



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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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
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
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Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
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
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
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
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
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Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll just rag the puck for a while while our guest gets seated. Mr. Speaker, on August 26 — the year was 2008 — a new star began its ascendancy in the American political firmament. The occasion was the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado, and the speaker — that rising political star — is our very honoured and special guest, Mr. Speaker. And if I may, I apologize for not requesting leave of a bit of an extended introduction and hope members will indulge me in that our guest is very special who's joined us today — both of them who have jointed us today.

Governor Schweitzer electrified the crowd at the Democratic National Convention on that day with his speech. He was the talk of all of the pundits. I remember watching that speech, Mr. Speaker. I remember watching the CNN [Cable News Network] panel who had panned away from the speech. I remember Wolf Blitzer referencing the fact that the panel was missing maybe one of the best speeches of the convention. And then the talk of that particular speech, the content of it and how it was presented dominated a lot of the news of that day and the next day in terms of those of us who are political junkies and follow North American politics.

He said, among other things in the speech, and I quote, "I am a rancher who has made my living raising cattle and growing wheat and barley and alfalfa in Montana, a beautiful place with soaring peaks and pristine rivers and endless prairies." He went on to say, "I'm probably a little biased, but I think it's the . . . [best] place in the world to raise a family, to start and to grow a business, and to build a community."

Mr. Speaker, with great respect to our guest, in that of course he is wrong. However he went on to say much that we agree with. Not only that, he went on to say much that inform our own actions, in forming our own decisions to work with the state of Montana and the governor's vision that Western North America can lead in the development of sustainable energy technology to provide a clean energy future for growing economies on our side of the continent. And in this we agree. In fact in this we have a partnership, I believe, that we're building together. We'll take the next step of that later this day.

So I would ask all members to welcome the Governor of Montana. He is also the Chair of the Democratic Governors Association, Mr. Speaker, and has an impressive biography. Before he entered politics, he oversaw the building of a major irrigation project in several countries, supervised the building of Saudi Arabia's largest dairy farm. The governor has a global perspective on issues, Mr. Speaker, and he is a friend of our province. I think he's a friend of those who advocate for sustainable energy futures for provinces right now and places

right now that rely heavily on hydrocarbons.

And he's joined today by Nancy, his wife, the first lady of Montana, who herself has Canadian connections, I believe born in the province next door that we won't mention and then moved to Billings, I think, at the tender age of eight or nine if I'm recalling correctly.

And so these are wonderful guests. We're so very honoured that they've joined us today in the Assembly. I appreciate the members' indulgence for this extended introduction and invite them to help me welcome the governor and the first lady of the great state of Montana to our legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join on behalf of the official opposition and bring greetings to the governor and his wife and welcome them here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I note that Governor Schweitzer is part of this burgeoning democratic presence in the United States, which is very, very important, I think, not only for the United States but for North America and for the world. And I think, with respect, I might suggest to Governor Schweitzer that he might like to have a name for that, and it's called the New Democratic Party. And so I think that if he wants to borrow something from Canada, he can do that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have many strong ties with Montana — economically, socially — but, I think, primarily in a lot of ways through our families. And I know in my family some of the people came north to Saskatchewan from Minnesota in 1903. Another group went to Havre, Montana and became strong citizens — Havre, in that area. And one of the most famous Montanan citizens was a fellow named Bill Farden who started *Fishing & Hunting News*, and that's one of my relatives that we're very proud of on the Canadian side of the border.

But we also brought back from Montana, Louis Riel, and he caused all kinds of change in our province. And so I think that we need to thank Montanans for educating Louis Riel about how to work hard here.

We also have one of our very famous writers, Guy Vanderhaeghe, who's written *The Englishman's Boy*. And there's a movie about that, and that movie is primarily set in Montana and Saskatchewan. He's working on another book in that area.

But, Mr. Speaker, my point is, by mentioning all of these things, is that we have very strong ties to Montana from Saskatchewan, and we know those are going to continue in the

centuries ahead. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize other members, I as well have a couple of introductions I would like to make to the Assembly. Joining us today, and I'd like him to give us a wave, is Mr. David Hamilton who is with us this morning. Mr. Hamilton's retired from the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories where he served as Clerk and Clerk Assistant for 23 years, has also served as their Chief Electoral Officer. And members will also know Mr. Hamilton was here to oversee the Métis election a couple years ago. So I'd invite members to welcome Mr. Hamilton to our Chamber.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Also seated in the front row we have a young gentleman and his fiancée who have joined us. I'd like to introduce Captain Levon Bond and his fiancée, Amber Hagerman, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery, if they could give us a wave.

Captain Bond was born and raised in Regina, is now working in Canadian Air Force Intelligence at the Canadian NORAD [North American Aerospace Defence Command] Headquarters in Winnipeg. As the senior intelligence duty officer, Captain Bond works with the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance division. Captain Bond served in Afghanistan in 2007 and is preparing to deploy to the Middle East to work with the United States Air Force as a part of Operation Foundation.

Levon is in Regina visiting his father, Kerry Bond, who works for the Legislative Assembly in the broadcasting services branch. And also congratulations to Levon and Amber as they plan their wedding this summer. I'd like to invite members to welcome the Bonds too.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to ask for permission for an extended introduction, but given what's transpired previously, I think I'll dispense with that formality.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, today I have the opportunity to welcome seven individuals who are visiting and learning about Saskatchewan as part of the Canada School of Public Service Advanced Leadership Program. This program is designed to prepare talented federal and provincial leaders who already serve as very senior officials for the next level of leadership. These are the deputy ministers, the commissioners, and the military leaders of the future. And I will ask each of them to stand as I introduce them today.

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Anil Arora, assistant chief statistician, Statistics Canada. I'd like to introduce Ian Burney, chief trade negotiator, Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Also with us today is Kin Choi, assistant deputy minister, Health Canada. We have Belaineh Deguefé, senior director, Elections Canada; Major General

André Deschamps, assistant chief of air staff, Canadian Forces; Bob Paulson, assistant commissioner with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and Gina Wilson, senior assistant deputy minister, Indian and Northern Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of our colleagues to join me in welcoming these individuals to our legislature today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery is another group of distinguished guests that really do represent the future of our province, and that is 13 students from Aden Bowman Collegiate in Saskatoon which happens to be located in the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana. These are grade 12 students, Mr. Speaker, and they're spending the day in Regina. And they're spending some time at this Legislative Assembly.

Joining them in the gallery is Jeff Balzer and Katie Kehrig who are both teachers at Aden Bowman Collegiate. I'll be meeting with these distinguished guests after question period, and I think we'll have a picture and a few refreshments in the members' dining room. And I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these 13 grade 12 students from Aden Bowman and their teachers.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm also very pleased today to have members from my constituency, grade 8 students from Porcupine Plain Composite High School, in your Assembly. There are 26 students and with them today we have their teacher, Lawrence Schmidt, and the chaperons, Kim Lechler, Suzie Pegg, Dean Frank, and Ivan Fletcher.

These students are from one of the 20 communities in Saskatchewan who are benefiting from the major schools upgrade and build in our province. And I'd ask all of my colleagues to join me in welcoming these students who will graduate from the brand new school in Porcupine Plain when it is finished by the time they get to grade 12 or sooner.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce two very special guests sitting in your gallery this morning that have come down from Saskatoon to watch this morning's proceedings.

I'll ask them to give a wave when I introduce them. The first is Don Klassen. He's the owner-operator of Crestview Auto

Service in Saskatoon Centre, a shop that I've taken my vehicles for over a dozen years. And the other is Mr. Rob Scott, the owner-operator of Glenwood Auto Service located in Sutherland.

Now these men have come down to watch the proceedings. They're members of the Automotive Industries Association of Canada, a group that we don't hear an awful lot from but actually have a huge impact on our economy and our safety every day. And they're very interested in a recent initiative called Right to Repair.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'll be making a statement about that in the House in a few minutes. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I understand there'll be members of the association watching from Calgary, Toronto, and Ottawa as I make this statement. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome these folks to their legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, among the distinguished guests in your gallery are some distinguished people from Moose Jaw. These are members of the Moose Jaw Right to Life, and I'd ask them just to give you a wave as we welcome them to their legislature.

They are Elsie Alexander, Angela Funke, Dennis Auger, Charlotte Dombowsky, Cathy Marr, Vicky Mayer, and Bernice Zagozeski. I'd like all members to extend them a welcome to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure today to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of the Legislative Assembly the grade 8 class from école Massey right here in Regina. The students are seated in the west gallery along with some of their parents and their teacher, Ms. Laurel LaBar-Ahmed. Give us a wave, kids. Show us where you are. Thank you very much.

Recently my wife Jocelyn and I participated in the global food trivia contest held at the school during International Development Week. It was a fantastic event organized by the students themselves. Working with the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, these young people put together a challenging quiz, just like a *Jeopardy* television show, that tested the knowledge of contestants about important world food issues, particularly in developing countries. Two hundred people from the community came to Massey School to watch, to learn, and to enjoy the great food and entertainment that were also part of the evening's program.

After taking in today's session, the class will get a tour of the legislative building, and I will have an opportunity to thank them all for their hard work and keen interest in world affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of us to welcome our guests to their legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, 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, speaking specifically to the members of SEIU [Service Employees International Union] west — members who are employed in Cypress, Five Hills, Heartland, and Saskatoon health authority — and the valuable care that they provide to residents.

Mr. Speaker, the government needs to realize that utilization and the full range of professional skills offered by these providers and also commit to adequate funding and the installation of good faith in the collective 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 public health care providers.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of workers and families in Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I stand and present a petition in support of indexing the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, we all understand that minimum wage earners would increase as indexing the minimum wage would help earners be able to maintain a standard of living as cost of living increases. And the prayer reads:

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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitions are signed by residents of Saskatchewan. 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 calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that the workers and community-based organizations in Saskatchewan have traditionally been underpaid, and many continue to earn poverty level wages. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these, Mr. Speaker, are folks come from Regina and Lloydminster. 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 Rosthern and Duck Lake. I so present. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for students here in Saskatchewan through the necessary expansion of the graduate retention program. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are students here in Saskatchewan, as well as a number of

individuals who are health care providers, some who have graduate degrees. I so present.

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

And 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 Estevan.

Mother's Day

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend will be a very special one for women across our province as we celebrate Mother's Day. It is a time to thank those who brought us into this world for all their love, work, and sacrifice in this, the most important job in the world.

Mother's Day traditionally falls on the second Sunday in May, the time of year when we see new life emerging all around us in this season of birth and renewal. Mother's Day is the busiest time of year for SaskTel as people across our province call home to speak with their mothers. As our province is growing again, it is important for people to remember where they came from, and days like these remind us to pause and give thanks to the people who are responsible for where we are today.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I am very fortunate to have my mother near. She lives in Estevan in her own home and enjoys relatively good health. I don't visit as often as I probably should. But I know she's watching today, so I'd like to wish her Happy Mother's Day, Mom. I love you.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the hard work, loving care, and advice that mothers provide to all of us, regardless of how old we are. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Fair Access to Automotive Repair Tools and Software

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know our vehicle repairs are becoming more and

more complex, so we need better up-to-date information and technologies. Difficulties in obtaining this information has created significant consumer concern leading to the federal Bill C-273, the right to repair Act.

Brian Masse, MP [Member of Parliament], members of the automotive aftermarket industry, the CAA [Canadian Automobile Association], the Retail Council, and Pollution Probe are all working hard to get this Bill, that ensures auto consumers have the right to repair their own vehicles, past second reading and into committee next Wednesday.

Right to Repair will give fair access to the tools and software that independent auto repairers need to stay in business. It has a direct impact here in our province, with a growing number of vehicles being registered at an all-time high.

Now Canadians are calling on their MPs to support this Bill, a Bill that will keep drivers in our communities more safe, paying competitive repair rates, and that will leave more money in their pockets. Mr. Speaker, our local repair shops have earned the trust of our communities. We know the local repair shop is a real indicator of the strength of our local economies, but more importantly, we entrust these good folks to look after the auto safety for our families and loved ones.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I must add too that this Bill is a Bill that crosses all party lines and a Bill that deserves all our support. So today, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members in joining me to make a phone call or an email this afternoon to your local MP and say let's get Bill C-273 into committee. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Women Entrepreneurs Week

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former reeve of a rural municipality and as a woman cattle rancher, it's my pleasure to stand today and recognize May 4-10 as women entrepreneurship week in Saskatchewan. Women Entrepreneurs Week is an opportunity to celebrate the successes and achievements of Saskatchewan women. Women entrepreneurs are playing an important role in the wide open future of Saskatchewan, and their contributions have made an important impact in making Saskatchewan the strongest economy in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 30 per cent of all Saskatchewan businesses are owned by women, and these businesses employ thousands of people in every community in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, women entrepreneurs are vital to Saskatchewan's economy. They are risk takers who seize opportunities and create ventures that benefit their communities. Their creativity and ingenuity turn challenges into opportunities, innovative ideas into commercial success. They have proven themselves to be extraordinary leaders and role models because of their strong commitment to mentoring and team building.

Mr. Speaker, during women entrepreneurship week but also

every day, we as a government applaud and celebrate their success and those who overcome failure to find greater success. I call on all members to join me in congratulating the great women entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World of Whittail

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to attend the eighth annual World of Whittail dinner. This event was very well planned, with a packed house and many great auction items. The proceeds of this dinner provide the World of Whittail the opportunity to pursue its goals as a non-profit conservation organization.

The World of Whittail supports the conservation of wildlife and outdoor habitat. It promotes ethical and sustainable hunting practices. It enhances hunter-landowner relations, and most importantly, it provides outdoor education for young people. It recognizes that hunters have become essential partners with governing agencies in wildlife management.

This organization was founded by local hunters and conservationists. I would like to recognize the executive of World of Whittail: Joe Warbeck, president; Ronn Wallace; Harold Lang; Don Fenwick; Murray Everett; Bob Koroluk; Len Trevena; Greg Mallett; Gus Janczyszyn; Frank Laurans; and Kent Silzer.

As a fellow hunter, I am thankful for the efforts of World of Whittail and recognize significant value in connecting our young people to our natural environment. Ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in recognizing the executive and supporters of World of Whittail for their meaningful contributions to our province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Campaign Controversy

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the chief of the Flying Dust First Nation is speaking out about the Dwain Lingenfelter phony membership scandal. In today's *StarPhoenix*, Chief Norman says band members are very upset with Dwain Lingenfelter for his campaign signing them up en masse as members of the NDP [New Democratic Party] without their consent or knowledge. He said there are Flying Dust members of all political stripes, plenty of whom would be insulted to be signed up by the NDP. He said, and I quote, "To me he has kind of burnt a bridge here to First Nations . . . I feel very insulted by his campaign strategy."

And like many other people, Chief Norman is questioning how these memberships were paid for, noting that it was the Lingenfelter campaign that paid for these 1,100 memberships.

Mr. Speaker, it's worth noting what we haven't heard in recent days. We haven't heard a word out of the NDP's two northern members who continue to support Dwain Lingenfelter in spite of this tremendous insult to First Nations people. And nowhere in *The StarPhoenix* article does it say that Dwain Lingenfelter has called Chief Norman to offer an explanation or an apology. You would think that's the least he could do after insulting the Flying Dust First Nations in this manner. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Keeping Children Fit

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, a pilot project that will get kids more physically active during their time at school is in the planning stages in my community. Its objective is to reach elementary school children between pre-kindergarten and grade 8. This is a new initiative in Moose Jaw that is seeking to keep children fit.

The pilot project is being led by a partnership of the Five Hills Health Region, the Prairie South School Division, Holy Trinity School Division, Saskatchewan in Motion, and Moose Jaw in Motion. It will target six schools including the Empire Community School, St. Michael School, and École St. Margaret in Moose Jaw over the next two years to work towards sustainable daily physical activity for all students. Children within this age range require a minimum of 60 to 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity everyday for optimal growth and development. It is estimated that only 10 per cent of children and youth are currently meeting this requirement.

Catalyst teams from each of the pilot schools will meet and create an action plan based on In Motion's behavioural change model. Each school's action plan will vary depending on the resources and the space available, but the goal is to ensure that students get 30 extra minutes along with the regular physical education curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members to join me in thanking all those partners involved in this important program and extend our best wishes to the participants. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn.

Campaign Controversy

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it is now day 3 of the search for the missing link. Dwain Lingenfelter is still nowhere to be found, and he's still not answering his cellphone, and he's still not answering questions about his phony membership scandal. Who was the mystery volunteer? How did this one person supposedly sign up 1,100 members on his own? How did he get his hands on \$11,000 in campaign money to pay for these phony memberships? Mr. Speaker, Dwain Lingenfelter doesn't have any good answers to any of these questions, and that's why he's gone into hiding.

Mr. Speaker, last night the NDP was supposed to be meeting to set the terms of reference of their investigation into the Lingenfelter phony membership scandal. Will the NDP be releasing those terms of reference today, and will they commit today to releasing the final report?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have one more question for the NDP. Yens Pedersen has gone so far as to suggest that there might even be criminal activity involved. He has said that all NDP memberships have a spot at the bottom for the member to sign. He said, and I quote, "If someone is signing that on their behalf, it seems to me it is fraud." Mr. Pedersen is a lawyer and a former NDP president, so he should know what he's talking about. So if their investigation finds any evidence of criminal activity as Yens Pedersen is suggesting, will the NDP refer the matter to the police? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Support for Students

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, last fall the Minister of Advanced Education told reporters that he was lifting the freeze on tuition for post-secondary students and implementing what he called a tuition management system. Of course, he never succinctly defined the so-called tuition management system, so students have been worried how they will make ends meet. Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina has approved a 3 per cent increase in tuition for the coming year.

To the minister: is the minister's idea of tuition management managing to make students pay 3 per cent more?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, absolutely delighted to provide an update. Kyle Addison, University of Regina student union president has said today, "The tuition increase was anticipated by the students' union . . . I feel it is a good budget and [I] am excited to see this new year come into action."

Mr. Speaker, Barb Pollock, the vice-president for external relations at the University of Regina says, "We got a generous increase in the provincial operating grant . . ." And, Mr. Speaker, the board Chair, Sue Barber, says, "By watching our expenses in some areas, we are able to provide additional funding to strengthen services for students where there is strong demand."

Mr. Speaker, this is just reflective of the type of support that we're receiving right across the province, given our commitment and dedication to the hard-working students, scholars, and institutions right across our post-secondary

system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, every day we see the Sask Party government ignoring the immediate needs of Saskatchewan students. Students are coping with rising costs for housing, for electricity, for home heating, and, this fall, for car insurance. The Sask Party appears to have a whole lot of management systems in place and the end result of these so-called management systems is the same. Saskatchewan students and their families are paying more and getting less.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party so out of touch with students and their families? Why do they believe that making students pay more is a sign of good management?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to provide an update to the member. And that is, just last Friday I met with the new student executive at the University of Saskatchewan. And while we spoke about many things, being out of touch was not one of them. In fact I only assume that that's reserved for the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, let's just provide, let's just provide some increase as far as \$665 million for institutional support, the \$26.4 million booster shot, the \$25.1 million regarding facility management, the 23.5 million on tuition support, the new student housing complex at the University of Saskatchewan, new student housing in SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] P.A. [Prince Albert] campus. Mr. Speaker, the 18.5 million regarding the graduate retention program, not to mention the \$2.2 million we put towards student loans for the first time since the mid-1990s.

This government is committed to the students, to the scholars, to the institutions to ensure that our post-secondary is among the best in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, educated people and their ideas are the foundation of a modern, knowledge-based economy, but enrolment at the province's universities was already on the decline before this announcement and now students will be forced to pay more.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party squandering the prosperity they inherited and risking the future of our economy with short-sighted decisions like increasing tuition and forcing more debt on students?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, one of the sad legacies of having the members opposite in power was that 35,000 people left the province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that had an obvious effect on our population and enrolments in the post-secondary system.

We saw these coming a decade ago, Mr. Speaker. They sat on their hands. What have we done, Mr. Speaker? We've ensured 15,000-plus people have moved back to Saskatchewan or to Saskatchewan for the first time, Mr. Speaker, through initiatives like the graduate retention program.

What do the members opposite do? They scan the horizon for a potential leader that they can't find, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'll stand on our record any day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon . . . Order. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Support for Unemployed Workers

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party likes to take credit for the economic expansion that began well before the last election, thanks to the NDP. But, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, they're less eager to take responsibility for what's happening under their watch in the real economy — thousands of jobs and families struggling to make ends meet.

Just last week Statistics Canada reported that the number of workers collecting EI [employment insurance] rose by 28 per cent in February over the same period last year. The Petroleum Services Association of Canada forecast a 38 per cent decline in wells drilled in Saskatchewan in 2009. This equals job losses, Mr. Speaker, and job losses in the oil patch will soon spill over into oil field service sectors, resulting in thousands more laid off.

To the minister: when will the Sask Party admit that things in the real economy aren't as rosy as they claim?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, you know, Mr. Speaker — I thank the hon. member for the question — we're not immune to what's going on with respect to the global recession. We have said that consistently, month after month and day after day. The province of Saskatchewan is not going to escape a global recession. There have been layoffs.

We are concerned about those families. We have the Minister of Advanced Education ensuring that ministry staff are deployed immediately after a layoff to link those who have lost their jobs with the jobs that are being created in the province. And on that point I would say this, Mr. Speaker, that while we're not

immune to what's going on, I cannot conceive of a place in North America that I would rather be during this global recession than the province of Saskatchewan which is still growing, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that almost every other province in the dominion is actually moving backwards.

Mr. Speaker, we created 10,000 jobs year over year. Our unemployment rate is lowest in the country and, Mr. Speaker, again the rest of Canada is looking to Saskatchewan to be an economic leader. We're going to work very hard in terms of those displaced workers to continue the great momentum of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I say again, thanks to the foundation laid by the previous NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the job losses in the oil patch are just the latest sign of what's happening in Saskatchewan's real economy . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the real economy where Saskatchewan people live, pay the bills, and raise families. Since December there have been 3,300 jobs lost in Saskatchewan, the majority of them good paying jobs in sectors like potash. And the recent layoffs in the Meadow Lake and elsewhere have brought a number of job losses in the forest industry to over 1,500.

The Sask Party recently announced the so-called rapid response teams to help workers at XL Beef. The opposition is glad to see the government is doing something to help laid off workers, but it begs the question, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: what is the government's definition of rapid response?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that Saskatchewan has a new record, Mr. Speaker, and that is \$804 average weekly earnings, Mr. Speaker. We've seen employment go up.

We know we're not immune from what's going on, so we did establish a rapid response, Mr. Speaker. And what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is, in co-operation, in co-operation with the union at XL Beef in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, our team went out. We're working co-operatively and collaboratively with the union members to ensure that we can transition those people as smoothly as possible.

Our team is in action, Mr. Speaker. It just simply takes a phone

call or an email and they will deploy to other communities across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, this has been going on for quite some time and this is hardly rapid response, given the real economy which has been shedding good paying jobs for months while this government issues news releases saying everything is fine and doing photo ops.

And the Sask Party certainly hasn't been quick on the draw when it comes to the forestry crisis. Workers in Carrot River, Hudson Bay, lost their jobs a year ago. Layoffs were announced last fall in Meadow Lake.

To the minister: where are the rapid response teams to help laid off workers in the forestry, potash, and manufacturing? And why is the Sask Party helping some unemployed workers and not others?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Mines.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly in a number of industries, we've seen some pullback. We are also seeing job numbers that are still very positive in Saskatchewan. Later this day we will see an announcement with respect to Carrot River and Hudson Bay which is going to be very positive for the people in that area.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — I would say, Mr. Speaker, that even though the province is experiencing job losses, the one job loss and the one person that seems to be lost these days is the missing link. Everybody is wondering where the next leader of the NDP is going to come from, Mr. Speaker. And I would dare say that we may not see the missing link return.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, those members would be well to pay attention to the economy of this province and quit worrying about that. They should worry about 2011 when they no longer will be there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said that he'll work with these other . . .

The Speaker: — I ask the member from Prince Albert Carlton to come to order. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said that he'll work with these other industries on request, but it's his responsibility to respond to the jobs crisis. We have no idea what he has done for workers who may be in need of help. Has the government advertised in the communities, many of them rural, who have been affected by these layoffs?

This province, this government hasn't even followed the example of other provinces like the BC [British Columbia] Liberals who are calling on Ottawa to improve EI benefits for unemployed workers — this at a time when the number of people collecting EI in Saskatchewan has increased by 28 per cent.

To the minister: why have they been so slow to respond to this job crisis?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we can talk about the thousands of jobs that are available still in Saskatchewan. We can talk about the progress that's being made.

But the claim that's just been put forward by the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, as far as not undertaking activity — just this morning, Mr. Speaker, I've sent a letter directly to HRSDC [Human Resources and Skills Development Canada], Mr. Speaker, to say please, is there a way that we can ensure that we can get those EI payments moving more quickly within Saskatchewan? If we can be of assistance to do that, please let us know. That letter has already gone out, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to table it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Carbon Sequestration Project

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to welcome the Governor of Montana here, and we understand that in about an hour he and the Premier will be signing a memorandum of understanding respecting a Montana-Saskatchewan carbon sequestration project.

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan deserve, from an open and honest and accountable government, to know the details of this project. Will the Premier make the full MOU [memorandum of understanding] public before signing this project?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I thank the member, I thank the member for the question. First of all, the substance of the MOU has been made very, very public already, both by the Governor of Montana who's been interviewed about this issue in the United

States media, and the project we're working towards together, and of course our government. The minister responsible, myself, we've been also very public about the concept that we are pursuing.

This will be a memorandum of understanding. These are the principles under which we are going to proceed to see if we can put together a world-leading demonstration project in carbon capture, Mr. Speaker. There will be, Mr. Speaker, negotiations that ensue. They'll be transparent. They'll be public.

Mr. Speaker, I would point this out as well. When the previous administration, quite rightly, moved toward the carbon capture initiative in Weyburn, all of the costs were not known. It is new technology, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't possibly have said, neither could EnCana, neither could Royal Dutch Shell or Shell, say here's what the cost will be exactly. It was new technology.

We're going to move forward together though, Mr. Speaker, with more knowledge than any other jurisdiction has because of the leadership position we have. We will report to the public. It'll be transparent. And this province — and I'd argue the state of Montana — will be international leaders in clean coal and carbon capture technology.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We understand from the Governor of Montana through a March 31 Associated Press story that private energy companies will in fact be partnering in this project. On May 5 the Premier said no one, other than Saskatchewan, has put up any cash into this project. There are no private companies involved yet on May 5.

To the Premier: are there private companies partnered in this project, and who are they? Or is his communication with the Governor of Montana less than adequate?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would just say this with respect to the hon. member's question. We're going to work very hard to build partnerships to continue to ensure Saskatchewan is an international leader in clean coal technology and carbon capture sequestration. You know, Malcolm Wilson, the director of the University of Regina's office of energy and the environment, has said many things. He's an international expert in the area. He's working on this project. He said, you know, it's a lot more costly to do nothing than it is to take action now, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

We want to ensure that our economy continues in terms of the momentum, that we have affordable and sustainable energy for future generations. We're going to work to build partnerships with the private sector. But we are going to move forward, Mr. Speaker, and again be a leader in the country. We're going to

continue on this side of the House to focus on carbon sequestration. We'll leave the candidate sequestration to the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House we're going to continue to seek answers to legitimate questions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — On March 26 the federal government . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, on March 26 the federal government committed up to \$30 million to a dormant polygen plant project at Belle Plaine. We know the Montana-Saskatchewan project has suffered a near-death experience recently on the floor of the Montana state legislature. But the Premier has assured us the project is alive and well.

To the Premier: how is it that Saskatchewan can get up to \$30 million from the federal government for a dormant project at Belle Plaine, but he can't get a commitment for any money at all from the same federal government for a project that he claims is alive and well?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know we have to continue to work very hard to get federal dollars into the province. But we are kind of proud of our record already, though there's more work to do. Because not only can we attract funds from the federal government for existing projects — I think we will with respect to the joint initiative with Montana — we're also able to attract some investment for dormant projects that we do hope will continue, obviously after the global recession has eased.

I would say this to the hon. member. The questions they've been asking are reasonable when it comes to the costs. We're going have a very transparent process going forward. What isn't reasonable, I don't think, what we hear from members opposite, is that they're trying to always play both sides of the issue. They're worried, they say, about electrical rates for the future, but they want us to have higher emissions targets which would increase the rates for people of the province, electrical rates for the people of our province.

That member seems to be now opposed to carbon capture and sequestration. The NDP energy and climate change plan from just a little while ago said carbon capture and storage is critical technology; we'll continue to research these technologies and rely on them to capture carbon. Mr. Speaker, that's what they

used to believe. I don't know what they believe today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well let's recap the situation to date. On January 30 this project was announced with a total cost of 170 million — 60 million from the state of Montana, 60 million from Saskatchewan, and 50 million from private investment. March 9, five weeks later, the cost had spiralled to \$250 million and then April 8, four weeks later, the cost became 270 million and the funders changed.

More recently Brady Wiseman, a representative of the Montana state legislature, said, and I quote, "Talk of cost for this project is entirely premature. They're just making it up. They don't know what it's going to cost."

So my question to the Premier is: what is this going to cost Saskatchewan taxpayers? Why is the government signing an MOU when they have absolutely no guarantee made public of any private investment or any commitment for money from the Canadian federal government or the American national government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, that is entirely the point of the MOU. The MOU lays out the position that the province of Saskatchewan and the state of Montana are going to work towards the successful completion of the project. And part of that successful completion will be Obama administration stimulus funding from the Montana side and national government funding from our federal government here in Canada. That's part of what the MOU is all about, Mr. Speaker — moving forward, taking the next step.

Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear about cost to the government. And I would say this with respect to Mr. Wiseman, who I've not yet met and I hope to some day because I think I'd like to tell him a little bit about what has been happening in Saskatchewan for eight years in terms of carbon capture. It is his position that this is all unproven technology. We've been sequestering millions of tonnes of carbon successfully and enhancing oil recovery for eight years. The good news from Saskatchewan is that this technology will work, that we can continue to lead the country, together with partners from other places like the state of Montana.

Mr. Speaker, this government is looking forward to the future. We will move to make sure Saskatchewan's in a leadership position while that party is consumed with internal leadership issues.

The Speaker: — The Premier's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Nutana.

Departure of Deputy Minister

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, on Monday of this week the Premier announced that Garnet Garven, the deputy minister to the Premier, would be leaving. Usually a departure like this is made after the session adjourns. To the Premier: given that Mr. Garven's departure was sudden and unexpected and only 18 months after he left his job as dean of business at the University of Regina, will Mr. Garven be receiving any severance and if so, how much?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm grateful for the service of the former dean of the University of Regina, Business Administration, in serving as a deputy minister — my deputy minister — for the first 18 months of the government and helping with the transition of this new government from that old government, Mr. Speaker, the former government. And I'm grateful for the work he's done.

He's resigned, and so there's not a severance package when there is a resignation. He is going to be pursuing some other exciting academic endeavours, Mr. Speaker, that I think will benefit, frankly, the province of Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions, in terms of public policy development for the country.

But the short answer to the question, to the hon. member, is that there will be no severance.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we're told that Garnet Garven will be going to the University of Regina where he'll be establishing a western branch of the Public Policy Forum.

To the Premier: is his government providing any money for the establishment of the Public Policy Forum branch so that his deputy minister will have a soft landing when he hits the University of Regina? And if they are providing money, how much are they providing?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Public Policy Forum of Canada has in the past received funds from the Government of Saskatchewan, as it has from other provincial governments and the federal government, to do just that — develop the public policy of the country and provide public policy innovation.

There will be, I think, an opportunity for Saskatchewan to be the Western presence for this very auspicious and important Public Policy Forum of Canada. We will be looking at funding

some specific work that Mr. Garven may be involved with — no final decisions have been made there today, Mr. Speaker — not unlike, frankly, what we did with the former deputy minister to the premier. When we took over as a new government, the province had been very well served by a former deputy minister, Dan Perrins, who's also helping with the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership]. We funded at the Johnson-Shoyama institute, we funded a opportunity for Mr. Perrins to continue his public policy leadership.

I think it's an important kind of development and approach to this sort of thing, and provides for a legacy for the province in terms of public policy and also ensures that Western Canada, specifically Saskatchewan, has a leadership role in the national Public Policy Forum of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we know that Dan Perrins was a career civil servant and for the government to sever him, the severance would have been in excess of over \$1 million. In the case of Mr. Garnet Garven, he has been with the province of Saskatchewan for 18 months.

Now 10 days ago, we submitted written questions about contracts that were awarded to Garven & Associates. Three days ago, out of nowhere, the government announced that Garnet Garven resigned his duties as deputy minister to the Premier.

So to the Premier: is there a relationship between the written questions asked about Garven & Associates and Garnet Garven's resignation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier earlier said that a number of contracts would be entered into with this Public Policy Forum.

Now we know that Garnet Garven today is leaving his duties as deputy minister to the Premier without any kind of severance payment. He goes at the end of May. We know that he is going over to the University of Regina to establish this Public Policy Forum. Can the Premier enlighten us as to how Mr. Garven is going to make his living, when the Government of Saskatchewan is not forthcoming in terms of telling us how much is going to go to the Public Policy Forum for Mr. Garven's light landing, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, you know, the hon. member's pursuing an interesting line of questions, including the one just before this, Mr. Speaker, where she makes some pretty serious aspersions, at least indirectly, Mr. Speaker.

We know that Garven & Associates was unrelated to — well related as a brother, but not Garnet Garven that she's speaking about in the question, so that people tuning in understand what she's doing — was hired by that former government to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and these contracts were tendered and won competitively.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a New Democratic Party that is desperately trying to change the channel, Mr. Speaker. They're trying to change the channel from their own record. That member talked about the foundation of the economy they left us. They left us the worst job creation record in Canada — '01 to '07, 35,000 fewer Saskatchewan people.

The reality today is a growing province that continues to lead the country. That's what we're focused on. What they're focused on is the missing link and one of the biggest political scandals, again courtesy of the NDP, this province has ever seen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Ministerial . . . Order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

SaskTel Invests in its Network

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. More great news from SaskTel, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform the House of a very important and positive development for the people of our province. On Tuesday, May 5, I had the pleasure on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan to announce SaskTel's plan to invest \$220 million in its Saskatchewan network.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — SaskTel staff work very hard to improve, expand, and maintain the communication networks that keep Saskatchewan people in touch with one another and the world beyond. Each year SaskTel makes an investment in its network, and earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, I joined with President Robert Watson — and CEO [chief executive officer] — to announce that SaskTel will invest \$220 million in its network.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will agree that SaskTel's investment in its infrastructure is money well spent. It brings world-class communication services to businesses, schools, homes in every region of our province, Mr. Speaker. This infrastructure is what allows productive people in every corner of our province to reach out to each other and to the world to learn, to share, and to do business, Mr. Speaker.

The three major components of the announcement included SaskTel's satellite high-speed Internet service, 55 new cellular towers, and a new universal mobile telecommunications system, UMTS wireless network.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the rural infrastructure program that was announced last fall, SaskTel recently signed an agreement with Barrett Xplore to deliver SaskTel satellite high-speed Internet powered by Xplornet to rural areas that do not have access to SaskTel's other high-speed Internet services. And SaskTel will be launching SaskTel satellite high-speed Internet service next month.

Mr. Speaker, our announcement also included the 55 locations that will receive new cellular service over the next three years. In 2009 SaskTel will spend \$37.6 million to expand and improve its wireless network. That includes the addition of 12 of those 55 new digital cellular sites across the province.

In addition to these initiatives that I've mentioned as part of the rural infrastructure program, SaskTel will be making a very significant technology advancement to ensure its cellular network remains leading edge and becomes compatible with the latest standard of networks around the world.

Over \$172 million in total will be committed to the construction of UMTS, the new standard in cellular technology wireless network worldwide. We are proud that SaskTel has made the commitment to deploy high-speed Internet and cellular service to areas announced this week. Every dollar, Mr. Speaker, invested in SaskTel's network is a dollar invested to provide better service in Saskatchewan to Saskatchewan people. That's why this government, through SaskTel, makes its investment in Saskatchewan's network a very high priority.

I am confident that the work SaskTel has done in the past, and continues to do, will ensure that tomorrow's leading-edge communications, whatever they may be, will always be available to all residents of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate SaskTel and the work it does to successfully maintain a world-class network for the people of Saskatchewan in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[11:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. minister for providing a copy of his statement before the session started today. Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to see these investments in communication and telecommunication efforts right throughout Saskatchewan. We take a great deal of pride that SaskTel has a reputation of providing service to rural and remote areas of this province and has been a leader in providing those services.

A small example is that it's now at least a half a dozen years ago when we had already provided 93 per cent of Saskatchewan's population with cell coverage. That's no comfort for the 7 per cent that weren't covered on it but, Mr.

Speaker, we know that SaskTel has a long history of first-class services.

We also know that no other jurisdiction in the world has been able to provide Internet services in the manner that SaskTel has provided it, where we have literally communities with hundreds of residents that have high-speed Internet coverage today, and we've got suburbs in New York that have no Internet service yet.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that we've been on the vanguard of advances in technologies. And we're pleased that in Saskatchewan this has been able to be accomplished because we have a publicly owned Crown corporation that can act in the interests of Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Speaker, we support the investments that continue to keep us at the vanguard of technology for Saskatchewan people. We will, as we go forward, have some specific and some pointed questions about the relative investments by taxpayers versus investments by SaskTel in support of this business plan. Given the massive manipulation of these types of investments by the Devine administration in the 1980s, and given the close links of the now government to the then administration, the discredited administration, we will be paying attention to those details.

Mr. Speaker, I'll end where I began by saying that we support this enhancement of services to the people of rural and remote Saskatchewan in particular. It is nice to see SaskTel continuing to be absolutely a world leader, the greatest little telco in the world, and that we're pleased with today's announcement. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Forest Industry Development Framework

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I'm very pleased to rise to comment on the government's forest industry development framework that I released earlier.

As all members are aware, forestry is an industry in transition, not just here but all across North America. Forest companies around the world are facing challenges in the global marketplace, and problems of the last few years in the US [United States] housing market have only added to those challenges.

More than 200 forest-related facilities have closed in Canada over the past five years. So clearly the recent hardships our industry and its workers have endured are not unique to Saskatchewan. But out of these hardships a new industry is emerging here and elsewhere — an industry moving from its reliance on commodity production to one delivering market-driven, value-added products. And our government is helping the industry in that transition by using the levers that we have at our disposal in the areas of regulation, taxation, infrastructure, research, and development.

The framework that I released today contains statements of broad policy direction on forest management, economic infrastructure, taxation and regulation, and knowledge and research. It outlines key actions that we intend to take to help industry achieve new growth and development.

Among those actions are a review of sustainable cut levels associated with the forest management agreement areas as they come open for reallocation; preparation of a northern resource development infrastructure plan; encouragement of a new multi-stakeholder FMA [forest management agreement] and forest management certification; and continued research in value-added production, agroforestry, and biomass energy.

The framework also encompasses a number of our recent actions as government on forestry. These include the process we've undertaken to assign the P.A. FMA to a new manager, and our contract with FPInnovations to analyze our value-added market opportunities in association with our industry.

Something this framework does not have, Mr. Speaker, does not have the government making equity investments in or grants to forest companies for their projects. We've been quite clear since we were first elected that we will not risk taxpayers' dollars in that regard. The framework signals our intention to the industry, how we will work with it — and forest area communities as well — how we will work with all forestry stakeholders to ensure that the Saskatchewan industry that emerges from these recent challenges is fully competitive in the global marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, our forestry resource is of a high quality, and our industry has some of the most modern and efficient facilities in the country. Our industry is in a good position to rebound and to emerge even stronger through new products, new energy developments, and full utilization. And I trust that all members will be supportive of the framework of the government's actions to help the industry reposition itself for those assuredly better days ahead. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — I want to thank the minister for providing me with a copy of his statement just before the House. I've said many times in the Chamber that we need a plan. I'm not sure that this is a plan, but it's something.

Mr. Speaker, there have been more than 1,500 jobs lost in the forestry industry. The Sask Party may think that this is rapid response, but it's hardly the rapid response they promised before the last election.

I quote from the speech the Premier gave to the North Saskatchewan business association in December 2005:

At the outset, we will direct Enterprise Saskatchewan to establish sector teams for the economic sectors that business has told me can drive true job creating economic growth in Saskatchewan.

Each team will have one month to prepare its first inventory of the barriers to growth holding that sector

back from reaching its full potential.

We don't need to appoint a forestry task force as the Premier did in the wake of the recent Weyerhaeuser announcement — one will already exist.

These sector teams will report publicly, and the new government will respond publicly with its plans to deal with those barriers to growth within two weeks. That is one to two months for the first action on barriers to growth.

Mr. Speaker, it took them 18 months to come up with a bunch of statements that are, at best, generalities. That's not the one or the two months they promised in the 2005.

I now want to comment on a few of the issues the minister raised. He talked about creating of the new multi-stakeholder FMAs. This might be an improvement over the things were sometimes done in the past. Certainly it's better than giving a single company like Weyerhaeuser a veto over the use of our forest resources even when they're not using them, but we'll all wait to see what happens. After all, it wasn't the NDP who signed over control of a big part of our forestry to Weyerhaeuser and made it impossible for the Saskatchewan people to benefit from our timber resources even when Weyerhaeuser wasn't using them. What the minister's friends in the former Devine government . . . Saskatchewan people own the provincial forest. Mr. Speaker, they deserve to be beneficial fully from these resources. We will see if that's what this government has in mind.

The government talked about a northern resource infrastructure development plan. They also harped on about the fact that they won't be investing in the forestry companies, but the devil is always in the details, Mr. Speaker, with these sort of things. We don't know for example how much they will spend on roads that will in many cases be used primarily or almost exclusively by the forest industry. They talk about value-added products and biomass energy. Again these sound like good things, but we don't know the details.

We don't know for example if they will be using waste wood to generate biomass energy and making use of every part of the tree. We don't know what they mean by value-added products. Do they mean building furniture? Do they mean building affordable housing in northern Saskatchewan from the wood? We need more details, Mr. Speaker. I'll just close . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, order. Order. The member has a right to respond to the ministerial statement without a lot of interference and taking away the ability of other members to hear. The member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — We don't know what they mean by value-added products. Do they mean building furniture? Do they mean building affordable housing in northern Saskatchewan for the wood? We need more details, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the forestry is about more than numbers and a lot of little cuts. It's about people, their families, and their communities. Hundreds of families in

Hudson Bay, Carrot River, Big River, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, La Ronge, and elsewhere are suffering. Those families are struggling to make ends meet, struggling to pay for the rising cost of keeping the lights on or heating their homes. They deserve more than words, Mr. Speaker. They deserve action. Put them back to work as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to questions 371 to 372.

The Speaker: — Questions 371 to 72 tabled. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the Standing Committee on Human Services to discuss education issues, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The minister has ordered 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 House stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:14.]

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Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Provincial Secretary

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Minister Responsible for Capital City Commission