



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

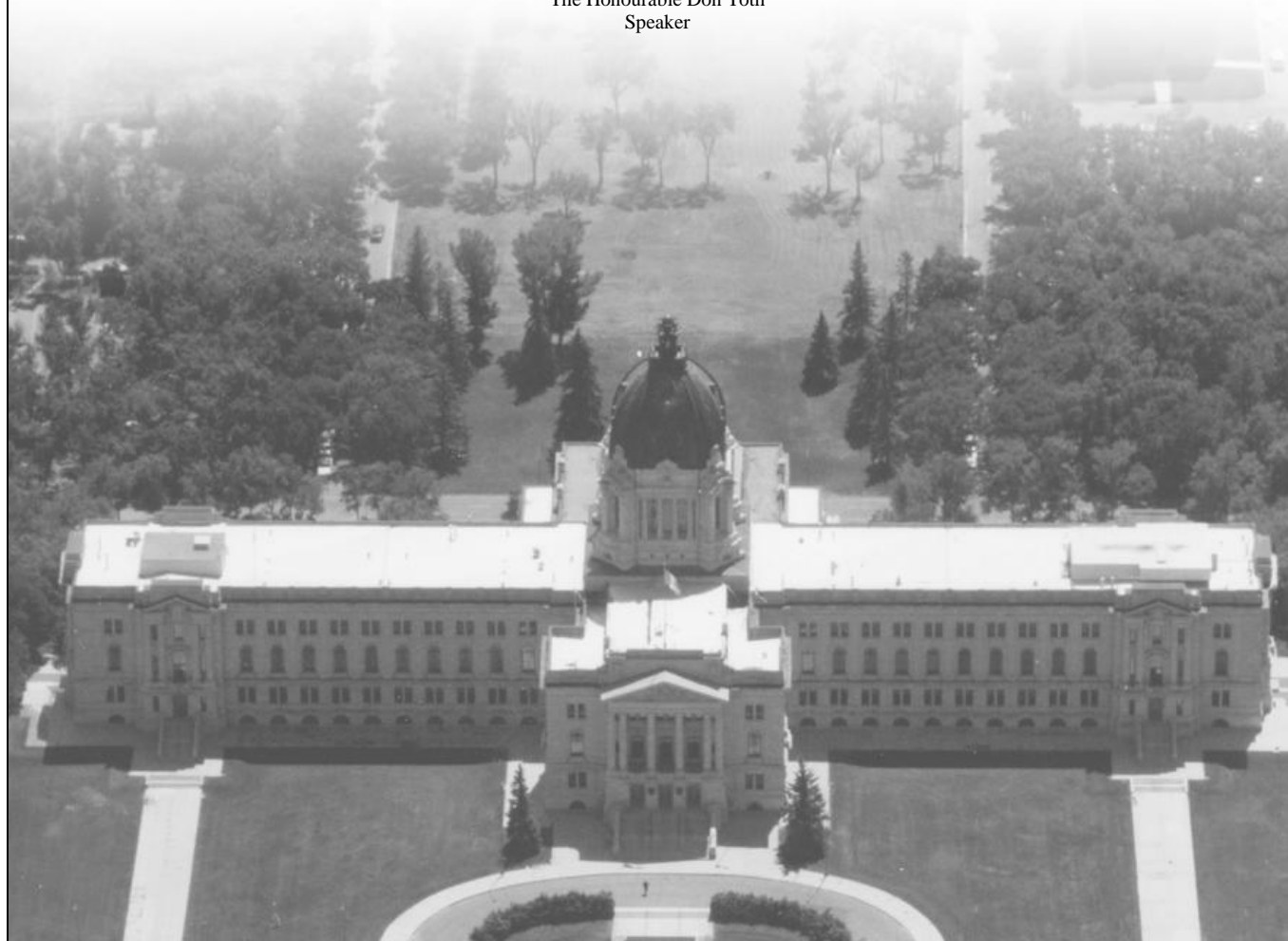
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. 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, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation 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
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in being able to introduce to you and through you and to the rest of the Assembly a group of 38 grade 10 students from Winston Knoll Collegiate in the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. They are here with their teacher, Michelle McKillop.

Winston Knoll is a wonderful school with great students and staff, and we had a chance to meet and discuss the coming events with the students today. They were very interested, and I hope they are now fairly well informed. Accompanying these students today we have Cathie Hunchuk, Brittany Raedake, and Lori Benoit. Please, if each and every one of you could join in a welcome to these wonderful students from Winston Knoll.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the member from Saskatoon Fairview and myself, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members two special guests that are seated in your gallery — if they could give a wave when I call them — Sharleen Rayner and her daughter, Morgan.

I should tell you a little bit about Morgan. They're both looking forward to seeing democracy in action here. Morgan is a grade 9 student at Tommy Douglas Collegiate in Saskatoon and a constituent of Saskatoon Fairview. She enjoys playing piano, basketball, and attending functions like the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] kids camp, the NDP [New Democratic Party] convention, the Saskatchewan Young New Democrats convention. So I ask all members in joining me in welcoming Morgan Haarstad and Sharleen to their legislature. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have two separate introductions to make. The first introduction I would like to introduce in the west gallery would be Christopher Florizone, who is 14 years old — just stand or wave — from Moose Jaw Vanier High School. He is accompanying his dad who has brought his son to work today. It's take your child to work today.

And you know, I admire you, Dan, able to have your son join you. I've asked our boys, and they just don't seem to want to come with me. Anyway, I just would like all members to welcome Christopher to the Legislative Assembly, and

probably see the proceedings and question period. And hopefully maybe we'll have a chance to visit back in my office after. So if everybody could welcome them to the Assembly please.

And while I'm on my feet, also sitting in the west gallery are two special people in my life. First of all, and I'll just get my big brother — older brother, but bigger brother — to wave. John McMorris is here from Moose Jaw. John has had a very interesting life. He has had the opportunity to travel the world pretty much in the grain handling business. Spent a lot of time in Kazakhstan, lots of time in Mexico. He's been around the world in the grain industry and farms very close to the family farm as well, so welcome him here. And why he is here is he brought my mother into Regina today from Fort Qu'Appelle for a eye appointment. It's good to see you here, mom. I don't know if I've ever had the opportunity to introduce you to my friends in the House here, on both sides.

Anyway I just wanted to say that when I meet people around the Fort Qu'Appelle area, they normally say . . . I say, hi, I'm the member from Indian Head-Milestone. I don't know if I can even use my own name in here. I'm the member from Indian Head-Milestone. And they go, oh yes, we know your mom. She is a very avid bridge player and does a very good job of PR [public relations] for me around the Fort Qu'Appelle area. So I'd like all members to welcome my brother and mom to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce a young man that's here in the west gallery seated. His name is Brett Angus. He's actually been in Regina for a while, getting an education, doing some work. And I'm very pleased that he's here and got an opportunity to come to the House and see the proceedings. And I just want to mention, I was very pleased and honoured to hear that he's actually moving back home to La Ronge in December. When he's finished up doing what he wants to do in Regina, he's coming home. So I just want to welcome him to his legislative and say all the best in your future endeavours. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this House, seated in your gallery is an unexpected guest and a friend of mine, also a constituent of mine from the great city of Swift Current. He's currently serving as a school board trustee in Swift Current for Swift Current and area in the Chinook School Division. He has been a youth pastor. He has pursued other endeavours as well. And right now he's working in the area of addictions in terms of the young people of our province. His name is Tim Ramage. And I'd like all members to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce a group of students and their faculty

of the school who are here from Prince Albert today. They are extremely dedicated students in the field of health care, and it's incredible to have them down here today for a very good purpose. We had a great meeting with them. The member from Saskatoon Massey Place and I met with them for lunch, and they're a tremendously talented and thoughtful group. And once again, I hope that all members will welcome them here to their Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone and the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just follow the member's welcome to these students that are visiting their legislature. Obviously they're involved in very, very serious work and important work on behalf of the people of this province. We're delighted to join with the opposition and everyone here in welcoming them to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour again this session to introduce the person I've introduced most often, if we did a count. Gunnar Passmore is seated in the east gallery. Gunnar is political liaison for the Saskatchewan Building Trades, and Gunnar and his wife, Dee, are long-time friends of my wife, Lorna, and I. And I just want to welcome Gunnar once again to the legislature, and it's always a pleasure to see him. And I ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming Gunnar Passmore to the legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Passmore to the legislature. I met with him as well as a number of SFL executive members earlier and enjoyed a frank and candid discussion with him and very much appreciated his keen sense of humour, which was directed at a member whose mother is here today. So I'll not repeat what was said, but it was good humour and it was much appreciated. And I would ask all members to join in welcoming Mr. Passmore.

The Speaker: — Members, as well it's my pleasure to introduce some guests who've joined us. Seated in the Speaker's gallery in the front row is my son, Byron, a youth pastor here in the city at Westhill, joined by one of his youth, young people, Cassie Josephson, who happens to be hosting a young gal from France, Delphine Bénistant.

And Delphine's been here since August in Saskatchewan. And I know that Cassie and her family have made an extreme effort to show her a good part of our province. She'll be leaving us on Friday, going home. And Cassie, in the early spring — I believe it's the end of February, March through April — she will be then returning to France on an exchange. So if they would rise, be recognized, and I'd ask members to welcome them to this Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the deteriorating conditions of our highway system and the safety factor. This particular petition pertains to Highway 135 through the community of Pelican Narrows. And if you've ever had the opportunity to drive through that community, you'll find that it's a very dangerous road through the community itself as well as a health problem with the large, huge amounts of dust that are raised off that road. And the people living in those communities have to endure that each and every day. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to pave the 7 kilometres of Highway 135 through the community of Pelican Narrows as committed on August the 24th, 2007.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present petitions on behalf of the people of Wawota and surrounding area who oppose the closure of the beds in Wawota Deer View Lodge, many of whom have family members placed outside of the community, and they find that this separating of family is unfair and dangerous. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop the closure of these beds.

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

This is another 250 signatures to add to the many I've already presented. And the signatures are from Carlyle, Kenosee Lake, Wawota, Langbank, Kennedy, Kipling, Saskatoon, Windthorst, Glenavon, Maryfield, Moosomin, Wapella, Rocanville, Fleming, Regina, Strasbourg, Whitewood, Yorkton, Tantalton, and Fairlight. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present yet another petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know Saskatchewan's income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. And we also know that when governments reduce spending, often supports for social supports are cut first. I'd like to read the prayer:

We in the prayer that reads as follows respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Saskatoon, Regina, Earl Grey, Melfort, and Tisdale. Thank you very much.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable 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 from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition with respect to the future of Saskatchewan's potash resource. The petition is signed and circulated because Saskatchewan has a thousand-year supply of the world's highest quality potash and that the people are owners of this strategic resource and deserve to receive the maximum benefit from its development, mining, processing, and sale. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Saskatchewan Party government to publicly demand the following terms and conditions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan of any foreign owners bidding to take over PCS: to ensure that Saskatchewan people receive the maximum net benefit, a golden share and preferred shares so that the public participates in both the corporation's future decision making and its profitability, public guarantees on a strengthened head office presence, support for Canpotex, and long-term targets for potash production and employment, Saskatchewan representation on the board of directors, public agreements to ensure no loss of royalties, public commitments to meet world-class standards of corporate and social responsibility, and an independent potash review commission with the power to monitor and enforce all of these terms and conditions.

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

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by good folks from Saskatoon and Dundurn. I so present.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive deficit budgets, the billions of dollars of debt loading under the Sask Party. And they note that this has all occurred at a time of record revenues making it unexplainable, reckless, and damaging to Saskatchewan's future. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens from across Regina, Mr. Speaker. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition for a private Bill on behalf of petitioners from the Sisters of Presentation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to repeal *An Act to incorporate The Sisters of the Presentation*, being chapter 71 of the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1923* and replace it with the proposed private Bill.

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

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the directors of the corporation, the Sisters of the Presentation, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jim Brady Honoured

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour the Year of the Métis and to mention one of the many events that have happened over the summer.

Mr. Speaker, Jim Brady was a well-known respected Métis politician during the 1950s and '60s. He disappeared on a prospecting expedition on July 6th, 1967.

On July 10th this summer, the La Ronge Métis local, known as Jim Brady Métis local, commemorated the disappearance and

contributions of Jim Brady by erecting a monument in his honour. Jim Brady served in the Canadian Armed Forces in World War II. He helped in the foundation of many Métis organizations in western Canada. These include the Métis Association of Alberta, the Métis Association of Saskatchewan, and the Métis local of La Ronge.

The disappearance of Jim Brady along with his friend, Abbie Halkett, continues to be a controversial subject to this day. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Jim Brady Métis local for their good work in honouring this historic Saskatchewan icon.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Premier of British Columbia Resigns

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this day, Premier Gordon Campbell of the province of British Columbia tendered his resignation, indicating that he'll be moving on from public life, pending the selection of a new leader of the BC Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, offer a few thoughts on this news. Mr. Speaker, I think most in the country would agree that Premier Gordon Campbell has been a very effective premier for his province. There has been a transformation that occurred under his watch in the province of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, including 400,000 new jobs from the time that he took over as premier, numerous and historic tax cuts, Mr. Speaker, the creation of 36,000 new full-time post-secondary student spaces in BC's 11 universities, a new medical services plan and pharmacare help, and the 2010 Vancouver Whistler winter Olympics — the most-watched winter games in the history of the games.

And, Mr. Speaker, significant for us, the New West Partnership. Premier Campbell, along with Alberta, pioneered the notion that provinces should be co-operating in terms of delivering service to their people, Mr. Speaker. And in my experience with Premier Campbell, at every occasion at the national table with the Prime Minister and other premiers, yes he made the case for BC [British Columbia], but he always made the passionate case for the interests of Canada, Mr. Speaker. We need more leaders like Premier Campbell, and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday my colleague, the member from Regina Lakeview and I, along with the Premier and other members of government, attended the grand opening of the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care at the Regina General Hospital. The centre is a state-of-the-art facility which will change how mother-baby care is delivered in our province.

It includes major enhancements for the neonatal intensive care unit, the labour and birth unit, and the mother-baby unit. Over seven years ago, a major gift from Gordon and Doug Rawlinson, owners of Rawlco Radio, launched the Small is Big campaign for the Hospitals of Regina Foundation under the

leadership of CEO [chief executive officer] Judy Davis. With the support of many other generous donors, the campaign raised \$6 million in furnishings and equipment. The project received strong support from both the previous NDP administration, as well as the current government, with the provincial contribution being \$28.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Lakeview and I had the opportunity to tour the facilities, and the list of improvements is impressive. The mother-baby unit now has 36 private rooms each equipped with a tub, toilet, shower, and sink. The labour and birth unit has eight spacious birthing rooms, each equipped with a Panda radiant warmer and an electronic birthing bed that patients can control, as well as six outpatient assessment rooms. And the neonatal intensive care unit has much more space and other comforts to allow parents to spend more time with their babies.

I would like to ask all of my colleagues to express our sincere gratitude to the generosity of Doug and Gordon Rawlinson for kick-starting the campaign, to Rawlco Radio and the Hospitals of Regina Foundation for their perseverance, and to all those who contributed to this amazing success story. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Leader's Actions

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1994 the Leader of the Opposition gave up on Saskatchewan when he gave away the golden share for potash.

He gave up on Saskatchewan again in 2001 when he got the NDP to change the Wascana Energy Act, meaning Nexen could move its head office and his job to Calgary. Again he gave up on Saskatchewan a couple of weeks ago when he waved the white flag and announced his terms of surrender in the potash fight before the fight had barely begun.

And yesterday he gave up on Saskatchewan one more time by running off to Ottawa. Why did he go there, Mr. Speaker? Is he there to try and get the federal government to block the takeover bid? No. According to the news reports, he left Saskatchewan to talk election strategy with Jack Layton. Instead of worrying about the best interests of this province, he focused on seats for the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier is still standing up for Saskatchewan. The Leader of the Opposition is off to Ottawa to try and find out what's in the will for him. This is a crass political opportunism of the worst kind, and it's why the people of Saskatchewan will always choose our Premier, who stands up for Saskatchewan, rather than the NDP leader, who gives up on Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Health Care Providers' Week

Ms. Junor: — This is health providers' appreciation week. A recent member's statement from the Sask Party stating the government's appreciation for the work that these

Saskatchewan citizens do to provide care and services for our children, mothers, fathers, spouses, and partners, friends, and neighbours was cold comfort to them.

As my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview and I travelled around the province this summer, we met with hundreds and hundreds of health care workers. They were from housekeeping, laundry, food services, ambulance services, maintenance, lab, and X-ray, and nursing, RNs [registered nurse], RPNs [registered practical nurse], LPNs [licensed practical nurse], special care aides, and nurse practitioners.

We heard consistently how understaffed, underappreciated, and downright disrespected workers are feeling. The Sask Party government with Bills 5 and 6 set the stage for the most toxic bargaining anyone can remember. The rights of workers were undermined and collective bargaining was set back for decades. Two years of hostile bargaining resulted in a contract that pleased no one.

We heard how the Premier's war on workers has translated into bullying and intimidation in the workplace. A culture of disrespect has been the result of the Premier's attitude, and it is showing up everywhere in facilities and health regions. Mr. Speaker, when one health region can say to its workers, if you don't like your job, Tim Hortons is hiring, you can see the erosion of the working relationship between employees and employers in health facilities. And this was in the Premier's own area of Swift Current.

If the Sask Party really does appreciate health care workers, they have a very long way to go to repair the damage done over the last three years under their government. A single member's statement is not nearly enough. Actions speak far louder than the words, and government actions are screaming disrespect.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Potash Corporation Golden Share

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the choice couldn't be more clear. We have a Premier who stands up for Saskatchewan and an Opposition Leader who gives up on Saskatchewan.

The Leader of the Opposition gave up on Saskatchewan back in 1994 when he gutted the golden share in the PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan] legislation. At the time, the legislation said that the provincial government could impose any terms and conditions it chose on a purchaser corporation. It said the majority of the directors of the purchaser corporation were required to be Canadian. Mr. Speaker, at least three had to be from Saskatchewan, and Canadians had to own at least 55 per cent of the voting shares.

Mr. Speaker, in 1994, the NDP government and that NDP leader let down the people of Saskatchewan by repealing all of those provisions. He gave away the golden share and now he says he wants it back. Mr. Speaker, that leader didn't just give away the golden share when he gave up on Saskatchewan; he gave away his credibility, and he'll be a long time getting that back. The people of Saskatchewan will let him know how they feel about a leader who gives up on their province next November. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Proposed Sale of Potash Corporation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A representative of the people who mine Saskatchewan's potash offered a comment today on the Premier's leadership in standing up for Saskatchewan's interest. It was Stephen Hunt, western Canadian director for the United Steelworkers, and the *Leader-Post* quotes him this way:

I wish he would have come forward with some courage earlier in this thing and perhaps it would be a different picture right now.

I think (Wall) is a little slow to react — it's not as if BHP hasn't announced this to the world and it hasn't been in the newspaper every single day, so it's not that he didn't know it was happening.

It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that by waiting until the last minute to send two letters to Tony Clement, the Premier was sending another message as well. The interests of those who pull the potash out of the ground were of no urgency for him. Hastily arranged speeches, cancelled meetings, and last-minute letters are no way to protect the future of Saskatchewan's 1,000 years of resource.

Now by the Premier's own reckoning, over 8,000 person-years of work are at risk and the verdict of the workers is in. Mr. Speaker, a lack of courage and initiative on the part of the Premier is responsible for the current predicament.

Mr. Speaker, all that remains is for the voters to deliver their verdict on this Premier's leadership in November 2011.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Proposed Sale of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing once again that the Premier's position on potash in Saskatchewan has changed. Conservative MP [Member of Parliament] Brad Trost says today, "It's hard to know what Brad Wall wants."

Has his position changed on this deal yet again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of the province of Alberta, the Premier of the province of Quebec, the Minister of Finance in Ontario, the new Premier of the province of New Brunswick, the NDP Premier of Manitoba, late today Brett Wilson, Mr. Speaker, Roger Phillips, business leaders from . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I'd ask the members to allow the

Premier to respond to the question from the member of the opposition. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Dick Haskayne — for whom the Calgary school of business is named — and I would suspect every Member of Parliament on the opposition side and on the government side know unequivocally the position of this government and this party when it comes to this takeover. We have chosen to stand up for the interests of this province, Mr. Speaker. We have chosen to stand up for the strategic interests of a province blessed with all these natural resources. We've left the flip-flopping and the multiple positions, Mr. Speaker, to the NDP opposite.

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

Mr. Furber: — Well I think, Mr. Speaker, we should check the record to see when he started to engage all of these folks to help him. And I think we'll find out that it was directly after his \$1.5 billion shakedown with BHP didn't work. Mr. Speaker, not only are we hearing that the Premier's position on the deal has changed once again, it's also being reported that he's in talks to sell Saskatchewan's potash industry to a consortium of Chinese and Brazilian buyers.

To the Premier: how is it a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan to sell Saskatchewan's potash industry to two of the largest buyers of potash in the world?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the people that the member is referring to are leaders of the First Nations group that has come forward with respect to a possible deal that they're putting together. I indeed had a conversation with them yesterday, indicated that if they were coming forward with it, they had better do it pretty quickly, and that obviously if it is a deal that the people of Saskatchewan would be supportive of, the province would be supportive of it. We have not seen that bid as of yet. It's something that may come forward; we don't know.

[14:00]

I would just say to the member opposite that when it comes to the First Nations leaders coming forward with respect to anything that they have on their mind, this government is always willing to listen to their concerns and their questions about it. Much different than the Leader of the Opposition and that member, and their treatment of First Nations. And we can all think of examples of that.

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

Mr. Furber: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a prime example of not listening to First Nations people from the member opposite, who in 1995 ran on an election platform of beating up First Nations people in Saskatchewan. He should be embarrassed about it. So he should not talk about relationships with First Nations people in this province.

And while the Premier is saying his minister is in talks with China and Brazil, his own report commissioned says that the consumers of potash are the worst-case scenario as owners of PSC, the worst-case scenario. Oh sorry, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. It's the worst-case scenario possible for Saskatchewan.

So to the Premier: what kind of leadership is he showing when he's leading a deal with Brazil and China, who are the purchasers of potash, when it's the worst-case scenario as reported in his own commissioned report?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's quite surprising that the member would want to talk about the 1995 election campaign, where indeed there was a proposal that went forward to talk about taxation in terms of First Nations people. And it was also quite interesting to note that shortly after the 1995 election, the NDP implemented that proposal in full, implemented it in full, Mr. Speaker. Every member on that side voted in favour of it at that time in their very first budget after the 1995 election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations leaders all across Saskatchewan know very well that when it comes to negotiating or having a discussion with the province of Saskatchewan, that that discussion is always welcome with this Premier and this government.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this province has known since August that BHP has put in their hostile takeover bid for PCS. The Premier has had ample time and all the resources of government to come up with some kind of a plan to ensure that the people of this province get maximum benefit from their potash resources. But instead he's been a bystander, waiting on the sidelines while Stephen Harper, BHP, and PCS decide the future of our strategic resource.

To the Premier: after two and a half months, does he have a long-term plan for potash, and will he table it here today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there has been support for the province's position right across this country. Mr. Speaker, there has been public commentary about the fact that this province did its homework. This province commissioned a report to look at the fiscal impact on the province. This province met with all the parties involved — including Canpotex, including the companies — doing our homework, doing our due diligence before we made what was a very, very important decision on our position with respect to this takeover. And then when it was ready, Mr. Speaker, we presented that position. But we didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We have continued to fight for this industry, Mr. Speaker. We continue to fight against the takeover.

And compare that, if you will, to the NDP who in October

under their leader's direction announced their plan for this takeover, Mr. Speaker. Their plan was simply this: they wanted to start negotiating the terms of surrender to BHP. That was their plan, and it ought not to surprise anybody because in 1994 it was the NDP that gave away the golden share that this province held with respect to PotashCorp, which is a large reason why we are where we are today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's conviction is commendable, but this is the guy whose name is on all the press releases when PCS was privatized in 1989. I mean it sounds good, but excuse me for not having a lot of faith in it.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has failed to deliver a long-term plan for potash — way different than some type of proposal or position — and he's waited when he should have been acting. We asked him to recall the legislature to debate this two months ago. The Premier waited. Our leader wrote to the federal minister in August. The Premier waited, Mr. Speaker. We offered to go to Ottawa with him to present a united position. The Premier rejected that offer, and he didn't even bother going himself, Mr. Speaker.

And three weeks ago, we presented a comprehensive plan to get the maximum possible benefit for the people of this province, no matter who owns the company. It's time for the Premier to stop waiting on the Prime Minister to decide our potash resource future. Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier's plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, shortly after coming to office, we were presented with the NDP royalty structure which had some improvements that had been done lately to it. We knew that maybe some more improvements were necessary. The companies wanted to talk to us, and so we executed that plan together with the potash companies. And the net result, Mr. Speaker, is that, in part because of the royalty structure of this government, over \$12 billion worth of expansion in the industry is under way today. Thousands of jobs are being created in the province today, Mr. Speaker. That's the plan we've had for potash.

It's like the plan we've had for the rest of the economy in terms of growth . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to know who is doing some research. Here's some research. In 1994 the province of Saskatchewan held the golden share in the wake of the privatization of PCS. It prescribed that PCS would not be able to sell securities without the permission of the government, Mr. Speaker. It was a true golden share. It prescribed that a majority of the owners of this company had to be from Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Who gutted that golden share? Who took away that protection

for the people of this province? It was the NDP. That's why today in this province the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada are saying our natural resource interests are best served with the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm even more nervous now because the Premier's changes to the royalty rate dealt with greenfield mines, didn't deal with expansion. That was something the former government had done. If he doesn't even understand, if the Premier doesn't understand his own royalty rates and he's making a deal and protecting the resources, the guy that worked for the government and sold PotashCorp, I'm even more nervous.

Mr. Speaker, it is long past time for this Premier to lay a plan on the table for the potash resources that belong to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, does he even have a plan or will he be supporting the NDP plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I want to invite members opposite to listen very carefully. What I said in my previous answer was that this government built on the royalty improvements that had been made by the previous government that are in part responsible for expansions in the industry.

But do you know what the NDP are now saying just now that they're in opposition? Part of their potash plan is they, unbelievably, Mr. Speaker, they would gut the very tax incentives that member just heralded and took credit for, Mr. Speaker. That would cost expansion in this province. It would cost jobs.

Her final question in her rambling, in what she just had to say was this. She said, will we adopt the NDP plan? No, Mr. Speaker. The NDP plan means giving up on Potash Corp of Saskatchewan. And the NDP plan means gutting the royalty structure that is creating jobs and wealth in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is the Premier that doesn't even understand his own royalty structure that made the biggest blunder in our province's history. He's been too late on the scene. He's been weak and simply not credible, Mr. Speaker.

At the eleventh hour of this critical debate, the Premier and his Minister of Energy and Resources have been meeting with — and in fact encouraging — a consortium of Chinese and Brazilian ownership of our potash resource. China and Brazil are consumers of our resource. Their aim is cheap potash — not profits, not royalties, not Canpotex, and not jobs.

Supported even by the Premier's own report, the one he paid for from the Conference Board of Canada, the absolute worst scenario for the people of Saskatchewan is to turn over control

to the very consumers of our resource, financially and economically. Why is this government even contemplating such a damaging investment?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had a conversation with First Nations leaders who brought forward a plan that they are considering. They're saying that they may look at putting together a consortium of people which include Canadian pension plan . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the member from Athabasca to allow the minister to respond to the question from the member from Regina Rosemont. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The consortium that they are putting together, they indicated to me, may include Canadian pension plans of various types. It may include foreign investment. It may include a number of different components. First Nations involvement in a very significant way, they indicated.

I said on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan that we were happy to take their representation at a time when they bring it forward. We'd be happy to comment on it when it becomes a public bid before the people of Saskatchewan and before the federal government. That is the position of the Government of Saskatchewan. We're always willing to listen to First Nations leaders when they bring forward proposals. Just as we have done in the past, we'll continue to do that in the future.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Irresponsible, Mr. Speaker, and pretty rich. Pretty righteous coming from that minister, the very minister and that very Premier who have disengaged completely in discussions about revenue sharing, duty to consult, and have had no authentic discussions as it relates to economic development with First Nations people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we don't know yet what the Harper Conservatives will do this afternoon. But we do know this. It's the Premier's job to have a plan no matter what the decision is. No matter what, the Premier needs to ensure that Saskatchewan people are getting the most out of our resources. So if the Harper Conservatives give the go-ahead today to BHP, what is the Premier's plan to ensure that Saskatchewan people will get a better deal for our potash resource?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When, at a time when the people of Saskatchewan, all of the people of Saskatchewan with a few notable exceptions, all of the people of Saskatchewan are fully supportive of the Premier's position with respect to this takeover, we see the Leader of the Opposition running off to Ottawa to see if he can gain some sort of political advantage out of this, Mr. Speaker. It

seems to me that's the only thing that the NDP are interested here, is in how many seats they might be able to gain out of this, out of this event.

Well I would say from our perspective that his leadership has been demonstrated to First Nations people on a number of occasions. He demonstrated it in Meadow Lake . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The minister can finalize his comments.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — The Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated his regard and respect for First Nations people on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's in a situation of the leadership of the NDP itself, in memberships, it's clear that his respect for First Nations leaders simply is not there.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — This incompetent minister and incompetent Premier have been engaged in eleventh hour discussions with the Chinese and Brazilian consortium to purchase our resource, Mr. Speaker. They are doing so or are throwing huge challenge to the case they're trying to make to simply say no, Mr. Speaker. But again we don't know what the Harper government will do here today. But either way, the Premier's responsibility is to have a plan regardless of all circumstances. He clearly does not have a plan if BHP, if that bid is approved. But if the bid is rejected this afternoon, the Premier still needs a plan to ensure Saskatchewan people get a better deal.

In recent weeks PCS made a pledge to the people of Saskatchewan. What is the Premier's plan to ensure that the commitments of PCS are legislated, enacted, and enforceable, and as it relates to employment, royalties control, and ownership, ensure that Saskatchewan people receive a better deal for our resource?

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

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Leader of the Opposition is lobbying in Ottawa today for . . . seeing if he can, seeing if he can gain some sort of — lobbying the leader of the NDP, I would say — to see if he can gain some sort of political advantage out of this. One would also wonder if he's also seeking another opportunity at a golden parachute similar to what he negotiated in the past for himself in terms of these types of deals.

Mr. Speaker, the deal that the member is referring to that has been brought forward by two First Nations leaders, Ken Thomas and Rick Gamble, supported by the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], is a proposal that they are bringing forward on their own. It's not something that has been solicited by the Government of Saskatchewan. It is something that they have put together. They're suggesting that it may have

some opportunity. We're taking opportunity to listen to the First Nations leaders here in Saskatchewan. We'll do that on every occasion, Mr. Speaker, here in the province.

The Speaker: — I just want to remind members and the minister that they're not to refer to the absence of members of the Assembly.

I recognize the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote.

National School of Dental Therapy

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it interesting that the member opposite would talk about meetings in Ottawa when his Premier couldn't get one meeting in Ottawa on this subject.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have students here today who are among our province's brightest and most dedicated. Many of them are committed to building their careers and lives in northern Saskatchewan. But the Saskatchewan Party government is ignoring them.

To the minister, simply: why has this government failed to ensure that the National School of Dental Therapy remains open?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to provide a direct response, and that is to the National School of Dental Therapy. This was announced last year by the federal government. This is an initiative that's profoundly important and, as a result, on November 30th last year, I began correspondence with the national Minister of Health, the federal Minister of Health.

What I can say, Mr. Speaker, in subsequent correspondence I have made a request that the funding be restored because the rationale that was utilized is empirically inaccurate. That was that the federal government wasn't going to be involved in post-secondary training. And what we certainly did is said certainly the federal government continues to be in a number of cases, both in this province and across the country.

We've also said that the federal minister probably overlooked — unintentionally but overlooked importantly — that this clinical and community-based program actually helps to treat more than 3,000 people within our province, many of those First Nations and Métis students. That request is in and has been shared with the federal government, as well as numerous Saskatchewan stakeholders.

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear here today that this program is important. What comes to mind and what's frustrating with the people of Prince Albert is that the failure to close any deal is apparently contagious on that side of the House.

He's had a year and he's written a few letters to their federal cousins. And apparently they've ignored them on this file as well, so we can add it to the long list of other times that they've been ignored by the Harper government.

So, Mr. Speaker, but truthfully this isn't just about the staff and students. It's about the health of northern residents in Saskatchewan. A report on northern health identifies dental therapists as the third most needed health professionals in northern Saskatchewan.

Now the Sask Party government is going to make the shortage of dental therapists worse by allowing the dental therapy school to die. This is short-sighted and irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. Why have they turned a blind eye to an important program that can help meet health care needs of the people in northern Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, it was in subsequent correspondence that I reiterated, and I quote:

Importantly this decision from the federal government not only affects education training for Saskatchewan students which the federal government participates in on a regular basis within and beyond our province, but has serious consequences for the health care of Saskatchewan people, especially within our northern First Nations and Métis communities.

I then go on to highlight, in fact, something that was overlooked in the rationale, and that is community-based and clinical care is provided, dental care is provided both within and beyond the Prince Albert area. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work on this file as we do on a number of files.

Mr. Speaker, our track record in post-secondary education in the North is solid. It's one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that you can see new residences under way or completed in Prince Albert, in Meadow Lake, in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite did nothing in this area. We continue to make sure that we're serving the people of the North, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Furber: — It's cold comfort to the students here today, Mr. Speaker, that he lists a bunch of other failures on the part of their government. It's a sad case in Saskatchewan where they can't get anything done with Ottawa even on a file as simple as this.

So, Mr. Speaker, the students and staff who have come here today are calling on the Saskatchewan Party government to step up to the plate and consider the needs of northern and rural Saskatchewan. They've been informed by ministry officials that no help was on the way for this program because — get this, Mr. Speaker — they said that there was not enough public outcry. That's what these folks were told. So they're here today, Mr. Speaker. It's about real students. It's about real people and

real communities. And they've come down to Regina today to express their public concern and to reflect the public outcry.

And I want to ask the minister today: will he commit today to working with partners to ensure that this program is reinstated immediately?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for the opportunity to return to this. I think our track record in the North, Mr. Speaker, especially on a number of initiatives regarding First Nations and Métis learners, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our track record, while we know there's much to be done, Mr. Speaker, we stand on our track record.

One of those vital partners, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to First Nations and Métis learners, relates to the federal government, Mr. Speaker, relates to the federal government. We continue to work on this file.

But we have a number of successes. For example, we have four Aboriginal skills training initiatives across this province, the largest of which, Mr. Speaker, the largest of which, \$33 million in the North where the private sector, the federal government, provincial government are all working together. Three others, Mr. Speaker. There's more to do, but our successes speak for themselves.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is from the minister that cut the Aboriginal employment development program so his support for Aboriginal employment programs is again not true.

Mr. Speaker, the students and staff who've come here today are on a noble pursuit. They're going to finish their course before the school is closed. So they are here in a very noble way to ensure that the school stays open for future students.

They come here with 18 letters of support from community leaders. They come here with 1,500 names on a petition that they put together in one week. And they come here with the blessing of the city council in Prince Albert. And they all want to know one thing. They understand that the federal government's cut the program, that there's no more money left in the program. They want to know this: will the provincial government pick up the funding for this program instead of pushing the blame off to the federal government on every occasion?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we know the federal government has responsibilities in our North, Mr. Speaker. We know the federal government has responsibilities for our First Nations and Métis student learners, Mr. Speaker. What we can't do, Mr. Speaker, is simply turn a blind eye, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The member from . . . Order. The member from the opposition had the opportunity to place the question. I ask the opposition members now to allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, it's prudent for the province of Saskatchewan to ask a very simple, straightforward question to Ottawa: will you restore the funding for these students? Mr. Speaker, it's vitally important, not just for their academics but for community-based health. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite obviously would just turn a blind eye to that, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that before, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work on this file on behalf of these students and future generations of students.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS

Bill No. 144 — *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to rule 90, Bill No. 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010* be reinstated to the order paper.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that pursuant to rule 90, Bill No. 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010* be reinstated to the order paper. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Gantfoer, seconded by Mr. Wyant, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Broten.]

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to resume this debate. I hope that I won't have to reiterate too much of what I said last night for the benefit of my colleagues, but if that should happen I think it will be worth the effort, won't it?

Mr. Speaker, a Throne Speech by its very nature is intended to do more than one thing. There are several things that a

document of this type will do. One is to indicate where the government has been. It also informs the people of the province where the government is at today, and it also advises where the government would like to see the province move as part of their legislative agenda in the days and months and years to come. This document achieves all three of the express purposes of a Throne Speech.

And as a matter of course, this Throne Speech has identified some clear victories, some obvious achievements that have been brought to fruition as a result of some very significant initiatives by this government early in its mandate. And it enunciates also where we are today, talks about what accomplishments we have made, how that sets the stage for where we want to go.

But there are, I would say, half a dozen specifics in this document that talk to future plans that I believe are relevant, not just to the entire province, but more specifically to the people of the constituency of Cypress Hills. And so, as my time continues this afternoon, I want to elaborate on those specifics of unique interest to my constituents.

If I turn to page 3 on the Throne Speech, I see that highways are identified as one of the important aspects of undertaking that this government will pursue in the next little while. Let me go back to the days prior to the 2007 election when almost all of rural Saskatchewan and much of urban Saskatchewan was disgusted beyond belief with the failed state of roads throughout the province. We had thousands of kilometres of thin membrane highway that had been allowed to deteriorate to the point where, in some instances, they were virtually impassable.

And the constituency of Cypress Hill had a number of examples of roads just like that. We had Highway 32, for instance, Mr. Speaker, the infamous Highway 32 brought to the attention of the province in total exasperation by a group of 12 people from the community of Leader in the now well-known nude pothole calendar initiative — a calendar that brought ridicule and awareness, I guess, to that stretch of road from the community of Prelate right down through to Shackleton, which was so bad that people could actually hide in those potholes, buck naked mind you, and hardly be seen. And that calendar identified some of the worst areas of disrepair along Highway 32.

[14:30]

But not only that, Mr. Speaker, that calendar was sent around the world. In fact today if you google nude pothole calendar, if you google that, Mr. Speaker, you will find that story in languages you didn't know existed. That story went around the world. I would say that you could still find probably 13, 14, 15 examples of that story in probably in Croatian, in Greek, in a number of Far Eastern languages. You'd probably find it in French, German. You'll find it in such a variety of languages. And that, in a novel sense, became the way people saw Saskatchewan. That story was believed to be representative of Saskatchewan roads. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, we had a huge public relations issue to overcome.

And when this government was given the opportunity to serve the people of Saskatchewan, one of the very first initiatives that

we addressed — and I had the privilege of being the minister at that time — was the full repair of Highway 32. Some 50-odd kilometres of road that, as I said, had fallen into such disrepair it was more like a goat trail. I think the Premier once described it as like driving on the lunar surface — it was that irregular and rough. And the grooves in the road surface were so deep that if you were running a small car, you ran the risk of tearing the oil pan off your car. And in some instances mufflers and exhaust systems were left on the side of the road. Big hunks of pavement had been yanked out of the road by the heavy truck traffic that was running up and down that road.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we focused our investment on that road. We spent about \$600,000 a kilometre for those 54, 55, 56 kilometres, had a multi-million-dollar investment. And over the last three years I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that that road has been completed. And as a matter of fact I am equally pleased to report in the . . . Well I was going to say in the absence of the Minister of Highways, but I can't do that because he's doing something just out of range here. So I'm going to say that on Friday we're going to host a grand opening of Highway 32, the rebuilt Highway 32.

We've invited a bunch of local dignitaries. We've invited the media. And, Mr. Speaker, we've even invited the 12 original models for the pothole calendar to come back — fully clothed — for this opportunity for celebration. And I think it's going to be an exciting time in the town of Lancer on Friday at 10 a.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the success stories around the provincial government's highway initiative. When we had really good weather conditions in our first year of construction, we accomplished 1490 kilometres of roadwork in this province. Never had been achieved before. A record amount of roadwork. In the second year we did that much and more. And this last year we had some weather-related issues to address but we've almost accomplished the volume of work that we wanted to.

And just this past year actually I think we had about 1129 kilometres of roadwork tendered and we've got another close to 800 kilometres of maintenance and safety-related work that's completed by the Ministry of Highways. So these are monumental investments in rural infrastructure that for so many years was ignored entirely by the previous government.

And so I'm very pleased to be able to say that Highway 32 is a symbol, a representation of this government's will and determination to renew our rural infrastructure. I know that there are many projects around the province that still require that kind of attention, and I certainly wouldn't want to minimize the communities that have not yet seen their roadwork accomplished.

But there isn't a single person who drives in this province who doesn't recognize the volume of construction work that is happening, whether it is new highway construction, repaving, or rebuilding of bridges or the installation of new culverts. All of this work has been long overdue and is progressing in a manner in which is timely, efficient, effective, and affordable. And, Mr. Speaker, we have many more good news items to talk about in that regard.

I drive the No. 1 Highway each time I come into Regina and

return to my constituency. And I'm pleased to report that so much of the No. 1 west of Moose Jaw has been repaved and worked on to the point of renewal that it's a real pleasure to make that trip. And I know that much of the Trans-Canada Highway east of the city of Regina to the Manitoba border has also been renewed with paving and construction.

So we're focusing very diligently on highway routes that provide a significant economic benefit to the province of Saskatchewan. We all know the quality of the work on Highway 16 from Saskatoon to the Lloydminster area. We know that there are other highways in this province that are pushing for escalated and early twinning because of the increase in volume of traffic, especially truck traffic.

But as we establish our priorities, as we move forward, our one goal is to provide a highway network that is building on our economic opportunity and responding to the increased truck traffic especially that is created by that economic growth and development. And so we're pleased to be able to make those significant investments.

One of the other areas of transportation and now distribution and warehousing logistics and that type of endeavour has been referenced by my colleague from Regina Wascana Plains. I'm referring, Mr. Speaker, to the Global Transportation Hub that is currently under development west of the city of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, this is a project that I believe has tremendous economic opportunity and benefit for the entire province of Saskatchewan. This project is not a Regina project. It happens to be located west of the city, but the impact and benefit of this project will accrue to the entire province. It's intended to streamline the supply chain activities of companies that are going to use the Global Transportation Hub as a distribution base, but it's also intended on the other side of the equation to provide a container capability and capacity to producers in Saskatchewan who are looking for a container access so they can ship their projects around the world.

When we talk about the Global Transportation Hub, many people think that we're being quite pretentious, that using the term global is a rather, well, elaborate way to describe what is basically a Saskatchewan prairie project.

But here's where the name came from, Mr. Speaker. As supply chains develop, as companies become more and more rigorous in their control of costs, as they source products from further and further afield, companies that are doing business in Western Canada need a warehousing and distribution logistics capability to serve the market in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, maybe as far west as BC, maybe as far east as northwestern Ontario and Manitoba. And that's what makes Saskatchewan a very interesting location for the warehousing and distribution of many of those products. But those products are coming into this part of the continent from worldwide sources, some as distant as southeast Asia — China in particular — others are coming from India. But products from around the world are coming into Western Canada by container through the port of Vancouver, the port of Prince Rupert, being unloaded there, put on trains, and moved into the internal part of the North American continent.

So we have an opportunity to provide distribution and warehousing facilities here in the city. But we also have the opportunity to reconfigure trains and truck traffic to send a lot of that international produce and production to other parts of North America, maybe further east into southern Ontario or Quebec, maybe into the Midwestern United States, maybe into the industrial heartland of the US [United States], such as the states of Illinois and Wisconsin and Indiana, those places that depend on a lot of the off-shore production for distribution to their consumers. And we are ideally located as we are in the heart of the North American continent, right here in Saskatchewan, to produce and provide those kind of warehousing and distribution services to a much large audience.

So the word "global" really has a very specific meaning in terms of imports as part of the supply chain that has developed over the last number of years. But we also anticipate this project to be global in its outward projections because Saskatchewan-produced oilseeds, grains, manufactured goods are actually being exported around the world right now. In fact Saskatchewan's short-line manufacturers are among the most successful in the entire world. And their products go all across Europe into Eastern Europe, into Russia, and into some of the former Soviet bloc nations that are finding that they have great agricultural potential and don't have the equipment to maximize those potentialities. And so Saskatchewan manufacturers are seeing increased opportunities in far-off markets.

An interesting story I hear from the CEO of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, Lionel LaBelle, is how Saskatchewan lentils and those types of ag products that we are growing here, generally called pulse crops, that has become a huge market . . . I'm sorry, a huge export opportunity for producers here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And one of the most unique stories that he tells is how the very poor and most recently flood affected nation of Bangladesh has become one of our most important customers. And at one time, where they used to import a few million dollars worth of pulse crops, lentils and peas and those types of crops that we grow very successfully here, that nation by itself has now become a \$300 million market for producers in the province of Saskatchewan. That's just one success story, but we are sending products that we grow into North Africa in large volumes now, where we never had that opportunity previously.

Our quality and our dependability in terms of production have made us a preferred source of some of these very unusual crops. And as a result, Saskatchewan is in greater and greater need, from the point of our agricultural producers, of containers. And containers don't arrive in an area by accident. You have to organize the availability of containers. And by using containers that are coming in from offshore to provide products to our distribution centre here, we might be able to take some of those containers, capture them for reuse, fill them with Saskatchewan-developed product, and ship them back offshore.

It's a balancing act, Mr. Speaker, and we hope that by our choice of companies that we'll be locating into the Global Transportation Hub and by the thorough and expert analysis of export potential that we believe is available to us that we'll be able to balance the incoming containers with the outgoing

requirements of our producers. And if and when we accomplish that as effectively as we hope, we will have one of the most effective intermodal facilities in all of North America.

Mr. Speaker, this project isn't pie in the sky. It was developed as a result of potential that we realized quickly and inspirationally, I guess, by the coming together of a number of important factors. The most successful inland terminals around North America, and even worldwide, have had two fundamental factors come into play. One of them is the availability of what is known as a class 1 railway. In Canada that would be a railway like CP [Canadian Pacific] Rail or Canadian National Rail. But the mainline class 1 railways are an important in fact an integral part of the success formula for inland terminals. The other is to have private sector investment in the form of companies that want to situate near this kind of intermodal facility and development. And in our case, we were very fortunate early on to have that kind of a situation develop here with CP Rail wanting to move their intermodal facilities from downtown Regina to a point west of the city and with the arrival of the Canadian Logistics Services million square foot warehouse that was being built on behalf of Canada's largest food retailer, the Loblaw Companies.

[14:45]

So when we had that sort of basic formation of capacity as a result of those two significant private sector players, we knew instantly that there was opportunity for other players of equal importance to participate in a project of this nature. And that has formed the basis for the development of the Global Transportation Hub, and that is what we are planning to build on as we move forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm excited about the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] and what it might mean for not just the city of Regina, as I said, but for the entire province. In fact given the kind of statistics we're hearing, this could be the single largest economic development project in the province over the next decade or so. We've already been given a clear indication that the job potential, the jobs potential for the Global Transportation Hub over the next number of years could be as high as 4,000 people.

Now I know that in one instance alone the company is talking of hiring anywhere up to 15, 1,600 people over the next couple of years. But that's just one company. That doesn't reflect the employment opportunities that will be created by other companies that come to locate in the Global Transportation Hub area. That's a 2,000 acre — plus or minus a few acres — project that will be home to many companies, all of whom will have significant employment opportunities. So we can see several thousands of people working at that hub over the next number of years as the project matures and as the land is developed out there on behalf of these various major players.

One of the interesting pieces of information that we've gleaned, one of the early companies that indicated they wanted to be a partner in this project said that they would expect truck traffic to amount to about 1,400 units a week initially — 1,400 units a week — and that's not just truck and trailers. That's truck and long-combination vehicle trailers. That would put a significant stress on our existing infrastructure, and as a consequence of

that early prediction, we saw the investment at the Lewvan and the new interchange that's being built there.

But we were required to produce a quicker response for supporting infrastructure further down the highway. And people who drive west on the No. 1 Highway will notice that there's new development at Pinkie Road. There is an accelerated timetable for another interchange to happen at Pinkie Road. There will be twinning of the road along the Pinkie Road access up to Dewdney. There will be some improvements on Dewdney Avenue as it heads out of the city past the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Depot west to the GTH. And sooner than later there's going to be a new development of highway — single and then twinned — to the No. 11 from Dewdney up to a new interchange at Highway 11.

Now at one time we thought that would all take about 10 years to accomplish. But now we're being told by the company that indicated 1,400 trucks a week as sort of their anticipated truck traffic requirements, because they're ahead of schedule and because they think that they're going to be able to service many more stores in Western Canada from this Regina facility, now they're predicting as many as 2,800 trucks a week. And, Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate how that would impact our planning and how significant that kind of an increase would be on the priorities of infrastructure development.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we see this project growing ahead of schedule in many instances at a much more aggressive rate with much more impact on our existing infrastructure. But the good news is that it will have tremendous benefit to the province from an economic and employment perspective. And we are doing whatever possible we can to manage this growth and to make this reality a real important and significant benefit to the province sooner than later.

I have some personal interest in the Global Transportation Hub as you may know, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier asked me to chair the board of directors of that organization. But that hasn't in any way diminished my enthusiasm for the project. In fact it's only heightened my enthusiasm, and I think we have a great opportunity here to really establish the role and reputation of the province of Saskatchewan as a leader in transportation logistics.

I indicated that there were two factors, you know — a class 1 railway and a private sector player — to make a facility like that a success. But the supporting infrastructure required to fully complement a project of this nature was recognized early on when we undertook our five-year rolling plan and our evaluation of the provincial transportation network and approached transportation in this province from a clearly strategic perspective, an economic perspective. And we identified roads that would feed into larger highways that would accomplish our export potential with more efficiency and quicker timelines and less cost.

And so we've laid the foundations for a successful project here by looking at the entire province and saying, how can we benefit the entire province through this project? What needs to be done? What investments need to be undertaken in order to achieve our ultimate goal here? And when we talked about highways earlier, that's why some of the highways that are

experiencing record levels of investment are being fulfilled right now because they play an important part in sort of feeding the opportunities that will accrue to the business people of this province through the Global Transportation Hub.

Mr. Speaker, this summer in the constituency of Cypress Hills, we saw the most devastating impact of unprecedented rainfall. You know, the Southwest is historically known as one of the drier parts of the province. We, on a good year, might get 12 to 14 inches of moisture including snow and sleet and rain and everything. And this year we had rainfall in Cypress Hills of unprecedented proportions.

And in the immediate area of the Cypress Hills — the park and the community of Maple Creek — we had significant rainfall. We had every little pothole and slough full of water. The ground was completely saturated, and then we had two separate large, wet, heavy snowfalls which produced far more water than you would ordinarily expect. And as that water and moisture kept arriving, it made it more and more difficult for the streams and the creeks and whatever dam structures or water control structures existed there to handle the increased moisture.

And then in the middle of the night, we had what was about an 8-inch rain that fell right at the top of the Cypress Hills. If you've ever visited that area, when you understand how much cobblestone and rock there is there and how much runoff potential exists, especially when it's all downhill, and when you have that much water over about 150 or 200 square miles, 8 inches of water in an area that large is going to produce an awful volume of water.

And in the middle of the night, authorities warned the people of the community of Maple Creek that a flood was imminent. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody in that community appreciated how significant, how dramatic, and how devastating that flood would be because nobody who'd ever lived in the community of Maple Creek had seen a flood of this proportion.

There was a flood there back in the mid- to late 1990s that did some damage, but it was a piker compared to the impact of this flood.

Mr. Speaker, officials who've looked at the volume of water and the speed with which it came and the problems that were associated with it, have identified this flood as a one in maybe a thousand-year event. And in fact, they said that the volume of water here was sort of a . . . You could identify it as about 4,000 times greater than anything that had been experienced in the area before.

Now Mr. Speaker, nobody can be prepared for conditions of that sort. Nobody anticipates that kind of thing happening. It's clearly unprecedented and never likely to happen again. But the question becomes, how does a government respond to a disaster of that magnitude? How does a government reassure the people that they will stand by them and work with them and help them in whatever way they possibly can?

Mr. Speaker, the provincial disaster assistance program has been in place for quite some time. But it was never intended to deal with an impact quite this significant. And it certainly

wasn't capable of responding to floods every day or two in different communities around the province.

Mr. Speaker, we had a flood in Maple Creek on June 18, 19. And I think the impact was starting to dissipate on the 20th of June. We had one just a week or 10 days later in Yorkton. We had one shortly thereafter in Saskatoon. We had another one in North Battleford. We had one at Raymore and the Kawacatoose, Watrous. We had floods and storms of tremendous power and damaging potential in communities all around the province.

And as of just recently, I heard the minister say that we have damage claims that are now numbering in excess of 3,700 — 3,700 claims from around the province, literally hundreds of municipalities asking for assistance from the provincial government.

What was the largest pre-2010 damage claim as a result of these kinds of events? What was it? I mean Fishing Lake. I've heard that, and I guess we would all be familiar with Fishing Lake. But how many people would've been affected by the Fishing Lake disaster? A couple hundred claims? More than that? Not very many more. But you know, whatever it would've been, it would have been a very small percentage compared to the 3,700, 3,800 claims that have been filed for the summer of 2010 with the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] officials. And I know the community of Maple Creek had between 450 and 500 claims. And outside of the community of Maple Creek in the rural area of Maple Creek, and then if you add the community of Burstall in, which also got an 8-inch rain overnight and flooded a lot of basements, if you add that in, you might have about 550 claims just in my constituency alone.

So we spent a lot of time this summer visiting the community of Maple Creek. I was in there on a daily basis for a while and for several separate occasions following that. I spent about 12 days in the community of Maple Creek just focusing on flood claim issues, and a day or two in Burstall.

But what I was impressed by, Mr. Speaker, was the responsiveness of the PDAP officials. Now I know there have been complaints as time wore on about some of the claims not being adjusted and not being paid out in a timely manner, but I can't fault the way officials responded to these disasters in the early stages. They were there instantly. You know, the day after the flood the Premier was on the ground in Maple Creek. The Minister of Highways and Transportation was on the ground. The Minister in charge of the PDAP program was there. The federal MP was there. I was there.

[15:00]

We walked door to door and talked to people right away. And the orders that came out of that visit that day from the Premier and the minister to the officials in the ministry was, we need to respond. What can we do immediately to help these people? And that's where it was almost instantly determined that we would provide every person who had a damage claim a \$3,000 cheque, and within a week that money was there.

That's never happened before, Mr. Speaker. And that responsiveness, I think, was very well received by the people of

Maple Creek. I know the municipal officials, the mayor and the administrator there and members of the town council, were working day in and day out to help the local citizens there.

But the other thing that they appreciated about our government's response was that they were able to call directly to the Premier. They either could talk to the Premier directly or his executive assistant or somebody in the Premier's office with a problem and with a suggestion. And the government responded as quickly as possible.

I know that, I know that, you know, in subsequent weeks there were concerns about the time it took for adjustors to do their job. But, Mr. Speaker, here's something else. If we acknowledge the fact that this province has never seen a disaster of that magnitude, never seen that kind of damage done province-wide, it's pretty likely that you're not going to have enough adjustors anywhere within the province to handle that magnitude and that volume of claims.

And you can go maybe hire new people to supplement the role of the adjustors, but if they don't know the details of the program, if they aren't familiar with this kind of damage, if they haven't done this type of adjusting before, that's not really all that helpful. And we had some situations where people who were brought in to help with the adjusting weren't familiar enough with the requirements of the program to do a fully adequate job.

And there are some instances of course where the damage you would see initially was superficial. It looked pretty obvious, but it was superficial compared to the ultimate damage that the flood would impact on any given property days and weeks and months later. In fact today we're still getting reports of damage that was caused by the flood that wasn't noticed within the first week or two or even month or two of the initial disaster. So I learned a lot about floods and the impact of floods, and I learned from insurance company specialists why floods are considered the worst possible natural disaster that you can deal with.

You know, if you have a tornado, Mr. Speaker, a tornado drops down and does extensive damage in this area or that area. It moves from building to building or farm to farm, but there's a beginning and an end to the damage of a tornado. If you have a fire, there's a beginning and an end. And when the fire is out, you can see pretty much the total damage that's been caused by that fire. But when you have flood damage, you have damage that is not just ubiquitous, it's pervasive and it's continuous. It's the damage that . . . I almost want to use the term, it's the gift that keeps on giving, except it's not a gift. It is the kind of situation where what doesn't appear damaged today is suddenly hosting black mould two weeks later.

You know, in one instance in a campground where the water was almost 45 feet deep, the pressure of the water was so great that it forced water between the plastic coating on electrical cable and the wire itself. Now who's ever heard of that? Is that the kind of thing that we would normally adjust in any kind of an evaluation? No. But it was weeks and weeks later when they found out that the corrosion that had started on that underground buried wire was so total that all of the wire in the campground would have to be ripped out and reinstalled at a

cost of thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. That money, that damage wasn't even recognized as part of the initial claim.

So when you see the impact of flooding, when you see basements now four months later starting to crumble because the water pressure in the water table is so great that it's causing basements to buckle, when you see joists starting to heave in houses because of moisture in the basement. When you see that kind of extensive damage happening many months after the fact, you can see why a flood is so devastating and the damage is so continuous.

So, Mr. Speaker, what was the response of the Saskatchewan Party government to this particular episode, not just in Maple Creek, not just in Burstall, but in other communities around the province? Well Maple Creek actually served as sort of the testing spot for a lot of changes that were introduced by the provincial government because it was the earliest and because so many of the shortcomings of the PDAP program became apparent as the adjustment process was undertaken.

And we're very proud of the way we dealt with this. It took some very thorough vetting and some very careful analysis by the ministry and by officials in the ministry. We wanted to make sure that we did this right, that we were thoughtful about it, that we didn't have unintended consequences, and it took a little time to do it adequately.

But here's some of the things that we've achieved, Mr. Speaker, changes that were brought to the PDAP program in the month of August after some of those very early assessments of damage had been done. We reduced the deductible for private claimants from 20 per cent — which was a real irritant — down to 5 per cent, which eased the burden for many of our claimants. We increased the maximum claim for residents, primary residents, from \$160,000 to 240,000. We increased the maximum amount of assistance to small businesses, to non-profit organizations, to boards, and to primary agricultural enterprises from 160,000 to \$500,000.

One of the things we did that caught a lot of people by surprise was we eliminated the Saskatchewan residency requirements for small business and agricultural owners. Mr. Speaker, previously the program would not, would not support the claims of individuals who were not bona fide Saskatchewan residents. But because of the experience in Maple Creek where we had people who lived in Alberta but owned businesses in Maple Creek, who were maybe part-time residents there, or who were in the process of relocating in Maple Creek from other jurisdictions, we felt that that business enterprise deserved to be treated on an equal footing with existing businesses in the community. And so that residency element was removed.

We also separated the maximum \$30,000 relocation payment from property claims. At one time, if you got relocation payments as part of the PDAP process, that \$30,000 cap was subtracted from what you got in total from the program. But that was separated out, and you could get your full relocation payment without it having an impact on your property claim.

We made regional park authorities eligible for the same kind of coverage as municipalities. And we fixed the deductible for

municipalities and regional parks at 15 per cent of their current taxable assessment.

We made other changes a little later on in the months of September and October. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that there's enough information here that I want to share with the members of the House that I'll need a little more time, but at this point . . .

An Hon. Member: — You won't get more time. You'll be done.

Mr. Elhard: — Well maybe I'll be done sooner than I thought, Mr. Speaker.

But let me just talk about some of the changes that happened to the PDAP program in September and October. We capped the amount of depreciation on furnaces at 35 per cent. I think that's really critical for people, especially as we approach the winter months. We reduced the depreciation rate on drywall and other tangible properties such as hot water heaters and concrete. We hired additional structural engineering firms to expedite the work of the adjustment process. We hired more independent claims adjusters. And we increased the advance payment on claims, initial claims, from 40 per cent to 60 per cent to allow people to get moving quicker once they received the adjuster's report. And we're moving on a priority basis any claims that are associated with furnace and hot water repairs.

Mr. Speaker, there's much more that has been accomplished under the PDAP program. And so if we had more time, I'd like to detail some of that.

The only other thing I want to talk about for two minutes is the benefit of the STARS [shock trauma air rescue service] program that's being introduced to the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this last weekend I was in Alberta, and coincidentally I talked to two people who'd had just recent experiences with the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] helicopter program there.

In the case of one man, he told me that that program saved his life. He had a heart attack at home. He was resuscitated, loaded into a helicopter, and flown to Calgary. On the flight to Calgary, he died on the table. And if it hadn't been for the full-service medical service available to him on that STARS helicopter, he would have died.

And when I heard his story and the enthusiasm he had for the quality of medical care he received as part of that STARS transfer, I was reminded how important that kind of capability would be in my own constituency. How important it would be for individuals in the large rural area of southwest Saskatchewan where a ground service ambulance can't reach in a timely manner, and how many lives might be saved in my own constituency with that kind of medical capability that a helicopter can provide.

The other story I heard, I was at a funeral on Sunday and the funeral was for a friend of mine who died in the STARS helicopter. But he was being rushed from Vulcan to Calgary and his heart blew up. And it wouldn't have mattered how good the medical capability on that helicopter was, he wasn't going

to survive it. But he had a fighting chance knowing that he could be removed from Vulcan to Calgary in such a timely manner.

And those two examples, Mr. Speaker, say volumes to me about the importance of having this type of service in the province of Saskatchewan. It isn't intended to replace any other activities. It's going to complement the existing services. And I think that these kind of anecdotal stories only reinforce, in my own mind, how important this undertaking is for the people of Saskatchewan.

And while we're talking about the benefit to rural Saskatchewan, the same kind of benefit can accrue to urban Saskatchewan when they need to be transferred from a smaller hospital in a more rural community to one of our tertiary hospitals in Regina or Saskatoon. And I think the lives saved through this undertaking will be clearly beneficial and make this investment absolutely worthwhile. I can't say enough about my respect for the STARS organization and the benefits they have brought to the many people whose lives have either been saved or whose wounds have been healed earlier because of access to that service. So this is an investment that I believe is not just justifiable but absolutely essential for quality of life and security for people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've been granted a lot of latitude by my colleagues to enunciate some of these initiatives, and I appreciate their indulgence. But I want to say once again that this Throne Speech I think represents not just the agenda of the government yesterday, not just an enunciation of where we're at today, but where we're going in a very pragmatic and practical way. And I will be supporting the Throne Speech motion, and I will not be supporting the amendment.

And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave of the House to recess for a short time and that the bells recall the members at the call of the Chair.

[15:15]

The Speaker: — The member from Cypress Hills has asked for leave to move a motion that the Assembly recess for a short period of time and that the bells call the members back to the Chamber at the appropriate time. Is the Assembly agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. This Assembly will recess until the call of the Chair and the bells are rung.

[The Assembly recessed for a period of time.]

The Speaker: — The Assembly will resume with the response to the Speech from the Throne. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a real honour, as always, to be able to stand in this Assembly and respond to the Speech from the Throne.

But before I get into the text of my remarks, I want to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Northwest on a

well-fought campaign in the recent by-election. I do know this, Mr. Speaker. The Wyant family is very well-known for its public service, not only in Saskatoon but in Saskatchewan as well.

When I was the Minister Responsible for the Crown Investment Corporation, I had the privilege of working with the member's brother, Peter, who is a very fine public servant, who offered good advice when it came to one of the companies that the province had an interest in, and that was Federated Co-op's heavy upgrader. And Peter did yeoman service not only with regard to the upgrader but other assets that CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] had. So it's really wonderful to see another Wyant come to Regina. And I'm looking forward to his career as a member of the legislature in Saskatchewan.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, I want to do a couple of things. I want to thank my constituency assistant, Judy Gossen, for the work that she does in our constituency office. I think it's fair to say that Judy sees me a lot more often now than she used to. And we've worked together for a number of years. And I want to thank her very much for the work that she does day in and day out on behalf of not only people that live in Saskatoon Nutana, but also people that come from across the province to our office to see whether or not we can make progress on some of their issues.

Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the Throne Speech, and I was struck by the opening poem. And the Throne Speech really is a brief outline of what the government intends to accomplish in the year ahead. And the opening poem is a poem by a poet, Robert Frost, and the poem is called "The Road Not Taken". And over the years, Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to go out the west doors of the Assembly and over to a secluded little area where some of a previous premier's ashes are interned outside of the . . . on the other side of the road. And Woodrow Lloyd, who was the premier of Saskatchewan in the 1960s has his ashes, some of his ashes are interned there. And there is a poem that Woodrow Lloyd often referred to in terms of his life as a politician in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Now the reason why I raise Woodrow Lloyd, Mr. Speaker, is because Woodrow Lloyd was the member of the legislature for Biggar, and that's the area that I've come from. Woodrow Lloyd was my mom's high school teacher and really was the reason why . . . On my mom's side of the family, her father and mother were Irish Catholics that had come here from Prince Edward Island. They settled here in the teens part of the last century.

And when they came here as Irish Catholics, they were Liberals. And as a result of the way that Woodrow Lloyd, who was the high school principal in Biggar, treated my mom and her sister, my grandparents became CCFers [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] in the 1940s.

And I would say that that's one of the reasons why I've had an interest in politics, was because of my mother's influence.

And when Woodrow Lloyd died, and I remember this very

clearly, on the program that described his life was this poem. And when you go out to the west side of the legislature, you will see on a plaque is this poem. And this poem is an important poem for social democrats in this province. It's an important poem for Woodrow Lloyd. It's an important poem for my family. And in fact I have the original program from his funeral. I've had it framed. And it's on the wall in my constituency office, and it's been there since I was elected in 1986.

And the poem was important for Woodrow Lloyd, a lot of the CCFers because they really thought they were taking the road less travelled. And when you think about what Woodrow Lloyd had to put up with in 1962 with the implementation of medicare and what people who supported medicare had to put up with, it was indeed a road less travelled.

Now I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, that we can fast forward several decades to 2010 and say that we really are on a road less travelled in the province of Saskatchewan because we've seen this movie before, Mr. Speaker. And I want to describe in the minutes that I have the movie that we've seen before. Because we now have in the province of Saskatchewan a conservative government. And they might say that they're not, but they are, Mr. Speaker. They are a conservative government.

And when I look at the Throne Speech, surely to goodness when we think about public policy we think about the people behind that public policy that we are trying to make progress for, Mr. Speaker. And the one part of the Throne Speech that I find most disconcerting is, on the new road we are doing more to help those in need, Mr. Speaker. And I don't see any evidence of that at the moment.

And I listened very carefully to the members opposite saying that they were taking the high road in their Speech to the Throne. And when I listened carefully to what they were saying, I concluded that in many respects many of them were taking the low road. Because they weren't talking about the people behind the public policy that we come here to implement, they were talking about the past.

Mr. Speaker, we have some very significant problems in the province of Saskatchewan, and I want to describe them. It is true that the average wage of people in Saskatchewan has increased, and we should be pleased about that. But what we're not looking at is the median wage and how many people are below the medium wage.

And, Mr. Speaker, daily in the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana, which is not a low-income constituency, people come into the office and talk about how difficult it is to make ends meet. And let me give you some examples. Day after day after day, women in particular and immigrants in particular come into my constituency office and talk about, Mr. Speaker, how difficult it is to make ends meet. And, Mr. Speaker, they talk about the increased rents that are occurring.

And let me give you an example. There is a woman that lives in my constituency — this is a real person — who spent most of her life working for a . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — With apologies to the member for Nutana. With leave to make a very brief statement on a very important day for Saskatchewan.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave is not granted. Order. Order. Order. Leave is not granted. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the woman that I am referring to worked for many, many years for an institution in the province of Saskatchewan . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I'd ask the members to allow the member from Saskatoon Nutana to continue her speech.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this woman is in her early 60s. She worked for an institution in the province that did not have a high-wage policy, did not have benefits, and did not have a pension plan. And when that institution closed in the province of Saskatchewan, she moved from a small town into the city to be closer to a sister.

And, Mr. Speaker, she came to Saskatoon about four years ago. She had saved on a minimal wage, a little bit above minimum wage, but she saved money and she had some investments in the bank. And she thought that she would be able to get herself to the old age pension. She's getting some Canada pension, but her money is beginning to run out and she doesn't know where she's going to go, Mr. Speaker.

A second person that I'm thinking of is an immigrant who came here under the immigrant nominee program, is working in the service sector — once again, makes a little bit above minimum wage. This is a single person, and this person has faced rent increases that now gobble up over 60 per cent of the money that he takes home each month, Mr. Speaker. These are real people with real issues.

And one of the public policy issues that we have in the province of Saskatchewan is a lack of affordable housing. And while the Throne Speech certainly referred to a home ownership program where over the next several years 1,000 people, 1,000 families would be able to own a home, this Throne Speech did not address the need. And it's a real need, Mr. Speaker, to have affordable housing, not only for families, not only for single families and not only for seniors, but a real need to have

affordable housing for those folks who work in the service sector or are not yet at the age of retirement, Mr. Speaker.

And we think that if the government is serious, serious about supporting people who have real needs, there will truly be a real investment in affordable housing, not only in Saskatoon but in North Battleford, Regina, Estevan, Swift Current, various parts of the province where . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well he may, but I want to put this on the record for the people that I represent, because they have real needs and the government, at the moment, is not stepping up to address their needs, Mr. Speaker.

There is certainly prosperity in the province for some people, but there is not prosperity in the province for all.

And when you're talking about taking a road less travelled, let's take a road less travelled where all people can have access to a safe and secure bed and home each day of the year, Mr. Speaker. That's what New Democrats support.

Mr. Speaker, another issue that is paramount is what's happening to people who are HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] positive. Mr. Speaker, I had a man in my office about a week ago that is a recovering IV [intravenous] drug user. He's 52 years of age, and he has absolutely no place to live in the city of Saskatoon.

And who did he come with to my office? He came with his 78-year-old mother on a bus because she was looking for help. She lives in a small apartment. And she is absolutely devastated that, on her low income, her son has no place to go.

And she recognizes that her son has made some very serious choices in his life, Mr. Speaker, that he is a person who has had a tremendous drug addiction. And he is on the road to recovery but he has absolutely no place. And I spent the day trying to find him a place to live. This too is a man, for the member from Southeast — and this woman lives in his constituency, the mom — this is a man that has no identification, none. And in order to get an apartment, you have to have some form of identification. You have to have a health card, a birth certificate. You have to have something. And with the condition that he has and the shape that he's in, Mr. Speaker, he really should be in a group home or someplace that is supported living. But there's no place for him to go, and he's living with his mom.

And I think if we want to travel a new road then we need to have someplace for people who are HIV positive to go to be supported, to have a safe place to live, to have food. Because we know that the health evidence shows that the people in our province who are HIV positive are the least healthy in the country and have the worst health outcomes in the country.

And why is that, Mr. Speaker? It is because they are poor and they are often homeless and they do a lot of couch surfing, or they live outdoors. And I think if we want to take a road less travelled in a province that is truly blessed at the moment, a province that is truly blessed, then we need to think about those people and implement public policy that will support people living with HIV, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council

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

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. June Draude
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan
Minister Responsible for Crown
Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for Information
Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Workers'
Compensation Board

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education,
Employment and Immigration
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services