



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
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
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
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
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 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Before I recognize members, I'd like to introduce a couple of groups that have joined us this afternoon. In the Speaker's gallery we have Gary Dickson along with his wife Arlene and a number of the staff from the Privacy Commissioner's office. And I'd invite them to stand and be welcomed to their Chamber today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — As well I'd like to introduce the wife of a former member of this Assembly that many of us came to know and appreciate. Alma Neudorf is joined today by her sister Tena and her daughter Cheryl, her husband Tony, and her grandchildren, Morgan and Marley. We're pleased to have you come and join us today. And we'd invite you to stand and be recognized by the Chamber.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to welcoming the guests you've introduced on behalf of the government, it's my pleasure today to introduce some very special people that have joined us, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly. And they include Michelle and Paige Hansen from Sturgis, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Paige is more famously known as baby Paige, but we can see, all of us quite gratefully, that she's grown beyond that. And so, Mr. Speaker, we want to welcome Paige to her Legislative Assembly. Joining them, by the way, is the constituency assistant to the Minister of Social Services, Susan Dunne.

And we want to acknowledge Paige today, and also her mom for her courage in bringing that case forward. I think in no small way helps to underscore the importance of a children's hospital. Mr. Speaker, all members will join with me in welcoming Paige and Michelle to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would want to join with you in welcoming Alma Neudorf and her family to the legislature here this afternoon. The member for Cannington and I had the good fortune of having lunch, along with you, Mr. Speaker, with them at noon. We had the opportunity to share some very, very fond memories of former member Bill Neudorf in the legislature, and the opportunities that we had to serve with him and witness his quick wit, his

quick anger, and also his very fine friendship that both the member and I — the member from Cannington and I — and along with you, Mr. Speaker, enjoyed over the years. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased, delighted, and extremely happy today to introduce a number of individuals in your gallery, people that I was able to meet with earlier today for a great announcement for our province.

With Habitat for Humanity we have Dennis Coutts who is the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina chapter; Bob Pringle, the executive director of the Saskatoon chapter; Dennis Elko, the executive director with Lloydminster; Roy Joans, the ReStore manager of Lloydminster; Joan Falaska, the steering committee Chair from Moose Jaw; Bill Harris, the board member of Moose Jaw; Lori Renton, the steering committee Chair for Yorkton; Louise Bellanger, the board member for Yorkton.

And hopefully I've got them all covered, but I want everyone to welcome these great individuals who do such terrific work with Habitat for Humanity.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the minister in welcoming these very special guests from Habitat for Humanity to our legislature. They've done great work. I know the work particularly in Saskatoon around the rehab store and all the good stuff they've done. They provide strong leadership in our communities right across this province, and it was an exciting announcement today. And I just want to join in welcoming them to their legislature. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. LeClerc: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, sitting in your gallery is my constituent assistant, Ryan Long. As all members of this House I think will acknowledge, they are the true masters of making MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] work properly.

And Ryan comes from his expertise through his father who was at one time the acting attorney general of Ontario and was the executive director of the Legal Aid Ontario. Ryan is a graduate of Teen Challenge and I've been privileged to have him live in my home with me as he graduated from that program. And he's doing a most excellent job for the constituents of Saskatoon

Northwest. Welcome to your Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to stand and present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents in support of the government's policy on green vehicles. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government ministers named in this petition to follow their own platform and government policies and trade in their Jeep Libertys for vehicles that are on SGI's 2008 list of recommended fuel-efficient vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by members from Southey, Regina, and around the province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of indexing the minimum wage as members of our province are concerned about the rapidly rising costs of living and the sporadic increase in minimum wage. 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 increase.

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

And the petition is signed by Saskatchewan residents from Moose Jaw and Regina. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that workers in the community-based organizations in Saskatchewan have traditionally been underpaid — in fact, in many cases were poverty level wages. 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these folks come from Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw, Canora, Weyburn, and Moosomin. 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 to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind when it comes to providing safe and affordable water. Mr. Speaker, 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed by the good residents of Waldheim, Rosthern, and Duck Lake. I so present. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition speaking against means testing for the seniors' drug plan. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners note that the income testing in general means dollars are spent on administration instead of helping people. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners ask:

... that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to reverse its decision to means test seniors and ensure that all seniors continue to have access to affordable prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of Biggar constituency, Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, and The Battlefords constituency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 Saskatchewan students through the 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 from the University of Saskatchewan, students from the University of Regina, as well as a number of health care professionals who have graduate degrees practising here in the province. 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 new 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 new long-term beds in La Ronge.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition 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 Saskatoon Nutana.

Saskatoon Hindu Society Banquet

Ms. Atkinson: — On Saturday evening I, along with members from Meewasin, Eastview, and Greystone, attended the very enjoyable and elegant 24th annual Hindu Society of Saskatchewan vegetarian banquet at TCU Place where Lieutenant Governor Gordon Barnhart addressed 600 banquet guests.

This event is always a popular social function for Saskatoon as it helps the Hindu Society celebrate with others in the community and raise funds for their temple located at 107 La Ronge Road in Saskatoon.

The Saskatchewan Hindu Society takes great pride in knowing that their temple was built and is maintained and operated exclusively through members' and community donors' generosity. Funding provides opportunities for the Hindu Society to have speakers, seminars, and projects of benefit to the Hindu community.

Many members of the Hindu Society have been recognized and honoured for their contributions to our province. Some distinguished members have received Orders of Saskatchewan and Orders of Canada. The Saskatchewan Hindu Society believes that members must participate and integrate with the larger community to embrace their Saskatchewan home and to share their rich culture with others in our multicultural province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Hindu Society of Saskatchewan on this successful event, and I would encourage members to attend future annual Hindu vegetarian banquets to enjoy delicious food, good fellowship, and cultural diversity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Regina Multicultural Council Public Speaking Contest

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday I had the pleasure of bringing greetings on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan to the 22nd annual public speaking contest hosted by Regina Multicultural Council. At this speaking contest, 42 students from grade 4 through to grade 12 were provided with a valuable opportunity to develop their speaking skills while also exploring and expressing their views on the vital role that multiculturalism plays in our society.

Mr. Speaker, we all understand the value of developing the ability to communicate effectively with our peers. We also know that these skills are not simply developed overnight. For many people, it takes years of practice to eventually reach the point where they are comfortable addressing large crowds. It is nice to see that these students are getting a head start, learning communication skills that will help them in the future with their careers as well as their daily life.

Mr. Speaker, the subject matter of many of these speeches also particularly was important in terms of development for each of these students. Saskatchewan has a very proud heritage of multiculturalism and this heritage continues to grow and thrive. By celebrating our diversity, we not only create understanding and acceptance of all people in our society; we develop and enrich our own individual lives. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Intercultural Association Graduation Ceremony

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 28, I along with the members from Saskatoon Centre and Saskatoon Greystone had the pleasure of attending the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association's MYWAY [Moving Young Women's Aspirations to Reality] project graduation ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, MYWAY stands for Moving Young Women's Aspirations to Reality. The MYWAY program is for immigrant and refugee women under 30. Its goal is to share information about the Canadian work environment with participants as well as to enhance their life skills.

Over a wonderful multicultural meal, we celebrated the accomplishment of the 10 graduates who completed the 10-month program. The highlight of the evening for me was to hear directly from some of the participants as they shared their stories of challenges, accomplishments, and gratitude.

[13:45]

This year's graduates are a diverse group of talented women coming from the countries of Pakistan, Sudan, Ukraine, Bangladesh, and Iran. They are Sheeba Babar, Awak Boir, Olena Kolchuk, Salma Ismail, Masoumeh Safari, Syeda Tahira Kazami, Yaroslava Kurnosova, Nyakouth Wal, Svitlana Makarchuk, and Inna Baglay.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating these graduates as well as the MYWAY staff, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association board, and the partner agencies that support this program. I know I can speak for all members of this Assembly in saying that we are looking forward to seeing how these graduates succeed in Saskatchewan — their way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan 4-H Recognition Banquet

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend I had the pleasure of bringing greetings on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Agriculture to the Saskatchewan 4-H annual recognition banquet. The event was held in Saskatoon and brought together many of our 4-H leaders and members from right across the province. It was a special event for myself as I was leader of my local 4-H club for over a decade with the West Prince Albert Beef Club.

At this year's banquet, we welcomed three new inductees to the 4-H Hall of Fame: Louise Haubold, a resident of Medstead, who was a 4-H leader with the Glenbush Homecraft Club for many years; Donna Saunders, a Midale resident who has been active in 4-H for a number of years and served on the Saskatchewan 4-H Council board; and Colin Hughes, a 4-H beef leader from Canwood who I had the opportunity to work with for a number of years on the P.A. [Prince Albert] 4-H regional show and sale.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have made outstanding contributions over the years to the 4-H program throughout our province and are to be commended for their hard work and dedication. We know that 4-H is a key avenue to developing future leaders in a number of sectors throughout Saskatchewan and we look forward to its continued strength for years to come. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Accelerated Readers Program in Moose Jaw School

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, recently students from William Grayson School gathered to celebrate the end of the school's first session of the accelerated readers program. William Grayson School is the first in Moose Jaw and the Prairie South School Division to implement this program.

What happens is the students set reading goals for themselves and then accumulate points towards their goals by taking web-based quizzes about the books they read. At the end of four months, the points are tabulated and those closest to their goals or who have reached their goals are celebrated.

The theme for the first session of the program was Life is a Highway, and its motto was Driven to Read. In honour of the theme, the top students received a limousine ride to the Oak & Rose Book Shoppe. And out of those students who reached their goals fully, a draw was made for two mountain bikes. Jayden Sanford and Adam Brotzel were the lucky recipients.

The school staff is extremely pleased with the participation of the students and believes it has helped to increase the students' interest in reading, and that's the goal. Fifty students reached their goals, and the students are looking forward to the next round of the accelerated reading program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating all those involved in this innovative program, and mostly to recognize the motivated students that participated in reaching, if not surpassing, their goals. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Moose Jaw Little Princess Ball

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a special day for more than 100 little princesses that attended The Little Princess Ball in Moose Jaw this past weekend. The Little Princess Ball was a fundraiser for the Moose Jaw Health Foundation for the renovation of a room and equipment at the pediatric unit of the Union Hospital.

The little princesses came to the event in the modern-day equivalent to a magical coach, Mr. Speaker — a limousine — and, while there, dined on princess pea pasta, a plate of pasta with a single pea in the middle of the plate. These little princesses got the thrill of their lifetime, Mr. Speaker, when they met with Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella and many other princesses. As one of the organizers said about his daughter, I've never seen her smile so much.

Mr. Speaker, the first-ever Little Princess Ball truly embodies the giving spirit of Moose Jaw. The community came together in celebration to support children's health. The organization of this wonderful event doesn't know yet how much they raised, but are estimating it to be in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to congratulate the Moose Jaw Health Foundation on their very successful event in support of children's health.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Man of Influence

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the inclusion of Dr. Malcolm Wilson as one of Saskatchewan's top 10 Men of Influence by *Saskatchewan Business Magazine*.

Dr. Wilson is the director of the Office of Energy and Environment at the University of Regina. He was involved in the initiation and development of the International Energy Agency greenhouse gas monitoring and storage program at Weyburn and Midale. At the university, he helped to found the International Test Centre for CO₂ Capture and the international test centre for CO₂ geological storage, as well as the Petroleum Technology Research Centre. Currently he serves on the Centre for Legislative and Environmental Research, CLEER, the research affiliate of The Energy Council.

In 2007 Dr. Wilson was recognized as co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Prize for peace for his work on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change with former US [United States] Vice-president Al Gore and the scientists of the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. Dr. Wilson continues to serve as adjunct professor of engineering as well as graduate studies and research at the University of Regina.

Please join me in recognizing Dr. Wilson on his achievement and for the work that he continues to do in developing solutions to the challenges presented by climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Future of Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier claims the Saskatchewan Party intends to keep the promises made during the last election. But one of his candidates, the member for P.A. Carlton made a commitment in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, November 2, '07, in which he promised, and I quote, "A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working."

To the Premier: does he believe that the member from P.A. Carlton should be held accountable for the promise he made to reopen the Prince Albert pulp mill?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my pleasure to answer the question. The government along with Domtar is looking at all options for redevelopment at the site. We are talking on an ongoing basis with the Vice-president Patrick Loulou with respect to development opportunities. We have said to them that everything is on the table, with the exception of \$100 million that the former premier was going to put at risk to the people of Saskatchewan. Everybody knows

where that money would be today — absolutely gone.

And I'm interested by the fact that the member asks this question because when asked by the media himself about what the government should do, whether the government should put \$100 million at risk of taxpayers' money, that member, the member from P.A. Northcote said no, they should not.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Now what's painfully clear to the people of Prince Albert is they're not going to follow our plan. But what's also clear now is that they've got no plan of their own.

On Friday, March 27, the *Herald* reported that the member admitted we won't see, and I quote, "We won't see an active pulp mill out of that site . . ." This statement is admission that the Saskatchewan Party's utterly and completely failed both the employees of the Prince Albert pulp mill and their families. To the Premier: will he admit that they've broken the promises made by he and the member for P.A. Carlton to the people of Prince Albert?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, the forestry sector is a very troubled sector all across North America. Since 2003 there have been some 207 mills closed across North America with respect to forestry services in this country. Pulp prices have fallen some 35 per cent year over year, so it's a very challenging time.

The one thing that this government will not do — as the former government was prepared to do and put taxpayers into a very difficult position — was put at risk \$100 million. There's 100 million very good reasons why we would not follow that former government's position, and in fact the member's question simply is, would we put at risk that kind of money? Would we follow the NDP's plan? No, we would not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Well it's now painfully clear that they never had any intention of keeping their election promise. Instead we've had 16 months of bluster. The minister responsible for forestry talks for meetings with forest companies and promises plants will be opening in the near future, but never offers any details. I'm sick and tired of his treatment of the Prince Albert pulp mill families. What is the Sask Party's plan for forestry? Did they ever intend to keep the promise made by the member from P.A. Carlton?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, discussions with Domtar continue on redevelopment of the site. And you don't have to believe me if you don't want. This morning Patrick Loulou, the vice-president for Domtar, said this that, "We will continue to work together with the government to investigate a number of options . . ."

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Vice-president of Domtar, Patrick Loulou said this morning, "We will continue to work together with the government to investigate a number of options for redevelopment of the site, some including the pulp production, some not."

So, Mr. Speaker, as the vice-president has indicated, we are working with the company. We are looking at redevelopment opportunities for the site. We're also looking at the redevelopment in terms of the forest management agreement that we put out this morning that forestry companies have been extremely supportive of.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Employment Trends

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the following layoffs have happened in Saskatchewan since December: Doepker Industries, 50 to 60 employees; Babcock & Wilcox, 43 employees; StarTek, 266 employees; Cameco, 35 employees; Agrium, 300 employees; Shore Gold, 89; Mosaic potash, 1,000 employees; Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, 940; Evraz, 175; Prairie Diagnostic Services, 13 employees; Advance Engineered, 96; and the Government of Saskatchewan, 77 employees. Does the Premier have a plan to help the 3,000 unemployed workers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many times in the past, the Premier and myself and my colleagues have said that while Saskatchewan is not immune from the forces of the pressures of the economic turmoil right around the world, we are certainly better positioned than any jurisdiction in Canada to weather these . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, our province, our province is fairing better than any jurisdiction in North America in light of these circumstances. And while these companies are indeed experiencing some short-term challenges, they are very optimistic. In fact our businesses and surveys are more optimistic than any jurisdiction in Canada about the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the question isn't immunity and positioning. The question is, how is the Saskatchewan government dealing with an obvious situation here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of optimism, the government's budget is based on blind optimism, projecting economic growth of 2.1 per cent while private sector forecasters project economic growth of less than one per cent — point six three per cent, to be accurate. At least 3,000 good paying jobs have been lost since December. Real families are struggling to pay their bills and make ends meet. That is what's happening in the real economy in Saskatchewan.

To the Minister of Finance: when will he get real, admit that these 3,000 lost jobs are a sign of things to come, and begin to plan accordingly?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last days, since the tabling of the budget in this House, I've had the distinct pleasure of being able to travel around this province and meet with community leaders, business leaders, and citizens right around the province. And nowhere in this province is there the sense of gloom and doom, except in that opposition caucus.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, every forecast for the economy shows Saskatchewan is likely to lead the nation again going forward into next year. We have led the nation this past year. We've gone into this recession later than any other jurisdiction, and we're likely to come out of it quicker than any other jurisdiction. Why doesn't the members opposite get on the program and share in some of the incredible optimism and wisdom looking forward into the future for our province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the government's optimism is cold comfort for those who are unemployed today. They can't take that to the bank.

Mr. Speaker, statistics released last week pointed to an eight and a half per cent increase year over year and an 11 per cent increase in January over December in the number of people collecting employment insurance in Saskatoon. Other provincial governments have been urging Ottawa to improve

unemployment insurance benefits for workers who lose their jobs, either by waiving the two weeks deductible or increasing benefits.

But while unemployed workers and their families struggle to make ends meet, the Saskatchewan Party has remained silent. Why has the Premier failed to speak up for unemployed workers in Saskatchewan struggling to make ends meet on employment insurance?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak about this, and we do so with a great sense of empathy. We have officials that are providing services today with assistance on resumé writing, advice on where to help look for jobs — of which there are over 6,000 jobs available still in Saskatchewan — finding to ensure that there's career counselling, as well as referral to CBO partners.

Mr. Speaker, let me just contextualize some of the remarks. In British Columbia, that number was 47.7 per cent. In Alberta, it was 46.1 per cent. In Manitoba, it was 20.2 per cent. The national average, 21.3 per cent; in Saskatchewan, 8.5 per cent; Mr. Speaker. We know we're not immune from what's going on, but on a relative scale across Western Canada and indeed across Confederation, we're doing quite well. And we have services available to help ensure that those who have been laid off will be provided services in a fashion that's very productive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that unemployed workers in Saskatchewan appreciate the opportunity to be contextualized. Mr. Speaker, speaking of contexts, Saskatchewan is no longer the most affordable place to live in Canada. In fact Saskatoon has fallen behind Winnipeg, Montreal, and St. John.

The Frontier Centre for Public Policy reports that Regina has gone from the most affordable major city in Canada to 18th out of 34 in less than two years. And Statistics Canada reports that Saskatchewan now has the highest rate of inflation in Canada at 2.6 per cent, and it attributes a big part of this to a 22 per cent increase in Saskatchewan's utility rates over the course of the winter. Why is the Saskatchewan Party making life less affordable for 3,000 workers and their families who have lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, let me just begin by highlighting some elements. When we look at some of the latest

statistics regarding average weekly earnings — up 4.4 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Average weekly earnings — \$773, Mr. Speaker, the largest growth in wages in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to monitor and provide assistance to those who are going through this transition, Mr. Speaker. And what we can do, Mr. Speaker, is talk about the number of people that have confidence in Saskatchewan, which stands in stark contrast to those members opposite. We see population growing by over 15,000, by 15,000 people, Mr. Speaker. That does stand in stark contrast to the 35,000 people that left the province while the members opposite were serving in government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of the previous government and its record, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I play a little bridge, and we're judged by not the hand that we're dealt but how we play the hand we are dealt. They have yet to play a serious hand, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Three thousand workers have lost their job since December. The Saskatchewan Party can try to spin this any way it wants. But the fact remains the number of workers collecting employment insurance in Saskatchewan is rising, and they're looking for work and at a time when life in Saskatchewan is becoming less and less affordable, thanks in part to the government's policies.

These families need more than boosterism, Mr. Speaker. They need economic leadership. When will the Saskatchewan Party get real? What will they do to help Saskatchewan unemployed workers to get a job in Saskatchewan? Will the Premier host a job fair here at home?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, let's stick to the facts, Mr. Speaker — 14,500 more jobs since February 2008, February 2009. First Nation, Métis employment up by 3,500 just this past month — 10.6 per cent increase. Employment among women, 15,300 increase, Mr. Speaker. Unemployment in Saskatchewan just around 5 per cent, the lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Are we immune? No, we are not, Mr. Speaker. We have the services available. We are out helping individuals through this transition, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, today I'm happy to report over 6,000 jobs available in our province, Mr. Speaker. Most jurisdictions would be happy with half of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert

Northcote.

Uranium Development Partnership Report

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, this government's been clear — they want to build a nuclear reactor in Saskatchewan. This would be the largest infrastructure investment in the history of our province. With infrastructure investment of this magnitude comes huge risk. Saskatchewan people will potentially be on the hook for billions of dollars. Because of this risk, Saskatchewan people deserve total transparency in a process that would lead to a nuclear reactor.

To the minister: will he guarantee the people of Saskatchewan that this government will be open and transparent in the process that leads to nuclear power in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — I thank the member for that question, Mr. Speaker. Clearly whatever we do, first of all, will be done within the context of clean, safe, and economic, affordable power for the people of this province.

But what we've embarked on, Mr. Speaker, is a multi-step process, and we haven't even completed the first step of that process yet, Mr. Speaker. The process consists of a number of steps, starting with a report that I will be receiving late tomorrow from the UDP, the Uranium Development Partnership, on opportunities for Saskatchewan in the nuclear cycle. Following that, Mr. Speaker, I will be announcing a comprehensive round of public consultations.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, Bruce Power is doing its own study of nuclear power in the province. And if Bruce Power decides that they want to proceed with that, it puts in play a number of additional steps, including environmental assessment process, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the Uranium Development report is to be released at the end of this month. The government's history on releasing reports is questionable at best. They sat on the education property tax report for months before releasing it. They took two months to sculpt the Correction minister's report on the jail break.

To the minister: can Saskatchewan people expect the Uranium Development report to be released at the end of March as promised, or will the minister be sitting on this report as well?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The UDP committee has indicated that their report is ready on time and will be released to me tomorrow. Upon receipt I will do a short review of the proposal, and it will be released to the public within days — hopefully later this week.

Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that as conflicted as the NDP [New Democratic Party] are on this issue, that that member was allowed to ask the question. I have a quote, I have a quote here. I have a quote here from NDP leadership hopeful Dwain Lingenfelter who, according to this, wouldn't bother with the UDP or public consultations or any of that stuff. He says this, Mr. Speaker. He says:

We have been having this debate in Saskatchewan for many years and arrived at the contradictory position that it is okay to mine uranium and turn it into yellowcake as long as we then ship it away and wash our hands of it. It's a bit like a piano player in a brothel who helps to warm up the guests but claims to know nothing about what is going on upstairs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — I think that the people in the province of Saskatchewan would . . .

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

Mr. Furber: — Once again, I think that the people of the province of Saskatchewan would be very upset to find out that they think it's a laughing matter in this province to spend billions of dollars and go down this process in a ham-handed way, the way they have so far.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Furber: — They've had a so-called feasibility study conducted by Bruce Power, a company that operates nuclear reactors, and soon the public will receive a report from a government panel composed of 10 or 12 people connected to the nuclear industry. Saskatchewan people deserve transparency on this issue of nuclear reactors in this province. To the minister: will the full UDP report be released or will it be blacked out like the jailbreak report?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is time that that member's heard some facts. And you know, he's heard them before. I think it's time he stuck to them.

That report will be chaired by Dr. Richard Florizone, a nuclear physicist and a vice-president of the University of Saskatchewan. The committee, the UDP committee, consists of members from industry, municipal officials, First Nations

people, labour, environmentalists, and our universities, Mr. Speaker. That report will be released unadulterated.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, unless something changes, it doesn't matter what the minister says about transparency and accountability on the file. His colleague from Prince Albert Carlton made it clear that this government has tipped the table in favour of a nuclear reactor. When responding to the makeup of the UDP, the member from P.A. Carlton said, and I quote, “. . . you bet we are playing with a stacked deck and we would not have it any other way.”

To the minister: in the interest of an open, transparent, objective process, will he guarantee that the UDP report is released? Saskatchewan people will be provided the panel's work plan, as well as the agenda, and minutes of any meeting the panel had?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member for that question particularly. The UDP report will be released completely.

But I have another interesting quote from Dwain Lingenfelter, the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Is it as good as the other one?

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — It's as good as the other one, only this time he deals with the matter of disposing of nuclear waste as well. He says this, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

It is hypocritical for any government in Saskatchewan to say that it is fine to mine uranium for use in nuclear reactors throughout the world, then turn around and take the position that it is too dangerous to use it here for fuel and deal with waste.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — I'd like to thank the member for his spontaneity in being open and accountable here. Mr. Speaker, in studies like this, occasionally a third party consultant is engaged in the process.

To the minister: was a third party consultant hired? And if so, will the people of Saskatchewan be told who it was? Will they be provided the consultant's full report, including the research done and the studies that they conducted?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Yes, a consultant was hired to assist the UDP. Yes, the report will be released in its entirety. No, there will be not be blacked-out sections.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the UDP was given \$3 million to study four sources of energy — nuclear, wind, hydro, and clean coal. This is \$3 million of public money.

To the minister: will Saskatchewan taxpayers be provided a complete breakdown of how the \$3 million was spent, including a breakdown of how much money was spent to research each of the four energy sources?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — . . . obvious, Mr. Speaker, the 3 million went to support the costs of the Uranium Development Partnership. A substantial portion of that would go to the consultants, there's no question about that, and rightfully so. I believe that we hired the best consultants available for the job. Dwain Lingenfelter . . . Media clips, Mr. Speaker, are a target rich environment for Lingenfelter quotes. He said this, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Again, I'm not talking about debating the pros and cons of nuclear power until the cows come home. As I said earlier, that debate is over. We need to elevate the discussion as to how we best capture the opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, let's cut out their rhetoric and spin. Will the minister stand up today and admit what everybody else already knows, that the UDP will come back and report that they will be recommending the development of nuclear power?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the answer is that I don't know. But I will find out late tomorrow, I expect, when the UDP releases its report to me. And I'll be happy to report to you the next day in question period or when the details of the report are released to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question. My question, my question to that member, Mr. Speaker: is he still supporting Mr. Lingenfelter?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Now the minister has stated that this is a multi-step process. But Bruce Power did a feasibility study before the minister commissioned UDP to study this issue. Will the minister admit that they put the cart before the horse?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Before I recognize the minister, I'd ask members to give the minister the opportunity to respond. Order. Order. The Minister of Health and the member from P.A. Carlton, come to order. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, certainly we're not. We're doing this exactly the right way. The UDP was set up to study the nuclear cycle in . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The minister of Enterprise and Innovation is trying to respond. I would ask members to respectfully allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the answer is certainly not. The UDP was set up to study this by community people, by experts in the industry, by a nuclear physicist, by our First Nations people, by our two universities, municipalities, Mr. Speaker, to determine what opportunities, if any, exist for further nuclear involvement in this province.

And I think it's perfectly correct — not only acceptable, but correct — to do it this way. I think that we need some basis for public consultations to be held, rather than just rumours and speculation that are proliferated from that side of the floor, Mr. Speaker. I think that it's . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

New Funding for Affordable Housing

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am indeed pleased, delighted, and extremely happy to announce the Government of Saskatchewan is committing 10 million of new funding for affordable housing for seniors, low-income

families, and those most vulnerable within our province. This is on top of the nearly 30 million announced by this government for affordable housing projects this past February.

I would like to highlight two of the initiatives that will result from this new funding, Mr. Speaker, initiatives that will increase the availability of affordable housing in Saskatchewan. The first announcement, Mr. Speaker, is a grant of \$1 million to Habitat for Humanity in support of Habitat's ongoing efforts to provide affordable home ownership opportunities for lower income families across the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Today's announcement, Mr. Speaker, will assist Habitat to build 20 new homes for deserving families. These new homes will be built right across the province in the communities of Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, and Yorkton. These projects will make a difference in the lives of low-income Saskatchewan families. These families, some for the very first time, will have safe, secure, and affordable housing.

This announcement of significant new funding addresses the task force on housing affordability's recommendations to enhance government's partnerships with community-based organizations that have the expertise in the creation of affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the 1 million in capital funding, I'm pleased to announce of further funding of \$180,000 for the Habitat Regina YouthBuild project. This project will distribute 60,000 a year over the next three years to train 40 young adults for careers in the construction trades. Habitat Regina will be partnering with North Central Community Association, the Saskatchewan Indian institution of technology, the Ehrlo Community Services to recruit and retain young people for this project.

Our government recognizes the necessity of developing a skilled workforce to maintain the current economic growth in this province. We are investing in the future of young people in Saskatchewan by providing them with training opportunities and access to well-paying jobs within their community.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, housing is a basic necessity of life. A home is where families connect and unite to become proud, contributing members of a community. It is where they develop a sense of self-being and dependence and security. Our government believes that people of this great province deserve to have homes that promote health, dignity, security, and independence. Homes that enhance our communities, socially and economically.

The Government of Saskatchewan is pleased to partner with Habitat for Humanity to construct not only just homes, but better future for Saskatchewan people. By working together to create affordable housing and to create opportunities for our youth, we can ensure that Saskatchewan remains on a strong and steady path towards safer communities and a better future for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the minister for providing me an advance copy of her remarks. And of course you saw the news and it's . . . We appreciated it very much, and I want to say that this is indeed a good news announcement.

Habitat for Humanity is a great partner. We've always had a good working relationship with them. They've been enthusiastic, committed, and they have resources that can really make a difference. But most of all they're very innovative. I think what we've seen over the past several years, the work that they've done with students — I know in my own riding students of E.D. Feehan and Mount Royal and Bedford — some really good work there. And I've got to say the store they have in Saskatoon is the best store ever, where they've recycled their curling rink and actually made it into a recycled buildings store. So that's great.

But this is good news. This is the core of their business, affordable housing, and for 20 families this truly will make a difference.

We also appreciate the \$180,000 support for YouthBuild. They're also a very innovative group, and it's really important that young people do get the opportunity to build, to develop their skills. This is 1 million out of 10 — 10 million. We're waiting to hear what happens with the other 9 million, and we're looking forward to that.

I have to say . . . And I know the minister certainly talked about the Alberta model, where they've announced \$3.3 billion over 10 years. That was announced just a few weeks ago. This is really exciting. Their plan, Mr. Speaker, is to build 11,000 units over the next 10 years — something phenomenal — and I really think that we really need to take a look at that.

In many ways I would rather see one big announcement about the plan forward, the framework about how we're going to deal with housing in Saskatchewan. We know housing is a basic human right, and the minister is right — everybody deserves a home in Saskatchewan. That is a basic human right, and so I'm really glad to hear that.

So we welcome the announcement and I'd look forward to hearing more in the weeks ahead. What I'm really looking forward to hearing is the framework, the plan that will make everyone in Saskatchewan having a home. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

One-to-One Laptop Initiative

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know children are the future of our province. What we teach them today has a direct impact on the success they may achieve personally, not to mention the benefits they will bring to our province, in years to come. That is why I'm very pleased to announce, as Minister of Crown Corporations, along with the

Minister of Education, that ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], the Information Services Corporation, has made a significant donation of \$90,000 to Regina's Albert Community School to fund the one-to-one laptop initiative, making it the most technologically advanced elementary school in the province, Mr. Speaker.

The one-to-one project means one laptop for each child. It's a pilot project supported by Regina public schools that provides all students in grade 5 to 8 with notebook computers to use at school. Video projectors and Smart Board technology have been added to their classrooms, and their teachers have been trained to incorporate the technology into their day-to-day learning. As well 10 additional laptops have been provided to the grade 4/5 classroom for a two-to-one laptop introduction.

This project is the realization of a dream between ISC and the Albert Community School to try to address the inequities that exist for vulnerable youth living in impoverished circumstances. And that is certainly something that this government supports, Mr. Speaker. These children don't have access to computers or the Internet at home, and it limits their possibilities for the future.

Mr. Speaker, the one-to-one laptop project is an exceptional investment in these children that will greatly enhance their technical and literacy skills, giving them — easy for me to say; needed a little more time in English and a little less in poli-sci, I guess — giving them the abilities they need for the 21st century workforce, and erasing the digital divide.

This special donation is an example of how Saskatchewan's Crown corporations are giving back to the community and making investments in our future, Mr. Speaker. ISC entered into a partnership agreement with Albert Community School in May 2008. The one-to-one project is part of that corporation's commitment to help improve and support the ongoing educational experience of students that attend core area schools. Mr. Speaker, this government believes that the students at Albert Community School should have a great learning opportunity like most in more affluent neighbourhoods. We hope that the one-to-one laptop initiative will level the playing field and give them the same chances as their peers. I for one look forward to their success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the minister for providing me with a copy of his address prior to us coming into the Chamber today so that I could read it in advance.

Mr. Speaker, this is a welcome initiative, a very interesting pilot project. We of course all hope that it makes a significant difference in these children's lives and is therefore . . . can be duplicated and extended.

I can't help but note that if \$90,000 is a significant expenditure,

I don't know how the \$700,000 the same minister threw away on enhanced driver's licence could be a modest expenditure. But this is a worthwhile initiative, Mr. Speaker.

The initiative, as I said, Mr. Speaker, is very worthwhile. It's, I think, an open question, Mr. Speaker, it's an open question as to whether this addressing of the digital divide, this issue of fairness at the age of 10 or 11, can do much to address inequities that could be far better addressed by a greater commitment to early childhood education at the ages of four to five, Mr. Speaker.

But I don't think it has to be either/or, Mr. Speaker. I think we can recognize the achievements approach like Head Start and pre-kindergarten in our province, for example, Mr. Speaker, and still congratulate the government on this initiative, and congratulate ISC on this initiative. As the minister points out, Crown corporations in Saskatchewan continue to play a unique role in what they give back to our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Government Services.

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave to move a motion recommending the reappointment of Gary Dickson as the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Government Services.

MOTIONS

Reappointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to recommend the reappointment of Gary Dickson as the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Approximately five years ago, Mr. Dickson was selected by a bipartisan committee and is being recommended again, unanimously, by the Board of Internal Economy, which also represents members from both sides of the House.

[14:30]

This is an independent office of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and a very important office. In today's connected world, information can be accessed very readily from very many sources. Therefore the Information and Privacy Commissioner's role is to ensure that clear rules are in place and that he is very vigilant and holds government to be very vigilant to the protection of privacy, but also, Mr. Speaker, to allow the public to have access to government information without undue restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dickson has done a very good job of walking this tight line between freedom and the need for protections.

Therefore it's my pleasure to move:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council reappoint Mr. R. Gary Dickson, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, as Information and Privacy Commissioner pursuant to section 38 of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Cannington, the Minister Responsible for Government Services, has moved:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council reappoint Mr. R. Gary Dickson, Q.C., of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, as Information and Privacy Commissioner pursuant to section 38 of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order for the Standing Committee on Human Services and Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice can conduct their work, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before I place the question, I would just like to invite members to join the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Dickson, and his staff in my office for tea following the adjournment of the Assembly.

The minister has moved that this House do now adjourn to facilitate the work of committees. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:33.]

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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
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Gaming Authority
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Hon. Lyle Stewart
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Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Capital City Commission