

EVENING SITTING

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 11 — Development of the Forestry Industry

The Speaker: — Order. Debate resumes on the private members' motion moved by the member for Cumberland and seconded by the member for Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to join with my colleagues to support the motion that's congratulatory to the forest industry for making great progress in creating thousands of jobs and attracting new investments of nearly \$1 billion in the last three years.

This strategy that has been developed with the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker, is all about partnership. And as the member opposite would have said, it's not taking credit for but congratulating the forestry industry for all of their hard work.

Now I listened — and I hoped they didn't — to the member from Carrot River give his speech about the gloom and doom that he sees in Saskatchewan because certainly it would not follow through with the intent of the ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) report and the people that came before us and said it's time that we all up our attitude, that they're looking to leaders to be positive and to attract investment in this province. And that certainly would not be the way to do it, Mr. Speaker. In any silver cloud, you can always trust that the Saskatchewan Party can find a dark and gloomy lining. You find, Mr. Speaker, that leadership requires . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I hear an opposition that may be coming to the ACRE point of view and our point of view, that you should up your attitude. They even noticed that there was sunshine outdoors, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — I want to say though that people are looking to leadership to take pride in what is happening and to tell others where the opportunities are and the opportunities that lie in Saskatchewan.

So I ask them to say, do you pass the test? If there was someone who was visiting Saskatchewan and turned on their television, and had just happened to be listening to the legislative channel, Mr. Speaker, would they hear the positive opportunities available in Saskatchewan, or would they hear the gloom and doom and want to stay far away from this province, thanks to the leadership provided by the members opposite.

Will people rush to invest in this province? Yes, Mr. Speaker, if they listen to the strategies that are available and the *Partnership for Prosperity*, there are those who are investing and want to remain investors in the province and particularly in the forestry industry.

So look on the bright side. It was a little more positive from the

member from Saskatchewan Rivers, so I listened probably more carefully than maybe many others did in the House this afternoon to how the forestry industry affects his community because it's very interesting to learn from members where they have an industry that is active and alive in their area. And he did talk about many, many things that are happening there.

But I was trying to figure out, between that member and the member from Carrot River, what would their strategy be? Or what would they do differently than the government has done to spark growth and creativity and opportunity for forestry in this province? And it was a bit convoluted, sometimes mind-numbing, but I did pick out pieces of it. And they said that government should not invest, that the private investors would do it all.

Well we know, Mr. Speaker, that many of the communities out there, particularly in northern Saskatchewan, without the government having a role to play and some investment through CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and other organizations that have some public monies involved in them, there would not be some of those opportunities.

So I want to read *Hansard* and see what they're saying about . . . let's not invest any public money, any further public money in forestry, that somehow this is all going to just happen. And that's of an interest to me because I know all of the educational opportunities that are now available for people who want to be employed in the forestry industry, particularly in post-secondary education and on-the-job training and many, many opportunities that are out there through the partnerships we form with the corporate sector and with our public education system to make sure there are people who are ready to work in the forestry industry as it grows in the province.

So I don't know how that's accomplished when you freeze education funding. So I don't know what kind of cornerstone forestry industry you have when you have no public investment, you have no public education for jobs and training in that environment.

And then I heard that somehow the taxes that they gain from that sector are going to pay for some of the things that happen in their communities that stand for a good quality of life. Well the next breath, the member opposite said, but we're not going to tax this industry. They're good corporate citizens and they'll do this out of the kindness of their hearts so we're going to decrease taxes. We're not going to collect taxes, and somehow in this industry that out of the goodness of the corporate heart there'll be a commitment to the quality of life everywhere throughout the communities.

Now economic development, Mr. Speaker — I'm not sure that that's a way that the forestry industry would see stability and growth there, and I don't see somehow where they would gather that the members opposite are somehow the guardians of the forestry industry for this province.

So to the bright side, Mr. Speaker. Let's look at the bright side of this. If you look at a map, and when you see in the '80s that there were maybe one or two players involved in forestry in northern Saskatchewan and had somehow negotiated large

tracts of land, that didn't allow for the investment that the members opposite talked about until about the year 2002.

So in 1997 — I'm looking at a map of northern Saskatchewan and what do I see? There's a few companies who are involved. There's about four major players: Mistik's up there, Weyerhaeuser, Pasquia/Porcupine, and L & M Wood Products. There was an opportunity; we had an opportunity to work, as I said, in partnership with those groups but with local communities to see how we could get more involvement.

And what do we see today? Now in 2002, when you look at that same map, you've got Mistik, Weyerhaeuser, Pasquia/Porcupine, L & M Wood Products, but you've got Kitsaki-Zelensky. You've got North West Communities involved. You've got the Mee-Toos. You've got the Turnor block with two tracts of land. You're now talking with people for development in those areas. So what a change, what a change in five years where we see that same map and it now includes investments and jobs and forestry stewardship from many of the partnerships that we've developed with these organizations.

The activity there is to be commended and congratulated and it's something that from time to time this Assembly on all sides of the House should step back and say, let's celebrate the activity and the growth and development in northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — So I want to highlight now how does partnership work. In the members opposite talking that there were threads and bits of pieces, but they didn't seem to be able to pull together how does this strategy develop, how do we get people involved, how do we look at all sides of the issue and get advisory committees that talk about environmental stewardship and sustainability as well?

And one of the ways we do that in forestry projects is to have land use planning, Mr. Speaker, and we have people who have come together in this kind of a partnership. And in several areas across the North, our Environment department and northern people are working together to set objectives for land and resource use.

Land use plans are underway for Pinehouse-Dipper, North Central, Amusatik, and Athabasca areas. Some are just beginning, Mr. Speaker, but we're seeing some results. And there are others who have worked for a long time together and they're nearly completing their land use strategies and plans. Each one of those plans includes a very important role for area residents. And in the decision making, there is the local and the regional advisory committees.

While I listened for over an hour to a member opposite who's involved in that community, and he doesn't have any knowledge of the land use committees at work in those areas. Now how could you say you're supporting that industry — you have knowledge of it — and somehow not acknowledge that right there with people, they're working together with government, with industry, with the local residents to develop their land use strategies and plans.

So we will do what was mentioned by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers — make sure sustainable development and economic development opportunities occur so we have generations in the future who are enjoying the forest as well, because there is planting and replanting that must occur. There is good stewardship in the way that the forests are harvested, Mr. Speaker, and that is well underway and in many areas completed — not acknowledged or celebrated by the members opposite, but it's there.

The wood allocations. Again, enhanced wood allocations for northerners means more involvement and more growth. Nearly three years ago it was determined that Weyerhaeuser's forest management agreement included more wood than the company would use. So under the terms of the FMA (forest management agreement), the company gave up surplus wood from its northernmost areas to allow for others to become actively involved and develop this industry. This wood was reallocated to partnerships, partnerships involving northern communities and First Nations.

And again the members opposite didn't seem to know that right in their backyard those kinds of partnerships are underway and happening, Mr. Speaker.

More recently a similar review of the Mistik FMA was conducted and the results? A larger wood allocation for the community-based partnership, North West Communities Wood Products, the opportunity for NWC (North West Communities) to own a share in the major oriented strand board development and the Turnor blocks in the northern areas available for local economic development opportunities. And when you look at the map you can see those opportunities springing up and happening.

From the beginning the forestry sector . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Carrot River Valley on his feet?

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Request leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for allowing me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to and through you to all members of the Assembly, 51 students. We have 27 students from Bjorkdale, Saskatchewan, and there they are, an enthusiastic group. And we also have with us this evening, Mr. Speaker, 24 students from Sechelt, British Columbia.

And the students from Sechelt are here on an exchange program with Bjorkdale School. Bjorkdale has been twinned with Chateleux Secondary School's Jazz Concert Band through the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada program. This program runs through a federal grant and fosters school students learning about different regions of Canada.

Bjorkdale School was in BC (British Columbia) in April and Chatelech students will be here in Saskatchewan for about a week.

We have with us as well, teachers from Bjorkdale, Theresa McHugh, Penny Cason; and from Chatelech Secondary School, we have Karin Tigert, Bob Benmore, Janet Bennie; and we have a chaperone, Bonnie Hoffus.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is indeed a pleasure to have both groups, but it's particularly a pleasure to have a group from BC here on an exchange program and I know that Bjorkdale has been very honoured to host these students. So I would ask everyone to join with me in welcoming both the students from Bjorkdale and the students from British Columbia.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Prince Albert Northcote on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in terms of welcoming the students from Bjorkdale, as well the exchange students from British Columbia.

We're debating tonight a resolution that speaks to \$1 billion of new investment in forestry in this province, which is an industry the students from British Columbia will I'm sure be very well acquainted with. It's an industry that's under a little bit of pressure right now, but we're going to get that fixed here in Canada and the jobs in the forestry industry are going to continue to serve British Columbia and Saskatchewan students well.

So welcome here and on behalf of the government it's good to see you guys.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 11 — Development of the Forestry Industry (continued)

Ms. Hamilton: — Well, Mr. Speaker, leaving off where our House Leader stopped in his introduction, it was mentioned that there are issues with softwood lumber, and it's a forestry industry in the sector that works with government here, and I'm sure in the province of British Columbia and the province of Ontario to have a strong voice in Canada to fight the softwood lumber dispute. Saskatchewan's working with those provinces and the federal government to deal with challenges from the taxes imposed from the US (United States) on the imports of Canadian lumber.

So the US is contending that the stumpage charged by government in Canada for Crown timber is so low that it amounts to government assistance in this industry, and they also

say that selling lumber in the US is at a loss and it's harming the American lumber sellers, a practice called dumping. Of course we all disagree with this. And there's a strong voice that's being taken from Saskatchewan, from British Columbia, to fight this, to fight the claims that the Americans have here.

The members opposite talk about well the marketplace will dictate and the Americans look at that and they say yes they are a free enterprise state and want to operate in that manner. But really, Mr. Speaker, if this is how they look at the industry here and the grains and so on, we've got a lot to fight when we talk about let the marketplace dictate because it's not doing it for this issue in Saskatchewan.

The comparison with the United States, the rates ignore the costs of doing business here. Long-term planning via forestation, environmental assessment, and monitoring are just a few of the issues that we tackle here that we work on and that cost to develop our lumber industries and softwoods. Part of the American response to the issue has been a 19.3 per cent duty and more recently a 12.6 per cent anti-dumping duty on the imports of Canadian softwood lumber. These costs have meant very difficult times, and I heard that both in the voice of the speaker from Saskatchewan Rivers and Carrot River that this means some difficult times for the Canadian lumber industry.

(19:15)

But with a strategy and with the kinds of plans that we've set forward, today the motion before us celebrates that we have the investment — \$1 billion investment in the last three years in the forestry industry in Saskatchewan.

We're going to need a lot of support and we're going to take this dispute to the World Trade Organization. It could take up to about 18 months but I think we'll get some good resolve to this issue and work through and up the other side.

So developing a partnership and celebrating success. The industry, someone talked about, didn't know where they stand or that there's convoluted regulations. I think the members should look at those regulations that are in place because they've been developed in partnership and they draw that fine balance between wanting to develop economic growth, jobs to have people employed in that industry and the economy, and the balance that we talk about in preserving our natural resources for the next generation as well.

Our commitment as a government to the industry is to review the regulations in place and yes, where there is duplication or if there are regulations that are outdated and don't make sense to modern industry, those will be either deleted or amended to make certain that they support this remarkable growth in the forestry sector in Saskatchewan.

All along in partnership we've been working with the forestry sector to expand using these principles. Sustainable forest management, a diversified industry with the emphasis on producing higher value products. We take pride in the way that in Saskatchewan we come together and we develop the higher valued product and this is no different.

Effective use of the province's wood supply, and as I talked

about the way that the companies have come together and the organizations to look at how wood supply could be allocated and the allocation and how they're utilized. And direct participation of Aboriginal northern communities in the new forest businesses. And we hear from them every day that they're appreciative that they're actively involved in the development of the industry.

So let's look at the project update for a moment, Mr. Speaker, from this area of the province. You've got Kitsaki-Zelensky — the partnership is currently running an existing sawmill in La Ronge. Because of its substantial customer base in the United States, the company has been negatively affected by the softwood lumber dispute. But despite the current difficult circumstances, the company continues to work toward a term supply licence — a first step towards a forest management agreement, an FMA.

Mee-Toos Forest Products. In spite of the withdrawal of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation's original industrial partner, a substantial opportunity in the region remains. The new company has approved environmental impact assessment. They've got that in place, they've worked towards that and they've got that there. And a great deal of work has been completed towards finalizing the long-term lumber supply. The company plans to harvest 65,000 cubic metres of wood this winter.

Northwest region. OSB (oriented strand board) mill. Tolko Industries, in partnership with Meadow Lake Tribal Council, North West Communities Wood Products, and Crown Investments Corporation is moving ahead with plans to build a \$200 million oriented strand board mill in northwest Saskatchewan.

Partnership, Mr. Speaker. The site selection phase is now completed for this mill. And the work needs to get an environmental approval — which is reasonable and they agree — for the specific site and the facility and that's now underway. And they are working together with our Saskatchewan Environment and others to make sure that they meet all the environmental processes for the site that will be selected. And we expect that this spring construction will now be underway.

Green Lake. The facility owned by Green Lake Metis Wood Products is in the process of rebuilding following a fire last year. Initially the first goal is to get a new sawmill and log sorter up and running by March 2002, this year. After that plans are in place to build drying, planing, and distribution facilities.

Buffalo Narrows and Pinehouse Lake post plant. Because of the abundance of small diameter wood in that area, post plants are being considered for both Pinehouse Lake and Buffalo Narrows. Discussions are underway between North West Communities Wood Products and potential partners as well as local contractors. And they will receive annual allocations for wood harvesting to create local jobs.

To hear the member from Saskatchewan Rivers this afternoon, you would think that no one has been talking to anyone locally or that there are not opportunities for the smaller local contractors, and yet I've already talked about two or three examples of where that's already underway and occurring.

Again, up the attitude. Let's talk about the positive things that are happening in this province. Let's have people turn on their television, listen to the leaders and say, come to Saskatchewan, it's a good place to invest. And the people that are here take a pride in the business that they operate and want to stay here and grow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Beauval. North West Communities Wood Products is looking for a suitable industrial partner for its planned Beauval saw mill project — a search made much more challenging by the softwood lumber dispute of course. But long-term plans include a diversified value-added industry such as prefab housing in association with other area developments.

Now there's an opportunity. We should be selling that to other people and getting industrial partners up there to get involved because it's happening up there. And it's happening because of the hard work of the forestry sector.

La Loche, two northern timber supply areas referred to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Why is the member for Saskatoon Southeast on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Permission to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm so pleased you've given me leave to introduce guests because I have tonight in the Speaker's gallery two very special guests. Brent Thompson is from Thunder Bay, Ontario. He is the vice-president of Wardrop Engineering. And seated with him as well is Doug Kramble who is in Saskatoon, is a constituent of mine. He is also with Wardrop Engineering.

Now Mr. Kramble came originally to Saskatoon from Winnipeg via Calgary and is very, very high on this province. And Mr. Thompson who is here this evening exploring business development with the mining sector is also equally enthusiastic about the great opportunities here in Saskatchewan.

They tell me that the engineering graduates from both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan are second to none all across this great continent. And they also have an extremely positive attitude about Saskatchewan and really wish that all people of Saskatchewan could see ourselves as other people see us — so optimistic.

So I would ask all members to welcome Mr. Kramble and Mr. Thompson from Wardrop Engineering.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 11 — Development of the Forestry Industry (continued)

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had an opportunity to work with Mr. Kramble when I was minister of Sask Property Management and I know of the enthusiasm that they approach our . . . Saskatchewan and our communities.

La Loche — let's go back to the area, northern timber supply areas referred to as the Turnor blocks. And they will form the basis for forestry economic development for this area. As well, 10,000 cubic metres per year from the Mistik licence area have been allocated to La Loche.

The government and the community are committed to work together towards a long-term wood allocation for the community and building regional partnerships. Current efforts are focused on doing an inventory of the forests so good forest management decisions can be made. A comprehensive inventory is needed before any further allocations can take place. This will occur. It will occur in partnerships. And when we talk about working with people in northern Saskatchewan in the areas to make sure sustainable development occurs, of course we want the comprehensive inventory so we can make those decisions based on comprehensive information.

North West inventory project. Before the forest can be harvested, information is needed about how much wood is available for harvest, where, and in what form. The forest industry forms the basis for deciding where and how much harvesting can take place in a sustainable way.

Through the summer and fall of last year fieldwork was done by northern residents to get more complete information, and also giving participants hands-on experience in the science of forest management.

Well when you see all of those companies and the corporations that are involved in the forestry sector that are creating the jobs, attracting new investment of nearly \$1 billion over the last three years, you know that where there's that kind of activity, groups are going to come here and want to be active and involved in the partnership. And one such group is the Forest Industry Suppliers and Logging Association that had their inaugural lunch kickoff earlier this month, May 6.

They chose P.A. (Prince Albert) as a place to expand their operations and establish an office in Prince Albert. With their extensive background in supplying and servicing the forest industry, I'm certain that FISLA (Forest Industry Suppliers and Logging Association) will be a valuable resource for Saskatchewan companies looking to take advantage of opportunities in our rapidly expanding forestry sector.

In fact, in the past three years government and industry teamed up to announce the major expansion of Saskatchewan's forest sector, with tremendous growth and opportunities, goals that were set and have been surpassed.

Mr. Speaker, it's with a great sense of pride, with a positive attitude, a reaching out to investors who want to be in partnership with us in developing the forestry industry, but also in being good environmental stewards of the natural resources that we have in abundance in Saskatchewan, that I support the motion that has been placed before us today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to stand in the House and talk about an industry that we have in the province of Saskatchewan that could be and should be a vital industry to the province, a growing industry to the province. But unfortunately under the present government that we have, this NDP (New Democratic Party) government, it's not.

I was listening to the comments put forth by the member from Regina Wascana, and in her remarks she was saying about how wonderful things were being done in the North with the Aboriginal people, and how the positive things are working for them, and how the forestry industry is looking very positive up there.

And I would like for her or all the members from the other side to actually go to the North and talk to the people up there, sit down and talk to them. Because I guarantee if they went up to the North and talked to the people and told them that the forestry industry in the province of Saskatchewan is booming and growing good, they'd get something like I just got here now.

The member from Regina Wascana was also saying that they've looked at positives up in the North where the Aboriginal people work with the government to create new jobs and create new industry. And they've also come out with the fact that the government in the 1999 budget said that they were going to create 10,000 jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I remember distinctly the member from Regina — or not from Regina, from Prince Albert — saying the same thing when he did his member statement, that they've created 10,000 jobs in the province of Saskatchewan and spent over \$1 billion. Well they may have spent close to \$1 billion but where are the 10,000 jobs? When they go from the year 1999 to now, that's a far cry from 10,000 jobs.

Just some statistics, Mr. Speaker, that I've dug up. In late fall of 2001 there was 70 jobs lost at Carrier, there was 50 jobs lost at Zelensky Brothers, there was some 300 jobs lost at Weyerhaeuser, there was 110 jobs lost at Carrot River, and Weyerhaeuser also were cutting back their third shift at the Big River mill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, common sense would kick in and when these kind of operations are losing people, in other words they've had to cut back on their jobs, it would tell you that they are not creating jobs, that they're losing jobs. And yet the member from Prince Albert says we're creating 10,000 jobs. In fact he also went on to say he's darn near got it complete. They darn near completed 10,000 jobs.

Well I say to the member from Prince Albert, and I say to all members, go up to the North, go to where the forestry people are, where the forestry business people are, and tell them that we've created 10,000 jobs. And they'll tell you point blank you've got your head in the sand because that's exactly the truth.

Now I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not going to stand

up for the government, but the embargo between Canada and the United States over the softwood lumber industry has definitely hurt the province of Saskatchewan. They have. But to stand up in the House and say that they created 10,000 jobs in the last two and a half years is bogus. It is. The people in the North will tell you the same thing that it's bogus. They're not there.

(19:30)

In the last two and a half years you may . . . and you can take credit for some jobs at the Big River Weyerhaeuser mill. They built on to the Big River Weyerhaeuser mill. But you got to remember also, Mr. Speaker, that it wasn't just the government that got those jobs because they just put a portion of money in there. What about Weyerhaeuser? What about the owner of the Weyerhaeuser mill? They were the people that created the jobs, not the government.

The government can stand up and say what they've done and done a good thing of it but they haven't done it. They can take credit for creating a little bit of the jobs that Weyerhaeuser did, but that is it. And those few jobs that they created is a far cry from 10,000 jobs.

There's a member up in the P.A. district and he wrote a letter. And I took a copy of this letter; he sent one to me. And it says:

NDP promised 10,000 jobs in forestry sector.

And this is what he says:

Several reasons for forestry jobs not appearing in Saskatchewan.

Now it is a lengthy letter but he's got some good stuff and I just want to read some of it, Mr. Speaker.

Now the member from Regina somewhere anyway, he was saying that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Elphinstone, right. He was saying is this a Sask Party member? By the comments from this letter I'm sure he's a Sask Party member because he knows what we're going to do when we get into power some day and that time is coming pretty soon.

Well it starts off, Mr. Speaker:

I've been logging since I was 14 years old — I'm now 43.

Well actually, you know, I could fit this category. Well not quite.

A new skidder 535 Cat is about \$325,000, then you need a delimber worth . . . (300 to 400,000) because (of) the lawmakers — in creating 10,000 new jobs in forestry — changed the workers' compensation laws to prevent people from realistically getting jobs and contracts in . . . (this) province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is so true. To the smaller operators in the province, they cannot get jobs for the simple reason they can't get wood contracts. Why can't they get wood contracts? Because the government is saying they can't have them.

That's why there's no job creation. That's why it's bogus for the minister from Economic Development, the member from P.A. to stand up and say, hey we created 10,000 jobs. Where? Where?

The member from P.A. also goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

If you have power saws, falling and delimiting it would be about . . . 20,000 for a couple of people to be insured, however, if you are mechanically logging you only pay about . . . 7,000 a year and get back . . . 3,000 to \$4,000 a year if you work injury free.

That's where the legislation in this province has gone haywire.

(The) legislation is taking away any profit you might make (that) will lower (your) expenses.

In Alberta, and I know that members don't like us talking about Alberta — they hate that when we start talking about Alberta.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Regina Qu'Appelle on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Request leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and members. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and to members of this House, friends who are here today — Larry Hubbard, with his mother and father.

Larry is in Regina today on a Justice of the Peace training course. And he is the RM (rural municipality) administrator for the RM of Rudy and for the town of Outlook. We met on a number of occasions to talk about the highways networks in that area, and I appreciated Larry's insights during that time. His parents, Garry and Alice Hubbard, are from Avonlea. They are retired farmers.

And I would just like all members to join with me in welcoming them to the House this evening, and to let them know that it's . . . a relative of Alice's is in one of the paintings downstairs, an RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officer.

And so we welcome you to this House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before we carry on, I just want to point to members, bring to members' attention the example that has been set by the member from Regina Qu'Appelle as the way to do introductions, without involving any members of the . . . any guests of the Assembly in the debate of the Assembly. And I thank him very much as an example.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 11 — Development of the Forestry Industry (continued)

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome Larry Hubbard to the Assembly today, and I hope he enjoys the proceedings. Hopefully my rant will not sound like a question period. But welcome, Larry, to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying about the member . . . or the gentleman from Prince Albert and his letter that was written to the paper regarding forestry problems in Saskatchewan. And I was just talking about Alberta, and I know that members opposite, they do not like us talking about Alberta. But the member that writes this letter says:

In Alberta you now must have a power saw license, (you have to) take a two-day course and spend \$280 or you can't even operate a power saw. Because of workers' compensation laws (the legislating preventive measure to stop successful small business in the province in forestry in favour of wealthy people), you must also have a buncher worth about . . . 375,000. So don't even think you can start logging without about \$1.5 million. Alternatively you could purchase worn out equipment with real high over-head costs and be plagued with mechanical failure and high repair bills. Some pumps are worth \$40,000 (in) . . . hydraulic systems (alone).

The point I think this member wants to bring forth, Mr. Speaker, is that our legislative laws that we have in place is contributing to everything goes bigger. If it's not big, it's not going to work.

Well in Alberta they use chainsaws and it still works. The problem with using . . . or the real asset about using chainsaws is you have more people working in the forestry industry and that would bring your numbers up. And to the member from Prince Albert, that would gain you your 10,000 jobs. But relating everything to bigger and bigger and bigger is not always better, Mr. Speaker.

The member also goes on to say:

But don't expect you'll find good experienced men to work here in Saskatchewan — the wages are too low. You can work your butt off and take home . . . 2,400 to \$3,500 a month. In Alberta you can earn \$7,000 to \$8,000 a month. Contractors here don't pay overtime after eight hours . . . most employers want you for (is) 15 to \$20 an hour. You take home about \$2,000 a month more in Alberta than here so who wants to work here.

And I listen to the members opposite talk when I was reading this about doom and gloom, always doom and gloom. Well, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, actually go out to the forestry industry in the North and talk to the people. You know the members are always saying we should up our attitude. Well maybe it's time the government upped theirs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard the member from Regina Elphinstone say that we should up our attitude and that we should go out into the forestry and see what positive people are talking about. Well if everything in the forestry industry in the North is working so well, why don't they set up another Crown?

They're so famous about setting up Crowns. If they set up another Crown in the forestry industry, at least it would be in Saskatchewan. It wouldn't be in Australia or Chile or somewhere else where they're now creating jobs somewhere else; it would be right here in Saskatchewan. So set up a Crown.

Maybe I shouldn't be giving them another idea but, on another note, Mr. Speaker:

. . . the forestry companies are cutting trees (that are) too small and not benefiting from the growing time. A tree six to eight inches in diameter is probably 80 years old and if thinned out, either mechanically or naturally, the forests would yield higher volumes. After 80 years, trees can put on one to 1.5 inches in diameter annually, or two to three inches a year once established in old growth trees. Most large trees, 20 inches (or) . . . bigger, are probably 150 years old. Nobody can grow trees in 20 to 60 years in Saskatchewan, and I sure wouldn't want to work there with a piece (of inoperational equipment) . . .

Weyerhaeuser was throwing away trees that (were) . . . less than 16-foot long. But ever since the new technology in forestry has taken over, the amount of waste is in the tons. We used to log only in the winter and take trees down to the size of my little finger on the tops. Now trees are cut off at 3.5 to 4.5 inches on the tops. The tops of sawlogs, at 5.5 inches used to be 16 inches long, go to pulpwood (to) . . . be 10 per cent of the overall cut. Now with lower pulpwood prices, about five to 10 per cent of the volume is thrown away over mechanical logging practices due to lower prices and lower technology practices.

A lot of lower prices I believe are caused by cheap Brazil wood where low wages and low environmental standards exist in South America due to the global economy and corporate profit over the past 10 to 15 years. The government should stop legislating small business with workers' compensation laws and allow more waste with new technology.

That ends the letter that this member wrote, Mr. Speaker, and it's a good letter. One of the things that's causing our problems in the forestry industry is legislative labour laws. It's hurting not only all of Saskatchewan but especially in the logging industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my other remarks I was saying about Carrier, and Carrier had to cut 70 jobs. And I'd just like to read a couple of things out of the paper from the *P.A. Herald* regarding Carrier. And it says, and I quote:

"A large helping of tariffs with a big piece of no wood supply led to the decision of layoffs employees at Carrier Lumber operations in Prince Albert," the company's president said.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't only the tariff that caused the problem, it was the fact that they had no wood. They didn't have any wood. The reason why they didn't have any wood is they couldn't get any wood from the FMAs. They didn't have a wood. There is only two FMAs in the province of Saskatchewan, and those are two big ones. In fact they have

about 95 per cent of the wood allocated to them, and that is Weyerhaeuser and Mistik.

Now it's okay to have those two big FMAs in the province of Saskatchewan, but the thing of it is there has to be somebody — which should be the government — realize that in order to create forestry jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, in order to create wealth and prosperity in the province of Saskatchewan there has to be smaller operations of loggers having the right to get a supply of wood in their areas to harvest.

And evidently it's not working, Mr. Speaker, because the smaller wood producers are falling by the wayside. And what are they doing? They're moving out of the province.

You know it's ironic, Mr. Speaker, when you look at Alberta. Our cattle go to Alberta, our grain goes to Alberta, our young kids go to Alberta. And you know something, Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the wind was blowing from the east and it was blowing very strong, and our dirt was going to the province of Alberta. And now our wood people are going to the province of Alberta.

So I know the members opposite don't like us talking about Alberta, but they're getting all our wealth. All our wealth that should be staying in the province of Saskatchewan is all going west to Alberta. They're the ones that's benefiting.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a short time ago — just about two weeks ago — we were talking about the ag problem that we had in the province and that the Bill that the United States had imposed on the province of Saskatchewan. And you know something, it tied in at the perfect time with the embargo between Canada and the United States and the problem that we had with the softwood lumber industry.

Well the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Rosetown-Biggar, proposed a motion in this legislature to the Premier that we would have Manitoba, Alberta, and BC come to the province of Saskatchewan, and come right here to Regina and talk about the ag problems that we have on the Prairies, but also to make sure the Premier of BC came so we could talk about the softwood lumber problems, because we have those problems in the province of Saskatchewan also.

Just because the accord was signed some years ago between BC, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec doesn't mean to say that Saskatchewan doesn't have a stake. We do have a stake. So when the member from Rosetown-Biggar proposed that the Premier invite the Premier from BC to come, it was a great motion.

And I don't understand why the Premier never invited him. I would like the members opposite — one of them, or even the Premier — to stand up and say why they didn't invite the Premier from BC so that we could discuss softwood lumber industries. But they never.

(19:45)

So as it went through, all we talked about was ag. But there's also another problem and that is the softwood lumber. And if we could've got the four Western provinces together, Mr.

Speaker — BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba — got them together, you know we would've had a stronger voice, a stronger front to go down east and say, look, we're united to bring the softwood industry to its halt. We could've put more pressure on the ministers from Ottawa and it would've helped. It's not going to solve the problem, but it definitely would've helped.

But the Premier wouldn't even invite the BC Premier here. And I don't understand why. Here we have a problem in Saskatchewan that's causing heartaches to people in the province, to all forestry people, and the Premier doesn't do anything with the forestry industry. But yet his member from Prince Albert, the member for Economic Development, stands up and says everything is wonderful in the forestry industry. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is not and it hasn't been for some time. In fact it hasn't been for some time since this NDP took over government back in the early '90s.

And to a point on that I just want to bring up to the members opposite, the chief from La Ronge, which his name is Harry Cook, and everybody knows Harry Cook. Harry Cook is a wonderful chief from La Ronge. He's also a very, very smart man. He understands the problems in the North, especially in the forestry industry. And talking to him, he said there is so much government red tape in getting things done with the government that he decided to go on his own. And that's why Mr. Harry Cook, the chief of La Ronge, has done so well for the people of the North in La Ronge. Everybody that you listen to or talk to and listen to Harry Cook can understand where he's coming from and what he's done with the North. And I know even the member from Melville knows this gentleman. He's a fine gentleman who's done a lot of work. And it's amazing what you can do when you don't have the government in your face. You know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — You know, that member up in the North, Harry Cook, has done a wonderful job with the forestry industry. He's given people in the North jobs. He's given them a sense of reality, a sense of worth in this province. And it's all because he's done it without the government help. He just said to heck with the government, we're going to do it on his own.

In fact, you know, Mr. Speaker, it kind of reminds me of the word privatization or something like that. Oh no, that's another bad word that we on this side here don't want to use. We don't want to use Alberta; we don't want to use privatization.

But then what would the members opposite know about privatization? Has any of the members been in private business for themselves? I remember asking this question here a short time ago, Mr. Speaker, and there was one hand went up — one hand out of all the members on that side said that they were in private business for themselves — one hand. And that goes to show just how they're governing. And that's why the province of Saskatchewan is going backwards. And that's why the . . . we up here always bring out the doom and gloom as they so-called say. But if there's nothing more than doom and gloom, then why don't they bring us up something to cheer about? They don't have anything to cheer about, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I would like to remind the member that the topic under discussion here is the forest industry and the jobs that are being created, and I'd ask the member to relate to that topic.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try and bring it back to forests. It is kind of tied in you know, because the doom and gloom with everything else in the province is kind of like the doom and gloom in the forestry. And the doom and gloom is brought about not by the members on this side, but by the members from that side, Mr. Speaker. So when they stand in the House talking about the doom and gloom, they are talking like they're talking in the mirror. They're talking about themselves.

If they want to get away from the doom and gloom, then do something positive for this province. Do something positive for the people in this province. Do something positive for the northern people that need the jobs so badly. That's what we need in this province, not the doom and gloom that the members opposite are bringing about.

Mr. Speaker, the motion that was put forth was a motion that says all the good things that's happening in the province of Saskatchewan in the forestry.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say to the members, get on the bus, put the wheels back on the bus, and take another trip and go north and talk to the people in the North and see what they say about the doom and gloom and all the positive things you guys are doing for the forestry industry. Because it's not working, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into this debate tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I've spent the afternoon and some time this evening listening to what the members opposite have to say. And I will tell you that I am surprised by the ignorance of some of the members in terms of what is happening in this province of ours, in terms of the type of investment we're looking at, in terms of the growth that we are seeing, in terms of jobs, and the sound forest management that this government is undertaking.

And I look forward tonight to spending a little bit of time talking about some of the things that this government is doing to grow jobs, to create investment opportunities, and to help find opportunities in the communities that those members opposite claim to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very interesting that, as we listen tonight, and as we heard this afternoon, a long list of woe-is-me complaints from the members opposite.

I listened for an hour to the member for Sask Rivers who every second sentence repeated what he had just said, throughout it all talking about very much the investment that was being made in the communities and then saying, oh but the government's not

doing enough. Saying, oh look at the good work the Zelensky Brothers do. But you know what, the government's not doing enough. Oh look at the good stuff that's going on in Meadow Lake. But you know what? The government's not doing enough.

And what I find interesting is that they use as an example the investment and the support given by the provincial government in terms of creating a climate for growth, creating a climate for investment, creating a climate for jobs, and they come forth and they criticize it.

And I think we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, why is that? Why do those members opposite do that? Well they like to give the credit to the entrepreneurs and they like to be quick in terms of their criticism of the government. Why? Because it suits their political advantage. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the economy. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the communities that they claim to represent, by the way, with the citizens that are employed in their own communities.

But they don't want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker. Instead what they want to do is they want to stand up and they want to be naysayers.

I thought it was very interesting this afternoon listening to the member for Saskatchewan Rivers talk about the situation in Meadow Lake. And what does he say? He stands up and he says the government is involved in the Meadow Lake pulp mill. And the government is stifling investment.

Well I can take from that that if the Sask Party were ever elected — God forbid, ever elected — that they would pull out every cent of government investment in that pulp project and that they would cripple the community of Meadow Lake. They would cripple that pulp mill investment. Because who's calling for their withdrawal? Not the investors, not the community, not the local tribal council — the Saskatchewan Party.

Why? Because it's good for the community? No. Because it's good for the investors? No. Because it's good politics for the Sask Party? I'd argue no, but they certainly seem to think so. That's the approach that they put forward. They cannot take off their ideological blinders for one single minute to look at the work that's being done in their communities.

I think it's time for the members opposite to stop speaking for the Saskatchewan Party and start speaking for the people that sent them to this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, as we understand, forestry is a complicated industry, it's a complicated issue, because it requires us to balance both an investment climate and an environmental regime. We need to make sure that we've got an environment for growth today but that we are also protecting it in terms of a growth into the future.

That's part of what being government is about. It's not about the quick fixes. It's not about using a chainsaw versus a skidder, I say to the member opposite. It's about building a climate for growth and a climate for investment.

Now I don't understand why the members opposite don't understand that. I don't know why the member from Sask Rivers, who supposedly lives in the forest range himself, doesn't understand this.

He claims to have visited La Loche. This is his great understanding of the North, is he has visited La Loche. He met some . . . one person from La Loche once, he says, and that person said, do you know what, he says, I think that we could do more. And his response is, oh yes, you could do more with the Sask Party. Oh, and by the way, we'd pull out all the government investment.

He didn't ever say what that person said to that. And I'd be very interested in knowing what the leaders of Meadow Lake have to say about the Sask Party's position that they will pull out the investment that CIC has and the support for the Meadow Lake pulp mill.

What does the community of Meadow Lake say about that? What does the tribal council say about that or do they just not care? Maybe they don't care about the tribal council, maybe they don't care about the community of Meadow Lake. But I think it's time that this party opposite come clean with the voters and the people that they claim to represent and tell us very clearly how they would put forward a forestry plan.

I appreciate listening to the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood and his argument that there will be a chainsaw in every garage and that these people will be out there chopping down their trees and that this is the way we're going to stimulate growth. Well you know what, Mr. Speaker, that's fine. That's fine if that's their approach. I mean, we can go back to the horse and buggy too.

But I think if any of us who understand modern forest management take a look at it, we understand that modern forest practices is about more than just that. We understand that there is a responsible use of technology. We understand that that's made for good employment and good forest stewardship. That's what we have supported.

Has it meant the single largest growth in jobs? No. Could we have grown it more aggressively? Probably. Did we want to balance it off in terms of the environmental responsibility? Absolutely.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, it is time for those members opposite from the flatlands and the grasslands to start to wake up and smell the forest. It is time for them to go forward and understand what people in the forest fringe are saying. Go up to the North, go and talk to the people.

I listened to the member speak. I listened to the member for Saskatchewan Rivers claiming to sit down with George Weyerhaeuser, Jr., I think he was saying this afternoon. I'm sure George calls him up on the phone and says, you know what, Mr. Member for Sask Rivers, I'm thinking about doing a little bit of an expansion up on the paper mill there. What do you think about that? He says, well, you know, Mr. Weyerhaeuser, paper is good — paper is good. You know,

paper is good. Well, thank you very much. What kind of a policy is that?

When we come forward with a plan that's going to expand the economy, that's going to expand the mills, going to expand the production, is going to protect this province's jobs, where are those members? They're sniping on the cheap politics. That's where they're off to, sniping on the cheap politics. They're not interested in moving forward with a growth agenda. They're not interested in moving forward environmental stewardship. They're saying, what's wrong with us simply opening up every patch of forest to everyone with a chainsaw that wants in?

Well you know what? We're trying to balance some of the agenda here, Mr. Speaker, and we're doing it fairly effectively. I think it's quite interesting to note that there is more than \$1 billion worth of investment that is undertaken in this province in forestry — \$1 billion.

This is a party opposite that likes to criticize this NDP government for investing in industry. It likes to criticize us for setting an investment climate that has seen a growth in the forest sector. We have seen a doubling of the oil production in this province; we have seen an increase in the type of agriculture development; we have seen an increase in the type of mineral production we have in this province. That's what this province's government has done.

That's what an NDP government has done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Those members opposite can talk all they want about the 65 years of socialism. And let me tell you this. There were 20 years of that 65 years of socialism that I don't want to relive; nobody on this side wants to relive. And nobody will ever vote for them to allow in. And that was the years under Thatcher and that was the years under Grant Devine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Because we are only now getting that repaired.

Let's understand this. When the member for Wood River stands up on his rant about this 60 years of socialism, I say, well those 60 years, Ross Thatcher and his Liberal administration, nothing says socialism like Grant Devine . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. I'd ask the member to relate his remarks to the topic and the motion at hand, that is regarding forestry.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — About some of the time during Grant Devine's wondrous administration, one of the things that we have cleaned up since then has been his forest management policies. We have helped to rebalance those, not by driving out private sector investment, as the members opposite said we would do . . . well I have a little surprise for them; they seem to laugh. Weyerhaeuser is not only actively involved in the province, they've expanded their enterprise — expanded it under the NDP government. But the members opposite don't

want to give any credit for that.

That's one of the things we've done in terms of rebalancing it. I think one of the things we have the most opportunity to be proud of in this province is the work that we have done in terms of advanced silviculture. The amount of replanting that has been done, the amount of reforestation that has been done under this regime, under our province, is a very positive piece of the forestry industry.

Because you know what, Mr. Speaker? You can't cut down trees that don't exist. You can't make jobs out of a forest that isn't there. And I think that those members opposite are prepared to take their short-sighted approach, as the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood does, with his, every man with a chainsaw in the garage, and going out to the forest and cutting it down and making a living. That's fine; that's fine. But that is not going to make a sustainable forest industry.

And when I listen to the member for Sask Rivers that has in the middle of his riding an economic centre built around forestry, and I listen to what he has to say about his views, I . . . all I can say is that I think that he has not taken a good look at what is happening in the city of Prince Albert right there. Because what this government, this NDP government has done, is it has expanded the forest opportunities; we have expanded the investment opportunities. And we are going a step further. We are making an investment in the technology that will make forestry sustainable long and far into the future.

(20:00)

And I say to the members opposite that when they oppose this resolution, and they stand and they oppose this government's approach on forestry, I ask them: tell me more than just why it should be about the single chainsaw. Isn't this about more than that? Isn't this about how we develop a forestry institute? Isn't this about how we build a forestry industry? Isn't this about how we put together a better forest management system? That's what this is about, and that's what we have attempted to do in the time — short time — that we have been in the stewardship of those forests.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite like to forget that. They like to forget about the investment that's going on in their own communities. They like to criticize what is happening and the opportunities that are being put forward by their very own constituents, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's very interesting, as we take a look around this province, in terms of new opportunities, not only in terms of softwood but in terms of hardwood development. I think it's interesting that they forget to talk about the development in oriented strand board plants that are happening in this province as a result of this administration.

Simply take a look at the number of Saskatchewan people today employed in that industry versus where they were under their cousins, the Tories, a few short years ago, and ask yourself: aren't we better off today? Are we not better off today than we were when those members opposite were voting Tory and supporting Grant Devine's administration? Well Mr. Speaker, I think that the answer is very clearly yes.

I appreciate the members' support on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, finally you know I have to say I have heard something that I agree a slight amount with from the members opposite and that is their support — this is their support for the government's ethanol policy.

And I want to say in terms of forestry, Mr. Speaker, because I know you're very interested in how this will relate in: as you know, Mr. Speaker, there are two ways that we can create ethanol in this province, one of which is from grain, the second which is from cellulose or biomass.

A cellulose production is simply using waste wood products. Think of the opportunity we have in the forest land. Think of the opportunity we have in the forest fringe in terms of being able to use those wood chips, in terms of us being able to use that waste wood product to turn that into ethanol. Think of what that will mean for communities like Birch Hills. Well I didn't hear the member that represented, or claims to represent Birch Hills, today standing up and saying that this is one of the things that he's going to support our government on.

No, instead he talked about meeting somebody somewhere on some street to talk about something or other related to forestry maybe once. That's what he had to say. This is not exactly the type of leadership that we would be expecting from a so-called government in waiting.

That's what they offer, Mr. Speaker. They offer a strategy that pokes holes, pokes at our government strategy. Is it perfect? No. Is there more we can do? Yes. Is there more we're going to do? Absolutely.

I say to the members opposite that what we did with the oil industry in the last 10 years in terms of doubling the production, we are prepared to do in terms of forestry. And just watch us in the next 10 years as we're on these benches moving forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — The members opposite know full well that there is no opportunity for them to move over into this bench. So the best that they can do is sit and squawk and poke holes.

I say to them, support the people and the industries in the ridings that they claim to represent. Support the industries in the ridings that they claim to represent. Don't sit there and snipe at an NDP government because we're prepared to work in partnership with business, because we're prepared to work in partnership with the communities, because we're prepared to work in partnership with Indian and Métis people. Don't snipe at this government because of that, Mr. Speaker.

That's what good government and good, sound public policy is all about and the sooner those members understand that the sooner the day we'll show Saskatchewan people that they may be worthy of the number of seats that they have been given. But until then, Mr. Speaker, the good news for Saskatchewan people is we're here to govern. We're here today, we will be here after the next election, and we are going to keep moving forward.

The motion before us today speaks of \$1 billion — \$1 billion worth of investment that has been stimulated by this government. Not government investment, private sector investment. These members opposite always say, oh that government over there, all they can do is get involved in everybody's businesses. Well you know what? I never hear this complaint from any of the businesses that come into this province.

Only a couple of weeks ago we had in this Assembly representatives from the Weyerhaeuser corporation. This is a very large forestry enterprise. What does this company bring forward, Mr. Speaker? Well of course they're very involved in saw mills, they're very involved in pulp mills, they're involved in paper mills. They're a big, big industry, they're a big employer.

And do you know what? They're working in partnership with us and they are supportive of the approach we're taking. They're supportive of the fact that we're helping them in terms of growing the economy. They're supportive of the fact that we are working with them on major issues, not only in terms of investment but in terms of protecting the capital they already have.

I want to tell you that we too have been pushing Weyerhaeuser. As much as they push us to be more involved, we push them also. And we ask for them to be more involved in the community, and they are. And we ask for them to take a broader perspective and to look at some of the environmental issues, and they do.

It's not always quick. There are always issues that we are constantly working on, whether it be Dore/Smoothstone and the issue there or be it the Kyoto accord. These are issues that we continue to work with industry on. That's what being in government is about, Mr. Speaker.

Sorry, I should say, that's what being a good government is about, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Because I think the members opposite forget this. It isn't always about the cheap shot. And it's nice that they've got that and that they're in to pick at it in question period. But I find it very interesting that in the some 50 days that we've been in this House I don't think there has been a single question raised on forestry yet in question period.

And I don't want to be critical of the members opposite. I mean they've got their job to do as an opposition and they will, in two or three terms, get quite good at it. But in the interim, what I say to them is, when the opportunity comes forward to support the businesses in their community and support the people that are working in their communities that rely on a sound forestry policy, be genuine about it. Come forward and be supportive about it and don't constantly feel the need to oppose good public policy.

Mr. Speaker, we have undertaken a large number of different issues and different opportunities over the last year — last several years to be honest. We are seeing now more than 2,200

new jobs created in this province as directly related to the forest industry, 4,400 new indirect jobs.

The members opposite constantly stand up and harangue this government on a job creation record. I want to say very bluntly I'm quite proud of our job creation record. During this government's administration we have taken Saskatchewan to a record number of people working — more than any other administration in this province's history. To date, more people are working in Saskatchewan under this administration, during this administration's tenure, more people have worked in this province than at any time in the province's history.

And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They are working in a larger number of industries. Just think about it. Yes, agriculture is under significant strain. Yes, there is a large number of people exiting the farming industry. But you know what is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that other industries are stepping up to the plate and they are filling those job opportunities.

Isn't it interesting that nearly 7,000 new jobs in forestry have been created under this administration. Isn't it interesting that in a year when we have seen significant decline in agriculture we have still seen other growth in other sectors. Isn't it interesting that we are not simply cutting down the trees and shipping them off. We've seen the growth here in terms of diversifying our economy and diversifying the industries. And I think we need only look at their communities to take a good example of that.

Look at the work, for example, that has been done in terms of Hudson Bay with the new OSB mill. A \$220 million investment — a quarter billion dollar investment — but the members opposite never want to talk about that. Members opposite say, oh that quarter of a billion dollars, oh we can't have that. We don't want to talk about that. Private sector's coming out with a quarter billion dollars; well that's not worth supporting.

And I say simply, why not? I mean we don't stand up and attempt to take credit for it. This is part of an investment climate that we've set out that's helped people move in. We've seen a \$315 million upgrade to Weyerhaeuser's Prince Albert pulp and paper mill — \$315 million — a third of a billion dollar investment.

Oh and the member opposite laughs, says oh well what's that? Obviously he can create that in his riding like that. Well I simply say to them that where we can celebrate the successes of Saskatchewan businesses and that kind of enterprise and that kind of an investment climate, we should welcome that, we should encourage it, and when it happens we should celebrate it.

Now I don't know why the members opposite don't want to do that, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why the members opposite don't want to do this. They just seem to have a list somewhere in that inappropriately named Grow Saskatchewan plan of theirs. I mean I haven't been around the farm in a long time, but I know that in order to grow things you need a lot of fertilizer and then maybe in that way that plan will work, because there's no shortage of fertilizer in that plan to be able to encourage growth.

But what I would say, Mr. Speaker, is this: when they come

forward in this Assembly and they say to us that there is good investment and there is bad investment, there's some private sector investment that they welcome and then there's some private sector investment that they would drive off — that says to me that this is an opposition party that's not yet ready to govern. This would say to me that on issues, whether it be on forestry or whether it be on further diversification of our economy, the members opposite have not clearly thought this through.

Now what I'd be interested to know, is do the members opposite accept the fact that we have a large American investor, in this case Weyerhaeuser, bringing in \$315 million to upgrade the pulp mill facility in Prince Albert; \$315 million is a lot of money — even in Canadian dollars it's still a lot of money, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . very close to a third of a billion. Very close to a third of a billion dollars.

Now I hear that the Finance critic from the Saskatchewan Party saying yes, yes, he would agree that this is not a bad thing.

But my question, Mr. Speaker, is obviously in the forestry sector they welcome this American money coming in to support jobs in Prince Albert and ostensibly Saskatchewan Rivers and Shellbrook-Spiritwood and where else is there — Hudson Bay. That clearly this is a good investment.

Now this is fine. We understand this on forestry. Now I know that tomorrow or the day after or the day after that, the members opposite will say oh, but you know, Mr. Speaker, those big, bad NDP guys, you know what they're doing? They're going to bring in American investment into ethanol.

Oh well, wait a second here now. Now do I maybe understand that American investment is okay in the forestry sector but not okay in the grain sector? So if we said that we were creating ethanol out of cellulose or biomass, then the American investment would be okay?

Well this is I think where the members opposite are going, because they seem to have somewhere buried in their platform a list of companies that investment is okay from and a list of companies that investment is not okay from. Some American money is good, some American money is bad.

And I say to the members opposite, what kind of a platform is that? What kind of a policy is that? How do you build an economy on that?

And what I say to the members opposite is that I think it is time that we simply work in the best interests of all Saskatchewan people, and let's accept investment in this province, wherever that investment comes from. Let's welcome in investment that is going to create Saskatchewan jobs, Saskatchewan growth, and help diversify Saskatchewan's economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — What's wrong with that? As long as a deal is structured fairly . . .

The Speaker: — Once again, order. I ask the member to relate his comments to the motion at hand.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was of the view that I was talking about cellulose-based ethanol production. But that's fine, I can talk about other forestry development.

There is no shortage of different issues that we can talk about. And it's not all based around just the tertiary expansion of the industry. It's not all based around paper. It's not all based around always being secondary. I mean, we can talk about the expansion that's gone on in a more primary-based industry. We can talk about the expansion of the saw mills.

Well it may come as a surprise to the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood, but there is room in this economy for both small-scale developers and large-scale ones. And both have prospered under this government.

In fact I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that under this government we have seen an expansion of both sets Why? Because we have helped rebalance it. We have not simply opted for a corporatist model that the Conservative government before us did. Nor did we, I would say, adopt this back-to-the-future model proposed by the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood. I'm starting to understand why maybe some members are more equal than others over there in terms of the policy development, because I think some of these ideas need a little working out. And I'm glad that they gave the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood a bit of a chance to run and show us what his ideas are here and the same for the member for Sask Rivers.

(20:15)

I only hope that the leadership of their party will come together and put together a coherent forestry plan that they can put to the electorate so that the electorate can compare it to ours, so that they can compare it to ours in terms of the expansion that we've seen, so that we can talk about the \$2 million saw mill upgrade and wood treatment plant at Glaslyn.

Now my question is, why hasn't the member for that area ever stood up and supported this? Why have I not heard a single solitary speech from that member about the work that's been done there?

But what about the \$2 million saw mill in Dillon? I mean we know that that's been a good support on our part.

We've seen a \$2 million saw mill expansion at La Loche. I heard the member for Sask Rivers stand up today and say he'd talked to somebody from La Loche once, maybe. And he thought they had said something about La Loche anyway and as a result he was pretty sure there was something good happening in La Loche. But he was sure the government had nothing to do with it.

Well I want to assure the member that it's because of the investment climate and the partnerships we've been building that we've been able to see this kind of expansion. We have a large number of other expansions which are on the drawing board.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a case of this government resting on its laurels. This is not a case of us simply sitting back and saying

what we have today is good enough.

I think all members know that today forestry is under a very serious threat. It's under a serious threat because of the situation in terms of the softwood lumber dispute. And what I would think is now imperative is that all members in this Assembly come together to support the government that's been elected to provide the leadership to help us work on this issue with Ottawa. Let's put forward a united front on this.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that despite the large number of trees in my riding, there's not a lot of forestry going on in Regina South. In fact I'd say woe be the man who takes out a chainsaw in my riding. There'd be big trouble.

But I'm prepared to support growth and the development of a forestry industry in this province. I'm prepared to support that despite the fact there's no particular gain to my riding directly out of this. So if I'm prepared to support that on behalf of the constituents of Regina South, isn't it a bit of a no-brainer to ask the members that represent the forestry industry areas to support that? Isn't it a bit of a no-brainer to ask them to join with the government on this?

I understand that their policy is going to be to take a chainsaw to government after the next election. I've heard that many times. I know all about their chainsaw audits, and their great love for BC's approach. That's not how you build an industry, that's not how you build a support base.

What we've got to do right now is we've got to go for it as a united province and work with Ottawa and we've got to fight those lumber subsidies.

Don't sit here and argue about these small little petty differences that the members opposite say, oh well, you should be bringing in more private sector investment. And then when we do, they argue, oh no, you shouldn't be bringing in that private sector investment. Mr. Speaker, the single best thing that the members opposite could do is get out of the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Let this Minister of Industry and Resources, let this Minister of Environment move forward on a forestry plan that is going to further build and diversify and grow our economy. Because, Mr. Speaker, that's what we've been doing. That's what we've been doing.

And I think that the thousands of new jobs that we are seeing in our economy as a result of it, the thousands of new jobs that we are going to see as a result of it are part of why we should be supporting this.

My bench mate reminds me that one of the most important things — and the members opposite always say this — that investors speak with their feet. Well they've been tromping their way into this province with more than \$1 billion worth of investment. And that's a whole lot of zeros. Now I know the members opposite know a lot about having zeros over there, but this is about having a whole lot of zeros after a one — \$1 billion worth of new investment in this province.

That's what the NDP government's been up to. While the members opposite are, whoa, saying, don't be getting involved in the economy, don't be involving yourself with these companies, don't be getting in the way of investment, you know what? We've been helping these companies grow.

And they've been growing not just in terms of profit. They've been growing in terms of jobs. And jobs are good for repopulating the province, and jobs are good in terms of helping those rural communities stay alive, and jobs are good in terms of making sure people have a sound basis to raise their families and keep their communities alive.

Mr. Speaker, who other than the Saskatchewan Party could argue with that? And what I think we need to be doing now tonight is moving forward to vote on this amendment, or this motion. I think we need to be supporting the fact that we have \$1 billion worth of new investment. I think we need to be supporting the fact that this growth is not just on a single basis of one company or one community.

I think we need to support the fact that this is a full, wide-ranging policy, a wide-ranging approach to expanding forestry. Not just for today but for making sure that we have made the sound investments through environment in terms of reforestation. It means making sure that we've got a good fire management policy in place. That's what this means.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we need to remember is that there is a lot more to be done if forestry is going to change.

Forestry is going to change. The member opposite speaks about the romantic old days with a chainsaw. I like the story of Paul Bunyan as much as the next guy. I mean, an axe was always used to clear the forest in the old days, and there is a certain romance to it. And we've got plenty of time and plenty of opportunity for all sorts of development.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I believe very much that the development of the forestry in this province is going to come from the investment and technology just as it has in oil, just as it has in terms of agriculture, and that's what we need to be supporting. This government, because it believes in helping grow this economy and because it helps . . . believes in helping to grow this particular industry, we're making that investment. It's a smart investment. It's an investment in research, it's an investment in our future, it's an investment in the science, and I think people understand this.

Many years ago we came to this understanding in agriculture in this province that if we were going to grow agriculture and move it forward, we needed to make the investment in the technology. That's why we have such a renowned university in Saskatoon with its College of Agriculture. That's one of the areas where we made a good government investment, and I don't mean this particular NDP administration because that's been going on for generations, but it was the type of investment that helped agriculture to grow.

Now what we need to be doing on this side of the House today is thinking about, as our economy diversifies, where are those new places that we invest? Certainly in terms of our

administration, we've decided there are two very key areas that we need to put that investment into. One is in terms of petroleum and the resources around that, and we've made big investments down here in terms of the University of Regina and petroleum technology expansion and the advantages we have for enhanced oil recovery.

The second area, though, is going to be in the area of forestry because as we look at the forest resource in this province and the advantages that we have, they're immense, but we need to take advantage of the smart science.

Now that, Mr. Speaker, some members over there who I know are tripping over themselves to try and pretend to represent Saskatoon . . . I guess they've given up on representing their own area; they're now attempting to represent the ridings we hold. Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. We are working in partnership with the smartest minds of that university in Saskatoon, we are working together with the industry, the best industry reps that we can find in the forestry sector, and we are going to put that together in what we call a forestry institute.

And that forestry institute, located in none other than Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, is going to be a beacon of hope and light and jobs in that industry for a generation to come. And what I think the members opposite should do is come forward and support it. And I say to the chainsaw artist opposite, put down that chainsaw; come in, come join us. Support our vision. Support our approach. Don't worry about trying to clear-cut the forest to gain some votes. I say simply, Mr. Speaker, that member and all members on that side should come forth.

Now I don't want to . . . I don't want to paint all members opposite with that same brush. I suspect that some members have a better understanding and certainly as I listened to the comments from the member for Carrot River Valley, I think he has a good understanding of the support that needs to be there for his communities to grow. And I certainly support that and I want to recognize that right now. But I think that this is the kind of more mature approach to politics that is going to help move this agenda forward.

I encourage other members to do the same. I say to the member from Sask Rivers, set aside that strange ideological view that you have. Set aside that irrational approach to politics, and get out there and get to work for the people who elected him. That's what I think. Get out there and get elected. Get to work. This isn't a huge amount of effort to ask for.

And sometimes you know what, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't hurt for the members opposite to admit that this government has done some very good things. Sometimes it doesn't hurt for them to admit that the investments that we're making in their home communities are actually helpful.

I think it's time to set aside the politics. I think it's time for them to come forward and support it. And we can give the same speech in terms of ethanol. I can give the same speech in terms of agriculture. We can talk about diversifying the rural economy — and maybe I will for a minute talk about diversifying the rural economy.

When we had ACRE here . . . and I want to tell the member

opposite just a little bit about how we came to want to set up an Action Committee on the Rural Economy. I think it's interesting to note that one of the reasons in 1999 when we talked about setting up the Action Committee on the Rural Economy, it was because we recognized that the rural economy is about a lot more than just agriculture. And I think the members opposite should know that. I think the members opposite should understand that — that there's a lot more to the rural economy than just agriculture.

And what we are trying to do here is move forward an agenda that's going to talk about building that rural economy in terms of forestry, in terms of ethanol, in terms of agriculture, in terms of rural industrial development, in terms of high tech. Those are the kind of investments we're making. And they're not isolating, Mr. Speaker. Because sometimes an investment in research is just as good as allowing the members opposite to cut more trees. And sometimes an investment in terms of advanced silviculture makes more sense than us simply figuring out how to cut down more trees.

And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we need to look at how we encourage that investment — private sector in co-operation with the public sector. Because I'm not afraid to put some tax dollars up to support Saskatchewan people's endeavours. The members opposite appear to be. The members opposite appear to be afraid to do that.

But as I listened to the member for Saskatchewan Rivers today talk and he talked about how an investment in forestry could lead to an investment in infrastructure and social programs, I say to him, well if that's good for a community, then why would we not look — when we're asked — at putting in some support?

Mr. Speaker, I notice that the benches opposite are rather empty. I am sorry that I drove them off. I hope that the members will have taken some notes or at least taken opportunity tomorrow to talk . . . to read what has been said. And rest assured, rest assured that this government is working for their constituents and their communities even if they're not.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. I will be supporting . . . I will not be supporting that amendment. But I think given, given the hour and given the fact that I would like to hear a great deal more about what members opposite have to say when they have an opportunity to come back in, I would simply move that we adjourn the House . . . debate. Oh, I'll just move that we adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 20:30.