended. And so there are really two different components. What the member is asking questions about specifically do not pertain to interim supply, but the member certainly, if he's asking for our commitment to make sure that those commitments are honoured, he has that commitment from this government.

The Chair: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe it is appropriate then that I move two resolutions. The first resolution, no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding 1,452,828,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009.

I so move.

The Chair: — The Minister of Finance has moved that, no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$1,452,828,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Motion carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a second motion, no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses for the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, the sum of \$1,452,828,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

I so move.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance in no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, the sum of \$1,452,828,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance:

That the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just briefly want to thank the minister and his officials for attending here today and for answering our questions. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you. I usually take every opportunity I can to thank the officials from the Ministry of Finance for their exemplary work, and I do that again on behalf of the members of the Assembly and the Government of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: — The committee will now rise and the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again. Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — It's agreed.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First and second reading of the resolutions.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Bill No. 39 — The Appropriation Act, 2008 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly I move that Bill No. 39, The Appropriation Act, 2008 (No. 2) be now introduced and read the first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 39, The Appropriation Act, 2008 (No. 2) be now introduced and read the first time. Is the leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly and under rule 72(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and a third time.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 39, The Appropriation Act, 2008 (No. 2) be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second and third reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Assembly will pause for a short time while we are waiting for the Administrator for Royal Assent.

His Honour the Administrator is here for Royal Assent. Please rise.

ROYAL ASSENT

[At 15:06 His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills.]

His Honour: — Please be seated.

The Deputy Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly in its present session has passed several Bills which in the name of the Assembly I present Your Honour, to which Bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — Your Honour, the Bills are as follows:

Bill No. 15 - The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008

Bill No. 4 - The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act,

2007/Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'Assemblée législative et le Conseil exécutif (élections à date fixe)

Bill No. 30 - The Statutes and Regulations Revision Act

Bill No. 11 - The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2008/Loi de 2008 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur l'exécution des jugements canadiens

Bill No. 20 - The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2008/ Loi de 2008 modifiant la Loi sur l'administration des successions

Bill No. 12 - The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2008

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

The Deputy Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has voted supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present Your Honour:

Bill No. 39 - The Appropriation Act, 2008 (No. 2)

to which I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

[His Honour retired from the Chamber at 15:09.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order that the good work of committees can proceed, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:10.]

CORRIGENDUM

On page 955 of *Hansard*, No. 26A Tuesday, April 15, 2008, left column, the last sentence of the second last paragraph reads, “[And Mr. Wheeler states].”

The sentence should read, “[And Mr. Weiler states].”

We apologize for this error.

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