



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

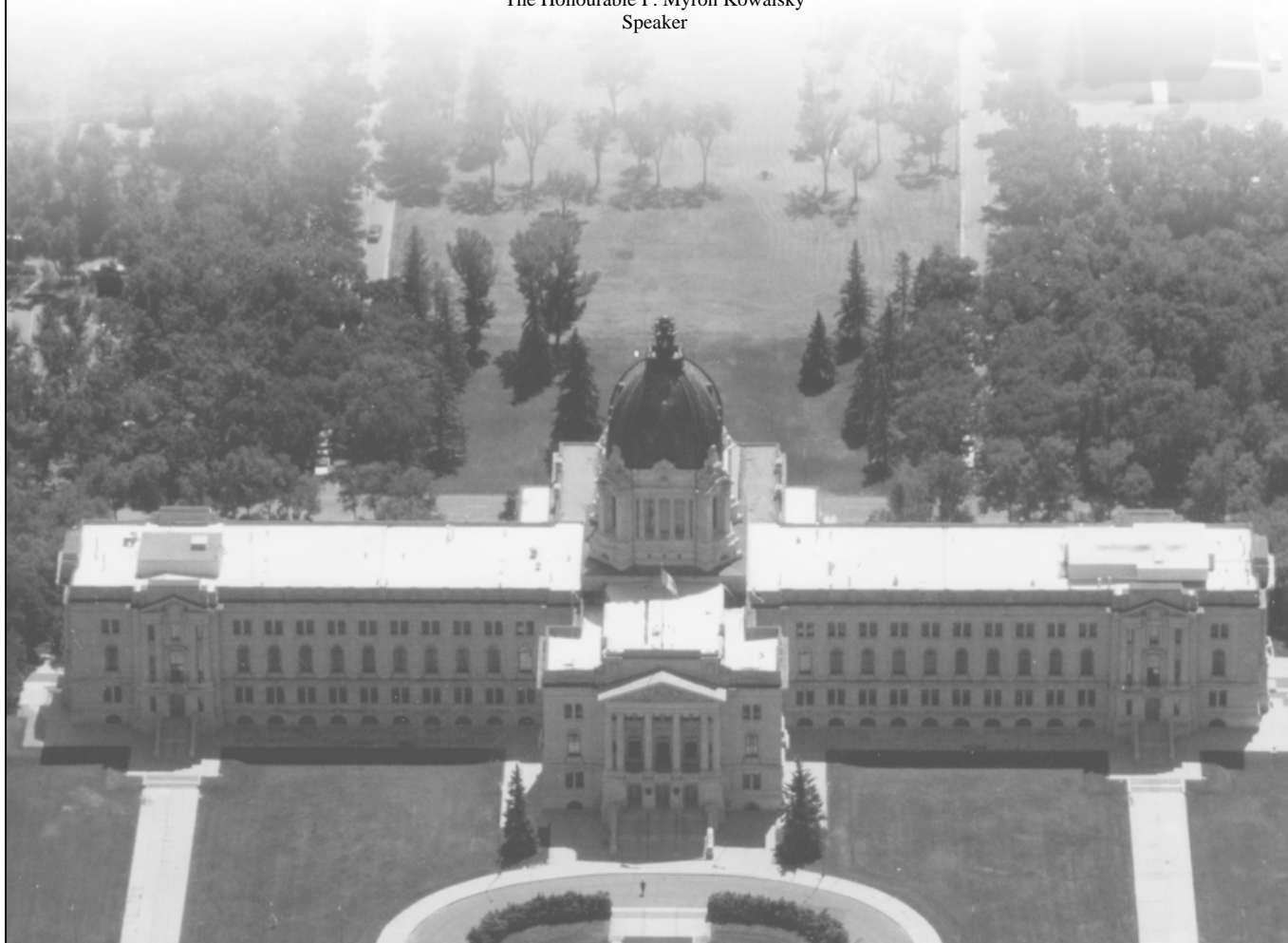
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
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, 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, Hon. 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]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a petition with citizens who are concerned of the safety of Highway No. 5. 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 upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Lake Lenore, Foam Lake, Saskatoon, Humboldt, Watson, Archerwill, and some I can't even read, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here to improve SaskTel cellular service in rural Saskatchewan:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary action to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure that residents along Highway 19 in the Outlook area in Saskatchewan are protected for reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Hawarden, Saskatoon, Strongfield, Loreburn. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition for improved cellular telephone coverage. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in regions encompassing the constituency of Biggar.

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

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

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I arise with a petition today on the deplorable condition of Highway 368 and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 368 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

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

And it is signed by the good people of Annaheim, St. Brieux, St. Gregor, Humboldt, and Lake Lenore. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been received and pursuant to rule 14(7) hereby read and received sessional paper no. 26 and addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 27, 2, 5, 7, 18, and 22.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 16 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture and Food: has the Department of Agriculture and Food prepared any briefs to be presented at the upcoming WTO conference in Hong Kong?

Supplementary: will any officials from the Department of Agriculture and Food be attending the upcoming talks in Hong Kong?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce three people seated in the east gallery. I have had the opportunity to introduce two of them a number of times before because on a regular basis my dad comes in for his regular cancer checkup. And that's what he's doing again here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce my dad, Peter Krawetz; and my stepmother, Sophie; and Sophie's son-in-law, Ron Mackie, has joined them. And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to also indicate that the month of November is my dad's birth month, and back on I think November 1 he celebrated his 88th birthday.

But also during November he made an announcement that he's officially retiring from one of his jobs. And one of his jobs has been to be a cantor in the Ukrainian Orthodox church for 60 years, and he's now decided to retire. So I'd like all the members to join me in welcoming my dad, my stepmother, and Ron Mackie to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce to the House and welcome to the House through you, sir, a number of visitors who are seated in your gallery. In your gallery today, Mr. Speaker, we have Vice-Chief Don Deranger, of the Prince Albert Grand Council; Isidore Desjarlais and Isidore Campbell, from the Northwest Regional Development Council; Ron Merasty, editor of the Prince Albert *Tribune*; and Napoleon Mercredi, of the area transportation committee.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals from our beautiful North are in the capital today to share with us in the announcement of Roads to Prosperity, our northern Saskatchewan infrastructure project. I thank them for travelling the great distance to be here. We welcome you to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I want to join with the Premier in welcoming our guests in your gallery today, Vice-Chief Deranger, and others that have joined him here in the gallery. And you know, the announcement earlier today of a northern roads strategy is something that the Saskatchewan Party has certainly advocated for. And we're grateful that they could join us today in the Assembly. We join with the Premier and welcoming them here as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — [The member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time, and I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome with our special guests that come from 1,200 kilometres away, a group of 20 students from the Pinehouse Lake School. And with them today are their teachers and Ron — well their chaperones and I think Ron is the principal there as well — Ron Skage and Jacquie Skage. I'm not sure if Jacquie is Ron's wife or daughter; the verdict is out. And we also have Raymond Iron and Rayna Natomagan.

And I just basically told the students in Cree, Mr. Speaker, to not be afraid of the size of the building, nor the importance of it, but to embrace it and to learn from it, and to visit as many people as they can, and to tell them that they're very welcome to this Assembly. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see that

we've been joined by a former colleague of ours, Lewis Draper, who used to represent the constituency of Gravelbourg, always very colourful. It's wonderful to have you back here again, Lewis. I know he's very active yet in his community, and we see him around the Legislative Building quite frequently. So welcome back. And please join with me in welcoming Lewis back to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Publication of *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is an honour today to rise on behalf of the official opposition and congratulate the Canadian Plains Research Center on the production of *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. The phrase, no small feat, has been used many times but perhaps never more appropriately than in the case of *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, a project which was over nine years in development and benefited from the contribution of over 800 writers, making it the largest educational publishing project in Saskatchewan's history.

The result, Mr. Speaker, is a truly remarkable piece of work featuring 2,300 entries and over 1,000 charts, maps, and tables covering all aspects of life in Saskatchewan, which taken together serve as a testament to the rich history of this province and the diversity of people and geography that continues to define the Saskatchewan experience.

We have a lot to celebrate in Saskatchewan, as our centennial has served to remind us, and the encyclopedia documents it. It is fitting therefore that the production of this outstanding reference guide should occur in this our province's centennial year.

On behalf of the official opposition, thank you to David Gauthier, the staff of the Plains Research Center, and all the volunteers who contributed countless hours to provide us with this important new reference work that will benefit the people of Saskatchewan for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

HMCS *Queen* receives Fenco MacLaren Trophy

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it has been said the best sailors come from the Prairies. And I'm proud to tell you the best sailors in Canada are the crew of HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Queen*, Regina's naval reserve division which trains and parades in my constituency.

Earlier this month *Queen's* officers and sailors were presented with the Fenco MacLaren Trophy which recognizes outstanding achievement in an operational environment by an individual, group, or team.

Queen's accomplishments over the past year include dedication to change and commitment to leadership which has resulted in continuous improvement in administration and training; organizing the Saskatchewan ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe; coordinating the naval participation in the royal visit of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Saskatchewan; providing on-water support for canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and sailing events during the Canada Summer Games; and hosting two namesake city visits by representatives of the West Coast frigate, HMCS Regina, including their participation in the Labour Day Classic football game.

According to *Queen's* Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander John Bell, he has always had high expectations for his sailors. At every opportunity, his sailors meet and exceed these expectations.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all honourable members to join me in wishing Bravo Zulu, well done, to the officers and sailors of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship, *Queen*.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

Carrot River Wildcats Win Provincial Championship

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week my colleague from Saskatoon Silver Springs lamented the fact that the Saskatchewan Roughriders had never won a Grey Cup under the suffocating influence of the NDP [New Democratic Party].

There is however, Mr. Speaker, a team that has been successful in spite of an oppressive government. And last Saturday, Mr. Speaker, the Carrot River Wildcats won the provincial six-man, 2A championship. The Wildcats won in fine fashion, defeating the Clavet Cougars by a score of 54-22. It was a fine day for football in Carrot River, Mr. Speaker, with a crowd of over 700 people out to cheer on their respective favourites.

Mr. Speaker, six- and nine-man football has provided many post-secondary football players in the past few years. From my constituency alone, Mr. Speaker, Darryl Leason, a star with the Regina Rams, is from Hudson Bay. And former Roughrider star, Bob Poley, is from Prairie River, who also played his high school football in Hudson Bay.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the fact in our house, our son Tyrel, who played his high school football with the Loreburn Aztecs, has been part of a national junior football championship with the Saskatoon Hilltops. Loreburn by the way, Mr. Speaker, holds the world record for most provincial or state championships in six-man football with eight.

The list of success stories to come out of rural Saskatchewan and high school athletics goes on and on. But one thing is certain, Mr. Speaker. Young athletes and young people from rural Saskatchewan are proving again and again in whatever their endeavours that they can compete with anyone, any time, anywhere.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Combating Racism

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker:

To be destructive is fast and easy, while to be constructive requires thought and sustained hard work. Acts of destruction can be portrayed in a single headline; while the constructive response to a difficult issue is more of a struggle, taking time.

Mr. Speaker, these are the well-considered words of David Arnott, Saskatchewan's Treaty Commissioner. He's talking specifically about our ongoing struggle with racism. Mr. Speaker, although racism certainly exists in Saskatchewan, steps are being taken to combat it, and some progress is being made. For example Saskatchewan's Office of the Treaty Commissioner has recently received the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's biennial Award of Excellence for its anti-racism programs. And for these public education programs the Treaty Commissioner's office received similar recognition last year from the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, these programs promote a deeper understanding of the spirit and intent of treaties, First Nations heritage, and the destructive nature of racism. They speak to the realities of our shared past and present that have to be acknowledged as we move together as a people into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Office of the Treaty Commissioner on receiving this prestigious award and for all it is doing in partnership with teachers, administrators, and First Nations to ensure a positive and vibrant future of all people here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Maple Creek's Wall of Remembrance Memorial

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 11 I had the honour of attending the Remembrance Day ceremony in Maple Creek, and that same day I witnessed the unveiling of the Wall of Remembrance, a memorial to the men of the area who served and perished in World War II. About one year ago, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jack Shepard of Maple Creek initiated the Wall of Remembrance project. Now this wall was modelled after the wall erected by the Legion in the community of Abbey, which contains 18 photo tributes there.

With the passing, however, of Jack Shepard in February of this year, members of the Maple Creek Legion took it upon themselves to complete the project that Jack Shepard had begun. The Wall of Remembrance in Maple Creek displays the photo tributes of 23 servicemen from Maple Creek and other

communities in the surrounding area.

Mr. Doug Chisholm of La Ronge created the photo tributes displayed on that Wall of Remembrance. Mr. Chisholm's profession as a pilot led him to a passionate venture of photography, where he'd go and take pictures of the geographic locations in northern Saskatchewan that are named after the World War II servicemen and women. The photo of each serviceman as well as the photo of the geographic site named after him is displayed on that tribute. His name, his unit, home town, casualty date, and burial location is also included.

It was a great honour to have the opportunity to attend this commemorative event along with representatives from the families of the many servicemen whose pictorial tributes hang on that Wall of Remembrance.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the members of the Maple Creek Legion for their efforts in the creation of this wall, and other Legions around the province where similar projects have been undertaken. It's important that we remember the efforts and sacrifices made by those who served in the war in order to protect our future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Community Housing Registry Database Unveiled

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was my great pleasure to attend the unveiling of the Core Community Association's community housing registry database.

The registry is the product of a partnership between the Core Community Association, Ehrlo Community Services, the United Way of Regina, and about 10,000 hours of volunteer work. It provides an inventory of all the properties in the core area and a description of their condition.

The registry is a big step forward in the Core Community Association's efforts to improve housing conditions in their neighbourhood. The project will also serve as a great complement to the work underway with the provincial HomeFirst program and the efforts of the Inner City Community Partnership's by-law standards enforcement team.

Mr. Speaker, this project is community driven, and while it's directly focused on housing issues, the registry provides a valuable tool to support efforts at improving the overall quality of life in the core neighbourhood.

The Core Community Association's executive director, Leila Francis, put it like this, and I quote:

We are going to take the community back. We are going to remove slum housing. We are going to decrease crime. And we are going to make the housing safe and affordable for all our community residents.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government will be working alongside the core every step of the way.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating association Chair, Glen Trafford, executive director, Leila Francis, the staff and volunteers of the Core Community Association as well as their partners on building this valuable tool for the critical work of enhancing and improving housing in the core community, the heart of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Blogging and Saskatchewan Issues

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In today's world almost everyone has heard of blogs. Even the Minister of Learning has heard of them. Last week he even quoted from one of the more prominent blogs that reports on Saskatchewan issues.

The minister took issue with smalldeadanimals — one word — .com blogger Catherine McMillan's opinion that our leader, the member for Swift Current, is the real thing. Mr. Speaker, the minister said that he thinks that bloggers are totally irrelevant. The Minister of Learning, during his Speech to the Throne on November 14 said, and I quote:

. . . but I will tell you that the Saskatchewan people that are going to . . . the polls in the next election are not going to be swayed by . . . small dead animals.

Well, Mr. Speaker, smalldeadanimals.com and the bloggers had something to say about this. Readers of her blog would know that McMillan was very happy to be mentioned by the minister. In fact she called getting slagged in the provincial legislature by Learning minister Andrew Thomson a high point of her blog.

Blogger Shane O. had this to say:

If you can pull off that kind of influence, Kate, and actually kick the Sask socialists out of power — you may just convince me to move my family back to Saskatchewan.

The minister may be interested in knowing that smalldeadanimals.com had more than 1.2 million hits, averaged 4,000 a day and 29,000 a week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Future of Weyerhaeuser Mill in Prince Albert

Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to quote if I can from the front page of today's *Prince Albert Herald* under the headline "Mill deal unplugged?" The article begins — and I'm quoting now, Mr. Speaker — it says:

Poor treatment by the province and task force leader Eldon

Lautermilch could kill a deal with Chinese investors interested in the Weyerhaeuser plant . . .

In the article there are many other comments from the representative of these potential investors about that minister, Mr. Speaker, the member for P.A. Northcote, and about the way he has already mishandled this file. The question to the Premier is direct this afternoon. The question is simple: will he remove that member from the task force?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The answer, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely not.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the representative of the potential investors for this deal had this to say about the actions about the member for P.A. Northcote in his capacity as the task force Chair. He said he was flabbergasted, disgusted and astonished. He went on to say that the minister's handling of this particular deal and this opportunity was an absolute joke. So maybe the Premier wants to explain why he will not remove that member from the task force.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would want to begin by saying I'm pleased to have the opportunity to provide some clarity on this matter. First of all I want members of the opposition to understand the government's role in the . . .

The Speaker: — Once again, the minister please.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Understand the government's role in the sale of these assets. First of all the task force is providing a forum to share information and to improve . . . how to improve long-term viability of our forest sector. And it's not the task force's role to pick winners or losers. Nor is it the role to negotiate the sale of Weyerhaeuser's assets, Mr. Speaker.

In addition I want to say we've established a technical team of forest and investment experts who have been working with Weyerhaeuser to help to secure a buyer for the assets as quickly as possible. And I want to say as well, I'm quite convinced that we're going to be successful. We've got some very positive candidates, some very good quality candidates who have been working with Weyerhaeuser in a positive way in an attempt to bring this to a positive conclusion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the

Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that minister just highlights what he thinks the role of the task force is. He's the Chair of this task force. He's been assigned to help solve this problem, to pursue possible opportunities.

I wonder if it's his role, Mr. Speaker, to return phone calls, to have the common decency to return phone calls to his office made by people who represent others that want to employ 700-plus of his constituents and keep that plant open? Is returning phone calls part of the role of the government, Mr. Speaker? The minister might want to answer. Is his role to do something about the cogeneration issue so that there is a viable option for this pulp and paper mill? Is that part of his role?

And if neither of those things are, I ask the Premier again, will he fire that minister from the task force?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say clearly the role of my staff and myself is to return phone calls when they're made. And I want to say as well, we have a pretty good track record in terms of communicating with people who choose to communicate with us, Mr. Speaker.

What I want to do today is, with respect to this article, table a letter that I think will help clarify this issue in a very positive way because what it does is it outlines four demands that the person in this article has put before the people of this province with specific reference to these demands. I want to share them with the Leader of the Opposition so he will know.

First of all, he has been told on the first two demands that we will negotiate on a proposed biomass cogeneration and on power production, as well we will negotiate the wood supplied. But I'll tell you on the third and the fourth, Mr. Speaker, we will not negotiate because one of his demands is that we get rid of all of the environmental legislation and regulations that that mill operates under. And that's not negotiable.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to unilaterally scrap the contract between Weyerhaeuser and their employees. We're not . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Weyerhaeuser — Weyerhaeuser, who operated in this province and still do — and other large industrial operatives, people who operate plants and employ people in this province have consistently highlighted this government's intransigence and refusal to allow cogeneration and the wielding of power as a way to create and sustain jobs in the province. What this episode has proved to us again, what it has proved to us again is that minister is incompetent. As he was on SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development

Company], he is here as well.

Will he stand up and do the right thing, Mr. Speaker, and commit that this government will act on the cogeneration issue so there is a future in P.A. [Prince Albert] at that mill?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell the Leader of the Opposition what we will do. We'll continue to negotiate with the legitimate people who have come forth and who have been made . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party may be willing to tear up negotiated contracts between private sector companies and their employers. And they may be willing to support individuals who ask of this government to absolutely eliminate and eradicate environmental law as it relates to industries operating in this province. I'm going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I tell the people of Prince Albert, we are not going to be doing that.

This environment is important to us. These contracts, these jobs are important to us. And this is nothing but another attack by a right-wing, provincial Conservative Party leader in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. We're going to work to protect those 700 jobs. He can play politics all he wants, Mr. Speaker. He should make his position clear on those items.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if that Premier doesn't . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if that Premier doesn't fire that member from this task force, then we won't have to worry about a contract and the jobs at the Weyerhaeuser pulp and paper mill because he's going to see to it that that mill closes without an option if he doesn't smarten up on these basic issues of cogeneration and what's been presented to him by the government, not just by these proponents, but by others, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order members. Order, order, order. Members will allow the question to be put. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, here's what the article goes on to say in the P.A. *Herald* today. In addition to referencing that minister's conduct as an absolute joke and the fact that he does not return phone calls, it goes on to say this particular representative of the deal is going to tell others who are looking

at Saskatchewan. He says, quote:

"I will do everything I can do to persuade them to look elsewhere as long as this government's in power."

Because, Mr. Speaker, what we have not heard from the government on Weyerhaeuser is that they're prepared to move on capital tax, that they're prepared to move on dues, or that they're prepared to move on cogeneration. Will the minister commit to make those fundamental changes that will make the project viable in Prince Albert?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party has a responsibility in this House to tell us where he stands. Does he support Ekstrand's demand that we scrap a negotiated agreement between Weyerhaeuser and its employees? Does he support that? Does he support the elimination of labour laws as it relates to the pulp and paper operations in Prince Albert? Do you support that? Yes or no, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, this whole argument turns on whether or not we accept the word of the minister responsible for SPUDCO. That's what it turns on, this minister who misled the people of this province for six years about SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker. You know what . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order. I ask members on both sides to come to order. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, here's a chance for that minister of this government or the Premier or somebody over there to stand up and say they're prepared to act on the cogeneration issue. Whether it's this project, this potential project, or another one, they all say the same thing. And that minister, in correspondence that we've seen, refuses to talk about it. He says, well maybe we'll negotiate a separate deal.

When will the government get the fundamentals right? When will it get its job right in the dilemma that's at Prince Albert? When will it do the right thing on cogeneration, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, again you've got the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party who won't listen. I indicated quite clearly just a few minutes ago that we

were more than willing to enter into negotiations with respect to biomass, with respect to cogeneration, with people who Weyerhaeuser will choose to do business with, Mr. Speaker, understanding that it's Weyerhaeuser who will choose who the purchasers or the potential purchasers are, not us. We don't own that asset. Weyerhaeuser owns the asset.

But I'll tell you what we will do, Mr. Speaker. We will ensure that there are sound environmental regulations and legislations when a new owner comes, just as there are now with Weyerhaeuser. And I want to know if he's made any kind of commitment with respect to scrapping labour legislation and labour laws and environmental laws to Mr. Ekstrand — yes or no?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I just got the letter that the minister tabled. I can't believe it, Mr. Speaker. The point that he's referring to, point number 3, talks about the fact that the new owner is going to be looking for labour, environmental, and governmental agreements that they agreed to. It's subject to negotiation. That's what it says. It would be part of a negotiation of a deal.

But do you know what, Mr. Speaker? There probably isn't a deal to negotiate because these people have had enough, Mr. Speaker, of this government and that minister. Will the minister explain why he, moments ago, just misled the House about a document that he tabled?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — . . . the third demand into the record . . .

The Speaker: — Order. There was nothing that was able to be heard, members. I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Let me read the third article into the record, Mr. Speaker. And I quote from Mr. Ekstrand's letter:

. . . will not be held liable for or committed to any existing labour [law], environmental or governmental agreements excepting with the approval of the new owner.

That's one of his demands, Mr. Speaker. Does that member agree to it or does he not? Mr. Speaker, this is the same leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party who said he is going to war with organized labour. Now we know. Now we believe him.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure it's good for taxpayers, but for the purposes of debate it's good to have angry Homer back in the House, isn't it, Mr. Speaker?

The point of the fact that the letter that that minister tabled is that they want to negotiate these things. That's what they're saying. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think they want to negotiate any longer because that government refuses to move on cogeneration. The state-owned electrical company won't negotiate with them on cogeneration. Imagine the irony of the communist Chinese being unable to do a deal because there's too much state-owned enterprise in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Will that minister make a commitment today to do the right thing on cogen and help this project help saves jobs in the city of P.A.?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, for the information of the leader of the Conservative Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Ekstrand has been told that we are willing to negotiate cogeneration, biomass. Biomass and cogeneration. It's part of our Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear that that's where this province is headed. Are we willing to do that? Of course we are.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out this. There are more than five, less than ten credible private sector forest companies who are now in the process of giving information to Weyerhaeuser so that they can be shortlisted to enter into negotiations. Mr. Speaker, the only one who's negotiating in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* is Mr. Ekstrand. Maybe that member can tell us why.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Sale of Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company Equipment

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More people in Saskatchewan are very skeptical about anything the minister from P.A. says. He's the NDP sequel to *Pulp Fiction*. Mr. Speaker, we all remember another deal that that minister was involved in. It was the botched SPUDCO deal.

Mr. Speaker, in 2003 Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation sold some of the SPUDCO potato equipment to Cavendish Farms of Prince Edward Island for about \$750,000. The sale was not tendered. No one else was given a chance to bid on the equipment. Why not, Mr. Speaker? Why did the NDP cut this special deal with Cavendish, and what was the total value of the equipment that the government sold for \$750,000?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Public Safety and Corrections.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have knowledge of the details of this sale. I'll take notice of the question, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. Order please. Would the minister repeat please because I was not able to hear the remarks. They were not on the record.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take notice of the question and provide the member with an answer when I have the information. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how the minister can't know, when this question was a written question asked in this House before. The answer, the \$750,000 is on the record. You'd think the minister would know what equipment was involved in the deal.

Mr. Speaker, no one actually knew how much equipment . . . No one in the public has been told how much equipment Cavendish got from SPUDCO because they never really used that equipment. It sat in their storage facility for three years until earlier this fall when it had to be removed to do some repair work.

The Saskatchewan Party has obtained pictures of the brand new equipment that the NDP practically gave away to Cavendish industries. Mr. Speaker, you can even see a piece of equipment with the C-O of SPUDCO painted over, so it says SPUD.

Mr. Speaker, we estimate that this equipment is worth about \$3 million, and yet the NDP sold it untendered for \$750,000. Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP agree to this sweetheart deal? Why weren't local potato farmers also allowed to bid on this equipment?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Saskatchewan Water Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I indicated to the member I'll be taking notice. And I take notice of this question as well, and I will provide him with an answer as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we had the first minister answering questions, just blowing a bunch of hot air. This minister doesn't even know his portfolio.

The NDP keeps telling us that SPUDCO was supposed to grow

the potato industry. So why on earth did they give away millions and millions of dollars of potato equipment to a PEI [Prince Edward Island] company that took that equipment and locked it up in a potato storage bin so it could not be used? This equipment could have been sold to local Saskatchewan potato farmers, Mr. Speaker. It could have been tendered out — the proper, responsible thing to do. Instead it's been gathering dust. It's been depreciating.

Mr. Speaker, we want to get to the bottom of this. Why did that minister, why did that NDP government agree to cut a sweetheart deal with Cavendish potatoes and undersell that equipment?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I indicated to the member I'm taking notice, and he will have an answer. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Federal Financial Assistance for Farmers

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, today the stress level on farms in Saskatchewan went down a wee bit. The federal government finally got the message that our farmers in Saskatchewan need help. For that matter, farmers across this country need help in the grain and oilseed industry.

And in their announcement today I believe it was \$755 million for farms, farmers — 250 approximately of that coming to Saskatchewan. And in their announcement, Mr. Speaker, they used the word that they would invite the provincial government to put their share in for Saskatchewan farmers.

The first question today is: will that minister and that government take their . . . answer their question and put that money in for Saskatchewan farmers, the provincial share, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important to clarify first of all that I expect that the member opposite is using the article that appeared in the *Leader-Post* this morning which is full of inaccuracies.

And clearly, Mr. Speaker, in the discussions that I had with the federal minister last night, it was very clear that there was no intention for the provincial government to be pressed in any way. He recognizes clearly the amount of money that we have put into agriculture in this past couple of years, and he recognizes clearly that across this country provincial

governments have been stretched as they have supported agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

And therefore in the press release from the Minister of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture there is clearly no reference — no reference, Mr. Speaker — to any extra provincial contributions at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well some of the reports that we're getting then are totally inaccurate because according to what we've read today, that at least three other provinces have agreed to put their money up front and put it in. And as usual, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP government has said, no they will not come to the plate for Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Speaker, about a month ago, we wrote Mr. Goodale and we wrote Mr. Mitchell, the Agriculture minister for the federal government. And we asked that government to support us at that time, telling the federal government what a predicament our farmers were in — the emergency situation, the need of money out here on the family farm. And that government's response at that time was no; they will not support us. In fact the Deputy Premier made the comment that the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program was adequate; crop insurance was adequate, and there was no need for emergency aid.

I find it amazing that the federal government has seen fit to help Saskatchewan farmers, and that government, even though they say there's not a problem, see what the federal government has done and once again will not help Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Speaker, will that minister reconsider, or will the Premier reconsider and help Saskatchewan farmers get through till next spring and help put next spring's crop in?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well again I need to point out that the article in the *Leader-Post* was incredibly inaccurate. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are not three provinces that have agreed. The other provinces talk about the programs that they have done as we do — the extra funds that have been put into agriculture, the funding programs that we have. That's what they talked about. There's ASRA [farm income stabilization insurance program] in Quebec. There's a market program in Ontario. And in Alberta they have done their own unilateral adjustments to the CAIS program.

Mr. Speaker, here over the last two years, \$1.2 billion into agriculture, Mr. Speaker. That is a significant amount for this province. Mr. Speaker, we have pointed out many times the disproportionate amount of weight that this province must carry in supporting agriculture relative to the other provinces — in

CAIS, 10 times the provincial per capita average.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have been there. And in fact this year, we announced the 2005 CAIS full funding far earlier — far earlier, Mr. Speaker — than the 2006 budget in order to help take stress off our farmers so that they could plan, so that they would know that support would be for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, last month when we asked for help from the federal government and we asked for support from that government, which we didn't get, APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] agreed with us. And they said also — and they'd been lobbying on behalf of farmers — farmers need help. Here's their comment today. They say that:

"This announcement is a good opportunity for the provincial government to make a wise investment in the economy through agriculture . . . The provincial government can show its support to producers by matching any portion of the federal funding or reducing taxes on agricultural farmland."

Here's another promise that that Premier has made to farmers. If they won't put any money into this emergency aid program, will they at least lower the education portion of property taxes for farmers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, not only is the newspaper report inaccurate but so are the quotes of the Conservatives opposite.

Mr. Speaker, clearly we have been arguing for further support for farmers in Saskatchewan. We have pointed out the billion dollars — Mr. Speaker, I say billion dollars — in trade injury that this province has suffered annually since the federal government unilaterally chose to cut subsidies.

We have been struggling, Mr. Speaker, to get this federal government to take its responsibility seriously, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, we are thankful, we are thankful that this federal government has finally acknowledged our letters, our verbal petitions, our phone calls, Mr. Speaker.

We're glad the Sask Party does provide some support occasionally.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for this money and the money in the spring and the help that it will provide the Saskatchewan producers. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Roads to Prosperity — Saskatchewan's Northern Economic Infrastructure Strategy

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All members of the Legislative Assembly are aware of the fundamental importance of transportation to Saskatchewan's economy. We live in a province where two-thirds of the provincial GDP [gross domestic product] is generated by exports that are sent to the farthest corners of the world. The industries that are propelling the province to new levels of prosperity — mining, energy, tourism, manufacturing, agricultural value-added processing — are all driven by transportation.

While we have in this province the most extensive network of highways and roads in the country, in many parts of northern Saskatchewan transportation infrastructure remains undeveloped.

This past summer the Premier travelled extensively throughout northern Saskatchewan visiting with community leaders, key stakeholders, and the people of the North.

In virtually every community we heard concerns about the state of transportation infrastructure in the region. These concerns were not new to us. This government has been working in partnership with northerners to improve the transportation system in the region.

Mr. Speaker, we currently invest in the order of \$30 million annually to build, operate, and maintain the northern transportation system. And our partnerships with organizations like three northern area transportation planning committees, the Athabasca Economic Development & Training Corporation, and the Hatchet Lake band are providing northerners with the opportunity to play a direct role in the ongoing planning, development, and maintenance of the transportation system.

Despite these efforts we've not gone far enough in providing access and mobility in the region. This places barriers to both economic and social prosperity in the North. Increasingly northerners see transportation as the key to unlocking the economic and social development potential of the North.

Today, Mr. Speaker, this government is responding in a manner that demonstrates the unwavering commitment we have to our northern citizens. This morning I had the honour of joining with Premier Calvert and Vice-chief Don Deranger of the Prince Albert Grand Council to unveil Road to Prosperity, Saskatchewan's northern economic infrastructure strategy. This is the single most significant investment in transportation in northern Saskatchewan's history. Through this strategy we will invest 65.5 million over the next five to seven years to develop northern Saskatchewan's transportation system.

This strategy is based on four pillars.

First we leverage this investment to generate capacity-building opportunities for northerners. The primary purpose of the capacity-building initiative is to ensure benefits are maximized for northerners. Northerners should be involved in construction projects in a manner that has lasting economic development benefits.

Capacity building means providing opportunities for northerners to strengthen or impart specific job skills that will directly be transferable to the economic opportunities transportation infrastructure enables; to develop skills in local organizations that improve their ability to play a lead role in the ongoing planning, development, and operation of infrastructure in the North; and to support business development; to participate in the management of complex projects as well, sir.

Through the capacity-building component, northerners will work in true partnership to deliver on the strategy's second pillar — a principal road network for northern Saskatchewan, essential to economic development and social well-being.

There exists in the North significant untapped economic potential, particularly in mining, tourism, and forest industries. The development of a principal northern road network that improves connections to the rest of the province and beyond will make the investment in the region more attractive and stimulate development. Improving access to and mobility in the North will assist entrepreneurs and businesses in creating economic activity where northern residents can participate in the production of goods and services that are in great demand around the world.

The third pillar of the strategy involves improving community access to the principal system. Currently some of our northern communities have no access or very limited road access. For example, Wollaston Lake's ground access to the rest of the province by barge that can only operate when the lake is ice-free or by an ice road that can only operate when ice is frozen to a sufficient depth. The result is this community only has access to reliable ground transportation for four to five months of the year.

Many other northern communities rely on substandard gravel roads that provide the only link from their community to the province's social and economic life. This situation makes access to vital services like health care and education — that the rest of us take for granted — very difficult. And in many communities it results in exorbitant prices for vital staples. For example, the cost of a 4-litre jug of milk in Stony Rapids is about \$12.

As residents of Saskatchewan, northerners have a right to basic transportation infrastructure that provides them with the opportunity to capture their social and economic development potential.

The fourth pillar of this strategy is to employ flexible funding strategies that will enable us to use our \$65.5 million commitment to lever federal government cost sharing on specific projects such as construction of an all-weather road in the Athabasca basin.

At the announcement this morning, Chief Deranger very clearly

articulated the responsibility of the federal government to contribute to the development of transportation in the North. Our industry partners in the North recognize the benefits of improved transportation links to, not only their own operations, but to the broader economic and social aspirations of northerners. To this end we will continue to work with them to encourage their participation in both the development of critical infrastructure and the capacity-building objectives.

Mr. Speaker, this potential in the North is virtually limitless. There's an abundance of opportunity in mining, energy, tourism, fishing, and other industries. Most importantly, sir, there's tremendous human potential in the region. By improving economic infrastructure in the North, we are opening doors to economic and social development in the region, but we're doing much more than that. We're creating a legacy that will benefit the entire province for generations to come.

2005 marks the province's centennial year. The time is now to provide northerners the opportunity to fully develop the potential of their people and their communities. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On a point of order, I wish to advise the member that he did refer to another member by surname, and the member should only refer to other members by their titles or by the name of their constituencies.

The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for sending me a copy of his statement on the northern road strategy. I had the opportunity to listen to the Premier and the Highways minister deliver the announcement this morning.

This is good news for the people of northern Saskatchewan. They will no longer have to pay 12 to \$14 for 4 litres of milk. They will have the ability to be connected to neighbouring communities in the rest of the province. They will be able to develop not only the economic potential of the North, but the social and human potential as well.

And while the announcement itself is a good news for the people of northern Saskatchewan, the minister made a point when he said that Saskatchewan's contribution to the northern highways in the past has been insufficient — insufficient, Mr. Speaker. That comment speaks about many parts of this NDP government and very aptly describes the party's commitment to the roads in northern Saskatchewan.

As we heard this morning, the northern roads proposal has been in negotiation and discussion phase since 1998. That is seven years, Mr. Speaker, and will take up to an additional seven years to complete this project. So the people of northern Saskatchewan will have been waiting for nearly 14 years to have sufficient transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the plan we heard this morning is light on details. The minister did not say when construction would start. The minister did not say what roads will be fixed or even if new ones will be built. He did say, however, to wait until February for more details and another announcement. Again making

announcements is more important to the NDP than taking action. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That means that northern people will continue to wait for their link to the rest of the province. That means northerners will continue to pay astronomical costs for basic necessities of life.

Neither the Premier nor the Minister Responsible for Highways can say definitely what the federal government is contributing money to this project. While it is hoped that the federal government would invest in such a worthwhile project, it is a concern that the provincial government has not secured that funding before announcing the project. The Premier and the Highways minister said that they hoped industry players would also contribute money to the project. The provincial government does not have any details, but they hope industry will contribute.

I want to make it clear that the Saskatchewan Party fully supports the building of a northern roads infrastructure. In fact it is idea no. 18 in our 100 ideas for Saskatchewan's 100 years which states:

Partner with the Government of Saskatchewan to build three new all-weather roads in northern Saskatchewan to facilitate sustainable northern communities and sustainable northern economic development.

I would hope that the people of northern Saskatchewan do not have to wait any longer for something so basic as a reliable road to and from the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — More ministerial statements. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Local Accountability and Partnership Panel Report

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to rise in the Assembly and announce our response to the local accountability and partnership panel report. The vision and recommendations presented in this panel's report have provided us with a firm foundation on which to build a new local governance system that will enhance parent and community participation in our schools.

Last February we appointed the panel to develop a provincial framework that would enhance the learning outcomes for all students by addressing the need for parents and communities to be actively involved and have a voice in education planning and decision making. I do want to today congratulate the panel Chair Craig Melvin and the members of that panel, Shirley Gange and Gary Shaddock, for the work that they had in developing these recommendations.

As part of their research, they held over 40 meetings, including consultations with education partners and 7 regional consultations. Their extensive research involved consulting provincial experts, reviewing relevant literature and investigating the work of other provinces.

Today we are addressing the key issues outlined in the panel's

report by moving forward with this initiative. There is a need to ensure a mechanism for parents and community members to be actively engaged at the school level in decision making of the boards of education, and we need to make sure that that is not lost as we move to the larger restructured school divisions. As such, we are committed to ensuring that the development of larger divisions will not be at the cost of local involvement in the education system.

Mr. Speaker, the report recommends and we are establishing school community councils across the province. In fact in every school or within every community there will be these councils that will play an integral, purposeful part in terms of school division governance.

Legislation to create the school community councils will be introduced in the spring 2006 session of the legislature. Once that legislation is in effect, school community councils will replace local boards which currently exist in rural areas. Other parent and community-based groups will continue to be able to work with their local boards as they do today.

These councils will ensure that both urban and rural residents will have access to the same opportunities for involvement in their children's learning and the same framework of local governance.

[14:30]

These school community councils will work with parents and community members to develop shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth in the system. They will encourage and facilitate parent, community and youth engagement in school planning and improvement processes.

These groups will be comprised of parents, community members, including First Nations communities, students, principals and teachers. They'll be truly representative of each school community. Members of the school community councils will participate in a collaborative development and implementation of school improvement plans. They will offer advice to the board of education, to the school, and to the community on policies and programs and operations affecting each school community.

Mr. Speaker, school community councils will address key matters that make a difference in student outcomes, student learning, and student well-being. The school community councils will align their work with provincial and division goals and initiatives. They will be accountable. They will be transparent, and they will be responsive in the relationship between parents and the schools.

By implementing these councils we are ensuring that authentic engagement of parents and community in learning success. We are going to support accountability in the pre-kindergarten to 12 education system, and will support the implementation of School^{PLUS}, as well as other strategic directions established at the school and community level.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize this is an extremely important step forward in the renewal of our province's education system.

It is a part that we connect the community to the school and build upon the strength that we have seen in the system today. This is a response that will ensure that we have sustainable, responsive communities where parents are involved in the education of their children. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his comments today on the local accountability and partnership's panel report and the fact that the government is making a response to this report in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that have been articulated in this whole process of amalgamation of school divisions to larger regional boards has been the challenge that's going to exist in keeping and building new corporate kind of alliances with these schools.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that have been expressed is that as we go to the larger school districts, there is the potential of having a disconnect between the communities, the community schools, and these larger school boards.

Mr. Speaker, and members, I believe that across the province in these school divisions that you're seeing a move from more of a hands-on board than has been the case in the past to more of a policy-driven boards of education, which deal with the global issues in a more broad-based basis. And the concern has been that, as communities are struggling to continue to have ownership of their community schools, how are you going to make that happen in a meaningful way?

Mr. Speaker, I believe the panel that was chaired by Craig Melvin and Shirley Gange and Gary Shaddock have done a great deal of work in trying to identify in a practical way what a methodology is going to be to allow this connection between the community and the school that they are attached to. Mr. Speaker, I think the panel's recommendations have been thoughtful and practical and worthy of serious consideration. And although the minister has not outlined specifically what recommendations are going to be followed and in what detail, we look forward to the minister's response in the spring of 2006 to see what specific legislation there's going to be proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that perhaps this legislation would have been ready at a sooner time so that it could be tabled in the legislature and would have been available on the period of time from this fall session to spring to invite comment and discussion on a local level about, will this new direction go far enough in order to ensure attachment to community schools.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that is of note in this is that there has been a very wide and diverse history of involvement with local school boards. In the rural areas, local school boards have been something that has been very important in some school divisions to largely misused in other divisions or underutilized in some others, and it is virtually an experience that doesn't exist in urban city schools. And in some ways urban city schools I think have the same attachment to a school in their

neighbourhood as there is in rural communities. And so I think that urban schools potentially are going to benefit by this minimum standard that is going to be expected right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, there's going to be a challenge in having these local school councils that are much more of a hands-on, connected to the community and to the schools they represent approach and the large policy approach that comes from the division schools, but I think it's important that efforts be made to build this new cultural attachment across the province.

This forced amalgamation process that we were concerned about in the past has created some real tensions between communities. And there's going to have to be a real effort on behalf of these school boards and these community councils, or school councils, to build a new culture of ownership with the communities and the schools so that they can defend and enhance and encourage improved programming and superior program delivery in the local level.

Mr. Speaker, we think that the minister's words are positive and encouraging. We're going to look forward and watch very closely what the details are going to be in the spring. And we trust in this whole process this will not be entirely a department-generated initiative but is something that really considers the needs and the concerns of local people as they try to develop new attachments and renewed attachments to their schools. This I think will be as an end result in the best interests of the children of our province, and that should be the objective of all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 28 — The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 28, The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Ag and Food that Bill No. 28, The Veterinarians Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next sitting of this House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Order please. Before orders of the day I wish to at this time table the annual report for the Saskatchewan Legislative Library for the period ending March 31, 2005.

Order please. Order. Would the members take this very important debate to some other private place.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and order questions 543 through 548 inclusive.

The Speaker: — 543 to 548 inclusive have been ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 27 — The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Healthy Living Services.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this speech I will move second reading of The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act, 2005.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, this Act supports our government's commitment to ensure an accessible, flexible, and effective treatment approach for youth with substance abuse issues. It will be consistent with the enhancement to addictions services found within the Premier's Project Hope.

We released Project Hope almost six months ahead of schedule so implementation could begin immediately. At the time, we indicated we were reviewing ways to help addicted youth who are extremely difficult to reach and treat through more traditional measures. Today, we fulfill that commitment.

Through Project Hope, Mr. Speaker, we are implementing proactive outreach programs and training for existing addiction workers. We're adding new treatment options including detoxification, stabilization, and in-patient treatment. We're also adding an element of aftercare in our programming that integrates community supports and helps to stabilize youth in their communities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the youth detoxification and stabilization Act will help to further enhance the ability of parents, caregivers, and others to provide much needed support to a narrow segment of youth with extremely serious substance abuse issues. Mr. Speaker, these youth who are at risk to themselves or others and who are resistant to traditional

interventions such as voluntary detoxification, stabilization, and treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this Act will include involuntary detoxification and stabilization services for youth aged 12 to 17 through an order from two physicians. We propose that youth remain in involuntary detoxification and stabilization within a facility that offers a safe and protective environment for a period of up to 5 days, with the possibility of an extension determined by physicians for a maximum of 15 days. The youth would be prohibited from leaving during that time, using acceptable methods of intervention.

We also propose provisions for involuntary community orders of up to 30 days that would be issued either before or after involuntary detoxification or as alternative to it. These provisions would allow for an order from two physicians for the safety and protection of a youth requiring involuntary detoxification and stabilization.

We also understand that the rights of the youth in question are of the utmost importance, and we will ensure their rights are protected through due process provisions. We will also keep parents informed of the process.

Using this Act would be a last resort, Mr. Speaker. We are confident that in most cases other available options for detoxification and stabilization will be successful. We will ensure all other avenues are pursued before authorizing that a youth be apprehended against his or her will. We will monitor the use of this Act closely using an evaluation mechanism to determine the effectiveness of this approach. This will continue to ensure the rights of youth are protected as well as their immediate safety.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the work of my colleague, the Minister of Community Resources and Employment, who spearheaded the process to research this serious issue and consult with the people of this province. Her commitment, combined with the work of various government departments — Community Resources and Employment, Learning, Justice, Corrections and Public Safety, and Health — to research this issue and consult with the people of Saskatchewan ensures that this proposed legislation, this proposed new legislation is based on the needs and desires of the people of Saskatchewan.

This Act will pave the way for more service options and will help us to better serve youth in all parts of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, with that I move second reading of The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act, 2005.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Healthy Living Services that Bill No. 27, The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to rise in this Assembly and speak to this Bill that's just been introduced this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that we have a serious problem in this province when it comes to drug and alcohol addictions and especially amongst our young people. And over the past number of years, Mr. Speaker, we have continued to see an increased dependence and use of the drug, crystal meth. And we see and witness on a daily basis the impact of that drug, the impact that it has on individual lives and young people's lives and certainly on the lives of families who have to deal with individuals who have become addicted to drugs, whether it's meth or any other form of drug.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the minister and his introduction to this Bill, one can't help but wonder at the end of the day how much of an impact the member from Kelvington-Wadena and the member from Weyburn and the member from Saskatoon Northwest had in the implementation of this Bill because, Mr. Speaker, if you look at it very carefully, it's not that much different than the one introduced by the member from Kelvington-Wadena back in the spring.

And I guess the question is, Mr. Speaker, will this government at any time acknowledge that someone else besides themselves has a good idea and allow a Bill of that nature like a private member's Bill to move forward? It boggles my mind to think that, when some one works as diligently as the member from Kelvington-Wadena and the member from Weyburn and the member currently from Saskatoon Northwest and come forward with a piece of legislation and come forward with some arguments . . . And the minister talked about detention of individuals who do not want to voluntarily address their addictions.

[14:45]

And these members on the opposite benches worked diligently and brought forward a piece of legislation that I believe at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the government would have a hard time knocking that piece of legislation because there was some very good principles to that legislation. And yet we could not get the government, get the Premier and his ministers and his colleagues to say, you know it probably wouldn't hurt us to say, you know, that's a good piece of legislation. The member from Kelvington-Wadena has done an excellent job on that legislation.

Yes we have a problem. And I think maybe we should work together and let's see if we can work together and tackle these addictions together as a Legislative Assembly and a group of members rather than government versus opposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, it's imperative that we move forward on this issue. And my colleagues have certainly argued this for the past two years, that we need to do something, because parents have been coming to us. Young people have been coming to us, as they no doubt have been coming to members on the government's side of the House, and they've been asking for help.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is very interesting in this piece of legislation . . . And the government talks about building a centre where people can have their addictions addressed. You know this was the very government . . . And I will acknowledge that the current minister was not around when Mr. Romanow and

his members of the day actually closed down Whitespruce treatment addiction centre in Yorkton. But the current Premier was a member of that government.

Mr. Speaker, I speak about that because Whitespruce was a centre that was really reaching not only individuals but reaching the families. And I had the privilege of talking to many families who came up to me after they had young people in the centre and had their needs addressed. And they were, as families, they were able to go and spend some time at the centre, working together with the staff to address the issues of addictions that their teenage children or children were facing, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't . . . I didn't hear one complaint about the program at Whitespruce — not one complaint. And it didn't matter whether it was an individual in the northwestern side of the province or the northeast or the southwest or from the two major centres. No one complained once they arrived at Whitespruce. No one complained about the centre and the fact that it was near the community of Yorkton, just outside of Yorkton, at Orcadia. Nobody complained about the location. The reason why, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, basically because of its location, it removed people from the influences that they had to deal with on a daily basis. They didn't have to worry about their neighbours or their peers, who they may have been involved in drugs and alcohol with, harassing them as they were trying to get their lives straightened around. It gave them a sense that they had caring people around them who were willing to work with them to address their addictions.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, 14 years later we finally come to the realization we need a centre where young teenagers or young people can be placed or can be taken to address their addictions — and especially if they're coming forward — a place where they will have the assistance of individuals who care for them and really want to assist them in addressing the addictions they're facing.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that it's taken this long. It's unfortunate that we closed down a centre that was doing an excellent job. But on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to see the government has finally realized that it's time to move.

However, Mr. Speaker, government says we need to do something. The minister just talked about involuntary detention. The minister talked about a number of services that this piece of legislation deals with. The unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, is that while there are some services the government's going to implement today, the facts are they really do not have the space and the beds available that they can utilize so that young people can have their needs addressed.

And the government talks about the Premier's Project Hope. And it's, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to be open for another two to three years. So while the government has finally acknowledged we need to move, there's still a lag period as the government now is forced to deal with the issue; they need to find a place for beds, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government as well was the government that disbanded SADAC [Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission].

And, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about addiction services, I talk about what's going on in our regional health districts. Kipling is a prime example of how our health districts are dealing with addiction services. We had a good addiction service in the community of Kipling, Mr. Speaker, and I understand that it may be phased out. We had an excellent councillor working with individuals who would come to the centre. And that's, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why many people across this province are so annoyed at this government and the way it is dealing with health care.

And while they continue to point to the statistics that would suggest that people are satisfied, the facts are . . . And I was reading an article the other day, and it was pointed out in the article that when you talk to people who finally found their way into the system to have their health needs met, people are quite pleased with how their needs have been met and the care, the attention they received. But, Mr. Speaker, they are not happy with the fact that they may have to wait anywhere from six months to a year to two to three years to finally have their health problems addressed. And I think that's the same factor we're dealing with here when we talk about addiction services.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the minister really talk much about the problem of crystal meth in this as he was introducing and doing second reading on his speech this afternoon, but we know that it continues and will be, for a period of time will continue to be a problem for young people in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we ask, where do young people go today while we wait for the full implementation of this government's vision as how we're going to deal with addictions in the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, we can look at the past and we can say it should never have been done. Whitespruce should have never been closed. SADAC should not have been disbanded. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government decided in their good wisdom that we didn't need those services any more. So that's in the past. We need to move on into the future.

And I want to say thank you to my colleague, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, for the way she has spearheaded the move and kept our caucus informed of the concerns that have been brought to her attention and the in-depth research that she has done in regards to crystal meth and the problems that people have and coming forward with ideas and solutions — ideas and solutions which that member had brought forward in her private member's Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that there are a lot of issues around addictions that we need to look at very carefully. There's no doubt it's time we offered young people a source of help and assistance to address those addictions. And, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to see the government is finally acknowledging that there is a problem, that we need to address that problem, and they've come forward with The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act this session, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to see that the Act has been brought forward. I want to thank the minister for coming forward with the Act because this will give this, as has been mentioned, this will give all members over the next period of months till the spring session to actually have the debate and the

dialogue in regards to the legislation to ensure that when the Act moves forward later next spring that we've actually addressed a lot of the concerns and that the Act will meet a lot of the requirements that people were looking for and hoping to see in this piece of legislation.

And let me say one more thing, Mr. Speaker. While there are a lot of criticisms, I want to take a moment as well to compliment the minister for his work and efforts as well. Yes, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have done a lot of work, but the minister certainly has, and I want to give him credit for taking the time to bring to his colleagues' attention that there is a serious issue out there and we need to address it.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on second reading of Bill 27 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of the policy field committees, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:55.]

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