

SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

# Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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## DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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(HANSARD) Published under the authority of The Honourable Dan D'Autremont Speaker

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### Plans for School Gymnasium

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sacred Heart Community School has a vital place in the community. But the students of the school here in Regina have no access to the gymnasium for physical activity. The school's gym has been ruled off limits as the lights fell off the ceiling and the scoreboard fell off the wall. Now the foundation is heaving and the walls are crumbling and, as a result, the school staff has scrambled to come up with activities for the students.

Mr. Speaker, the school pushed for repairs for years, but no one in the Sask Party government seems to be listening. In the meantime, students sit idling as they await access to their gymnasium. To the minister: how could the Sask Party government stand by as the school's gymnasium literally falls apart?

**The Speaker:** I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Marchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for the question. I have been apprised of the situation at Sacred Heart Community School. Our officials are in contact with the Catholic School Board officials, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, I met with the chairwoman of the Sacred Heart Community School this morning. We have elevated the situation from the critical space category to the health and safety priority, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to work with the Sacred Heart staff and the Catholic School Board to mitigate that situation, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** Mr. Speaker, the Regina Catholic superintendent of facilities told the local media last week that the wall in the gymnasium has major damage. And as the school sincerely, sincerely focuses on improving grades and literacy, the lack of physical activity this spring and into the week's muddy season will even put more pressure on the staff and administrators of the school.

But, Mr. Speaker, the school and the division have put in continual requests for improvements for the provincial government. But they say this is the first time, this is the first time they've heard it's been a health and safety concern. This is a serious matter, Mr. Speaker. And in the words of the superintendent, this isn't just something they've stumbled across. And yet the Sask Party leaves the school gym's replacement on its waiting list indefinitely.

Why has the Sask Party government denied these students access to the renewal of their school, and does no one in the government benches understand the negative effect it has on students when they don't have access to their gym?

**The Speaker:** I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Marchuk:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and again thank the member opposite for the question. I'm very aware of the importance of physical activity in student achievement, Mr. Speaker. And we are working, as I said, with the separate school board to do everything we can to alleviate that situation.

I do want to remind the member opposite that in this year's budget, we have again increased spending for capital by \$7.2 million, Mr. Speaker, for a total of \$119 million. And included in that amount, Mr. Speaker, is an amount for preventative maintenance and renewal.

We are working with the school board to mitigate the circumstances so that our children do have access to quality physical education activities, Mr. Speaker. I fully realize the importance of that, and we're doing everything we can to alleviate that stress.

**The Speaker:** I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the school's principal says there's been a noticeable change amongst the students because they're not getting enough gym time that they need to stay healthy. And the school's had to bus students to other schools so that they get their physical education. And the staff have gone above and beyond to ensure the health and well-being of their students.

And as a community school, that is all the more important. And that's why it makes absolutely no sense this provincial government's spokesperson told the media that there would be no decision, no decision of the situation until next spring.

Mr. Speaker, is that the Sask Party's official answer? That they're going to expect the community school to operate without a gymnasium for an entire school year?

**The Speaker:** I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Marchuk:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I can't . . . A third time, we are working with the school division to address the physical education needs of the students at Sacred Heart Community School. I realize that physical education is a very important part of student achievement, Mr. Speaker.

But I can't emphasize enough, Mr. Speaker, in the Sask Party's six years of government, we've invested \$600 million in capital compared to the NDP's six years of 165, Mr. Speaker. As well, Mr. Speaker, in our six years, renovations have increased by 228 per cent, Mr. Speaker, \$450 million from the members opposite . . . or from our government, Mr. Speaker, and 137 million from ours, Mr. Speaker. We've invested in 43 major school capital projects, over 900 additional projects, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to invest in our education infrastructure.