



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

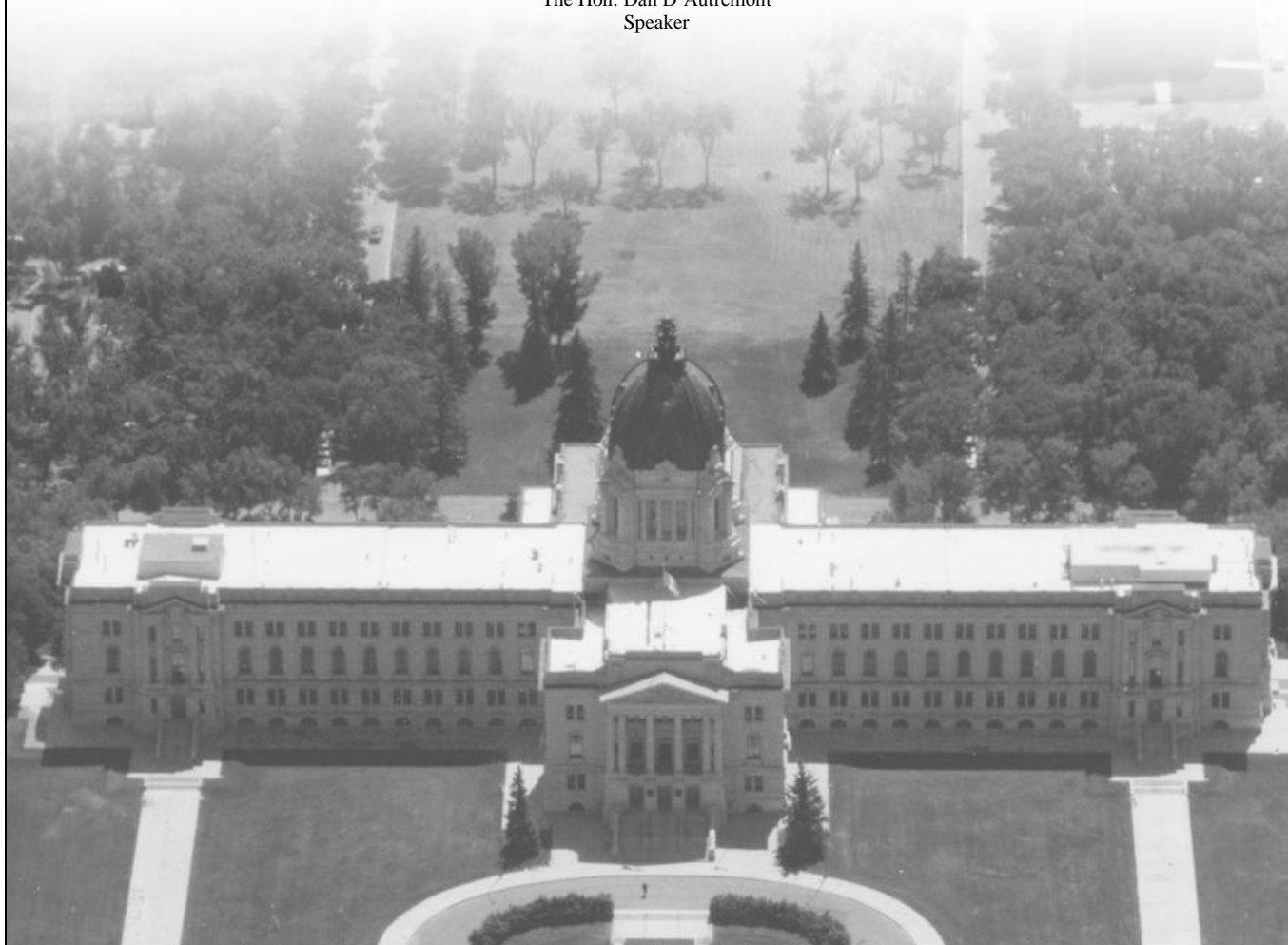
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Hon. Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great privilege to introduce the reason that I'm here, certainly not in this House but on this planet, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce my parents, Ted Merriman and Marie Merriman. My father, as everybody I think in this House knows, was a member from 2003-2007 representing Saskatoon Northwest, which unfortunately at the time never saw this side of the House, but certainly appreciated his time down here.

And I just wanted to put a little thanks out to my parents. They've been very supportive of me through some difficult times in my life. Certainly with my children and just various times of my life, my parents were always there, Mr. Speaker. They supported me during my campaign, were very supportive of me in helping out while I'm down in Regina working for the people of Saskatoon Sutherland.

And certainly my dad is a very inspiring man and very well knowledgeable in what's going on in the province, as well as what's going on in politics. And my mom is my mom. She has always been there doing everything for me, so that's all I could say about that. And thank you very much. I love you both, and thanks for coming down and seeing me. And I'd like to welcome you to your Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce two special guests in your gallery, if they could give a wave when I talk a little bit about them.

First is Chandra McIvor, and she's the department head of youth development education at the Avenue Community Centre in Saskatoon. She works with both the public and separate schools in Saskatoon to ensure our school communities are safe, inclusive spaces for all diversity, especially for our gender and sexually diverse youth. She is currently the go-to resource person within the Saskatoon Public School Board with respect to gender and sexual diversity positive skill development, including GSA [gay-straight alliance] implementation and sustainability. And she runs a city-wide network of GSA members and allies known as the Rainbow Coffee youth group of Saskatoon.

And as well we have Fran Forsberg. And, Mr. Speaker — Fran can give us a wave — she is a force of nature, Mr. Speaker. For all 125 foster children she has lovingly cared for, she has searched for their unique potential and helped them find their place. She gives completely of her time and experience educating foster parents, giving pride training, lecturing on

gender creativity in the schools, and promoting understanding and respect for children who could otherwise be neglected. She has passionately supported the Lighthouse, Breaking the Silence Conference, policing for diversities board, CNIB [Canadian National Institute for the Blind], and many other community groups. And, Mr. Speaker, she has been nominated this year for YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] woman of the year as well.

So I'd ask all members in joining me welcoming them to their legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these individuals to their legislature. The work that they do to build increasingly inclusive communities across our province is vitally important. So I'd like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members, to help me welcome these individuals to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, three key team members from the Saskatchewan disease control lab here in Regina who are joining us in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, with us today are the medical director, Dr. Greg Horsman; Dr. Paul Levett, the assistant clinical director; and Dr. Nick Antonishyn, the manager of the molecular diagnostics section. And I had the opportunity to join with them late last week for a very exciting announcement for the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they are key players, as I said, in an exciting project that we recently announced at the lab late last week. And we'll be hearing from the, I believe, the member from Regina South in a member's statement shortly. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming the representatives from the provincial lab, the disease control laboratory or centre. It's with great pride that all of us in Saskatchewan drive by your building, even though we know we can't get in there very easily because of all of the controls to make sure it's a very appropriate lab. But we very much appreciate the work that you do, and we also appreciate the fact that you're going to get the best technology, the best ideas to make sure that all of our Saskatchewan citizens are well protected. So thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to introduce a great group from the Canora-Pelly constituency. Seated in the west

gallery are a group of 13 grade 6 to 8 students from the NorthStar School. The NorthStar School is an affiliate of the NorthStar Mennonite Church in Hyas.

Along with the 13 grade 6 to 8 students are a teacher, Mrs. Jan Penner, and her husband, Quinten — if you could give us a wave there, right there — and six chaperones: Mr. and Mrs. Verle Penner from Stenen, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Fehr from Hyas, and Mr. and Mrs. Grant Penner from Norquay.

This group is very conscientious about coming to the legislature on an annual basis. I think I'd say annual even though there may have been a year or two that we've missed over the last while, but always here, always interested in the affairs of the Legislative Assembly. And I want to thank them for coming, and I want to ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, 34 grade 10 students from Melville Comprehensive High. They're accompanied by their teachers: Andy Rondeau, Dan Alspach, and Stuart Wilson. And, Mr. Speaker, this is another group that's been pretty faithful, grade 10's from Melville coming in every year, and thanks to their teachers for that. So I'd ask everyone to help me welcome them to their legislature.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the member opposite and welcome these students and teachers from Melville. And I want to give a quick hello to my friend, Mr. Wilson, who's up here today, and as well his wife, Ms. Theresa Wilson, who serves on the Christ The Teacher board back in Melville. Certainly they provide a lot of leadership to the community and to education within the region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take this advantage to introduce a new employee to the library, Greg Salmers, director of library support services. Greg, if you could stand. Greg has 30 years experience in the library system, including Estevan and the Southeast Regional Library. His latest role has been with the Moose Jaw Public Library and he serves as a reservist in Moose Jaw as well. I would ask the members to welcome him to his Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased and honoured to stand today to present a petition in relation to cellphone coverage for northwestern Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay;

Buffalo River First Nations, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nations, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nations along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of those areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, as indicated before, the people that have signed this petition have come from all throughout Saskatchewan where we have thousands of names. And the particular petition I'm presenting today are primarily from Buchanan and Yorkton. And I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition calling for better care of our seniors here in Saskatchewan:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care in our province, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public facilities, private facilities, and for home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in senior care facilities; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today presenting a petition calling for the reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

We know since the employment Act was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interest of due diligence. But we know there's no labour relations crisis affixed and no necessity to rush this omnibus through that will likely govern workplace relations for decades to come, and stable labour relations in all sectors run the risk of being thrown into turmoil as a result of Bill 85's sweeping changes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

And Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Arcola, Carlyle, Oxbow, Alameda, Camduff, Glen Ewen, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, Loon Lake, Green Lake, Canoe Lake, Kamsack, Yorkton, Canora, Stornoway, Veregin, Togo, Pelly, Churchbridge, Melville, Stockholm, Goodeve, Neudorf,

Willowbrook, Glenavon, Dubuc, Duff, Regina, Battleford, Lanigan, Guernsey, Drake, Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon. [13:45]

I do so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly. Northern Saskatchewan is being targeted by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to become a storage site for millions of used irradiated nuclear fuel bundles. These radioactive nuclear bundles would be shipped on provincial highways, and some provinces have already banned the storage or transport of used nuclear bundles. I'd like to read the petition.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly pass legislation to permanently ban nuclear waste storage and transportation of nuclear waste into, out of, and through Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina South.

Disease Control Laboratory's Groundbreaking Work

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we have the opportunity to recognize and celebrate some outstanding groundbreaking work that's being done right here at our provincial disease control laboratory which, as the Minister of Health mentioned a moment ago, is here in Regina.

This past Thursday, our government announced that the Saskatchewan disease control lab has developed a new way to test lab samples for many infectious diseases at one time. The testing process is called BioMark. It allows the lab to take a tiny sample and test it for multiple infectious diseases. BioMark's use in the health sector is a world first, Mr. Speaker, and it will make a great difference for patients.

This new testing method is faster, more accurate, and less expensive than the current testing process. Definitive test results will be available much more quickly, allowing physicians to provide better care to patients. Regina's own Dr. Nick Antonishyn in the gallery today, as was mentioned, is the team lead on this exciting project and the one who developed and adapted the technology to serve our residents.

Again, Mr. Speaker, nowhere else in the world is this being done. The Saskatchewan disease control laboratory supports our plan for growth and our desire to offer new opportunities for a highly trained, innovative workforce. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the talented staff at the lab for their hard work in providing Saskatchewan people with high-quality testing, screening, and disease surveillance services. Thank you.

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

Leaders Make Communities Better

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, each of our communities are made better by local leaders that make a difference. That difference was on full display this past Saturday in Regina Rosemont. The sun was shining and the community was alive with thanks to local leaders.

I began the day with hundreds of runners hitting the roads for the Royal Road Race 10-K, at the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] depot, thanks to the Jaleta Pacers. Following, I joined the always dedicated McNab Community Association for its annual cleanup. We lifted and hauled our way to clean streets and alleys. This association has revitalized McNab Park with trees, promenade pots, and paths over the past few years.

Next up was the Rosemont craft flea market at Martin Collegiate, bringing together more than 800 people, organized by Wilma Whyte and the Rosemont/Mount Royal Community Association, an association that offers programming and activities year-round. Later in the day, a stone's throw away, I observed talent and pride on display at the First Nations University Pow Wow. And Stephanie and I took in an inspiring message and evening at the Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers' dinner.

Mr. Speaker, it was one of those days that demonstrated first-hand the difference made by local leaders, many of whom are building our strong, vibrant, diverse community year-round. I ask members to join with me to simply say to those leaders, thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

Stepping Stones Career Fair

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise in the Assembly today to recognize the volunteers and sponsors behind the Stepping Stones Career Fair which was held in Regina last week. The Stepping Stones Career Fair was established over a decade ago by a group of young volunteers in partnership with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council. Today it's a well-organized, interactive, and fun event for Aboriginal youth, attracting First Nations and Métis youth as well as others from across the southern part of Saskatchewan.

This year there was a total attendance of over 1,500 students, including some enrolled in adult basic education and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] courses. Mr. Speaker, there were also 97 information booths covering a wide range of employment and educational opportunities, from potash companies and others in the private sector, to health regions, post-secondary educational institutions, the Government of Canada including the Canadian Forces, and of course the Government of Saskatchewan. Students also had an opportunity to try their hand at various construction and interactive activities.

The major sponsorship was provided by PotashCorp and additional sponsorship was provided by ISC [Information

Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], News Talk CJME, Jack FM, and Z99. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members to join me in recognizing this important event and thanking all of the exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers, and attendees for supporting our Aboriginal young people in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Fifth Annual Camp Fyrefly

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As summer approaches, many of us start thinking back to our own time at summer camp or preparing to send our own children to camp. The Fifth Annual Camp Fyrefly in Saskatchewan will be operating from August 15th to 18th. Camp Fyrefly is a camp for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersexed youth and their allies between the ages of 14 and 24.

The camp's director and co-founder, Kris Wells, says the reason behind the theme Camp Fyrefly:

The firefly is one of the only animals that produces its own energy, which I think is a . . . [beautiful] symbol for the camp. We want to move youth from feeling at risk to feeling resilient in their communities so that their own light can glow in dark times.

The camp is youth-focused with older youth doing programming and mentoring for younger youth. The model is one that allows youth a voice in how the camp is run and the activities that take place. Camp Fyrefly exists because caring adults believe that all youth are entitled to live fully in a world that embraces diversity rather than fearing or opposing it. For four days each year, Camp Fyrefly tries to create that world, a world that lives out the Fyrefly acronym, which the youth say stands for fostering, youth, resiliency, energy, fun, leadership, yeah!

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House join with me in wishing Camp Fyrefly another successful summer. Thank you very much.

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

Housing Development Provides Safe Environment for Youth

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in this House today to celebrate the start of a new housing development that will create eight new homes for homeless and at-risk youth in Regina.

The new homes are to be called Chaz Court and are being constructed in partnership with the province, the city of Regina, and Ranch Ehrlo Society. These homes will allow residents to share their lives and support one another. They will provide a safe home for them. They will be a place where young people can learn, grow, and respect one another in a caring environment. In turn that allows us to improve the quality of life for the young people of today and for those of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that our government is partnering with the Government of Canada by contributing 768,000 towards this project. I also think we should thank Malcolm Neill and the Ranch Ehrlo Society for their commitment to the people that they serve every day, and Dale Chastkiewicz, who is one of the Ranch Ehrlo's dedicated volunteers and the namesake of this project, Chaz Court.

These partners are a wonderful example of what must take place in order to support Saskatchewan's growing population and ensure that housing is accessible for everyone. Mr. Speaker, Chaz Court will be a testament to the people who conceived of this project and those who it will serve in the future and to Saskatchewan's growth plan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, last week Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield hosted the 22nd annual Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit, which I had the privilege to attend. These awards were hosted by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network with Cameco sponsoring the Cameco Literacy Learner Award and Bursary.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit honour and acknowledge the outstanding contributions by Saskatchewan citizens, organizations, and businesses for the advancement and development of literacy and essential skills in our province. Six awards were presented to individual champions of literacy, programs devoted to encouraging lifelong and life wide learning as well as those organizations which encourage the inclusion of literacy and essential skills programming as part of their workplace training.

This year's recipients are, in the Workplace Award category, Vecima Networks Workplace essential skills training project in Saskatoon; the Professional Award went to Denise Cote of Kamsack who spoke passionately about the needs and conditions which exist on the reserve; the Program or Project Award went to the Northwest Regional College and St. Mary's Community School essential skills for the workplace program from North Battleford; the Giggle Factory in Saskatoon won the Business Award; Jim Slough of Regina, the Volunteer Award; and Nicole Behr of Regina won the Cameco Literacy Learner Award and Bursary.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to congratulate and recognize this year's award winners and nominees. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Opposition Statements

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, once again the NDP [New Democratic Party] has embarrassed themselves by making statements in question period that just aren't true. Last week the NDP Environment critic claimed that Oregon was only using fire detection cameras as a pilot project in one small test area.

She said there was only one unit that was completely automated and she said the rest still use human observers — wrong, wrong, and wrong, Mr. Speaker.

We have received an email from Mr. Doug Grafe, interim deputy chief of the Oregon fire protection division. Mr. Grafe confirms that the fire detection cameras are a state-wide program in Oregon. He said, and I quote:

We operate over 30 detection cameras state wide and continue to expand annually. Cameras are mounted on a tower that does not have a person staffed. There is one tower in Oregon that has both a person and a camera in place, but this is not the intent for the camera detection system and not how we're operating our detection system.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP critic said this was a pilot project in one small area of the state — wrong. She also said there was only one completely automated unit — wrong. And she also said the rest were still manned by human observers — wrong again.

Mr. Speaker, it's the opposition's job to raise important issues in this Assembly, but it is also their job to get their facts straight. And they're not doing their job.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Pediatric Health Care

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last several weeks, we've heard many concerns about the health care for children here in our province. Many of these concerns relate to the possible closure of the pediatric intensive care unit and the pediatric cancer ward here in the capital city, Mr. Speaker. But there are also significant concerns in Saskatoon, particularly with regard to the shortage of pediatric neurologists. In fact Saskatoon will soon have no pediatric neurologists, as one is on indefinite leave and the other has recently accepted a job in Australia, Mr. Speaker. That will mean that children requiring these services, the services of a pediatric neurologist, will be required to go out of province.

My question to the Deputy Premier: at a time when our economy is so strong, why has the Sask Party government failed to recruit enough pediatric neurologists here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question. Certainly we know that this is an issue that is facing the Saskatoon Health Region and has for several years now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have provided funding for the Saskatoon Health Region to recruit and retain three full-time pediatric neurologists, Mr. Speaker, and my understanding is that they in fact, to this point, have at least two that they are actively recruiting to fill those positions. But we know, Mr. Speaker, that this certainly is not an ideal situation to be in.

Mr. Speaker, there are other pediatric specialists that are

available in Saskatoon to deal with the less complex issues in the interim. As well, Mr. Speaker, if need be, the more complex cases in the interim may need to be referred out of province. We hope that that is a situation that isn't a long-term solution to this issue. The long-term solution, Mr. Speaker, which the region is working at, is to ensure that we have those positions filled.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know from media reports that May de Freitas's grandson Matthew had the appointment to discuss his brain scan results cancelled due to the pediatric neurology shortage. May said, "This is just appalling. There is nobody to see my grandson."

But we know it's not just Matthew who's been affected by this shortage. Brian Michasiw's 15-month-old daughter Harriette has suffered neurological damage due to an overactive pancreas. And Brian tells me that for the most part they've been pleased with the care that they've received from their pediatric neurologist, but they've recently had challenges receiving information about the appropriate medications for their daughter. And now with the shortage of pediatric neurologists and the possible absence of a neurologist in Saskatoon, the family is concerned about what this means for them as a family, as they may be faced with taking Harriette to Calgary every six weeks in order to see a pediatric neurologist.

So my question to the Deputy Premier: at a time when our economy is so strong, why should Harriette and her family be forced to travel to Calgary to see a pediatric neurologist?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we have a proper complement of specialists to serve all the people of Saskatchewan, including the children of Saskatchewan, is a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. And that's why from March of 2008, not long after the NDP left office, to December of 2012, just this past year, we've seen an increase in specialists across Saskatchewan of 173.

Mr. Speaker, we know that that's a significant increase in specialists, but we do know that there are some specialty positions and subspecialty that still do need to be filled, Mr. Speaker. Over the last two years just in pediatrics, we've seen additional resources put in for pediatric nephrology, respirology, endocrinology, and general pediatrics, Mr. Speaker.

We know that we rely heavily in this province on general pediatrics. That will continue, Mr. Speaker. As well, Mr. Speaker, in the interim, we know that the Saskatoon Health Region needs to recruit in this specific subspecialty, Mr. Speaker, and they are actively doing that. We hope to have those positions filled soon.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Brian's daughter Harriette is 15 months old. She has neurological damage and suffers from seizures. She requires the ongoing care of a pediatric neurologist, but because the government has failed to

recruit pediatric neurologists here to the province, Mr. Speaker, their family is faced with the situation where they may have to take Harriette to Calgary simply to see a doctor. And this doesn't make sense to Saskatchewan people when times are going well, when the economy is doing well, why the government has failed to recruit the necessary pediatric neurologists to Saskatchewan.

It's also tied in to the discussions we've had here in Regina and with the possible closure of the pediatric intensive care unit. Government officials have said this is no big deal because there's a critical mass of the necessary specialists in Saskatoon. But now we see, Mr. Speaker, and we hear from families that there's a shortage of the important specialists that we need, especially for pediatric care here in the province. This has concerns for the entire province.

My question to the Deputy Premier: when our economy is doing well, when the Sask Party has had years to fix this problem, Mr. Speaker, why have they failed to recruit and retain the necessary specialists here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, in relation to, with respect to the member's question and the premise of his question, particularly as it relates to the work that is being done by Regina Qu'Appelle in this health region, I don't think I've ever referred to it as no big deal. Mr. Speaker, we take these issues very seriously.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we know that a purpose-built facility like the children's hospital which is being built in Saskatoon, which this government supported while the NDP government did not support, Mr. Speaker, with capital funding . . . This government is going to build that.

[14:00]

We know that, according to a February 2012 news release, that the head of pediatrics in Saskatoon has indicated that "We have increased the number of physicians in our department [meaning pediatrics] by 40 per cent over the last two years," Mr. Speaker. We know that at that same time they were able to attract a joint academic and clinical pediatric hematologist/oncologist, the first in the province, Mr. Speaker, because of that very announcement that we're going to have a children's hospital in this province. And we believe that, based on the experience in other jurisdictions, that that children's hospital will be a hub for retaining and recruiting other pediatric specialists.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Saskatchewan Transportation Company Bus Routes

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, two months ago we raised concerns of Saskatchewan people about cutting STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] routes. For many seniors and other rural people, travelling on STC is one of the few ways they can get around. When the Sask Party cuts off transportation for rural communities, they are telling seniors to hitchhike.

Mr. Speaker, this week the route from Blaine Lake to North Battleford will end for good. Now the people of Hafford, Krydor, and Speers have no access to the bus. How can the minister for STC justify shutting down this route in northwest Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll say on the outset that these decisions are not come by lightly. Mr. Speaker, we certainly realize that when you discontinue a route, there will be some people affected. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we also realize that the subsidy that has gone to STC to make sure that it is functioning in the province has increased substantially over the last number of years.

It would only be prudent for a business to look at its services that it provides. And when it looks at a few routes — for example these three routes that will be discontinued — and you see a ridership of about one to two people per trip, Mr. Speaker, I think a decision had to be made. And certainly we've come to that decision, not lightly. We know it'll affect some people.

But I would say, Mr. Speaker, at least half of the communities in the province don't have STC service now, and people in those communities have made arrangements of other transportation. And we would expect the same or similar in these communities that will be affected with this route discontinuation.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, there are only five days left of service for this route. And one of the biggest impacts to be felt will be the rural businesses who use affordable STC freight services to ship parts and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, it costs about \$31 to ship a 50-pound parcel from a small community to the city, using STC. Now for rural businesses the cost will go up. To ship that same parcel with Canada Post, it will cost about \$67. Mr. Speaker, why would the Sask Party ask rural businesses to more than double their shipping costs when STC can provide a valuable and affordable service?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we know that STC not only provides passenger service, but obviously courier service as well. We do know again, Mr. Speaker, of half the communities in the province right now are serviced by courier companies — in fact more than half. There are a number of communities that are serviced by STC as well as a courier company. But those that don't have STC, have access to courier companies. There is Canada Post. There are a number of ways, Mr. Speaker.

Yes STC may be convenient for some. It may have changed, but I don't know if you can start pricing how much it's going to cost on a courier service depending on the size of the parcel and everything else, Mr. Speaker. There are many communities that

receive goods to and from their community on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, that don't have STC. We would expect the courier service to be filled in by private companies just as what's done in many other rural communities in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this isn't the end of the cuts. The Sask Party has announced two more routes will be shut down on January the 1st. They already reduced services in the last year to La Loche, Nipawin, and Melfort. And, Mr. Speaker, service was eliminated to Carievale and to Gainsborough just last year. You can only imagine what other routes they say won't have enough passengers to operate the bus.

To the minister: what other routes will STC, will the Sask Party be considering to next year's cuts or this year's cuts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, these decisions don't come by lightly. We certainly are challenging STC to look at all the efficiencies they can possibly find so that we can continue serving the communities that they do.

We do know that, Mr. Speaker, there have been route discontinuations or reductions over the last . . . well actually none over the last number of years. But there were many years ago, Mr. Speaker. In fact under the NDP — and they don't seem to want to acknowledge it; in fact the critic didn't even know this, Mr. Speaker, when he first brought it up — that under the NDP, they shut down 13 routes, Mr. Speaker, throughout rural Saskatchewan, in fact one that went really close to the community that I farm by, around Sedley and Francis. There was a bus route through there. The NDP closed it down, Mr. Speaker. People in those communities have made other arrangements. Businesses have made other arrangements.

For him to stand here and question whether we'd be looking at further route cuts, we'll be a long ways from the 13 that they cut.

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

Standardized Testing and Student Achievement

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While no one from the Sask Party can explain their expensive standardized testing scheme, they do know it'll cost \$12 million in the first three years alone. And when people have concerns about this expense and the usefulness about these tests, the Sask Party government just doesn't seem to listen.

The Premier admitted in his estimates last week, he has not met with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation about standardized tests. And, Mr. Speaker, because teachers will be giving the tests, it just makes sense their concerns about standardized testing should be listened to. Mr. Speaker, why won't the Sask Party government listen to the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] and talk with the STF when it comes to their expensive standardized testing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, we do have a student advisory committee that we have been in constant consultation with since the announcement last spring, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the student achievement initiative is really an investment in students. It's a consistent process, Mr. Speaker, for gathering data about student learning. It's about informing the instructional process, Mr. Speaker. It's a comprehensive program that will span all of the grades from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, Mr. Speaker. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it's a balanced approach to student success. It involves the curriculum, it involves assessment, and it involves instruction, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, parents want to know, teachers want to know, students want to know how they're doing. And we will continue that investment in our children's education, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it isn't just the STF the Sask Party government ignores. There's a wide agreement among educators and professors at our universities that standardized testing is not the way to go.

Professors at both of the province's universities have spoken out against the tests, and over 1,700 members of the public have signed a petition opposed to the Sask Party plan. And even when the ministry prepared a list of the academic research to show the minister, he hasn't read them.

Mr. Speaker, the research showed that the overwhelming consensus from education experts is that standardized testing just doesn't make sense. So, Mr. Speaker, why would the Sask Party rush, rush ahead with standardized testing when so many people are against it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again thanks to the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, student achievement, the program that we are proposing, does work. We have evidence of that throughout our province. To cite a couple of examples, Mr. Speaker, Chinook School Division, with its balanced literacy approach to reading, has seen an increase of 21 per cent over its four years, Mr. Speaker, in reading levels. In 2008, Mr. Speaker, they had 63 per cent of students meeting or exceeding grade level in reading. Four years later, 84 per cent increase in reading.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the student achievement initiative is not just about testing or assessments. It's about finding information out about student engagement. Without student engagement, Mr. Speaker, students simply don't succeed. The Tell Them from Me survey, which is part of the student achievement initiative, will provide us invaluable information as to how students see their school, see the health of their community in the school, etc. Mr. Speaker, It's not just about an assessment program.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we know there are gaps in education, especially when it comes to education outcomes for First Nations and Métis students. And that's exactly why teachers and parents want to identify the gaps and work to close them and not waste precious resources on the Sask Party's pet project of standardized testing.

Mr. Speaker, we now know it'll cost \$12 million in the first three years alone and millions more in the following years, just for the software. The Sask Party's expensive standardized testing will take precious resources away from the priorities of today's classrooms in Saskatchewan. And teachers and educators and parents believe the Sask Party's standardized testing just doesn't make any sense. So why is the Sask Party so focused on standardized testing when there's so many other areas in education they should be paying attention to?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again thanks to the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, student achievement is not just about assessment. Mr. Speaker, this is an investment in our students' future. It's about investing in our students and how they move forward. And it's about allowing us to gather the kinds of information that is going to be necessary to provide the supports that teachers need to inform instruction, that parents will need to help with their students at home, Mr. Speaker, and for students themselves to be able to look at what they're doing so that they can move from one level to the next with the proper supports, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need this information so that we're able to track progress year over year, Mr. Speaker. It's an important initiative. It's not an either-or, Mr. Speaker, it's an investment in our students' success as they move forward.

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

Education for First Nations and Métis People

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For two years, Mr. Speaker, since May 2011, every single time the opposition has raised concerns about the education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people, the Sask Party government has repeatedly pointed at the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people.

Time and time again the Premier and government members have talked about the importance of this task force and the quality of the individuals who are serving on the task force. But last week we learned from the Premier that he plans to ignore at least one of the very key recommendations from the task force, and that is the recommendation to provide interim funding to provincial school divisions to reduce tuition costs charged to First Nations educational authorities for First Nations students that attend off-reserve schools — a very important recommendation.

My question to the Deputy Premier: how many of the task force's 25 recommendations will the Sask Party government be ignoring?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is we're not going to ignore any of them. We will take every single one of those recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and we will consider those recommendations. We have acted on a couple of them, Mr. Speaker, especially with regards to the on-reserve driver training instructor, Mr. Speaker. We will not ignore the recommendation as it pertains to unequal funding of on-reserve students. Mr. Speaker, that is recommendation no. 4 a. and we will consider that, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, next week Mr. Reiter and I are on our way to Ottawa to talk with the . . . Error. My colleague next to me and I will be travelling to Ottawa next week to meet with Minister Valcourt to bring those discussions to bear, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is a very different story than in Premier's estimates when I asked the Premier very clearly if they were considering this recommendation, and the Premier said no. And now we have the Education minister, Mr. Speaker, who either was not informed about the Premier's decision, does not know his file, or he's making up the policy as he goes along, Mr. Speaker. Last week . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, maybe modified, says the Deputy Premier. They're making this up as they go along, Mr. Speaker.

Two weeks ago I was at the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] grad in La Ronge and I heard, Mr. Speaker, about the disparity of funding for on-reserve and off-reserve schools. I heard from people on off-reserve schools, Mr. Speaker, who talked about how a funding shortfall means that their curriculum is outdated, that they operate out of old textbooks.

Part of the problem with the funding disparity is the amount that First Nations pay whenever their students attend off-reserve schools because they pay more per student than they receive from the federal government. That's why the task force recommended that the provincial government provide interim funding to school divisions to reduce the tuition that First Nations pay when their students are at an off-reserve school. That would help them, Mr. Speaker, have current textbooks.

[14:15]

My question to the Deputy Premier: why will he not listen to the common sense, practical recommendations from the task force?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. We are not funding, we are not providing the interim funding of that \$1,000, Mr. Speaker. That is perfectly clear. That is a federal responsibility, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to discuss that issue with the federal government when we go to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

As well, the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] has been in contact with my office. The new vice-chief of education, Vice-chief Bob Cameron, has been in contact with our office, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue the dialogue with them to come to grips with the disparity in the funding, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, as the so-called dialogue continues, the Sask Party government can't get its story straight. The Premier is saying that they're not going to do this recommendation. Now the Education minister is saying it's on the table. The task force members, Gary Merasty, Rita Bouvier, and Don Hoium, are highly respected individuals and they worked hard to provide concrete, practical recommendations to the government.

The Premier has claimed, as just reiterated by the Education minister, that this particular recommendation would be \$1,000 per student. The most recent numbers from the federal government show that there are 3,400 First Nations students who live on-reserve attending provincial off-reserve schools. So by the Premier's own math, this recommendation, Mr. Speaker, would cost \$3.4 million. And this is something that the Premier would have known because the task force provided midpoint costing estimates in order to allow the Sask Party government to make the right decisions and respect the recommendations in the budget that was just released. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we see \$6 million for a computer system for standardized testing.

My question to the Deputy Premier: how is it they have \$6 million for a computer system for standardized testing but they don't have \$3.4 million to carry out a recommendation from the task force that they were so proud to champion?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, again we have received the report from the task force, Mr. Speaker. We've allocated an additional \$3 million to help institute some of the recommendations of the joint task force, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, there are over \$22 million in this budget for First Nations and Métis initiatives, Mr. Speaker — \$4.3 million for First Nations and Métis specific initiatives for school divisions; \$500,000 for summer literacy camps, Mr. Speaker; \$500,000 for the Community Literacy Fund; \$268 million, Mr. Speaker, for supports for learning of which our school divisions have access to, to provide that extra support for intensive needs children, etc. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. When students arrive on our doorstep, they all get a first-class education, Mr. Speaker, and that's because of our investment in the students.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, U of S [University of Saskatchewan] economist Eric Howe has studied how much we're wasting by not properly educating and employing First Nations and Métis people here in the province. Dr. Howe says that by bridging the Aboriginal education gap here in Saskatchewan, it would be \$90 billion for our province. The

Sask Party government's approach is very short-sighted. They do not realize this is our biggest economic challenge but is also our greatest economic opportunity that we have here in the province.

Last week when I brought up Dr. Howe's \$90 billion figure and the work and the study that he has done, the Premier dismissively shook his head, indicating he did not agree with this. It's no wonder we see so little action from the Sask Party government on this. It's no wonder we see the Sask Party government ignoring the recommendations from the task force, something that they were very proud and something which they used as a defence for their inaction for over two years.

My question to the Deputy Premier: when the economy is doing well, when experts tell us we can benefit \$90 billion if we address this issue as we ought to, why is it the Sask Party government doesn't have \$3.4 million to address this recommendation, but they have \$6 million for standardized testing, something of which everyone sees as folly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the opposition for the question.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we have started the student achievement initiative, Mr. Speaker. We have invested in the early years, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the number of pre-kindergarten spaces, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at the early years evaluation tool, Mr. Speaker, because we know, we know that if children don't come to school ready to learn, if they haven't made that transition from learning to read, to reading to learn by age 8, Mr. Speaker, we are going to lose them. That's the importance of the student achievement initiative, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we're going to continue to move forward with that initiative.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman for the Human Services Committee.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Advanced Education has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and that this bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:23.]

The Speaker: — Carried. When shall the amendments be read the first time? I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 85 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education that the amendments be now read the first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed with third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 85 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday.

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