



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

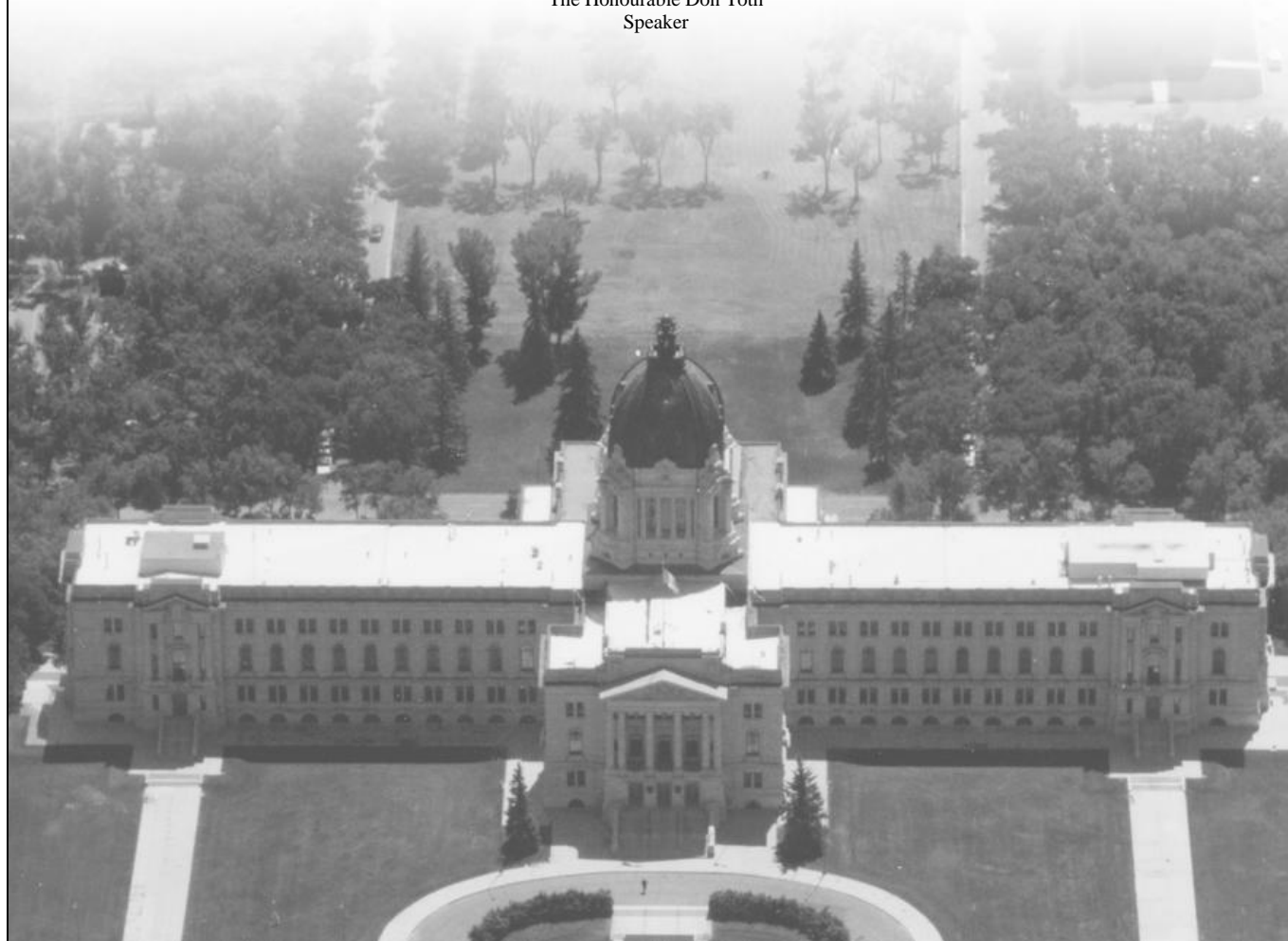
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
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]

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Minister of Justice on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — With leave to make a statement regarding National Day of Mourning, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has asked for leave to make a statement regarding National Day of Mourning. I'd ask if the Minister of Justice would include also the opposition? Is that agreed? Are we agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### National Day of Mourning

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 28th, we will mark the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job, a time for us to honour those who have been injured and those who have lost their lives as a result of work. On that day, we will join with others across this country and around the world to take a moment to remember those who have been injured or killed as a result of their job. The family and friends left behind by those who lost their lives will also be in our thoughts that day.

Mr. Speaker, the Day of Mourning also gives each of us the opportunity to renew our commitment to promoting, creating, and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces. The Day of Mourning takes place each year on April 28th, the anniversary of the day in 1914 when the first comprehensive workers' compensation Act in Canada received third reading.

On April 28th, workplaces across the country will observe the Day of Mourning through moments of silence, candle lighting, and donning ribbons or black arm bands. Here at the Saskatchewan Legislative Building, Day of Mourning pins were distributed to the members of the Legislative Assembly in recognition of the Day of Mourning, and our flags will fly at half-mast. In Ottawa, Parliament Hill's Canadian flag will also fly at half-mast to recognize those who lost their lives on the job.

It saddens me to report, Mr. Speaker, that 45 people have lost their lives to their work in Saskatchewan. The names of those we honour today are being read into the official record and will be inscribed in the national registry at the Canadian Labour Congress in Ottawa.

I would ask that all members please rise while I read the names of those who lost their lives:

Brian Huber  
Ken Campbell  
Paul Currie  
Richard Schell

Norman Stewart  
Gerard Schmidt  
Elvin Mierau  
Barry Johnson

James Harrison  
Roberta Courtney  
Lenard Lycett  
John Graham  
Horst Flurer  
Morris LeBlanc  
Larry Michel  
Eddie Zelinski  
Edward Artic  
Walter Graham  
Danny Chiasson  
Cammie Issel  
David Jensen  
Arthur Buzash  
Stephen Roe  
Clinton Andrews  
Erkki Simola  
Werner Bauer  
Trevor Smith

Philip Curtis  
Ronald Werk  
Orville Bigstone  
Hugh McDermaid  
Clinton Vance  
Howard Spence  
Brett Hunt  
Barry Freundl  
David Adler  
Michael Lloyd  
Gino LeBouthillier  
John Paget  
Margaret MacDonald  
Norman Petit  
Roger Byer  
Kelvin Hicks  
Stan Stepien  
Jerry Coverchuk

I would also like to draw your attention to farm fatalities. With an average of 14 fatalities each year, farming continues to be one of the most hazardous occupations in Saskatchewan.

Although we will not be in the legislature on April 28th, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to each take a moment on that day to pause and think about the lives lost in Saskatchewan last year and attend the various vigils being held by labour councils around the province.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I express my deepest sympathy to those who have been left behind because of these tragic deaths.

Mr. Speaker, the only acceptable number of workplace injuries and fatalities is zero. We are all responsible for creating and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces and farms. Let us all come together to embrace health and safety in our daily lives and to make getting home safely the most important part of our workday. Together we can prevent the loss of life and the tragic toll it takes on our families and communities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, when all members' statements for the Day of Mourning are done, I ask that we observe a moment of silence in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Leave to make a statement, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the minister in expressing the opposition's deep regret for the senseless workplace injuries and fatalities in our province, and I want to extend our deepest sympathies to the families and all those left behind.

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated there were 45 deaths in our province in 2010. We must all in our way accept the

unacceptable. Accept this reality we must, but we know we must do better. Mr. Speaker, we all agree that one death is one death too many. But, Mr. Speaker, 45 people are no longer with us in 2010. Mr. Speaker, seven of those people died of mesothelioma, asbestos exposure.

Mr. Speaker, mesothelioma is not common. In 60 to 70 per cent of mesothelioma cases, the person has been exposed to asbestos. People with the highest risk are those employed in the following areas: the asbestos industry; dockyardworkers, dockyard workers especially if they dismantle asbestos-insulated steam piping; workers who handle and manufacture asbestos compounds; the insulators and steam fitters; demolition and construction workers. Mr. Speaker, from the time between exposure to asbestos and the mesothelioma develops is 10 to 15 years. That is why mesothelioma usually affects people in their 50s, 60s, and 70s.

Mr. Speaker, this is important for all of us to know and understand. Mr. Speaker, I urge all members on both sides of the Assembly to take time on April 28th to remember and commit to work place safety. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I would invite the members and the guests in the gallery to join us and stand with us for a moment of silence for injured workers.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

**The Speaker:** — Thank you very much. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think all members of this Assembly would agree that we have just an excellent press gallery here at the Legislative Assembly in the province of Saskatchewan. We say it only of course because it's absolutely true. And when one of the leading members of that press gallery is missing for a time, we miss them.

And I want to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly one such member of the press gallery who for a time is away from us, but attending to much more important things. Sarah Mills has joined us, Mr. Speaker. She of course is the chief correspondent for News Talk Radio, and a regular in the press gallery at the Legislative Assembly here. And she's joined today by her husband, Chef Malcolm, Malcolm Craig is here — there they are — and her parents who have come all the way from England because of the company of yet another that I'll introduce, Mr. Speaker. Their brand new baby, Brianna Rose Craig, has joined them and joined us today. She was born on the 3rd of April on what is called Mothering Sunday in the UK [United Kingdom], our equivalent of Mother's Day here in North America. She weighed in at 6 pounds and 10 ounces, Mr. Speaker.

So we're especially proud to be able to welcome all of them, especially Brianna, to their Assembly today. Sarah says her

mom is convinced that Brianna will grow up to be a fan of English soccer. I don't want to disappoint her, I have a feeling Brianna will grow up to bleed Rider green. Either way, we want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, and we want to thank Sarah and Malcolm for contributing to the province's extraordinary population growth.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier and welcome Sarah Mills back to the Assembly with her husband, Malcolm, and also her parents visiting from England to help out. And also, Mr. Speaker, offer a very warm welcome to Brianna Rose. She's an absolute beautiful child, and I'm sure she is well cared for by Sarah. And of course, with help from grandparents and her husband, she'll do fine. We do miss her here at the legislature.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say to the Premier, with a dedication to equality and equity, someday Brianna Rose will be playing soccer and football. She may not be just a fan. But welcome to the Assembly, and we look forward to you coming back.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in your gallery are two individuals I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members. Seated in the gallery is Dr. Carman Rabuka and Dr. Luke Hnenny. Carman is my brother-in-law, and Luke is my friend and also good friends with Carman. And they're both here today to watch the proceedings as interested citizens. I know they often tune in when their schedule permits.

Carman is a dentist practising in Saskatoon, and Luke is a fourth-year neurosurgery resident through the University of Saskatchewan. So they are here simply as interested citizens, but if the Health minister had time, I'm sure Carman would be happy to talk about dental implants, and perhaps Luke would want to talk about a new angio suite — but only if he had time, of course. But I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these two individuals to the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, the member from Regina South.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Japanese.]

I'm very happy to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of 43 grade 11 students visiting our fair city all the way from their hometown of Yokohama, Japan. They are accompanied in the west gallery by their teachers, Kawamura sensei, Shimada sensei, and Umezu sensei, and by their tour guide, Komatsu sensei. To everyone, I am pleased to say:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Japanese.]

And to our very, very special guests from Japan:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Japanese.]

When I visited your lovely country, I was known as Beer-u des.

Also present this morning are the student hosts from Campbell, Winston Knoll, Sheldon-Williams, and Thom collegiates here in Regina. The students are accompanied by the local host parents and organizers: Vicki Kerr-Wilson, Susan Schneider, Troni Grande, Ron Jacobs, Karen Henders, Wendy Johnson, Lee Malythong, Shirley Milhiney, and Jim Daschuk.

We are delighted, Mr. Speaker, to welcome everybody to our city. We hope they are enjoying every moment of their stay and that they are having fun exchanging information about customs and cultures with their new Canadian friends.

On a more serious subject, we also want to express to our guests our great concern for their fellow citizens of Japan following the recent tragic occurrences there. The whole world is watching that situation and hoping for a safe outcome for all citizens and a return to normal life for everyone in that great country. I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming our guests here today.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I would also like to introduce another very special guest to our Assembly today. With us this morning in your gallery is Mr. Codie Prevost. Codie's name will be familiar to many of you as he is one of Saskatchewan's most accomplished country musicians. In fact I believe the Premier mentioned Codie's name several times in a recent statement about this year's Saskatchewan Country Music Awards. That's because Codie won no less than six awards there. He won Fan's Choice Entertainer of the Year, for the second time, by the way; Male Vocalist of the Year; Single of the Year for "Rollin' Back to You"; Song of the Year for "I'm Okay"; Video of the Year for "Standing Still" and Album of the Year for *Get Loud*.

Codie is with us today because he is one of the Saskatchewan artists invited to perform at the Prairie Scene arts festival being held in Ottawa from April 26 to May 8. I'm going to be there; it's going to be fantastic. Later this morning we're holding a send-off event in the Saskatchewan gallery in our building for the artists travelling to Ottawa, and Codie is performing with us. So hold on to your seats, people, because it's about to get loud. Please join me in welcoming Codie to his legislature.

[10:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, if I can just very briefly join with the minister in welcoming our guests from Japan. On behalf of the province of Saskatchewan, on behalf of all the people of Saskatchewan, we would want to take this opportunity to express our very best to these young students and especially to those that are at home, obviously.

To the people of Japan, the people of our province and of Canada are working, are trying to make sure that we're all standing with the people of Japan as they deal with the

incredible damage that occurred as a result of the earthquake and with the trials and the challenges that have ensued for the people of that country. And we just want them to know that our prayers are with them, our thoughts are with them. And more than that, we are providing other sources of support. And we wish them all the best, glad that they're here today. And we wish them all the best on their visit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature Mr. J.P. Ellson who is the head of SaskMusic. And it's very important to introduce him because Codie Prevost, The Sheepdogs, all of the various musicians that come from Saskatchewan rely on the good work that J.P. does, along with his organization. And I think we should all be especially thankful for the good work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join my colleagues in welcoming the guests from Japan. And, Mr. Speaker, my niece, Chelsea Belanger, travelled to Korea and also spent a year in Japan teaching English as a second language. And she returned home to Ile-a-la-Crosse less than a month ago, and she has great and fond memories of the country of Japan and the Japanese people.

And she indicated to me a really important part of her visit. She was stationed in Kobe and that's where the legendary NBA [National Basketball Association] basketball all-star Kobe Bryant got his name because his parents travelled to Kobe, and I guess they just loved the beef there. There's this phenomenal beef, according to my niece. And when I asked her how the people were in Japan, she just simply pointed out that they're a most gracious people. So I want to thank the people of Japan for welcoming my niece to their country and for the fond memories that we have of the people of Japan. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn, the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to join with two of my colleagues to welcome visitors that have already been introduced. As the member from Lakeview has pointed out, J.P. Ellson is here. I've had the opportunity to work with Mr. Ellson in my previous roles, Mr. Speaker, and know first-hand the good work that he does on behalf of the music industry in this province. And I saw that, Mr. Speaker, frankly, not only from my portfolio of responsibilities, but also because of my spouse who is involved in the music industry. And so I'd like to personally thank him for all of his work.

As well Mr. Codie Prevost who is here, is being introduced. I'd just like to extend my congratulations. I had the opportunity to be in Swift Current for the music awards and saw how successful he has done. And I've had the opportunity to spend some time with Codie at various events over the last number of years and know that not only is he a great ambassador, because of his music, for this province but just because he's a genuine

decent person. And so I want to wish him all the best. I believe he's performing on April 28th in Ottawa and probably beyond then. So I want to extend my appreciation to him and to welcome him to the legislature.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition that speaks to the issue that Saskatchewan residents being faced with surging rent increases is simply making life unaffordable in the province of Saskatchewan. It also notes that a majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, BC [British Columbia], Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. Mr. Speaker, it also points out an interesting fact that when we look at Saskatoon and Regina combined from the year 2007 to 2009, CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] states there were fewer than 300 rental unit starts in those two cities. Yet in rent-controlled Winnipeg during the same period of time, 1,500 new rental units were begun.

Mr. Speaker, and the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to immediately enact rent control legislation that protects Saskatchewan tenants from unreasonable increases in rent.

Mr. Speaker, I present these petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan residents in Saskatoon, Emerald Park, Humboldt, and Regina. I so present.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who support maintaining quality health care services:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the Government of Saskatchewan ought to recognize the need for timely access to comprehensive and quality health care services for all communities within the province, including Wakaw and surrounding areas, and that the disruption of emergency services and in-patient services at Wakaw Hospital will not serve the needs of the residents in this community and surrounding area; and

That the cuts in access to timely and accurate diagnostic and laboratory tests within the community of Wakaw and surrounding area will not serve the needs of the residents either.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintain quality health care services through the commitment of necessary funding to address critical retention and recruitment issues.

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

The signatures on these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Bellevue, P.A. [Prince Albert], and St. Louis. I so present.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition concerning the need for hospice and palliative care in Saskatchewan:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that all Saskatchewan people deserve quality end-of-life and bereavement care; that hospice and palliative care is known to help enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death, and bereavement; that a publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care system, including residential hospices, would increase end-of-life care options for Saskatchewan people.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to enhance and increase publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care, including in-home hospice services and residential hospices, in order to ensure that all Saskatchewan people have access to high-quality end-of-life care.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition today are from the cities of Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of a potash royalty review because the people of Saskatchewan are the owners of a 1,000-year strategic resource, and we believe that the owners of that resource should receive the maximum benefit of the resource. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the CEO [chief executive officer] of a potash company in Saskatchewan had said that there's a new norm for potash and for the shareholders of the potash corporation. And so, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to begin a comprehensive, transparent, and public review of Saskatchewan's potash royalty system with a view to maximizing the return from this strategic resource for its owners, the people of Saskatchewan, who wish to use these additional potash royalty revenues for needed investments in health care, child care, education, affordable housing, infrastructure, and other social programs as well as initiatives such as debt repayment.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by good folks from Lanigan, Wadena, Canora, Melville, Glenavon, and Aberdeen. I so present.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to present a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effect that Bill 160 will have on human rights law in the province if enacted. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan withdraw Bill 160 from consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, hold extensive public consultations informed by a public policy paper before any amendments to the Human Rights Code, the law that supersedes all others in our province, are even considered.

Today the petition is signed by residents of Regina and Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to a record of increasing debt, three consecutive years to the tune of well over \$1.3 billion, and this year alone increasing debt by \$548 million. And of course, Mr. Speaker, this occurring at a time of record highs in revenues, offering negative consequences for Saskatchewan people now and well into the future. We're going to raise this matter today with a debate later on here this morning. 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.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by concerned residents from the communities of Balcarres, Raymore, Fort Qu'Appelle, Lumsden, and Buena Vista. I so submit.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Day of Mourning

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, April the 28th is the day for mourning and remembering workers injured or killed on the job. This year the day falls when the House is not sitting. So today it is my honour to rise in this Assembly to mark a day set aside to remember all of those who have suffered injury or even death on the job.

On too many days, Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan and

across Canada suffer injury or death simply because they went to work. Unsafe or unhealthy working conditions can claim a life instantly or ruin quality of life for months or years later. And workers, their families, friends, and communities are left to deal with loved ones whose work cost them far more than it ever paid.

Mr. Speaker, this day should be one not only for mourning but for action. All of us in this Assembly and in our wider society should recommit ourselves not only to remember those who have suffered a workplace injury or death but also to ensuring that no one, no one should have to work in unsafe or unhealthy conditions.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today we heard the names listed of those workers whose lives were lost in the past year due to workplace conditions. I ask all members to commit with me to work together to ensure that next year's list is not nearly as long.

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

#### Treaty 4 Education Conference

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was accompanied last night by my wife and attended the 13th annual Treaty 4 Education Conference Award Ceremony and Banquet at the Queensbury Centre, along with fellow MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], the Minister of Government Services, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, and of course yourself, Mr. Speaker.

The theme of the event was Honour, Embrace, and Implement Treaty Rights to Education. The evening began with a lovely meal followed by an award ceremony and then an inspirational speech by former NHL [National Hockey League] player and coach Ted Nolan, who spoke about the need for setting goals and dreams and working hard to make them a reality. He talked about the hardships he had to endure, such as being away from home and the overcoming of racism, to help realize his potential. He talked about good leadership, part of which includes surrounding yourself with positive people and relying on others or team building.

The highlight of the evening for many was the first production of *My Kokum Prayed for Me*, a play by Vera Tourangeau based on a book by the same name. You could have heard a pin drop for most of the time as the story unfolds of a young First Nations man whose kokum continually prayed for him to Kitchi-Manitou, or in Vera's own translation, God of the Bible, for the evils of drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, and gang crime to not be part of her family or her people. After his grandmother dies, he falls into the traps she so passionately prayed against, but through the memory of her and the powerful words in her prayers, he is reborn and overcomes the previously mentioned evils by the power of his kokum's God of the Bible.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating the participants and award winners of last night's event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Administrative Professionals Day

**Mr. Furber:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next week the House will not be sitting. We will all be enjoying the Easter weekend, and we'll spend the week in our ridings, working with our constituents. Back in our constituency offices though, Mr. Speaker, the pace of work will go on as always.

April 27th of this year is Administrative Professionals Day, and the entire week is an opportunity to express our gratitude for the hard work and invaluable contributions that Canada's 475,000 administrative professionals provide every day.

Mr. Speaker, behind every successful office, there's an efficient and dedicated administrative support staff. In today's high speed, demanding, and technical world, the role of an administrative professional is ever changing and becoming increasingly dynamic. Aside from handling the mail, answering telephones, writing letters, and sending emails and faxes, administrative professionals play an essential role in our public relations.

Whether they're greeting our constituents over the phone or in person, or maintaining a solid working relationship with our colleagues and the various organizations and institutions we seek to represent, our administrative professionals are the backbone of our offices. They ensure that the day-to-day business runs smoothly, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't function without them.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of all administrative professionals throughout the province and commend them for their tireless effort and commitment today. To all of our constituency assistants, and in my office, Rose, and the administrative professionals in our caucus office, Jannet, Val, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

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

### Health Care Quality Summit

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this past week the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council, the Ministry of Health, the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations all partnered to present the first provincial Health Care Quality Summit.

The Health Care Quality Summit had three main goals, Mr. Speaker: the first, to foster sharing, awareness building, learning, engagement, and inspiration among those involved in quality improvement efforts in the health sector. The second is to demonstrate and share health sector quality improvement experiences with those outside the health care system. And the third is to connect participants with local and international quality improvement leaders and experts.

Throughout the summit, stakeholders were engaged, focused, and energized at Saskatchewan's first-ever provincial quality improvement summit. Participants had the opportunity to hear

directly from North American experts about transformational power and quality improvement, and learn more about local successes in designing top-notch health care services and processes. Mr. Speaker, the participants were indeed inspired and, as witnessed by one of the tweets that we received just this morning, and I quote, "Wow, first in my 20 years of health care, Premier popping in to commend system leaders for changes under way in Saskatchewan health care."

Mr. Speaker, thanks to all the attendants for participating in this summit, which demonstrates a strong desire to improve health care throughout this province. Thank you.

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

### Earth Day

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, Friday, April 22nd is Earth Day. Across Canada and around the globe, people young and old will be celebrating the 41st anniversary of Earth Day. Millions of Canadians will join people in 170 countries in raising awareness about the critical environmental issues that face humanity. Dynamic, aggressive action has the power to capture the attention of our peers and political leaders.

The theme of this year's Earth Day, Mr. Speaker, is A Billion Acts of Green. And the campaign is urging people to make a clear pledge to take a simple action to benefit the environment — a pledge to recycle or compost, to save water or electricity, to stop idling the car, to ride a bike, or take the bus. These are things all of us can do, Mr. Speaker, to protect the environment. And taken together, a billion such pledges can have a hugely positive impact on our environment.

Mr. Speaker, this year the Earth Day campaign seeks to increase global participation by working with student communities in particular. The campus Global Day of Conversation is designed to help students organize constructive dialogue with campus and government officials on local environmental issues and sustainable solutions for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members to engage their constituencies, and specifically students, in environmental discussion and, perhaps more importantly, action. Happy Earth Day, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Celebrating Easter

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All around the world, people are preparing to celebrate the most important religious holiday of the Christian calendar. This is not a single day celebration. It's an entire season in the Christian calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, today is Holy Thursday. This day recognizes the last supper that Jesus shared with the Apostles prior to his death. It was here where he broke bread and shared wine with his closest followers and friends. This act forms the basis for Communion celebrations practised by Christians to this day.

While spending time with our family and loved ones this



weekend, whether it be over a family supper or sitting down to colour Easter eggs, I ask that we not forget the reason for this celebration. Many people attend church on this special holiday to remember the Crucifixion and to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. And for others, this holiday is a season of Easter egg hunts, chocolate bunnies, and turkey suppers.

However, Mr. Speaker, I do think it's important that we remember that by giving his life, Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins, for my sins. I urge all members of this Assembly to recall the true meaning of Easter while spending much-deserved time with their families during this first long weekend of spring. Thank you.

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

### Planned Parenthood Services

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important public service Planned Parenthood performs in providing health information and resources to communities across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of Saskatchewan citizens benefit every year from the sexual and reproductive health information and resources Planned Parenthood provides. From reducing the spread of sexual disease to helping prevent unintended pregnancies, Planned Parenthood's activities benefit not only the health of the individuals who drop into its centres to receive counselling or attend a clinic, but also the health of the broader community.

Of particular note, Mr. Speaker, is the service this organization performs for the young men and women who too often find a lack of compassion and understanding when they're faced with some of the most sensitive, complex, and difficult personal decisions any young person could face. In places like the Sexual Health Centre in my home community of Saskatoon, these young people can feel safe to talk about these decisions and feel assured that they are equipped to make them with the best information available. Planned Parenthood carries out its mission of promoting reproductive and sexual health and well-being by the most effective means possible — knowledge and information.

All decisions related to our personal health should be based on sound medical information and resources. Planned Parenthood has provided many years of public service in making this information and those resources available to those who need it on an informed, compassionate, and non-judgmental basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### College Merger

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, it's been a while since the Minister of Advanced Education reported on an investigation into the mess which he helped to create at Carlton Trail

Regional College and St. Peter's College. On March 28th the minister gave us just a tidbit of information about Carlton Trail's bank account balance, and then he said this: "Day by day we'll report on every dollar for taxpayers."

Well 24 days have passed since then and the minister has not reported on one single dollar. To the Minister: has he learned of any public funds that have been misused or misappropriated at either institution, and will he report that information to taxpayers today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact there has been a report. That report was posted last week on our website. There'll be a second report posted today as discussed during the committee, Mr. Speaker. We know that there are a series of allegations, Mr. Speaker. We also have, Mr. Speaker, a number of audits under way. KPMG is doing an audit of St. Peter's College. Deloitte is undertaking work as an administrator of Carlton Trail, and Meyers Norris Penny is doing an overview of both institutions, Mr. Speaker.

As we continue to receive reports from these auditors and these entities, Mr. Speaker, we'll make sure that we continue to provide timely updates to taxpayers right across the province.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, all that minister is putting on his website once a week is a couple of high-level paragraphs. That hardly fulfills his clear pledge that "Day by day we'll report on every dollar for taxpayers."

Since he refuses to answer whether any public funds have been misused or misappropriated, perhaps he will at least report on the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been dumped in to clean up and investigate his mess.

We know that the minister set aside \$160,000 for the Sask Party appointed administrator. That is over \$53,000 per month for the work of just one individual. I received a phone call yesterday telling me that this individual is only at Carlton Trail and working on college matters one day a week. That means that taxpayers are paying for this one accountant over \$13,300 per day, over \$1,660 per hour. To the minister: how can he possibly defend spending over \$1,660 per hour on just one accountant?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report, and this figure has come out previously . . . Mr. Speaker, based on the allegations, and at this point, Mr. Speaker, only allegations, and the member opposite continues to make references to rumours and phone calls, Mr. Speaker. And so what we have from Carlton Trail, from Graham Pearson, Mr. Speaker, and I've made reference to this previously, there is an outstanding question regarding \$273,000. And, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a confirmation, the matter of internally restricted funds set aside for facilities, these funds are segregated within the general

ledger and are all accounted for — \$273,000.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite continues to truck and trade in rumours. What we're doing is taking those allegations very seriously. There are a number of audits under way, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to provide timely updates to the people of this province. We're doing this through, Mr. Speaker, we're doing this through, Mr. Speaker, on our website once a week, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that taxpayers across the province can be assured that we'll track every dollar down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister promised to report day by day on every taxpayers' dollar. He is not doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not forget that this \$13,300 per day is just for one accountant, and we know that a whole army of accountants is looking into the minister's failed merger project. The minister arrogantly ignored concerns and he plowed ahead with his little legacy project. He has taken no responsibility for the mess that he created.

We have no idea how many taxpayers' dollars have been misused or misappropriated, and now taxpayers are forced to pay over \$400,000 to investigate and clean up that minister's mess, including \$1,660 per hour for just one accountant. To the minister: is he proud of the fact that Saskatchewan taxpayers are forced to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to clean up his mess?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the Meyers Norris Penny initial report. And it says the proposed merger was initiated by the colleges and subsequently a proposal was submitted. That was last June.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative was a grassroots initiative. It came out, Mr. Speaker, from initiatives and meetings that started, in fact, prior to the last election. Mr. Speaker, a proposal was submitted, proposal was submitted, Mr. Speaker. What we said is that would be reviewed through an independent process, Mr. Speaker. That process was undertaken by Meyers Norris Penny. They made recommendations that the merger not go forward, Mr. Speaker. They also came, Mr. Speaker, with a series of questions, questions I'm going to continue, Mr. Speaker, to highlight. These are questions and allegations. These are under investigation through audits, Mr. Speaker.

We have a pledge to the people of this province that we will track down these dollars, Mr. Speaker. That work is under way. We're providing weekly updates, Mr. Speaker, as promised that we would do in committee, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there were timely updates. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make sure that there's a full accounting of this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's deputy said the astronomical expenditure of taxpayers' dollars to clean up the minister's mess demonstrates, "the seriousness with which the ministry takes the allegations." Well that's as laughable as when the former minister of Parks said that taxpayers would appreciate our parks more, their visits if they simply had to pay more to go to them.

Obviously Saskatchewan taxpayers want these allegations taken seriously, Mr. Speaker. But if the minister really wants to show that he's taking these allegations seriously, he doesn't need to spend \$1,660 per hour for just one accountant. If the minister really wants to take this seriously, he should take responsibility and step aside until this mess is fully investigated and cleaned up.

To the minister: when will he take some responsibility instead of just throwing more taxpayers' money at this mess?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, since coming to office, our government has invested more than 2.8 billion dollars, \$2.8 billion into post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. You can see the results of that right across the province, Mr. Speaker. We can see the results of that as we have more First Nations and Métis students enrolled in programming, Mr. Speaker. You can see that, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to make process . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You can see that at the University of Saskatchewan as construction continues . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I barely sat down, had invited the minister to respond, and the member to my left is interfering with the minister's response. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You can see at the University of Saskatchewan where construction continues to proceed on the academic health science wings, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite so irresponsibly allowed the College of Medicine to go on probation. Mr. Speaker, you can see that in communities like Humboldt, Mr. Speaker, where there's a joint facility to ensure that our students both through the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system and through Carlton Trail Regional College continue to have opportunities. You can see it in communities like Swift Current and Estevan and Nipawin. Mr. Speaker, \$2.8 billion, a record. We're going to continue to invest in our students and our future in the new Saskatchewan.

[10:45]

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

Eastview.

### Coverage for Dental Surgery

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, Charlene Sullivan was in the Assembly asking for the minister to honour a promise he made in his office in front of witnesses to cover her dental implants. In response, the minister said, “We’ll look into the case again.”

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: has he reviewed the case again, and will he now honour his promise and pay for the dental implants that Charlene legitimately needs?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we can certainly look into that case. I’ll instruct the ministry to look into that case. What I will commit to and what I committed to in my office is that we would review the policies that were in place under the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker.

Those policies were reviewed, Mr. Speaker. Those policies were changed. They were changed to come in line with other provinces in Western Canada so that we not only could cover congenital defects, Mr. Speaker, that we would cover tumours, Mr. Speaker, that would cause then the loss of teeth. That policy was changed, Mr. Speaker. That is the commitment that I made in my office, and that is the commitment that we’ve followed through on.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister appears to have selective memory about this event. Tuesday though in the rotunda, while the minister was saying he can’t make policy in his office and can only cover people who applied, his assistant deputy minister was phoning Dale Regal, telling him to send his application in because his implants will be covered. His application is approved sight unseen.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when can Charlene Sullivan expect to get her phone call from the assistant deputy minister telling her she is covered?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the people that the member opposite referred to, for example, people that lobbied for this policy change, had not sent in their request for payment. Mr. Speaker, we’re inviting them to send in their request for payment, Mr. Speaker, and the ministry will evaluate those requests to make sure that they fall in line with the policy that we have changed.

The one case that was sent in, Mr. Speaker, the ministry reviewed that. It didn’t fall in line with the policies, Mr. Speaker, because it wasn’t a tumour within the mouth, Mr. Speaker. On the other cases that the issue was raised, we are asking them to send it in so the ministry can review because we do think it falls into line with the policy. But we’re asking them

to send in their application so the ministry can review it.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister’s department went a step further and called Dale Regal’s dental surgeon to tell him to send in Dale’s file for approval because they were changing their policy yet again. And this dental surgeon has something clearly to say, and he will be saying it.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what is today’s requirement for dental implant coverage? Does Charlene need to go to Dale Regal’s dental surgeon to get coverage? Just tell her what she has to do.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that all dental surgeons, and we’re working with the College of Dental Surgeons, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they’re familiar with the policy change. We’ve had people that have had implants put in, Mr. Speaker, that have applied since the policy has changed. We’ve had four that have been covered, Mr. Speaker. Four more have applied, but it didn’t follow in line and they were rejected, Mr. Speaker, as was the member opposite’s case.

Mr. Speaker, we’re asking people that . . . And we’re informing dentists, dental surgeons around the province, to make sure that they understand the policy that has been changed. I understand . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member is yelling from his seat, which policy . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Order. I’d ask the member from Prince Albert Northcote to allow the minister to respond. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I’ll make it very, very plain. It was a policy that under 16 years of NDP government would have rejected every one of those cases that came forward, Mr. Speaker. That’s the policy that was changed, Mr. Speaker, and we’re very proud of it.

Now we’re informing the dental surgeons to make sure that they understand and their patients understand what will be covered, Mr. Speaker, because I can understand that after a long 16 years, those policies were just ignored. Mr. Speaker, not under this government.

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

### Arrangements Regarding Long-Term Care Facilities

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’ve a question to the Minister Responsible for Government Services. On two occasions, I’ve submitted a written question to the minister regarding the total taxpayers’ dollars paid for the lease and now purchase to the private sector owners of the Parkridge nursing home.

Can the minister now inform the Assembly how much the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have paid for this lease and recent purchase of this facility that was built in 1986?

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

**Hon. Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have given their views on Parkridge facility and its lease arrangement, but perhaps a few other facts should be mentioned in regards to this facility.

Mr. Speaker, the lease that was entered into by a previous government did not include any requirements for the maintenance of the facility. The responsibility rested with the government and was passed on to the Health regions who operated the facility. So when the member opposite laments over the cost of the upgrades or the costs of the needed in Parkridge, they should perhaps mention that it was the NDP government that did not provide the necessary funds to carry out proper maintenance during their term. And the payments being provided by the Ministry of Health for this government are being made to cover the work being done, and the work that was covered was not done by the building owner, but rather work done by the former NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, while indeed a lot of money was paid to the developer over the term . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I note the minister didn't answer the question, so I guess I'll answer it for her because yesterday or two days ago in the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, the ministry provided us with this information. The total amount that has been publicly report by the Ministry of Government Services as being paid to Wolfe Group Investments Ltd. from 1986-2011 is \$57,965,312. However this amount does not include payments from 1987-88 and 1988-89. They're going to continue their efforts to locate the information. This does not include the \$7 million that was sent from the Ministry of Health to pay for renovations at the facility, and this does not include the \$19 million that apparently of renovations the facility needs.

So to Minister of Health: we have this nursing home that's being built in Saskatoon by Amicus. This is a \$27 million facility with also a lease that will be paid out to Amicus. Can he tell us what this is going to cost us over the next 25 years?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know, but to me it's like déjà vu all over again. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked a questions each and every day of last session except for the very last one. She didn't ask a question on the very last day of the fall session, but she's picking it up now, Mr. Speaker.

Amicus is a long-term care facility that will service the needs of 100 people, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon. It will be an agreement that we've entered . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Allow the minister to respond to the question presented. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, it is an agreement that the Saskatoon Health Region has entered into with the Catholic Health Ministry to supply services. The Catholic Health Ministry has supplied excellent health care services throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, for decades, for generations, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so we look forward to the day when this facility opens, and we can move people out of what is really quite frankly acute care settings, inappropriate for them to live in, into the proper living conditions with the help from the Catholic Health Ministry.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that the Parkridge nursing home deal cost the people of our province over \$80 million. Mr. Speaker, that facility was built in 1986 and we know that if it had been paid for in 1986, it would have saved the taxpayers of our province tens of millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, there is a 100-bed nursing home being built in Saskatoon, and it's going to be owned by someone other than the health region. It is being built for \$27 million, and the minister tried to tell us last spring that we'll pay, as taxpayers, less than \$1 million a year to Amicus for the support of this guaranteed mortgage. Can minister really tell us, in real terms, what is this particular deal going to cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this facility will certainly provide great care, Mr. Speaker. We've entered into an agreement, the Saskatoon Health Region, that will see us pay a per diem rate for the care of the facility, Mr. Speaker, as well as some capital costs on top of that, Mr. Speaker. And we believe it's a very good deal that will serve the people very, very well.

But I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, because they like to . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. It would seem to me the members would like to hear the response from the minister to the question presented by their colleague. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, Parkridge was in place for many, many years, many, many years. First of all it started under a Conservative government, but for 16 years under an NDP government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it very curious. We have got four different Health ministers sitting over there, former Health ministers, that didn't say a word for 16 years about the Parkridge deal, Mr. Speaker. They're quite happy to live with it for those 16 years, Mr. Speaker. Now all of a sudden it's a problem. If they were so concerned about it — and that member herself was a Health minister — if she was so

concerned about it, why didn't she do something about it when she was the Health minister?

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

#### Relationship with Municipalities

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it was just, I believe, about two budgets ago when the Minister of Finance stood in this House and then later . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, it was just over two budgets ago when the Minister of Finance stood in this House and then later in the Assembly to announce to the media that the long-term funding formula for municipalities was cancelled or delayed because of this government's financial mismanagement. Mr. Speaker, there were no phone calls to municipalities to give them a heads-up. There was no respect shown to municipal partners, just an announcement through the media.

Mr. Speaker, there was lots of apologies that followed, and the Premier and the minister said they would do better. But here we go again. The provincial housing plan was announced in this year's budget with no consultations with the municipalities, and it dumps a majority of responsibility on municipal partners.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister refusing to negotiate with municipal partners?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can speak to the past experience that I had with the board for our Housing Corporation. And I know that board has had extensive consultations with municipal leaders, with developers. They have gone to a number of the cities and communities within our province, and they have expertise right on the board, quite frankly, in the different areas of housing.

So I don't think it is quite accurate to say that the board did not consult before decisions were made on the housing strategy as we move forward.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, here we go again. This government makes an announcement forcing responsibilities onto another level government and has done no consultations beforehand. This program supports developers, but it misses the mark on meeting the needs for Saskatchewan residents. And it again downloads a fair bit of responsibility onto the municipal sector.

Mr. Speaker, when is this government going to sit down and do some actual consultations with municipal partners before

downloading onto them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to clarify for the members opposite exactly what this government has done in terms of downloading on the municipalities. I'm going to talk about the revenue-sharing plan, and I'm also going to talk about education property tax, Mr. Speaker, two commitments that we made. The member stood in her first question . . .

[Interjections]

[11:00]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want an answer about how this government has worked with its partners, the municipalities, and that was the question, about what we've done in terms of downloading.

Mr. Speaker, what we committed to in this year's budget was to ensure that we were going to create a revenue sharing pool that would address 1 per cent of all of the PST [provincial sales tax] dollars collected by the province. Mr. Speaker, that 1 per cent translates into \$216 million. Mr. Speaker, \$49 million more than last year. So that's what we've done, Mr. Speaker. We've downloaded \$49 million to municipalities to make sure that they can meet the challenges of a growing province and, Mr. Speaker, we've created a Saskatchewan advantage here.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — If this is a minister that is responsible for the finances of the province of Saskatchewan, I'm worried. If he doesn't even know that the municipal operating grants were negotiated and paid on the basis of the operating expenses of municipalities, he needs to read his briefing book.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government, this government has downloaded onto municipalities, and they have dumped the majority of costs onto those municipalities. The 250, that is loans to developers. They're quite able to support developers, but they have ignored municipalities, and they have not even given them the respect of negotiating this housing agreement with them. Mr. Speaker, when will this minister actually do some honest-to-goodness consultations?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, let's be clear, let's be clear about what this government has done with the consultations of all people of this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, mill rates, the mill rates that that member was part of, back a number of years ago, ensured that there was 20, 21, 22 mills charged to agricultural people, to people who have residences, in all communities, Mr. Speaker. We make a promise, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to reduce that mill rate to 3.91 mills for agricultural lands right across this province,

Mr. Speaker. That's our consultation.

We also said that we would address the problem faced by homeowners, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mill rate for homeowners this year is 9.51 mills, a far cry from the 19 or 20 or 21 mills that that member was part of, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've downloaded, we've downloaded tax savings to the people of the province.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to questions 1,032 through 1,047.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 1,032 through 1,047 are tabled.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Seventy-five minute debate. If I could have members' attention, it will just take us a moment till we get the clocks sorted out again.

Order. Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the members to come to attention so the Clerk can call the motion before the Assembly.

I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

### Financial Reporting

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on the debate. It's not necessarily my pleasure actually, Mr. Speaker, but I certainly do so with purpose and recognizing the importance of doing so when we look at the direction of our finances in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the complete lack of transparency that Saskatchewan people are being provided from a government that shrouds deals in secrecy and that isn't willing to test the deals it signs with the Saskatchewan public to ensure it's in their best interests. And that's disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

To test it in the best interest to make sure that those contracts, those tenders are in the best interest as it relates to efficiency and effectiveness of services, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that this government continues to report its finances in a manner that's inconsistent with public sector accounting standards, out of line with the rest of Canada and all other provinces, Mr. Speaker, and territories, and the Government of Canada I might say, Mr. Speaker, and that this government continues to report its finances in a way that doesn't depict the reality that's going on, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't provide the true picture. So the motion that we're speaking to here today, that I'll be moving at the end of the day is:

That this Assembly condemns the provincial government for its unwillingness to grant the public the transparency they desire and deserve, including when it comes to reporting the government's actual debt; and

That this Assembly urges the government to adopt public

sector accounting standards and begin reporting the provincial government's actual debt to the public, as opposed to its current practice.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to just start in on one aspect here, Mr. Speaker, and this is the aspect of public debt which Saskatchewan people, certainly business leaders across this province and individuals who observe the books are well aware, and the general public, Mr. Speaker, I will say are well aware, that this government is adding huge debt to our province's books, our public books. And certainly those people recognize that. They recognize it because certainly that's been a discussion in the public domain. But they recognize it as well because they read the budget books of this government, Mr. Speaker.

So what confuses the public and what frustrates the public is when they see taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker, being used to spin a message that is a distinct departure from reality, Mr. Speaker, and that the ads that in fact mislead the public, Mr. Speaker, and in fact use public dollars, taxpayers' dollars, people's own dollars, to carry forward a message that is incorrect, Mr. Speaker. I reference just one example of those: are the recent ads that are being played right now, Mr. Speaker, or for the last few weeks, outside of budget with taxpayers' dollars, authorized by this Sask Party caucus, Mr. Speaker, to try to allege a picture of debt paydown that's incorrect, Mr. Speaker, that's not true and that's debunked by the own books of this government, Mr. Speaker.

And what we know the reality is, now that the Sask Party put forward these ads and in fact used taxpayers' money to say that a certain amount of money had been paid down, well that number in fact is of course, Mr. Speaker, incorrect, not true, not the reality, Mr. Speaker. But not only that, Mr. Speaker. Those ads suggest that in fact debt has been paid down over the past few years and by this last budget. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we all know, and the members opposite all know. They can certainly, I guess, let their ads continue to mislead the public on this front with taxpayers' dollars, but the fact, Mr. Speaker, is within their own budget books, Mr. Speaker.

And Saskatchewan people recognize that in fact over the last three years, debt has been on the increase in a massive way in this province, Mr. Speaker, and at a time of prosperity, Mr. Speaker, with record highs in revenues, and that the trend, of course, has continued to this year, Mr. Speaker.

And so the Saskatchewan people are upset to see their ads being run with taxpayers' money to ads that are misleading and incorrect and not true, Mr. Speaker. But they're also disappointed to recognize the true state of our finances, understanding that this has huge consequences for Saskatchewan people, both now but well into the future, and ties the hands of future governments and reduces the prosperity that we should so enjoy, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the resource rich future of our Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now just to use the Sask Party's own budget documents, Mr. Speaker, I'll use the budget summary from 2011-12, and we'll go to page 60. This is a statement about debt, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes that government — and certainly I shouldn't say sometimes — that government pretends to be reducing debt,

Mr. Speaker. That's not correct. The ads that this government has run, Mr. Speaker, that suggest that debt has been paid down in this last budget are incorrect, Mr. Speaker. Those ads are misleading, not true.

It's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, that truth in advertising laws don't apply to this government, but it's unfortunate for Saskatchewan people who are feeling frustrated with a Premier and a government that are relentless in their attempt to suggest something that's different than the real circumstance, Mr. Speaker, particularly hiding something that comes at a direct consequence to Saskatchewan people.

So from the books of this government, from page 60 on the budget summary, I'll quote: "Public debt is forecast to increase by \$375.9 million during 2010-11 and increase by an additional \$485.3 million in 2011-12." Mr. Speaker, that's pretty crystal clear. Debt is on the increase this year and it's on the increase next year, Mr. Speaker.

When I move on to the next page, page 61, and I look at the trend line of this government and a chart that lays this out for Saskatchewan people . . . And Saskatchewan people recognize this; business leaders recognize this. And I don't know any more, Mr. Speaker, who this Premier thinks he's joking, who he's kidding, Mr. Speaker, when he suggests otherwise, but the debt's laid out here very crystal clear, Mr. Speaker.

In 2009 total debt as reported by this book is \$7.7 billion, so even by the Sask Party's own measure — they show the trend line out and into 2015 — we see total debt at \$10.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. This year alone we see it at \$8.4 billion. We know over the last three years we have incurred well over \$1.3 billion of increase to the total public debt of this province, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that this year alone, at a time of highs in revenues, that we're adding \$548 million to our books, all with reckless and irresponsible government, Mr. Speaker, and management, a government that lives for the now but not for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, that isn't taking care of needs of today nor is it planning for a future generation, Mr. Speaker.

I'll highlight specifically that the debt that we see increased is categorized in the area of Crown debt, Mr. Speaker. In fact we see a doubling of Crown debt. From roughly \$3 billion in 2009, we see that doubling to just over 6 billion in 2015. That's a 100 per cent increase, a doubling of debt, Mr. Speaker, and a real . . . That impact is felt by Saskatchewan people who are paying rates and the owners of those public utilities and Crown corporations, both now but well into the future.

It saddles families with consequences that they simply can't afford both now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the price of gas, whether we're talking at the pumps or the price of our utilities when we're talking power, and the whole array of cost of living increases that have been a huge burden brought upon Saskatchewan people by this government.

But when we look at that Crown debt, what's interesting about it is that we see this doubling of the Crown debt, this massive increase over this period of time. But we've seen the unsustainability of these budgets, Mr. Speaker, on display when this government has just been all too willing to drain all of the resources that our Crown corporations have and utilize those for

our operational budget, Mr. Speaker, a living-for-the-now kind of experience. Not only those dollars but our rainy day funds, Mr. Speaker, draining those off.

We've drained over \$1.7 billion from our Crown corporations, an unprecedented high for three years running of over \$500 million a year. Absolutely unsustainable. If we look specifically at *Sask Trends Monitor*, I quote, this is May 2010. This speaks of the dividend, Mr. Speaker, from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] and I quote, "The 217 per cent in 2009 and the proposed amount for 2010 are of course well above that average and unsustainable in the long term," Mr. Speaker, speaking of the risk that we experience, Mr. Speaker, with that kind of drain on our dollars.

I reference from SaskPower's annual report, Mr. Speaker, that we have this relentless pursuit of private power in this province without the measurement and transparency back to Saskatchewan people. And I read from a page here called, off balance sheet agreements, Mr. Speaker. And what it highlights here specifically is that the liabilities that are being created by private contracts, Mr. Speaker, grew from in 2009, \$7.5 billion to over \$11.7 billion, Mr. Speaker, just this year, two years later. That's a massive increase in private contracts that of course, Mr. Speaker, we understand are less efficient and that are less effective for Saskatchewan people, and a government that's saddling future generations and tying the hands of future generations in a real, living-for-the-now kind of a moment, Mr. Speaker.

We see that this province fails to comply with public sector accounting standards, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan New Democrats have an incredibly proud record of moving forward our fiscal well-being as a province but as well our reporting, Mr. Speaker. And this isn't something that remains static. And it's well past time, Mr. Speaker, for us to comply with reporting standards that are demanded and expected by public sector accounting standards, and that are complied by with every other province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And in not doing so puts this government in a position, as we've seen in the last few years, to exploit the fiscal tools available to them and to mislead the public, Mr. Speaker, as to the true state of our finances, Mr. Speaker, that are truly in a negative trend line and circumstance under this government.

[11:15]

We've had a very worthwhile Bill put forward by the member from Wakamow who's going to be speaking here today as well, Mr. Speaker, the kind of positive change that this, that's required in this province where people benefit, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, in this province and would allow us to understand the merits and the concern, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to contracts and tenders. Why that information shouldn't be public to the people of this Assembly, who can provide scrutiny and ensure risk is mitigated, Mr. Speaker, and the best interests of Saskatchewan people are served, it's beyond me why this government won't move in this direction.

But this occurs at a period of time where we have this government hiding debt, Mr. Speaker, making decisions that are not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people as it relates to long-term care, Mr. Speaker, private long-term care with

organizations taking on debt and us paying more, far more, through the long run and having less control over those services. We see that in health care, Mr. Speaker. We see it in these purchase power agreements, the private power of this province from our . . . taking away the most efficient and effective way we can deliver that through our publicly owned Crown corporation, owned by the people of this province for the benefit of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

We see the secrecy continue with 20-year leases, Mr. Speaker, to occupy the most expensive space in Regina, Mr. Speaker, to build new office space, but with no understanding from this government, Mr. Speaker, as to what that space will actually be utilized for, Mr. Speaker. At a time when they're shrinking the civil service, they're taking out this massive amount of space, Mr. Speaker, and not sharing those contracts with Saskatchewan people.

Why should we be concerned, Mr. Speaker? Well the examples are just too concerning to dismiss. We could look to this Parkridge example as a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker, as but one example where taxpayers, under the Devine administration, entered into a contract with a private entity to deliver long-term care. And instead of building that building ourself for, at the time, \$8.5 million, Mr. Speaker, they chose to enter into contract and to grease the wheel of the private sector, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of Saskatchewan people, both taxpayers but also as it relates to services, Mr. Speaker. And it relates to efficiency and effectiveness of being able to respond to the broader needs. It ties the hands of future generations.

But this Parkridge deal, Mr. Speaker, instead of paying \$8.5 million upfront, they tied the hands, entered into contract, Mr. Speaker, and that contract's now cost taxpayers over \$80 million, Mr. Speaker.

And as the Health minister said here today, his quote was déjà vu all over again, Mr. Speaker, and he is true. We see a repeat of the Devine debacle that I believe today the member from Nutana will be able to speak to very clearly. We see practices that bring us back into breach of the recommendations put forward by the Gass Commission that was authorized in 1992 to clean up the financial mess and clean up the circumstances of this province at a time where we were left as a fiscal basket case, Mr. Speaker, by the Devine administration. And to take us to the point of fiscal strength, Mr. Speaker, of continuous improvement, to see that all go by the wayside and decline is troubling for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

So we see the hiding of debt. We see the failure to comply with public sector accounting standards, and we see the fiscal trend line. One that is adding debt, Mr. Speaker, when they're pretending something else, Mr. Speaker, a massive adding of debt to the books of Saskatchewan people. We see just a simple, a fiscal shell game under this government, and we certainly don't see a true, real circumstance, Mr. Speaker, being shared with Saskatchewan people.

At this point in time I'm going to move my motion that's going to be debated here today:

That this Assembly condemn the provincial government for its unwillingness to grant the public the transparency

they desire and deserve, including when it comes to reporting the government's actual debt; and,

That this Assembly urges the government to adopt public sector accounting standards and begin reporting the provincial government's actual debt to the public, as opposed to its current practice.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my statements here for today, and I move this motion at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved:

That this Assembly condemns the provincial government for its unwillingness to grant the public the transparency they desire and deserve, including when it comes to reporting the government's actual debt; and,

That this Assembly urges the government to adopt public sector accounting standards and begin reporting the provincial government's actual debt to the public, as opposed to its current practice.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to enter into this debate that the member opposite put forward.

Mr. Speaker, it sometimes amazes me that members opposite will make statements and put forward motions that deal in only half of the information and only tell half of the story, Mr. Speaker. And what I intend to do, Mr. Speaker, is give the people of this province the rest of story, Mr. Speaker.

I have the budget document for this current budget in my hands, Mr. Speaker, and it is a document that is 100 pages long. It is filled with financial tables. It is filled with projections. It is filled with economic analysis, Mr. Speaker. And to the average citizen that doesn't have an accounting background or at least some experience with financial records and reading balance sheets and that sort of thing, it can be a pretty overwhelming document, Mr. Speaker. And it is difficult for the average citizen to really get the whole . . . all the information, the total story.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask the member from Regina Rosemont to allow the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood to respond to the debate before us. Order. I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But there are some tables in this document that I'd like to refer to that summarizes the financial picture of our province. Within the province there are . . . within government there are a number of ministries that provide services to the people of the province. In Saskatchewan we have a large Crown sector that the people of the province own, and all their financial numbers are distilled down and summarized in the budget document. And as I said, there are some summary pages that give the financial picture of our



province, Mr. Speaker. On page 80 there is a number of financial statements that give the summary of the financial picture of our province and then they go on into greater detail. But for the simple numbers, sort of a one-pager that people can understand, page 80 will provide at least some of that.

But before I go to those numbers, Mr. Speaker, I would like to perhaps explain the framework of a provincial budget and perhaps put it in context of a household. The provincial budget is not unlike a household budget except you add a whole lot more zeros. The numbers are much bigger. If you can imagine a family, Mr. Speaker, where you may have two or three family members earning income, working at various jobs and earning income, and all the money that those family members . . . get deposited into one bank account and that is the bank account that pays for the families' living costs. It buys their car. It pays for their vacations. It buys their big screen TV if they decide to do that. And we'll call that the family living budget.

Well at a provincial level, it's the General Revenue Fund. It's the fund that the province deposits all the money received in taxes and resource royalties, all those sorts of things. And from that bank account, from the GRF, the General Revenue Fund, the government then takes money to pay for health and education and roads and all those sorts of things.

Now if we take the same family, Mr. Speaker, and they also own a small business and within that business occasionally they take some money out of that business, because it is profitable in most years, to supplement their living costs and they say . . . And it's legitimate because they own assets and they require . . . It's only natural that they would assume that that business . . . They're working in that business, devoting some of their time and they require, assume that they should have a bit of return. And so they take a modest amount of money on an annual basis to supplement their living costs.

Well on the provincial basis, we have the Crown sector. And the people of the province own the Crowns and they have investment in the Crowns, large investments in the Crowns, and the Crowns provide services to the people of the province. And the Crowns are successful. They make money in most years, Mr. Speaker. And the people of the province says, well okay, if we own assets and they're doing well, can we not take out just a little bit of money that they make, some of, a little bit of the profit, and use it to fund education and health, Mr. Speaker?

So if we look at it in those terms, Mr. Speaker, and then we go back to the budget and we look at . . . As I said there on, page 80, there's sort of a summary document that tells the story of the General Revenue Fund. And this year's General Revenue Fund, the revenue is projected to be \$10.794 billion. Expenditures are projected to be \$10.679 billion, leaving a surplus of \$150 million. With that surplus then, the people of the province, through their duly elected government, will determine what they will do with it. This case, the government of the day, our government, decided that we should pay down some more General Revenue Fund debt to the tune of \$325 million.

Just for information purposes, when this government, the Sask Party government, became government in November of 2007, the general revenue debt was \$6.8 billion. Do you know what it is today, Mr. Speaker? After paying out an additional \$325

million in debt, it's 3.1 billion, Mr. Speaker. In less than four years, a phenomenal reduction in debt. And then the members opposite stand and say that this government is running up the debt of the province.

The only place that debt has increased in this province is in the Crown sector, and it is not debt. It is borrowing. It's an investment. Just like that family, if they need to grow their business, occasionally they need to, occasionally they need to borrow some money to buy some additional equipment or, in the case of a farm, to buy some more land. And it is self-sustaining debt, Mr. Speaker. Because the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, are managed well. They're profitable. And the members opposite, they laugh.

Well let's have a look here at what the budget document says. The member opposite quoted out of the budget document on page 60 and 62 and 61. And if you look at the chart that the member was referring to on page 61, you will see that the increase in debt is in the Crown sector, and that it's not a debt. It's an investment. It's borrowing, and it's self-sustaining, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

On page 62 of the budget document, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite failed to tell the people of the province, and I'll quote what it says, Mr. Speaker: "All 2011-12 borrowing requirements are for the purpose of Crown corporations." There is no borrowing for the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. It is an investment in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite know it.

And the member opposite stood in this House and said that we are not using generally accepted accounting principles. Well let's see what the Provincial Auditor had to say about that. For the record, Mr. Speaker, we are using the exact same methodology as those members used when they were in government to prepare a budget. We are using the same highly talented and knowledgeable Finance officials to prepare the budgets, Mr. Speaker. And what does the Provincial Auditor say about our accounting principles? Well I'll tell you what he said. I'll quote, and this is what the Provincial Auditor said: "I have audited the summary financial position . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I believe the member from Regina Rosemont was able to present his arguments without interference, and I would ask the member to allow the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood to do the same.

[11:30]

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll quickly start again. The auditor says this:

I have audited the summary financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan as of March 31st, 2010. In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly in all material matters the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan at March 31, 2010.

And he goes on to say that they are done with the generally

... in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Mr. Speaker, so when those members stand up and say that we are not using accepted accounting principles, Mr. Speaker, the auditor does not agree with them. And I will take the auditor's word over those members' word any day, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the short period of time that I have had to enter into this debate, I have given the people the rest of the story.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I had a bit of a plan in mind about the things I wanted to touch on, but the member that just spoke, I think he's kind of sidetracked this a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, I think more and more what sticks in my mind is ... And I go back to the election campaign and the commitment that this Saskatchewan Party made clearly to the people of the province, printed in their platform document, and it says, and I quote, "A Saskatchewan Party government will provide Saskatchewan people with more transparency and accountability than any previous government."

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing in this first three and a half years shows that this, that statement isn't worth the paper it's written on. And this government has time and time again buried facts, given half-truths and partial information to people across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable, and there needs to be some changes that are made.

And I want to quote from an article. When I was looking at the whole issue of transparency and accountable, this quote has stuck with me, Mr. Speaker. And it says:

Government accountability means that public officials — elected and un-elected — have an obligation to explain their decisions and actions to citizens. Government accountability is achieved through a variety of mechanisms — political, legal, and administrative — designed to prevent corruption and ensure that public officials remain answerable and accessible to the people they serve. In the absence of such mechanisms, corruption may thrive.

Mr. Speaker, "A transparent and accessible government is essential to a successful free society and fosters trust and confidence in government." And it goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that "a lack of government accountability and transparency undermines democracy and gives rise to cynicism and mistrust." And, Mr. Speaker, that is the basic element of our discussion today, that the transparency and accountability is lacking from this government.

And the explanations that we just heard from the member saying that Crown corporations borrowing debt is fine or acquiring debt is fine because that's an investment, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to think of an analogy that would look at this the same way that the member that just spoke did, and I'm hard pressed to find some type of a rational explanation. But I guess what people need to look at is that this

government has taken up to 90 per cent of the profits out of the Crown corporations.

Often when the Crowns paid a dividend to the shareholders — which is us, Mr. Speaker; we own the companies — and they would every year pay a dividend to the General Revenue Fund as their payment to the shareholders, the people of the province of Saskatchewan which contributed to health care, highways, education, all of the things that are important to Saskatchewan people. But, Mr. Speaker, there was a formula that was followed for dividends to be paid to the General Revenue Fund because as a business — and you know, the members opposite, they talk about being such wizards of business and understanding it all — there needs to be retained earnings in the Crown corporations so they are able to operate and continue to provide the services to the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, so here we are. They are peeling, they are peeling 90 per cent of the revenue out of the Crown corporations and expecting the Crown corporations to borrow money to maintain their business operations and improve business operations in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, on one level that is offensive. But on another level it is also offensive to the general taxpayer of this province because this government is happily spending the revenues from the Crown corporations, but ignoring the responsibility of the debt that has been created because of their actions. Mr. Speaker, you can't take credit for the revenue and not take responsibility for the debt. They go hand in hand, and they will end up being the responsibility of the people of this province. So, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I would ask the members now to allow the opposition member to make their arguments in the debate. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite also went on about the budget documents and how difficult they are to read and understand and taxpayers may not be able to understand them. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is an insult.

And there is a book, it is the Estimates book, and also a budget summary book which lays out in very clear language, some very clear graphs, and some concise numbers, the situation of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, citizens of this province should look at that book, and they should see that the debt for the province of Saskatchewan is increasing. And you know what? I don't care if it's general revenue, whether it's Crown corporations, whether it's government-owned . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, it's all government debt. And while the member may like to pick and chose, he's kind of

like that old milk horse. You know those old pictures where they used to wear the blinders down the street so they didn't get distracted by anything else? You know, the old milk wagon pictures? And there's that horse with his blinders on, walking down the street. Well that's kind of what the member's like, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't want to look at anything outside of what his tunnel vision allows him to see.

And, Mr. Speaker, he's not seeing the whole truth and that's what he needs to do because, Mr. Speaker, when it gets right down to it, there's one taxpayer. There's one taxpayer and we are it. And this government has a responsibility to be clear and open and transparent for those taxpayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Ed, he just takes a cheap shot and then heads out the door. You know if he wants to . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Member, order. Members know they're not to refer to the absence or presence of members. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Oh, okay. Well I apologize, Mr. Speaker. But I would recommend that if the minister wants to get into the debate, I'm sure there's an opportunity for him to get up and make his comments.

Mr. Speaker, this government, we can talk about what the accounting practices are. And I know there are recommendations that talk to public sector standards and what needs to be used, and on a regular basis, these are updated and refined and improved. And I also know that the province of Saskatchewan is the only province that does not use summary financial statements. Mr. Speaker. And summary financial statements include all of the debt of the Government of Saskatchewan, all of the debt that is a responsibility of the taxpayers of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would again refer people back to the budget summary document, page 61, which lays out some very clear graphs about how the debt, the responsibility of the taxpayers of this province — whether through utility rates, through government debt, whichever — but it's our responsibility how it's increasing over the next few years. And, Mr. Speaker, it's going up. And when we look at this chart, it is very clear. It is very easy to understand and, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't, I wouldn't venture to insult the people of the this province for not having a good grasp on the debt of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another area that is a huge concern is on page 61 of the budget summaries document, and it lays out the debt of the General Revenue Fund. Now this is the debt which the member opposite is referring to when he had his blinders on here, so he can't see the Crown debt or can't see government-owned debt. But the line on that chart says guaranteed debt. And it says the actual in 2010 is 17 million. Forecast in 2011 is 42 million, almost 43, and the estimated in 2012 is 91.3. Now that's guaranteed debt, Mr. Speaker. But we have seen a number of initiatives over the last few months that

have been, had the sunlight shone on them that are questionable, and whether the debt is actually being accounted for.

And, Mr. Speaker, a couple of issues pop to mind. The member has announced and withdrew and announced and withdrew funding for 13 long-term care facilities in rural Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, half of that money has been committed, almost half, but the rest of it has not. Half of the \$156 million has been committed. The rest is still nowhere. Nowhere. It's not in the budget. It doesn't show up at debt. It doesn't show up as a liability for the Government of Saskatchewan. It just doesn't . . .

**The Speaker:** — Member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now it's a real pleasure to stand in the Assembly today to speak on this topic, which I will not be supporting. This motion is about negativity and debt. So I would like to highlight the good initiatives in support of our government towards the people of this province and exactly what programs are available that our government is doing.

And I also want to take this time to show the public how the government cares for the people of Saskatchewan. The riding that I represent is Saskatchewan Rivers, and we have eight rural municipalities that I represent. When speaking to the reeves, they discovered that the past government was not listening to their voice, and so they are very happy with our government's initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, we had record crop insurance coverage and funding in the 2011-12 Agriculture budget, and this will help protect these Saskatchewan producers against the risks such as excess moisture that we had last summer and what we're experiencing probably today.

Now the Government of Saskatchewan has also increased its Agriculture budget by 32 million to 418 million in the 2011-12 budget. Now this is the second largest Agriculture budget ever announced in the province history, and I believe that that demonstrates this government's positive growth for supporting Saskatchewan livestock and agriculture producers. Now more than three-quarters of this year's budget will fully fund business risk management programs including Crop Insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest. And our government will be leaving more money in the hands of Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers by implementing phase 2 of its education property tax reduction plan, and this will reduce education property tax rates by 80 per cent on agriculture land compared to 2007. This year the mill rate will be reduced from 7.08 to 3.91 on agriculture land.

And our government will continue to provide funding for the Crown land sale program, the wildlife damage compensation program, the gopher control rebate program, irrigation infrastructure, the farm and ranch water infrastructure program, the farm business development initiative, and other programs to benefit producers.

Mr. Speaker, coming to work this morning, I ran into an old

friend from north of the Prince Albert area where I come from, and he works for SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management]. And I said, well what brings you to the city? And he said, well we were called in to help the flooding here with provincial disaster assistance program. And I said, well why were you called in? And he said, well my crew and I were called in to help, and we're going to help everywhere in Saskatchewan that we can. And I believe this is a very good example of the Saskatchewan way. We assist others in need, and it's a common sense example of going where you can be of service. And perhaps that's our Saskatchewan advantage — our sense of wanting to help other citizens in Saskatchewan.

[11:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan highways and transportation are very important to the residents of rural Saskatchewan as well as urban. And there was an investment of 556.2 million, and this brings a total transportation spending to 2.2 billion over four years. This year's Highways and Infrastructure budget will improve 14 kilometres of provincial highways, and this budget includes 285.3 million of capital construction. And I believe that's the largest capital investment in the province's history.

There was 54.6 million to support major, multi-year projects including, close to home where I come from, new lanes will be graded from north to Duck Lake to south of Macdowall, and opening new twin lanes on Highway 11 from south of Hague to north of Duck Lake and north and south of Macdowall. And all this brings traffic from the South for our tourism in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers.

As well there's continued work on the new St. Louis bridge, and this will improve the route on No. 2 Highway access into the city and flowing into Saskatchewan Rivers, where we do experience a lot of traffic for tourism in the beautiful Sask Rivers constituency. And I'm also pleased to say, because of this, 10 million for a new program to upgrade community and tourism access roads. And I believe details of this program, this particular program, will be released later this year.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the 2011-12 budget fulfills the second phase of the government education property tax reduction plan and 80 per cent on farm land, which is very important to the rural area and the farmers and ranchers that have spoken with me.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put some quotes on the record. During the budget time, I was speaking with Chief Guy Lonechild, but then I was reading in *The StarPhoenix*, and he said:

“This government has put its money where its mouth is,” said Guy Lonechild, chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. “This is an opportunity for us to start doing much needed work to roll up our sleeves and start improving educational outcomes for First Nations people . . . early childhood development, K to 12, and post-secondary education.”

Then I was doing further research and he also continued to say on CJME, “This is an important step forward. This budget

allows for this work to come in for the next 12 months so we are actually quite happy with it.”

And speaking with Mr. Lonechild, he did say he was very, very happy with working with the members of this government and in particular the First Nation cabinet minister.

Then I was talking with Dave Marit, and I read about a quote from Global TV that he said. And Dave Marit is with SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], as most of you know. He said, “For an average farmer in rural Saskatchewan with 10 quarters of farm land with an assessment of 300,000, he's going to see his taxes go from an average about 34, 3,500 down to about 1,300.”

And then when I was reading further with Dave Marit, SARM, from CTV Regina he said:

The big one we saw, of course, was the education property tax reduction. It's huge to our organization and to farmers and ranchers in rural Saskatchewan, so that's significant. The revenue-sharing piece that we saw going to a full 1 per cent by the province is very, very huge for rural municipalities.

There is a few more, but I see my time is very limited.

I'd also like to talk about tourism because it's such a significant industry in my constituency, and our Saskatchewan advantage budget has met with glowing approval by the tourism industry.

Sue Schigol belongs to the Tourism Saskatchewan's board Chair, and she does live in my riding, so I'd like to quote her: “The significance of tourism to the province's economic growth and employment has been recognized through commitments made in today's provincial budget.” Sue goes on to say, “Targeted support to highway infrastructure and provincial and regional parks demonstrates the government's understanding that tourism is a growing, viable sector and that investment will pay dividends.”

Mr. Speaker, with my work with the Ministry of Immigration, I can tell this Assembly that our immigration programs have definitely improved because of our Saskatchewan advancement budget, and that our government has made important advancements in improving net migration, both interprovincial and international. And our province's 14.7 million immigration budget includes 1.8 million in new funding for settlement and supports.

So I do believe that we are on course and that our government is making great strides for meeting the needs of people of Saskatchewan, both rural and urban. And I'm very proud of our government's accomplishments. So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well I rise today to enter into the 75-minute debate where we are basically condemning that provincial government for its unwillingness to grant the public the transparency that they

desire, including when it comes to reporting the government's actual debt.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2007 election campaign, those men and women over there promised the people of Saskatchewan that they would be the most open and transparent government in the history of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, I'd even heard them say, the history of the entire world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I got a little taste of that transparency when I submitted a request for information about the Amicus nursing home deal in Saskatoon. And what did this most transparent and open and accountable government do? Was this the most open and transparent government in the history of the globe, Mr. Speaker? Well I got 1,500 pages of blanks — 1,500 pages of blanks. Like, Mr. Speaker, it was this big. I still have it down in my office. Fifteen hundred pages of nothing, Mr. Speaker. So much for the most open and transparent government in the history of the globe.

And what do . . . I'll give you another example. Mr. Speaker, I submitted two written questions to the Minister of Government Services. I wanted to know — which I think is a reasonable question given that the government had purchased the Parkridge nursing home in Saskatoon after twenty-three and a half years of lease payments — I wanted to know, what did the Parkridge nursing home cost the people of our province? Because it had been built in 1986. It was a request for a developer to build it. The government, the taxpayers would lease it and purchase it, Mr. Speaker. And I wanted to know, what did that cost the people of Saskatchewan, so I put in two written answers. And the lovely member from Biggar, what did he do, Mr. Speaker? He stood up and told the Assembly, the most open and transparent member of the Assembly from Biggar — actually I was born in Biggar — Mr. Speaker, you know, this open and transparent member from Biggar, what did he do? He stood up in the Assembly and converted it, Mr. Speaker. He converted it. Now how is that open and transparent?

So, Mr. Speaker, I started going through public accounts to try and figure out what this Parkridge nursing home cost. And lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, I went into the estimates and I started asking the Minister of Government Services, and she said that they would see what they could do. Because they knew, I think they knew I was kind of on to them. You could go back through public accounts and figure it out, Mr. Speaker.

And what did we find out? We found out that this nursing home has cost the people of this province . . . Now remember it was built in 1986. It could have been built for maybe 8 million — I'm being very, very conservative here — \$8 million. It has cost the people of Saskatchewan \$60 million to lease and now buy that facility. And guess what? There are another \$20 million worth of renovations that need to be done which we, the taxpayers, will pay for.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we got another deal. And I go back to my 1,500 pages of nothing, the 1,500 pages of nothing. The 1,500 pages of nothing is about another nursing home deal. If the government wants to build nursing homes, then what you do is you cash finance them so that we all know what these things are going to cost.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know what's amazing? I listened to Stephen Harper's speech or his debate the other night, and he told the country that there are no corporate tax cuts this year. And, Mr. Speaker, Jack Layton and Mr. Ignatieff said that that was simply not true. But Stephen Harper said in the debate and he continued to say it, there were no corporate tax cuts.

Well you know, we've got a group of men and women here that tell us day in and day out and day in and day out that the province's debt is only . . . They said it in 2009-10. They say that the province's debt in that year was \$3.6 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is, it is . . . I can't use the L word, but it's simply untrue. It is not true. Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Provincial Auditor tells us that the actual public debt of the province was \$8.46 billion because they refused to include Crown corporation debt.

Well, Mr. Speaker, debt is debt is debt. And now what we have these guys doing is they're entering into all kinds of deals — 25-year leases — and they say, okay well that will be off budget; that will be off the books. But do you know what? We have to pay for it over the next 25 years. And, you know, I think my colleague has asked the Minister of Government Services, tell us what it costs for this 25-year deal down at the Hill tower where civil servants are going to move from existing space over to the Hill building. Obviously if I was the developer, I'd want a 25-year lease too. That makes absolute sense. But why did the rocket scientists over there think that they have to use taxpayers' money in order to help certain developers develop their buildings and have a return on their investment? I don't think it's prudent and I don't think, frankly, it is a good use of the people's money.

Now you know, as my colleague says, if you're going to brag about the revenues, then you need to brag about the expenditures and you need to know about the debt, Mr. Speaker. And you know, they've entered into a purchase power arrangement through SaskPower to all these private facilities.

Here's what the people of Saskatchewan need to know. They need to know that the North Battleford facility, which is Northland Power, the total cost of all power purchase agreements is expected to be — get this — 11.6 billion, billion dollars, billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, billion dollars, billion dollars. And you know the question is, why are we using the people's money on these kinds of deals when, if you simply built it yourself, you could save us money, Mr. Speaker? It's absolutely unbelievable.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that wilfully withholds the actual cost of its deficit. It says it's balanced the books, but we know that isn't true. We have a government that is obviously embarrassed by its actions because it keeps feeding the public about the debt, and it's simply wrong, Mr. Speaker. Debt in this province is going up and the citizens of our province need to know that.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, this government came to office promising the people of Saskatchewan that it was going to be the most open and transparent government in the history of the province, and I've heard some members over there say, the history of the

world. Well, Mr. Speaker, our debt is going up; it is not going down. And even, Mr. Speaker, we know that debt has been on the rise, and it's expected to climb much higher over the next four years. This is a government that is not open. It is not transparent. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, they've changed the rules.

You know what I learned the other day over in Education estimates? School boards are now going to go out and borrow their share of the money in order to build schools. So when the government says . . . Oh here's the other thing I learned: I learned that they've said over and over again, we're spending \$450 million on new school capital. Well what they didn't say . . . We have to drill down a bit; finally got them to admit that \$75 million was returned to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and in fact the answer is \$350 million. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? That money, for the most part, hasn't gone out the door yet. Those facilities haven't been built.

They take away a school board's ability to tax, and they're telling school boards now they changed the rules. They're now Treasury Board Crowns and they can borrow. School boards will now borrow their portion of the cost of that capital project. Well, Mr. Speaker, all that does is add to the debt of the province. That's \$150 million I'm estimating, \$150 million that school boards are going to have to go out and borrow, and it's going to add to the debt of the province.

And then we have these people . . . You know, we're back into the immigrant investor funds, and we're backstopping them. We're loan guaranteeing them. And what are they doing with those immigrant investor funds? They're giving them to the private developers.

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has elapsed. Order. Order. Why is the member from Athabasca on his feet?

**Mr. Belanger:** — To ask for leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're joined today by two special visitors from the Red Earth Cree Nation. In the east gallery is Harvey McKay and Robert Whitecap. And we were hoping that the chief would be here, Chief McKay, and so hopefully he will show up. And I'm planning on having lunch with them. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, very quickly in my Cree language, which is really important to many of the people that speak Cree, including our guests:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Again the language is: this is your House, this is our land, and you're more than welcome here. There's plenty of room for the

First Nations people.

And I want to say that my entire caucus all recognized these two fine folks when they walked in. So once again, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all the members to welcome some very special guests from Red Earth Cree Nation, Harvey McKay and Robert Whitecap.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Carrot River Valley is asking for leave to introduce guests as well. Is leave granted.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I also would like to welcome the members from Red Earth as it's up in the wonderful constituency of Carrot River Valley. And I'm sorry to hear about their flooding problem lately, and the government will be working hard at trying to help them out. So I would like the rest of the members of this Assembly to welcome to this Assembly.

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

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

#### Financial Reporting (continued)

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate today on this motion. You know, I kind of, I looked at the end of the motion and it says:

That this Assembly urges the government to adopt public sector accounting standards and begin reporting the provincial government's actual debt to the public, as opposed to its current practice.

Well these practices, Mr. Speaker, were done, were done for years by the previous administration, and all of a sudden now it's a terrible thing. So anyways, and I just want to put into the record again, as the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood already put in there, a quote from the Acting Provincial Auditor. And it says, and I quote:

I have audited the summary statement, the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan as at March 31st, 2010. In my opinion these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan as of March 31st, 2010, and the results of its operations. The changes in its net debt and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know this is what has been done. It's proper accounting procedures. But I'll tell you what. The member from Regina Rosemont keeps on putting spin on this. Every day he stands up in the House presenting petitions which he said are signed by the grand total of maybe five people, which he claims this government is running this province into the hole and is just doing a . . . [inaudible] . . . job, Mr. Speaker, of our finances.

You know, when I say spin it reminds me of a top, and I think this top's getting a little wobbly, Mr. Speaker. Like I mean really, what he does is he's got dear leader pulling that string on that top to get it to spin. And he gets talking about transparency, and that takes me back to the first part of the motion, "That this Assembly condemns the provincial government for its unwillingness to grant the public the transparency they desire and deserve."

Now I would like to talk just a little bit about transparency. Where did this spin go? Where did this spin go? Where was it when the \$35 million was hidden for six years, was hidden from this Assembly for six years? SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], where did that go? Where was the transparency on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker? Where was the transparency? Where was the transparency on Murdoch Carriere, Mr. Speaker? What kind of transparency was that?

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on on the various different things on the business, the great business failures that that government when they were in power had. Tapped into at 6.7 million; Persona, 9.4; Navigata, 43.4 — these are all at millions of dollars — Retx.com, 26 million; Craig Wireless, 10 million. It goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. How many different things that they had absolutely no transparency. They actually wanted to hide it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know by 2007, the people of Saskatchewan decided they had seen this top and it was wobbling way too much. And they decided enough already; let's have a change.

You know, this government is about transparency.

**An Hon. Member:** — Oh, ouch.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Yes it is. It is not an ouch. It is great on transparency. Well a good example is in our stabilization fund. Like I mean, we're not pulling the NDP trick of robbing Peter to pay Paul, working on a credit card so to speak, to try and help doing the accounting of the government's money. You know, we have a rainy day fund that honestly, actually has real money in it, not just a credit card.

Now I have to admit that the member from Regina Rosemont wasn't there in those days, but you know dear leader was. And he was pulling hard on that string to try and spin the top as fast as possible. Mr. Speaker, but all of a sudden he saw the top wobbling, so he pulled the pin and he went to Alberta, taking a hit off of some Nexen oil with him. Oh and we know about the transparency in that deal don't we, Mr. Speaker? Ah the great, the NDP is great on transparency.

And speaking, and speaking of dear leader, when he goes up north and talks to the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation, he forgets about, he forgets about his issue on royalties. He only mentions potash, but he forgot about uranium up there. But yet when he comes back down here, when he comes back down to southern Saskatchewan, he wants to review the royalties on potash, uranium, oil, and gas.

He wants to drive this province into being a have-not province

again. He wants to have this job-killing monster out there. And for the life of me, I can't, I can't understand why when we're sitting here being a have province after years and years under the NDP of being a have-not province. And all they can do is sit there and say, well we still want equalization. That's how they figured that they would pay, pay for all the promises that they've been making lately. If they were to come into government, one of the things was, is they thought they could go get equalization. Well isn't this great? In other words, they're trying to say they want to make us back into a have-not province.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are doing well in this province. We are transparent, and we are showing the people of this province what transparency is really about. We do not go around hiding things like the previous administration. We are moving this province forward. This is the Saskatchewan advantage.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my time is starting to run out. But it's, I just have to say, this is a great province. I'm proud to live in it. I'm also proud to represent the people of Carrot River Valley. The member from Regina Rosemont, his talk is running out of steam. It's slowing down. It's about to fall over and spin off the table. You know something, Mr. Speaker? Come this next November the 7th, I don't think their leader is going to be there to put the string back on and give that top another spin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — We will now enter the 10-minute question period. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party has wasted taxpayers' dollars, public money on ads that aren't true, aren't factual, aren't correct, Mr. Speaker. They suggest that debt's being paid down. Of course all members in this Assembly know that's not the case. And they reference their own book right here, Mr. Speaker, to say that debt is massively on the rise under this government.

I guess my question would be to the member from Sask Rivers: how does she defend running ads with her own constituents' hard-earned tax dollars that are incorrect, not true, that are not factual and misleading the public, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member opposite for the very valuable question. When our government came into office in 2007, there was a 6.8 billion GRF debt. Now we've paid it down annually, and now after this Saskatchewan advantage budget, the GRF debt now stands at 3.8 billion. So in three and a half years, we have paid down the GRF debt by \$3 billion.

So further to that, we are saving Saskatchewan people more than \$600 million in interest costs over four years, money that can be used to improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents. And debt reduction means lower interest costs and more money to pay for infrastructure and important government services such as health care and education. So, Mr. Speaker, I do believe our . . .

**The Speaker:** — Member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP's record in government placed a tremendous burden on the people of this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when their leader was in government, he raised the PST three times. He raised income tax twice. He raised business taxes four times and raised fuel taxes twice.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: what measures did her leader take to be transparent with the people of this province when he implemented 11 tax increases which placed a great economic burden to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1991 when the NDP came to government, we were faced with over a \$15 billion deficit. I can tell the member opposite the 1999 election campaign, the NDP under Roy Romanow ran on a — because we were starting to get our fiscal house in order — ran on a record to cut personal income taxes by \$1,000 per household, Mr. Speaker, and that was a policy that was implemented.

[12:15]

In 2002, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh we absolutely did. And we redesigned the income tax system which they have not changed. Mr. Speaker, in 2003 we said we were going to reduce corporate capital tax, corporate income tax, the small-business tax, and renew the royalty structure in the province, and that's exactly what we did. And our record is causing the record growth in this province.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, quite simply, a question for the member from Saskatchewan Rivers. Why on earth did this government run on a platform of being the most transparent government in the history of Saskatchewan and then refuse and ignore that promise when it came to being accountable to Saskatchewan taxpayers?

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has reduced the debt by 44 per cent since we took office. Debt reduction is not a lofty accounting principle, it means lower interests costs and more money to pay for important government services in Saskatchewan. Our government has cut the small-business tax rate by more than half, from 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent, and education property taxes on farm land, residential, and commercial property are further being reduced by 55.6 million.

Not only has our government reduced GRF debt since 2007, but our government has reduced the amount you pay in education property taxes, the largest ever property tax cuts in Saskatchewan history. So I believe in our government, and we

do care for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite believe that our budget is different than other provinces across the country. Mr. Speaker, they are right. The Saskatchewan advantage budget is different. Our budget is the one and only one in Canada that is balanced. As CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] reporter Stefani Langenegger said, "This is a real balanced budget. Even the auditor would agree."

The members opposite may want to smear our province's reputation by attempting to discredit our accounting principles. But our government believes in the Provincial Auditor's ability and will stand by his work.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: why do you and your party want to damage Saskatchewan's reputation as one of the most fiscally stable and economically strong jurisdictions in Canada, simply for your own political gains?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to take that question, Mr. Speaker, and to correct the record, Mr. Speaker.

The Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan has made recommendations annually and he's done so in the 2010 volume 2 report, Mr. Speaker, calling for compliance with public sector accounting standards, recognizing that Saskatchewan is out of line with all of the provinces, the territories, and the Government of Canada.

Further to the member's foolish suggestion that this budget is balanced, what we don't have in that budget: we don't have teachers' contracts; we don't have . . . which is upwards of \$100 million; we don't have many other aspects such as the flood damage we see to our highways; we don't see the long-term care projects, Mr. Speaker. And what we recognize is that debt is on the rise, Mr. Speaker.

What we need in this province is to comply with the Provincial Auditor's report, and what we'd be well-served by is a backbench with a backbone, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I just listened very carefully to what the member from Sask Rivers told this Assembly. She told this Assembly that her government has reduced debt by 40 per cent. Then my question to the minister or to the member is this: when you say you've reduced debt by 40 per cent, are you including Crown corporation debt and General Revenue Fund debt, or are you just referring to General Revenue Fund debt?

Mr. Speaker, we have to look at this in its entirety and I would argue very carefully . . . I know the House Leader has the answer for her. She is capable of answering the question, Mr. Speaker. We don't need Mr. House Leader to answer it for her.



Mr. Speaker, is she referring only to the GRF debt?

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I specifically said GRF debt. However I would also like to put on record, if you would allow me a moment to quote our province's Acting Provincial Auditor, "I have audited the summary statement of the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan and, in my opinion, its Canadian generally accepted accounting principles . . ."

Thank you.

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

**Ms. Tell:** — The Acting Provincial Auditor's report states, and I quote: "I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards." And his final statement is this:

In my opinion [in his opinion] these financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan as of March 31, 2010. And the results of its operations, the changes in its net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

To the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow: why does your party think that they know more about accounting principles than the Acting Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan?

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, it has nothing to do with the debate over the Provincial Auditor or the Acting Provincial Auditor. It's how this government actually reports debt and reports to this Assembly and in the media to the taxpayers of the province.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at, if you look by the government's own reports today in the province of Saskatchewan, for every man, woman, and child there is \$6,000 in debt on every man, woman, and child. In four years, by the member's own budget, that debt will be \$9,000 on every man, woman, and child.

Mr. Speaker, you're inaccurate. You're looking at it like an old milk horse with blinders on, Mr. Speaker, and ignoring all of the debt that you're creating.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite want to look at the general revenue debt and Crown corporation debt as different. A simple question to the member from Sask Rivers: if you buy a new tractor on your farm and you have to borrow 50,000 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The time has elapsed on the 75-minute debate. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Furber:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Furber:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce some guests in the Assembly. With us today are some folks from the PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] and the Red Earth First Nation. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery are: Ian McKay, chief of the Red Earth First Nation; Barry McKay who's a councillor at Red Earth; Roy Head who is the emergency coordinator at the First Nation; and Richard Kent who is the commissioner, emergency and protective services, for the PAGC or the P.A. Grand Council, Mr. Speaker.

And I do want to add this in my introduction. I'm hopeful that the work that they're doing on their First Nation with respect to flooding is going to protect their citizens. We certainly, in this Assembly, are unified in our prayers of support for your First Nation.

And certainly the opposition in Saskatchewan supports your call for some permanent, long-term solutions to your flooding problems because we know full well that this is an issue that is ongoing for you. So thank you for being here today and best of luck in your ongoing efforts with respect to flooding. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — To make an introduction, 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.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the Assembly for this. I really appreciate the people coming from Red Earth coming down here today and discussing their problems with their flooding. I know that they've had problems before, Mr. Speaker, and I know that this government will work hard at trying to alleviate some of the problems. And it is a continuing problem up there, Mr. Speaker. And I certainly appreciate them and thank them for coming down to this Assembly today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar. Order.

Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — To introduce guests.

**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:** — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take a moment to recognize in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, five individuals that work in the Sask Party caucus office, Mr. Speaker, observing proceedings here today. I welcome them to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Of course these are funded by the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that that total bill would add up to about \$300,000 a year and I suspect sometimes sitting up there they must get a little bit frustrated, Mr. . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order, Order, Order. Order. I would just ask the member to introduce the guests and not get into debate. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I would just simply in closing . . . Certainly all members and all staff of this Assembly work incredibly hard. Maybe not at this very moment, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to wish all individuals a great Easter weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Why is the member from Yorkton on his feet?

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to introduce the five hard-working caucus members that came down to listen to debate on their lunch hour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 1 — Responses to Provincial Emergencies

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Ottenbreit.]

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be

given the opportunity to speak to the main motion that was moved by the member from Yorkton. And I'd like to read the motion into the record again, because it's very important. It says:

That this Assembly recognize the dutiful efforts of the many volunteers, organizations, and different levels of government's swift response to the emergency situations of this past summer, as well as our continued efforts to enhance and expand the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program to the benefit of those who must rebuild their lives after the disastrous flooding of 2010.

And it's very relevant that when this disasters happen, as our guests in the legislature from Red Earth Reserve is experiencing right now, that these disasters affect real people and their homes may be lost or they're out of their homes for a long time before the disaster is, some of the problems are mitigated and looked after.

So I'd just like to take this opportunity to wish all the people who had problems in the last year, last year and this year, all the best in the future. Our government certainly is there to help them in any way that we can. And I'm going to take this opportunity to explain some of the things that we've done, as far as a government, to help people in a time of crisis.

But I like to start out by thanking the member from Wood River who is the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. He and his officials and the civil service in that ministry has done great work throughout the last two years, helping people with the application process and all those necessary things that have to happen to get money into the hands of people after a disaster has taken place.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, last year some of the worst flooding took place in Yorkton, Maple Creek, but it also took place in North Battleford, Saskatoon, many rural areas, and of course we see that there's flooding taking place again this year. And we certainly wish all those folks all the best, and we are here to help them.

Mr. Speaker, in my own constituency we didn't have a serious amount of flooding, but we've had some. We've been very fortunate that we haven't had a lot more, but the towns of Asquith and Langham and the villages of Borden and Perdue will be sharing funding from the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority totalling nearly \$6,000. And that's just in my constituency.

During the Easter break, I'm going to be touring my constituency and stopping by and visiting all the RM [rural municipality] council offices and the villages and town offices just to get a first-hand read of any problems in the constituency and offer any assistance that I may have to offer and our ministry and government can offer, some of the things that we've done. I look back — how many years? — five, six years ago when Langham had a lot of flooding. And they called me out and the issues that they had was it took a year and a half to two years to get payment for the disaster that they incurred.

[12:30]

And certainly, certainly our government has taken many initiatives to address that slowness in processing applications because these people need money. In many cases they're out of their homes and their businesses are affected. And some of the changes that the claimants received, how they received faster payments . . . We changed, made changes to the provincial disaster assistance program or PDAP that will significantly reduce the amount of time claimants wait for their claim to be processed as program staff work towards processing the remaining 2010 PDAP claims more quickly.

Now PDAP has received more than 5,900 claims related to flooding in 2010, more than double the previous record number of claims set in the 2005-06 fiscal year. To date more than 14.5 million has been paid out, 3,900 claimants have received portions of their overall payment, and approximately 1,100 files have been closed in their entirety. PDAP's staff are working to complete the remaining claims as quickly as possible in preparation for 2011 claims resulting from, obviously, spring flooding that's taking place. And to do so, PDAP will add 30 additional temporary staff to process claims, either from within government or from new hirings. As well, PDAP staff will begin working in two separate shifts, six days a week. Officials will also adjust claims based on the relative size and other streamlining processes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, not only people have had flooding problems with houses and businesses in the commercial side, but also the agriculture sector has had considerable flooding as well. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to point out some of the . . . With partnership with the federal government, we have made \$360 million available to Saskatchewan farmers through the excess moisture program in 2010 and for land that we're unable to seed due to excess moisture and land that was seeded and flooded out totally.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we introduced the Saskatchewan feed and forage program to assist livestock and forage producers, \$30 a tonne to help producers affected by excess moisture purchase additional feed, and funding to help with the transportation of feed and moving livestock to alternative feeding locations, and also \$30 an acre to help producers reseed hay, forage, and pasture land affected by excessive moisture. And, Mr. Speaker, there's other very important initiatives that we have taken.

But I want to point to one thing in particular. And our Premier and our minister responsible for PDAP and our government made the decision when we see that there was going to be a lot more flooding taking place this spring, we committed \$22 million to assist flood victims and to help with their . . . mitigate some of the problems relating around to flooding. The RMs and communities took up that offer. We soon realized that \$22 million wasn't anywhere near enough to address the problems out there and the expanse of concerns in the province. And so we're estimating that there's going to be another \$30 million needed to go out to Saskatchewan people and municipalities to help mitigate the flooding concerns. So that's, you know, nearing \$50 million that our government has committed to that process.

And I know, talking to other MLAs that have been in the constituencies, that there has been a lot of culverts that's been

. . . concerns with culverts being frozen and they've been, that issue's been mitigated and it has helped reduce the flooding and the washouts of roads around the province. And there's many other areas that that money has gone into and will continue to flow. And we're committed to helping with the minimum of \$50 million.

Also the Premier made it very clear that we did commit to \$22 million but it didn't matter; whatever the cost was going to be incurred, we are prepared to have the money available to help in mitigating flooding problems in Saskatchewan this spring. And it just speaks to our Premier who certainly made that decision. And it was certainly well received in caucus and in cabinet that our government, you know, spend the money now to help alleviate any flooding problems. And as we always have in this government, we've been there for people in the province when needed.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know this isn't about the budget, but at the end of the day we have that extra \$30 million in the coffers to help people. And the only way you have money is to have a growing economy and a good future and businesses and people working in this province and businesses creating jobs. And so with our tax policies and reducing debt and reducing the amount of interest paid on debt, we have been able to have extra money for disaster relief.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just would . . . I'm glad I've had the opportunity to speak to this file, and it's such a very important one. You know, you don't expect disasters to happen, but when they do, people need help; municipalities need help; farmers need help. And we have been there to help them through this disaster, and we'll continue to be there in the future. So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I trust members will enjoy their time with family over this Easter break. And this Assembly stands adjourned until May the 2nd at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:37.]

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