



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

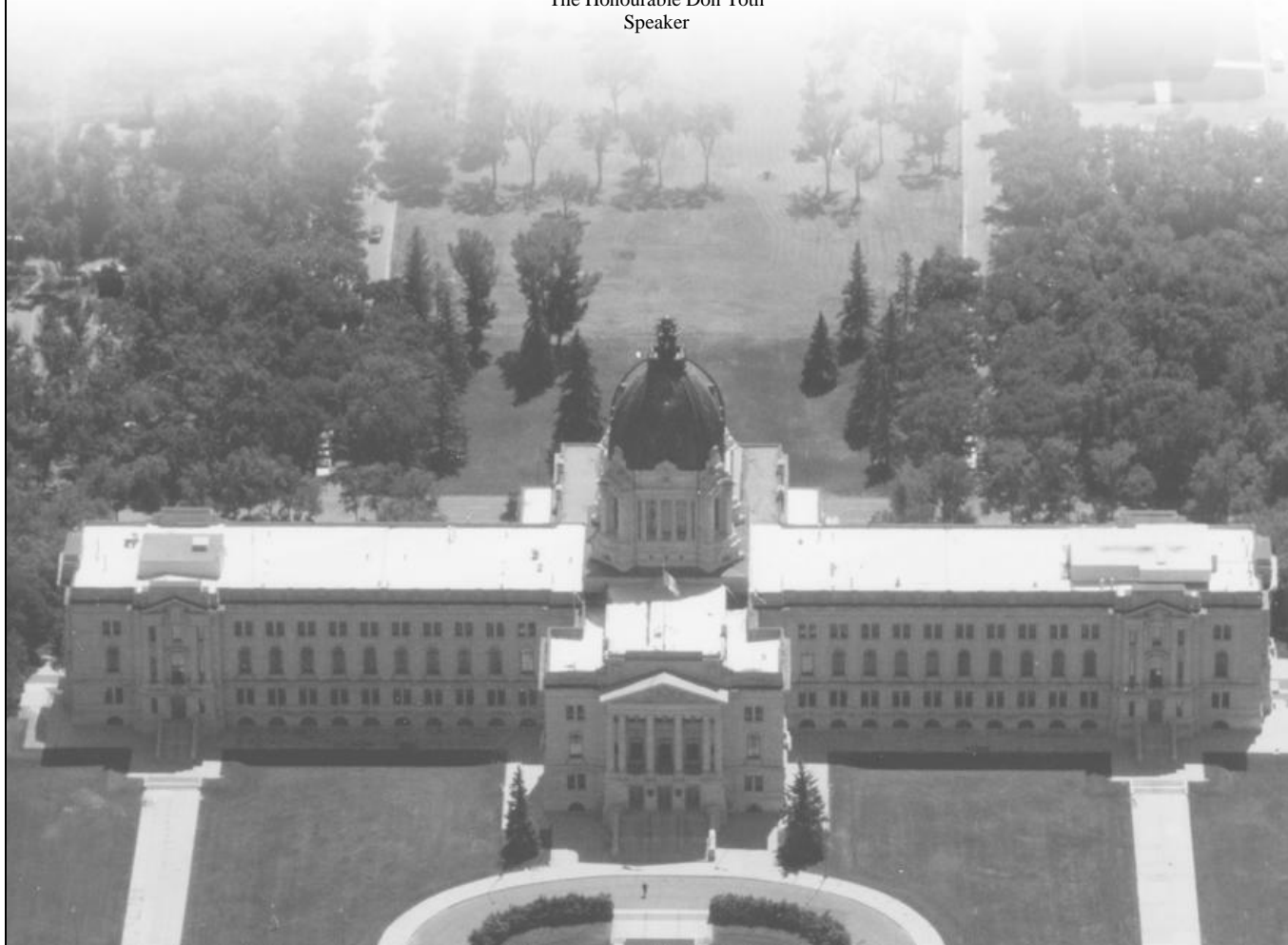
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, may I request leave of members of the Assembly to give an extended introduction?

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you to members for granting that request. It's a pleasure for me, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House someone who truly needs no introduction at all. Brent Butt, originally of Tisdale, Saskatchewan, Canada, now of Vancouver, has joined us this day, seated in your gallery, to help the province announce that next Monday, April 13, will be Corner Gas Day in the province of Saskatchewan — a practice, by the way, we encourage in other provincial capitals and across the country — as Canada's most successful sitcom signs off next Monday.

Over 100 episodes, Mr. Speaker, a viewing audience at any given time up to 1.4 million people, never dropping below 1 million viewers in any given week, Mr. Speaker, and it is all due to the vision and the perseverance of the gentleman that we honour today with this introduction. I think Brent Butt had this idea; perhaps there was another collaborator. And after a successful pitch and a pilot, here we are all these years and episodes later celebrating just a great television success in any country as this now airs in two dozen countries around the world, soon to go into syndication, I expect with the agreement of Mr. Butt and others involved in the production.

And, Mr. Speaker, we just want to say to Brent, we want to thank him for the vision for the show, for the great contribution he's made to Saskatchewan, to the film and television industry in this province. We want to acknowledge all the cast that brought Oscar and Emma and Hank and all the others to life every week for Canadians right across the country. But we also want to thank the production crew that were largely, principally from the province of Saskatchewan, who made the show possible week in and week out.

We want to acknowledge the previous administration who undertook some important infrastructure investments with respect to this industry and taxation policies — ones we're working hard to continue — that are certainly an important part of this success story as well.

And, wholly inadequate as it is, we want to say to Brent, thank you for this vision and for his perseverance that brought *Corner Gas* to our province. We know that for generations to come

many, many people from across our province, across our country are going to drive by Rouleau just a little bit more slowly maybe than they would otherwise.

So, Brent, to you on behalf of a grateful province, we say thank you very much and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to, on behalf of the opposition, on my own behalf, extend a warm welcome to Brent Butt to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon and, with the Premier and all members, to thank him for the creativity and the leadership that he has given to *Corner Gas*.

I understand tonight the Premier has a cameo appearance on *Corner Gas*. I recall having a similar experience several years ago, having rejected one or two scripts that Brent suggested. But I think I also share the dubious honour, and I'm not sure the Premier will end up there, of being on the blooper reel of *Corner Gas* for a period of time.

*Corner Gas* symbolizes so much of what is great about our province. It is that creativity of the artist; it is the determination to succeed. And it is in the genuine warmth of the Saskatchewan population that I think captured the hearts of a nation and now the globe, and we thank Brent Butt for making that all possible.

And I do have a little suggestion for the Premier who has appropriately declared April 13 as Corner Gas Day. Perhaps he could help us all celebrate by declaring it provincial gas tax free day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request extended leave.

**The Speaker:** — The Provincial Secretary has asked for an extended leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, I had to ask for leave for an extended introduction because the last introduction I gave, I was harangued mercilessly by my colleagues for not having asked for extension.

But today, I want to do things appropriately and properly because I have in your gallery today 27 guests, Mr. Speaker. They're all members of the parliamentary program for public service that we offer through this building about a half a dozen times a year. So this group of people represent some of the finest public servants.

We have a number of people from the following ministries: Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; from Agriculture, from Education, Energy and Resources, from Environment, Health, Highways and Infrastructure, Municipal Affairs, the Public Service Commission, Social Services; Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport; and of course the Legislative Assembly Service.

Mr. Speaker, this is a program that has become a bit of a tradition, but I think the participants over the years have found it to be very beneficial. In part of the proceedings today, they're going to hear from a member of the opposition and from a member of the government. Normally that's me, but today the Minister of Social Services, the member from Humboldt, will be standing in in our stead. And I'd like all members of the legislature to welcome these public servants to their legislature and to their ongoing participation in this program today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the minister and welcome the 27 members of the public service to their Assembly. We always enjoy having you come visit us, and it's wonderful to see you here today.

And I generally am the person who comes visits with you after, but today Mr. Taylor's going to stand in for me as I . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from North Battleford will be taking my place today.

Thank you very much for coming and visiting us today, and we hope that you have a wonderful career in the public service of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, two individuals seated in the western gallery. I'm speaking of Iain and Dorene Mentiplay.

Of course the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford will be doing a statement, as shall I, but the two individuals I'm mentioning, of course, are representatives of the Camp Balmoral Sons of Scotland. For those that were listening and for those that were in attendance earlier, the pipes and drums came to help us celebrate Tartan Day. And certainly the Camp Balmoral's got a busy dance card, Mr. Speaker. They're zooming around the city to help the celebrations. But Iain and Dorene have made it back here to listen to the members' statements.

So I'd ask all members to join me in wishing them a happy Tartan Day and to welcome them to their Assembly. Slainte M'hath, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition that speaks to the issue of living costs, including housing, that are having a major impact on Saskatchewan senior citizens, and that more affordable housing options would significantly help Saskatchewan seniors cope with the cost of living, especially those living on fixed incomes. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to expand affordable housing options for Saskatchewan's senior citizens.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions in support of indexing minimum wage to deal with the increasing costs of living in the province of Saskatchewan. And the petition 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 the cost of living increases.

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

The petitions are signed by people from Indian Head, Regina, Melville, and Moose Jaw. I so present. 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 rise today to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know those working in community-based organizations, the low wages result in high staff turnover, and the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity has a negative impact. I'd like to read the prayer, please:

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

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

And the citizens come from the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, and Tisdale. 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 Rosthern, Duck Lake, and Hague. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of a new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners note that in 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan committed funds and resources to the development and construction of a new hospital in North Battleford. The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, ask:

... the Legislative Assembly to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recommit funds and resources for the continued development and construction of a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford and provide the Prairie North Regional Health Authority with the authority necessary to complete this essential and much-needed project.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners all come from the constituency of The Battlefords. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present it. Thank you very much.

**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 students for fairness through 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 Regina as well as students from the University of Saskatchewan 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 long-term care facility in La Ronge. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by the good citizens of La Ronge and area. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Tartan Day

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, today is Tartan Day, a day of appreciation for the Scottish descendants here in Saskatchewan and across the country. Today not only celebrates the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath, but the many contributions the Scots have made to our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members had the opportunity to hear the Sons of Scotland, Camp Balmoral pipe and drum this morning. If not, you couldn't have been in the building. The association, of course, represents one of the largest Scottish organizations in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Scotland has lent its colours to the people of this province and to the history of Saskatchewan. Walter Scott, Saskatchewan's first premier, and W.R. Motherwell, our first minister of Agriculture, for example, were both of old Scotia. And, Mr. Speaker, in examining the roll call of members who have served this Assembly over the course of the last 100 years, we see that the Scots are very well represented.

Perhaps the best known, the one whose accomplishments on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada saw him selected as the greatest Canadian, is one Thomas Clement Douglas, a son of Falkirk, Scotland. But of course, Mr. Speaker, the MacDonalds, McInneses, McIntyres, McIntoshes, and other

Scottish clans are very much in evidence today. And I am proud, as I am sure others are in this Chamber, to be counted among their numbers.

Slainte M'hath, Mr. Speaker. Have a great Tartan Day, and have a good ceilidh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

**Mr. Chisholm:** — Mr. Speaker, today indeed marks Tartan Day here in Saskatchewan and in a number of provinces across our country. It's on this day that we show our appreciation — arguably outwardly, some more than others — for the members of the Scottish clans that settled in this country.

The original concept of creating a day to visibly recognize Scottish heritage was begun in the late 1980s by the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia. Other provinces soon followed their lead. And with the initiative of the current esteemed member from Kindersley, Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan formally announced *The Tartan Day Act* which came into effect in 1992.

Our province has its own tartan that features bands of gold, brown, green, red, yellow, white, and black which our legislative tour guides proudly wear on our behalf.

Here in Saskatchewan, those who consider themselves to be of Scottish heritage comprise one of our larger ethnic groups. The settlement of people of Scottish origin in Saskatchewan dates back more than two centuries to the fur trade. Later on a number of Scottish communities began to develop in places like Arcola, Carlyle, Douglaston, Langbank, Doonside, among many others.

Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned previously that I am of both Scottish and Irish ancestry. And yes, we do enjoy a drink and we do not enjoy paying for it. Mr. Speaker, we would wish to thank you and have the House join me in thanking our Scottish people.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Sound Stage Supports Film Industry

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, back in September 2002, the Saskatchewan-Canada sound stage opened for business and signalled a giant step forward for this province's film and video industry. Between 1993 and 2001, the Saskatchewan film and video industry, consisting of some 40 film production and post-production companies, brought almost a quarter of a billion dollars worth of production to our province.

It was recognized by both industry and government that if this valuable sector was to continue to grow and help diversify the

provincial economy and provide Saskatchewan young people with training and jobs here at home, a production facility would be required.

One group that didn't think the sound stage was a good idea was the Sask Party, who voiced their derision and disapproval of this investment on behalf of the people of this province. How ironic of this Premier to proclaim a Corner Gas Day when according to the creator and star of *Corner Gas*, Brent Butt, it was the very facility that the Premier and his party vocally opposed that made the production of *Corner Gas* possible.

Mr. Speaker, the film and video industry makes a huge contribution to the provincial economy. It provides hundreds of jobs and the opportunity for Saskatchewan young people to pursue jobs in the film industry here at home. The sound stage is a big reason for that, but if it had been up to members opposite, it wouldn't exist.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Women's Rights in Afghanistan

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past week we have been reminded that as Canadians we have much to be thankful for. We live in a society that has dedicated itself to the eradication of human rights abuse including those against women.

It's a different story in Afghanistan where they are considering a law that, if enacted, would not only take away women's rights; they would also be subjected to legalized sexual assault. Under this law, women will be forbidden to leave their own homes without the permission of their husbands. In addition if wives refuse to have sex with their husbands, the men could legally sexually assault them.

The NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries involved in Afghanistan, including Canada, are united in their opposition to this law, which is a throwback to the days of the Taliban. At this time it appears as though international condemnation may stop this attack on the Afghani women.

As a proponent of rights for women and having served for terms as an executive member on the Saskatchewan Regina Council of Women and the Canadian federation of women whose organizations work hard on behalf of women and girls, I hope to pray that Afghani politicians do the right thing and reject this proposed law.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Project Day 2009 at the University of Regina

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, Saturday was a day of creativity, intelligence, knowledge, and youthful enthusiasm coming together in the form of Project Day 2009, the day for

graduating students at the Faculty of Engineering, University of Regina, to present their final projects to the world.

This year I attended two presentations. The first was an environmental systems presentation on grey water reclamation and reuse at a local restaurant. The system in question allowed the restaurant to reclaim and reuse 80 per cent of the grey water from their dishwasher. Given increasing concerns in our society about the availability, conservation, and price of water, we are likely to see far more of these systems in the future.

An industrial systems presentation also focused on conservation. The student presenters had noticed a fair amount of spillage from a conventional draft system for pouring a pint of beer. Their automatic beer dispenser consistently produced a pint in less time and with much less spillage but with an acceptable beer-to-head ratio of 6:1. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, I was not able to join the presenters afterwards at the local pub for more extensive research on the fluid dynamics of beer.

These were but two of many excellent presentations and displays by the engineering students in environmental, industrial, electronics, petroleum, and software systems. Please join me in congratulating these young engineers for their projects and Dean Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul and his faculty for organizing yet another stimulating and fun day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

#### Public Speaking Competition Held in Blaine Lake

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I had the pleasure of being the guest speaker at the 4-H provincial public speaking competition held in Blaine Lake. The theme of the competition was Let Your Voice Be Heard, and the participants had no trouble doing that.

Thirty-two contestants between the age of 6 and 21 from across Saskatchewan showcased their talents. The quality of all the speeches was excellent, and the judges had a difficult time selecting the winners. The young speakers demonstrated poise, knowledge, and passion in their speeches. Lionel Casavant and the organizing committee in Blaine Lake did a great job hosting the event that included ethnic entertainment and a fabulous Ukrainian buffet at the awards banquet.

In the cloverbud category, ages six to eight years old, Sara Edwards from Glaslyn took first place with Wyatt Radics from Leask the runner-up. In the junior category, ages 9 to 12, saw Adam Thompson from Kelliher come in first, and David Edwards from Glaslyn was the runner-up. Intermediate category, ages 13 to 15, the winner was Taryn Reimer, who hails from White Fox, and the runner-up was Tyson Row, whose hometown is Marshall, Saskatchewan. Aimee Moore from Tisdale was awarded first place in the senior category, ages 16 to 21. Kendall McCormick from Weyburn was runner-up.

Mr. Speaker, 4-H is on the move, membership is increasing. I

ask you and all members to join me in congratulating the contestants. I also want to commend the 4-H club leaders in our province for their time and effort in mentoring our province's young people.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatoon United Way Achievements

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, United Way of Saskatoon & Area's primary role is to raise funds for the community and invest them in agencies that provide a wide range of high-quality human services to meet the needs of our community.

Mr. Speaker, the United Way 2008 community campaign results were unveiled, and I along with members from the Saskatoon constituencies of Centre, Eastview, and Massey Place and almost 400 United Way supporters attended the achievement banquet held at TCU Place. United Way of Saskatoon & Area celebrated an unprecedented success, raising \$4,138,926 to help build our community safety net and support those in need. This achievement, the highest in the United Way of Saskatoon & Area's history, is due to the incredible efforts of the thousands of volunteers, donors, and partners.

Mr. Speaker, United Way of Saskatoon & Area came into existence in 1959 as a result of the partnership agreement between the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce and the Saskatoon District Labour Council. Business and labour leaders came together to form the United Way because they saw the need for the community to act collectively, identify human service needs, and raise funds to address them.

Mr. Speaker, in order for the community to be truly great, it must be great for everyone. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the United Way of Saskatoon & Area for embracing a philosophy that supports our community and leaves no one behind. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Auto Insurance Rates

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's lower auto insurance rates have been a significant factor in the lower cost of living in Saskatchewan. Earlier today we learned that, as of November 1, Saskatchewan drivers will be paying up to twelve and a half per cent more to insure light passenger vehicles.

This rate hike comes on the heels of a massive power increase coming May 1, and after months of gouging Saskatchewan consumers with high natural gas bills all this past winter. To the minister: why does the Sask Party continue to make Saskatchewan people pay more for home heating, electricity,

and now auto insurance?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had the opportunity to announce the 4.2 per cent increase that SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] will be asking the rate review panel for.

Our economy is growing. There's 50,000 more vehicles and trailers in the province today than there was a year ago. Growth means that there's more taxpayers, that there's more going on in the province. Wages are increasing at a record rate; labour costs are increasing as well. 4.2 per cent is the first increase in the last eight years, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan will continue to have the lowest automobile insurance rates in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot of excuses. The SGI auto funds rate stabilization reserve provides a cushion — not for the Sask Party as the minister likely believes — but a cushion to protect Saskatchewan drivers from big increases in auto insurance rates. This reserve today still has more than \$100 million in it.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: given the size of the rate stabilization reserve, how can the Sask Party possibly justify making Saskatchewan drivers pay more for auto insurance?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, the rate reserve is at \$100 million. It's at the bottom of the range where it is supposed to be. Over the last year the portfolio, the investment portfolio of SGI was not unlike other investments portfolios. Indeed it had a challenging year but, Mr. Speaker, the Crown continues to be run well. What is happening, in addition to the increase, is some rebalancing that members opposite refused to do, so to ensure that there's fairness in the rates that are allocated to all vehicle types.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, they had all of the answers 18 short months ago and darn few of them today. Mr. Speaker, low auto insurance and utility rates helped make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live in all of Canada, but how quick things change. Under the Sask Party, Saskatoon has fallen from the first to the fourth most affordable city in Canada according to the Sask Party's own budget.

The minister assured this Assembly on March 18 auto insurance rates would remain the lowest in Canada, despite investment losses in the Auto Fund and boondoggles like the \$670,000 the Sask Party wasted on their failed enhanced driver's licence scheme. Today in a media scrum, the minister sounded less sure.

So to the minister: notwithstanding what might happen in other jurisdictions, will the Sask Party guarantee here today that Saskatchewan drivers will still be paying the lowest auto insurance rates in all of Canada after November 1?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, people across Canada are voting with their feet. They're coming to Saskatchewan. Yes, they're bringing their vehicles. They're bringing their kids. They're bringing all their resources to this province to ensure that we do have the fastest growing economy in the country.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, some costs are going up in our province — about \$5 per month per vehicle — but, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members opposite, this is also the place that last fall saw the largest, largest decrease in income taxes ever in the history of Saskatchewan, some 80,000 people removed from those rolls. Mr. Speaker, just a short couple of weeks ago, the largest property tax decrease ever in the history of Saskatchewan . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Announced right here in this legislature by my colleague, the Finance minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will continue to grow. It'll continue to attract more people. It will continue to lead the way, and SGI customers will continue to pay amongst the lowest rates in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

### Uranium Development Partnership Report

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's worn pro-nuclear blinders from the beginning. The member from Prince Albert Carlton admitted to this Assembly on October 28 of last year, with regard to the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] that, I quote, “. . . you bet we are playing with a stacked deck and we wouldn't have it any other way.”

And the minister himself told his own party convention that the purpose of the UDP was to advise the government on how best to proceed, not whether they should. To the minister: will he admit here today that a report from the UDP rejecting a nuclear reactor was never a possibility?



**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.

Mr. Speaker, the UDP was chaired by a nuclear physicist, the vice-president of the University of Saskatchewan; and represented First Nations, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, labour through the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers], Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the University of Regina, and the environmental community, as well as industry experts.

Mr. Speaker. I had no idea, and neither did anybody else in this room, let alone the rest of the province, what the results of the UDP would be. I'm delighted that they are what they are. I think the UDP had the confidence because of its structure to not only recommend certain things, but to also recommend against certain things.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Well let's talk about where they got their confidence because of their structure. Three of the member's panels — a full 25 per cent of the membership — sit on the board of Bruce Power, the only company that they've shown interest in in building a nuclear reactor.

Two are CEOs [chief executive officer] of uranium mining companies. The so-called environmentalist that he spoke of once said in a magazine "People who don't want to live near nuclear facilities should probably move."

Another member obviously knew what the Sask Party wanted to hear, telling the *Calgary Herald* April 2 that the government is, "very gung ho" about a nuclear reactor. So to the minister: why won't he just admit what everybody else already knows, that the Sask Party stacked the UDP to ensure that their report endorsed a nuclear reactor?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that is probably the most ridiculous assertion that I've heard in this hon. Assembly for some time.

But I'll tell you this. I'll tell you this. To the member: almost everyone in the province thinks that Dwain Lingenfelter will be the next leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party] . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, almost everyone.

I'm just going to tell you one of the things — and it's a target-rich environment for Dwain Lingenfelter quotes, Mr.

Speaker — but I'm going to say one of the things he said is, I'm not going to lay out the pros and cons of nuclear power. That discussion has been going on for decades in Saskatchewan, and most people seem to have entrenched positions. While we've been having that long debate, the rest of the world has moved on and concluded that nuclear will be an increasingly important part of the energy mix.

That's what Dwain Lingenfelter said, Mr. Speaker, and that's what they said last Thursday when they voted for our motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Now in spite of the member's near-Freudian fixation with Lingenfelter, it's interesting that, and I think the people of Saskatchewan find it unsettling that he spends more time researching Lingenfelter quotes than he does consulting with him.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, he claims that the UDP was unbiased, but you'd never know it from how they went about their work. They went on company organized tours of nuclear facilities. They were asked to read pro-nuclear books. They obviously didn't have much to discuss as a group, since they only met a few times during the reporting period. They spent more than 75 per cent of their entire budget to hire a pro-nuclear consulting firm.

To the minister: given all of this, how can he stand there with a straight face and claim that the UDP was unbiased?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question as well. It's always fun.

Mr. Speaker, you know, yes, apparently the UDP toured a nuclear facility. Imagine that. Imagine that. They're studying the nuclear cycle, Mr. Speaker. If I was going to buy a car, Mr. Speaker, and I bet that member too, I wonder would he go to a car dealership or would he go someplace else. It's absolutely appropriate what the UDP did and how they carried out their business. I'm proud of the work that they've done. They represent a broad cross-section of our society, and more power to them.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When the Saskatchewan Party announced the creation of the Uranium

Development Partnership, they did not tell anyone that the majority of the work would be done by an outside consulting firm. The public only became aware of this fact after the release of the minister's order creating the UDP from a freedom of information request. The order reveals that the decision to hire an outside consulting firm was "experience in the nuclear industry," was made by the Saskatchewan Party government, not by the UDP.

To the minister: why did he make the decision to hire an outside consulting firm, and why didn't he leave such operational decisions to the supposedly arm's-length UDP?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government, through Crown Investments Corporation, paid for the UDP, and accordingly we chose the best possible facilitators that we could. McKinsey & Company do business, Mr. Speaker, in 50 countries in the world, with two major offices in this one. We're not dealing in the minor leagues here as that member is so accustomed to doing, Mr. Speaker. McKinsey & Company were the absolute best people we could get for the job and we got them.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The UDP spent most of the Sask Party's \$3 million budget to hire this firm, McKinsey & Company, or about \$25,000 per day, Mr. Speaker, is what that works out to. We know that the company's services didn't come cheap. We know that the company worked on this project full time. What we don't know is exactly what taxpayers got for their money.

To the minister: what did taxpayers get for their money from McKinsey & Company? What role did McKinsey play in preparing the final report? More specifically, Mr. Speaker, did McKinsey write the final report?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. McKinsey & Company performed the duties that facilitators normally perform when they're working for boards of this type — boards who meet from time to time to set direction, and to finally in the final analysis, make decisions. They provided information. They distilled information. Mr. Speaker, they assisted.

The member asked me if they wrote the report. Of course they assisted in writing the report. They assisted the board in writing the report. That would be their job, Mr. Speaker. They did it, and they did it very well. They condensed volumes of documents to a manner in which the board could deal with, and I congratulate them on a job well done.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Public Consultation Process Regarding Nuclear Development

**Mr. Taylor:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious the debate over the future of nuclear power in Saskatchewan has been tightly scripted for months, and the upcoming public consultations may be the only real opportunity for input that anyone who isn't the cheerleader for the nuclear power will have. Mr. Speaker, it's critical that these consultations are conducted in a fair, open, and transparent manner and that they provide members of the public, including critics of nuclear power, with the opportunity to be heard.

To the minister: what role, if any, will McKinsey & Company play in organizing or managing these public consultations? And if they are involved, how much more will they be paid for their work?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, a full and comprehensive public consultation process has been set up with nine meetings spread around the province where people can attend in person. Also a website at [www.saskuranium.ca](http://www.saskuranium.ca) where people can obtain information about the UDP report and/or voice their opinions.

There's a phone number that people can phone to have an executive summary of the report forwarded to them. There's a mailing address, Mr. Speaker, for people like myself who would rather do it that way than use electronic communications. And, Mr. Speaker, those opportunities are open, those opportunities are available to people right now and will continue to be until 15 June.

The nine meetings will be held, plus three days of consultations for stakeholders besides that. Mr. Speaker, this is the most fair process. And no, McKinsey & Company will not be involved in it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, there's going to be some debate about that comment the minister just made about this being an open and fair process. Last week in this House, the Minister of Enterprise assured this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan there would be a credible, a credible consultation process for the people of Saskatchewan to engage in.

Then incredibly on Friday, he announces that this public consultation process shall last a matter of 18 days — two and a half weeks. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: does the Premier believe that it is credible to suggest that a consultation process on a issue of this magnitude deserves only two weeks?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess there's a number of options before the province of Saskatchewan in terms of discussing this issue. You can have an interminable process, Mr. Speaker, one that doesn't have an end date.

You can choose, Mr. Speaker, to espouse the view that there ought not to be any public consultation at all, that the debate is over, as the would-be successor to the hon. member has said very, very clearly and on the record. Mr. Lingenfelter, who is apparently the favourite to become the new leader of the opposition, has said he doesn't support any consultation process at all, that it should just happen. Time for debate is over.

We don't agree. We believe Saskatchewan people should be engaged. We first started talking about this in opposition, reiterated our interest in value-added uranium opportunities in the platform. We've been talking about it since, Mr. Speaker. People are aware of it because they've been sending me emails and letters in large numbers, both for and against nuclear development and other uranium value-added opportunities.

The debate has been under way for a very, very long time. It's going to become very focused and broad-based across the province in these public meetings, and I look forward to the input, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, even the Premier cannot stand in his place and justify a two-week, a two-week consultation period for an issue of this magnitude. Now over the course of the weekend, Mr. Speaker, many of us saw the large government ads that were placed in our newspapers, heard the radio spots — at some great expense — telling us all that we could refer to the website for information about this consultation process. We could go to the website and find out about this consultation process.

Well last week, Mr. Speaker, you'll remember, we had a problem with blackouts on government information. Well today I have a whiteout, Mr. Speaker. I have a whiteout on government information. I go to the website to try . . .

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — I understand, Mr. Speaker, this government does not want to hear this kind of questioning, but they're going to hear it — not just from this opposition — but they're going to hear it from the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I go to the website, which they advertised, to find out about the consultation process. For instance when are these meetings to be held? At what time? Where? Who will be facilitating these meetings? How may I approach them?

I go to the website, and what do I find, Mr. Speaker? I find this page, one sentence. It says, well, attend one of the public meetings that someday will be announced here on this website.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue of tremendous magnitude for the future of the people of Saskatchewan. How is it that they can claim this to be a credible process when they announce a consultation and then can't even announce the dates of the meetings?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, you know, governments in the past, including the one led by that member opposite, have said very clearly to Saskatchewan people that, on behalf of their government, that they believe Saskatchewan should be moving to add value to uranium.

That member opposite talked about the need to look at nuclear reactor as an option for the province's power. That member opposite, on behalf of his government of the day, talked about, in their Saskatchewan action plan on the economy, adding value to uranium.

[14:15]

Do you know much consultation that they announced as a result of that decision, that fiat? None. None, Mr. Speaker. Not one element of consultation. Not one public meeting scheduled. They just said, look, this is a priority of the government of Saskatchewan of the day.

We said that prior to the election. We said the same thing during the last election, that we wanted to look at these opportunities. We laid out a process to analyze those opportunities. The UDP has said some of it makes sense, some of it doesn't make sense. And now through online input, through letters, and through contacting MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and through public meetings, people will have a focused opportunity for participation.

That is a lot more opportunity for consultation with the people of this province than that member ever offered when he either said, we don't want nuclear or we do want nuclear — depending on what side of the issue he was on, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, may I remind the Premier, the question is about the consultation process that he and his government is proposing. We're asking some questions about the process. They will not tell us, either in the press on Friday or through the website — which they've advertised with public dollars — they will not tell us when these meetings are going to be, except generally in May and June.

Well perhaps then they can tell us today the who of these meetings. These are intended, I expect, to be consultation meetings. I expect the government will be there to listen. Which

of the ministers will be in attendance at these consultation meetings? Who will be chairing these meetings? Who will be facilitating the consultation process of which they are so proud?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to receive that question. We will be announcing a chairman for this process in the next few days and would be more than happy to announce it in this honourable Assembly and tell that member as soon as it is public.

I'm flexible on the subject, but I don't believe it's my role to be at these meetings, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's for me to influence the process one way or another. The members think that's funny, Mr. Speaker, but I think that we want to know what the people of Saskatchewan think, not what politicians think. We already know what they . . . Well, I guess we don't.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue of debate here is not just simply an issue of a nuclear reactor. It is the issue of the energy future, the electrical energy future for the people of Saskatchewan. Now this government has already devoted two and a half million, \$3 million in the research around one potential component of that future.

My question today is to the Premier: will he commit today to devote those same kind of resources to alternative energies, to renewable energies, and then, and then consult the people of Saskatchewan so that every option can be put in proper context with proper information so that an informed debate can happen in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the discussion around those alternative sources of energy have happened in the past in this province. And in fact under their government, and now under our government, we're moving forward with renewables. We're going to be moving forward, as the Minister of SaskPower said, with respect to wind, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be moving forward with respect to biomass. We've already advanced the geothermal issue, Mr. Speaker, per our election campaign. Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward with respect to net metering, something that side of the House approved.

When it comes to uranium though, Mr. Speaker, we have done something different. That side of the House, Mr. Speaker, used to play both sides of the fence on the issue. They'd say they're in favour of adding value. They may be in favour of nuclear, then have a convention. And the convention would threaten to revolt, and so they'd kind of back off on it a little bit, Mr. Speaker. But they still made pronouncements without ever

bothering to ask Saskatchewan people. Neither did that party ever ask the people of Saskatchewan whether or not they supported that party's policy that all we ever should do is mine it, Mr. Speaker.

We have a bigger vision for the resources of this province, for the economy of this province, Mr. Speaker. We will fully engage the people of Saskatchewan in terms of sustainable energy, affordable energy, and we will add value to our resources in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier and this government wants the people of Saskatchewan to believe that this is somehow a credible process. Well get this — the minister responsible goes to his own political party's convention and says, this UDP report is not about whether we're going ahead or not. We're going ahead, and they're going to tell us how to do it.

A member of the UDP itself, a panel member in Calgary, the day before the UDP is released says, and I quote, this Sask Party government is "gung ho" on a nuclear reactor. They will not give us an adequate consultation. They say two weeks is fine. They will not present balanced options for the people of Saskatchewan to consider. They will not apparently even be in attendance at the consultation themselves.

Again my question to the Premier is: how can he suggest that this isn't a railroad to build a reactor as opposed to being a fair, open consultation process?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, there ought not to be any doubt at all from the people of the province, or that member opposite, that this government would be looking at adding value to uranium. We campaigned on it, Mr. Speaker. We talked about it in opposition. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday in this House, I wasn't able to be here, but I understand that members opposite stood up and voted in favour of that very thing, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover here's the NDP *Energy and Climate Change Plan* from 2007, I'm assuming endorsed by that member when he was the premier of the province. It says, "Ongoing assessments of the potential for a nuclear reactor to supply Saskatchewan's domestic requirements or for export are regularly carried out by SaskPower."

Oh, is that right, Mr. Speaker? And what kind of public consultation process was there to set the stage for that kind of a statement in the official policy of the government? None, Mr. Speaker. I will take this minister and this government's record, in terms of engaging Saskatchewan people and the opportunity to add value on uranium and find sustainable affordable energy for a growing economy. I'll take this side over that side every day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

#### Growing Forward Agreement

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I, along with the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Gerry Ritz, announced the signing of a new Growing Forward federal-provincial agreement.

This agreement will deliver more than \$216 million in non-business risk management programming over the next four years to Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers. Highlights of the program include \$52 million for a province-wide farm and ranch infrastructure program. This is an expansion of last year's successful program in southwest Saskatchewan.

This program will help producers throughout the province secure water sources to mitigate the effects of drought. Eligible applicants include farmers, ranchers, rural municipalities, and Indian bands across Saskatchewan. Funding will be provided for up to 65 per cent of the cost of community wells. The program will also cover 50 per cent of the eligible costs of on-farm projects which include large- and small-diameter wells, pipeline, and dugouts.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of a long-term infrastructure investment by this government. This program will provide benefits to farmers and ranchers for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Growing Forward agreement also includes funding for the environmental programming. Environmental farm planning has been very popular amongst producers across Saskatchewan. This programming will provide assistance to help producers address the environmental risks in their operation. Eligible projects include the purchase of GPS [Global Positioning System], fencing around feed supplies to prevent wildlife damage, relocation of livestock facilities.

Mr. Speaker, Growing Forward also indicates funding for farm business planning, research, and voluntary food safety programming. These programs will help, I believe, farmers and ranchers address a number of specific needs.

Mr. Speaker, these Growing Forward programs are going to provide long-term benefits to farmers and ranchers. This government is putting our focus back on the farm gate, Mr. Speaker, where it should be. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I want to thank the minister for sending over his ministerial statement before question period. I have had an opportunity just briefly to read the agreement that was signed between Canada and Saskatchewan regarding this new Growing Forward

program.

And one of the things that I'm extremely interested in — and we had a discussion of this in spending estimates for the Ministry of Agriculture — is performance indicators. And I know that during our estimate discussion, I noted that there was a significant decrease in performance measures for the Ministry of Agriculture when you compared those performance measures . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Decrease, when you compare those performance measures to '07-08 when there were a number of measures.

I do note however that Canada is demanding that there be performance indicators and targets and so some of the discussion that was left out of the minister's plan for his department this year is certainly contained in this new agreement with Canada.

So I will be interested to know a year from now whether or not the Ministry of Agriculture meets the performance measures and indicators that have been laid out by Canada in this document, because I think that really will indicate how and where the ministry has been accountable for some very significant taxpayers' dollars.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, I request leave to redirect a Bill to a different standing policy committee.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

### MOTIONS

#### Redirection of Bill No. 46

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That Bill No. 46, *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008* be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Human Services and committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That Bill No. 46, *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008* be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Human Services and committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 89 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*/Loi n° 3 de 2009 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*. Mr. Speaker, this Bill will help to fulfill the election commitments of this government; namely to achieve a fairer balance for education funding, to assure the pre-kindergarten to grade 12 education system is properly funded, and to ensure the education portion of property tax is further reduced.

After carefully considering the recommendations provided by Member of the Legislative Assembly for Rosetown-Elrose and his review of education funding, we stand ready to implement a long-term solution for education property tax relief, while increasing government's responsibility for the province's education system.

Mr. Speaker, *The Education Amendment Act* will ensure property owners benefit from reduced education property taxes. This legislation also ensures school divisions have the funding they need to support a strong and accountable education system.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, the Bill will provide the necessary authority for the province to cut and cap mill rates for the three major property classes. This move will ensure fiscal equity and taxation fairness among property owners across the province. Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't expect to pay a different amount in the provincial sales tax from one community to another in the province of Saskatchewan. Now property owners, no matter where they live, will have the same mill rate set on their property whether they live in La Ronge, in Swift Current, or in Canora.

The Bill continues to respect the constitutional right of minority faith school divisions to levy taxes from members of the minority faith, and outlines the process for a separate school division to set tax rates. The Bill also continues to authorize school divisions to collect the education property taxes from their municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bold new approach that addresses a long-standing concern regarding Saskatchewan's reliance on property taxes to fund education while taking into account the adequate funding for education for the province's youth. As a result of this amendment, by 2010, \$156 million will be put back into the pockets of property owners. Provincial funding for education will increase from 51 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2010.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — To achieve the increase of provincial funding for the education system, the province will boost its share of funding to school divisions by \$241 million to cover teacher salary increases and costs related to inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Education has moved second reading of Bill No. 89, *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to speak at second reading of Bill No. 89, the Act to amend *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the explanation provided by the minister just moments ago and I have a few comments to make, both on his words and, Mr. Speaker, on the legislation in front of us. But, Mr. Speaker, as the title of the legislation implies, this is the third amendment to *The Education Act* since this legislative session opened, Mr. Speaker. This government never tires of amending *The Education Act*, Mr. Speaker.

It does strike one as odd in the sense that usually, Mr. Speaker, a ministry or a department tends to view the needs for changes to Acts, Mr. Speaker, on an annual or a per session basis. And here we are, Mr. Speaker, doing the third amendment in a row, Mr. Speaker, when in fact this government could have addressed this issue, Mr. Speaker, more simply; especially, Mr. Speaker, when the second amendment could actually have been an amendment to the first Act, Mr. Speaker, and have been dealt with in the committee in this Chamber without having to go through the separate Act and the separate debate process here, Mr. Speaker.

But that having been said, there is something that the public should understand in this context, Mr. Speaker, and that is for all intents and purposes, this Act here, although it's not related to the financial affairs of the province, is really an enabling piece of legislation. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it could be argued this is a budget Bill because the changes that the Act proposes are a direct result of financial changes that have occurred in the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are indeed seeing the government changing the way in which education is financed in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation — the public has to understand — this piece of legislation directs how this change in education funding is going to take place.

Let's remember, Mr. Speaker, that up to this point the provincial government provided funding for school boards. School boards reviewed their needs and made decisions based on what the community, the students, and the local area required to provide adequate and appropriate education. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, in doing so, the boards would decide, over and above the finances provided by the province, what did that local school division require in terms of funding in order to provide all of the services that the local area desired — whether that was size of classrooms, types of programs offered, that sort

of thing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the school boards have been saying for years that they needed additional provincial support because without additional provincial support, the local needs, the extra needs had to be dealt with by increasing education property tax at the local level. Boards have always said, we need additional funding from the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, this budget does indeed change the way education is financed to the tune of about \$200 million, as the minister said in his speech. He says that this budget will provide an additional \$200 million to the boards.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the education portion of property tax was, prior to this, raising approximately \$700 million province-wide, Mr. Speaker. So for the province to be providing 100 per cent of the capital of education financing would have required an additional 700 million on an annual basis with cost of living applied in each of the years in the future in order to ensure that the education system today will be funded exactly the same as it was the previous year and the year before that and to address more local needs.

Bottom line in all of this, Mr. Speaker, is that the boards still are going to need to ensure that they have the capacity to raise currently about \$500 million a year over and above what the province provides them.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the public also needs to understand is that this legislation restricts the abilities of the boards to raise any additional money. What this legislation does, Mr. Speaker, is that it says that there will be grants provided by the province, Mr. Speaker, based on, and then a provincial mill rate applied. Well, Mr. Speaker, the legislation doesn't, as the minister said, ensure boards have the funding they need. I'm quoting the minister from his speech just a few moments ago. This legislation ensures the boards have the funding they need, Mr. Speaker, to provide adequate and appropriate educational needs at the local level.

What this legislation actually does, Mr. Speaker, is ensures that the minister controls what's going on within the education system in the province, Mr. Speaker. This legislation quite simply can be viewed and seen as a sweeping centralization of the authority for the Education minister over the education needs in this province. We can actually, Mr. Speaker, anecdotally refer to this legislation as an education centralization Act for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This legislation gives the minister the ability to direct boards and the decision that the boards will make. Mr. Speaker, the minister's approval will be needed to set budgets, plans, expenditures, purchases of assets, sale, divestments of assets, or borrowing money.

Mr. Speaker, the Act provides the minister with more authority over the delivery of education at the local level than local boards have had or will have obviously in the future. Boards have lost their autonomy, Mr. Speaker, to make decisions to deal with very specific local needs, and they've lost the scope of their decision-making authority. Mr. Speaker, it could be

summarized in saying that the boards have now lost their ability to respond to local needs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard this frequently in the past about the ability of the boards to fund the need specifically to their community. One of those needs, Mr. Speaker, very specifically addressed in the past, has been special-needs students and special-needs education in the system. Mr. Speaker, boards have frequently said that they need additional financial support to ensure that they can meet some of these very expensive requirements in delivering adequate education to all of the students within an area.

Mr. Speaker, one hopes that this centralization of authority is not a sign of things to come with regards to other government, local government, decision-making authorities in the future. Mr. Speaker, members opposite will know — not every member of the public will know — that in fact a while ago the province of Alberta made a decision to go to a single health board in the province of Alberta. Rural Alberta — the people who live outside of Edmonton, Calgary, and some would argue Red Deer, Mr. Speaker — rural Alberta has responded very negatively to the removal of local boards of health's activities in terms of deciding what happens in the delivery of health care in that province.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have discussed in the past, in fact members opposite in an election platform, Mr. Speaker, talked about moving to a single health board in the province of Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is not something that I believe — nor do I believe my constituents in rural Saskatchewan believe — that we should be operating from a central authority for the delivery of decision making in health care. Nor, Mr. Speaker, do I believe that rural Saskatchewan is comfortable with the centralizing of authority in the hands of the Minister of Education over the decisions of the school boards nor the delivery of education through the school boards into the community.

Mr. Speaker, the government, under the auspices of reducing taxes, has made a fundamental change in the way our children will be educated. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe for a minute that the public believes that a change in the way their taxes are collected should have an impact on the way in which their children are educated. Mr. Speaker, I think had there been adequate consultation with the public, they would not have placed these two matters, Mr. Speaker, on the same level of priority when it comes to what they wanted their government to do.

Number one, they wanted to see — the public wanted to see — a reduction, Mr. Speaker, in the way in which their taxes were collected on property for education. But, Mr. Speaker, they also wanted to know that their provincial government would adequately fund, for local purposes, the delivery of education throughout our province. This Act, Mr. Speaker, represents a historic change and as such eliminates the authorities of the school board.

Now the boards, Mr. Speaker, will argue very clearly, the boards will argue very clearly that they were not consulted on this matter. The minister and the members opposite will argue that the member for Rosetown-Elrose did a sweeping study of

the province and in fact talked to the school board members, Mr. Speaker. But the boards will tell you that they weren't asked for an opinion on a provincial mill rate that eliminated their authority or autonomy, Mr. Speaker.

The minister, in his comments to a question the other day, indicated that he asked school boards to think of everything up to 100 per cent funding by the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if that was indeed his intention for the province to 100 per cent fund education or not. But the boards of education, had they been presented in a question-and-answer format — or a format that said, here's what we're thinking; you respond to it, Mr. Speaker — the boards would certainly have argued in favour of maintaining some access to the local property tax base in order to ensure that the local needs are able to be financed when the provincial priorities don't match with the local or community priorities. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that on occasion that happens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have in this Assembly on occasion talked about the way in which this government would prefer to legislate and then consult. Well, Mr. Speaker, there was consultation on the issue of reduction of education property tax payments, Mr. Speaker. There was no consultation on the removal of the autonomy or the authority of the boards, nor was there consultation about adequate financing of education.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Bill in front of us today is about adequate financing of education. The Bill in front of us today is not about reducing education portion of property taxes. It's about financing education. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is about the centralizing of authority for education in the office of the minister — not something that the public was consulted upon and not something that the public has a lot of sympathy for.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, school boards, teachers, students, and the community are now at the whim, and some would argue the whimsy, of the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, the boards are likely to see a huge increase in the amount of reporting and accounting processes that they will have to engage in. Some will argue, Mr. Speaker, that the boards will actually see an increase in their costs as they are required to increase the amount of paperwork provided to the Minister of Education, the amount of reporting that they must do to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, for the members of the public, I think it should be pointed out that the minister, who had his time to speak, chose not to address a lot of these issues, and now from his seat he's trying to address those issues. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that if the minister had something to say, he should have said it in his speech, Mr. Speaker, and not from the seat of his chair.

Mr. Speaker, as we address this piece of legislation, Bill No. 89, we are addressing this from the perspective of education financing. We are addressing it from the position of concern for the role of teachers and professionals within the system. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the most important work is that between students and the teachers, and we're very concerned

about what the future holds under this new environment, Mr. Speaker — this constrictive environment that the minister has created.

We worry, Mr. Speaker, that teachers can be pulled from the meaningful work with students to following the whims of the minister — directives — and they can be bogged down by reports, compiling statistics, and other time-consuming process that the minister may choose to impose upon the boards and their employees, Mr. Speaker — whether it's administrative or teaching staff — in order to comply with what is directed by the minister.

So, Mr. Speaker, although the minister did not address these issues in his speech, there are going to be a number of questions raised with him when we get to committee. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House wish to continue to consult with boards, teachers, students, parents, and communities, Mr. Speaker. And I know that other members of the New Democratic Party caucus will wish to speak on this legislation. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, in order to facilitate that process on this side of the House, I would move that debate on Bill 89, an Act to amend *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)* be now adjourned.

**The Speaker:** — The member from The Battlefords has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Bill No. 90 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act, 2009***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, before I get into the context of the second reading speech regarding that Bill, I want to put on the record some information for the benefit of the members opposite, and especially for the member from The Battlefords.

And he needs to be aware that in the Estimates document, on page no. 7, there's a column that is entitled, specified budget Bills. And, Mr. Speaker, it says this: "Below are the budget bills that Government has specified to be passed in the spring session pursuant to Rule 33(1)(c) of the Legislative Assembly."

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of Bills, but the very first two, the first one is *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)* and the second one is *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act, 2009*.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, for the member to have stood on the last Bill and said, we don't even know, we don't know whether this has been declared a specified Bill, well, Mr. Speaker, I guess this side of the House will have to do the research for him as well because now we'll have to indicate that he can find it on page 7. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess he better be



sure because there are five other Bills there that the member opposite needs to know that are declared as specified.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us, the Bill before us is the miscellaneous statute Act. And, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is one of two, Mr. Speaker. It's one of two I am introducing. The first one we've already introduced. And the member has a lot of questions on that Bill, and we'll clarify those questions for him in committee. So I encourage him to move that Bill to committee where he'll get all the answers that he wants.

But, Mr. Speaker, this second Bill helps us fulfill the election commitments of this government, one of which was a commitment to address a long-standing concern with how education property tax has been used in this province to fund education. Mr. Speaker, with the changes we are implementing, we are making life more affordable for Saskatchewan people while ensuring our education system is properly funded. To support this, I put before the House an amendment to repeal *The Education Property Tax Credit Act*.

Our government has believed that, for far too long, property tax payers have paid a disproportionate amount of the cost of education in this province. In the last election, we promised to ensure that the education portion of property tax would be further reduced through enhanced education property tax credits. Mr. Speaker, the education property tax credit was a stopgap measure until a long-term solution could be found.

In 2008-09, our government provided \$158.6 million in provincial property tax credits. Mr. Speaker, the 2008-09 rebate program included rate increases from 38 per cent to 47 per cent on agricultural land and from 10 per cent to 12 per cent on commercial and residential properties. The education property tax credit by class for 2008 was the following: 91.3 million for agricultural property, 20.1 million for commercial property, and \$47.2 million for residential property.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that this year's budget has outlined a long-term solution to the issue of education property tax. Under our new system of funding education, we will cut and cap education property tax rates by setting province-wide tax rates for each of the three major property classes.

As a result of the changes we are implementing, provincial funding for education will increase from 51 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2010. Between 2008 and 2010, the total amount of long-term property tax relief provided to the people of Saskatchewan will be over \$314 million, Mr. Speaker. As a result of our government's permanent solution for education property tax, we no longer need legislation for the administration of education property tax credits, and we are moving to eliminate reference to them in *The Education Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the changes set forth in this Act will help our government to meet its commitment to achieve a fairer balance for education funding to ensure the pre-kindergarten to grade 12 education system is properly funded and to ensure the education portion of property tax is further reduced. This is good news for the people of Saskatchewan. Because of these positive changes, the stopgap measure of the credit is no longer needed. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and*

*Amendment Act, 2009*. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Education has moved second reading of Bill No. 90, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise on second reading of Bill No. 90, *An Act repealing The Education Property Tax Credit Act and making amendments to certain Acts consequential to the enactment of The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)*. Mr. Speaker, I'm mindful of the clock, that in a few minutes we have committees scheduled to sit in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, my remarks will be very brief on this Act that is primarily consequential to the comments that I made a few moments ago.

But, Mr. Speaker, while the government has expressed an interest in moving forward with long-term education property tax relief, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that these two pieces of legislation need to address — Bill No. 89 and Bill No. 90 — is long-term certainty in education financing, Mr. Speaker. And one of the things that we on this side of the House are most concerned about is that the boards, the teachers, the students, and the parents have confidence that in indeed the funding of education will be adequate to meet the needs of every local community throughout the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, that having been said and mindful of the clock, I certainly do not want to interfere with the work of committee scheduled today. Mr. Speaker, I would move that debate on Bill No. 90, *An Act repealing The Education Property Tax Credit Act* and making certain amendments, Mr. Speaker, be now adjourned.

**The Speaker:** — The member from The Battlefords has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 90. 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 to allow the work of the Human Services and Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice committees to do their important work, I move this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:59.]



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