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Travel Expenses

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know about the \$200 personal lunch with a friend in London, but we don't know if this friend accompanied the Minister of Social Services on her entire trip. To the minister: did her friend from Saskatchewan go with her to Ghana as well, or did they just meet up for the London portion?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Mr. Speaker, my friend was with me on the trip. And to be sure that the members opposite are aware of this, my family paid for their own trip at all times.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, we understand that a receipt inadvertently submitted as the registration fees for the FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] conference was actually a receipt for Ghana travel visas for herself and two others. Are we then to assume that person was also one of the other two people on . . . that she paid for their travel visas?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There was the \$250 registration fee that I didn't submit, I confused with the \$285 visas. And I on Friday repaid the \$190 that was mistakenly charged to the taxpayers of this province. And again my family paid for their own trip.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The conference that the Minister of Social Services arranged to attend in Ghana was from June 6th to June 8th. It was a three-day conference, but the minister actually spent eight days in Ghana and she claimed her meal and incidental per diems every single day. To the minister: what did she do on those extra

days, and why did taxpayers have to foot the bill for her extra time in Ghana?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is aware of my schedule, that I had meetings for the conference. And then on the Monday, I actually had a meeting as well and it was with the . . . On the Monday, I had meetings that were involving the community college, the Tema community college board of directors, and I toured the campus.

The Tema community college was actually developed with the assistance of the province of Saskatchewan about 25 years ago. The college was looking at possible joint opportunities with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] and, Mr. Speaker, this is work that I carried on. Mr. Speaker, the work that we did when we were in Ghana was, I believe, very, very important for the people of this province.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of her itinerary. On Thursday we did ask her to table her itinerary for both the Ghana portion and the London portion. Will she do so today?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Yes, I will release that. I thought it was already released today. But I want to make sure that the members opposite have an idea of the work that was carried on when I was over there. There were eight meetings as well as the conference and some media that I did over there. I spoke with the Speaker and the chamber of commerce. I talked to the High Commissioner.

There was a Dr. Lutterodt from the clinic who has actually practised here in Regina for over 30 years. And he saw the work, the possibility of more work that we could be doing in conjunction with the people of Ghana. I went to the Tema community college again and talked about what we could be doing in partnership with our educational opportunities. And a really important meeting was with the Minister of Health where I brought forward the declaration from the conference where we actually implored her to look at FASD as an important part of what they're doing in their education system. Mr. Speaker, this issue was way beyond the borders of any province or any country. It's something that we have an opportunity to deal with as a nation and a national nation.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, the minister has tried to claim that her four-day layover in London was a filler between her time in Ghana and another conference in Prince Edward Island. But the conference in Prince Edward Island started 10 days after the conference in Ghana ended. The minister could have come home and worked for a week before going to Prince Edward Island. Instead she tacked on extra days in Ghana and claimed all her

per diems, and then she hung out in London with her friend and sent the bill to the taxpayers.

To the minister: why didn't she either take those 10 days off and pay all the expenses herself or just come home and work for a week, instead of racking up bills for the taxpayers?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite doesn't have my itinerary for over in London, then I guess I should have sent it to him earlier. But I think right now is the opportunity to tell him the work that we did do when we were overthere.

One of the most important things that we did when we were over there was meeting with the minister responsible for diversity, the deputy director, and we talked about what they are doing in their disability structure. And you know, the member opposite is well aware that we are developing a comprehensive disabilitystrategy.

Over in the UK, they have four points, which is employment, education, transportation, and access to goods and services. I spent a lot of time talking to them about the work that could be done. And when we came back here, we talked in Saskatchewan about having six pillars. We added to the work that was done over in the UK because we now have support for community caregivers, we have community inclusion, and we have housing that wasn't discussed over there.

Mr. Speaker, we also included things like talking about the social impact bonds, which is something I had never heard about till I got over there. But I assure the members opposite, they'll be hearing about it soon.