



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

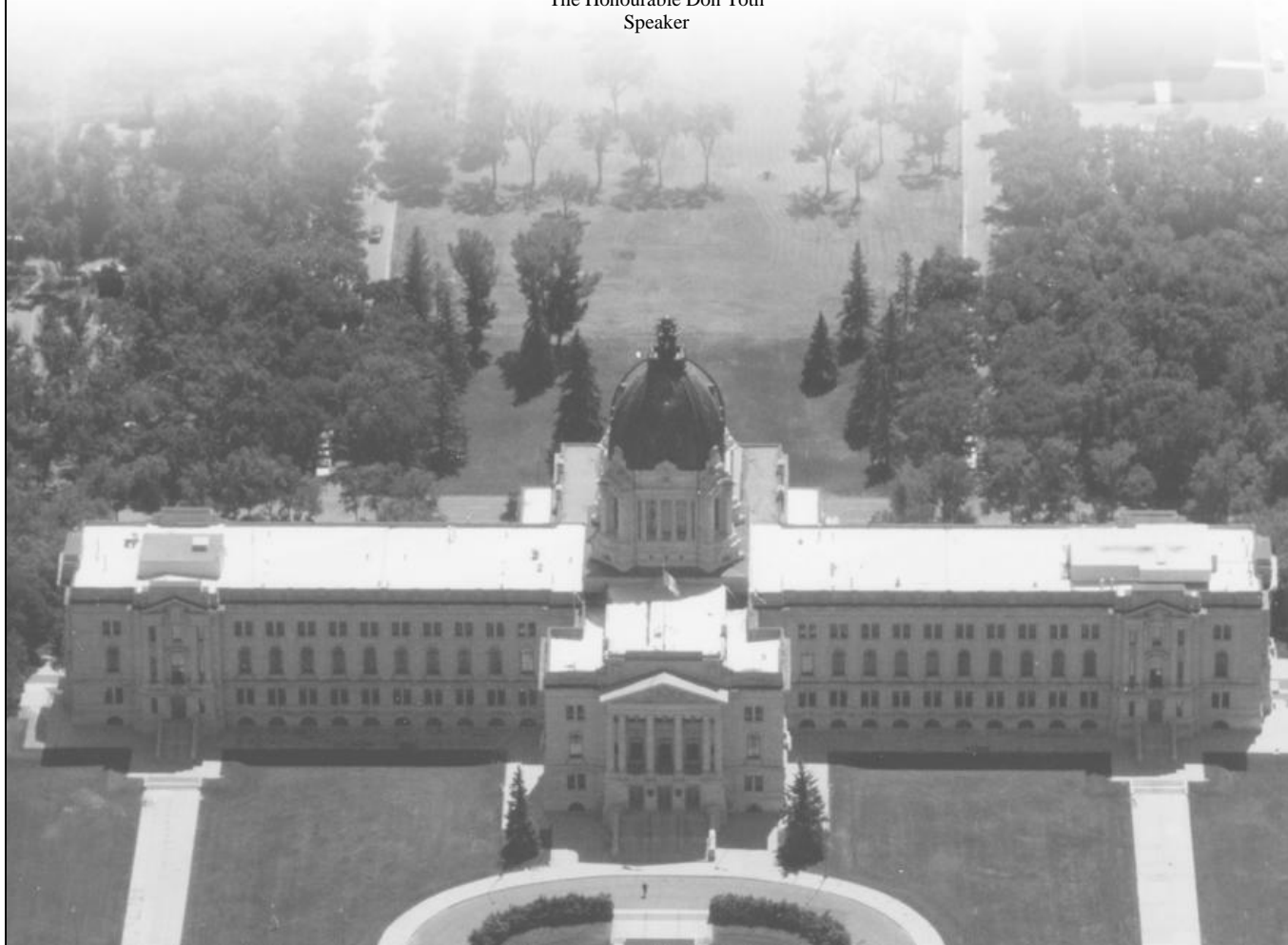
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
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Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
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Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
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Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
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Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce through you and to you to all members of the legislature today, a group of very special guests assembled in your gallery.

Today we have members from the intercultural leadership program, along with the course instructor, Annette Ermine, and intercultural leadership program advisory Co-Chairs, Dr. Rick Kleer and Shannon Avison.

The students here today — maybe they could give us a wave — Laura Starblanket, Keenan Cummings. Today we also have Pat Sparvier, Gloria Poorman, Lauri Guppelin, and Stuart Manhas.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce a very special person today, Rebecca Sangwais who is with our group. Rebecca is the First Nations University of Canada Pow Wow Princess for 2009. Rebecca is from the Ochapowace First Nation, is a first-year student in business administration program at the First Nations University of Canada. She's talented and beautiful and capable. And I ask everyone to join with me in welcoming the whole group to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the Minister for First Nations and Métis Relations and welcome the group from the intercultural leadership program to the legislature. It's good to see Annette Ermine here and Pat Sparvier, the Co-Chairs with the program, and of course especially the students.

And it's also great to welcome her majesty to the legislature. The Pow Wow Princess is a highly sought-after position and certainly the FNU [First Nations University] Pow Wow Princess has a lot of very talented, quality individuals that have served in that capacity. So I'd like to join with the minister and encourage all members to welcome these fine individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Ta wow.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, with leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave for an

extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would assume that most of my colleagues in the House would understand that almost every introduction I give is extended. Maybe I should quit asking for leave but, Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to stand in the House again today and introduce the latest group of participants in the parliamentary program for public service employees. We have 25 of the attendees in the gallery today. You want to all just acknowledge who you are for our sake? Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, we have participants from the following ministries: Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; from the Ministry of Education, from Health, from Highways and Infrastructure, Municipal Affairs, the Public Service Commission, Social Services, and the Legislative Assembly Service. And as I was going through the list today, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that there were some who had enrolled but weren't able to participate in today's event.

This is at least the fourth such program in this spring session. I think there are at least one or maybe even two more to come, but this seems to be a very popular program and very well attended from across the various ministries. The program includes an in-depth history and tour of the Legislative Building, briefings by the Legislative Library, the Legislative Assembly Clerk's office, Exec Council, and they will be observing the proceedings of the House through to the end of question period.

They'll meet with members from both sides of the Legislative Assembly and finally, Mr. Speaker, if the two of us who are dealing with the program prior to your arrival keep within our time constraints, you'll get a chance to talk to them as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like all of our colleagues to welcome these participants in the parliamentary program today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the minister and welcome our civil servants here this afternoon, and hope you enjoy the proceedings this afternoon. Normally it would be the minister and myself joining you later this afternoon, but because I'm going to be in committee, one of my colleagues will be attending on my behalf. And if we can keep to those time frames, Mr. Speaker, you'll get your few minutes as well.

But welcome to your legislature on our behalf, and thank you very much for attending and I hope you enjoy your afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is three people that are very important in my life. My wife Debbie is sitting up there along with our two grandchildren. Taylor is five and Jacob is three.

Now Taylor is the artist and the craftsman. In fact yesterday before church I had to glue two stones together for a craft that was going to take place after church, but I think it got forgotten. And as far as Jacob, I hardly recognize him without his hockey gloves. He's three years old and he's a fan of the Calgary Flames. And before he plays, either his grandmother or I have to sing *O Canada* before he starts. So please welcome him to your legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery are 40 students and their school staff from Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon Eastview. This program is an English as an additional language program, and they're accompanied by their school staff, Rita Wolfe, Yvonne Musey Johnson, and Sheila Kohle. I hope I've pronounced your names right. Would you just give a wave. And welcome to the legislature, and I hope everyone joins with me in that welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Assembly I'd like to introduce six guests that are seated in your gallery. First of all I'll introduce Patrick Dupuis. And I ask them to give a wave just so we know where you are. Patrick is from Estevan, and he's with the firm of Meyers Norris Penny. And now that the April 30 tax deadline is past, he's kind of allowed out of the office. So welcome, Patrick.

Accompanying Patrick are his father, Paul Dupuis from Winnipeg; Leonard Samoisette from Gravelbourg who's Patrick's father-in-law; Dave Punga from Gravelbourg; Gerry Piche from Gravelbourg; and Ted Reaves from Gravelbourg. And, Mr. Speaker, some of these guests, it's their first visit to the legislature so I ask all members to greet them warmly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you, through you and to all members of the Assembly I'd like to introduce two guests seated in the Speaker's gallery: Deb Mortensen is a dear friend of mine from childhood, and she's here visiting from Vancouver right now. And she's accompanying her father. Her father is Ed Morgan. Perhaps

they could both just give a wave so we can identify who they are.

And Ed has been a dedicated employee and servant of the Sask Archives Board for 31 years and is currently enjoying his retirement and his children and his grandchildren. And I'd like to welcome them to the legislature today and wish them a good future and hope that they enjoy today's proceedings. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery I have a number of people that are workers with the victims services program in Saskatoon. These people are an integral part of our administration of justice, Mr. Speaker. They work hard to ensure that victims are made comfortable and are able to arrive in court understanding what's expected of them, and that they have the necessary supports and resources as they go through what is often a very critical and trying time for them. Sometimes they're witnesses. Sometimes they're there as victims and also as witnesses. And we commend them for their very good work.

The individuals are Marie Hildebrandt, Linda Perrett, Dorthea Swiftwolfe, Janice Linklater. And then two of them are volunteers, and they've done this for many years without getting paid at all. They are Bev Kinshella and Cathy Anderson. Another member that was not able to be with us today was Brenda Douglas. They are joined by two of our staff members from Saskatoon, Dwight Lawrence and Pat Thiele, that operate the program.

And, Mr. Speaker, these people do a very good job in sometimes very trying times. And I would ask that all members welcome them to their legislature and thank them for the very good work that they do.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would like to introduce some guests seated in the west gallery from Weyburn. I had the opportunity to have a brief meeting with them in the lobby before the session started today. We have a brand new RN [registered nurse] that has been recruited from the Philippines with us, also an RN that has been working in Weyburn for eight years, also from the Philippines. They have a guest that is visiting them from London. She's an RN — may be considering relocating to Saskatchewan also. We also have a medical technician along with them. So it's wonderful to see them here today.

Now they are in a bit of a rush because they're off to the museum. The young man sitting in the gallery there wants to get over to the museum and see what Regina has to offer. So please welcome them to our House today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition that speaks to the need for the government to recognize the essential role of all health care providers as valued members of the health care team. Specifically this one speaks to SEIU [Service Employees International Union] West members who are employed at Cypress, Five Hills, Heartland, and Saskatoon regional health authorities. The petition also speaks to the need for a commitment to adequate funding and the installation of good faith in the provincial bargaining process. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all health care providers.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of residents and workers in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Before I recognize anyone further in petitions, just a quick reminder to the guests. We really welcome you, but just to ask you not to participate in any of the debate on the floor. That would be greatly appreciated.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand and present a petition in support of indexing the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, we all understand that increases to the minimum wage help low-income individuals and families to improve their standards of living. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to indexing Saskatchewan minimum wage to ensure that the standard of living of minimum wage earners is maintained in the face of cost of living increases.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Birch Hills. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the low wages paid to those who work in the community-based organizations sector results in high staff turnover, the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity, and this has a negative impact on the quality of care clients receive. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

And, Mr. Speaker, these citizens signing this petition come from the cities of Regina and Weyburn. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Saskatoon, Duck Lake, Carlton, Ciskaciwan Reserve, Prince Albert, and Sandy Bay. I so present. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a long-term care facility in La Ronge. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of a long-term care facility in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

May Day

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday on May 1, working people around the world celebrated International Workers' Day or, as it is known, May Day. The origins of International

Workers' Day are bound up in the struggle of working people and their unions to secure better working conditions and a living wage.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats acknowledge the importance of unions in building a more fair and caring society. Unions fight for women who still to this day earn less than men. Unions fight for decent, secure work in an economy that generates more and more part-time jobs at the expense of full-time careers. And unions continue to fight for democracy when right wing, conservative governments systematically dismantle the rights of workers to join unions and earn a decent living.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats stand opposed to the Sask Party government's growing list of attacks on the rights of Saskatchewan working people, whether it was Bills 5 and 6 which take away workers' democratic rights, the new attack on our skilled building trades workers with Bill 80, or the Sask Party's trespassing Bill that without the NDP's [New Democratic Party] amendment may interfere with the right to demonstrate peacefully. New Democrats stand firmly alongside the working people of our province and against these government-led attacks on the rights of Saskatchewan workers. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

Snowbirds' Acceptance Show

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday myself and the members from Moose Jaw North and Moose Jaw Wakamow had the distinct pleasure of attending the Snowbirds' formal acceptance show. The show was performed for the approval by the commander of 1 Canadian Air Division, Major-General Marcel Duval, and Canadian and US [United States] air traffic regulators.

In conjunction with the Snowbirds' show, the F-86 Saber Hawk One flight was also approved. Hawk One constitutes a tribute to the commemoration of 100 years of flight, as this year marks the 100th anniversary of the first powered flight in Canada. On February 23, 1909, Douglas McCurdy took the Silver Dart on its inaugural flight at Baddeck, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, the Snowbirds, in their 39th season, have flown in well over 2,000 shows before more than 125 million spectators. The 2009 team will fly in 65 shows in 45 locations across North America this season.

Mr. Speaker, the Snowbirds' mission is to demonstrate the skill, professionalism, and teamwork of the men and women in the Canadian Forces. These three words provide the framework for what they do, what they represent, and more important, who they represent.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Major Chris Bard and his team for an excellent acceptance show. And I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating the Snowbirds and wishing them a successful season. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It must be early in the week, but it just seems that while members have been trying to do statements, we've had a fair bit of conversation going on which has kind of distracted from the statements. So I'd ask members to be mindful of the right of members to share their statements without interference.

The member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Saskatoon and District Labour Council Celebrates 100 Years

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, May 2 at TCU Place in Saskatoon, I along with members from Moose Jaw Wakamow and Saskatoon Centre and Saskatoon Nutana and over 250 people came together to celebrate the achievements of the last 100 years of the Saskatoon and District Labour Council, and to relive some of the momentous historical achievements of this proud organization.

The Saskatoon Trades and Labour Council, who had affiliate with the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, brought workers together in February 1909 to fight for economic justice. And so began the proud history of the Saskatoon and District Labour Council as we know it today.

Mr. Speaker, the council has been at the forefront of working people's struggles for a better life at work, at home, and in the community. Some of the more notable accomplishments of the council are the partnership agreement that it has been able to forge with the United Way of Saskatoon & Area, a partnership agreement that was signed with the United Way in 1995 and is recognized as one of the most successful and respected such agreements within Canada. Also the summer snack program — the program was initiated in 1988 and provides nutritious lunches to children at inner-city playgrounds every summer in Saskatoon. Last year alone, over 3,000 nutritious meals were provided to children at four inner-city parks.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon and District Labour Council not only has a proud history, but its continuous efforts bring promise of a better future for working people in the community of Saskatoon. I want to congratulate Kelly Harrington, president of the Saskatoon and District Labour Council, and Jim Bitinsky, Chair of the gala committee, and all the volunteers for an evening of memories, great speeches, and entertainment. Again congratulations for a job well done. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Job Opportunities for Persons with Cognitive Disabilities

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to speak about an announcement made this morning by the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission. The announcement was regarding the creation of a more representative workforce by expanding job opportunities in the Public Service Commission

for persons with cognitive disabilities.

Originally this initiative was limited to the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, where there are currently 19 people working as general program assistants in these ministries. Thanks to the work at these ministries, the work of hiring managers in the government, and the co-operation of the public service unions and the community-based organizations, we are now in a position to expand this program to all ministries.

This program will help to promote a more diverse workplace within the public service. Employees with cognitive disabilities will gain new strengths, new skills, and take on tasks that will contribute to a more effective workplace. It will also create a positive work environment where everyone's contribution is valued. Public service unions have been consulted and are on board with this new initiative.

Employees under this program will earn \$11.20 to \$13.63 per hour, which is in between minimum wage and the lowest in-scope pay rate. The staff working in the Department of Highways as general program assistants with the cleaning duties as well as assistants with mechanics . . . Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

National Mental Health Week

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mental health is an essential part of overall health and well-being. Good health means more than feeling physically fit; it also means feeling mentally fit. Spreading awareness of the importance of maintaining mental health is the mandate of National Mental Health Week.

Today we recognize that good mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. These new understandings of mental health are prompting a new kind of focus that identifies components of mental wellness and mental fitness and explores ways to encourage them.

It's also important to acknowledge that mental health problems can affect any person, regardless of age or circumstance. The Canadian Mental Health Association reports that Canada's youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrialized world. Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable. It is never too early to consider children's mental health. That is why the first week this year is dedicated to increasing public awareness of mental well-being and social development of children in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to increase our awareness of mental health issues. I hope we can all take the time to listen to or participate in information sessions during this special week. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn.

New Democratic Party Memberships

Mr. Duncan: — Well well well, Mr. Speaker. Just last week, the NDP member from Regina Dewdney was openly bragging about how Dwain Lingenfelter has the NDP leadership race in the bag, mainly because of the 1,100 memberships they sold in Meadow Lake constituency. It'll be interesting to see if he has as much to say about the phony membership scandal that has now erupted in the Lingenfelter campaign.

This morning Mr. Lingenfelter admitted to paying for these phony memberships. That's over \$10,000 from a guy who didn't donate anything to the NDP last year. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lingenfelter has a lot of questions to answer: who knew about these phony memberships? Why was his campaign paying for these phony memberships? How do we know there aren't other phony memberships in other parts of the province?

Mr. Speaker, in typical NDP fashion, the NDP is trying to downplay the phony membership scandal, comparing it to buying a *Reader's Digest* subscription for someone else. So, Mr. Speaker, I picked up this month's *Reader's Digest*, and the very first article on page 1 is entitled "Managing the mess." So maybe it is a little like joining the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, we will be expecting a full and open accounting of the NDP's phony membership scandal, not just the *Reader's Digest* version. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Autism Services Spring Gala

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday evening, I attended the Autism Services 11th Annual Spring Gala at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The event — which included a reception, silent auction, dinner, and superb jazz singer, Jennifer Hanson — raised funds that will enable Autism Services to continue increasing the awareness of autism among the general public and to help provide programs and services for children and adults with this complex disorder.

Autism usually appears within the first three years of an affected person's life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that hinders the normal development of the brain in regards to social interaction, communication, and cognitive function.

Mr. Speaker, statistics show that 1 in every 150 Canadians is affected by autism. This is an increase of 600 per cent in the past 10 years. Autism is now the most common neurological disorder affecting children.

Since 1979 Autism Services, based in Saskatoon, has been providing support for children and adults and has expanded its delivery of programs substantially. While it receives financial support from the provincial government and the Saskatoon Health Region, most of its program funding comes from memberships, donations, and fundraising events like the spring

gala this past Saturday.

I ask members to join me in extending the very best wishes to Autism Services and other organizations that provide research, information, and programs on autism.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Supplementary Health Program Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clients of the supplementary health program have been having difficulty in recent weeks obtaining dentures. In one case brought to our attention, a senior stopped eating properly and started rapidly losing weight. In another case, family members have become concerned that a woman might choke on her dentures in the middle of the night. The inability to get coverage for dentures poses a risk to the health of a growing number of people.

My question to the minister is simple. What is the Sask Party going to do about this situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we're very aware of the issue around dentists and the contract that they have with the provincial government to supply services to these citizens that the critic just talked about. We have been in negotiations with the dental association, with the dentists in the province. I think we're getting very close to an agreement that will see services fulfilled through the whole . . . all the practising dentists who service clients, the denturists that service the clients that the critic just had mentioned.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — This question is about denturists, not dentists. And I know the Sask Party's ultimately responsible for reaching an agreement that ensures clients of the supplementary health program do get the services that they need and that denturists are fairly compensated.

But a year of negotiations has ground to a halt on the government's watch and the health of low-income seniors and families has been put at risk. The government was able to find \$7 million to spend on the Olympics, so I know the issue can't be money.

To the minister: how much longer will these seniors and families have to wait for the Sask Party to ensure that they get the denturist services that they need?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my earlier answer, negotiations have been going on between the denturists and the provincial government. That work is being done. I am pretty confident that an agreement will be struck in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine there are a number of contracts that the provincial government has, that the Ministry of Health has with a number of suppliers. Denturists are one of them and we, as I said, have been in negotiations with them. I think we'll be seeing a agreement coming to fruition in the near future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I know these issues are the subject of negotiations. And I do see that there's a failure to move forward on these issues. I asked the question in estimates. I had the same answer then and that was almost a month ago. So I think that we should be concerned when we hear stories about people who are in frail health who can't eat, who are starting to lose weight, whose dentures are floating and it could choke them. And my question to the minister is, how much longer do these people have to wait? I mean you're saying it's going to be soon. When?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is is that a number of dentists are still — and denturists — are still supplying services to this clientele, maybe not to the full amount that has been there, but she's implying that there are no services supplied whatsoever across the province, which is absolutely wrong.

Some dentists and denturists have pulled their services back until a contract is reached. Some are still supplying the service. I am telling this Assembly that we are working with the denturists and plan on having an agreement in the very near future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Drinking Water for Duck Lake

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, while this government was spending \$7.2 million on the Vancouver Olympics, at least 25 people in the real world lost their water service because they couldn't afford monthly bills of more than \$160 a month.

Mr. Speaker, this situation has been dragging on for months, and it is taking its toll on families in the Duck Lake area. Community leaders are beginning to despair of any meaningful

help with their predicament.

To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what is he doing to ensure families in Duck Lake have access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, memories are indeed short. In recent debate, we've reminded members of the opposition that problems with Duck Lake's water system first came to light, not last week or last month or even last year, but way back, way back in 2003 when the province had an NDP government.

We reminded them that their government had four years to solve this problem and infrastructure problems like it in the rest of our communities, and they didn't get the job done. Although I'm sure if you ask them, they had the best of intentions, they simply didn't get around to it.

What did the member from Regina Walsh Acres have to say about all of this at that time? She said we shouldn't worry about all of the emergency boil-water orders imposed by the NDP government on Duck Lake. And her reason — it was just water lines breaking, you know, year after year after year. Now why would that happen, Mr. Speaker? That happened, of course, because her government systematically ignored the needs of Duck Lake and other communities year after year after year.

We're doing much better, Mr. Speaker, and I welcome another question to explain the details.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Well the Duck Lake residents would beg to differ on the doing much better. Quite frankly, the water quality didn't diminish until 2007, and this government has been in power for 18 months and hasn't even had the courtesy of responding to them. Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps talking about the Building Canada fund as a source of possible assistance, but doesn't seem to understand the criteria for assistance under that fund.

The Canada Saskatchewan Building Canada website states that:

Projects are ineligible if construction work (e.g. physical changes to land above or below ground level or buildings) has started in advance of the approval of the Ministers or the completion and approval of the environmental assessment.

Building Canada is "for shovel-ready projects," but the Duck Lake water plant is already completed and the shovels were put away a long time ago, Mr. Speaker. When will this minister

stop throwing out red herrings and start providing real support to rural families who simply can't afford the cost of safe water?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm awfully sorry that the member hasn't done her homework. Mr. Speaker, I'm awfully sorry she doesn't understand the eligibility criteria for the Building Canada fund. But I am pleased to be able to recommend the following information for her digestion, consumption.

Here's what's happening. The second phase of this particular project is 100 per cent eligible for Building Canada funding, and we have worked hand in hand, the ministry officials and the town officials, to put together a top quality application for BCF [Building Canada fund]. That's already in the hopper, Mr. Speaker. We'll just have to wait for the adjudication panel to review and give their decision. That's coming in the weeks and months ahead.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — The second phase will have absolutely no impact on the water prices that they are currently paying. And the weeks and months away for the lagoon are again weeks and months away.

Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that there has been regular contact with community leaders in Duck Lake, but those same leaders report that he hasn't talked to them at all. Families in Duck Lake don't need more empty promises. They need this government's help to provide safe and affordable drinking water. Instead of encouraging the town to apply for programs that won't help them in this situation, will the minister commit to sitting down with Duck Lake's community leaders and finding an actual, workable solution?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to clarify to the member and all of the members the following: we actually have sat down with an official from the town of Duck Lake. We met firstly here in the Legislative Building with the deputy mayor when he came a couple of months ago.

What have we been doing since then? We've been working on making sure that they have a top-quality application for the next phase of Building Canada fund which of course, as I said just a minute ago, is 100 per cent eligible for funding. Also historic increases in revenue sharing, also municipal economic enhancement funding — the kind of funding, the kind of financial support never imagined, never provided by the

opposition members when they were in government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Drinking Water for Saskatchewan Communities

Ms. Morin: — The residents of Duck Lake appreciate the help with this intake of the Building Canada fund, but they need solutions for their water bills that they're paying now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, citizens in Hepburn face similar problems in the near future. A project of more than \$5 million, installation costs of more than 10,000 per household, and water bills of more than \$100 a month. As of Friday, May 1, 2009 there were 153 precautionary drinking water advisories . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — As of Friday, May 1, 2009 there were 153 precautionary drinking water advisories and 52 emergency boil-water orders in effect, and the Watershed Authority's plan for the coming year also says there are at least two other high-risk communities where the authority will be conducting an assessment.

To the Minister Responsible for the Watershed Authority: what are the names of those communities? And just how big is the water crisis in rural Saskatchewan and what does she plan to do about it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the member is suddenly so interested in this. The NDP tested water in one town and then walked away from the program. We have reinstated the program to do free testing for communities that may be facing some situations with their water, and Hepburn was the last but, Mr. Speaker, going forward we are working as a government on integrated water management strategies so that we make the right decisions for our province going forward on quality and quantity of water.

And we'll have announcements for that later this year, Mr. Speaker, but the people of this province can be guaranteed that water is one of the priorities in my ministry, and that is one of my focuses.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Consultation Regarding Energy Sources

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago we introduced the energy development partnership which would investigate

energy options to meet the province's energy needs in the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly way possible. The Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, and the Premier all agreed that it had merit, but instead of accepting it, they trotted out their Crown Corporations Committee, a proposal that begs more questions than it answers.

To the Minister of CIC: this government has said our plan has merit, yet they refuse to implement it. So what part of our plan do they not accept?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated previously in this House, we welcome the suggestions made by the opposition going forward, and how we can analyze better all types of power generation in the province. The best way to do that — and I think all members had a look at it, and members have participated before in this committee — it's through the Crown Corporations Committee.

It's an all-party committee, I would remind the member opposite, that members from the opposition, a couple of members will be a official part of the committee meetings. All members are free to sit in and to learn and to educate themselves.

I look forward to the process. I think it'll be well done. And the people of Saskatchewan will be well served, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Well if our proposal has merit, then why does their proposal look nothing like ours? Mr. Speaker, the government could potentially be putting the taxpayers of Saskatchewan at risks for billions of dollars to build nuclear reactors in this province, yet they'll not engage Saskatchewan people in an informed, meaningful, comparative debate on energy options.

Mr. Speaker, depending on who you talk to on that side and whether you read the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] report or Bruce Power's report, the province needs between 1000 and 3000 megawatts of power to meet future need.

To the minister: will he guarantee today that his Crown committee will be equipped with resources to fully study the future energy needs of this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the member opposite, it's not my

committee. It's not our committee on this side of the House. It's a committee of this legislature; a committee that involves all members.

In doing this, I'm trying to be bipartisan here. I'm trying to be as fair . . . Well members opposite may find that humorous, but I'm saying the energy future of this province is too important for political purposes for one person. We don't have all the answers, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly are looking forward, going forward. What's the portfolio going to look like? We welcome the information that the New Democratic Party puts forward. We welcome the information that the Green Party brought forward and other parties. We'll look at all the information, and we'll come up with the best decisions going forward for SaskPower, for the Government of Saskatchewan, and for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the problem isn't that they don't have all the answers; it's they don't have any answers. People attending these meetings are going to have technical questions they need answered in order to provide meaningful advice to the government.

To the minister: which one of the committee members is an energy expert that he feels is qualified to travel the province and answer any technical questions that the public might have?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. It may surprise the hon. member, but we do indeed have experts in Saskatchewan housed within SaskPower: those that look at wind energy, those that look at hydro development, those that look at solar, those that look at biomass, those that look at imports, those that look at all types of generation, Mr. Speaker.

The one area where we didn't have the expertise was in the nuclear file. That's why the Uranium Development Partnership was put into place. That's why hearings are going to start later this month. They will do that information; we will do our work. And together hopefully we will find the best portfolio mix to ensure that we can continue to have the strongest economy in the country and the safe, reliable, and sustainable power to ensure that that happens. That's what we're doing. That's what should be done. And that's what will be done, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Now I asked him a simple question. I asked

him which members of the committee are experts, and he says that people from SaskPower are experts. Are they on the committee? Is he going to appoint them to the committee, and is he going to make part of the committee all of the different potential energy experts in this province?

Mr. Speaker, this government has pushed this nuclear agenda in spite of the fact that 40 per cent of the people in this province feel that they're not properly informed. People of Saskatchewan have questions regarding nuclear waste storage, export markets, export grids, the cost of decommissioning a reactor, and the number of public dollars that'll go into building one, two, or even three reactors in this province. Members opposite add to the confusion by contradicting each other and themselves at every turn.

To the minister: will the Crown Corporations Committee be equipped with a panel of experts to answer questions people are asking about all of the options?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in this House before, the Crown Corporations Committee will have full access to the experts of SaskPower. SaskPower will be asked and will be tasked to provide full services to this committee and provide as much information as possible.

But not only SaskPower. We again will look through and invite companies from outside the province to come in and talk to us about their expertise, whether it's TransAlta or TransCanada or any other company.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a monopoly on the expertise. What we do have is a willingness to look at all options to come up with the best possible plan going forward. We welcome the information of members opposite. We welcome their participation. It is their responsibility as well as ours. Let's get to work, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Let's get to work. It'd be about time they started. Mr. Speaker, the debate around this province's future energy needs and the cost-efficient and environmental friendly way of meeting those needs is a discussion that must engage the people of Saskatchewan. So a simple question of the minister: why does he hide from his responsibility to inform the public?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment in this House that I'll participate in those committees, that I'll be there as far as my responsibility as

minister of SaskPower and Minister of Crown Corporations to ensure that that committee has all the information necessary.

I'm very surprised by this line of questioning. And I think the question in the House today is will the members opposite participate in this committee, or will they just go about furthering their partisan purposes?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Support for Hog Producers

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's hog industry has been devastated over the past 18 months. They've been hard hit, seeing breeding herds reduced and an overall 25 per cent decline in production. And now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's hog producers have to deal with an outbreak of H1N1 influenza. To the minister: when will he be announcing his government's plan to help Saskatchewan hog producers through the latest influenza crisis that is having a significant impact on our hog producers and our hog numbers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the problems in the hog industry right now, but as the member is well aware, we're right in the middle of sending cheques out to hog producers — \$20 a market hog and \$10 per weanlings — right across the province, along with the \$40 for cows and bred heifers right across the province. Those cheques are going out as we speak today, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the H1N1 virus right now that's in the province, Mr. Speaker, the CFIA [Canadian Food Inspection Agency] and the Public Health Agency of Canada have taken the lead on this file, and I think are doing a good job in that respect.

The one thing I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that is, contrary to what some in the province have said, is the H1N1 virus is not a food safety concern. And I think this misinformation has got out there and is hurting our hog prices and hurting the hog industry right across this problem. And, Mr. Speaker, pork products are safe for consumption. And I think that's the message we have to get across this province, across this country, and for that matter, right across North America.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, Canada exports more than half of our hog production, and now because of the H1N1 flu strain, Canadian exports are down 10 to 15 per cent. Mr. Speaker,

according to *The Globe and Mail*, at least 20 countries are banning pork exports from Canada because of the H1N1 influenza, and that has to be affecting our Saskatchewan hog producers.

To the minister: will his government be providing additional support to hog producers as a result of H1N1 influenza, over and above the \$20 and \$10 payment that's going out because this is having a devastating effect on prices?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the member opposite, as she has talked about, we have support going out for the industry. And myself and my officials are monitoring the situation on an hourly basis, working with our federal counterparts. And there's been professionals right across this country that have been very helpful in monitoring the H1N1 virus.

What is not helpful though, Mr. Speaker — and I want to talk about the misinformation that's out there — and I want to quote News Talk radio: "NDP leadership hopeful links flu to intensive livestock operations."

Mr. Speaker, this does more harm to the hog industry than anything any government could do to help them through this time, when they spread misinformation when it has nothing to do with the hog industry in Saskatchewan, in Canada, or in North America or in Mexico — anywhere, Mr. Speaker. That misinformation is hurting our industry far more than anything I could do or this government could do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the minister and I had quite a lengthy discussion about the state of the hog industry in our province during spending estimates. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that it appears as though there is very little in the way of activity going on with the minister and his ministry when it comes to the hog industry in Saskatchewan. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, since this government came to office, there's been a dramatic reduction in the number of hogs in our province and the number of hog operators.

Mr. Speaker, when BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] hit Saskatchewan, the NDP government immediately went to work with the federal government to put together a BSE recovery plan and also provided the Saskatchewan set-aside program. To the minister: is the minister and the Sask Party government working with the federal government to provide a hog industry recovery program similar to BSE?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to

tell the member, and as she knows, that when we first came into power we were asked by the industry for a cattle and hog loan. We provided \$90 million for a cattle and hog loan. Mr. Speaker, she's well aware of what we have done, with a \$71 million hog and cattle support right across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, for 16 years they totally ignored rural Saskatchewan and paid no attention to these problems, and now all of a sudden they ask us to solve a problem for which has been a number of days old. We were monitoring day by day, hour by hour what's going on within the hog industry. And as I said before, this is not a food safety situation with the hog industry, and hog producers right across this province are being hurt by that misinformation.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are working with hog producers. We are working with vets right across this province in monitoring just what the effects will be on the hog industry in this province, and we'll work very closely with hog producers in this province to try and get them through these tough times.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about coming to government and immediately providing a loan program to the hog industry. Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister acknowledged in spending estimates that was very little uptake. And in fact the minister also acknowledged in spending estimates that about 45 per cent of the uptake of \$15 million had been put into loan loss provisions this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. The industry doesn't need more loans. What the industry needs is a plan to help get them — help get them — through this crisis, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister describe to the producers and to the Saskatchewan public how they plan on assisting the hog industry that has been devastated in the last 18 months get through this crisis that is devastating them even more?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe the member knows full well that we've done more on this side in 16 months than her government did in 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — But, Mr. Speaker, if that member and the opposition on that side want to help producers in this province, they should talk to one of their leadership hopefuls. And I want to quote. I'd like to quote Yens Pedersen in one of his comments, Mr. Speaker, in spreading his misinformation across this province. His quote goes on to say “. . . insects breed in the massive amounts of hog manure produced by hogs at factory farms and are quite possibly [quite possibly, Mr. Speaker] responsible for starting the flu scare.”

But then he goes on to say, well this is just an “educated guess.” Those kind of comments are not helpful to the hog industry in

this country — in fact for that matter, a plot to scare everybody in this province that hogs are causing the problem when, Mr. Speaker, they know full well that they're not causing the problem. They are not a food risk, and pork is safety, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Orders of the day. And I just want to remind members or mention to members, while we have written questions here, it was a printing error. Written questions aren't due till tomorrow. They'll be raised at that time. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to allow time for the Standing Committee on Human Services to do its work, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that in order to facilitate the work of committees, this House do now stand adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:24.]

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