



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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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

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Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
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Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
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Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to be able to introduce to you and then through you to all members of the Assembly a special guest that's joined us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce and welcome Her Excellency, Sheila Sealy Monteith. She is the High Commissioner of Jamaica in Canada. She's with us today obviously in your gallery as part of her official visit to the province of Saskatchewan. We welcome that visit.

Ms. Sealy Monteith has served her government for 24 years with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, and in doing so, she's become an expert in the formulation, implementation, and management of foreign policy for her country, Mr. Speaker. Throughout her career she has spent six years in the permanent mission of Jamaica to the United Nations in New York, two years with the Embassy of Jamaica in Venezuela, another six years as director in charge of international organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in Kingston, Jamaica. It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that she brings a wealth of experience to her position as the High Commissioner of Jamaica in Canada and to this official visit to our province. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members in the Assembly, on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan we welcome Her Excellency here today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming Her Excellency, Sheila Sealy Monteith from Jamaica here to the Assembly. I had the privilege of visiting Jamaica for the first time ever in January of this year, and it's a beautiful country and hope to return again soon. But welcome to Saskatchewan and all the success in your visit. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to make an extended introduction, please.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave's been granted. I recognize the minister.

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

Speaker, I am very pleased today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two guests who are seated in your gallery. With us this morning are Shirley and Larry Schneider who I know will need little introduction to most of us as they have both been extremely active in many areas of public life.

Larry has served his city and his country in so many ways as a businessman, as the mayor of Regina, a Member of Parliament, a minister of Western Economic Development, and as well as Chair of the Regina Airport Authority, as the honorary consul of Mexico, and most recently as the honorary colonel for the 10th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery.

Shirley has just finished co-chairing the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Charity Ball which took place last Saturday here in Regina. And, Mr. Speaker, it was my great pleasure to be one of the 400 or so people in attendance. She chaired the event on behalf of the Mackenzie Infant Care Centre, an organization that she helped to establish in 1986. The centre was established as a home for the special tutorial program at Balfour Collegiate which was created in 1972 to give young teenage moms the opportunity to complete their high school education.

The program is now in its 39th year of operation, Mr. Speaker, and in fact it's the longest continually running centre of its kind in Canada. It will graduate 20 students again this June. This past February, it was renamed the Shirley Schneider Support Centre in honour of Ms. Schneider's dedication for so many years to this worthy program. Over the years the centre has provided guidance and counselling to young moms and given professional care to hundreds of infants who got a better start in life because they were fortunate enough to be there.

In the two years that the Mackenzie Infant Care Centre was the charity recipient, the RCMP gala has raised \$300,000 for the organization, which of course is a tremendous support for them and helps to ensure that they can continue to provide this much needed service in our city. Please join me in welcoming Shirley and Larry to their legislature and in thanking them for their amazing contributions to their community, to their province, and to their country.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these two distinguished individuals and community leaders to their Assembly here today. Mr. Larry Schneider certainly served in many capacities in our community and still continues to this day. And Ms. Shirley Schneider, who the minister highlighted some of her efforts, but they go a long ways to improving the lives of many young people in our community as it relates to the Mackenzie Infant Care Centre.

It was my pleasure for my wife and I to join the Schneiders at the RCMP Charity Ball this past weekend, and I simply commend Shirley and her committee for the exceptional work that they put together to deliver this important fundraiser. It was a fantastic evening and the dollars go to a great cause. An

impressive amount of money that they have raised over these last two charity balls that we've had the pleasure of attending — I believe over \$300,000 and not without an awful lot of hard work. I know that because my mother-in-law also sits on that board and works alongside Shirley and speaks so highly of Shirley Schneider. So I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming the Schneiders to their Assembly and thanking them for their contributions to our city and our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, while still on my feet I'd like to introduce, seated in your gallery, Jaime Garcia who's a candidate for the NDP [New Democratic Party] in Regina Coronation Park. Jaime is an individual who dedicates himself to the betterment of others and improving the community around him in all aspects through his work, through his focus on working people and the wellness of families. I know as a candidate he's held even forums, Mr. Speaker, community forums as it relates to affordable housing, recognizing how important it is for young families and for seniors to have the dignity of a place to live, raise their family with a quality of life and a place for which they can afford.

Jaime and his family are dedicated to the community, dedicated to the cause of running as the candidate in Regina Coronation Park. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, the people of Regina Coronation Park would be incredibly well served with the service of Jaime Garcia. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming Jaime Garcia to his Assembly here today.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And with your endurance, I've got three introductions to do. First and foremost is a class, a grade 12 class from A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, 24 students. And I want to acknowledge their teacher, Carrie Kiefer, along with the chaperones, Kathie Berry and Alma Kaus.

I want to say a few words about the teacher, Carrie Kiefer. Carrie has been very diligent in bringing the grade 12 class here every year. And I'm glad they're here today because one more day, they would have missed it. But she takes this very seriously about teaching the students on the parliamentary system as it is in the legislature and brings them every year. So we're very pleased to see them here, and I'd ask all members to welcome the A.E. Peacock Collegiate.

Mr. Speaker, also in your gallery, in your gallery is a couple of friends of mine and good citizens of Moose Jaw, Greg Lawrence. Greg is a customer service technician with SaskTel in Moose Jaw. He serves as the vice-president of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Local 3. Greg's involved with the community as he teaches martial arts at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. He also serves as the president of the Southern Plains Métis Local 160. He recently served as the military reserve as the deputy commanding officer of No. 40 Royal Canadian Air Cadets in Moose Jaw.

Greg is particularly impressed by the Saskatchewan Party government's commitment to the Métis people in Saskatchewan in 2010 when we declared the year as the Year of the Métis in Saskatchewan. He is the Saskatchewan Party candidate for Moose Jaw Wakamow and he's looking forward to being here in the next session on this side of the House. So please welcome Greg Lawrence.

Also, Mr. Speaker . . . Thank you. With Greg is his son Ryan. Ryan is the president of the Métis Youth Drug and Heritage Patrol, where they have put together two drug- and alcohol-free concerts, a program that started the SADD [Students Against Drinking and Driving] program in the Riverview Collegiate in Moose Jaw.

Ryan has been involved with the leadership of the air cadet squadron for the past three years, and this year has achieved the highest ranking officer as a warrant officer first class. Through air cadets, Ryan has achieved two highest scholarships: his glider licence and his private power licence in air traffic. Ryan has also done some mentoring for less fortunate youth in Moose Jaw for the past two years. He is also the captain of the football team for the last two years and a honour roll at Vanier Collegiate. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome Ryan and his dad, Greg.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Moose Jaw North in welcoming Peacock Collegiate, the 24 grade 12 students, their teacher, and chaperones to the legislature. It is very commendable that the teacher is dedicated in bringing the class each year to view the legislature and to impress upon these young people that democracy and what happens in this Assembly is very important to you, not only now, but in the future. So thank you very much for your participation, and a warm welcome.

And also while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome Greg Lawrence and his son Ryan to the Assembly. I know Greg is the nominated candidate in Moose Jaw Wakamow for the Saskatchewan Party. And I truly hope that he enjoys his seat from the visitor's gallery because that's precisely where I intend to keep him, Mr. Speaker. Welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena, the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I want to introduce four people today who are very important to me in the Speaker's gallery. I'm going to start with my oldest son, Tim. Tim is on the management team at Doepker Industries. My wonderful daughter-in-law Pattie. Pattie is a public health nurse in Melfort. And then, my second oldest grandson, Grant. Grant is here today to see the, spend his day with us because this is probably the last day that he'll have both of his grandparents sitting in the legislature.

I don't know how many people knew that Pattie is the daughter of the member from Melfort. And so politics has been

especially kind to the member from Melfort and I because we not only have enjoyed a great political career, but we have a wonderful family because of that. And with them today is Carole Gantfoer, who is a very special friend of ours as well. And I want to ask everybody to please welcome this family that I love dearly to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Minister of Social Services in welcoming the family to the legislature. I especially want to welcome Carole. And you'll note, colleagues, that I didn't say current wife. I will pay for that forever I am sure in this Assembly. But it's great to have you here. Thanks for coming.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly a grade . . . actually not a grade — an English as an additional language class from Holy Cross High School in the constituency of Eastview. There's 47 students up in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, accompanied by their teachers, Rita Wolfe and Yvonne Musey Johnson, and educational assistants, Maureen Bzdel and Sheila Kohle. I would very much like to welcome . . . They were going to leave at quarter after, so we just get this in in time. So welcome to the Assembly, and I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a long-time friend of mine who is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. That's Mr. Terry Martin from Parkside. He's here to visit with us today.

Terry and myself first met many years ago, much longer than we both care to remember, back in university when we were students at the College of Agriculture. We maintained a friendship throughout these years. Terry spent his working career in Winnipeg in the ag industry, but he's retired from that position and has become a world traveller, Mr. Speaker. I won't hear from him for quite some time and then he'll call and he'll tell me about his trip to Antarctica or up the Amazon River and those sorts of things. He has friends all across the world.

But his latest passion, Mr. Speaker, he's devoted his time, and not only his time but his resources, to a charity that's based in Vancouver, and this charity provides nutrition to malnourished children in North Korea. And as part of that effort, Mr. Speaker, he was here in Regina and met with a Korean congregation last night to inform them of the good work that this charity, First Steps, is doing. And I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that about a year ago at this time, as part of his work with First Steps, he visited North Korea with the executive director and he tells me that their organization, First Steps, is currently feeding 80,000 malnourished children on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. So I'd encourage all members, or ask all members to welcome Terry to his legislature.

[10:15]

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to join the member for Rosemont in welcoming Jaime Garcia, but more today . . . I did that more formally yesterday than I intend to today. Today I wanted to particularly note Rick Pollard in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Rick is my constituency assistant and just does a terrific job on behalf of not only myself but the people of Regina Coronation Park. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming my constituency assistant, Rick Pollard, to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the Minister Responsible for Government Services.

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this honourable Assembly Mr. Mark Docherty, the Saskatchewan Party candidate for Regina Coronation Park. Mr. Docherty is a proud alumni member of the University of Regina where he earned three degrees including a Bachelor of Science, a Bachelor of Human Justice, and a Master of Social Work. Mark is very involved in his community. He currently sits on the board of Street Culture Kidz Project Inc., and has also served on the board of North Central Community Association. Mark is deeply committed to representing Regina Coronation Park in the provincial election, provincial Legislative Assembly. We want to welcome Mark to this wonderful Assembly. We also want to wish him happy birthday. My understanding is that Mark is celebrating his 50th birthday. So I wish all members to join with me in welcoming him to this Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce, to you and through you, Richard and Joanne Lepp and Patricia Fraser. These three individuals are proud representatives from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley constituency. Along with them, with Richard, Joanne, and Patricia, is Murray. These four members are from the House of Prayer, and they sit here day in, day out, providing strong counsel to both sides of the House. So I would wish each and every one of us here to show them our appreciation for their strong counsel here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the tradition of the NDP, Mr. Speaker, we leave no one behind. So in your gallery, sitting with Jaime and Rick, is Eric Anderson who does my member's statements, Mr. Speaker. And I wanted to welcome him to the Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if I may, to you and through you to members of the Assembly, also join with members who have welcomed a very special family that's seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, to Tim and Pattie and Grant, and especially to Carole, we want to welcome them here again to the Assembly.

We want to very specifically for this family thank them for sharing not just one but two MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] with the province of Saskatchewan. We know that there's a sacrifice that families make for all of us to serve. And this family has made a sacrifice in the case of two parents and two grandparents. And so we want to thank them for that.

We especially want to acknowledge the fact that they're going to be getting one of those MLAs back, but we want to thank them especially for sharing the member for Melfort with this Assembly and with the province of Saskatchewan for such a very long time. We extend that especially to you, Carole. Thank you very much. And if it's any solace, you can, for today at least, refer to your husband as the current MLA for Melfort.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave's been granted. I recognize the member.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, through you, and to all members of the gallery, someone that is no stranger to the legislature by any means. And she is seated in the third row. Her name is Shaheen Lotun.

And Shaheen began — I just want to give you a little bit of background — Shaheen began a Bachelor of Arts degree program in 2004 with a major in political science and a minor in indigenous studies. Her honours thesis focused on women's political engagement in the Middle East. She convocated with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in 2009.

In 2006 Shaheen was one of five Canadians selected to participate in the 2006 Canada-Washington Parliamentary Internship Program in Washington, DC [District of Columbia]. And this program was sponsored through the Senate of Canada. She was placed as a public policy intern with a government relations firm. Her position entailed writing for the firm's weekly newsletter and attending Senate and congressional hearings on behalf of the firm's clients. Also in 2006 Shaheen was employed as a research assistant with the Saskatchewan Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. This position provided an opportunity for her to be selected to represent Canada as a youth delegate to the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Capetown, South Africa.

Entirely in love with the African continent at this point, Shaheen took a volunteer position during the summer of 2007 with a student-operated and -managed non-government organization in the Iganga District in eastern Uganda. With a small team of volunteers from Uganda and the United States, she helped to deliver public health and education programming

in small towns and rural areas. And Shaheen's volunteer activities, Mr. Speaker, go on and on. The list is long and she's still actively involved.

During the fall of 2009 and spring of 2010, Shaheen served as a legislative Page for the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, where we all got to know her very well. Following completion of these duties, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree program in African studies at Carleton University. She is interrupting these studies to participate in the 2011 Saskatchewan legislative internship program, which is what she's participating in in the legislature at this moment, Mr. Speaker.

I was very fortunate to have Shaheen select me as an MLA to work with, Mr. Speaker, and it's been an absolute phenomenal relationship so far. We started working together on approximately April 15th. She has done amazing research for me on some of the Bills that came before the House, as well as other tasks that I've assigned her. She's currently doing some research for me on renewable energy projects that are taking place across the country and elsewhere, and I look forward to working with her for the next two months.

So I'd ask all my colleagues in the legislature to welcome Shaheen and thank her for the service that she has provided, not only to the MLAs that she's selected for the Saskatchewan legislative internship program, but the service that she's provided to Saskatchewan people throughout her very short lifespan so far in the many volunteer activities that she has participated in throughout Canada and elsewhere. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this honoured Assembly I'd like to introduce a gentleman seated in the west gallery. Warren Steinley is one of our caucus researchers and he does an exceptional job. But after the November election, Warren will be the MLA for Regina Walsh Acres and I'd like all members to join me in welcoming him.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not recognize that Mr. Steinley was in the gallery and I too would like to welcome Mr. Steinley to the legislature today, and with a wish for a very respectable campaign going forward. And of course I have the same wish as my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow, that Mr. Steinley enjoys the view from the gallery where he is seated for a very long time, Mr. Speaker.

I also while I'm on my feet would like to welcome and thank Mr. and Mrs. Joanne . . . Richard and Joanne Lepp as well as the other members from House of Prayer, Murray and Patricia, that are with us today. They do great yeoman service to the legislature and we're very, very, very fortunate in this province to have dedicated individuals like this who will come to the legislature on a daily basis in a non-partisan way, Mr. Speaker, and offer guidance through prayer for all the members of the legislature to ensure that we are doing the best we can in our decision-making processes on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

So I would very much like to, on behalf of the official opposition, thank you for the wonderful service that you are providing to the legislature on a continual basis and look forward to seeing you again in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Members, as well I have a couple introductions I'd like members to . . . and individuals who have joined us today, we'd like to acknowledge. Seated in the front row of the Speaker's gallery we have Alice Nenson from Hansard in the Speaker's gallery. She's here to observe question period on her last day of work before she begins her well-deserved retirement.

Alice and Hansard go back a long time. She was an editor from '84 to '86 and in 1996, Alice returned. And I'm told she's brought her fine editorial judgment, her sense of humour, and her heart to the job every day. Her co-workers describe Alice as a great team player, a truly delightful person, and an excellent baker. The Hansard team will miss her very much. And I'd invite Alice to stand and allow us just to give her our thanks and appreciation for her work in the years in Hansard.

Joining us as well today . . . This coming weekend, visitor services will assume summer hours and as a result they have invited more people to come and join them so they can provide the many visitors who attend, come to the Legislative Building the opportunity to get to know the building. So as I call out names I'm wondering if people could just wave and let us know who they are. Seated in the gallery we have Marita Clark, Alyssa Pittet, Brittany Love, and Troy Smith, who have been here before, joined us again this year. And new to the team this year we have Alyssa Bredohl and Daniel Fortier, and they're joined by full-time staff Arnold McKenzie, Marianne Morgan, and Lorraine deMontigny. I invite members to welcome these guests to their Chamber.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today and to present a petition talking about the Northern Trappers Association:

And wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to recognize that the Northern Trappers Association maintain the traditional values of hunting and trapping and also brings in millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year from the proceeds of the fur harvesting combined with the economic spinoffs of the tourism sector and to the local economies; and in so doing, Mr. Speaker, to cause this government to stop turning their backs on not only the trappers association, but all the people who live and work in northern Saskatchewan; and in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately reinstate the funding to the Saskatchewan Northern Trappers Association.

As in duty bound [Mr. Speaker], your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these many, many petitions from all throughout the land include Stanley Mission and Regina, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of maintaining educational assistants. We know that all Saskatchewan children have a right to learn in a supportive and stress-free environment that ensures that they have the best possible chance to succeed in school, and that by the government's own data, we know that a growing number of students require additional support to succeed in school. Mr. Speaker, educational assistants provide that support to students with special needs including learning disabilities, behaviour problems, and ensure that their behaviour doesn't disrupt the learning environment for other children. And they are an integral part of the professional team that deals with students who have a different support need requirement, 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: to cause the government to provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the supports they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

Mr. Speaker, these many petitions are signed by residents of Saskatchewan from Carrot River, Lanigan, Aberdeen, LeRoy, Martensville, Vanscoy, Delisle, Saskatoon, Warman, Regina, Dundurn, Humboldt, Watson, Radville, Muenster, Middle Lake, Spiritwood, Wynyard, Elfros, Blaine Lake, Rosthern, North Battleford, Melfort, Vonda, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Star City. And there are many others that I didn't take note of individually. But, Mr. Speaker, I so present.

[10:30]

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of residents of the province of Saskatchewan who wish to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association has approximately 180 senior centres throughout the province with the vast majority of them situated in rural Saskatchewan and that these centres provide much needed recreation and social activities as well as important health clinics and workshops, which themselves contribute to an enhanced quality of life for the many seniors who use them and that due to the skyrocketing costs of utilities, insurances, taxes, garbage disposal, and exterior maintenance, approximately one quarter of these centres may close in the last 18 months and that the closure of these centres will lead to the deteriorating mental and physical health of seniors which will lead to additional stress on long-term care and hospital facilities.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the

much-needed funding to assist seniors' recreation centres to remain open and active within their communities.

The signatures on these petitions today, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Shellbrook, Prince Albert, Kindersley, Watrous, Green Lake, Big River, Leoville, Chitek Lake, and Holbein. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty here in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. And we know in Saskatchewan the income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

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

I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of Highway 102:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention that Highway 102 is the only road access for communities like Grandmother's Bay, Sucker River, Stanley Mission, Missinipe, Southend and that the current road has huge potholes and ruts that pose a real danger to anyone who dares to drive on it and that this road is in dire need of upgrading.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to recognize that Highway 102 is used extensively by the mining resources and tourism industries, which contribute millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year, and that the people who travel this road must be able to travel in safety, and in so doing, commit to immediately providing the repairs needed to Highway 102 and paving the remainder of the highway to Southend.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of Air Ronge, La Ronge, Stanley Mission, Sucker River, Brabant Lake, Glaslyn. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to once again present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village. And the petition is about the need for a new elementary school for their children. The petition reads:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Hampton Village is a rapidly growing community in Saskatoon with many young families, that Hampton Village residents pay a significant amount of taxes including education property tax, that children in Hampton Village deserve to be able to attend school in their own community instead of travelling to neighbouring communities to attend schools that are typically already reaching capacity.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to devote the necessary resources for the construction of an elementary school in Hampton Village so that children in this rapidly growing neighbourhood in Saskatoon can attend school in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are residents of Hampton Village from throughout the neighbourhood, including the streets of Allwood Crescent, Klassen Lane, Hargreaves Crescent, Coad Crescent, Korol Crescent, West Hampton Boulevard, McKague Crescent, Coad Manor, Greenfield Crescent, Pulles, McClocklin, East Hampton Boulevard, Denham Crescent, Denham Place, and Denham Rise. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to present this petition on behalf of my constituents. 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 owners of a 1,000-year strategic resource and, as the owners of that resource, deserve to receive the maximum benefit of the resource, Mr. Speaker. Additionally the CEO [chief executive officer] of PotashCorp has said that there is a new norm in the world markets for potash moving forward. And I believe that their \$732 million first quarter proves that. Mr. Speaker, 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 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 public initiatives such as debt repayment.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by good folks from the cities of Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is the last opportunity for me to rise to present a petition that's been presented every day of the House so far, regarding restoring funding equity to Regina Catholic schools. Regina Catholic schools receive \$275 less per pupil than Regina public schools, amounting to a funding inequity of \$2.7 million in total for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. And that debt is growing, Mr. Speaker, because this inequity has not yet been corrected, and this inequity affects all of Regina . . . I mean all Catholic school divisions across the province, Mr. Speaker.

That funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk, and we are already seeing program delivery being cut for the fall of 2011. The Government of Saskatchewan has denied Catholic school boards in the province representation on the government-appointed committee mandated to develop a long-term funding formula for Saskatchewan school boards. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to address the funding inequity between Regina Catholic schools and Regina public schools that provides \$275 less per pupil funding for Regina Catholic school students, totalling \$2.7 million, and make known that the continuation for another school year of funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk in Regina Catholic schools; and in so doing, immediately restore funding equity to ensure that every student in Saskatchewan, whether enrolled in a Catholic or a public school, receives equitable resources to ensure every student in Saskatchewan has access to a quality education.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions once again today 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 that includes the running of deficits and increasing of debt at times of record highs in revenues. Mr. Speaker, they reference the fact that debt has increased for three consecutive years, well over \$1.3 billion of debt. They reference that this year alone debt's increasing by \$548 million. They reference that this province fails to comply with the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor and fails to comply with public sector accounting standards and continues to report their finances in an inappropriate fashion, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities,

institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents and good folks from various communities that include Stanley Mission, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Estevan, Kisbey, Kenosee Lake, Oxbow, Aberdeen, Langham, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Hafford, Swift Current, Shaunavon, and Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to present a petition on behalf of citizens here in Saskatchewan who are calling on the government to do something about exorbitant rising rents that we've heard about here in this legislature and that I know we all have heard about on many, many occasions in our constituency offices where people are actively making the decision between paying rent or putting food on their table or buying needed medications. I'd like to read the petition, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protecting Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Regina. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Contract Negotiation with Teachers

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan teachers have been without a contract since August 31st, 2010. Despite teachers' best efforts to negotiate in good faith, present alternatives, and remain open to flexible solutions, the Sask Party government again and again has disrespected them. Now government tax dollars are being used to bully teachers in the media in an attempt to sway public perception. The people to whom we entrust our children are battling negative advertising bought with their own tax dollars.

Mr. Speaker, teachers, like so many other people in our province, are seeing that while the Sask Party government is flush with cash and our economy continues to grow, they are not benefiting from that success. Further, teachers are concerned about the long-term recruitment and retention of future co-workers and the increasing burdens being placed upon their profession.

To remain competitive . . . neighbouring jurisdictions and to ensure the quality of education in Saskatchewan remains at the

highest level, fairness and respect must be brought to teacher bargaining. Teachers can no longer be taken for granted and must be recognized for the valuable work they do.

Mr. Speaker, teachers have clearly grown frustrated by the government's rhetoric both at the bargaining table and in the media. If their message is not heard at the bargaining table or on the steps of this legislature, it will surely be heard on November 7th.

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

Fundraiser for Tsunami Victims

Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, a ferocious tsunami, spawned by one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded, slammed Japan's eastern coast this past March. This killed hundreds of people as it swept away boats, cars, and homes while widespread fires burned out of control.

Though time has passed since this disaster, the people of Saskatchewan have not forgotten. Mr. Speaker, the generous gift and . . . or generous spirit of the people of Saskatchewan was on full display this past weekend. Some of Regina's great musicians have volunteered their time and talents to play at a two-night Japan earthquake tsunami relief concert fundraiser called Kanpai 2 Recovery. There were a total of eight sets scheduled, including performances from Fur Eel, Nancy Ray-Guns, Colby Nargang, and two-time Gemini Award nominee Jack Semple.

All of the net proceeds generated from this event were donated to the Canadian Red Cross. There were four musical sets staged nightly, combined with a silent auction from a wide array of Saskatchewan and Regina businesses. Mr. Speaker, in one weekend, Kanpai 2 Recovery raised over \$4,700 for Japanese aid efforts.

I would like to recognize all who were involved and who participated in this event, and a special recognition to my son Regan who played a huge part in organizing this great event. You have all played a part in directly influencing the amount of aid provided for the unfortunate people of Japan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rent Control

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout this session, advocates for affordable housing and rent control have been coming to this legislature. The people of Saskatchewan are struggling to make ends meet. Massive rent increases, higher utility costs, and elevated food prices in the Premier's new Saskatchewan are leaving families behind. The Premier himself referred to these increases as unacceptable. And what is the Premier's solution to the housing crisis, Mr. Speaker? The Sask Party government offers taxpayer-backed loans to developers to develop \$300,000 homes, has increased the debt on the government books, but it's doing nothing to address the real

issue of families who can't keep up with such steep rent hikes.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan need next-generation rent control, a modern approach to curbing excessive rental rate hikes while continuing to encourage the development of new rental units. One need only look at the successful Manitoba model which saw Winnipeg create, from 2007 to 2009, five times more units than in Saskatoon and Regina combined. We need to examine those years and apply those principles of that success to a made-in-Saskatchewan approach. We are seeing more and more families being economically evicted from their homes because they cannot afford to pay 30, 40, 60, or even 100 per cent rent increases.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families deserve more than the Premier's lip service to this housing crisis. It's time that the Sask Party government move ahead with a next-generation rent control system to help reduce the financial burden families are carrying, while planning continues to help increase new building starts. What kind of premier would allow these unacceptable rent increases under his watch?

[10:45]

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

Riding to Break the Cycle

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In a few weeks, Saskatoon Greystone's own Emily van der Kamp will be part of a spirited group of young people bicycling 4000 kilometres across Europe, from Amsterdam to Istanbul, to raise awareness of global poverty in the ride called Riding to Break the Cycle bike tour 2011.

This past Saturday I was accompanied by my daughter Jacqueline in participating in a fundraising bike ride organized by Emily and her family to inform our community of her upcoming ride across Europe. The event was a great success. The bike tour was followed by a fundraising block party just in and around Garrison, where a number of neighbours came out to share an evening of good company for a good cause. All funds raised during this campaign go to Global Agents for Change, a Canadian charity that supports projects around the world focusing on poverty reduction.

She's going to be convocating in just a few days, actually in early June, and Emily is also helping to focus on specifically raising funds for a project in Uganda, focusing on providing Ugandan youth with the resources and knowledge they need to help fight poverty in their home communities.

I'd like to congratulate Emily and her family, most especially her parents, Linda and Garth, on their hard work, and wish Emily and her team the very best as they bike across Europe to raise awareness for this very worthy global cause. Mr. Speaker, Emily van der Kamp is a model global citizen who takes global action to help ensure that there's global justice. To she and her family and friends that participated, we offer our special thanks.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

College Merger

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education's failed college merger project says a lot about the Sask Party's level of arrogance after just three and a half years in government. The minister arrogantly dismissed the concerns which I raised about the merger last May, and his office completely ignored at least two separate emails that showed staff were raising ethical concerns and board members were dismissing it as whining. Instead he plowed ahead and funnelled over \$60,000 per student in infrastructure funding to this, his special project, even though the man in charge of merging the colleges had a history of fraud.

A recent column in *The StarPhoenix* said, "Consider Advanced Education Minister Rob Norris's cavalier dance around the fact that he knew 11 months ago of Glen Kobussen's criminal past, yet trusted Kobussen's decisions on the St. Peter's-Carlton Trail merger more than staff members who were ringing alarm bells."

Now that it's all gone off the rails, taxpayers have to pay almost half a million dollars just to investigate and clean up the minister's mess. And all of this could have been avoided if the minister had simply listened to the concerns that were raised last year, Mr. Speaker. That's a shocking level of arrogance, and taxpayers are paying the price. Saskatchewan people deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Laughing Gas

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Late last year the member for Regina Walsh Acres issued a news release promising to introduce a private member's Bill on acid rain. It was so important that she called for immediate action, yet it took her more than 150 days to introduce her Bill, and she did so with only four sitting days left in this session. There'll be no time to actually debate the Bill in the House, and it will die on the order paper. Not only was it introduced at the last possible moment, but there are some serious questions raised by this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the member for Athabasca failed high school accounting. Now it appears that the NDP member for Walsh Acres failed high school chemistry. In the Bill, the member identifies nitrous oxide, the chemical name being N₂O, as a contaminant that has acidic disposition. I would like to take the chance to point out to the member that nitrous oxide is not one of the top 20 contaminants emitted from the oil sands in Alberta. In fact, Mr. Speaker, nitrous oxide is the technical name for what is commonly known as laughing gas.

In light of the fact that this Bill was obviously written on the back of a napkin at the last possible moment and it contains many significant and laughable errors, will the members opposite agree to withdraw it today? Or do they honestly expect our government to pursue compensation from Alberta for laughing gas? Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this is no

laughing matter, but the member opposite has made that absolutely impossible.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Circus

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we close this session of the legislature, a circus tent is about to rise in south Regina. It's a sure sign on the southern horizon, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this city will soon be offered quite a show, featuring every kind of antics, acrobatics, and contortions. But, Mr. Speaker, the view from the North is that however good the circus is in town, it will pale in comparison to the three-ring circus that this Sask Party government has been bringing across the province over the last four years.

Sask Party antics include speaking out of both sides of the mouth at once, Mr. Speaker, on issues like housing, highways, and health care. They promise one thing, then they do another, Mr. Speaker. And with the greatest of ease, Mr. Speaker, they flipped and flopped like the best of acrobats on their campaign promises to ensure economic development and education in all regions of the province. And we've seen them tie themselves into knots, Mr. Speaker, with contorted explanations of new voting rules that will put seniors, students, and First Nations in a bind.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are getting ready to deliver a message to this three-ring, travelling circus, and that message is: Wall and brothers, move on.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Before we move on to question period, I want to remind the member, even in members statements, members are not to refer to members of the Assembly by their names but by their position or responsibility.

QUESTION PERIOD

Negotiations with Teachers

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, there have been many important issues raised in the session. And one of the most historic things I think that has happened during this session is that, for the first time in 78 years, teachers in this province have had to take job action in order to get the government to pay attention to their needs and to show some respect for the people who look after our children in our schools. In fact 12,000 teachers have voted to take job action, over 3,000 who showed up here at the Legislative Building in order to try to get the Premier and the government to pay attention to their needs and the needs of students. And in fact, in light of that, no one from the government came, even took the opportunity to come and talk to the teachers.

I want to ask the Premier, the minister, why is it that at a time of record profits in this province we have a situation where the teachers, for the first time in the history of the province, have had to take job action for the first time in history in the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is false. The teachers have taken job action in the past. When I, in 2002 I remember as an MLA meeting with our local teachers who were taking job action. They were reducing the hours that they were available in schools to make their point to the then NDP government about their contract negotiations. So, Mr. Speaker, we should deal in truth with respect to the preamble to questions in the debate that's going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, we want our teachers to be compensated fairly. We want to have competitive wages for our teachers . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we want our teachers to have competitive wages relative to every other province in Western Canada. Mr. Speaker, we know with the settlement trustees have put on the table or the offer that's put on the table, we will close some of the gaps that exist, but we know there are other gaps, Mr. Speaker, with respect to first-year teachers and some who are further on in the tiers in the grid of teaching.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, there are negotiations happening right now. We think, Mr. Speaker, that the trustees want to be flexible, Mr. Speaker, flexible on some of those points where we need to be more competitive. But overall, Mr. Speaker, with the offer that's on the table, our teachers will be the second highest paid in Western Canada. There is more work to be done with certain teachers certainly who have different levels of experience. We're prepared to do that. We would say to both sides, let's resolve it at the bargaining table.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier tries to explain to the teachers why they're wrong and he's right, and that's just unfortunate. What's worse than not coming to speak to the teachers, the 3,000 who came here to lobby the government, was last weekend we saw the government use taxpayers' money — money they say they didn't have for teachers, money that the taxpayers paid — to run attack ads against the . . . [inaudible] . . . in fact talking very negatively about the teachers of this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, teachers do not understand where, at a time when they are asking for a reasonable amount of money, the government is offering only 1.5 per cent per year, that at a time when they're giving CEOs of the health boards up to a 60 per cent increase, and even their own political staff are being given 20, 30 per cent increases in the Premier's office. How is that logical, fair, or moral where teachers are being offered 1.5 per cent and others in his own office are being offered much more, in fact 20, 30, 40 per cent? Why is that fair?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there are years in the past where the NDP members opposite, when there was some

resources in the treasury, offered zeros to teachers in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that's a fact of the matter. Mr. Speaker, there are other examples where teachers have felt they needed to take job action to make their point to the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the offer that's on the table from trustees, and the offer that's forming the basis for negotiation and the basis for obviously some distance between the two sides, is one that will ensure the competitiveness of what we pay our teachers. We need to be competitive. Now in areas where there's a bit more of a gap, I think the government in the past has shown flexibility in other contracts. That's why 90 per cent of public employees have settled with the government, Mr. Speaker. We've collectively bargained in good faith. We think that's the answer in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, it's a dangerous thing to simply compare the situation in Alberta because there's been editorials even in Alberta in the papers there, in Medicine Hat for example, with a message to all of us in Saskatchewan that we may not want to replicate the policies of the province of Alberta because it's not serving teachers very well.

We want smaller, we want effective classroom sizes. We want competitive wages. Mr. Speaker, the answer to this issue will be at the bargaining table.

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

Potash Royalties

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are owners of a 1,000-year strategic potash resource and, as the owners of that resource, deserve to receive the maximum benefit of the resource. I've presented petitions throughout this session to that effect. There are people across this province that want to see a potash royalty review, Mr. Speaker.

And leading economists agree with the people of Saskatchewan. Dr. Jack Mintz says the potash royalty system is "actually a poor rent collector." So does Dr. Sylvain Charlebois who said that a review of the potash royalty structure is "dearly needed" and would be better for both the companies and for the people of Saskatchewan. Yet this government plan seems to be to defend only the interests of potash companies. Well, Mr. Speaker, for the first three months of this year PotashCorp cleared nearly \$800 million. They're doing very well, thank you very much.

To the minister: this government is failing to defend the interests of Saskatchewan families. When will they listen to the voices of the Saskatchewan people and the experts across the country, step forward, and ensure that we receive the maximum benefit from our potash resource?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the member finally, on the last day of session, rises in his place to ask some questions about potash. He wouldn't do it for

about several months, but now on the last day he gets up and asks some questions.

It's unfortunate as well that he isn't acquainted with what his Leader of the Opposition is saying with respect to potash in Saskatchewan, that if the companies in Saskatchewan, after taxing them to the rate of 50 to 80 per cent, if they don't like it, he's just simply going to nationalize them. Because they've done it before and they'd do it again. And that's what he's said. Melville *Advance* — it's right here in front of everybody. It's unfortunate.

And, Mr. Speaker, the important question here is, is this system is working in Saskatchewan right now. It is the NDP's tax system that we're following, after all, Mr. Speaker. It's a system that is recognized across the world as a system that is generating huge investment into our province right now, thousands of jobs being created. The greatest risk to those jobs is the member opposite.

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

Mr. Furger: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to the jobs that he says are at risk, how is it that the workers at those potash mines also back the potash royalty review?

Mr. Speaker, even the potash industry admits that higher prices, or prices higher than \$400 a tonne are the new norm moving forward. In fact PotashCorp CEO Bill Doyle is taking billions of dollars out of Saskatchewan and leaving virtually nothing for the people of Saskatchewan. That's the Chicago way.

Projections this year put PotashCorp on track to see \$3 billion in profits. With a better return on our potash, we could build better roads. We could repair the health care system and recruit more doctors. We could build sufficient housing, and instead we're getting a nickel on the dollar on a return for our potash resource.

So to the minister: when will this government take the steps needed to ensure the Saskatchewan families see the return that they deserve for their potash resources?

[11:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure we're going to take any counsel from the member opposite who, when he rose in an earlier speech in the legislature, said that in Saskatchewan people don't even use potash.

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the extent of his knowledge has been exemplified in the legislature here in graphic form. He said that potash isn't even used in Saskatchewan, when in fact there are thousands of tonnes of potash used in Saskatchewan in seeding operations that are taking place right across

Saskatchewan these days.

The Leader of the Opposition, in addition to that, said that he's been out speaking to potash workers out at Kamsack. Well I dare say to the Leader of the Opposition, there isn't even a mine in Kamsack, but there might be one in Colorado because that's presently where the member's car is occupied. What is the reason for your car being down, your CVA [central vehicle agency] vehicle being down in Colorado? Are you looking for some potash down there?

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

Rent Control and Affordable Housing

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, rental prices are rising . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Please allow the member to place her question so we can hear the question.

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, rental prices are rising fast. And we're seeing more and more people suffering economic eviction because they can't afford to pay the 30, 40, and 60 per cent rental increases. Rent control is needed and it's needed sooner rather than later. Renters of Saskatchewan want rent control but, Mr. Speaker, there are some that would like the opportunity to buy a home. However with their paycheques drained away with these large rental increases, their ability to put together a basic down payment is really taken away from them.

To the minister: when will this government move to help Saskatchewan renters who are being forced from their homes by rental rate increases that even the Premier has admitted is unacceptable, but won't do anything about?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP hold out the policy of rent control. Their example is Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. They hold this policy out even though, when the housing shortage was even more acute than it is today, they rejected rent control. The member for Eastview was asked to study it. They rejected rent control. That's a matter of the public record.

Mr. Speaker, I think they probably rejected rent control at the time under Premier Calvert because they looked at the Manitoba model. Here are some facts. The Manitoba policy does not apply to buildings under 20 years old or to units that rent for more than \$1,120 . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, so when they talk about this particular policy they are not talking about new units developed as a result of loopholes in the rental policy. A public policy institute in Manitoba has said, and I quote, "More and more properties, because of rent control, are boarded up, abandoned, and have to be acquired by the city for default of taxes."

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] report fall of 2010 says the Winnipeg rental market universe has experienced a net loss of units in seven of the last . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Premier isn't that far from this desk, but I'm having difficulty hearing the Premier's comments. I'd ask the handful of opposition members to allow the Premier to respond.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the policy they advocate for rent control, according to CMHC, fall of 2000, has resulted, for that city, rental market universe they say has experienced a net loss of units in seven of the last 10 years. Just last fall, Mr. Speaker. Compare that to our policy: 800 new public units built, 1,000 under construction, 4,600 more to come, two cities already applied to that housing program for another 2,600 units. Mr. Speaker, that's good public policy. We'll leave the politics to the NDP.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier likes to talk about the new Saskatchewan, but yet he justifies all his lack of decision and lack of action on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens by using old quotes from a situation that is quite different. He needs to look at the new data that is out there.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Manitoba legislature took steps to further strengthen their rent controls and protect renters in their province. With a critical housing shortage here in Saskatchewan and very little new construction, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have turned to their government for help. They are told that their concerns aren't as important as the concerns of people who will happily gouge their tenants. While the Manitoba government works to protect their people, this government does nothing.

Mr. Speaker, will this government finish its time in office doing nothing while the people of Saskatchewan are suffering due to unacceptable rent increases and gouging?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Apparently, Mr. Speaker, according to that member, a quote from CMHC on this rent control program they propose from fall of last year is an old quote. How about then, how about a newer quote? From their NDP candidate in P.A., in Prince Albert Carlton, who said in the media that he supports the government's, he thinks the government's policy is advantageous in terms of dealing with the housing shortage, Mr. Speaker.

We are addressing, Mr. Speaker, we are addressing the full continuum of housing issues in this province. On the rental side . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — On the rental side, Mr. Speaker, we see an increasing number of supply in the units in terms of new home availability. We see more new homes being constructed. We see an easing in the vacancy rate from when those members were in power, Mr. Speaker. The vacancy rate, the housing market was tighter under the NDP. They looked at rent control then objectively, and they rejected it. What is the difference today, Mr. Speaker? The difference is they are . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I think it would be appropriate for the member from Prince Albert Northcote . . . Order. Order. The member from Regina Rosemont will also . . . Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker from their seats they say, what's changed? Well actually what's changed is the vacancy rate's gotten a little larger. I mean it's still a challenge in many communities, but it's better than it was under the NDP when they rejected rent control. So it begs the question then, why did they reject rent control then? Because they understood it was bad policy. Manitoba's finding out it's bad policy. Why would they change their position? Because, Mr. Speaker, they're in very desperate straits as a political party in this province. Rent control might look good on a billboard, they might think it might be good for them politically but, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of the province will side on the side of good public policy, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Health Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government has failed the people of Saskatchewan in protecting the health system. There has been a 40 per cent increase in doctor vacancies, and communities are spending as much as 15 per cent of their municipal funding in bidding wars for doctors. Hospitals and acute care services are closing in Spiritwood, Big River, Wakaw, Kamsack, Leader, and the list goes on. Now we're looking at Kindersley and Rosetown. Long-term care beds have been closed in Wawota, Muskeg Lake, Melville, and Canora. There's no support for mental health and no funding to build the hospital in North Battleford. The kidney transplant program is decimated, funding has been cut to chiropractic care and West Nile mosquito control, and over 100,000 personal private health care records have been left in dumpsters, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve far more than the empty promises and empty rhetoric from the minister. Will the minister today admit that all his hot air and broken promises have failed the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what that minister and this government inherited from the NDP went something like this when it came to health care. What we inherited were the longest wait times for surgery in the country, Mr. Speaker. What we inherited was one of the most acute doctor shortages in the

country, Mr. Speaker. That's what the NDP left. What the NDP left is a province with a thousand too few nurses and as a result, with closing beds, Mr. Speaker. What the NDP left this province was their legacy of 52 hospitals closed, 1,100 long-term care beds closed, Mr. Speaker. In three and a half years, Mr. Speaker, we now see more doctors . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I think the Premier should be allowed to respond to the question without a lot of interference as the government members have allowed the member to place the question. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — They don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker. The good news is this. The good new is this. Wait times in the province of Saskatchewan are down. Those people waiting 18 months or longer, down 75 per cent; 12 months or longer, 55 per cent; six months or longer, 32 per cent down; three months or longer, 21 per cent down. There are more doctors practising today, specialists and GPs [general practitioner]; 840 more nurses practising today, Mr. Speaker.

This government is dealing with the challenges that we have in communities, and they still exist. You cannot fix 16 years of neglect in three and a half years, but we've come a long way, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — Most things I have read, Mr. Speaker, are failures that they cannot fix and they have not fixed. Their list of closures is growing and they seem to be quite proud of that. Hospitals now are looking in Kindersley and Rosetown. They're happy about that?

Going back to 16 years, if he wants a history lesson, Mr. Speaker, the legacy left to this province was by Grant Devine — deficit, deficit, deficit. And from then on, it's been digging out of that hole.

And, Mr. Speaker, not only has the minister failed to provide Saskatchewan families with the health care they deserve, he has consistently disrespected and undervalued the people that work in the health care system. With the hammer of Bills 5 and 6, the government bullied, threatened, and finally rammed through contracts for health care providers that gave them less than the cost of living and, Mr. Speaker, the government's been continuing that tactic with the health science professionals now.

To the minister, Mr. Speaker: how can he possibly think that he can recruit and retain professionals, keep hospitals and acute care services open, open the kidney transplant program, keep the ambulances running, when he's disrespecting and undervaluing all the people that work to deliver those services? How can bullying work for this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the member says how can we have the right complement or more health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan? There are 20 per cent more

front-line health care workers in the province today under our government than under their government. There are more doctors working in the province today — I think over 200 — under our government versus their government. There are 840-plus new nurses working in the province today compared to what happened under their watch, Mr. Speaker. Wait times are less for people waiting for surgery now versus their government, Mr. Speaker. Ninety per cent with respect to collective bargaining, 90 per cent of public employees or thereabouts have settled with the government, Mr. Speaker. There remains work to be done.

The health care deficit left behind by those members, left behind by those members was very significant, including if you can believe it, our College of Medicine under probation under those members, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province recognize that there's more work that's needed to be done, but they will take a record of progress on this side over a record of neglect from the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

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

College Merger

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, throughout this session, details of the Minister of Advanced Education's failed college merger project have slowly emerged. And there's now an army of accountants on the ground trying to get to the bottom of his mess.

Unfortunately it's taxpayers who are paying the price for the minister's incompetence and arrogance. So far, so far \$400,000 has been dumped into the investigation and cleanup of his mess. My question to the minister is this: will that \$400,000 cover the full cost of the investigation and cleanup, or will Saskatchewan taxpayers be forced to pay even more to clean up his mess?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, under this particular minister, with respect to post-secondary education, we have seen record investment in the post-secondary institutions of this province, Mr. Speaker. We have seen an historic graduate recruitment and retention program implemented in this province and now working for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have seen tuition rates that have been maintained inside the spectrum of affordability. When you compare them with other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we see innovation . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, prior to the 2004 imposed tuition freeze, the NDP raised tuition by upwards of 30 per cent in only two years. Those days are gone, Mr. Speaker.

Regional colleges, Mr. Speaker, that's the member's question, our campuses at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied

Science and Technology] . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres to allow the Premier to respond to the question. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And, Mr. Speaker, the campuses at the University of Saskatchewan, the research parks there understand this government's priority with advanced education.

This particular proposed merger didn't happen. That's entirely the point. The minister's done his job, and he continues to do his job on behalf of the government to make post-secondary a priority, the likes of which it was never under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I'll have to check *Hansard*, but did I just hear the Premier say that the minister did his job on this file? Mr. Speaker, this is . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Please allow the member to place his question. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is the height of arrogance. I expect the member from Regina South to stand up and give him a standing ovation for the Minister of Advanced Education, but for the Premier, the Premier to say that the minister did his job on this file? Almost half a million dollars has been wasted cleaning up his mess, a mess that he directed and had the blessing of your government, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of taxpayers' dollars have been dumped into this project, first to try to make it happen and now to investigate it and clean it up. Taxpayers deserve answers. Yet the minister's track record on releasing independent reports is not a good one. He sat on the initial Meyers Norris Penny report for weeks and was so arrogant he said, in this House, he was refusing to release it because ". . . that way we can make sure that local stakeholders are positioned and prepared . . ." His delay may very well have jeopardized the investigation by allowing key evidence to be destroyed. And this Premier says the minister did his job.

So to the minister: will he commit publicly today to fully release all the information gained through the multiple, multiple investigations into the minister's failed merger project, and will he release that information as soon as it is received?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Maybe the minister was not as thorough as the member in his undoing of Dr. Ryan Meili in the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker. Maybe he wasn't that thorough,

Mr. Speaker, but I'll tell you . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Please allow the . . . Order. Please allow the Premier to respond.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — But you see, Mr. Speaker, the difference between the two sides of the House is that this government reacts and deals with situations as they're presented. Compare that to the record of members opposite when they were in government. Compare that to the record of the Opposition Leader, Mr. Speaker, who when scandals were presented to him in his government as minister like Channel Lake, like SPUDCO, and we've got the correspondence . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would anticipate the members would at least like to hear the answer. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the difference is that NDP government stopped precisely nothing. They let things continue. They let the losses mount. And they weren't necessarily forthcoming about the facts of it until forced to by court cases, Mr. Speaker. Maybe this will be the same. Maybe it'll be a mystery similar to the one that the member of Energy and Resources has referenced relative to the Opposition Leader.

Mr. Speaker, this is a track record on this side of the House of moving Saskatchewan forward in a historic way. We're leading the country today in terms of our economy. We're leading the country today in terms of a place to invest and live, Mr. Speaker. That has happened under the watch of this government. We look forward to the next election to compare our record to theirs of 16 years.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on Bill Nos. 907 and 625

The Speaker: — Before we move to orders of the day, I do have . . . Order. I do have a ruling that I need to make in regards to — order — a Bill on the order paper.

I would like to draw to the attention of members that this Assembly had under consideration two Bills with provisions of substantially the same purpose: Bill No. 907, *The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi Amendment Act, 2011* in the name of the member for Saskatoon Northwest and Bill No. 625, *The Saskatchewan Respectful Language Act* in the name of the member for Saskatoon Centre. Both Bills propose means to remove the same anachronistic phrase from existing legislation.

According to Erskine May *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd Edition, p. 578:

There is no rule or custom which restrains the presentation of two or more bills relating to the same subject, and

containing similar provisions. But if a decision of the House has already been taken on one such bill . . . the other is not proceeded with if it contains substantially the same provisions . . .

This Legislative Assembly has numerous precedents on the subject of the “same question rule” with respect to Bills. Speakers have consistently ruled that if the Assembly has agreed to one Bill that contains similar provisions in another Bill, the Speaker must then prevent any further consideration of the second Bill.

Yesterday the Assembly passed all stages of Bill 907, *The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi Amendment Act, 2011*. Given the decision by the Assembly to pass this Bill, it is my duty to ensure that the Assembly does not come to two different decisions on the same question. For this reason, it is necessary that I order that item 5 under private members’ public Bills and orders, second readings, Bill No. 625, *The Saskatchewan Respectful Language Act*, be removed from the order paper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Housing

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

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to rise and add comments to the motion that calls on the Assembly to urge the government to immediately assist emergency shelters to increase their capacity and provide some desperately needed services during especially the cold winter months, and to immediately begin the process of developing a comprehensive affordable housing strategy and a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy to address the underlying causes of this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn’t matter what information or what data you will look at when we look to determinants of health and look to the well-being of citizens, which ties into, quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, the reduction of poverty. One of the major planks that have to be in place is quality, stable housing accommodation for people. Mr. Speaker, the impacts are huge, and it is mentioned again and again and again in a variety of forums.

Mr. Speaker, that’s one of the main reasons that the opposition has been calling for rent controls throughout this session, earlier through last summer and into this session, Mr. Speaker, was that it is something we have heard across the province over and over again. And it’s not just in the big cities or the main cities, but it is in communities right across this province.

But many people, many citizens of this province and families are being squeezed, and it’s putting a huge strain on the people of the province that are caught in this difficult position of seeing their rental accommodation costs increasing well beyond their means. And in many cases, they are being caught in what is now referred to as economic eviction, where their income will not cover the new increase in their rental accommodation and they are being forced to downsize.

Mr. Speaker, we met with a family here in Regina that had been renting a two-bedroom apartment — the husband and wife and their two children — and they could no longer afford . . . Now they were working, Mr. Speaker. This is not an unusual case that this family was working, but the wages that they were bringing home was not covering the increased rent that was being put on their budget by the accommodation that they were in and by the landlord. Mr. Speaker, they ended up downsizing. So here was this family with two children, ended up moving into a . . . downsizing into a one-bedroom apartment so it would better fit their budget.

Mr. Speaker, that’s unacceptable when we have a government that talks about a booming economy. They are enjoying some of the highest revenues ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. And we are seeing very little, if anything, done for these citizens. Mr. Speaker, seniors are facing this same pressure of economic eviction. I’ve had calls in my home community of Moose Jaw where senior citizens are spending well over 50 per cent of their income on their rent, and there’s no options for them to move.

Mr. Speaker, there are some huge wait lists when it comes to public housing in the province of Saskatchewan, wait lists that my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has documented here in this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, this government has not only ignored the issue but almost, Mr. Speaker, they’ve refused to even admit that the circumstance exists in what they are calling their new Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the government has announced a housing plan, and the minister has stood a number of times and defended it. But, Mr. Speaker, what it is, it’s guaranteed loans to developers. It’s some small grants to municipalities who have plans in place, and it is some renovations of already owned government stock to bring them up to a more acceptable standard. That’s nice, Mr. Speaker, but an investment in current government stock does not provide any new doors, does not provide any new units for families across the province. It’s just a re-development of existing units, Mr. Speaker.

And the minister has taken great pains to provide \$200 million in loan guarantees for developers and, like I say, a small grant to municipalities who have taken it upon themselves to develop housing in their own communities. But, Mr. Speaker, I’ll ask you, what’s missing out of this whole plan? What is missing? We’ve looked after the developers. We’ve helped them. We have given a token incentive to municipalities to put in the work and develop the housing projects in their community. But, Mr. Speaker, what’s missing is tenants and citizens — the people who need the housing, the people who are caught in this crunch, and the people who are suffering the poor policies and initiatives of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I mean, when you step back and take a closer look at the government's plan, the minister announced the plan in June so that means that municipalities will have to put together a plan for housing developments or increases in their communities. Many municipalities don't have the capacity. House planning and building development is not something that municipalities are well versed in. They will have to find the people to develop plans. They will have to do assessments on their communities to see what exactly type of housing is needed. Is it seniors? Is it rental accommodation? Is it more affordable housing? Where will it be built? Infrastructure will have to be put in — sewers, streets, sidewalks, power, gas, all of the things that go with a new housing development.

And, Mr. Speaker, this isn't a quick process. I mean, everyone in this House is well aware a program was announced in June. You will see municipalities now, right before the summer break for most councils across the province, looking at what opportunity there is for their community. You will need to find the people to develop plans. You will need to work with developers to make sure everything is in place for developers to move ahead. Then we will look at the building season starting next spring. Who knows if we are going to have another wet spring next year?

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a year to a year and a half — and I'm being optimistic here — a year to a year and a half before we will see any progress on this plan that the minister announced with great fanfare. And in the meantime we have tenants, families, seniors, Mr. Speaker, citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are going through economic eviction. They are struggling to find accommodation to live. And, Mr. Speaker, I didn't even use the words looking to find quality accommodation to raise their children in. They are just at this point looking for any accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has forgotten citizens in this whole process, in this program that they've put forward. How do you reduce poverty? How do you solve the issues of homelessness and families dealing with and struggling with some of the very basic issues of necessity? How do you ever expect them to be able to move ahead and build a life for their families or themselves when you cannot find a home to live in, when you cannot find accommodation in the province of Saskatchewan that you can afford?

[11:30]

And the minister says, well that's fine. We're going to build all these thousands of homes and units, and she said they're starting at 180 to \$300,000. That's where these housing units are going to be priced. Well that's nice, Mr. Speaker, but let's take a quick look at this. You talk to any real estate agent in the province of Saskatchewan and there is a requirement for 5 per cent to be put down on any new home, on any home. Any purchasing a home, you need 5 per cent down. So on \$180,000 — which is the low end of the minister's program and the Premier's program that they have talked as being so wonderful — 180,000, that means on minimum you need \$9,000 to put down to be able to move into that \$180,000 house. If you were moving into a \$300,000 house, you would need \$15,000 in your bank account to be able to put down to be able to purchase that home.

Mr. Speaker, if I had \$9,000 or if I had \$15,000 cash sitting in my bank account to put on a down payment on a home, or any variation of the amount in between that, I will be able to afford my rent. I will not be one of the people that need, in many cases, rent control and are looking to the government to offer some solutions and offer some help for myself and my family.

Mr. Speaker, did not the minister look at that issue before she announced this? \$9,000 down, plus you will need fees for any lawyers' documents that need to be done with the transaction, plus there would be real estate fees, Mr. Speaker. Any of us who have purchased a home, no matter what the cost, know that there are fees and costs that go along with it.

Mr. Speaker, many of these young families in the province, they don't need the government to support developers to build a house. They need support to be able to enter the housing market, Mr. Speaker. That's where they need the support, because they are paying very high rents that have increased substantially over the last couple of years. They are having trouble making ends meet. They are not . . . I mean how do you . . . They don't have the additional income or disposable income to be able to save for a down payment to purchase a house.

So when the minister stands up and says, well we're supporting developers; we're guaranteeing their loans to the tune . . . \$200 million in loans we're guaranteeing to build accommodation between 180,000 and \$300,000 so Saskatchewan families, they'll have lots of choice. They'll just be able to move in, be off the street, be out of rental accommodations. Life will be wonderful.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't work that way because many people . . . And many people, whether on fixed income, whether they are working families, they will never be able to save 9,000 or \$15,000 to put as a down payment. So, Mr. Speaker, part of this motion speaks to the issue that the minister and that this Saskatchewan Party government needs to actually sit down and get real and look at the issues that Saskatchewan taxpayers are dealing with.

Well now the minister also stands and says, well we cut 114,000 people off the tax rolls, and that's just wonderful. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, we could have a bit of a debate on our numbers because, I think, she's just adding to. But we'll leave that alone.

But, Mr. Speaker, if someone is off the tax rolls already, if their income is so low that they are not on the tax rolls, how does a tax cut help them? And, Mr. Speaker, the right wing conservatives, Saskatchewan Party, whatever you want to call them, they assume that's always the number one issue that they talk about — tax cuts. Tax cuts are the panacea for absolutely everything. Slow business, cut tax. Too busy, cut taxes so you can put more into your business. Prices are too high, cut taxes because I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, it'll filter through into all of us as consumers.

Well, doesn't happen. It's not the panacea for everything. And the minister, to stand in this Assembly and say that 114,000 people have been taken off the tax rolls, is appalling and shows an absolute misunderstanding or lack of knowledge when it comes to this issue of Saskatchewan families struggling to be

able to find accommodation and to move into accommodation that they can afford, where they can afford groceries on the table, where they can afford their utility rates which, Mr. Speaker, have gone up under this government.

Mr. Speaker, there is a real disconnect when it comes to this program and the needs of Saskatchewan people. And there is a disconnect between the minister's explanation of how this program works and her understanding and her answers in responses to questions in this Assembly over the last number of weeks and what actually happens to families and seniors and constituents of ours across this province. Mr. Speaker, the minister has to sit down and look at a broader concept — the actual impact of these programs and what's needed.

Mr. Speaker, I again refer to determinants of health. Housing is one of the main determinants of health, and health determines our future. Mr. Speaker, to have that solid base for a home, a quality, affordable accommodation, means not only better health. It means better outcomes for children in school, which just leads to better outcomes later in life.

Mr. Speaker, housing is one of the main components of success in our society. And, Mr. Speaker, whether we are talking about immediate help of shelters, whether we are talking about immediate help of rent control until more appropriate accommodation is built, Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister, you have forgotten the one and a half to two-year gap that this province and citizens of this province will see before anything of this program comes to fruition.

The debate as to whether the program is appropriate, the debate as to whether it will actually work, I'll leave that aside, Mr. Speaker, because what we've talked about with rent control, what we have talked about over the last many months with people right across the province, is that there needs to be some immediate action, an immediate action that citizens feel — not guaranteed, government-backed loans for developers, Mr. Speaker. That's what we need to see.

And if we truly want to address the issue of poverty, if we truly want to improve the life of Saskatchewan residents, and if we wish to continue talking about how successful Saskatchewan is, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister and members of this Assembly to review these programs and to make sure that all citizens in this province are feeling the success, the economic success that we are seeing so much about in the recent months and, Mr. Speaker, really reassess the programs to make sure that they are impacting citizens in this province that need a hand up and they need some help to get on their feet and to be able to contribute not only to themselves, to their families, but to the province as a whole.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very delighted to be able to stand in the House today to address the motion that was brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Centre. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks, I'm going to be bringing forward an amendment, but I'd like to start to speak for a few minutes about housing in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our province has experienced phenomenal growth under the new government, and we have a Saskatchewan advantage. And you know, we know there is challenges to meet the needs in the new, vibrant Saskatchewan.

When I listen to the members opposite, I have no doubt why their polling numbers are down. Their depressing attitude over there about the options people should have to move from the few units that are left in this province, moving around instead of the idea of actually building more units and giving people opportunities to choose so there actually are . . . have something to wake up in the morning and determine, I have some choices in life. I don't get to move from one unit to another that's already in existence in a province that has more people, when obviously the members opposite's great desire is to make sure we don't have more people. Maybe that would be a way we can do it: control the number of people, then we don't need new houses.

Mr. Speaker, we have, before this spring, we spent an amount of money to make sure that we have completed 860 new affordable rental units since November of 2007. We have 1,100 more units under development at this time. We've helped nearly 400 people achieve home ownership, and we've helped nearly 3,000 households improve the health and safety and the energy efficiency of their home, Mr. Speaker.

But then this spring we did announce the Saskatchewan housing advantage plan. The five-point plan outlines housing initiatives that's going to invest \$252 million into provincial housing markets in the next five years. These initiatives are going to make sure that we have a minimum of 4,600 new rental and home ownership units in the province housing market.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke about the plans and said that in their opinion, in their humble opinion, they believe that this isn't going to work for a year and a half. Well to the member opposite, they should know that in the first week, the first week where there was an opportunity for people to actually apply and to get information on this program, there was 26 RMs [rural municipality] and towns and cities applied and said, I want to be part of this, Mr. Speaker. And these applications are anywhere from the North to the southern part of our province, from small towns and small cities to the larger cities. Mr. Speaker, these individuals know that they need new doors because there is more people coming to our province.

The housing plan that we announced consisted of programs that involve municipalities. They involve industry. They involve developers. They involve builders and low-income housing providers. Together we're able to partner with these participants to ensure that the growing demand for rental and home ownership in our province is met. Since we've announced this plan, we have had overwhelming interest from the municipalities.

In April of this year the Sask Housing Corporation, together with CMHC, hosted a three-day summit in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, the summit created an opportunity for housing stakeholders to come together for a profit . . . or for non-profit agencies to come together to discuss the future of housing in our province. The discussion covered the continuum of housing from spectrum that's right from rentals and shelter units, right

through home ownership, rental purchase units, and the homes that many people in this province are living in.

Mr. Speaker, there was common ground. The common ground is that we had partnerships to make sure that we could have the RMs and developers could work with government. I had the good fortune of attending the summit and enjoyed the frank discussions that took place. However what really stood out for me, Mr. Speaker, is that everybody was excited to be part of the solutions. They know that there's a challenge, but there's also solutions, and it's not limiting the number of homes that are built in this province.

I was excited at the summit, Mr. Speaker, to hear about the solutions. And recognizing the answers for addressing our housing file was not a cookie-cutter solution. And that is why we announced the Summit Action Fund — \$6 million that stakeholders could tap into to pursue creative ideas. This little fund is an incubator for good ideas for something that could be uniquely Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the challenge that our province seeks as we look at the housing shortage. The world has heard of the Saskatchewan advantage and as a result our province has become a beacon of opportunity for people that are looking at the province from right across the world. Our government will continue to meet the challenge of building new Saskatchewan and will come with more opportunities for developing. Mr. Speaker, we're developing housing units, but more importantly we're developing homes — more importantly, homes for people who want to come to the best place in the world to live.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put forward the amendment now, an amendment that says:

Remove all the words after the word “government” and add:

to continue the plan to improve the accessibility of affordable housing throughout Saskatchewan and take steps to ensure that the knowledge that was gained from the most recent housing summit be implemented to help in taking strides towards addressing rent and affordable housing issues facing people in our province.

[11:45]

The Speaker: — The Minister of Social Services has moved:

That the motion be amended by removing all the words after the word “government” and add:

to continue the plan to improve the accessibility of affordable housing throughout Saskatchewan and take steps to ensure that the knowledge that was gained from the most recent housing summit be implemented to help in taking strides towards addressing rent and affordable housing issues facing people in our province.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to speak to the amendment.

I kind of feel that after all these days that we've been talking about this motion about rents and affordable housing, and we've come to this point in the session here today and the government . . . This is what, this is what really speaks to how this government operates. The last minute, the last minute it proposes an amendment just in the closing hours of the session. And this speaks to what it's done around its strategy. We're still waiting until July. We hear now July that actually a strategy will come out.

And I have some real concerns about this because people, people are up against the wall when it comes to housing. And we've seen that numerous times in this session where people have come to the House to say, we need action right now. And we could have had that action in the past weeks when we've been sitting. It doesn't cost any money. And we've seen that 80 per cent of Canadians live with rent control. And in fact we learned that yesterday in fact Manitoba now is in fact strengthening their rent control regulations.

And for the first time, we saw today actually the Premier stand on his feet and talk about rent controls as well when those questions were posed. No, actually I'm wrong on that. We did know that the Premier did answer some questions on rent control earlier when he talked about how unacceptable it was.

And so I have some real, real concerns about the amendment that's put forth to us because it clearly, clearly misses the point. And it shows, it shows how these folks have missed the boat in terms of the urgency of this and in fact will like to stall, will like to stall on this.

And so when we take a look at the motion that we see that's put before us, and I'll read the motion:

Remove all words after the word “government” and add:

to continue the plan to improve the accessibility of affordable housing throughout Saskatchewan and take steps to ensure that the knowledge that was gained from the most recent housing summit be implemented to take strides towards addressing rent and affordable housing issues facing people in our province.

And I find that a very interesting summit because we've heard essentially a couple of mixed messages from the government side, one from the minister who said that she had brought some people together and the issue of rent control wasn't raised. But we know how this government works. If it's not raised, it must be a positive. Well did she ask the question or didn't ask the questions? I don't think she asked the questions because many of the groups that she was dealing with actually deal with people who are actually building homes, and rent control isn't necessarily an issue for them. It isn't an issue for them.

But we also heard then also from the Minister of Justice who said when renters were asked directly, what do you think we should do about rent regulations, he was very upfront, very upfront and said that in fact renters just want rent control. It's really straightforward. It's really straightforward. And it does

make sense because 80 per cent of Canadians do live, do live with rent controls, and this is not an unusual thing. In fact we see it right around the world, right around the world.

We know that in New York, we know that in New York on June 15th, they're coming up to a deadline where the rent controls that have been place for many decades in New York state could be lifted, and of course the Governor Cuomo is working hard to get that reinstated. In fact the impact of what that will mean would be huge. We see it in New York. We see it in California. We see it in Bombay, Mumbai. We see it in New Zealand. It's very interesting actually as you take a look around the world that in fact, people say it's only reasonable to have some form of rent regulations.

And of course from their summit they avoided the question. In fact people were out in front handing out information, and it was referenced, it was referenced in the summit by questions. And I remember I was there and one speaker was asked, so what would we do in the absence or what can we do in the absence of rent regulations? And the speaker said, she said, I think I've stepped into something I didn't really want to talk about.

And that's the issues because we have things where this is a pretty straightforward issue, the old issue around rent control. And so when the minister says that they're going to take the knowledge gained from the most recent housing summit . . . And there were some interesting things put forward, some very interesting things, and one of them of course was co-op housing. And I'm very looking forward to seeing what that may mean, what that may mean to this government . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, and you know it was an interesting thing — who was invited to the housing summit and as well the consultations that happened in leading up to that. I don't know if the 10 or 12 consultations are part of this because they said at that time it was. It seemed to be expanding, then contracting. And of course we had heard at the summit that in fact the president of CHC was talking about how the strategy that was to be released in June may be delayed into early July because . . . And when we questioned the minister about it, she says she wants to get it right.

Well we've seen that pattern before. We've really seen that pattern before where we've seen . . . Especially I think about the Pringle report around the children in care. And we had said two years ago, two years ago that I was worried. We were worried that it was going to be delayed, that it should be released before, before the session not after the session. And surely it was released the week before Christmas, a week before Christmas. And this is really, really a concern. Really a concern.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have some really grave concerns about this amendment. I think it's a delaying tactic for the government because we wanted to see how the government felt, really felt about two things, really felt about what was happening with the Salvation Army hostel in Saskatoon. Because when I wrote the original motion back in December, November or December, the issues around the Salvation Army was dealing with overcrowding, and they were seeing right away, right away that in the winter months they were being filled up to capacity if not overfilled. And we saw that right across the continuum.

And of course when we talk to this government here, the whole issue around shelters and homelessness and those in the near-homelessness that are being doubled up, tripled up in housing that's just not built for that kind of capacity, that's not part of this discussion. That's not part of this discussion. What's part of our discussion are \$300,000 homes with the loans guaranteed to developers and this trickle-down or trickle-over effect which . . . We don't have the time for that. We don't have . . . This is an urgent issue. This is urgent. And when you talk to the people who are providing shelter to those who are homeless across the province, we see the issue is that the summer months offer a different challenge, offer a different challenge. Just because it's warm outside doesn't mean that they all go away. No, it's very much a real thing, very much a real thing.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the government, actually, to withdraw this amendment, and let's just get on with this, and I think . . . Because people want to know where this government stands. It's important where this government stands. It's important that we recognize what the issues are, what the issues are and that we do something constructive . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask . . . Order. I would ask if members have a debate between themselves, that the members go sit behind the bar and allow the member from Saskatoon Centre to be heard. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And so with that, I would urge this House, urge this House to defeat this motion and talk about the original issues. I mean this really, this amendment really changes the intent of the motion, really it changes . . . Because we wanted to talk about rent control and get these folks on the record, get these folks on the record. And to change the motion in this way is not productive. People have been watching this debate for a long, long time, and I think that it's really a shame that this government would put in at the last moment a plan about continuing the plan. I find this very interesting. As you really have to ask, what is the plan? What is the plan here?

You know, we saw the Pringle-Merriman report that came out. And that's an interesting history for the Pringle-Merriman report too because here we had a report, a task force just appointed the day before their first budget when they realized, when they realized they had nothing in the budget around housing. And they realized, what are we going to do? What are we really going to do? And so they said, let's have a task force. Let's have a task force, and it will report after the House is concluded in June. Well it did, Mr. Speaker, and many of those recommendations are still left, are still left on the floor. And we haven't seen, we haven't really seen the solution to the housing crisis because of that task force.

And I think of one. Actually one innovative idea was the whole idea of rent bank and how people, if they were being economically evicted, they would have somewhere to go to help them stay in their homes, stay in their homes. And I think this is an issue that this government doesn't understand is that we have two different world views of what rental units are. Are they a home or are they investments? And this government sees that

they're an investment. They're not homes. So they're not talking about people's homes. Well we are, Mr. Speaker. We are, and that's why we have to have fair and progressive rent regulations that protect people from economic eviction.

And this government just doesn't get that. Doesn't get it. Doesn't get it that when seniors have chosen to live in a rental accommodation, that actually this is their home. And they think they're going to be there for a long, long while as they enjoy their senior years and that they aren't looking to move. They aren't looking to move. And when the theory comes out, no we all want to own a home . . . And many of us do. Many of us do. And we think that's a good goal for many people but not for everyone, not for everyone. And especially as we move into a society where we see better urban planning and people wanting to live downtown where there's exciting things, this whole issue of rent is more and more complex.

So we look around and say, so what are the best practices around Canada? What are the best practices around Canada? Well we don't have to look too far. We see BC [British Columbia] doing well. We see BC doing very well, having put on the Olympics, and they seem to be doing all right.

We look at Manitoba. And in fact it's very interesting that quite often we hear these folks interestingly talk about the Manitoba rent controls, and they are the second generation rent controls. And in fact this morning we heard quotes about CMHC from last year. But we know we have a very thorough report on an analysis of the Manitoba circumstance done in January of this year, done in January this year: Hugh Grant's work, *An Analysis of Manitoba's Rent Regulation Program and the Impact on the Rental Housing Market*.

And you know, Hugh Grant was on the radio on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]. It was early April. And what he said, I think, was right on the mark. He said, rent controls are fair and they work. They're fair and they work. It's very simple.

Now we heard the Premier say today about the exemptions. And I know the minister quite often will try to spin this as well, say, well their exemptions aren't part of the regulations. Well of course they are. That's what makes them work. That's what makes them work — the exemptions.

And so it's only fair we say, so how can we have a made-in-Saskatchewan rent control regime, the next generation that reflects the Saskatchewan experience where we can talk about the mom-and-pop operations? Because they take a lot of pride in their ownership, and they take a lot of pride in building their communities. And they see their role of providing rent accommodations, providing rent accommodations.

[12:00]

But it's a real . . . And in fact what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, is those folks often talk about — and if the minister had been listening at the summit, and I know in Yorkton they talked about it — is the whole issue around taxes and tax regime and capital gains on rental property. And how are we going to deal with that? How are we going to deal with that? How are we going to deal with the changing face of the landlords in

Saskatchewan? We know over the last 20 years, 10, 20 years the emergence of major landlords such as Boardwalk and Mainstreet who've come in and said, you know, this place can really work. And they're here, but they own a significant amount of the market. And how do we deal with that?

You know the minister yesterday got up and spoke, and I think this is interesting because it speaks right to the housing summit. But she was talking about, this was something — talk about exemptions that she doesn't talk about — is where you have . . . Over the last four years, how much money has been spent on the rental supplement? A very good program. We were proud to have started that. That was a transitional program to allow people to, when they got themselves into a place of high rent, that they would have some support. But I don't think anybody saw it growing from 5 million to 31 million without any idea of how you're going to control that kind of spending. How are you going to control that kind of spending?

And it's not because there's six times more people on it. I think there were about 4,000 at the beginning. That would mean there would be 24,000 people on it now, and there is not. I think there is about 8,000 people on it. I think there is about 4 or 5,000 families and maybe 4,000 people who are living with disabilities who qualify. We'd have to check those numbers but I think that . . . but it definitely is not 24,000.

And though when we ask the minister, we say, so, minister, who's getting this \$30 million? Well we don't know. We don't know. We know the tenants are getting it for about five minutes, and then they have to give it to the landlord. Well I'd be curious to know who's getting that \$30 million. That's a big chunk of money. That's a big chunk of money that the minister has lost sight of. And for that to happen and then to say, next year at this rate of growth, who knows where it will be? Who knows where it will be? It could be in the 40 millions. Maybe at that point we start saying, you know what? We've got to start building more social housing, more social rental housing.

And in fact we even asked that question: what has been built by Sask Housing in the last four years all by themselves? All by themselves, not a partnership. We think the partnerships are great, but has there been any individual project by Sask Housing? Well we find out that no, not really. There's been an addition to a project here in Regina, but really essentially Sask Housing is winding down their own work of building Sask Housing units. And that's really, really unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because I think there is a role for public housing, a huge role . . . [inaudible] . . . especially for those who are hard to house. And while partners do a fantastic job, fantastic job, and they will always be there — the NGOs [non-governmental organization] — and we have to honour them and thank them for their good work, but we can't leave it totally to themselves.

And this government has really vacated . . . if we do what this amendment says, continue the plan. Well one part of that plan, I see, is how this government has moved away from any leadership role, any leadership role at all in terms of improving accessibility of affordable housing through Saskatchewan. They see themselves as more of facilitators of the private market but not any kind of responsibility at all in terms of the real leadership of housing issues, such a core value, a core responsibility of the province.

You know, when you talk about . . . When you visit the municipalities, they say, yes, we're happy. We want to make sure our communities are strong and vibrant. We absolutely do. We absolutely do, but it's not our responsibility. We'll be there as partners. We'll be there as partners, but we don't want to see the Government of Saskatchewan downloading by the back door, by the back door a system by which the Government of Saskatchewan is vacating its responsibility.

That's really unfortunate because I think Saskatchewan has a proud record of doing such a good job of leadership in this area, whether it's leadership in terms of co-op housing, leadership in terms of this whole thing around the rental supplements, joining that area. But you know, we have to really look at this plan that this amendment talks about. We really have to look at this plan, you know.

And what the original motion said, and this is what they're taking out because of that amendment:

That this Assembly calls on the government to recognize the urgent nature of the housing and affordability crisis across the province as evidenced by the fact that the Salvation Army is having to turn people away from the emergency shelters in Saskatoon due to overcapacity for the first time, and further;

In making this call, the Assembly urges this government to do the following:

To immediately assist emergency shelters to increase their capacity to provide desperately needed services during cold winter months; and

To immediately begin the process of developing a comprehensive, affordable housing strategy and a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy to address the underlying causes . . .

So what this government with this amendment really does is takes out the word urgent. So they feel it's not an urgent situation. Well I have to debate that. I have to say, I think there's a lot of people — and we have seen it throughout the session — many people who have come to this House to call on the government. And we just have to think of the renters from Portnall street. I think they would call this an urgent situation. The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow today eloquently talked about the issues in Moose Jaw. I think you have to underline the issue. This is an urgent situation — urgent. Why they would want to take out the word urgent and say, it's business as usual in Saskatchewan, I think that's a shame. That's a real shame. And not really recognizing and just ignoring and turning your backs on the emergency shelters who are, as I said back in December, experiencing for the first time the type of crisis where they've never had to turn people away and now they are. Now we've passed through the winter months and we're into the summer months. Of my understanding, you know, things continue on. People still have the same issues, still have the same issues. And we have a real, a real dilemma here, Mr. Speaker. So this amendment really, really misses the mark.

And then I have to say, I don't know why they would be so against developing a comprehensive, affordable housing strategy. I mean the summit . . . If the logic of the minister is the summit's going to inform that, then right on. Let's all work

together and get this together and work on it and pass it and be done. And that's very good. So I don't know why she's so against that.

I mean and then she talks about this plan. Now was that the plan that was in the budget, that \$1.7 million plan? Or is it the five-point plan where they're guaranteeing loans for developers for \$300,000 houses? Is that what she's really talking about? And you know, the biggest chunk of that change for the 250 million, 200 for the loan guarantees and 34 million for repairs which should be . . . You know, they're in their fourth year. This should be part of their process.

And I know they like to use the blame thrower and say it's from the past and they're catching up. Well I've got to tell you, we understand that in some years they did very little. In fact they moved money around in Sask Housing, some \$17 million. They could have gone for renovations and now all of a sudden it's become an issue this year because the deadline for the budget, the federal budget, was March 31st. How can that be? How can that be? All of sudden they realized that there's a deadline and about two weeks before, two weeks before, they do this kind of thing.

And of course, you know, the other key pieces, and then every day, every day, every day I have been standing up here with petitions when I'm in the House, talking about a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. And you know, I think this is something we really need to do, we really need to tackle.

Now why this government or why this minister would say, let's just cut that; that's not very important, I think that's shameful. Let's get behind that and let's develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that includes people who live in poverty, that includes people who live in poverty because you know, Mr. Speaker, one of the questions we have when we debated this issue is the use of stats. And we see the government bringing out their stats. I don't know how many people work on stats in the Ministry of Social Services, but they must have quite a few because they sure seem to have a lot of stats. They don't like to share them. They don't like to share them because we know in written questions this year, particularly when the minister talks about all the new construction over the last four years, and we asked about that, we asked about . . . Well we'd be curious to know about these new places that you've built or you've been partners for, for \$5,000 out of the 200,000. I have to say that's less than the PST [provincial sales tax]. They probably get that back in the PST that they collect on the building materials. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I just find it really odd that they can pump out the stats and then not share any.

But my point, my point here is this amendment takes out the whole thing about the poverty reduction strategy. And on top of that, people would like to know what's the true picture. What's the true picture? Why can't we have an agreed upon set of stats that people who are living in poverty, people who are working in the CBO [community-based organization] sector and with the academic community — because I know the minister likes to quote the academic community every once in a while — why can't we have an agreed set of statistics about measuring poverty in Saskatchewan? And we say, okay we'll do that. We do that with jobs, job creation. Nobody ever argues about that. Nobody ever argues about that. But why do we always get sort

of a different variation, a different variation of the stats?

And I have to find the most . . . The most interesting ones that the other side will often bring out are around food bank usage. A bit of a crisis, I would say, because we see seniors, seniors using food banks at an alarming rate, and yet we hear from the government actually the use of food banks is going down. But we hear from the food bank people that it's going up. Who can be right? The people at the door who are counting people coming in? Are we saying they're wrong? No, the real numbers are going up. The real numbers are going up, and the government likes to spin it because they use percentages.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am just so disappointed that we would have this motion come forward that really doesn't address the issues, this amendment, because it's just missing the key points around the urgency, the urgency of the housing crisis that's before us, particularly when it comes to homelessness and particularly when it comes to the issue around rents. And we have some real problems here. We have some real problems because it totally, totally misses the mark and whitewashes the issue and says, let's have business as usual. And I don't think that's on. Business as usual. And I don't think that's at all, at all a suitable solution here. Because business as usual is not on, is not on at all. And when we have that kind of an amendment before us, we think . . . We don't think the plan that they announced . . . I mean the irony of that plan was, as I was saying of course and we all waited quite anxiously for the budget. It came out with a \$1.7 million announcement for housing, and it didn't even make it into the top priorities when the *Leader-Post* reported it.

They did their little look-through at the budget and they said, so what clearly are the priorities of this government? Well we saw the hoteliers with their beer discounts. They got up there. They made it 5 million. That was a priority. But the housing was down at 1.7. But then lo and behold, the following week, and even in their handout, their material, their mailout about the Saskatchewan advantage, there was the \$1.7 million. But all of a sudden the following week, I think it was on the Tuesday, we saw this five-point plan that added even more confusion. Because you have a budget; the budget's supposed to be your plan. So which is your real plan? The one that happened on the Tuesday or the one that happened on the Wednesday? Which really was the true plan here? And then I'd have to say the minister's not clear on this. And then we're waiting for the strategy . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, after consultation with the Opposition House Leader, in order to conclude proceedings of this sitting day, I ask leave of the Assembly to suspend rule 26(4) and further proceedings of motion no. 2 presently under debate, and that the said debate be reinstated to the order paper as an adjourned debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also ask leave to proceed directly to personal statements by members so choosing to make statements.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to suspend rule 26(4) and suspend all, any further debate on the motion currently before the Assembly to allow the Assembly to move

directly back to orders of the day, allowing for members to make personal statements. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[12:15]

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

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this is my last speech in this very honourable room, and I was thinking about this last night a lot, Mr. Speaker, and I thought of how I, in the past, had wronged my seatmate, the member from Thunder Creek, and I feel bad about it. However I'm not going to apologize.

I would like to first of all say what an honour it has been to be the MLA from Saskatoon Sutherland and to thank the good citizens there for their support. Being an MLA is quite an honour, and it has been a very good learning experience. Unfortunately the time in my life, my health, and other things, I decided not to run again.

But one of the things that I would like to share is how hard MLAs work. And we have a member, two members here that have been MLAs for 24 years. The Premier mentioned the sacrifice that the family gives, and it's very true, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate all MLAs in this Chamber today on their hard work. I also recognize the extremely busy schedules that the ministers have and how they commit to the good people of this province. And I believe that our government and these ministers and especially our Premier is doing a fantastic job.

I'd also like to thank my campaign team and the constituency executive. When I ran, I had a lot of my family members on my campaign team. And my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer in week 2 of the election, and the next day . . . We had a cry one day, and the next day she was back doing her volunteer job. And she's an admirable woman, and a special thank you to her. I wish I was as strong.

I'd like to thank my family, my love, Gary, my children, and my mom, Rita, who watches every day. Mom, turn it up. She's deaf. She just cranks the TV. You go into her apartment, it's just like . . . [inaudible] . . . But anyway, one of my first jobs in political retirement is to get her fitted for a hearing aid. Anyway I love you, Mom.

And so the first day as an MLA, I remember walking into this building thinking that it was a dream. It's such a beautiful building and it's such an honour and the halls have seen so much history. Our Chamber, I mean it's just a fantastic, beautiful place.

I also would like to speak to our record as a government. One of the things that I am very, very proud of is the social conscience and the social issues that our government has addressed and is addressing. One particularly comes to mind. It was a constituent who has a 32-year-old son with Down's syndrome, and he lives with his parents. He calls it his job in the afternoon, and what he

does is he goes across the street and visits the level 4 nursing home there, and people just love him. Anyway they care for him, and they went to visit one of their children in Australia and brought their son with them, the Down's syndrome son. And because he was gone longer than two weeks, he had to reapply for social services when he got back. And one of the things that the disabled people wanted was to be addressed differently and not have the same rules and umbrella that social assistance does. We've done that, and that was done actually, I think, in our first year. And that was so important, and it was important to them.

Another issue that I'm very, very proud of is the fact that our government was the first to fund testing on the liberation treatment. And that would include the diagnostic procedure as well as the treatment itself, the liberation treatment. And that is going forward, and I think we've set the bar in Canada. And I think two provinces have followed and more will continue, I'm sure.

To make that a little bit more real, a friend has MS [multiple sclerosis]. He was a paramedic but couldn't work any more. And he, when the liberation treatment first came out, he went to Buffalo and paid to have the diagnostic procedure. They did an ultrasound of his veins and arteries, and he was told that he doesn't have the stenosis, the narrowing in the vessels. However when he went to Costa Rica, they redid a test and did an angiogram, which is injecting dye, and he did have the stenosis. And so they followed it up with the liberation treatment, and he's having good results. So you know, we do need to look at this and through scientific evidence make it so that people with MS can have this procedure. And that was a very, very proud moment.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, we've kept over 130 promises, 130 promises. That's a pretty good record for a government.

I was a little taken aback with the behaviour in the House at first, but you get used to it. It doesn't mean it's right though. At one point I thought, wow, like it's almost a disturbance, and maybe I should arrest someone. But I held my chair.

The media, what also I've learned is the media is powerful, very, very powerful. You cannot fight a person that has a barrel of ink. For the most part, they're very balanced, and that's good because the media has a power, powerful influence on the public. People read their words and believe it as gospel. And so the accuracy has to be very, very good. So I thank them for doing their best to be non-partisan.

I will talk a little bit about something that was kind of a bee in my bonnet, and that's that in an article I read it said that Dr. Meili doesn't have the stomach for politics. And that offended me in the sense that, should we have the stomach for politics? Should we have to have the stomach for politics? We're here to serve. And sometimes it's not nice how we behave, maybe the things we say, and I think we really have to work on concentrating on the debate. And I feel bad for Dr. Meili, and I hope he has a good medical career and continues to do his good work. I think rather than having a stomach for politics, it would have been better said that it shows man's hunger for power, you know. And so that again is the behaviour and treatment of one another.

Lastly I'd like to talk about my friend Serge, the former member from Saskatoon. You know, being a cop, oh, I was kind of hedgy. And one day I was in the car with him, and we were driving to Saskatoon. And he kept on looking in his rear-view mirror. And I said, only two people look in the rear-view mirror that much — cops and criminals. And he laughed. He laughed. And so having worked in the drug unit and, you know, we did a year, sometimes two-year-long investigations where we did a lot of surveillance and stuff like that. And the bad guys, when they try and shake their surveillance, they call it heat checks. So Serge was telling me the heat checks he used to do. And so when I go back to policing, I'll be one up on the bad guys.

Serge was a powerful person in my life, and he had a passion for justice. He said what was on his mind. And I think we need to recognize where he came from. He was in survival mode for most of his life. So when he would say things like, oh, I'd like to, you know, punch this or whatever, that is normal for the kind of people that grow up in survival mode because their first instinct is to fight. Their first instinct is anger, and then they sort it out from there. And Serge had to learn at a very, very early age that you can't back down. You cannot back down when you live that life. There's no retreat. There's no second chance. You've got to stand your ground or you'll be eaten alive.

So I'd just like to say that I miss him and that I knew he had my back, and that through him and the member from Yorkton and the House of Prayer, I've begun a journey in reconnecting with Jesus Christ. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't think it would be that hard to give this speech, but I think it might be. But, Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, I announced a while back that I would not be seeking re-election and therefore not running in the next election, and that's after serving in this great Assembly for 16 years.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can say, at least for me, that I would have never been able to achieve 16 years had it not been for the support of my family. So I want to say to my wife, Carol, a very special thank you. Thank you for your love, your support, your encouragement, and I think mostly for your patience. Because when it comes to me, she has demonstrated unlimited amount of patience as she's seen fit to support me for 43 years now. So that, Mr. Speaker, just simply goes to show that you can fool some of the people all of the time, or at least for a long time.

I want to also thank my family, our daughters, our son-in-law, and our granddaughter Emma, who now brings us so much joy each and every day. I want to also thank my leader, the member from Regina Douglas Park, for the time that we've spent together, for his advice, his words of wisdom. The member from Douglas Park and I have been through a number of political battles together. One more would have been nice, but it's just not to be.

Mr. Speaker, it has certainly been a very interesting 20 years. Yes, I say 20 years, although I've served in this Assembly 16

years. It took me 20 years to get those 16. That, Mr. Speaker, is because I have been elected to this Assembly twice, re-elected to this Assembly twice, and defeated once. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to recommend the re-election; it's much more fun than the defeat.

But, Mr. Speaker, I realize when I leave here later today, I leave here for the last time as an MLA. But I leave here rich — rich in the friendships I have been able to develop over the years, friendships which I hope will continue on well past this House. I hope that my colleagues in this House and I have the opportunity to have our paths cross many times into the future. And when we do, I hope we not only acknowledge one another, I hope we take the time perhaps to have a cup of coffee and bring ourselves up to date on what's new in our lives.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, when I leave this place later today, I leave here with a wealth of memories. Not only memories of individuals, but also memories of situations and circumstances. Memories of CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] trips where you get to spend a lot more time with your colleagues and you get to learn them and appreciate them. And I really have been very rich that way. There is one particular memory though, Mr. Speaker, that is recalled on occasions in our household. It's a memory of an early morning, shared limo ride to a certain airport.

To my colleagues who are not running again, I want to wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I want to wish you good health, and I hope we all get to do the things that we've always wanted to do. To my colleagues who are running again, I want to wish you all good luck in your re-election attempts. Mr. Speaker, more luck to the members on this side though, than that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to, as inadequate as it is, I want to say thank you to my constituents. Thank you for giving me the chance to serve in this Assembly. I am both honoured and humbled to have had the privilege of their support for these many years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with a paraphrase: old politicians never die, we just fade away. Thank you and God bless.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to address this Assembly one last time. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of people I wish to thank. Thank you firstly to the people of Cut Knife-Turtleford for affording me the opportunity to represent them for the past seven and a half years, and to assure them that I will continue to serve them for the balance of this term.

To my constituency office staff, thank you. It is through their endeavours on behalf of constituents that concerns are addressed, contacts made, and in many cases problems solved. To the Office of the Speaker, the office of the Clerk, the caucus office, and all the support staff in the legislature, thank you. To the civil service of our province, thank you for what you do for

the people of this province. To the Premier, fellow members of caucus, and colleagues, I thank you.

This opportunity to serve also provides the opportunity to get to meet many, many people within our province, within our country, and indeed beyond our boundaries and establish friendships that will no doubt extend into the future. And to my family, thank you for their support and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, when I made the decision to allow my name to stand for nomination and subsequently for election in 2003, things were very different in this province than they are today. In our area we had experienced in 2002 the most severe drought that even the old-timers had ever seen. Now excess moisture in the province is providing agriculture's most serious challenges.

Out-migration, Mr. Speaker, from Saskatchewan was prominent, as it had been for a number of years. Our children were leaving the province to explore opportunities that were simply not available here. Now we are experiencing in-migration, and the province is able to recruit and retain those young people that will be the future of Saskatchewan.

Our provincial economy was stagnant, and we relied on our Confederation partners to subsidize our very existence. Now we're leading our nation in economic growth and have become the place to be rather than the place to be from. Mr. Speaker, I take no personal credit for these positive changes in our province, but I can be assured that these are exciting times for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that history repeats itself, even relatively recent history. In 2003 in my first opportunity to address this Assembly, I said, I am however not a man of many words. The constituents of the new riding of Cut Knife-Turtleford, my community, and my family know that, and I thank them for understanding that.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I say thank you and farewell.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Who would have ever thought a quarter century would go by in a mere 25 years?

My first words of course are to my wife, Lorna, who has kept me as solid or as on the ground as anyone possibly could. Any time I started to get a little bit ahead of myself, Lorna was always there to put me back in line. But the love of my life, Lorna; my family; my extended family, just the support that they give — I know all members in the Chamber know that from their respective families, but none would know it more than I do.

My next words are of gratitude and thanks to my constituency, my NDP executive, my constituents in what was Regina North in 1986, Regina Albert North shortly thereafter, Regina Coronation Park, not because I moved or the constituents moved, just redistribution and mostly change of name of the constituency. The heart of the constituency has always been Argyle Park, Coronation Park. And I have enjoyed support of constituents far and beyond anything that I feel I've ever earned

or deserved. And I want to express, in this most public way that I can, my deepest gratitude to my constituents. They are truly wonderful, amazing people, and I know that they will continue to thrive well into the future.

I want to express gratitude to my colleagues, particularly on this side, but on the other side of the legislature floor as well. Throughout my soon to be 25-year career, there's been many highs and a few lows — probably about as many lows as there are highs when you think about it, but I choose to remember the highlights, the good points, the things that we've been able to accomplish together. Politics is, as Roy Romanow was fond of saying, it's about people doing together what they cannot do alone. So collectively we are truly greater than the sum of the parts.

Throughout my career, Mr. Speaker, I have watched with sometimes interest, sometimes with a bit of concern, but watched myself grow in the job. I've watched myself grow. In fact I'm about 40 pounds heavier now than I was when I first came in here. The other thing that I know has happened, some constituents think . . . And we all have these, constituents who think we don't listen. But I found out about three years ago, Mr. Speaker, that it's official for me, and I now wear a hearing aid. So it might be a little bit late for me to have the hearing aid but I can now hear, and I've tried to listen to my constituents throughout the piece.

Just two quick things. I'm not going to be parting with any particular advice. I do feel like I have to say, if I have any apologies, it's to the constituents that I've tried to advocate on their behalf and not been able to, not just while the current government's in office, while we were in office as well. I say this in truly in a non-partisan sense. Sometimes the train goes off of the track and you just can't get the people that should know how to put that train back on the track, and I do have a few of those regrets although many more happier memories of people that we've been able to help over the years.

In closing I want to say I am amongst the very luckiest of people on the face of this earth. I've had the opportunity to serve in this great legislature for 25 years. I've had the opportunity to meet some incredibly interesting people on both sides of the legislature and well beyond, Mr. Speaker. It really is lucky, but what I am the most lucky about is that when I leave here I'm going to my wife, my family, a family that not only can be loved but can love me as well. And I'm leaving here with the happiest of memories and best of wishes to literally everyone in this Chamber. Thank you. It has been fun.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish that after 16 years in this Assembly, I would have the necessary wisdom to definitively come out with the wisdom to impart to everyone how we could perfect this parliamentary system. Unfortunately, I do not. It's been an incredible good fortune for me to serve in a wide number of roles in opposition, in government, and it's given me a whole new appreciation for this process and the men and women who give themselves to the service of this province.

I therefore wish to express my gratitude to a good number of

people without whose support I wouldn't have been able to serve. First of all I'd like to thank my wife, Carole, and the family. During the 16 years that I've been elected and the 20 years in provincial politics, Carole has been steadfastly at my side. She has supported, advised, encouraged, often disagreed with, but always loved me. During this time our three daughters have married three wonderful men, had eight grandchildren and have likewise supported me, and I thank them all. They've also held me to account when I was indiscreet enough to, in a comment, say a reference to my current wife. Pattie met me at the door when I got home that Friday and said, "Dad, do you know what you've done?" And of course I didn't, men being the sensitive people that we are. But she cleared it up for me and by Monday I was on the floor again, apologizing.

It's really great to have Grant Draude here today because he can witness what I think is kind of unique, to have two grandparents on the floor of the Assembly at the same time. And soon I'll be sitting up in the stands, as Dan calls them, with you guys.

Next I would like to thank the constituency, constituents of firstly Melfort-Tisdale and then of the Melfort constituency for allowing me to serve them these many years. I have met many, helped some, but have been proud of them all.

The assistants in the constituency office, Laurie Hookway, Peggy Gordon, Faith Orr, Tammy Thompson, and Fred Fedosoff have provided great service to the constituents over those 16 years.

I'd also like to thank all of the employees of the legislature. Over the years, they've been tremendously supportive of everything we do as politicians. And I've come to realize they're the frame on which the true values of the political process are made real.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank all the wonderful people at the Ministry of Finance under the leadership of then deputy minister, Doug Matthies. These extremely professional men and women were there with their advice, direction, and support. And I've enjoyed working for them, even when potash prices weren't so good.

Thank you as well to the staff of my minister's office: chief of staff, Dick Carter; administrative assistant, Kim Jalbert; and ministerial assistants Krista Baker and Fred Fedosoff.

The Premier and my colleagues have been incredibly supportive. In the opposition, in the Executive Council, and in backbench, they have understood and supported me. It has always been with a sense of pride that I recall the many successes, rewards, and challenges that we faced together. Beginning with a small group of eight, we have persevered and become the Government of Saskatchewan. That has been, in large part, due to the leadership of the Premier, the member from Swift Current. And I thank him for that leadership, but most importantly his friendship.

Over the years we've had members leave: some permanently; some returned. Always they have brought their passion, beliefs, and principles to this Assembly. And I truly believe that I've been able to work with the finest men and women of this province. And I thank all of you for the privilege. And I will

miss you.

I will also miss the stories that we've had, the opportunities to think about gardening in retirement, rakes and hoes and those sorts of things. And I think it's at this time that usually people invite their colleagues to come and visit them after this particular time, knowing that they rarely do and counting on that, I suspect. I extend that invitation to all of you in the knowledge that if you don't come to see us, we'll come to see you. Thank you.

[12:45]

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just think I should announce to the whole Assembly that I've been in this building for 25 years, and I was very proud of myself for the past 25 years that I have never publicly or privately shed a tear. And I just embarrassed myself when I was talking to the press by wailing away. So I want you to know that I'm Irish and if I get a bit too sentimental and I start to cry, the member from Lakeview has permission to get out the big hook, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, today's an interesting day. I drove up to the legislature this morning, realizing that it will soon be 25 years this fall since I first entered this building. I was a newly minted member of the legislature representing the people of Saskatoon Nutana, and I must confess that the only time I'd ever been to this building was in 1979 when SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] was on strike and I was there with my little "Government give us a fair deal" picket sign.

I know that some of you will find it hard to believe, but I will never forget, in 1986, coming up those steps for the first time. And I note that there are some members of the legislature that were barely out of Pampers in 1986. I recall thinking the people of Saskatchewan have elected us and, regardless of which side of the House we sit on, each of our votes are equal. Well I learned, when we became government and in cabinet, that some people's votes are a little heavier than others, Mr. Premier, and other premiers.

I've had this thought after each election, that we're all equal. And I've also had this thought: can you imagine 56 of us represent over 1 million people? And that's quite an honour.

Mr. Speaker, in six general elections, the people of Saskatoon Nutana have sent me here to this amazing building, this institution with all of its history and tradition, to represent them, and for this honour — you might have to get out the hook, John — I owe the people in Saskatoon Nutana a tremendous debt of gratitude and thanks.

I want to thank the people in Nutana for allowing me to be their representative for close to 25 years. I have to thank them for sticking with me through thick and thin. Thank you for supporting me even when you knew that I knew that I was wrong. Thank you for phoning me up and giving me a piece of your mind. And I have to tell the public, I've never hung up on anybody. And the people in Saskatoon Nutana did this often

and I also want to thank the people of Saskatoon Nutana for coming by and saying thank you. And, Mr. Speaker, I just have to say this: that I have been absolutely shocked at the number of people who've dropped into my office to say thank you, sent notes, sent letters, sent flowers, sent chocolates, saying thank you for representing them.

I believe that the people in Saskatoon Nutana actually made me become a better member of the legislature. So, Mr. Speaker, being an MLA, in my view, is the best job a person could ever have and I have . . . This has been a difficult decision because I've absolutely loved being a member of the legislature or I wouldn't have stayed here to . . . well too long, as long as I have.

I just want to say this. As a child growing up, I lived in the Biggar constituency, which is now represented by . . . I won't say his name, but I will; I'll just say it — Randy Weekes. And you know, Biggar constituency was represented by former Premier Woodrow Lloyd, and Woodrow Lloyd was the longest serving minister of Education. He was the minister for 16 years. I think I have the distinction of being the second longest serving minister of Education at five.

Well Woodrow Lloyd was my mom's high school principal. And my mother's family moved here from Prince Edward Island and they were Liberals. If you were Irish Catholic, you were Liberal. And as a result of the kindness of Woodrow Lloyd to my mother who had to leave the farm to go into Biggar to board, she and her sister, my grandparents, the Aylwards became strong CCFers [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation]. And Woodrow Lloyd was one of my dad's friends, and my mother campaigned, as her family did, in 1944 for Woodrow Lloyd. So as a young person, I got to see what a truly good member of the legislature was like and what service to the public was all about.

I come from a family where public service is an important value. Public service means service for the overall public good, and public service is about the betterment of our community, our province, and our country. Public service is an essential part of the care we're obliged to take to ensure we continue to have good governance and good democratic government. For the values of hard work, community activism, and public service I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my parents, Roy and Betty Atkinson.

So I came to public life 25 years ago because I wanted to make a difference. I wanted life to be better, not just for some of us but all of us. And upon reflection I've been struck by a myriad of remembrances and thoughts. Twenty-five years ago I was a young woman in my early 30s working as a teacher with young people who had significant behaviour problems, which sometimes I've been accused of that myself, Mr. Speaker. But they had significant behaviour problems and they were experiencing lots of difficulties because of their backgrounds. I wanted an education system that met their needs so that they could stay in school because I know that a high school education . . . And if you can go on to post-secondary education, you can stop the cycle of any kind of dependence.

Well I can report to the public that a lot has changed in those 25 years. There are many alternatives to young people trying to get

a high school education. And guess what? We now have child day care in our schools.

Twenty-five years ago few women had been elected to this Assembly, but the people in our constituency took a chance and they elected me in 1986, 1991, '95, 1999, 2003, and 2007. I remember the campaigns where people would say, well you're too young to be a member of the legislature. Or you're a woman, aren't you supposed to be home, and all that sort of thing. Anyway I also remember their kindnesses of home preserves. I'd come in off the campaign trail and I'd be loaded down with jam and baking and books and lots of, you go girl, you go. And I've received that over the years.

I've also had some important privileges. I've been privileged to serve with Premier Allan Blakeney who was the Leader of the Opposition in 1986. He took a group of us — and I've been trying to remember who we were, but I can remember being there — and he took us into his office, the Leader of the Opposition's office, and he told us that we needed to understand annual reports, public accounts, and budgets. And he taught us an important lesson, and it's a particularly important lesson if you're a social democrat, that you can't be in charge of your own destiny if you are beholden to the bankers and the bond dealers and the moneylenders. And you should rarely spend more money on the day-to-day operations of a government than you're taking in in revenues. That can hobble a government, and we certainly learned that during the Romanow years during the 1990s.

Now I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I never intended to come to government in 1991 and start cutting everything in order to get our debt and deficit under control. I do remember this, that interest on the public debt was the third highest expenditure of government, and there were lots of things that needed to be cut and there were lots of things that went undone as we tried to get our finances under control.

During the Calvert era, things got a bit better. We continued to see our overall provincial debt reduced, which included GRF [General Revenue Fund] and Crown debt. We began to see the province turning things around. And after the 2003 election — which I think most of us were surprised to win, but we did, even though it was close — we began to put a number of policies and programs in place to ensure that young people who wanted to stay here could.

And in 2006 we began to see our population increase. And I have to say that there have been many times some people in traffic jams in Saskatoon and Regina have commented to me, why did you put those signs up in Calgary and Edmonton? You know, those signs on the freeway, "If you were in Saskatoon, you could be home by now." Or in the morning we said, "If you were in Regina, you could still be eating breakfast." Anyway we started to see lots of people come back, and I believe that the Calvert policies have led to the growth that we've witnessed in the last five years.

I've had a front seat to politics for 25 years, and I've witnessed — I'll use this one first — the lows and the highs of public policy debate, on many occasions great progress, and for this I will always be grateful.

Before I sit down there's just a few people I think I should thank. Again I thank the people of Saskatoon Nutana for giving me this great honour. I thank the people of Saskatoon Nutana NDP executive who I believe are the best political organization in the province, bar none. Thank you for working so hard to elect me over and over and over again because the one thing I know is that you can never be elected on your own. Thank you for all the fundraisers, membership drives, campaigns, donations, pancake breakfasts, taco events, and so on and so forth. Some of the people in Saskatoon Nutana have been there since the beginning, and I thank them.

Third, I want to thank my friends. I've had a group of high school friends, we've known each other since we were 13. And tomorrow night they're coming from across the country to the celebration of my life as a member of the legislature. I can report that my high school friends are not NDP. Some of them live in Alberta, and they might have worked on Prime Minister Harper's campaign, I don't know. Some of them are elsewhere, but they have not generally been NDP — maybe one. But it's not something we particularly talk about.

Mr. Speaker, my high school friends . . . And we like to golf, and I don't really publicly acknowledge that. But we have a little trip once in a while up to Waskesiu, which we did in 1999 after the nurse's strike. And the press was busy trying to find me. They didn't know where I was. The Premier didn't know where I was. And my friends were busy trying to hide me. So I thank them. They've been with me through thick and thin. They have been with me during some of my worst moments, and I thank them.

The other persons I want to thank are the people who have been my constituency assistants. I've had four constituency assistants in 25 years. And Judy Gossen has worked with me for close to 15 years. And Mark Stobbe, who is the executive director of the Craft Council in Saskatoon, he also started out with me in 1986. And then there is another young man by the name of Darcy Marriott, the jack of all trades, who's been with me, helping for over 17 years. Constituency assistants, I must tell you, get to see you unfortunately at your best . . . or no, fortunately at your best and unfortunately at your worst. And Judy got to see lots of people picket my office, and she was very good. She always invited them in to use the washroom or have coffee. I want to thank the constituency assistants that have worked on my behalf for being there and supporting the people in Saskatoon Nutana.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my next-door neighbours, Frank and Thelma Cvek. I've lived beside them for I think 34 years. They've looked after my sidewalks and my yard for all of this time. And they've looked after me as a person, fed my cats. And I want to thank them because without them being next door to me, I think my yard would've been an embarrassment and my sidewalks wouldn't have been, some neighbours called it NDP clean.

[13:00]

Finally I want to thank my dad and my brothers and sisters, my niece and nephew. Thank you for putting up with me and forgiving me when I didn't have time to bake something for a family gathering, a dessert or a salad. I have lots of making up to do, and I plan on making up.

I also want to thank all of the public servants that I've had an opportunity to work with, both in government and in opposition. Sometimes we think it's not easy being a politician, but I think often it's not easy being a public servant trying to address all of the issues that politicians want addressed. And for the public servants that I've worked with and people at CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] that I've worked with over the years, I want to say thank you, thank you, thank you. You have taught me a lot.

And finally I want to thank the press and journalists that I've met over these many years. Thank you for documenting my journey and covering my every word, even when I didn't want you to. I think generally speaking you've treated me well and for this I'm grateful. Journalism is an important part of democracy, and we should be thankful that we have a free press, free to report on what they wish to on us. We have a free press in the province of Saskatchewan.

Finally I want to thank colleagues that have worked in caucus office, ministerial offices. I want to thank them for all of their work that they've done on behalf of the New Democratic Party government and caucus.

And finally I want to thank my colleagues. Now some people have suggested I'm a bit feisty, and I am. Some people have suggested I'm a bit emotional, and I am. Some people have suggested that I could hone in on something and drive them crazy. I know I've driven my leaders crazy and my colleagues crazy, but I think it's fair to say that regardless of which side of the House you sit on, there's very few of us that know what it's like to have this life.

And very few of us know what it's like to be in this kind of workplace, I guess. And you're away so much and sometimes you don't see your parents or you don't see your husband or you don't see your wife, maybe you don't see your kids as often as you should, and I'm not sure anyone really understands that except us.

I think we've been through a lot together, good and bad. But I think regardless of which side of the House we are on, I've always appreciated my colleagues, even when I disagreed with them. And I have disagreed with colleagues on this side of the House and that side of the House, that side of the House and this side of the House. But nevertheless I tried to disagree respectfully.

So I'm just going to say this final little point. On this fine spring day, as we watch the greening of our beautiful province, I'm going to bid adieu to this House and to you, my colleagues. I hope for new green shoots to spring forth in my life, in this Chamber, and in Saskatoon Nutana, though certainly in a similar shade of green decorated profusely with delicate orange blossoms. That is how we like the landscape decorated in my home constituency of Saskatoon Nutana. I want to assure my colleagues across the aisle, in Saskatoon Nutana, we'll continue to plant a garden that will burst forth with orange blooms early next fall.

I've loved and enjoyed this honourable calling. The privilege of representing and serving my constituents and all of the people of Saskatchewan has been profoundly rewarding and fulfilling.

I've been all atwitter, debating and sparring with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I've formed deep friendships that will continue to enrich my life. So until we meet again, thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to request leave of the Assembly for just the displaying of a token of a gift for the members who have just spoken in the Assembly.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave's been granted. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — We were debating whether or not I could ask for leave to use a prop, but we decided apparently that was not acceptable, and so we make this leave request instead. If I may say, Mr. Speaker, just before I quickly present this or display it so that it can be properly presented and hopefully signed by all members, I would like just to say very briefly on behalf of the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook, the deputy Whip on the government side who was unable to be here, who will also not be returning, we know he will miss this place. He has certainly told me that, and his colleagues, and we will miss him. We will miss his voice in agriculture. We were elected together in 1999 and most importantly we'll miss his friendship. And we thank him on this official occasion for his service to the province and to his constituents in what is now Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Speaker, Reg Downs in my office picked up a picture. I think it was on the CBC website, had a series of pictures of the flood and our very, very wet spring. And he found one in particular and he thought it might be a nice token or a gift for members who have just made their last speech in the Assembly. It's pretty unique, Mr. Speaker. We know there are a lot of pictures of the Legislative Assembly Building, and there should be. It is beautiful, as has been eloquently noted by members who have spoken. But there aren't a lot that have this much water in them right up to the, almost to the walls of the building itself early on in the melt with almost a perfect reflection of the Legislative Building in that melted pool. And if there's any picture perhaps that the members who have just spoken so very well, who have served this province so very well, if there's any picture of the legislature that will remind them specifically of this spring and the decision they made here well in advance of this and that they spoke to earlier on, it would be this picture.

And so we have enough of them and maybe during the traditional handshakes after the Assembly is adjourned, we can have them on the table with some, I think we've got some Sharpies in the back and we'll get them onto the table, and I'm sure members maybe will want to sign them for each other.

And just on behalf of the government, we just want to thank all of those who have served so very well, and for some, for such a very, very long time, and who have distinguished themselves with that service to the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few comments that I'll make as I ask for leave to adjourn this Assembly. I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker. This day marks the end of the fourth legislative session of the Saskatchewan Party government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both you and the Clerks at the Table for your wisdom and professionalism while guiding members through the procedures of the Legislative Assembly. And I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your office staffs for their support over the last four years. I know we have challenged them and yourselves at times with instant rulings and instant paper to come forward in this House as we ask for leave for various and sundry Bills and regulations and legislation.

I'd also like to extend my thanks to all of my colleagues, the elected members, and especially those who are retiring and are spending their last day as elected members in this Assembly. I'd also like to thank the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the various committees. Over the four years, we have asked you to do a lot of work, and you have done that, and we would like to thank you.

I would like to also offer thanks to the staff of the respective caucus offices, the staff of Executive Council, and the staff of ministers' offices. And I think there's an office that we often forget to say thank you to, and that's to the people in our constituency offices that are there to support us and deal with the constituents when we're not available to be there.

In addition I would like to commend those that help contribute to the daily operation of the Legislative Assembly, such as library services, broadcast services, Journals, and Hansard, and especially Journals and Hansard. They are little seen. There are two members in the House during sessions, one in committee. They are never heard. We never hear a word from them, but they are very well read, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms and the commissionaires for the duties they perform in the House and the building, the building staff, the cafeteria staff, the Pages, the interns, and the tour guides, Mr. Speaker. You truly help to make our jobs as legislators that much easier with your hard work, positive attitudes, and friendliness.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to the media for keeping the public up to date on what's happening in the legislature and the work that actually happens here.

Last but of course not least, I would like to thank our families for the continued support they provide to us. It's truly by their sacrifices that we are able to do this work on behalf of the people of this great province. It is our spouses, children, and in some cases, as we saw earlier today, our grandchildren of our members that have to endure the extended absences that often occur. And for that I offer my sincere gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to wish everyone a safe and

happy summer as we continue with our duties outside the Assembly. And drive safely.

So, Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day today, it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion presented by the Government House Leader. Will the Assembly take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand to also thank the many, many people who make this Chamber the great place it is, where we get to represent the people of Saskatchewan on behalf of all of them. Mr. Speaker, it's an opportunity that very few people ever get. And it is a challenge but it is also a great, great opportunity to feel and represent the people of the province and bring forward the things that are most important to them.

Mr. Speaker, today we had six wonderful speeches from people who have given a good part of their life to serving others. I'd just like to say on behalf of all of us and the people of Saskatchewan, it is appreciated. We may have our disagreements. We may have at times our issues which we are polarized on and we can't agree but, Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of the province appreciate the work that's done. We have the province we have and the great country we have because we have the democratic process we have.

Mr. Speaker, to each of those that are leaving, you've made a contribution to make this province a better place for all of our families, and for that you earn everyone's gratitude. Mr. Speaker, to yourself and the staff in your office and the many staff in this building who make every day an opportunity to make every day a pleasure to work in this building, I think that they all deserve a thank you, from the people who clean our offices, to the people who provide the food services in the cafeteria, staff in the Library, Hansard, Sergeant-at-Arms. I could go through the whole list as my colleague opposite did.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take all the members' time this afternoon. Many of them have a distance to travel. So I want to finish by saying a thank you to each and every member's families who make the sacrifice of allowing their loved one to be a part of this great Chamber, this great Assembly. It is through their sacrifice that the good work that gets done here is able to be accomplished. So on behalf of all of us, I'd like to wish everybody a wonderful recess and hope that I see . . . Well I hope we're back in the fall, Mr. Speaker. We could maybe trade sides and a few members.

But to each and every one, too many people fail to recognize the enormous task that people undertake when they enter public life. And I just want to say thank you. And for those who may

not come back next fall, we don't know, you won't be forgotten either. Thank you very much.

[13:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Firstly before I place the question, I'd just like to make a few comments. And I'm going to begin by saying as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, an honour that the members have bestowed upon me, I would like to extend to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, the member from Regina Northeast, the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, the member from Regina Coronation Park, the member from Melfort, and the member from Saskatoon Nutana, our thanks, appreciation for your devotion, dedication, and commitment to your constituents and the people of Saskatchewan as you've served in this Legislative Assembly.

As a Speaker and having been, I've had the privilege of serving this Assembly, it's been an honour to serve with men and women on both sides of the Assembly. I think we need to come to the recognition that while we may have our differences, each and every one of us — one of you, pardon me — represents a viewpoint, and we need to respect that. And I want to say personally, thank you for the way you have represented your constituents.

I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the House leaders, the Whips, and the caucus Chairs and the members for your co-operation as we have managed to move through another session of the Legislative Assembly, the twenty-sixth, this twenty-sixth Legislative Assembly. And as Speaker, to my staff of Irene, Kathy, and Anna, and especially to Anna at this time. In a few short weeks, she's going to be leaving the office, unfortunately, to plan for her marriage and moving to a new community. She's been a real asset to my office, and I say thank you.

I say thank you as well to the Clerks for their assistance, and to the legislative staff. And I will not go through all the staff, but I want to acknowledge the presence of a few members, not particularly staff, but especially our Pages: our Pages, Laura, Alana, Sydney, Kayla, Quinn, and Tristan. Thank you so much for serving us in this session, the fourth session of the twenty-sixth Legislative Assembly. Maybe members we could give them, show them our appreciation.

And so members, thank you so much. And at this time I place the question presented by the member from Cannington. By leave of the Assembly:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day today, it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government; and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:19.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

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

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

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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

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

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

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

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services