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Poverty Strategy and Inquest Into Death

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And that was a most bizarre answer, when we see the worst record of keeping track of those consultants — 75 per cent without a record of what they actually do or what they're doing.

But, Mr. Speaker, we asked this government a few weeks ago for an inquest into the death of Jerry Peequaquat. Jerry needed help, but his family says he was cut off social assistance despite being desperate and homeless, and Jerry died in a makeshift shelter in Saskatoon. We called for an inquest to investigate the circumstances of Jerry's death and to make recommendations to prevent some more deaths in the future because no one should freeze to death in a province as rich as ours.

To the Minister of Social Services: will she commit to an inquest today?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: Mr. Speaker, my answer is no different than when the member asked it last time. To ask for a coroner's inquest is usually done by the coroner. We still do not know the details of how this gentleman died. And so therefore we are waiting for the final test results from the coroner, and determination can be made then as to what best to do.

However, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to work on issues of homelessness and poverty, and that's why we've announced a poverty strategy that we're undertaking very shortly within this province. Our poverty rates are going down, Mr. Speaker. We're the second lowest in our country. However we know there is more that needs to be done, and that's why we'll be working with our stakeholders to come forward with the poverty strategy.