



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

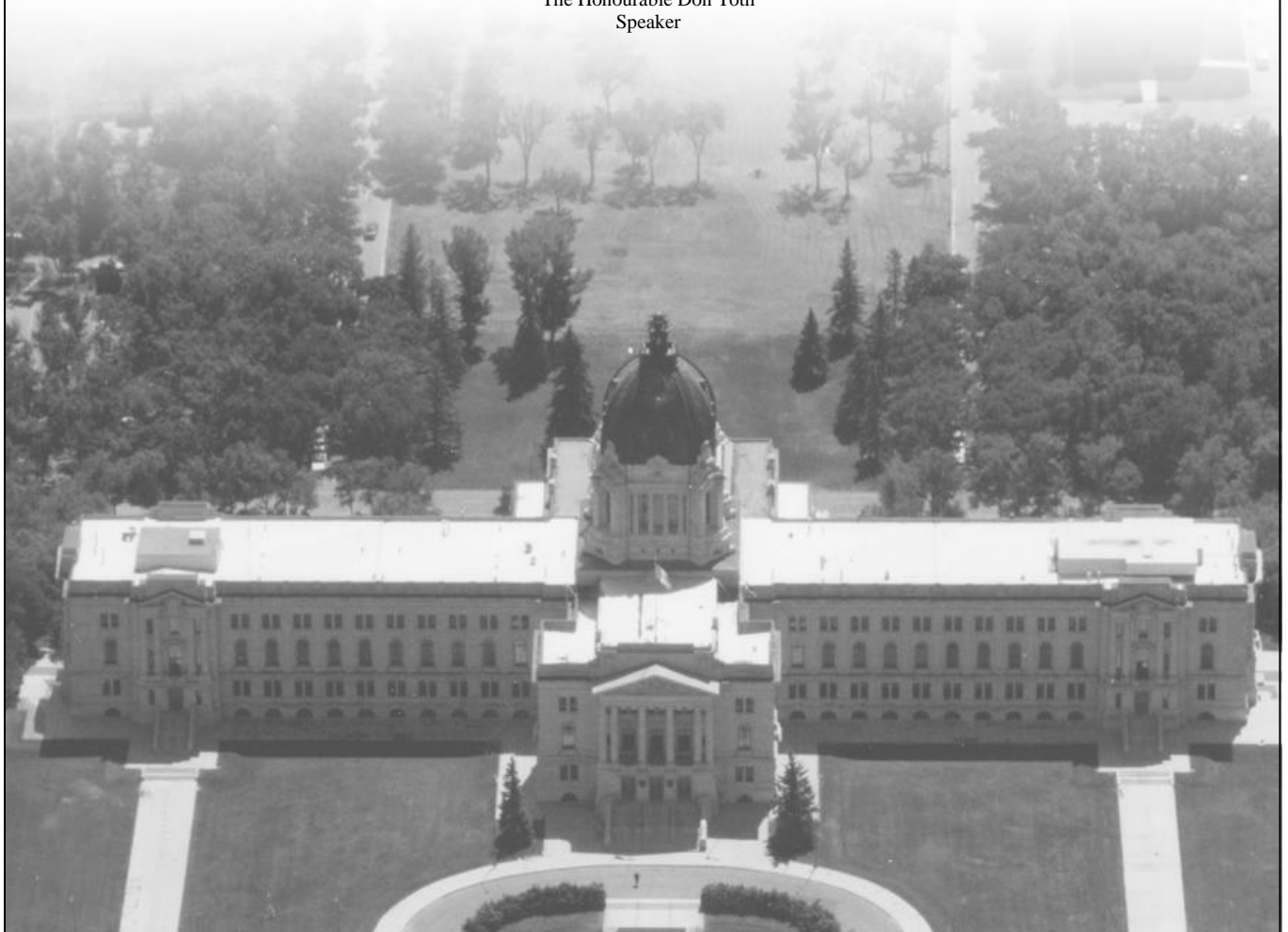
of the

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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and then through you to all members of the Assembly today some special guests that have joined us in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, on the 29th of October, the members of the Saskatchewan Party in the constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford gathered to nominate a new candidate for the coming election. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, Larry Doke and his wife Valerie have joined us today in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Larry and Valerie currently live in the resort village of Metinota where he serves as a councillor. He has done so, Mr. Speaker, since 2000. He's also currently the director of the West Yellowhead Waste Resource Authority, and Chair of the Jackfish Lake West Water Utility and waste water utility, Mr. Speaker. Prior to moving to Metinota, they lived in North Battleford, where he was involved in the chamber, where he was involved in the . . . for 14 years, where he was involved in the golf course and the park and recs board for that city and where they operated a business, Mr. Speaker.

Larry has a number of interests other than politics. They include, interestingly enough, restoring muscle cars and golfing and fishing — all very commendable activities I would say, Mr. Speaker. And may I just say that while we will very much miss the current member for Cut Knife-Turtleford when he takes his leave of politics, we very much look forward to working with Larry on this side of the House and ask all members to welcome him to his Assembly today.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier in welcoming Larry and Valerie Doke to the legislature today. Indeed the Premier's comments are absolutely correct. Larry has served the city of North Battleford and the surrounding area very well over the years, Mr. Speaker. I think the public in that Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency recognize the hard work that Larry has done and is continuing to do, and would like him to stay there and continue to do the work that he has done so well, Mr. Speaker.

But that having been said, I acknowledge the good work that Larry and Val have done in our community. And on behalf of the official opposition, I welcome them to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, the Minister Responsible for First Nations Relations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I introduce a special guest

that we have seated in your gallery today. With us is Mr. Douglas Gamble from the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation. Doug, if you want to stand and give us a wave.

Mr. Gamble recently was honoured at the 12th annual Circle of Honour Awards. I know members from both sides of the House had an opportunity to attend those awards. And he was the recipient for the individual award for the justice initiatives in Saskatchewan. Mr. Gamble has devoted his life to the area of justice, from being instrumental in the construction of the Beardy's Justice facility to being an active participant in the well-known pilot peacekeepers program on his First Nation. His hard work and dedication has helped make his community a safer place, and I look forward to having the opportunity to speak with him after question period.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to congratulate all Circle of Honour recipients for their outstanding contributions, and today I ask all members to help me in joining Mr. Gamble in this, his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Douglas Gamble to his Legislative Assembly. Certainly the Circle of Honour is one of the highest awards that First Nations can bestow upon people that have served the people in this province, and it was with great interest that I saw Mr. Gamble win this award back at the awards in October.

So I congratulate him for that and I congratulate him for the work that he does every day in terms of furthering the important cause of justice for First Nations in Saskatchewan. So it's good to see Mr. Gamble here, in his Legislative Assembly. The Gamble name of course is a famous First Nations name in the province of Saskatchewan, not just in Beardy's Okemasis. On behalf of the official opposition, I want to say Ta wow and hay-hay.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to point out as well to members that the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Dave Wilkie, has joined us this morning, and extend a welcome as well, please.

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 over the safety of our highways. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer of this petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1 in order to improve the safety for Saskatchewan's motoring public.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Regina, Melville, and Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. But we know that when governments reduce spending, often supports for social programs are cut first. Citizens in the province living in poverty have long identified affordable solutions such as the Saskatoon health disparities report and the Canada Without Poverty Dignity for All campaign. They all call for a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to 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 Regina, Saskatoon, and Hafford. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition that calls for the expansion of the graduate retention program and a call for fairness for Saskatchewan post-secondary students in Saskatchewan. 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, I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Furdale residents. A government ministry has directed SaskWater to cut off supplies of water for domestic use to Furdale customers. The same government ministry has directed that customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health.

The Furdale residents, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment as well as for

livestock and irrigation lines. And the alternative water supply referred to by a government ministry is a private operator offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost with no guarantee of quality, quantity, or availability of water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off non-potable water to residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives; to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*; and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the residents of Furdale and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today 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 specifically to the two consecutive deficit budgets, the billions of dollars of debt growth, Mr. Speaker, both occurring and projected under the Sask Party — an alarming 55 per cent of debt growth over the next four years which is \$4.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, and of course comes at a price to Saskatchewan people.

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 petitioners here today are . . . Petitions are signed by concerned residents from the Southeast of our province, specifically Carievale and Fillmore. I so submit.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave's been granted. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Seated in the east gallery, Blair McDaid, a friend and former staff person in my ministerial office and his daughter, Ophelia. And I understand Ophelia will be three tomorrow. Blair's other great accomplishment in life is having a partner by the name of Danielle Chartier who's a member of the legislature from Saskatoon. So welcome to the Assembly, Blair.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is December 3rd. It's International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme this year is Keeping the promise: Mainstreaming disability. And we know that people who live with disabilities too often live in poverty. Worldwide they suffer high rates of unemployment and often lack access to adequate education and health care. Here in Saskatchewan, we know that well over half of those who receive social assistance are people who live with disabilities, and that number continues to grow.

But despite these obstacles, persons with disabilities have displayed great courage and resilience. But even as we continue to be inspired by those who reach the highest levels of achievement, for example, in the Paralympics, such successes must not obscure the difficulties faced by those who live in desperate conditions and lack the rights and privileges and opportunities available to their fellow citizens.

We as legislators need to do more to support people with disabilities. This means not only fully implementing the UN [United Nations] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities but also its Optional Protocol agreement. Tomorrow and every day, let us pledge to keep the promise of the UN goals alive in the community of persons who live with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the International Day of Persons with Disabilities as we all work to make Saskatchewan a much better and inclusive place for all of us to live. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal Ceremony

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge the contribution of Saskatchewan's outstanding protective service personnel, who were recognized yesterday in the Protective Services Medal ceremony at Government House. The Protective Services Medal recognizes exemplary long service from individuals who work to ensure the safety, security, and protection of Saskatchewan citizens. Each individual recipient has a minimum of 25 years of experience in either a volunteer or

full-time capacity, and this year there were 73 recipients.

The recipients came from a number of protective services including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Whitewood Fire Department, the Regina Fire and Protective Services, Mr. Speaker, Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, Estevan Fire Rescue Services, Ministry of Environment, the Regina Police Service, the Weyburn Police Service, the Fort Qu'Appelle Fire Department, Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association, the Swift Current Fire Department, Glen Ewen Fire Department, the Moose Jaw Police Service, and the Moose Jaw Fire Department, Correctional Service of Canada, and the Canadian Forces.

It is true that their success comes from years of hard work and a commitment to the province that is unrivalled. And I want to thank them not only for the work they have done but for the example they have set throughout their communities and in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Celebration of Hanukkah

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday at sundown was the beginning of the celebration of Hanukkah, the eight-day Jewish festival of lights. Jewish families in Saskatchewan, throughout Canada, and around the world gathered to light the first candle on their menorahs to enjoy one another's company, the latkes and sufganiyot, and to celebrate their rich heritage and deep faith.

The Hanukkah story is the earliest recorded struggle for religious freedom — the triumph of the Maccabees. It's a story about the miracles that come to those with great courage and great faith. It's a story about peace and perseverance, and it's a story about hope shining through darkness. Throughout the entire year, but especially at times such as Hanukkah, we join with one another to celebrate hope and to celebrate life. And we join with one another to celebrate freedom, to embrace diversity, and condemn all types of discrimination and hatred, including anti-Semitism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join with me in sending warm greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah. To all Jewish families in Saskatchewan, I wish peace, joy, health, and happiness during this festival and throughout the coming year. Happy Hanukkah. Chag Sameach.

[10:15]

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

Saskatoon Physician Receives Award

Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise in this House today and recognize Dr. Anne Doig and her naming as one of Canada's 100 most powerful women. These awards are presented by the Women's Executive Network and are Canada's most recognizable awards for the country's highest achieving female leaders in the private, public, and

not-for-profit sectors.

Dr. Doig is an alumna of the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1976 she completed postgraduate training in family medicine in Saskatoon, and attained certification from the College of Family Physicians of Canada in 1978. She began full-time family practice in Saskatoon in 1978 and is a founding member of the College of Medicine's alumni association and one of its past presidents.

In 2003 the alumni association honoured Dr. Doig as the 17th alumni lecturer at the 50th anniversary reunion of the College of Medicine. In 1990 she was named Clinical Teacher of the Year in Family Medicine by the medical house staff at Saskatoon City Hospital. In 1996 she was the Saskatchewan recipient of the Excellence in Training Award of the Association of Professors of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She then went on to become to president of the Canadian Medical Association.

Her contributions to Saskatchewan make us all hopeful what can be achieved through hard work and dedication. On behalf of this House, I want to congratulate Dr. Doig on her recent award and thank her for her work in this field of health care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Cultural Centre Renamed

Ms. Atkinson: — On Tuesday evening, November 30th, Saskatoon's well-known artistic venue, The Refinery Arts and Spirit Centre, held a dedication ceremony naming its performance centre the Angie Tysseland Theatre to honour one of The Refinery's founding members. Adjacent to St. James Anglican Church, The Refinery has been a warm, intimate setting for dance, drama, literary readings, and music for the past decade.

Saskatoon musician Angie Tysseland has been a founding member, creative director, and frequent performer at The Refinery. Angie is also a former music director for St. James Anglican Church where she directed the 40-voice St. James Refiner's Choir.

The dedication ceremony honours Angie while she's receiving treatment for ovarian cancer. Though Angie could not attend the ceremony, she was able to participate through Skype.

Angie's first album was released 10 years ago, followed by a decade of composition and directing music for theatre and church. She has directed three choir recordings of the Refiner's Choir, a choir which toured St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery in New York city. Angie also wrote three musicals: *New York is Big but This is Biggar*, *The Girl Who Was Saved by Jazz*, starring Andrea Menard, and *The Dreamriders*.

Throughout her life, Angie has worked for peace and social justice. She has directed an inner-city choir and worked with the Saskatoon chapter of Integrity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me in congratulating Angie

Tysseland for her many accomplishments and in thanking her for her rich contributions to Saskatchewan's cultural life.

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

Lumber Mills Opening in Carrot River Valley

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have good news for Carrot River Valley constituency. We have lumber mills opening up and, you know what, Mr. Speaker? We didn't have to put \$100 million of taxpayer money into them. In fact, Mr. Speaker, these companies feel that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business in, and they actually think it's prudent to use their own money.

Mr. Speaker, the Weyerhaeuser strand board plant in Hudson Bay is up and running as I speak. Edgewood Forest Products has purchased the stud mill in Carrot River and the plywood plant in Hudson Bay. They have given a firm start date of July 4th for Carrot River and November the 1st for Hudson Bay of next year.

Mr. Speaker, Weyerhaeuser has been in this province a long time, but Edgewood Forest Products is a new player in town. Mr. Speaker, this company is a division of C&C Wood Products Ltd., which have mills in BC [British Columbia] and Alberta. They see Saskatchewan as a place to invest, a place with a positive attitude, a province going down a new road — not the old potholed one.

Mr. Speaker, on November the 4th, the member from Prince Albert Northcote said, and I quote, "The Premier had no plan for forestry. It went in the tank."

Mr. Speaker, our forest industry is moving forward in this province without the NDP plan of squandering 100 million in taxpayer money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's fiscal record is one of mismanagement and deception. It includes two consecutive deficits, debt growth, and inappropriate accounting. They raided the rainy day fund and the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and the fact is that debt is increasing by an astonishing 55 per cent over the next four years. That's an increase of \$4.2 billion, and this does not include the hundreds of millions of dollars being hidden off balance sheet through deals like Amicus or private power or for-profit health care, Mr. Speaker. And it is Saskatchewan people that will pay the price now and well into the future for this mismanagement through their power bills, through harmful cuts to education and health care, as but a few examples.

The Provincial Auditor weighed in yesterday on the government financial reporting in his volume 2 report. I quote various phrases: "inaccurate and incomplete"; "Because of this inappropriate accounting, the statements report the net debt and annual surplus inaccurately"; "... does not use Canadian

generally accepted accounting principles for the public sector . . .”

Mr. Speaker, we're the only province not to report from a summary basis. We're offside with accounting standards. Quite simply, Saskatchewan people deserve one set of books and the straight goods.

A *Leader-Post* columnist stated, I quote, “The debt graph presented by Wall’s strategists in their propaganda was at best misleading and at worst downright deceitful.” Mr. Speaker, it’s no wonder that Saskatchewan people do not trust this Premier and the Sask Party to manage our finances. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve much, much better.

The Speaker: — Before I ask the member why the member is on her feet, I’d just like to remind members of the terms that members would use, whether quoting, and remind members that under parliamentary rules and forms, language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. It’s been a long-standing tradition and ruling of previous Speakers.

Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member from Humboldt has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave’s been granted. I recognize the member from Humboldt.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly I am very honoured to be able to introduce 40 grade 12 students from Humboldt Collegiate. Accompanying them are their teachers, Jillian Hamilton and Dave Millette, and a chaperone, Gisele Classen. I’m truly looking forward to meeting with them a little bit later, and I hope they enjoy the proceedings. So may all members welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — To you and through you, seated in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, I see two individuals walk into this gallery that are in fact constituents in the fine constituency of Cannington, Mr. Speaker. From the community of Carlyle, I see

Todd and Connie Gervais.

Todd is the reporter with the *Carlyle Observer* in Carlyle, Mr. Speaker. Connie works in the RM [rural municipality] office, Mr. Speaker. These are two fine constituents in Cannington, in a thriving little centre there of Carlyle with a great community and two individuals that offer a lot of leadership, Mr. Speaker, to their community.

And I always enjoy watching the coverage as well in the *Carlyle Observer* as it relates to the cuts of long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, the challenges of the rural doctor shortage — all challenges under this government, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me, two individuals and leaders within their respective communities, Mr. Speaker, and welcome them to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Arrangements for a Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, on May 17 the Minister of Health, in reference to the Amicus deal, told this Assembly, and I quote, “We’ve looked into it through the Ministry of Health and no, we don’t look at this as a loan guarantee.” To the minister: does he still stand by those words today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised an issue regarding use of a person’s name, Bill McMorris, and the fact that my mother had been called by the opposition. The day that that name was raised in this House, my mother was phoned at home — a 90-year-old. I want to know who on that side had the nerve, or if it wasn’t anyone on that side, who in your employment would be phoning a 90-year-old mother to ask her information on a political question you wanted to ask?

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is trying to divert from the question. That’s what the minister is trying to do. I asked the minister a very simple question: does he still stand by his statements that he made in this Assembly on May the 17th that there wasn’t a loan guarantee to Amicus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, that member has been asking questions for six weeks now on Amicus. I find it absolutely amazing that the opposition critic spent time in rural Saskatchewan, supposedly found or uncovered all these problems in rural Saskatchewan. I’ve talked to people in rural Saskatchewan. Their number one issue isn’t Amicus, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they have issues, but it’s not Amicus. It’s not whether it’s a loan guarantee or not a loan guarantee, Mr. Speaker. KPMG, an accounting firm, reputable accounting firm in this province, has weighed in and said it’s not a loan guarantee. I stand by my words and the words of KPMG.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the minister, the Minister of Health said that his officials looked into the Amicus deal and said there was no loan guarantee. That's what he said. But on April 14th, an email from one of his minister's own, one of the minister's own officials reads in part, "Agreeing to pay out the mortgage, I would suggest, effectively amounts to a contingent liability." That's not my interpretation of the agreement. That's one of the minister's own officials, the same officials that he said told him that there was no loan guarantee.

So to the minister: how is an agreement to pay out the mortgage not a loan guarantee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I've said this before; I'll say it again. Under the NDP [New Democratic Party], 16 years, not one new long-term care bed in this province. Absolutely shameful, Mr. Speaker. They'd rather have people . . . [inaudible] . . . in acute care settings, Mr. Speaker, not living in appropriate settings.

Amicus, through the Catholic Health Ministry and the Saskatoon Health Region have entered into an agreement to supply some of the first new long-term care beds in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's good for seniors, Mr. Speaker. This agreement has been weighed into by many others that will say that it is not a loan guarantee. An agreement set in between the Saskatoon Health Region and the Catholic Health Ministry who's provided care in this province for many years, excellent care in this province, Mr. Speaker.

This is a good deal for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to long-term care and improvements in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, our government is getting it done.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister has boasted that the Amicus loan guarantee is an innovative funding model. It's so innovative, Mr. Speaker, that his own policy and governance adviser says, in an email dated April 14th, and I quote, "It was never contemplated that regional health authorities or affiliates would provide guarantees to third parties." In the same email, Mr. Speaker, they say of the loan guarantee, "This provision is contrary both to the spirit and the intent of the provisions contained in *The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2007*."

Mr. Speaker, why did this minister innovate his way into signing off on an agreement that violates an Act that he is responsible for enforcing?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this agreement, as I have said before, will provide long-term care arrangements for

seniors. We're getting them out of acute care centres in Saskatoon, out of City Hospital. Anywhere from 60 to 70 seniors are living in an acute care centre. Absolutely unacceptable. We don't accept it. Under the NDP, it was acceptable. They didn't increase the number of beds, Mr. Speaker.

We had a Patient First Review that identified some of these very problems and said, you need to look at different funding models. Mr. Speaker, that's what this is. Through Samaritan Place, the actual facility, the Catholic Health Ministry and the Saskatoon Health Region will be supplying appropriate spaces for seniors to age together as couples, Mr. Speaker, something that was never done under the government opposite. It is state-of-the-art. It's looking at new concepts, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I'll weigh in on what KPMG says in a letter dated May the 12th, that this is not a loan guarantee arrangement.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's own official says in the same email, and I quote: "The Act specifically requires the approval of the Minister of Finance to approve borrowing above specific amounts."

The agreement to guarantee the borrowing to finance the Amicus deal, Mr. Speaker, counts as a government liability. Debt is debt. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if he complied with the Act by seeking the Minister of Finance's approval for the specified amounts in the Amicus loan guarantee? And if so, when?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I'll quote from the letter from KPMG. It states here as such: "The contractual obligation under the agreement would not be defined as a guarantee," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they keep trying to spin this and trying to spin this, Mr. Speaker. I find it amazing because there are issues in health care — absolutely. Mr. Speaker, we're working with communities on physician recruitment. We're working with communities regarding long-term care. We're working with communities, Mr. Speaker, to make sure there's a proper complement of health care professionals.

Not once have I heard in rural Saskatchewan — and members, correct me if I'm wrong — was the issue of Samaritan Place as to whether it was a loan guarantee or not.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can't pretend he doesn't have to meet the Act's requirements in this case. As opposition Health critic, he was very involved in the debate around the amendments to the Act.

Mr. Speaker, that same email says that once the Amicus loan guarantee payout precedent is set, other health care affiliates,

and I quote, “. . . could reasonably be expected to argue that they should be provided with the same benefit.” In other words, Mr. Speaker, once the minister’s proposed loan guarantee language lets Amicus trigger a payout of the mortgage, others will come looking for the same treatment, setting a dangerous precedent.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister not listen to his officials when they warned him against setting this dangerous precedent?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when we came to power in 2007, we certainly looked at the facilities across this province, realized that many of them were dated. In fact, Mr. Speaker, just prior to the 2007 election, the opposition in all their wisdom hired a firm to look at every facility in Saskatchewan. It’s called the VFA report and looked at the shape of the facilities, Mr. Speaker. And that report is really quite humbling when you look at the deterioration over 16 years of NDP government, Mr. Speaker. The facilities, some of our facilities are absolutely dated.

That’s why this government, early on, looked at 13 long-term care facilities that will be constructed — replacements, Mr. Speaker. It also is looking at other funding arrangements to ensure that we have proper facilities throughout the province. This is a first of its kind, Mr. Speaker, a pilot project. I think it’s going to serve the people of Saskatchewan very, very well, but more importantly it’s going to serve the seniors of this province that deserve appropriate care at the end of their life, Mr. Speaker. It will serve them extremely well.

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

Ms. Junor: — We can’t be taken off track from the questions, the way that these questions are being put to the government and on behalf of the public. The public needs to know where their money is being spent.

On the tour that my colleague from Fairview and I took this summer, we visited 10 of the 13 facilities that are promised upgrades or replacements. And there’s no doubt that they need them. But they didn’t have a clue that there was a new funding arrangement in town. They did not have any idea. And they are interested in knowing, does this apply to them? And do they have to stop their local fundraising, levying health taxes, having bake sales? Can they stop that now because this new funding agreement is in place? Or is it only in place for friends of the Sask Party and from the Premier’s office?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I’m certainly glad that that member opposite with her friend toured the long-term care facilities and finally admits, when they’re in opposition, that these facilities are badly needed of repair or replacement. Excuse me, where were they for 16 years? Did these facilities age in the last two years? Or had they been deteriorating year after year after year because of underfunding by the NDP government, Mr. Speaker? I’d say it’s the latter.

Mr. Speaker, this government is getting it done. I’ve had the opportunity to meet with all 13 of those communities after that member had her little tour. And absolutely there are some concerns with funding. But when it comes to levying taxes to put towards a health care facility, is this new in the province under the Saskatchewan Party? Absolutely not. In fact in Redvers they got zero cents from the NDP. They funded a hospital 100 per cent under their community fundraising initiatives.

But there are communities under the NDP that have levied taxes for health care facilities for many, many years, Mr. Speaker. That is continuing under the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, because we’re making sure we have the proper facilities in the proper communities.

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

State of the Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Provincial Auditor said this. I quote:

Because the Government uses inappropriate accounting policies, the GRF financial statements report net debt and annual surplus inaccurately. If the Government had accounted for all transactions properly, the statements would have recorded net debt of \$8.46 billion instead of \$3.64 billion at March 31, 2010 . . .

My question is this. This Amicus insider deal is just another way for the Premier to hide debt by moving it off the government’s books. How can he stand for this?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to provide an update here. We welcome the Provincial Auditor’s extensive report and appreciate the effort the auditor has put forward throughout his review. It serves as a helpful guide in identifying areas that we need to improve upon, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly regarding this issue, like the last government, we produce a general revenue statement that provides an accurate and clear picture of government expenditures and revenues. We also produce, as the last government did, summary statements twice a year which includes activities of the Crown corporations and other government bodies. Mr. Speaker, this is consistent with what has happened in the past, Mr. Speaker. It provides a sound and transparent financial framework for the people of this province and reassures them that their finances are in fine shape.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we see is a quote from the Leader of the Opposition recently saying, “It’s exciting times in Saskatchewan. I don’t want to make it sound like there’s a huge problem because there isn’t,” Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'll stand behind the record of New Democrats any day of the week as it relates to improving financial reporting, accounting reporting, and as well the fiscal health of this province, Mr. Speaker. These aren't static pieces, Mr. Speaker. We need to be moving to summary finances.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's rhetoric doesn't match the reality that is emerging from the documents that are leaking out of this insider deal. An email from the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Health Region says, I quote:

This deal provides Amicus with funding to cover both their operating costs (which are higher than the per diem provided to any other SHR affiliate) and their debt servicing charges, with protection to the bank that the region/ministry will assume the debt if the deal falls apart or Amicus defaults on its loan.

A loan guarantee, Mr. Speaker. That's the truth about the deal and what it means for our finances, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: why isn't the Sask Party listening to the Provincial Auditor, and why are they continuing to engage in trickery and trying to hide the true state of our debt.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker again, we've been around this many, many times. I guess we'll be around it a few more times with four more days after today. And I'm sure it'll be asked each and every day.

What I would say though, Mr. Speaker, is we've been very upfront. The cost, Mr. Speaker, for Amicus is the daily cost that it would cost for a senior, that we're reimbursing the Catholic Health Ministry along with some capital. Mr. Speaker, as we move forward. The Catholic Health Ministry through Amicus and Samaritan Place is putting up 100 per cent of the capital. There is no exposure for the government. We are paying it off over time, Mr. Speaker, on a capital piece.

And if the member opposite is saying trickery is the letter from KPMG, then Mr. Speaker, I don't know what further authority that we could go to that would confirm that or satisfy that member opposite. Because quite frankly I don't believe when we get a letter from KPMG, that would be classed as trickery.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The letter of reference, will the minister table that? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are starting to see this deal for what it is, an insider deal with untendered contracts and benefits for the Premier's friends, and all of it trying to be hidden off the government's books so that the true state of our provincial debt is hidden from Saskatchewan people.

The Provincial Auditor criticized the Premier for inappropriate practices back in June and now again yesterday. But the Premier continues to ignore the admonishments of the Provincial Auditor and to ignore public sector accounting

standards, Mr. Speaker, expectations. And he just keeps adding up debt and hiding it from the public, a whole bunch of deals off the books, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: will he commit today to listen to the Provincial Auditor and come clean on what the Amicus deal really means to Saskatchewan people as it relates to our finances.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for an opportunity to provide a summary about the financial state of the province, Mr. Speaker. When this party came to power, Mr. Speaker, we inherited \$6.8 billion in debt, and there was \$1.2 billion in the savings fund. Mr. Speaker, what we have is more than a debt reduction of more than \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker, and more than \$1 billion in the savings account, Mr. Speaker. That's more than \$2 billion improvement, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, we see employment going up. More jobs, more people, higher wages, Mr. Speaker — that's what the people of this province have come to expect and appreciate from this government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — What people have come to expect from this government, Mr. Speaker, are deficits. Two consecutive deficits, Mr. Speaker. Debt growth, Mr. Speaker, \$4.2 billion over the next four years alone, not counting all the other debt that we're talking about here today, Mr. Speaker. And as has been reported, inappropriate accounting standards. What are people saying about this? Well it's been called misleading by a columnist in the *Leader-Post*. It's been called downright deceitful by a columnist in the *Leader-Post*. By the auditor, the words "inappropriate" have been used. "Inaccurate and incomplete," Mr. Speaker.

I ask the member opposite to quit bouncing around the issue here with all the flowery rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that this government is adding billions of dollars of debt to the people of Saskatchewan. In addition to that, they're hiding hundreds of millions of dollars of debt in off balance sheet here, on private power deals, for-profit health care, specifically on this Amicus deal. What does this mean for Saskatchewan people? Come clean, Mr. Minister.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. As far as flowery rhetoric what I'll do is I'll quote the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Dewdney, who on September 30th offered this: "Saskatchewan is a great place to live. People move to where the jobs are," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we understand what's going on here. Mr. Speaker, employment has gone up by 5,200 jobs year over year, Mr. Speaker. For six straight months we've had First Nations and Métis people having more jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker. We've seen employment gains in manufacturing, in trade, in utilities, in transportation, and warehouses. We have the

average weekly earnings going up, Mr. Speaker, and year over year we continue to see improvement.

Mr. Speaker, Scotiabank has just come out and said, "Saskatchewan is expected to be one of the country's strongest performers in 2011, with economic growth of 3.3 per cent," said Scotiabank in its latest provincial economic forecast. Mr. Speaker, you can see from independent analysts as well as citizens from across this province. They're satisfied that there is more work to do, but they have right party in power, Mr. Speaker.

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

Arrangements for a Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week the Premier accused one of my colleagues of being the mistress of conspiracy theories. So we'd like to give him a chance to clear it up.

To the Premier: did the Premier ever have a conversation with the chair of the Saskatoon Health Region about the Amicus deal prior to the Saskatoon Health Region vote on May 12th to approve it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, day in and day out, they come into this Assembly and try and first of all smear peoples' names, Mr. Speaker, misrepresent letters from KPMG, Mr. Speaker.

I think we need to look at the real record of when they were in power, Mr. Speaker. In fact it's really quite interesting. The Health critic and her seatmate, the member from Nutana, had quite a bit to say when they were the Health minister and the member opposite was the associate Health minister. In fact in 2000, 10 years ago, they sent out a news release talking about the health care under their watch, Mr. Speaker, under their watch.

This news release talks about 50 long-term beds being closed with another 40 possible closures, Mr. Speaker. But what did the associate minister say about that? Here is her exact quote in her own news release: "These plans will lead to a better quality of long-term care in the province," Mr. Speaker. Yes, closing 90 beds in the province always leads to a better quality of long-term care.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, no one has ever questioned the goal. It's the road this government is taking to get there that is questionable, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have already seen that this government goes to some very elaborate lengths to hide the truth, including censoring 1,800 pages of information about this Amicus affair.

So I want the Premier to be absolutely clear about this to the Assembly. Did he ever have a conversation with Jim Rhode,

Chair of the Saskatoon Health Region board, about the Amicus deal prior to the approval and agreement being made public?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition put in a freedom of information request to the Saskatoon Health Region. The Saskatoon Health Region answered that freedom of information request. They redacted a number of pages, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it sounds like some of those members have got their hands on those redacted pieces of information. That's really quite interesting. I'd be interested obviously to know how they got their hands on redacted information from the Saskatoon Health Region.

But what I will say, Mr. Speaker, regardless of how they received that information, what I will say, Mr. Speaker, is that we'll have 100 seniors, some with their spouses, being able to live the last years or months of their life together in a new facility in Saskatoon, something that has not been done in this province for years, especially 16 years under the NDP government.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the FOI [freedom of information] was redacted under the legislation of the provincial government. So the minister needs to quit dumping this on the Saskatoon Health Region because it falls clearly in his lap.

Mr. Speaker, the FOI request includes a legal memo from the Saskatoon Health Region. The government censored this memo in response to the original FOI request. But the uncensored version reads, and I quote, "Jim Rhode spoke with the Premier. This is a deal." To the Premier: why has he repeatedly claimed that he and his office had nothing to do with this deal when a legal memo from the Saskatoon Health Region confirms that he did?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members opposite, they're saying that it was our government that redacted the information. Who did the opposition put the freedom of information request to? Was it the Government of Saskatchewan or was it the Saskatoon Health Region? I believe it was the Saskatoon Health Region.

It's the Saskatoon Health Region's decision to redact whatever information they so choose, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatoon Health Region is acting under the Act that is in front of them, Mr. Speaker. It is well within their rights to redact the information they feel would be inappropriate to go into the public record, Mr. Speaker, because of tendering issues and other issues, Mr. Speaker. It is their decision to redact that information. That's what they have done.

They continue to use all their question period time on an issue, Mr. Speaker, that quite frankly I don't think will get any

traction.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Increased Support for People With Disabilities

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and I ask all members of this Assembly to join with the United Nations, with people and governments around the world to recognize this very important day. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities has been observed around the world every year on December the 3rd since 1981. The commemoration is intended to promote a better understanding of the disability issue.

Later this morning, in the spirit of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, our government is once again demonstrating our commitment to people of Saskatchewan with disabilities. Our government will be announcing increased supports for people with disabilities who are clients of the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, or the SAID program, and the Saskatchewan assistance program.

Effective February the 1st, people with disabilities who are clients of this program will receive an increase to their earning exemption. The inheritance exemptions for SAID clients are also being raised to \$100,000 per household.

Raising the exemptions on earned income and assets such as property inheritance recognizes the unique and the long-term nature of income replacement required by clients of our ministry with disabilities. Earning exemption limits will increase by \$100 a month for single persons with disabilities and \$125 a month for a childless couple with disabilities. An estimated 540 people with disabilities will benefit from the earnings exemption increase.

This announcement will be the latest in a series of multi-year initiatives that . . . It will respond to the recommendations of the 2009 community-government task force on income support for people with disabilities. This announcement is also part of our overall government effort to put money back into the pockets of those who need it the most.

For example, we've reduced provincial income tax and removed 80,000 additional low-income people from the provincial tax rolls. Low-income single parents can now save up to \$2,800 annually, thanks to tax reduction. And low-income families will save up to \$2,600 annually, thanks to tax changes.

We've also moved to create tax savings for people with disabilities and families with disabilities. We've increased the caregiver tax credit, the infirm dependant tax credit, and the disability tax credit. And finally, we've increased the rental housing supplement for people with disabilities and indexed it to the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the steps we have taken to put more money back into the pockets of vulnerable people in

our province. And today we celebrate a new step, a step towards a more inclusive and equal Saskatchewan.

We know there's more work to do, and we recognize there are still inequalities for people with disabilities that must be addressed. That's why, as part of this announcement, our government has also allocated an additional \$100,000 to finalize the research and development of a disability impact assessment tool that will be used as the basis for determining eligibility for the SAID program as we go forward.

This work will set the stage for a significant expansion of enrolment in the SAID program, and it will be another significant milestone on the road to be a more inclusive and equal province. And that's why I'm proud. And I encourage all members of this Assembly to join us downstairs in the Qu'Appelle Gallery at 11:30 for this important announcement on behalf of the Saskatchewan people with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister, for the advanced copy of her comments and also for the invitation at 11:30. We appreciate that, and many of us hope to be down there and meet with the folks.

And of course the SAID program is one that offers a lot of hope to people who live with disabilities. And we have a lot of hope and we look forward to many more announcements as we move along this road of full inclusion in Saskatchewan because this has been set by a goal. And earlier today in my member's statement, I talked about the UN goals. Of course they talk about the millennium development goals where they want to see inclusion met by 2015. So I'm hoping that we can start to see some benchmarks for this.

Some very specific comments about some of these announcements. Of course the exemptions for inheritance is a very important thing to see, and that's a good thing. I know parents are very concerned about that.

Good to see about the earning exemptions, but I do have some questions about the earning exemptions. Why could we not do it sooner? Why not December 1st? December 1st recognizes that, for many people who are living in poverty, the Christmas season is an opportunity to make a few extra dollars, spend a few extra dollars on loved ones, either travelling . . . It may mean a bus ticket; it may mean an extra gift.

But in February the holiday season is past, and I think that just by changing it up to December 1st would be much more meaningful to people. And so we think that's an important step and of course \$100 is a good first step. It adds to the \$200 exemption I think that's there right now. I would like to see this even increased a little bit more. But as I said, the big deal, the big question mark I would have is, why not December 1st?

The minister referenced the 80,000 people taken off the tax rolls. And I've submitted written questions, and I know others have, to determine the proof of this claim. We have not seen any proof that there are 80,000 low-income people taken off the

tax rolls. And as this announcement has been made for several years now, still we have not seen any proof, and we would hope that that proof is forthcoming.

And the \$100,000 around the assessment tool, that's an important job to get done, but no date to when that actually will be accomplished. We know this announcement was made some time ago, and why are we not seeing this done?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, you know, yesterday some people were talking about the upcoming day tomorrow, and they said there is one thing that this government can do. It's called Rosa's Law. Barack Obama introduced this law in the United States, talking about removing all offensive language from the legislation, and I would encourage this government to do. There's one piece of legislation that still refers to mental retardation in this province. And it's one that we could act really quickly to remove that language, make it more inclusive. And I know people in the community, people living with intellectual disabilities, would like to see that removed. And so I'd ask the government to think about Rosa's Law and do that in the spirit of tomorrow.

So with that, I would close my remarks and look forward to many more announcements from this minister on the SAID program. Thank you very much.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, pursuant to subsections 6 and 7 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I lay on the table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer with respect to the use of the Chief Electoral Officer's emergency powers during the Saskatoon Northwest by-election October 18, 2010.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Funding for Health Care

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my remarks, I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Saskatchewan Party government for undermining our health care system by failing to negotiate in good faith with health care providers, including physicians, medical residents, and interns, while devoting taxpayers' dollars to untendered contracts and inside deals.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a lot of debate in this legislature around the Amicus deal in Saskatoon and I think, to begin my remarks, I would like to remind the House and the people watching that the questions are on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan who have a right to know. This is their money that is being spent and they have a right to know where. And they have a right to know the answers to the questions that are being asked, and they have a right to know the answers are the truth, and they have a right to know them in all the detail that

they're being asked.

These aren't frivolous questions and it's not a frivolous deal. It is something that goes to the heart of how the government is operating. It goes to the heart of how deals are done. It goes to the heart of how people can trust them. It goes to the heart of their promise for transparency and accountability. It goes to the heart of many things that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know about their government.

And the Minister of Health has been openly, made openly snide comments about the tour that we had over the summer. My colleague from Fairview and I, we visited 55 communities and we visited 10 of the 13 long-term care facilities that are on the list to be replaced or upgraded or renovated. And the government in the '09 budget announced funding for these facilities — \$156 million — and in the 2010 budget took that funding away. So communities on the tour that we visited were interested in the status of these construction projects. They had the plans on the wall and on their desks, and they were very proud of the plans and how far they'd come. And there was no doubt that those facilities needed to be replaced or upgraded or renovated. There was no doubt, and that's never been the issue.

[11:00]

The issue is that these long-term care facilities in these communities should be able to get the same innovative deal that the Amicus deal is getting in Saskatoon. And the fact that the minister said no one cares about it out there is because he's told no one out there about it. So when we went out and told people, they were very interested. They wanted to know why they in their communities were putting health levy tax on for building facilities, why they were having sales, why they were taxing surrounding municipalities and having people contribute in all sorts of ways to raise their 35 per cent.

And yes, that has been the standard. The government provides 65 per cent; 35 per cent is raised by the communities. But now, by the minister's own comments, this is an innovative, new funding arrangement, and those 13 communities want to know why they've not heard about it, why it's not being offered to them.

What did they need to do to get into the lineup for this innovative funding so their communities don't have to have a health tax, don't have to spend years raising money, when they can have their facility right now like Amicus did? The shovel was in the ground before the deal was even approved by the Saskatoon Health Board. Well that's the kind of service I think those 13 communities would like to see, and they wonder why they can't.

So when questions are asked here in the legislature, those are valid questions and valid concerns from communities and from citizens of Saskatchewan who deserve to know. And to laugh about it or make fun of it or otherwise say that it isn't important or shouldn't be asked, is wrong. It's wrong. And the people deserve to know, and they will get the information from us as best we can put it out.

The role of the opposition is to speak for the people because frankly the government is not listening to people. They're not

listening to people who are coming to the bargaining table over the last three years, coming to bargain for health workers in SEIU [Service Employees International Union], SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], that provide the basic services in all of our facilities. They are the licensed practical nurses, the special care aids that look after people like my father in long-term care, who cook the meals, who clean the rooms, who keep the facility running. And these are the people that keep it all going.

And to say that, like the Premier said, he's going to go to war with working people and then put in Bill 5 and 6 and bog down collective bargaining and frankly set it back decades, and to put such an atmosphere of mistrust, disrespect into the bargaining process, has done irrevocable damage to the health system and the people working in it. And by extension then, the patient care and the people that receive the care will suffer.

The contract that was reached with those providers was not satisfactory. It was basically driven at them and to them, because two and half years is a long time to be bargaining. But they're not going to forget what happened. They will not forget.

Now we have Health Sciences, representing 3,000 professional people in this province who don't have a deal, and they're saying the same thing. You don't value us. You don't respect us. Two years is not acceptable to be bargaining.

We have physicians who don't have a contract. They have started to do job action. We've not seen that, Mr. Speaker. I've never seen it. I've never seen doctors so frustrated — in their own words — that they were taking this kind of job action. And in Swift Current, which is a message in itself. This is Premier's riding. They wanted to speak directly to the Premier and they're not happy.

And I think that this is . . . Actually it's an MO [modus operandi]. It's the way the government is operating. They do not respect people who come to the table to ask for decent wages, decent working conditions. They don't respect that.

And now we have the interns and residents, doctors who are training here to be specialists and to be working in our communities. They have come to the legislature to say they feel disrespected. They've sent a petition of 225 signatures saying the minister was wrong when he said his remarks in the House about, they would not be leaving. He's wrong, and they said that. It was pretty clear. They do not believe what the minister said and they have said so in the petition of 225 doctors. That's a pretty stark statement.

And now the SMA, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, which represents all the doctors in the province, are saying the same thing. We're not getting a contract and we can't work without a contract. And no doctors are going to come to Saskatchewan if this is the kind of atmosphere that they come to.

The kidney transplant program was on hold for over a year because there was no agreement on how the doctors would be paid. The minister dragged his heels, didn't do a thing, let that program languish and people suffer. And we saw those people

come to this legislature.

And people have to come to the legislature now to make any movement happen on their issues. We've had many, many people speak out, and the Premier and the government are just not listening.

My colleagues talk about children in care. They talk about highways. They talk about the North. They talk about suicide rates, HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] rates. Nothing is being heard.

The big story of the day yesterday was there was a Sask Party candidate that's a Roughrider. What happened to the children in care story? What happened to the auditor's story? What happened to the HIV story? Those are the stories that make the difference to people. And those are the things that we have to bring out in this legislature because people are listening and they are paying attention and they do deserve to know.

And now we're seeing that there's no contracts. Chiropractors, there was a contract reached with the chiropractors, with the government, and it was ripped up. So this sends a message through the whole workforce in the health sector particularly that there's no trust with this government. There is no trust.

We're not hearing what is actually happening. We're having the minister stand up day after day, not answer questions, talk about our record of 16 years. The people want to know about the government's record of the last three years. And heaven only knows if we try to put a magnifying glass on it or shine a light on it, the minister gets quite angry. And now he's brought his mother into the whole debate. I mean, he has reached an all-time low of searching for answers, searching for answers.

I mean it's actually, it's actually kind of pathetic. And it's really . . . I'm starting to feel sorry for the minister because I don't think he has anything. He doesn't know his file. He doesn't know his file. He has a lot of fun laughing and looking around for answers from his friends. It's like being on do you want to be a millionaire — throw out a lifeline. Ask the audience. Call a friend. He is the weakest link, Mr. Speaker. He is the weakest link.

He's got no answers. He's got the same pat answer, that 16 years. Well people don't really want to know about 16 years ago. What they want to know is today. And when my colleague and I from Fairview are on our tour, what they wanted to know was tomorrow. What's going to happen tomorrow? What's going to happen in rural Saskatchewan, in small communities tomorrow? What's the plan?

There isn't a plan. Closing long-term care beds in Wawota, cutting ambulance services, cutting dietary services, cutting lab services, cutting housekeeping services. That's not much of a plan to appeal to rural Saskatchewan. And if the minister has talked to people out there, well that's what they're saying.

And it wasn't that we heard it in one or two places that we selected to go and hear certain information. We went to 55 communities and many more facilities because some of those communities, we went to two, three, and four facilities in each community. And the message was clear: we're disrespected,

underappreciated. What rural communities were telling us from their mayors and their RM administrators and their business people was that they're on their own. This government does not pay attention to them.

And Wawota people have come here. That's a symptom of what's going on in this province. They're not being listened to. The auditor had some interesting comments about Sun Country and this particular issue around the Wawota thing. And I think it's worthwhile reading the auditor's report. And I hope the people in Sun Country are paying attention to what the auditor said about them and their operation. It's actually quite shocking.

But I think that people of Saskatchewan need to hear the answers to their questions. They need to know that as working people . . . 80,000 people belong to the SFL, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 25,000 health care workers. And if you're telling 25,000 people in this province that they don't matter and you don't care about them, that's a dangerous thing to be saying to people.

The people that work in those professions and in those jobs and in those facilities, they contribute to our life and how our life is lived and how happy we are, how safe we are, how healthy we are. They contribute so much to the fabric of our society and to have this message . . . In Swift Current one of the managers told the people there — this is again the Premier's riding — they told them that if they didn't like the job, they could go and work at . . . Tim Hortons was hiring.

Well like I said, Mr. Speaker, I like a good cup of coffee and some Timbits, but I also want to know that the people looking after my father in long-term care like to be there, want to be there, and are qualified to be there. And I think that they are getting the message from management because it has come directly from the Premier. We're going to war with working people. That message has filtered down now to the management level. So people are being disrespected in their workplace.

Every district was underfunded this year, Mr. Speaker, and they were told to find efficiencies in workers' compensation, sick time, and overtime. Well it's simply not going to make up for the huge deficit these districts are running. But immediately to find efficiencies, you look at the workers — why are they phoning in sick? — and start looking at punitive measures for that. Some of them are pretty draconian, some of the measures that have been taken.

Why is overtime so high? Well basically if you're looking at why is overtime so high, you have to look at how the ward or the unit or the facility is managed. Do you have enough staff? Do you always have to call in overtime when you have to fill a line? But now we're finding out that sick time, the reason they're saving money in sick time is because they're not replacing people who are sick. If eight people are on a shift and one person phones in sick, they are saving money by not filling that eighth position. And people are working short. That is an artificial saving, Mr. Speaker.

And if you're looking at sick time too, people are telling me now that they're being told to come to work sick. And they're making it pretty onerous to actually be sick, to be off sick

legitimately. And it's interesting that the first thing the districts were told to do was find efficiencies and . . . along the backs of the workers. To accuse the workers of abusing sick time, abusing overtime, and of abusing workers' comp. This is where they first started to look.

In fact I was out at one meeting and we asked . . . It was specifically asked from the audience that, did they look at administrative savings? And the CEO was actually there, stood up and said no, they hadn't. They hadn't even looked at any administrative savings. They were looking at basically cutting the ambulance service. They didn't even look at administrative savings. So first of all they looked at cutting services.

And they thought basically in those communities . . . And communities have said that. They thought that the government thought and the health districts thought . . . Because truly, Mr. Speaker, the health boards are appointed by the government. They're selected by the government, funded by the government. There's no line separating them, Mr. Speaker.

The government is responsible for SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] bargaining. They're responsible for the health districts. The buck stops with the minister and the Premier. So the people know that if their health district is underfunded, the government has made that decision. They know that the people around the cabinet table voted for that budget. They know that. And if they don't know it, we're going to tell them.

So I'm thinking that this motion basically speaks to the mood of the people that we had found. So, Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, because I know I have a couple of colleagues who want to make remarks as well, I will move the motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for undermining our health care system by failing to negotiate in good faith with health care providers — including physicians, medical residents, and interns — while devoting taxpayers' dollars to untendered contracts and inside deals.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Eastview has moved a motion condemning the government for undermining our health care system by failing to negotiate in good faith with health care providers. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not just a pleasure for me to enter this debate; it's imperative, Mr. Speaker. Because I've never seen a motion in front of this House that was more . . . a greater example of a collective memory loss on the part of an opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member from Saskatoon Eastview very carefully, and there are a couple of things she said that I can agree with. This is the people's business. This is the place to have these kinds of debates. And I think we need to deal with these issues honestly and forthright.

But she said that one of the things they didn't want to talk about

was their dismal record of 16 years of government. All they wanted to do was focus on three years of Sask Party government. Now, Mr. Speaker, when I look back on the record, I'm really happy to make that comparison.

[11:15]

I think it's an important time in the history of this province to talk about the initiatives that this government has undertaken, to look at how much progress we've been able to make in three short years. And to draw that comparison between the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP record is a real pleasure, because in three years we've been able to accomplish more than the previous administration did in the whole time that they were in office.

Mr. Speaker, the feigned outrage that we've already heard, and which we are going to hear as this debate continues, is somewhat offensive. And I just, I just want to point out some of the realities of the situation that previous members left this governing party with when the election took place in 2007. Here's a little bit of the labour relations history from the previous members, the previous government.

On April 9th, 1999 the NDP threatened to throw striking nurses in jail. That's a good way to get started on a positive foot in terms of labour relations. And later, Mr. Speaker, they legislated all of the nurses back to work. I'm sure that the nurses took a little umbrage at that. I think they saw the NDP as their friends and found out how reliable friendship could be with those people.

Early in their first term the NDP closed 52 hospitals, fired 600 nurses, and cut the feet out under dozens and dozens of doctors practising in rural communities and rural hospitals around the province. In May of 2004, May 19th exactly . . . I'm sorry, May 18th — I want to be sure we get the facts right — the NDP fired 92 nurses with 160 more health-related job firings expected. And on August 26th, 2004, 93 physicians left Saskatchewan while every other province saw increases. On November 15th, 2006 Saskatchewan had a shortage of over 700 nurses.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the statistics and facts that the NDP accrued in their tenure. And that was the situation that was left to the Saskatchewan Party government. We saw a rural health care system in disarray and despondency throughout the communities of rural Saskatchewan as a result of the emaciation and the emasculation of rural health care delivery in communities all around the province outside of urban centres.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as far as the member from Saskatoon Eastview, who sponsored this particular motion today, she has a particularly difficult record to defend. Because early in her tenure, after serving as the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, she came to this House and served as the associate member of Health. I'm sorry, the associate minister of Health. And during her tenure, between 2001 and 2006, the associate minister of Health suffered through some of the highest losses of health care workers in the country. She oversaw the loss of 455 registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses, 173 physicians, 155 pharmacists, and 95 physiotherapists, and that information is according to the Canadian Institute of Health Information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned previously that shortly after their arrival on the scene in 1999, the NDP closed 52 rural hospitals. But it didn't stop there. In 2000, the NDP commissioned the Fyke report which recommended the closure of close to 50 more rural hospitals.

Now I hear about the rural tour of many of the communities that the members talked about where they visited facilities that were still in existence. She didn't, however, mention the 50 communities that had their hospitals closed by the administration under the NDP. So, Mr. Speaker, if the Fyke report had been accepted, we'd have lost 100-plus hospitals in rural Saskatchewan — all at the hands of the NDP.

Now that is part of the record of disillusionment that folks in rural Saskatchewan have dealt with. I want to talk a little bit about the positive record of the Saskatchewan Party in just the first three years of the mandate that were given to us by the people of Saskatchewan.

You know, we had a nursing shortage of somewhere around 800 people, maybe 800 nurses about the time the election happened. And the previous administration would never address that shortage in any specific or targeted way because they were afraid they'd never be able to meet their targets. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think from the experience of most of us, we know that if we don't set goals, we're not likely to achieve much at all.

And one of the first things that this government did when we were offered the opportunity to govern by the people of Saskatchewan was to set a goal of hiring up to 800 nurses over the first four years of our administration. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand here and report that we've met 100 per cent and more of that target in just three years. I believe at this point we are enjoying the addition of 830 nurses in the province of Saskatchewan, and that's a real accomplishment.

We committed \$3.5 million for a physician recruitment strategy and the establishment of a recruitment agency which is helping to address the shortage of rural physicians. We've added more training seats at the College of Medicine, the same college that just about suffered closure because of its loss of accreditation. That College of Medicine was so close to losing its ability to train doctors that it was a tragedy, a pending tragedy for the province of Saskatchewan. Under the NDP's watch, that was the reality for medical training in the province of Saskatchewan.

What have we been able to accomplish in the short three years that we've been here? Well not only did we reverse that situation, the funding situation that was affecting the accreditation reality facing the College of Medicine, we added more training seats. We went from 60 to a promised 100. We're well on our way to achieving that. For residency seats, we've gone from about 80 or 100 to 120, which is good news for residents that want to train right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

We've created some new opportunities for rural practice training for doctors in the city of Swift Current. A brand new clinic has been opened up, and young doctors are coming out to a smaller community to practice family medicine. And we're

looking at expanding new opportunities throughout communities of a similar size throughout the province so that doctors will get a feel for smaller communities, smaller practices and maybe, as part of their long-term plans, decide to settle in some of these smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to talk about quickly in the time I have left is the 13 long-term care facilities that we've promised the people of Saskatchewan. In the constituency of Cypress Hills we have one new facility under way. There is planning in progress right now. Functional planning has been done. There's additional planning under way, and there will be sod-turning in the next little while. I know the community of Watrous, they've had a sod-turning. I think construction is under way in a very progressive manner right now. That's two facilities I can name.

We've funded the \$200 million requirement for the Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. We have more rural facilities that are well on their way to both fundraising and planning, and we expect that some of those facilities will become reality in the very near future. That is in marked contrast to the record of the previous government that didn't create a single new long-term care bed anywhere in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And we're hearing constantly about the money that is going to go to build the new long-term care facility in Saskatoon. That is a blemish on the previous government's record that we are trying to address in a creative and sustainable way, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy with the progress that we're making in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that is before us is much more comprehensive than I've been able to address, and so I'll allow some of my colleagues to continue the debate.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Carrot River Valley has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce to this Assembly a person who is no stranger to this Assembly, Mr. Sherwin Petersen, who is a former member.

Sherwin comes from Rose Valley and is actually a shirttail relative of mine, Mr. Speaker. He is my brother's wife's cousin

so that's a real shirttail. But we welcome him to his Assembly or back to his Assembly. And enjoy the proceedings. Thank you.

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

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Funding for Health Care (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleague in this 75-minute debate because I think it's an important debate that we're having, and it has to do with how we devote public money to our health system.

Mr. Speaker, in question period today, the opposition spent the entire question period on details surrounding the Amicus deal that the government has entered into in the city of Saskatoon. I want to put it on the record, Mr. Speaker, because the opposition has tried to claim, over and over again, that there were no new nursing home . . . Or the government has claimed, over and over again, that there were no new nursing homes built during the entire 16 years of the NDP.

I want to say this. There was a nursing home built in the city of Melfort. There was a nursing home built in Saskatoon — not one, but two of them. Mr. Speaker, there was a nursing home, an integrated facility built at Outlook. There was a facility built at Ile-a-la-Crosse, Moosomin, Maidstone, Preeceville, Mr. Speaker. Hudson Bay, there was an addition. Wynyard, Mr. Speaker. Wynyard is a beautiful nursing home. So for the opposition to say day in and day out — and those are just some examples — that nothing happened under 16 years of the NDP, is simply incorrect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a nursing home agreement that has been entered into by the government. And today in question period we tried to outline, for the benefit of the people but also the government, that there are some serious issues surrounding this deal. And I want to go through what those serious issues are.

Mr. Speaker, under *The Regional Health Services Act* it is quite clear — and this Act was amended in 2007 — it's quite clear that assets are only paid for when the health authority terminates an agreement with a third party. Mr. Speaker, that's not the kind of agreement the government has entered into with Amicus. What the government has entered into is an agreement where Amicus can tell the health region that they want to terminate the agreement and they want the government to pay out the mortgage, Mr. Speaker. Now Mr. Speaker, that causes some significant concerns. Not only do we have an agreement with Amicus that provides a loan guarantee, but we also have an agreement that clearly violates the legislation. And that's what we were trying to get at today.

And Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health had been advised this by his officials, but they chose to ignore, they chose to ignore the advice that they were getting. And they entered into an agreement, an agreement with some of their friends. And they did so at the expense of legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we introduce pieces of legislation into this Assembly for a reason. We introduce pieces of legislation into this Assembly hopefully to protect the public and public tax dollars. And we, as the people who introduced this legislation and passed this legislation, we should be honour bound as legislators to follow that legislation. And in this case, Mr. Speaker, the government chose not to follow its legislation, and it's clearly in violation of its legislation with this Amicus deal. That's point number one.

There are many problems with this deal. Second point, Mr. Speaker, the officials were concerned about a clause in the agreement where essentially the government of Saskatchewan, at Amicus's discretion, would take over the mortgage of this nursing home should they not be able to pay for the mortgage. And, Mr. Speaker, the officials in the government's own ministry advised the government that by doing this this was a contingent liability and there would be issues with the auditor. There would be issues with the auditor and that never before had government agreed to basically guarantee a third party and their facility and their debt, Mr. Speaker. That is a huge problem because I suspect what the government is trying to do, among many issues they're trying to do, they're trying to take debt off the books of Saskatchewan and put it on a third party and enter into an agreement which in essence will pay for that debt over a 25-year period.

[11:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the officials were saying that is a contingent liability which means that the province in essence has this debt.

Now there are many other examples of the government being in some difficulty when it comes to capital. One of the difficulties we will see shortly is schools. They've announced millions of dollars of new school construction, but they took away, they took away school boards' ability to tax. And they have to determine how the school boards are going to pay for their share of that school construction.

Mr. Speaker, the worry is, the worry is that once again they will try to take this off the books of the province. Because they've certainly indicated this in their Throne Speech a year ago and their budget that they were going to treat Treasury Board Crowns differently. And school boards are part of Treasury Board Crowns. But, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, debt is debt. And whether you pay for it in one year or 25 years, debt is debt. And that's the difficulty we got into in the 1980s when there were attempts made to take this debt off the books. And when we finally figured out through the Gass Commission how much we owed, Mr. Speaker, it was tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars more than what we were being told.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting about Conservatives. If you look at the Conservatives in Ottawa, they have added billions of dollars of debt to this country's bottom line. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that continues to try and spin that they're reducing the General Revenue Fund debt. Well, Mr. Speaker, they are adding to Crown debt. And when you put it altogether, it's debt that is still owned by the people of this province.

And we know that debt in this province is rising. Debt in this

province is rising. And you can't sort of be . . . You can't just say, well this is GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt. You can't just say, it's GRF debt. You have to include Crown debt because that's what the financial houses look at, Mr. Speaker. And they look at these kinds of deals. And the Provincial Auditor is there to look at these kinds of deals.

Now the minister today said that KPMG gave him a legal opinion that this is not a loan guarantee. Well, Mr. Speaker, it depends on how you ask the question. And, Mr. Speaker, it was the Government of Saskatchewan . . . And he says, oh this is up to the health region. They blacked out all of this material. Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the 1,800 pages of documents, it indicates under which piece of legislation all of this information was redacted or blacked out. And, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of the 1,800 pages were blacked out under the province's legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know because I was in contact with the privacy officer of their health region, that third parties were asked to respond to my request. I am shocked that a third party is considered the Government of Saskatchewan, but they are. And, Mr. Speaker, it was the Government of Saskatchewan that had this information blacked out. Mr. Speaker, the question will be, how will the Provincial Auditor treat this? That will be the question.

And, Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat appalling that somehow because we ask questions in this Assembly about loan guarantees and debt and insider deals that somehow this is a bad thing. Mr. Speaker, I learned in the 1980s that we should have asked a lot more questions about debt and deficit because we spent the 1990s trying to get ourselves out of this mess.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are fiscal conservatives. We know that you cannot be in charge of your own destiny if you have debt and deficit that prevents you from advancing public policy. Mr. Speaker, I can't say that about the members opposite. We've seen a significant . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to enter into the debate today. I do find it a bit interesting that the NDP would initiate a debate on health care considering what their record has been. But I know that they don't want to talk about their record. They've said that numerous times that we shouldn't be talking about the 16 years of NDP government. They're happy to go way back to the '80s — the member from Saskatoon Nutana did it again today — to go way back to the '80s and talk about that, to talk about our record today. But the years in between apparently are just supposed to disappear, and we're not supposed to talk about them.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk about the NDP record today. My colleague has already touched on some of the things that I'm going to mention, but I think they're worth repeating.

I did find it interesting that the member for Saskatoon Eastview talked a lot about respect in her speech. Well, Mr. Speaker, in 1999 when the NDP were threatening to throw nurses in jail, I wonder how much respect they felt from their government then.

And, Mr. Speaker, in April of 2000 when the NDP were raising fees on seniors in long-term care homes, I wonder how much respect those seniors felt from the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, to carry on with their record, in September of 2002, the average surgical waiting time in Saskatchewan was 32.6 weeks — the absolute worst in Canada. March 2004, the NDP cancelled most surgeries in Saskatoon hospitals.

In April 19th, 2004 . . . And, Mr. Speaker, this one is a pretty infamous one. I remember my dad having a good time with this one considering the ridiculousness of this statement. The member for Saskatoon Eastview had actually called on seniors, apparently, to die quicker as a cost saving measure.

In May 18th, 2004, the NDP fired 92 nurses, with 160 more health care related job firings expected. In August 26th, 2004, 93 physicians left Saskatchewan while every other province saw increases.

October 18th, 2005, Saskatchewan suffered the longest waiting lists in Canada, almost double the national average.

June 5th, 2006, the NDP planned to close emergency rooms in Arcola and Kamsack. July 12th, 2006, Saskatchewan's wait times were actually too unreliable to even be published. November 8th, 2006, the NDP closed the Preeceville Hospital due to lack of doctors. November 15th, 2006, Saskatchewan had a shortage of over 700 nurses. November 27th, 2006, the NDP closed the Broadview Union Hospital for patient admissions.

January 3rd, 2007, the NDP closed emergency rooms in Regina for January and February. June 25th, 2007, the NDP cancelled emergency medical services at the Maidstone Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, that is their record, and we have been working the last three years to overcome the abysmal record that the NDP left when it comes to health care, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to take a few moments to discuss some of the initiatives and progress that we have made to overcome that.

But further to some of their record, Mr. Speaker . . . Because I know one of their concerns was the contract negotiations with doctors. And, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan was on strike for 28 days and bargained for 18 months before reaching an agreement.

The member for Saskatoon Eastview had mentioned SEIU and SGEU today. In 2004-2005, they had to bargain for 22 months with the NDP government before reaching an agreement, Mr. Speaker. So their record speaks for itself.

And I find . . . I think the one thing that was running through my mind when I was listening to speeches and their feigned outrage was hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. Their record does not give them a leg to stand on to criticize what we're doing when we are actually improving health care for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from a *Leader-Post* article from April 20th, 2004, and the article says, the message is . . . And this is to do with long-term care beds: "The message is that

long-term beds, of which Saskatchewan has more than the national average, are not the answer to the needs of all seniors."

And, Mr. Speaker, here's a direct quote from the member for Saskatoon Eastview: "I often say to them that if you make different choices even after 60, which the literature supports, that you will live healthier lives and die quicker." Mr. Speaker, we're not looking for our seniors to die quicker. We are looking for an opportunity for them to live out their last years with dignity, surrounded by family members, with their spouses.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've heard over the last few weeks in this Legislative Chamber the discussion over long-term care beds and that through an innovative funding model with the Catholic Health Ministry that we're going to see 100 new long-term care beds in Saskatoon — an opportunity for seniors to age with their spouses, which for any of us who have seniors in our lives, understand what an absolute necessity that is.

It actually extends their life, Mr. Speaker, going back to the opposite . . . the attitude from the members opposite. We don't want them to die quicker. We want them to die, to go into their last few years with grace and dignity and being able to be surrounded by their spouses, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's important.

What we are looking for, Mr. Speaker, in our initiatives is that residents of Saskatchewan both need and deserve quality health care, and that's what we're looking towards.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we faced when we took over government in 2007 was a massive infrastructure deficit. It was the health care system that was on life support, Mr. Speaker. And our government has taken steps towards improving on our health care system. We have strengthened cancer care. We are adding more training seats for doctors and nurses.

Mr. Speaker, in February of 2008, we signed an historic partnership agreement between the government and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. It was the very first of its kind in the entire country. This agreement set out a framework for the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and the ministry to work with health regions using dedicated funding to hire 800 registered nurses and registered nurse practitioners.

And, Mr. Speaker, we had set in the 2007 election a goal of hiring 800 nurses over four years. Well, Mr. Speaker, in three years we have hired 830 nurses. We have gone well beyond what we promised we would do, Mr. Speaker. We are not afraid to set targets, as opposed to the members opposite who don't want to set targets because they don't believe they can actually reach them. And, Mr. Speaker, we saw what happened under the NDP with that kind of attitude. We lost health care workers throughout our province.

Mr. Speaker, as I've been saying, we've heard over the last little while from the members opposite, specifically the member for Saskatoon Nutana, conspiracy theories over this long-term care building that's going to be built in Saskatoon, offering opportunities for our seniors to age with grace and dignity. Mr. Speaker, she's been going on a fishing expedition, and as the Health minister has pointed out, she's come up empty. It's because there's no fish in that particular pond, Mr. Speaker. But

she keeps trying.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a saying that I think we're all familiar with, and it's called the pot calling the kettle black, which of course, Mr. Speaker, denotes hypocrisy. So perhaps at some point the member for Saskatoon Nutana could explain to us whether or not she has a close relative who not only works for but owns shares in a construction company that got significant work under the NDP when the member for Saskatoon Nutana was a cabinet minister with the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, a very important initiative that our government undertook was in answer to the many calls, letters, emails, and face-to-face conversations that I think we've all had with friends and family and constituents over MS [multiple sclerosis]. We know that our province has some of the highest rates in the country.

And, Mr. Speaker, recently there's been new treatments, the liberation treatment into MS, which has shown improvements in some of those people that are suffering with this, Mr. Speaker. And I was very proud to be part of a government who's investing \$5 million to fund clinical trials for MS liberation procedure. Mr. Speaker, we are the first province in the country who is going down this road. We understand that there is the potential for groundbreaking discoveries when it comes to MS treatment.

And like I said, this is very important step for the people of this province. I'm sure that we've all been in contact recently with folks that are afflicted with this horrible disease. They are looking for hope and some reassurance that their government is listening to them. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't go into this believing that this the 100 per cent cure for MS. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is incumbent upon us to do what we can to help those who are suffering with MS to see if this is a potential option for those people to have a better quality of life as they move forward.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other initiatives. I've got pages of initiatives when it comes to wait times and surgeries, surgery lists, and doctor recruitment, and other things. But the list of improvements that we're working on is too long for the time allotted to me today, Mr. Speaker.

But as I said, it was a privilege to be able to stand and speak of our government's record on this issue, Mr. Speaker. There is more work to be done. But I think our record over the last three years has proven that this is a priority for our government, and we'll continue to do good work for the people of our province. Thank you.

[11:45]

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to rise and enter into this debate of the motion that's before the floor that ... or that's currently on the floor speaks to this government's total disregard for maintaining a health care system and the employees I think especially that are the main force of action and support within that health care system.

Mr. Speaker, it condemns the government for really undermining the health care system and failing to negotiate in good faith with health care providers — and the list is long, Mr. Speaker — and while they're also devoting taxpayers' dollars to untendered contracts and inside deals such as the Amicus deal that we were speaking about this morning and asked questions about. Still waiting to receive answers, Mr. Speaker, but asking the questions because the people of the province need to know where their tax dollars are being spent.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to add just a quick comment. The member for Cypress Hills talked about the new facility, the Cypress Regional Hospital, and I want to say to him, he's welcome. 2006-2007 was the budget year that the money was dedicated for the Cypress Regional Hospital because the government of the day realized that it was needed. There was money set aside for it to be done. And I'm very pleased to hear that it is serving the people of that community because it was needed and is needed, Mr. Speaker, and we were glad to be able to put money and dedicate towards new facilities across the province.

And even though the Minister of Health seems to be ignoring a fair bit of investment that went on during the former NDP government's time, Cypress Regional Hospital is just one example. Outlook Integrated Facility, Ile-a-la-Crosse Integrated Facility, Moosomin, Maidstone, Preeceville, Humboldt, Saskatoon Mental Health, which is very important, Oliver Lodge, Hudson Bay — Mr. Speaker, these are all very, very important.

And the member from Cypress Hills also spoke to hospitals that were closed down during the early '90s. While they refer to them as being closed, Mr. Speaker, there is some very long lists that talk about health centres. Many of these facilities were converted, and they are active in communities as health care centres and special care homes across the province and providing very good service in those communities. So when the member opposite, the previous speaker, Mr. Speaker, was saying that we needed to be factual, well I think she needs to look in the mirror and take her own advice.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the motion about this Sask Party government undermining the health care system by failing to negotiate in good faith, we know that the vast majority in people in Saskatchewan and in Canada support a publicly funded, publicly administered health care system. And I've just lately seen some recent polling that spoke to ... a recent poll where 90 per cent of citizens across Canada that were surveyed supported public solutions to the current problems within the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, we don't want to buy in to this line from the right wing, that the only way to fix health care is to privatize and get rid of it because it is somehow a flawed system. It's not. It provides very good care, and I would say a vast majority of cases across this province and across Canada are treated in a very timely fashion with quality care. And people across this country appreciate that. I know in Saskatchewan we do.

Yes, there are still problems. Yes, there are issues that need to be dealt with. But, Mr. Speaker, it is quite conceivable that it can be accommodated within the medicare system and that

people of Canada can, and Saskatchewan will, continue to be grateful for this system that is in place and really I think highlights who we are as Canadians in many cases.

Mr. Speaker, during the 2007 election campaign, the Saskatchewan Party spoke of managing the health care system and protecting Saskatchewan families. Very nice words, Mr. Speaker, but you really need to walk the talk.

People in this province expect this government to keep their commitments. And they expect . . . They elected this government and put it in place with good faith and expectations that those commitments would be kept. But instead we are seeing mismanagement of the health care system and families concerned that protection and their health care protection is quickly disappearing and being eroded by some moves that are highly suspect by this government, Mr. Speaker.

And instead of managing a health care system and protecting families, the Saskatchewan Party government is letting resident doctors leave the province, almost forcing them to by total disrespect. Health Sciences Association represents 3,000 health care professionals. Their negotiations with this government have broken down.

We all remember just prior to last spring's budget, Mr. Speaker, when chiropractors, after a year of negotiations, the president of the Chiropractors' Association signed an agreement on behalf of all chiropractors with the Ministry of Health. The president of the association was told that the minister would sign this agreement within days. The ministry even went so far as to prepare a news release about signing the agreement, and the minister was even quoted in that proposed news release by saying, "I am pleased that we have reached a deal with the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan."

But, Mr. Speaker, just short days before the budget was released, the minister ripped up that contract and said there was no deal. They eliminated chiropractic care from any coverage, and I think many people believed that it was well, underhanded for one thing, but extremely short-sighted in that what it did would just shift people. If they couldn't afford to go see a chiropractor, they would be showing up at their doctor's office or at the emergency wards in hospitals across the province, trying to access care.

But, Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on. Health Sciences, chiropractors, the doctors, the resident doctors that are still in contract negotiations that seem to be not moving along very quickly. We can look at SEIU, CUPE, SGEU, that were just health care providers. Very divisive, Mr. Speaker, when you see some pretty substantial agreements go to nurses and then everyone else in the system be hung out to dry. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a real problem when you cause divisions like that within a workplace. And I'm sure the minister is hearing more and more reports.

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of days talking about Amicus, the last few weeks, we have raised issues with this deal. And I have to say there's some very good reasons. My community, we have had a levy on our property tax for the last few years to raise our portion, our 35 per cent, of the cost of a new health care facility. And it's just . . . Initial proposal is for an addition

on to our current Moose Jaw Union Hospital. So our community has set aside the levy. The city of Moose Jaw is collecting that money. And like the other communities across the province that the Minister of Health has made a commitment, that has a commitment to 13 long-term care facilities, which they have since pulled back on, Mr. Speaker, and they're kind of waiting in the hopper. Those communities are out raising money, looking for donations, holding bake sales, running concession stands. We know how it's done, Mr. Speaker.

It happens right across this province except, Mr. Speaker, in the case of one facility in Saskatoon, Amicus, which is getting a loan guarantee from the regional health authority. The deal appears to have been initiated in the Premier's office. We are seeing all kinds of meddling that has gone on. It is unfair to Saskatchewan taxpayers. It is unfair to other contractors when untendered deals are put out for this kind of money. And it is unfair to other communities across this province who are still expected to raise the 35 per cent share of capital costs of improvements and expansions or new builds in their own communities, Mr. Speaker, and that is a huge issue.

Now I know the minister likes to say this is innovative financing. Well a bit of creative financing seems to be maybe a better word. Mr. Speaker, I will wholeheartedly be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to join in with this debate. Before I do carry on too much further, I just want to speak on . . . Before I speak on our record I just want to review, as my colleagues have but very briefly, the NDP record for some more perspective. And members opposite, I know they're getting tired of hearing this, but the length is quite long and unending so they have nobody to blame but themselves.

Again in April '99 the NDP threatened to throw striking nurses in jail. April 5th, the NDP raised fees on seniors' long-term care. September 19th, 2002, the average surgical wait time in Saskatchewan was 32.6 weeks, which was the worst in Canada. March 4th of '04, the NDP cancelled most surgeries in Saskatoon hospitals. May 18th of '04, the NDP fires 92 nurses with 160 more health-related job firings expected. August of '04, 93 physicians left while every other province saw increases. October 18th of '05, Saskatchewan suffers the longest wait-lists in Canada, almost double the national average.

June 5th of '06, the NDP planned to close emergency rooms in Arcola and Kamsack. July 12th, '06, Saskatchewan's wait time too unreliable to be published. November 8th of '06, NDP closed Preeceville hospital due to lack of doctors. November 15th of '06, Saskatchewan had a shortage of 700 nurses. November 27th, '06, NDP closed Broadview Union Hospital for patient admissions. January 3rd, '07, the NDP closed emergency rooms in Regina in January and February. June 25th, '07, the NDP cancelled emergency medical services at the Maidstone hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite always are accusing this government of being at war with labour, and I take exception to that. They've talked over and over about not valuing the quality of service and the jobs and the service that these health care providers do provide to the people of this province, including my family and the families of all our members around the House, on both sides of the House.

And I know it's always difficult, Mr. Speaker, negotiations, times. You know, things happen and games get played to a certain extent. But at no time did I ever hear any member on this side of the House disregard or discredit any member in the employment chain of our health care providers.

Whether it was myself meeting with approximately 25 union employees during the SAHO negotiations, wanting to talk and have their voices heard, sitting over a cup of coffee and some hot chocolate and some cookies and talking about what they want to talk about, Mr. Speaker . . . And I was very clear in vocalizing my feelings that I don't care if it's the custodial staff, if they're cleaning the floors or keeping the place clean and contamination free, whether it's the nurses, the LPNs [licensed practical nurse], the care aids, which my daughter is one and currently accepted to go on for her nursing career. So I'm very proud of her. She'll be visiting me a little bit more often in Regina, I presume.

And all the way up the labour chain, Mr. Speaker — whether it's doctors, nurses, the lab techs, everybody is very important. Without any member of that very important chain, the system can break down. So again, at no time did I hear any member on this side of the House ever, ever speak to that.

But I will say that it's kind of the standard tactic that I've seen in my short three years here in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. The fear, the fearmongering driving by fear. And fear is an amazing motivator; we know that. The problem is when that fear's unfounded, it does nothing but create problems.

I think that led to a lot of the stretched out negotiations that we did see in the past SAHO negotiations, Mr. Speaker. The member for Eastview constantly talked about negotiations, just deplorable negotiation; length of time going on for two years, better than two years.

Let's look at their record, Mr. Speaker. Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan, on strike for 28 days and bargained for 18 months prior to that agreement. Not quite the two years we saw. Again not driven by as much fear as we saw through these . . . [inaudible] . . . negotiations. SEIU, SGEU had to bargain for 22 months with members opposite in '04 and '05 before reaching agreement. That's pretty close to the two-year goal there, Mr. Speaker.

The evidence is true of the members opposite in regards to senior health. You know, I'll quote from an article of James Wood, *Leader-Post* article from April 20th of '04 that "The message is that long-term care beds, of which Saskatchewan has more than the national average, are not the answer to all the needs of seniors."

[12:00]

Now you know, that's something I just won't speak to any further, Mr. Speaker.

But what I'm really focusing on here is the memory of the members opposite are very selective. Again, the member from Martensville pointed to the fact they don't like speaking about the past. But I'm a very firm believer, Mr. Speaker. We learn from the past. We work for today and we plan for the future, which the members opposite have no plan. They had no plan and they continue to have no plan, other than fearmongering and trying to make things look as bad as they possibly can for their own political and their own benefit.

The NDP rhetoric and fearmongering never helped in negotiations with SAHO, but again, fear always seems to serve them well and . . . At least that's what they seem to be reverting to, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I want to just touch on a couple of comments that I heard from members opposite, and again sort of what I've come to see over the last, specifically the last year — insults, character assassination. It seems to be the norm or the rule rather than the exception. The member from Saskatoon Eastview referred to our Minister of Health as the weakest link and I find that insulting, Mr. Speaker. Again, character assassination as we've seen character assassination maybe on the part of our Minister of Justice and other members in the past here, Mr. Speaker.

There is one weak link or the weakest link in this Assembly and I know that's been clearly identified through polls. And the member from Saskatoon Nutana referred to the Preeceville hospital, the sod-turning; we built the Preeceville hospital. Mr. Speaker, sod-turning after sod-turning after sod-turning equates to cultivation, not to a hospital, Mr. Speaker. What we saw was announcement after announcement from the member from Regina, the former Health minister, and what we did see was actually on the part of this Deputy Premier and that Minister of Health that got it done, Mr. Speaker. So I just wanted to clear that up before I go too far and run myself out of time because I do have a lot of things to speak about, Mr. Speaker.

Again I mean not to beat a dead horse, but we've got to keep looking at what the attitude of the members opposite was. Member from Saskatoon Eastview, again her quote, "I often say to them that if you make different choices, even after 60, which the literature supports that you live a healthier, longer life, and die quicker." Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know about those members; I know members on this side of the House have never asked for their loved ones to die quicker. We firmly believe that Saskatchewan communities both need quality health care and health care where needed.

So that's their record and from what I've understood is sort of their attitude. But let's examine our record, Mr. Speaker, on health. When we came into power in '07, we inherited a huge infrastructure deficit from the previous government. And that's well documented. We don't need to speak that much more. I've heard the health care system as being — by media members, I believe — a system that was on life support.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, we see a government that's taken actions to make steps to improve health care. We see

improvements in cancer care. We see improvements in cancer information and working with not only the Heart and Stroke Fund, but the heart and stroke association, Mr. Speaker, but the Canadian Cancer Society and others in stepping forward and more awareness and better treatments as they've been asking for, Mr. Speaker.

We've added training seats for doctors and nurses. In fact, in February of '08 we signed a historic partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses which I think went a long way to build a relationship and sustain our nurses and grow the nurses that we needed in this province, Mr. Speaker. This agreement set out a framework for the SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] and the ministry to work with health regions as dedicated funding, using that dedicated funding to hire what we . . . Our goal was 800 nurses and RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse] with annual targets set out for achieving those goals over four years.

But, Mr. Speaker, again as been spoken about — and I'll talk about it again — three years in, Mr. Speaker, that target has been exceeded: 830 and counting. And I know the members opposite, the former Health minister refused to set targets because he . . .

The Speaker: — The 65-minute debate period has ended. Now we'll take the 10-minute question period. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'd like to ask the member from Yorkton: how is leaving resident physicians without a contract for almost two years, leaving them working long and sometimes unsafe hours, managing the health care system and protecting residents and patients?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll admit, I mean talks are ongoing. I mean talks went on with health care providers in all different aspects of health care over the years, Mr. Speaker. But those talks haven't broken down. The talks are continuing. And we're very confident that shortly there will be an agreement with our physicians and the health organizations to continue on with quality health care in this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Saskatoon Eastview. In her motion she says that the current Sask Party government is undermining our health care system, yet that government . . . And she was part of that government that closed 52 hospitals, fired hundreds of nurses and other health care providers.

And she wasn't content, Mr. Speaker, to dismantle the health care system while she was part of government. In opposition she, last year when Saskatchewan, Canada, and the world was facing the H1N1 health crisis, she continued to criticize the Health minister for the manner in which the vaccination program was outlaid, rolled out. I would like to . . .

The Speaker: — I'd ask the member to place the question, ask the question. Okay, I'll recognize the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the motion is that we were talking about the Sask Party's record. And the Sask Party's record is clear in the last three years that they have undermined the system. They've cut lab services, ambulance services, underfunded the health districts this year, significantly underfunded the health districts that they are now starting to make cuts, do closures.

And speaking of closures, there's been over 80 beds closed by this government in this March budget alone — 80-some beds and long-term care beds. And somehow that's going to make a difference in you putting 100 into Amicus? That's supposed to make a difference? And they totally are ignoring the fact that those beds are closed in this budget alone, that's 2010. So the question and the motion is on their record.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Cypress Hills. Fairly short and to the point, Mr. Speaker. Thirteen long-term care facilities were announced, which the member from Yorkton was just criticize . . . then pulled back. Now they're sitting in limbo.

Mr. Speaker, to the member from Cypress Hills: when will a long-term care — in Maple Creek — facility be under construction?

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have had that question directed to me, Mr. Speaker, because the news is good news for the community of Maple Creek. They are currently in the process of doing their functional planning, Mr. Speaker, and with the conclusion of that process, sod will be turned.

The community of Maple Creek are not going to sit around waiting for some arbitrary time to start. They're going to move as quickly and as progressively and as aggressively as possible to get that new facility built. They raised their money in just a matter of two short months. They had their plans and their ideas in place. Mr. Speaker, they are very aggressively pursuing the completion of this facility. And when they do, it'll be the most modern facility in all of rural Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Eastview has made comments regarding seniors that is unbelievable. In a morally reprehensible statement in 2004 in this Assembly, she suggested that Saskatchewan's senior citizens could alleviate the NDP's mismanagement of the healthcare system by dying quicker. I remember this comment very well, Mr. Speaker. So does my mother.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: will the member use this opportunity to apologize to the Saskatchewan seniors for this callous comment?

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the member from Yorkton actually read the whole quote, and it was that if people make different choices, even after 60, they can live healthier longer. And everybody wants to live healthier longer. My mother's 85, and she's living healthier longer. And they die quicker . . . is you don't want to linger in dying. My father is in a nursing home having a stroke; I can see the difference. And I think they had a John Gormley show in which John Gormley — who is not NDP-friendly — was pretty darn clear that he understood what I was saying and he thought it was disingenuous if not downright stupid to have the comments being made that were being made by the Sask Party at that time.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed towards the member from Cypress Hills. And as the member will know that all of these nursing homes that have been announced, all of the communities have to raise the 35 per cent and they're busy trying to get municipalities on board. Some municipalities are. Some aren't. They're doing local fundraising initiatives — bake sales, car washes, you name it — to try and raise their 35 per cent. In Saskatoon there is a new long-term care facility being constructed where 100 per cent of the cost of that construction is being guaranteed by the province of Saskatchewan.

I guess the question is this: why would you force those communities like Maple Creek which you represent, Prince Albert, Biggar, where I come from, to have to raise the 35 per cent? And some of them are having a hard time. They have to raise the 35 per cent to replace aging facilities but . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again I'm pleased to address the question in a factual manner.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Maple Creek and the surrounding RMs and towns that support that general area were more than happy to contribute to a new facility. They knew what the rules were. The rules didn't change. The 35 per cent, the 35 per cent requirement is exactly the same requirement as existed under that administration. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it was a such burden, I suppose, to the community of Redvers that they went out and raised all the money themselves. The NDP refused to put a nickel into that new facility.

The people of Maple Creek saw a need for a new facility. The surrounding RMs and communities came to the table with monies to support that project. They raised that 35 per cent in just a matter of a couple of months or less, Mr. Speaker. Now there are going to be new and creative financing options available I'm sure. The pilot project in Saskatoon will set the

template for another number of projects.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the 16 years that the NDP were in power their health care policies devastated rural Saskatchewan. When they weren't ignoring rural residents' concerns regarding health care, they were closing hospitals. The NDP closed 52 rural hospitals. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: why did the NDP create a two tiered health care system in Saskatchewan — one for rural residents and one for urban residents? Thank you.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm really happy that I've been asked this question. First of all, if the member wants to look at the facts of the . . . She talks about 52 rural hospitals. I believe the number was 51 hospitals and 50 . . . No, just the facts. They can laugh at the facts. Fifty-one hospitals. Fifty were converted to health centres, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact let me give you an example. Kincaid received a health centre; Ponteix, a health centre; Vanguard, a health centre; Bengough, a health centre and special care home; Pangman, a health centre; Radville, a special care home; Cupar, a health centre; Ituna, a new special care home; Beechy, a health centre; Eston, a health centre and special care home; Macklin, health centre, special care home; Smeaton, health centre; Arborfield, health centre and special care home; Climax, health . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed. Next question. Next question. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Question is to the member from Yorkton. Mr. Speaker, they stand up and they read off all these old clipped facts without the story behind it, Mr. Speaker. And if the member from Yorkton is upset with these hospitals being changed into health care centres, why hasn't this government, with the largest budgets in the history of this province and all of the complaining they have done, why haven't you opened them up?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the first thing I'd like to say to that, it's a poor exchange — a health service centre for a hospital.

And I'll say this, Mr. Speaker, you know, at least we've set goals. We've set plans. We see from the members opposite there is absolutely no plan, no plan. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail, Mr. Speaker. Again with . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Time for the 75-minute debate has elapsed. Why is the member from Regina Dewdney on his feet?

Mr. Yates: — To rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney and ask him to state his point of order.

[12:15]

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During question period today, the Minister of Health was quoting from a letter he said was from KPMG. We can clearly see that the letter was totally unredacted. There was nothing blacked out as he held the letter up. He was asked to table the letter. He said he would, Mr. Speaker. We ask officially now, because it hasn't been tabled, that the letter from KPMG that the minister quoted from be tabled.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister did indeed say he would table the letter and he will do so today, Mr. Speaker. There's no time frame that you need to have in place on tabling of a document and it will be done today, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the member's point of order and the response from the Government House Leader, and as we see in rule 495 in parliamentary *Rules and Procedures*, if ministers are asked to table documents they quote from, the minister is obligated to. I take the word of the minister that that document will be tabled and I trust that it's tabled shortly.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 3 — Saskatchewan's Resource Sector

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to a very important motion. At the conclusion of my remarks I will be happy to read a motion into the record and to move a motion which will state words to this effect:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP's ongoing support for nationalizing Saskatchewan's resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, in 1944 . . . And my remarks may sound a little bit like a Robert Mitchum novel at times, Mr. Speaker, but you can't fully appreciate — I won't be going quite back to the Stone Age — but you can't, you can't fully appreciate the effect that nationalization and the threats of nationalization have had on the economy of this province, and how it has devastated the progress of our people without a little history lesson, Mr. Speaker.

In 1944, as I said, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had a million people; much as it is today or was in 2007 at least, at the point when our government took over the reins of power. We had little or no debt in the province. We had in Regina the oil industry for the country. We had Canada's flour milling industry at that time, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, to put that into perspective, Canada's flour milling industry not only filled our domestic needs, but it was a huge export industry as well, Mr. Speaker, so a very important industry. We had nearly half the farmland in the country, which of course we still have, Mr. Speaker. We had limitless coal reserves. And another

perspective on that, Mr. Speaker, coal was in 1944 the main fuel that powered economies and certainly was extremely important for Saskatchewan. The list goes on.

We were, frankly, Mr. Speaker, the shining star of Western Canada as well as the breadbasket of the world.

At about the same time, Mr. Speaker, Alberta had only 750,000 people, no oil industry — none — a much smaller ag sector, no oil, no gas, virtually no industry of any type, a staggering debt, Mr. Speaker, in fact so much debt that the province was insolvent and proceeded to do business only by virtue of a very large loan from the federal government.

At about that same time in history, Mr. Speaker, there were two elections. In 1943 Ernest Manning was elected in Alberta, and they chose a free enterprise, a private initiative, an individual freedom course. And just a few months later than that, Mr. Speaker, in 1944, there was an election in Saskatchewan. And at that time a young Tommy Douglas was elected as the premier of Saskatchewan under the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] banner, which of course later became the NDP, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan chose a different course, a different course altogether from that that Alberta had chosen and a different course from any which had been ever chosen to that point in North America.

Saskatchewan chose a course of high taxes, less liberty for individuals, more government and taxpayer involvement in the economy, nationalization of our businesses and industries, and disincentives for investment in the province, not the least of which, Mr. Speaker, was the threatening rhetoric which often involved threats of nationalization.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the period leading up to the most recent election in Saskatchewan, the period leading up to 2007 when things have started to improve for us, before that time, Alberta had the head offices for the oil and gas industry in Canada. Most of the heavy industry in Western Canada was in Alberta. They had 4 million people, Mr. Speaker, and building infrastructure for 6 million. They had clearly been the Western Canadian success story, at least up to the time when our government took the reins of power in Saskatchewan in 2007.

Up until 2007, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan still had 1 million people, the same as we did in 1944 when Tommy Douglas and his CCF took over government. We had no oil and gas head offices in the province at that time. We had one of, if not the slowest, economies in Canada — no growth, crumbling infrastructure. No interest in investing in the province, Mr. Speaker, and no revenue for the government to even begin the job of fixing our crumbling infrastructure and our devastated social programs.

Mr. Speaker, there are reams of material that has been written about the anecdotes that happened following that election in 1944 when Tommy Douglas took power and devastated the economy of this province for 63 years, Mr. Speaker. There is lots that has been written. There is lots that has been written, Mr. Speaker, and I commend the members opposite to read some or have it read to them.

Mr. Speaker, one very important and telling story that came out

of that election. The Atlantic No. 3 rig at election time, on election day was drilling at Davidson, Saskatchewan, in the heart of what was then the oil country in Western Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, that Atlantic No. 3 rig, which was contracted to Esso, on hearing of the election of Tommy Douglas and the CCF party, pulled their steel out of the ground. Didn't even finish the hole they were drilling, Mr. Speaker.

So afraid were they of this CCF, later NDP, that had already threatened to nationalize the oil industry on numerous occasions — Tommy Douglas was famous for that — they were so afraid of what would happen in this province, as were other industries. But I use this as a shining example of how nationalization, or even the threat of it, can destroy an economy. On hearing of the election, they pulled their steel out of the ground and went to a place then unknown to most of the oil industry called Leduc, Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, they drilled three holes at Leduc, came up empty in the first three attempts. And there was confusion. Esso didn't have their orders really straight, so the foreman didn't know whether he was supposed to start on the fourth hole or not. And so having unclear orders and being a diligent sort of a guy and convinced of the likelihood of finding oil in the Leduc area, he undertook to give the order to start drilling a fourth hole.

Well Esso apparently had not intended to drill a fourth hole. They were going to give up after three attempts. And as fate would have it, when Esso found out the hole was half drilled and they said, well go ahead and finish that one, and then if it's not successful, move on. It was successful, Mr. Speaker, and was the beginning of the oil boom in Alberta that could have been ours and should have been ours and is ours now, Mr. Speaker.

But that is one anecdotal case and only one. And there are hundreds, Mr. Speaker, of how nationalization or even the threat of it can devastate an economy. And, Mr. Speaker, these members opposite are still threatening it. They still threaten it. They threaten it with potash. They threaten it with oil. They never stop, Mr. Speaker. They don't relent. Their philosophy means so much more to them than does the future prosperity of this province that we love so much on this side of the floor, Mr. Speaker.

In the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, I'll have a number of examples to cite you of their callous disregard for their province and their dedication to their socialist philosophy. I'll start with the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Throne Speech in 2009, Mr. Speaker, in which I quote the Leader of the Opposition as saying, and I quote:

Many people don't know this, but 29 of the top 50 oil companies in the world are not privately owned but are owned by government or state — 29 out of 50. They are Saudi Aramco which is the largest oil company in the world. They produce about 10 million barrels of oil a day. They have tens of thousands of employees. You have Petrobras which is one of the leading drillers in the world. They drill offshore in some of the deepest water in the world. Ecopetrol in Columbia.

And on and on. He also espoused Soviet-like plans, Mr.

Speaker, and he goes on and on. He also espoused Soviet-like plans when he called for an energy strategy that we'd base our economy on for the next five years as well as extolling the strength and effort of state-owned oil companies, Mr. Speaker.

In April 9th, 2009, *StarPhoenix* article reported that:

In a campaign speech delivered last week [it says; I'm quoting now again, Mr. Speaker] in Moose Jaw, Lingenfelter [and I'm quoting] reportedly promised that, as premier, he would create a provincial government oil company.

This came after that member, and I'm quoting again, Mr. Speaker, "... a player in the oil business by virtue of a well on his family farm near Shaunavon." And after he went into the oil business full-time in Alberta.

Man, you know I've got to stop here, Mr. Speaker, and talk about how Mr. Lingenfelter got into the oil business in Alberta.

At that time in the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, I think the NDP had nationalized a number of small oil companies and formed what was then known as Saskoil, a government-owned oil company, Mr. Speaker, under the Blakeney administration. Eventually that company was sold to Canadian Occidental or became Wascana Energy and then Wascana Energy was sold to Canadian Occidental, Mr. Speaker.

That was about the time — and I'm jumping ahead here, Mr. Speaker. I'll go back and forth a bit — but about that time, Mr. Lingenfelter's political career was clearly, clearly over in Saskatchewan and he was looking for a job. And so he lobbied members of this Assembly to give up the golden share that Saskatchewan held in what was then Wascana Energy, formerly Saskoil, Mr. Speaker. The golden share gave Saskatchewan some rights and some say in what happened with Wascana Energy, formerly Saskoil, Mr. Speaker, including a head office in Regina and a number of other very important pieces that that member, the Leader of the Opposition lobbied this Assembly to give up. And the NDP having the majority at that time, the golden share was given away.

And that's where I get back to my story here, Mr. Speaker. Shortly after that, the Leader of the Opposition resigned his seat and went looking for a job. Or maybe he went looking for a job and then resigned his seat. I suspect that's more like it. But in any event, Mr. Speaker, he moved on to Alberta to become vice-president with Canadian Occidental which later became Nexen.

Mr. Speaker, but let's get back to what that member actually said during his now infamous speech. And I, you know, I'd be the last one to ever suggest that Mr. Lingenfelter or that that member, that the Leader of the Opposition would ever use his power as deputy premier to get himself a job, but there are those that have suggested it. In any event, Mr. Speaker, getting back to what that member actually said during his now infamous speech, and according to an article by Murray Mandryk, that member is quoted as saying:

What I regret in many ways is that we didn't fight harder the privatization of some of those things that we did in the

former NDP Allan Blakeney era. We fought it, but I think there's a question of whether we fought it hard enough.

Now let's keep that in context and not forget my little story about how Mr. Lingenfelter got his job with Nexen. He didn't . . .

[12:30]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The member knows that we should not be bringing the . . . We should be talking about the member's constituency, not the member's name.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that that is the protocol. And I was jumping in and out of quotes so often that I got a little sloppy, and I'm sorry about that, Mr. Speaker. I'll attempt, I'll endeavour not to let it happen again.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, he said, I'll repeat myself a little bit: "We fought it, but I think there's a question of whether we fought it hard enough." And then the now Leader of the Opposition, remember, Mr. Speaker, had not fought it at all but he had actually lobbied this Assembly to give up the golden share so that he could get a job — some think — that he could get a job with Nexen in Alberta. But anyway that's what he said.

He said, we should get back to the point of setting up an energy company that does our own drilling and exploration for gas in this province. He said, I'm committed to do that if I'm the premier. Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of a statement that without any follow-up casts a pall on investment in any jurisdiction in which it's made if they believed him, Mr. Speaker, and if they thought he had any credibility or the ability to carry through on that threat.

On November 8th of this year, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Fairview demonstrated exactly why the NDP can't be trusted if it were in charge. He said, in reference to Saskatchewan's potash, he said, don't sell this resource. Well, Mr. Speaker, how can we benefit from potash if we don't sell it? Even, Mr. Speaker, even little kids who set up a lemonade stand know that the lemonade is only valuable if it's sold. The kids, Mr. Speaker, with the lemonade stand know that you have to sell the potash to get the money to build the schools, to pay the health care workers, to build the roads.

Mr. Speaker, imagine. Imagine if that member were in charge. Buyers of potash from China and India and places like that, you know, would approach him. And his response would be, they'd approach him to try and buy some potash, and his response would be, we don't sell our resources. You know, the kids with the lemonade stand know that you must sell lemonade and/or potash in order for the enterprise to be profitable. But apparently that member didn't run a lemonade stand either.

We've always sold our resources, Mr. Speaker. There's a huge difference in selling our resources though and fighting the sale of one of our largest resource companies. That's the distinction that the member from fairway needs to make. I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to explain to the member from Saskatoon Fairview how an economy works, even a lemonade stand, for simplicity's sake, or the resource sector for that

matter.

Mr. Speaker, in an article by James Wood in *The StarPhoenix*, October 7th, 2010, I quote, Mr. Speaker. He says:

The NDP wants a review of the government's royalty and taxation structure around potash and Lingenfelter [I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker] said the ownership issue could be looked at as part of the review.

He stressed he was not discussing nationalization of the company, although he did note the success of state-owned resource companies such as Norway's Statoil, and Brazil's Petrobras.

In 1936 and up until 1944, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was the third most populous province in Canada with a population of one million people. And Saskatchewan is now the sixth largest province, Mr. Speaker, with respect to population. And up until 2007, there was absolutely no growth from 1936 through all of the NDP and CCF years. Sixty-three years, Mr. Speaker, of mostly NDP government from 1944 until 2007.

This is in sharp contrast to our two neighbours. Alberta under a different program, pro-business program, Mr. Speaker, a program of individual liberty and freedom and the right to invest and encouragement to succeed, Alberta has grown fivefold in that same length of time, Mr. Speaker, from 750,000 to 3.7 million. And Manitoba, even Manitoba, who have had their setbacks, Lord knows, with some NDP issues of their own, have grown more than 70 per cent from 700,000 to 1.2 million during the same period.

"Various factors explain Saskatchewan's stagnant population growth, but no doubt its anti-growth public policies . . ." I'm quoting again, Mr. Speaker, when I say:

Various factors explain Saskatchewan's stagnant population growth, but no doubt its anti-growth public policies have been of little help.

These policies are the same ones often found in Third World countries with overbearing governments that nationalize companies and bring in job-killing labour regulations and uncompetitive taxes on capital investment. Saskatchewan is as close to a socialist economy as one could get in Canada.

But that's all changing now. I'm still quoting James Wood, Mr. Speaker.

Even PotashCorp serves as a good example. It was originally a Crown corporation that could hardly earn a dime. After privatization, the company grew quickly, generating far more revenue for the Saskatchewan government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's the end of the quote.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan has generated many times more revenue every year than it ever did on its best year as a Crown corporation since it's been privatized, Mr. Speaker.

Here's an interesting quote from the *Toronto Star*. And I don't have the edition, but it's in 1987. They talk about the federal NDP convention. And at the federal NDP convention, the article states, "An unnamed Saskatchewan delegate called for the nationalization of the five major chartered banks in Canada should an NDP government rise to power. We don't know . . ." Now I think this is a bit tongue in cheek. It states, "We don't know who the Saskatchewan delegate was." Maybe it was a current member of the NDP caucus. Who knows? Oh wait. We do know. "The current NDP candidate for Saskatoon Greystone."

Now this is in 1987. And Mr. Speaker, ironically, I think that's the same candidate that we have for the NDP in Saskatoon Greystone right now: Peter Prebble, recycling ideas from the '70s and politicians from the '70s, I guess, over there.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, this is the same convention that such socialist gems as a call for the elimination of all corporate tax expenditures and confiscating personal earnings of more than \$200,000 came to play, Mr. Speaker. I think even they would be confiscating income from some of their own members, Mr. Speaker, particularly the member from Nutana.

This same NDP candidate — and we know who that is now — went on to rant against the non-existent threat of casino capitalism, he calls it. Now I don't know what that means but anyway, I bet he does. In a treatise, Mr. Speaker, that would make even Karl Marx blush, he went on to say, and I quote:

It's not sufficient to simply talk about government procurement or certain taxation policy. We need a precise mechanism for channelling regional capital investment and there's no other mechanism than a clear transfer of economic capital from private, central multinationals to decentralized, regionally based institutions.

Now that man is running. He wants to be a member of this honourable Assembly, Mr. Speaker. He knows the history that I've been talking about, He knows what those kind of threats can do to an economy. He knows what they've already done to this economy for 63 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the now defunct non-partisan research group that used to call itself the Institute for Saskatchewan Enterprise hired a firm of accountants from outside of the province in the late 1980s. And it discovered — that firm of accountants that was hired by this Saskatchewan-based research group — discovered that the real value of PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan] as a nationalized enterprise was a bust for this province. That's pretty much as succinctly and factually as I can put it, Mr. Speaker, in condensing a lot of volumes of information.

They found that despite the initial heavy investment by the government, the cost of maintaining each job annually was the salary of the employee plus \$50,000 each, Mr. Speaker. There's inefficiency and then there's NDP inefficiency . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Maybe that is. Maybe that's it. Maybe that's casino capitalism. I hope not.

This is what the Leader of the Opposition wants to return to, Mr. Speaker. While the member from Regina Rosemont decries

fiscal mismanagement, his own boss wants to return to a time when Saskatchewan citizens paid an additional \$50,000 per PCS employee out of their tax money for the privilege of being an owner of PCS. In fact the NDP leader was House leader for the NDP in 1989 when he orchestrated a failed filibuster designed to maintain the nationalization of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

It's a well-known fact that in 1944, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan population was larger than Alberta's by 25 per cent. The country's oil capital was Regina. But since then, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have frightened off businesses with their economic nationalism and wholesale nationalization of industries. And on average, 1,700 people were leaving this province each year over the last 63 years that the NDP were government for most of the time and since the first election of a CCF government in 1944.

Just to give a sense, Mr. Speaker, of the anti-prosperity policies that former NDP . . . An independent report issued in the 1990s painted a grim picture for Saskatchewan families. Through this independent report, Mr. Speaker, it was revealed that Saskatchewan had the second highest personal and corporate income taxes in the country. Quebec was higher. The average family in the province had an income of only \$54,490 and paid taxes on that \$54,490 of \$27,053, leaving a disposable income for the whole family, Mr. Speaker, of only \$27,437.

The average family's income in Regina, Mr. Speaker, this was at a . . . In Alberta, I should say. And this was at a time when Alberta was just beginning to cut taxes and so the results got much more stark after this, but even this is telling. The average family's income in Alberta was 65,897 and the provincial take or the total tax take was 29,314, leaving a disposable income of 36,583 or 9,146 a year more in Alberta than in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Rounding off, \$10,000 advantage a year for living in Alberta even before they did most of their tax cuts, Mr. Speaker, and it got much better after that.

[12:45]

The Saskatchewan NDP grabbed, in the form of taxes, almost the entire average income increase of 3,769 between 1997 and 1998. The average tax bill in Saskatchewan increased \$3,215 over that period, Mr. Speaker, according to this report. Meanwhile in Alberta, incomes went up by 2,516, and taxes fell by \$619. In Canada as a whole over that period, Mr. Speaker, incomes went up \$1,629, and taxes only went up by \$215. Three thousand dollars, that's \$3,000 less net advantage to living in Saskatchewan in those years, Mr. Speaker, than any place else in Canada on average.

An article states, and I quote, "Why is Iran importing gasoline?" This is in 2007, 2007 and up to the present, Mr. Speaker. Iran's parliament in 2007 approved legislation to curb the use of cars in that oil-rich country. I know, Mr. Speaker, you want to shake your head. It doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. Why? Iran, Mr. Speaker, is the country with the world's third largest oil reserves and they could no longer afford to import costly gasoline.

Well that, you know, that poses a couple of questions, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker? That flies in the face of common sense. Why wouldn't they have their own gasoline since they're the third

largest oil producer in the world? Why couldn't they afford to do just about anything they wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, being the third largest oil producer in the world and a relatively small country by Canadian standards?

Here's why, Mr. Speaker. Iran has effectively nationalized their oil production. Because of their anti-internationalist policies and as a result of the country's aging and inefficient refineries, they can't meet a swelling demand for gasoline. Their government has discouraged multinational energy companies from making large-scale investments in Iran's infrastructure, and their domestic energy policies encourage waste and increased domestic demand.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more needs to be said about nationalizing industries and what that can do to economies. Iran, the world's third largest oil producer, can't afford to burn gas in their cars. And that's because of nationalization policies just exactly, Mr. Speaker, like the ones that are promoted on a day-by-day basis by those members who sit in their seats and heckle me today.

The NDP are going in a different direction in fact, Mr. Speaker, than the rest of the world. We've seen in our lifetimes, all of us, the end of the former Soviet Union. The Cold War went on from the end of the Second World War until 1989, Mr. Speaker, when the whole Soviet empire fell apart like a house of cards, Mr. Speaker. Makes you wonder if the Cold War was necessary at all. It was about, the Cold War was about not permitting the Soviet Union to expand and destroy the economies and lives of people in many more countries, Mr. Speaker. But really all we had to do was wait for the whole thing to collapse under its own weight and it's over.

But in any event, Mr. Speaker, communism and the ideas of socialism did look like a threat at one time until the Cold War and many billions of dollars were spent to stop that, when in fact it was about to stop itself, frankly, through bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker. And there are no progressive countries in the world who espouse the NDP's philosophy of nationalization of industries or resources or frankly much of anything else, Mr. Speaker.

Under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s when they nationalized oil companies and created Saskoil and they nationalized potash companies and created the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, they were short of money. They were short of money, Mr. Speaker, and this was in a time when the previous commodity boom was going on, Mr. Speaker.

The previous commodity boom started about 1973 and ran right through the '70s. Should have been the most prosperous time in history up until that point for Saskatchewan, but it wasn't, Mr. Speaker. And the reason it wasn't is because those members opposite and their predecessors spent that money. Spent all the revenue that was available to them to nationalize oil companies and potash companies and create little empires for themselves to run, Mr. Speaker.

And they were so short of money to do these things that they unfunded the teachers' superannuation plan. They do it. That created, Mr. Speaker, a \$4 billion liability that exists to this day against the province of Saskatchewan.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, how many school teachers in this province know that they rely on the largesse of government now, year to year, for their pension payments when before, before their pension fund was necessary for the capital to invest in the potash industry, their pension plan was fully funded. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not well known, but it is a fact just the same. I remember well Davey Steuart and others at the time railing against that and to no avail, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately.

But my sympathy is with the teachers. If we're ever in a time when we have NDP government in this province again, and the economy will take a downturn when that happens, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if government will always be able to make the payments to pay those teachers their superannuation. I'm skeptical.

In 2007, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, Mr. Speaker, we repealed *The Potash Development Act* of 1975. When we did that, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Norm Beug of the Saskatchewan Potash Producers praised our legislation for, I quote, "The symbolism is that the province is open for all business because investors have long, long memories."

And that is clearly true, Mr. Speaker. They were long enough that they, investors that were scared off in the 1940s and the 1950s and the 1960s and the 1970s, did not return to this province to invest again until after 2007 when our government came to power, Mr. Speaker, repealed this crazy legislation that destroyed the economy of our province.

And since then, \$12 billion in newly announced investment in the Saskatchewan potash industry, Mr. Speaker, the first major investment in the industry since, in Saskatchewan, since the early 1970s before the NDP nationalized part of the industry and killed investment in the province — and frankly, Mr. Speaker, killed the future of this province through that nationalization — until the Saskatchewan Party government took over in 2007. Zero investment in 16 years of NDP governments, \$12 billion in investment, announced investment in the first three years of our government, Mr. Speaker.

What does that mean? People ask, what does that mean? Does that mean anything to me? It means thousands of jobs in the province, Mr. Speaker. It means population growth. It means tax and royalty collected by the government to pay for things like hospitals, Mr. Speaker, health care professionals, schools, highways, social programs, and generally better services for the people of this great province.

They haven't learned anything, Mr. Speaker, from history or this socialist philosophy, this socialist experiment that, sadly for us, took place in North America right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is running short so I'm going to jump ahead. I'm going to read some headlines first, Mr. Speaker, and then quote from some articles that have been written. Now this is in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were in power and claimed that they didn't have any money to spend to fix our infrastructure and to improve social programs and the like, Mr. Speaker.

Here's some headlines for a start, Mr. Speaker. This is out of *The StarPhoenix*, April 24th, 1998, and it states, the headline

states, "PCS quarterly earnings up." April 2nd, 1998, the *Leader-Post*, it says, "Childers gets eight-figure compensation." Now that was a controversial one with an NDP government, Mr. Speaker. Luckily the company was reprivatized by then, and they could pay top quality executives to grow the company. That would have never happened under a nationalized industry, Mr. Speaker. But that was significant in that it meant that Mr. Childers was being rewarded for doing a good job in growing the company.

February 13th, 1998, Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker, the headline states, "'97 PCS profits smash records." Friday, February 13th — Friday the 13th, 1998, that was an unlucky day for the NDP, Mr. Speaker — headline reads, "PCS breaks new records." Regina *Leader-Post*, Thursday, October 23rd, 1997: "Profits up for PCS" the headline reads. Regina *Leader-Post*, Friday, July 25th, 1997: "PCS has record profits." *StarPhoenix*, Saturday, April 19th, '97: "Childers worth that kind of money" the headline reads. March 29th, 1997: "Childers made 2 million."

All right, Mr. Speaker, I see . . . I wanted to keep going, and I see that the members want me to. But I'll read the motion now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP's ongoing support for nationalizing Saskatchewan's resource sector.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The member from Thunder Creek has moved the motion:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP's ongoing support for nationalizing Saskatchewan's resource sector.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — I recognize the member from Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to be able to speak to this motion and set the record straight on a number of things that we've heard from the member from Thunder Creek, I believe it is, so far.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard now that the member has a great talent for revisionism, and his obvious disdain for the office of Tommy Douglas not to mention the success of governments of the NDP since then. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan is the strong province that it is today because of the fact that Tommy Douglas brought rural electrification to this province, because of the fact that Tommy Douglas introduced public health care into the province of Saskatchewan, which was then emulated right across the country, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The time now being 1 o'clock, this Assembly stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

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