



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

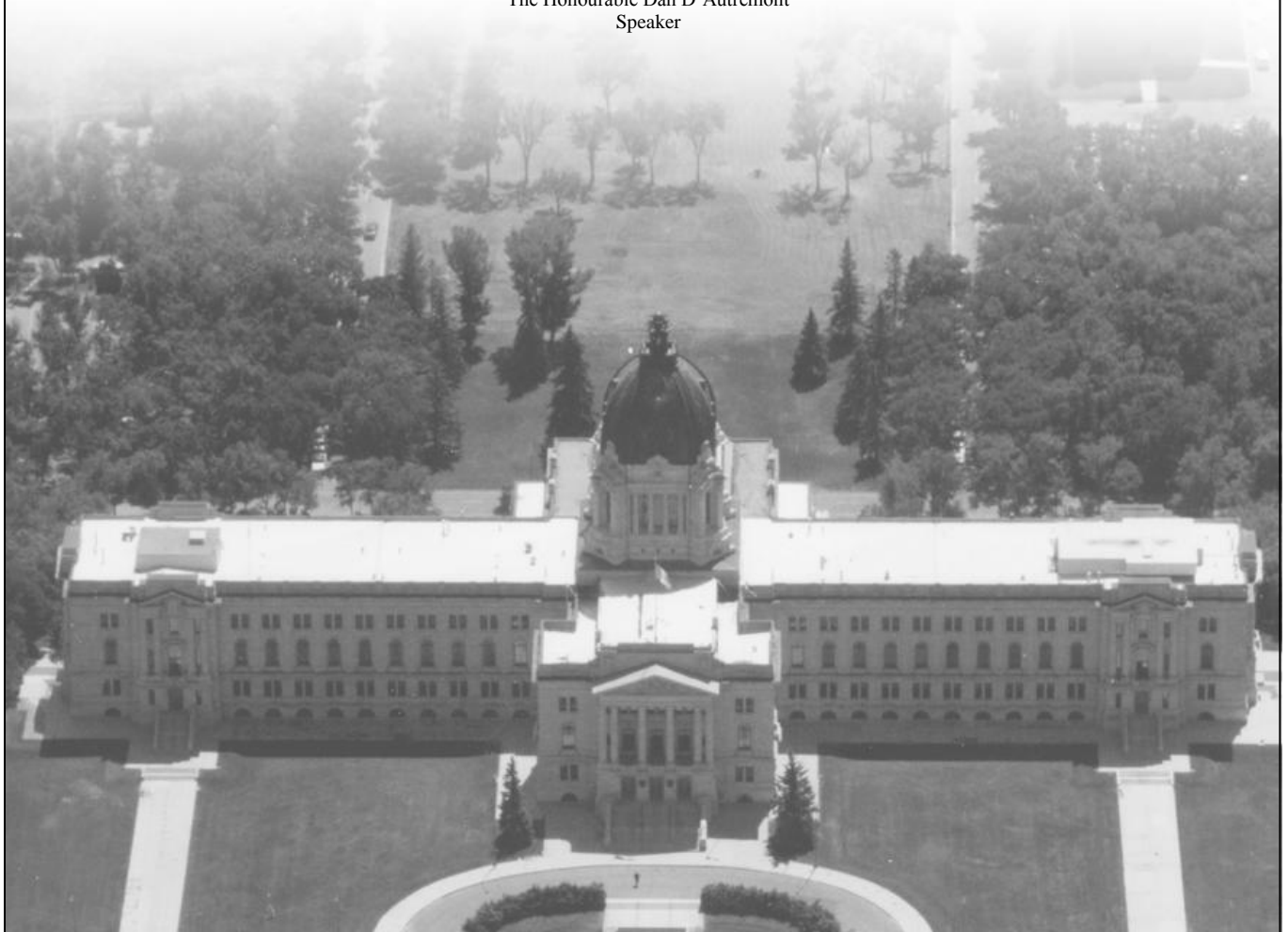
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

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

[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. To you and through you to all members of the House, it's a pleasure to introduce some guests that are seated in your gallery, some of whom I may have seen last in the community of Dublin at a very successful job fair in Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, joining us today is the newly elected, newly chosen president of the Regina Chamber of Commerce, Cory Furman, originally from Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, and so this bodes very well for the chamber. He's joined by the president of the Saskatchewan Construction Association and city councillor, Michael Fougere.

And also with them we have Rachele Clark who's a recruitment manager at ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation], an IBM [International Business Machines] company here in the capital city, Mr. Speaker; Doug Simon who's chief personnel officer at Brandt Tractor; and Shaun Hanson who's the assistant transport manager with Loblaw, Shaun being a recent nominee in terms of our immigrant nominee program from Newcastle, from the UK [United Kingdom].

And, Mr. Speaker, we want to welcome this delegation to the Assembly. Later on we'll be reporting more formally on the efforts of Saskatchewan employers and the Government of Saskatchewan with respect to that job fair in Ireland and the investment attraction mission portion in London, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to thank them for the work they've done for representing this province so very well on that important mission and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome the officials who have been part of this tour to the Assembly. I want to make a special welcome of Mr. Furman as he's a member of my former law firm and is upholding the strong tradition of good business sense and good common sense as we develop this province. And I know that the others who have been working together all bring their skills together in the task of making our province better, and we say thank you very much.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray

Wiebe was shot two times and died from his injuries. He was working alone at a gas station in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. We know provinces like British Columbia have brought several safety precautions through law, including a requirement that workers cannot be alone during late-night, early morning hours. And if they are required to work, there must be protective barriers such as locked doors and protective glass.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately enact Bill 601, Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours.

And the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to make education a top priority by establishing a long-term vision and plan with resources that is responsive to the opportunities and challenges in providing the best quality education and that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that recognizes the importance of educational excellence to the social and economic well-being of our province and students for today and for our future.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village as well as Dundonald, and the petition is about the need for a new school in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village. It says:

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 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, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that concern our traditional trappers. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience be valued; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to trapping regulations and firearm use in consultation with traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many trappers and the good people of northern Saskatchewan.

I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Women's Day

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, March 8th, we mark the 101st anniversary of International Women's Day. This is an important day for all of us to consider because it provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the political, economic, and social contributions women have made to the world. But it also serves as a reminder of the work we still have to do.

Canada elected our first woman to the House of Commons in 1921, so you'd think we would have made great strides over the last century, but we currently rank 40th on a list of 109 countries when it comes to electing women to national parliaments. In Saskatchewan we took a step backward in the fall election when it comes to gender representation and have two fewer women sitting in our legislature — an abysmal 19 per cent.

Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food, but earn only 10 per cent of the world's income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's land. That, Mr. Speaker, is a problem.

This year's International Women's Day is focused on Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures. If we are going to inspire positive futures for girls, then we are going to have to do a lot better at showing young women that we are ready to value women as true equals in pay, in status, in representation and other decision-making bodies.

I ask all members to join me in celebrating International Women's Day, recognizing that we still have much work to do, and in committing to do this work together. Thank you.

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

Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, each year on March the 8th, Saskatchewan joins a global community to celebrate International Women's Day and mark the economic, political, and social achievements of women. Inspiring International Women's Day events promote equal labour standards, rights to maternity leave, increased participation in the labour force, and expansion of educational opportunities. This special day has been observed since 1911 and was officially proclaimed by the United Nations in 1975.

Saskatchewan's theme in 2012 is Women and Girls Inspiring Leadership: Gateway to Economic Security. Saskatchewan has long been home to women leaders. Former Estevan Mayor Ida Petterson and national journalist and Senator Pamela Wallin are but two outstanding examples of women determined to succeed in their fields of expertise.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Status of Women office in the Ministry of Social Services, through an International Women's Day grant program, is assisting 94 community-based women's organizations to host 36 events throughout the month of March. Details of these events are listed on the Ministry of Social Services' website, and I encourage my colleagues to attend events in their own communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House and the people of this province join me in paying tribute to the many women who've contributed to making Saskatchewan such a wonderful place to live and work. Thank you.

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

Seniors' Bill of Rights

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since taking on the role of the opposition critic for seniors a few months ago, I have been contacted by many people with concerns ranging from access to home care and long-term care, to the quality of care, and to broader concerns about abuse and exploitation. And of course I have recently heard a lot about the rapid eviction of seniors in their 80s and 90s from an assisted living unit.

Many of those that contacted me with concerns asked me to reintroduce the seniors' bill of rights. So later today, I will move first reading of that Bill. I want to thank my former colleague, Judy Junor, who has been pushing this Bill since 2009, and I call on the Sask Party government to stop stalling on this important issue because we owe it to our seniors and

elders to better protect their rights.

I am reminded of a quote from Bill Clinton who said, “Of all the duties we owe to one another, our duty to our parents and grandparents is among the most sacred.” As a society, we have a duty to look out for the seniors and elders who not only built this province but are still contributing to our social fabric in many important ways, both big and small. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer

Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, March is national Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is over 90 per cent preventable, and it’s highly treatable when caught early. Our government is committed to strengthening cancer care for Saskatchewan people and supporting screening programs for prevention and early detection of cancer. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency screening program for colorectal cancer is a great example of the benefits of early detection. The screening program is a proactive, effective way to identify people who are at risk of developing colorectal cancer. Eligible men and women aged 50 to 74 are able to complete the test in the privacy of their home using a personal test kit. The sample is then dropped off at a medical laboratory or mailed back in a supplied postage-paid envelope.

As of January 2012, more than 16,000 individuals have responded, giving Saskatchewan one of the highest response rates in Canada. This program is already available in several health regions and has shown positive results. Because of this screening, dozens of patients have had precancerous polyps removed, avoiding invasive cancer treatment or surgery.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and our health regions for their excellent work in introducing and expanding this screening program. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Provincial Impaired Driving Awareness Week

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to inform you that the week of March 4th to 10th, 2012, has been officially designated provincial Impaired Driving Awareness Week in Saskatchewan.

The negative effects of impaired driving are staggering. The Canadian organization of Mothers Against Drunk Driving published 2008 statistics citing in that year alone 1,162 fatalities and 68,538 injuries. While it is possible to put a financial cost on these tragic occurrences, it is impossible to record the immense suffering of the family and friends. In Canada, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and students against drunk driving work with thousands of community volunteers, spending countless hours carrying out a mission to stop impaired driving and to support the victims.

The Project Red Ribbon campaign and the grade 7 to 12 school

assembly program are examples of these initiatives aimed at raising awareness and money to provide services for victims, increase public awareness, conduct legal research, and improve anti-impaired driving technologies.

Mr. Speaker, impaired driving is still an ongoing issue in our country and province, and designation of Impaired Driving Awareness Week is one way for a government to help better inform citizens of the resulting effects of a decision to drive drunk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Tim Hortons Brier

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of year again for a Canadian tradition, the Canadian men’s curling championship, the Tim Hortons Brier. The Brier is a thrilling time for players, coaches, volunteers, and event organizers, and especially for Saskatchewan. Twelve of the best curling teams from across Canada represent the provinces during six days of jam-packed curling action. With more than 7,000 curlers, who attempt to qualify each year for the Brier through club, zone, district, and eventually provincial championships, these 12 teams can truly be proud of their accomplishments of making the Brier.

The 2012 Brier has been held 10 times in Saskatchewan, and this is the sixth time it has been held in Saskatoon since the Brier began in 1927. Curling is an important part of Saskatchewan culture, and you’d be hard pressed to find someone in the province who hasn’t thrown a rock or two. And those small town Saskatchewan bonspiels, well they’re legendary. There has been a long history of championship curling in Saskatchewan and the Brier being a great opportunity to showcase what the city of Saskatoon and the province has to offer. And although our Saskatchewan weather has not exactly co-operated, I believe the 2012 Brier will yet be another successful event hosted by the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in congratulating the organizers and countless volunteers for their determination in putting on . . . Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

100th Anniversary of the Legislative Building

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of this Legislative Building. On March 8th, 1912 — 100 years ago today — Provincial Treasurer James Calder delivered the first budget ever tabled in this Chamber. That budget came at a time of incredible growth in our new province, and the 1912 budget reflected that growth.

Saskatchewan’s population had doubled from a quarter of a million people in 1906 to half a million people in 1912, and the 1912 budget spent just under \$9 million or about \$18 for every Saskatchewan resident. Five million dollars was also announced for a massive new highways program known as the

Scott good roads policy, another 1.5 million was allocated for telephones, and 1.25 million for public buildings. In contrast the budget spent just \$585,000 on education and just \$113,000 on health.

Another thing that has really changed is the media coverage of this budget. I particularly like this line from the next day's front page in the *Regina Morning Leader*:

The budget speech was a clear-cut statement of the financial affairs of the province, a statement that must have been pleasing to all who heard it, save of course for the opposition men who can take no pleasure from anything, which shows how well the government has done its work.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has changed since 1912, but the 1912 budget paints a clear picture of a new province taking on both the challenges and the opportunities of growth. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Representation

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for the Premier: does he represent everyone in his constituency or just those who are 18 years of age and over?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cryptic question of course is in reference to legislation being brought forward, changes being brought forward in the wake of the census and the new electoral map. Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan will now join a number of other provinces in the country, I think including Ontario, in terms of the 18-year-old criteria.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we continue to have a growing population in the province of Saskatchewan, something we're grateful for. We continue to welcome newcomers to this province. We continue to engage those who are not fully engaged in the economy to a greater extent as each month goes by, Mr. Speaker. And as we move forward, all of those citizens will be represented effectively, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly and especially by the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, Bill 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act*, will eliminate people under 18 from the equation that is used to redraw the constituency boundaries. In this legislation, the Premier is saying that young people under 18 don't count. My question is to the Premier: how can the young people under 18 believe that the Premier is working in their best interest when he says that they don't count in the electoral process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that we allocate resources based on eligible voters. That's how funding is given to constituency offices, and that's how, in fact, elections are operated. I can advise the members as well that Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Yukon count not only people that are over 18, but they require them to be registered voters as well.

Mr. Speaker, our intention is to include everybody that is over the age of 18, to hopefully include people that are immigrants that may want to become citizens, and we would encourage them all to become citizens so they can vote. But we feel that it is an accurate and fair way of apportioning and allocating our resources through the province and a way of ensuring that we have good representation for everybody that's there. Mr. Speaker, our intention is to represent each and every resident of the province, whether they are a citizen, whether they are a voter, and regardless of their age. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, about a quarter of the people in the province are under the age of 18. And about half of this approximately 250,000, or slightly more, of young people in the province are Aboriginal.

Many times throughout the session, we in this legislature, the Premier and members right around, introduce the school groups that come to our legislature and say, welcome to your legislature. My question to the Premier is this: how can he stand with a straight face and welcome these young people to their legislature when he's passing a Bill that says that they don't count?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — This is incredible leadoff to question period, Mr. Speaker. It's pretty obvious that when government enacts policies, when government delivers health care, when government invests in education, when government invests in post-secondary education, when we invest in a quarter billion dollar housing plan, when we outline and implement economic plans that, Mr. Speaker, see our province leading the nation in economic growth, that is for all the people of this province.

And I can tell you, based on the record of this government in delivering those services to people of all ages, based on the record of this government, Mr. Speaker, in moving Saskatchewan forward, members on this side of the House will be very proud to continue to welcome every single school student to this legislature — to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Other provinces and territories make the same calculation, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is this: the record of this government is kept promises and a growing, leading economy on behalf of all of the province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this may be the Premier's first question period in this session, but once again he's speaking out of both sides of his mouth. In one sentence, he's telling the young people of Saskatchewan that he wants them to engage in

the political process and that their concerns are going to be heard by the legislature, is going to be heard by him. In the next sentence he's telling them that until they are 18 they don't count in the electoral process.

My question is to the Premier: how can he expect young people to be engaged in the politics of this province when their own Premier is telling them that they don't count?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there's no change to the age criteria for those who can vote. Those people who could vote in the past will be able, those people of that age will be able to vote in the future. Mr. Speaker, there have been many avenues for young people to get involved in politics without having the vote, Mr. Speaker, through things like youth parliament, through things like the youth wings of various political parties.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this. I can tell you the greatest disservice ever done to the young people of this province was inflicted upon them for a generation by members opposite with economic policies that drove families and young people out of this province in record number. Mr. Speaker, young people and people of all ages and from all backgrounds, they're voting with their feet, Mr. Speaker. They're coming to the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Accommodation in Seniors' Facility

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Health, I know the Minister of Health would simply like the St. Mary's Villa issue to go away. But I continue to receive many calls on this issue, and emails, and individuals are asking me to raise concerns. One story I've heard is quite concerning, Mr. Speaker, and this story occurred after the short notice was given for eviction and after there was widespread coverage in the media. I was informed, Mr. Speaker, by five individuals, that while . . .

The Speaker: — Mr. Member, please address your comments through the Chair.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I was informed that while seniors were packing their belongings, trying to find a place to live, that at the same time construction work was beginning on the area where they were living, including the removal of asbestos. My question to the minister: was he aware that construction was beginning while residents were still living in their units, including the removal of asbestos?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I dealt with this issue, I think, on the first day of the House that we were sitting, and at that time I apologized on behalf of government. This was not handled the way we would want to see it handled. Nor does the health region, Saskatoon Health Region, feel it was handled appropriately either. You saw the CEO [chief

executive officer] of the health region apologize. We have apologized.

I will say in light of that, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands, tens of thousands of dealings with seniors each and every day in the health system, Mr. Speaker. And for the vast majority of them, they're handled very, very well. The ones that aren't handled very well we learn from and we want to make changes so that those mistakes won't happen again. This is a classic example where there were 10 that weren't dealt with very well. We've apologized, Mr. Speaker. We've not only apologized, but we've called in the Ombudsman to have a look at this, Mr. Speaker, to see where changes can be made so this doesn't happen again.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about individuals here. We're talking about grandmothers, grandfathers, moms, and dads. These are specific individuals. The minister was informed of what was going on — there was widespread coverage — and he chose not to pay attention to what was happening.

In addition to the stress of these seniors having to pack their belongings and find a place to live within days, they were confronted by individuals in protective suits with masks removing asbestos. One person told me that they actually had to close the window on her mother's unit in order to prevent dust coming in. Another person told me that while the mother was still living in the unit that they actually started to take apart the window, removing the casing on the window while the woman was packing her belongings.

My question to the minister, my question to the minister: why did he let this happen? It was covered in the news. He was informed of what was going on, but he chose not to pay attention and he allowed these seniors to be disrespected. Why did he do that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the past, the timelines were certainly tight. There were some issues around communication. That's why we have the Ombudsman looking into this, so that we can learn from it and make sure that those mistakes will not happen again.

I will say though, Mr. Speaker, after four and a half years of touring the province, of seeing many of the health care facilities left by 16 years of neglect by the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker, that there are many facilities in this province that need upgrading, Mr. Speaker. St. Mary's is one of them. And as we move forward to upgrading and fixing more facilities left by the neglect of the NDP, we'll do it better next time, Mr. Speaker. That is a guarantee, Mr. Speaker. But I can't help but say, when you tour some of the facilities after 16 years of neglect, Mr. Speaker, there has to be some renewal, and this is one of those facilities.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's trying to deflect the issue. The minister knows that this mistreatment happened under his watch. It's about the process that happened under his authority as the Minister of Health. It is good that this issue has been referred to the Ombudsman. I support that. But that does not remove the role of ministerial accountability. After this issue was in the news, after the minister knew about it, there still was continued mistreatment. Actually it probably got worse than the initial news of having to move.

Mr. Speaker, these are people in their 80s and 90s — as I said before, grandmas and grandpas, individuals that we're supposed to care for in our society. I've been told stories about grandparents breaking down and crying, full of anxiety about what they're going to do next. I was told about one individual who missed taking their cancer medication because of the turmoil and the anxiety with this move and the uncertainty about where that individual will be going.

My question to the minister: when did he know about this? What did he know about this? And why did he choose to do absolutely nothing about this so that these seniors were treated properly?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, this government prides itself on really, quite frankly, having a good look at the health care system, putting the patients first, which hadn't been done before, Mr. Speaker.

Day in and day out, we have thousands and thousands of interactions with all people of the province and especially seniors, where the treatment and the service delivery is done very, very well. And I'll say Saskatoon's Regional Health Authority is a leader in that front, Mr. Speaker, adopting the patient-centred care. That is what is shocking about this. That is what is alarming about this. And that's what we all need to learn from, Mr. Speaker. It's far from perfect. The system is far from perfect, and we'll admit that, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're not afraid to look into this even further with an independent officer like the Ombudsman that will certainly put forward some recommendations that we'll learn from and move forward from, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the treatment was unacceptable, but I can also tell you, Mr. Speaker, on the thousands of interactions that happen day in and day out, for the vast majority of them, they're treated very, very well. We want to learn from this one.

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

Government Appointments

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recently learned that since 2007, there's a marked disparity between the number of women government appoints and the number of men appointed to Saskatchewan boards. In fact by the government's own account, it shows that since 2007, a

shamefully low 29.6 per cent of all government board appointees were women.

My question to the minister is: half our province's population are women, so why is your government's record on appointing women to boards so one-sided? And does the government believe this is acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question. Our Crowns, all the boards of government, we appoint competent people. Some are women, some are men, but all are competent, Mr. Speaker. We ensure that the leadership roles . . . I know that in our Crown corporations we've had women as CEOs, we've had women as Crown presidents. And it isn't something we discriminate on, Mr. Speaker. It's competence that we search for. And there are women that have contributed a great deal to the boards for our government, Mr. Speaker. And there's women that continue to contribute their time to ensuring that our boards are well represented and serving the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that those numbers that I referenced, the 29.6 don't include Crown boards. Crown board numbers are even more abysmal. SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], 2 out of 12; SaskPower, 2 out of 11; SaskTel, 3 out of 11; SaskEnergy, 3 out of 9. I'm talking about Executive Council appointments. So the Crown appointments are even worse, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we asked the government what criteria — and we heard a little bit from this last minister — are used to determine the suitability of order in council appointees to boards. The response we received says, "Criteria is based on the needs of the ministry and includes appropriate levels of education and/or equivalent experience, skills, abilities, and knowledge."

So my question to the minister is: since only 29.6 per cent of your government's appointees were women, does your government believe that for every one skilled, able, and educated Saskatchewan woman, there are three skilled, able, and educated men?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I think that kind of question is kind of ridiculous when you look at what we have within our government right now. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to tell you that in Saskatchewan right now, we have the first ever deputy minister of Finance who is a woman. We have six other deputy ministers who are female. We have six chiefs of staff that are women. We have Lisa Boire who has received the Premier's Award last year for her work in the lean initiatives right across the entire government. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the members opposite realize that 57 per cent of the government workforce is women.

Mr. Speaker, what we're doing right now in this province is making sure there is a balance of competent women, and the needs and the views of women are seen right across our government. I'm proud of the work that we're doing right now and so are the women that I met with yesterday in the Inspiring Leadership Conference led by Dr. Timmons from the U of R [University of Regina], who noted that women right across Saskatchewan are increasing their opportunities to be involved in government.

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

Ms. Chartier: — I think one of those key words is balance that the minister used, and 30 per cent is not what one would call balance. Mr. Speaker, we know that the government's record on appointing women to boards is abysmal. We also know that according to the government's own admission, there is no one, no one in the Premier's Executive Council office responsible for monitoring gender representation on the board, on boards.

So to the minister: will your government develop a policy to ensure that women of Saskatchewan have equal opportunity to be appointed to our provincial boards and that in fact a representative number of Saskatchewan's well-qualified, competent, and highly capable women are appointed to serve on boards?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue, one that has been identified by our government to make sure that we do have people coming forward. One of the issues we found is that people aren't bringing their name forward. So I know that the Premier has asked the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Fairview to come forward and work with chambers of commerce and different groups right across the province to identify women who could be on boards and are willing to take time and give their expertise in many areas — not just on boards that are within the ministries but on Crown boards as well to make sure that they understand they have a value and that we need them as we grow the province.

Women's issues, women's perspective is important to make sure that our government is looking at the whole province and the needs. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to the report that's brought forward from the member from Fairview.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister tried to spin that her government had consulted with Saskatchewan people in the education sector when they decided to divert funds to previously unfunded private, independent schools. Mr. Speaker, that's categorically incorrect. In fact a December 22nd Saskatchewan School Boards Association news release states:

For the second time in the past six weeks, the Government of Saskatchewan has announced a change in education

policy without consulting the locally elected school boards of Saskatchewan.

Not only was the education sector not consulted. I have looked through the Sask Party's fall election platform and it certainly didn't have any mention of diverting funds from education. And I've taken some time to go through the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker — not a mention.

To the minister: why won't this government simply be straight to Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have met with the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] on this particular issue and their press release and reminded them of the consultation process. And they do know and they have the report. The media has actually the report as well.

The media have the report of the consultation process that was started, quite frankly, when the NDP were in power. The consultation began then. All of the stakeholders were involved: STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], SSBA, the LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], as well as the independent school associations, were involved in the consultation. There were recommendations that came forward. And we didn't act on them immediately, Mr. Speaker, because the priority of course was to focus on working on the funding formula. But now we have acted on that report, Mr. Speaker, and the recommendations were that we do the same as other Western Canadian provinces and have recognition of independent schools.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, a ministry will always be reviewing different aspects of a respective ministry and that does not count as consultation in any way, shape, or form. And I know that the education sector and the stakeholders — the SSBA, the STF, LEADS, across the piece — they in no way have been consulted on this front. And in fact they didn't even have a funding formula for three years running when this surprise announcement to divert funding came along. This diversion of millions of education dollars has been widely criticized and rightfully so. There was no consultation. There are pressing needs and opportunities in education and now the government's threatening cuts. Will the minister do the right thing and scrap this damaging program?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — As I said in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, there was an independent schools review. The review began under the NDP. All of the specific stakeholder groups had representation, and there were recommendations. Mr. Speaker, I know that this member keeps saying again and again that we're diverting funding from the existing \$1.7 billion education budget. That is not true. The up to 1.7 million, not billion, will be new dollars and the schools that will receive it will have accountability.

Our number one goal is to serve all students in Saskatchewan. And we are going to improve student achievement. Schools that meet a certain criteria that will focus on student achievement will receive 50 per cent funding, the same as other provinces in Western Canada, including their NDP neighbours in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's sort of interesting, Mr. Speaker. The minister says they're not diverting funding. I guess they're just sending new money, millions of dollars, to previously unfunded private, independent schools at the same time as they're cutting resources in the classroom and boards across Saskatchewan. If that's not diverting dollars, I don't know what is, Mr. Speaker.

Another example of mismanagement . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . A question I heard opposite, where are they cutting funds? Better consult with the Education minister because there's cases of that all across the province right here and now.

Another example of mismanagement in education is the government's high-interest loan scheme. In 2009, the Sask Party took complete control of education funding, stripping away the school boards' ability to collect any revenues, but nonsensically still require boards to contribute a 35 per cent share for infrastructure. Without revenues and no abilities for boards to build reserve funds, school boards are now forced to borrow that share at a much higher rate than government, wasting millions needlessly on high interest. Question to the minister: how does this make any sense?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — School divisions have always funded a share of their capital projects and they used various methods to do so, Mr. Speaker. Some borrowed from traditional lenders, which is seeming to cause now the NDP problems, but yet under the NDP they still borrowed from traditional lenders. Some issued debentures but very, very infrequent, and in fact the last one was in 2006 and none have attempted to do so since.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not reinventing anything too dynamic here. They did go to traditional institutions for borrowing in the past. What is changing, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, is we used to have tax revolts in our province and now we don't. The school division debt was never transparent; it was hidden. Now it's in the summary financial statements. They used to ignore crumbling schools. They didn't have to borrow if we don't build schools. Now we're building schools across our province. We used to have mill rates increasing by 5 per cent every year. Now we don't. There used to be an NDP government and now there's not.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, as the Premier's come back to Saskatchewan from Ireland here this week, it might be interesting for him to learn that in his home community of Swift Current, they're hiking property taxes by 8 per cent and

likely more, as we move forward with off-loading at so many levels and certainly from this government.

When the government took over full control of education funding in 2009, this arrangement should have changed. Or at least now, as a new education funding formula has been introduced, it should have been corrected.

Mr. Speaker, if the government is looking for inefficiency and waste, I found it in their high-interest loan scheme. It is wasting valuable education dollars and at a time when this government's threatening cuts. Will the minister do the right thing and commit to fix this today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, what the government's going to do, it's going to focus on student achievement. It's going to focus on a strong education system. We increased funding for education by over 18 per cent in our very first term. Mr. Speaker, we're going to commit to building schools and repairing schools in this province, something the NDP did not do. And we inherited \$1.2 billion of a disaster in school facilities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the school divisions had the power to borrow from traditional lenders before. They will still have the power to borrow from traditional lenders. This is not unique or new. It's just the NDP didn't even know what the heck the school divisions were doing before.

[10:45]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 603 — *The Seniors' Bill of Rights Act*

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 603, *The Seniors' Bill of Rights Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Massey Place has moved first reading of Bill No. 603, *The Seniors' Bill of Rights Act*.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a second time?

Mr. Broten: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Western Canada's Natural Resources

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue of great importance to our province, an issue of Western Canadian importance and indeed one that has national implications, and frankly one that deserves support from both sides of the House. At the conclusion of my comments today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving a motion that I believe both sides of this House, this Assembly, can support.

Now recently, Mr. Speaker, there has been some attention, more so than usual, on Canada's natural resource sector. There has been much toing and froing in the United States over the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, and President Obama has indicated that there will be no firm decision on that initiative until after the presidential election later this year. There has been widespread debate, Mr. Speaker, over the Northern Gateway pipeline project that will run between Alberta and the West Coast of Canada.

The media attention has focused on the fact that a great deal of Canada's natural energy resources are located within Western Canada, and that somehow only the people of Western Canada benefit from these resources. When the issue was recently highlighted, Mr. Speaker, in the media, due to some unfortunate comments comparing the viability of Western Canada's oil and gas sector versus the value of the Canadian dollar, our Premier immediately rose to the defence of the resource sector in all of Canada calling the comments divisive and not at all helpful to national unity.

For you see, Mr. Speaker, as our Premier said to the media, criticisms by anyone of the oil and gas sector could just as easily have been directed at the potash sector or the uranium sector or, for that matter, the hydroelectric sector in Quebec or Manitoba.

The natural resources within Canada — whether it be located in Quebec, Atlantic Canada, or British Columbia — belong to all Canadians and benefit everyone in this country. Mr. Speaker, our Premier immediately recognized that this attention and focus could easily have been directed at industries that are actually . . . that are critically vital to our economy here in Saskatchewan. Thousands of men and women in Saskatchewan rely on the potash industry, on the oil industry, the uranium industry for their livelihood and to support their families and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the potash industry specifically, as we all know in this Chamber, Saskatchewan is home to 50 per cent of the world's potash reserves. The Saskatchewan potash industry directly employs over 4,500 people and contributes to jobs for thousands more in spinoff activities.

There are significant investments, Mr. Speaker, in mine expansions going on as we speak. There are new industry players doing their due diligence, doing their geological

engineering and financial modelling to determine the economics of new greenfield operations here in the province.

Now the potash industry itself, Mr. Speaker, estimates that there are some \$13 billion in new expansions going to take place between now and 2020. As a matter of fact BHP Billiton's Jansen project could be the largest mine in the world with over 1,000 permanent employees once it comes to fruition.

K+S is investing \$3.25 billion, Mr. Speaker, in the Bethune area which will create 300 permanent jobs and 1,000 construction jobs for the first new greenfield mine in Saskatchewan in some 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, world potash demand is generally expected to increase by at least 3 per cent or more annually over the next 10 years. This is based on the following: there was increasing world food demand; there was limited available land to expand agricultural production; there is a growing middle class in emerging economies resulting in increased protein demand; and of course there's a growing world population, Mr. Speaker. The total annual demand could increase by as much 15 million tonnes by 2020. At current market share here in Saskatchewan, sales could increase by as much 5 million tonnes annually.

In the new expansions taking place right now, Mr. Speaker, we'll be the first to market, resulting in the opportunity to capture more of the current world market share for our own Saskatchewan producers.

The world is looking for energy security and food security. We in Saskatchewan are positioned to be a leader in these sectors. So, Mr. Speaker, when the debate arises about the utility of the energy resource sector in Canada, our Premier carefully and clearly articulates why this sector is so important to all of Canada and not just Western Canadians. This is exactly why the people of this province trust him to defend their interests and speak with an informed voice on issues of national importance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me spend a few minutes on another critical industry to our province and that is the oil and gas sector. The Government of Saskatchewan strongly supports both the Keystone XL project and the Northern Gateway pipeline project since they will provide Western Canadian crude oil producers important access to new and expanding markets in the United States and Asia.

Now, Mr. Speaker, pipelines have been operating safely and in accordance with high standards for decades in Saskatchewan under previous administrations and under this administration. The lack of pipeline capacity, however, in North America has resulted in challenges for our oil producers right here in Saskatchewan. It is possible if the Keystone pipeline project does not proceed or the Northern Gateway project does not proceed, it is possible that this slowdown, this lack of capacity for pipeline will impact the growth of Saskatchewan's production in the oil and gas sector.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is Canada's second largest producer of oil, home to a large part of the Bakken play, a formation US [United States] geological survey says is the largest conventional play in North America and one that we share with our US neighbours, Montana and North Dakota. If

we can increase our recovery rate through innovation and technology by just 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, it would triple our recoverable reserves of oil. Increasing our recovery rate by 10 per cent would increase our recoverable reserves sixfold. I know there's an awful lot of work going down at Boundary dam 3, Mr. Speaker, down in the Estevan area with respect to carbon capture and utilizing that captured CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery projects. Right here in Saskatchewan, innovation is taking place that the world is watching.

Mr. Speaker, the construction of the Keystone XL will inject billions of private sector dollars into the economy, creating more than 20,000 direct jobs and 118,000 spinoff jobs during construction throughout North America. Between 2010 and 2035, Ontario is expected to see \$63 billion in economic spinoffs and in excess of 65,000 oil sands related jobs according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute. The Canadian Energy Research Institute, Mr. Speaker, also projected over the same 25-year time frame that British Columbia could expect \$28 billion in economic benefits and in excess of 31,000 new jobs. In Quebec, Mr. Speaker, the province of Quebec may see \$14 billion worth of economic activity and in excess of 16,000 new jobs.

The demand for safe and conflict-free oil remains high, positioning Saskatchewan well for the future. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's population is now at an all-time high of 1.063 million and change. It has grown by over 15,000 people in the past year, making Saskatchewan the second fastest growing province in Canada. The province's population has now increased for 22 consecutive quarters, and in the past five years, Saskatchewan has grown by over 70,000 people. This is the fastest and most sustained period of population growth in decades.

Mr. Speaker, our province's unemployment rate now stands at 5.1 per cent, the second lowest rate in Canada and well below the national rate of 8 per cent. Saskatchewan has jumped from eighth to second in the ranking of the best performing labour markets as described in a report prepared annually by the Fraser Institute.

Saskatchewan has been rated as the best place in Canada for oil and gas investment based on the opinions of petroleum executives and managers in an annual Fraser Institute survey. As a matter of fact, according to the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, oil and gas drilling in Saskatchewan has increased by 11 per cent, Mr. Speaker, year over year. This is the highest percentage increase in the country. So, Mr. Speaker, it is no coincidence that Saskatchewan's population is on the upswing while oil and gas exploration is also on a record pace of growth. The two go hand in hand. So, Mr. Speaker, if the debate is about the viability of the natural resource sector in all of Canada versus a low Canadian dollar, the two are not incompatible as long as Canada is competitive from a productivity perspective.

This is not a partisan issue, Mr. Speaker. This is an opportunity for members of the opposition and the Government of Saskatchewan to stand together in a unified voice and affirm their commitment to defending the natural resource sector and the thousands of men and women, many of them unionized, who work in these industries. This is a time for the NDP and

the Sask Party to speak out in a bipartisan fashion and ask all political leaders in Canada to recognize the value that the oil and gas, potash, uranium, and indeed hydroelectric sectors bring to our country — not just in Quebec, not just in Atlantic Canada, not just in Western Canada, and not just Ontario, but clearly pan-Canadian, Mr. Speaker.

Whether it was the ice storms in Quebec a few years ago, whether it was the manufacturing sector crisis in southern Ontario a few years ago, whether it was the forest fires in British Columbia a few years ago — all of Canada comes together when these types of situations occur and helps out our neighbours. And so it must be, Mr. Speaker, for our oil and gas sector. It is not a Western Canadian oil and gas sector; it is a Canadian oil and gas sector.

So, Mr. Speaker, I humbly ask the members opposite to join us and support the following motion:

That this Assembly calls upon all partners in Confederation to join Alberta and Saskatchewan in sharing a positive message regarding Canada's oil sands.

Because, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the latest industry figures, mining accounts for over 30,000 direct and indirect jobs right here in the province of Saskatchewan. It generates \$1.5 billion in wages, Mr. Speaker, and generates approximately 7.7 billion in gross domestic product for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mining in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is our third largest industry after oil and gas and agriculture. It represents approximately 5 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP [gross domestic product] and will likely represent a larger portion of GDP under sustained high potash and uranium prices. \$12.2 billion combined, a combined value of oil and gas sales, is estimated for 2011, Mr. Speaker, up some 13 per cent from \$10.8 billion in 2010.

The success of Saskatchewan's energy sector, Mr. Speaker, is good for Canada and it's good for working families. The construction of the Keystone XL pipeline will result in hundreds of jobs for Saskatchewan people and considerable economic benefits, not only for this province, not only for our province, neighbours to the west, but indeed all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and those communities and businesses throughout Canada.

Oil and gas drilling in Saskatchewan is expected to increase now, the highest percentage increase in the country over the next year, Mr. Speaker. It's a vitally important sector for the province of Saskatchewan. We here on this side of the House want to ensure that we speak with a unified voice when we're defending the mining sector, the potash sector, the uranium sector, or the oil and gas sector. They're critically important, not only to Saskatchewan, not only to Alberta, but all of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we hear comments that may be interpreted as divisive with respect to a particular sector, this is a situation that the people of Saskatchewan don't take very lightly. When other things happen across the country, whether it's the auto manufacturing sector in southern Ontario and the federal government had to come to the rescue of this particular

sector, nobody in Saskatchewan stood up and say, I don't want any of my federal tax dollars going to help that sector. What they said, Mr. Speaker, is this is a pan-Canadian problem. This is an issue that we all need to come together with and support that industry in southern Ontario. It's time now the rest of Canada recognizes the value of our natural resource sector for all of Canadians.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move the following:

That this Assembly calls upon all partners in Confederation to join Alberta and Saskatchewan in sharing a positive message regarding Canada's oil sands.

[11:00]

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Northeast has moved the motion:

That this Assembly calls upon all partners in Confederation to join Alberta and Saskatchewan in sharing a positive message regarding Canada's oil sands.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to this particular motion and to set out the balanced approach that the New Democrats in Saskatchewan have been following for many years as it relates to oil and gas policy and mineral policy. And I know that the members opposite support the NDP approach because they have, over the last five years, maintained the mineral royalty structures and oil and gas royalty structures that were put into place after much consultation with the industry over quite a number of years.

Now what we knew and what we know from Premier Romanow's work in this area — and more importantly over the last number of years Premier Calvert's work, working together with Mr. Cline and with the other members of the cabinet — we understood that getting the policies right as it relates to oil and gas and minerals would make a huge difference in the economy of Saskatchewan. And we ended up also looking at taxation policy first and then looked at these kinds of policies. And I know the member who has just spoken this afternoon was referencing those strong policies, which continue in effect without change, and how important they are to the economy of Saskatchewan.

The particular motion today is talking about the oil sands. And for many people, they don't always understand that Saskatchewan has a large part of its province that includes oil sands up in the northwest part of the province. Mr. Speaker, the oil sands projects that were and are continuing to be promoted by the Axe Lake project and things in that particular area have very many technical challenges that are sort of an added layer of complexity on top of what is happening in the Alberta oil sands area. And so what ends up happening as these particular assets of the people of the province are being discussed by the officials within our energy and mines ministry, is that we need to understand all of the different challenges that are there, and therefore we have been working with them.

I know in my role as a minister in the previous government that we spent many, many hours with the companies that were interested in expanding across into Saskatchewan to further develop this asset for the people of Saskatchewan. And always the question was getting the right balance, making sure that the asset could be used safely and carefully and at the same time making sure that any company that was involved could do that in an economic fashion. But we all knew, both the companies and the provincial government, was that due to the complexity there were going to be some great difficulties. And that has been borne out as the projects have gone ahead. But as we know, each decade, probably every three or four years, there are enhancements in the technology that assist.

Now one of the questions that comes from this motion relates to the overall use of these assets for the long-term health of Canada and North America.

We all know that the oil sands of northern Alberta and northern Saskatchewan are an incredible reservoir of energy for use by the world. And it's very clear that the world knows that as well. When we see now the numbers of Crown corporations — if I can put it that way — that have come from countries around the world to invest in the oil sands as partners or as main operators in the Alberta oil sands, we recognize that this asset is being treated as a world-class asset that is of value to everyone.

But at the same time, we need to ask a number of very difficult questions to maintain the balance. One of the major concerns that we have from the Ministry of the Environment — and I know this from when I was the minister of the Environment — is that there are quite a number of airborne contaminants that come from some of the processes in Alberta that directly affect the lakes and rivers and the vegetation of northwestern Saskatchewan.

We know that this is an issue in Alberta as well, and we know it's especially an issue for the federal government. I think the federal Minister of Environment, Peter Kent, was in Alberta just a few months ago to make an announcement about a very specific monitoring program which would be sponsored by the federal government and the provincial government. And I think our provincial government is involved as well. And the reason for that is that there have been a number of difficult issues related to both to the airborne issues but also to concerns about water quality.

And we should never forget that this Earth where we live needs to be dealt with carefully. And we in Saskatchewan have to be good stewards of not only the resource which will be used — it's a one-time resource — but also of the place where it comes from. And I think that what the message and what the concern is worldwide about the oil sands is that they have not totally understood how those of us who live in this place are concerned about the extraction of the resource and how it needs to be done carefully.

Now we do know that over a number of decades, as this resource was first being developed, that there weren't necessarily the same standards of how to do it, how to do that job, and that there are many things that were not done correctly. And I think many of the people involved in the oil industry will acknowledge that, and we've seen that.

But what we also know is that we can all work together, both the environmental groups, the environmental ministries, and the oil companies, and the energy ministries to get this right. It was quite interesting today in *The Globe and Mail* that there was a headline about the oil industry and the oil companies in the oil sands coming together with a number of the very thoughtful environmental groups to put forward policies that they jointly recommend to our federal government and our provincial governments that will allow for the balance that makes sure that these projects will all go ahead but at the same time will address many of the concerns that come to us from around the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's what this issue is all about. It's about how we portray what we do, how we make sure that we have the rules and the regulations in place that will absolutely make sure that the land and the water and the air is protected for the people and for the animals and for the fish. Because over the centuries, it's that legacy that we will want to protect.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we see a motion like this, what we wanted to do is make sure that the position that comes from the Government of Saskatchewan is the traditional NDP position of balance. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to hold that perspective and make sure that that message gets out. Thank you.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to speak a little bit about utilitarianism and kind of identify what the meaning is. It's held to the view that the action made is the action that produces the most good. My colleague from Regina Northeast had spoken earlier about the economic benefits of the oil and gas industry. The utilitarian view is: one ought to maximize overall good; consider the good of others as well as one's own good. And resource development has many positive aspects in the form of thousands of jobs and procurement opportunities.

So I also want to speak a little bit about on Saskatchewan's strong economy. And we should be focusing on the Saskatchewan benefits basically of being a blessed province to have a strong resource sector.

And I want to speak about Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal skills training, the partnerships that are taking place, and making a connection between education and resource jobs — you can't have one without the other. So we need a Canada where more people are educated and working on their own natural resources is a better overall Canada.

So I kind of want to talk about a little bit about our uranium industry. And approximately 49 per cent of mine site employees, including contractors, are residents of Canada's North. Approximately 43 per cent of mine site employees, including contractors, are of Aboriginal ancestry. Uranium employed 2,341 people in 2010 — 51 per cent were residents of northern Saskatchewan and 87 per cent were First Nations or Métis.

First Nations and Métis institutions like the Saskatchewan

Indian Institute of Technologies, which I'm an alumni of — that's where I started eight years ago, so I know the value of their training and education programs — and the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Dumont Technical Institute and First Nations University of Canada are playing leadership roles in recruiting and training Aboriginal students here in Saskatchewan. And I know first-hand of the good work that these institutions are doing because I'm still a student, and I'm still involved in university politics.

So many of the programs that these institutions offer link directly into employment within the resource and mining sectors, and we have helped ensure these institutions receive the necessary funding and supports to facilitate success in the classroom and then success in their careers.

The growing Aboriginal youth population presents a great opportunity for our province, with roughly 13,000 First Nations and Métis learners in Saskatchewan's post-secondary system. And we see real progress as we continue to link learning opportunities with earning opportunities right here in Saskatchewan. We also commend the work done in the private sector by world-class corporations like Cameco and PotashCorp, both headquartered right here in Saskatchewan, on their efforts to train and employ First Nations and Métis close to home.

[11:15]

I want to talk a little bit about the Saskatchewan tribal council and the PotashCorp partnership. PotashCorp has allocated \$250,000 per year for education and training opportunities, and I was sitting at that table and I know that those dollars are going down the right pipeline. So those dollars are basically going into youth entrepreneurship programs as well as educational and training programs and also into active measures programming. So these companies are looking at the Aboriginal population as their long-term skilled labour and are working on an Aboriginal strategy. They're also working on procurement strategies. The Saskatoon Tribal Council has somebody working on procurement.

With a record of economic growth, one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada, and a growing population, Saskatchewan is the place of unparalleled opportunity. And this is one of the reasons why I stayed in this province once I got my M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration]. I could have went to Toronto. I could have went back to the States, but I stayed. This is my home, and the opportunity is here.

So \$2.8 billion is a record investment in post-secondary education. Over \$46 million in funding for First Nations and Métis education and training, a 20 per cent increase from the previous year. Over the past four years we committed 142.8 million directly into First Nations and Métis education and employment. We will continue to work with our partners across the post-secondary system including First Nations University, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, GDI [Gabriel Dumont Institute], and others to ensure most First Nations and Métis students get the training they need to succeed in their careers here at home.

Seeing real progress with these investments, in 2011 off-reserve

Aboriginal employment in Saskatchewan increased by 7.1 per cent, an increase of 2,600 compared to the previous year. Employment of 39,200 in 2011 was the highest on record, exceeding the previous high of 37,000 in 2008. In January 2012, Aboriginal employment was 40,600, up 6,200 which is at 18 per cent compared to January 2011. Youth Aboriginal employment was up 4,300, a total of 17.3 per cent over the same period. With roughly 75,000 to 90,000 jobs opening over the next five years, the strong investments in Saskatchewan's residents will ensure we have the labour force needed in the future. However, training takes time and Saskatchewan needs skilled workers today. We also look at two other areas to meet the current labour demand in our province.

So I want to talk a little bit more about what PotashCorp is doing with their Aboriginal initiatives. For recruitment they held three career information sessions at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, generating almost 150 applications, made more than 50 presentations to First Nations and Métis communities and institutions, and opened up the dialogue between our company and the Aboriginal population; provided tourist information sessions and career fairs for more than 500 First Nations and Métis people.

In 2010 I was part of organizing The Future is Yours career fair, and we had youth from as far as Black Lake, which is way up north, come to our career fair in Saskatoon. So for the youth, PotashCorp supported STC [Saskatoon Tribal Council] youth entrepreneurship programming in on-reserve schools, including an intensive introductory class at the Native Nations Institute, which is in Arizona — and they basically had a business camp for a week and I escorted them down there; co-hosted with STC and City of Saskatoon, ATOSKÉ [Aboriginal Training Opportunity for future Saskatoon Employment] summer youth camps to introduce youth to career possibilities and to help them to identify and prepare a skills portfolio; and supported programs at White Buffalo Youth Lodge to ensure healthy and safe resources are available to youth and their families. They provide enhanced support to super Saturdays, which is an introduction to university life. They bring in people from on-reserve and have a Saturday where they hang out at the university. And efforts to increase links to math and science programming.

I just want to talk a little bit about Cameco. They have a northern scholarship program. They offer scholarships up to 7,500 for northern Saskatchewan students entering a university degree and up to 5,000 for students entering trades or technical training. Scholarships of up to a total of 100,000 per annum are awarded under this program each year. Cameco Aboriginal Scholarship in Business — this scholarship to recognize and promote academic excellence among Aboriginal students. And John Desjarlais who is from Cumberland, Cameco put him through school with an engineering degree, and he finished school last year.

So I support the motion:

That this Assembly calls upon all partners in Confederation to join Alberta and Saskatchewan in sharing a positive message regarding Canada's oil sands.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise to speak to the debate today regarding this notice of motion.

And I would like to say very clearly that we do support the motion, and we are in support with the member from Regina Northeast in terms of the actual wording in the motion. Indeed we believe there is an importance to having a positive relationship with the rest of Canada and that Saskatchewan have a positive relationship with the development of the Alberta oil sands. There are many ways to approach that positive relationship, and I'm just going to take a few moments now to speak to some of those ways to do it.

I'm a bit disappointed that the two members opposite didn't actually speak to the particulars of the motion. They spoke about a lot of other things. But I'm going to try and focus my comments on the motion itself which talks about partners in Confederation sharing positive messages regarding oil sands.

There's a number of ways I think that this government and our province could take forward a positive approach to the Canada oil sands. Obviously oil sands are an important part of our economy. In fact they've created what our Prime Minister is calling us as an energy superpower, although there's a number of different articles about how you might interpret what that means. Certainly the oil sands are an incredibly important part of the economy of Alberta and certainly of Canada. The links with our economy aren't direct at this point because we haven't started developing our own oil sands resource, but indeed the economy of Canada is dependent, highly dependent on this part of the energy sector.

One of the things I think that this government could do in terms of an overall strategy and bringing a positive dialogue in the area of energy development is to balance the development of non-renewable energy sources with other renewable energy sources. And I think that's something that is being called for by many, many citizens of this province and certainly citizens of Canada. The idea of balance is important to have to make sure that as these resources are being depleted, we have an answer for the next century.

So one of the things we want to look at is the role perhaps of the pipelines. And certainly the member from Regina northwest talked about the importance of the role of the pipelines. Maybe in terms of balance, because he also represents a riding that has an upgrader and the capacity is here in this province to upgrade, that maybe we could balance, have more of a balance between shipping crude oil out of the province and certainly out of the country, and that's an issue for both of the pipelines that he speaks about. Or perhaps developing value-added capacity within our province and certainly within Alberta, I would think that's something they're looking at as well. So it's about balance and it's about sustainability.

Indeed, the former premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed, spoke quite frankly about this, and the concern is an economic concern, Mr. Speaker. It's about the idea of shipping out raw materials and crude oil at a very low price as opposed to having

upgrader capacity here, so that we could actually keep the revenues and the positive benefits of developing this non-renewable resource here for the people of Saskatchewan. So I think those are things that we could focus on as a province and certainly as a country, is to ensure that we are getting the best bang for our buck here in Canada.

Well right now the demand for crude is high and there's a lot of people doing very well in the development of that portion of the oil and gas industry. I'm looking forward to positive and innovative ideas from this government to ensure that our own citizens are also benefiting from the value-added version of this particular resource.

A couple of the things that might be considered by this government and certainly the federal government is how we actually value this non-renewable resource. Because if you look, if you go on Amazon you could type in "peak oil" and you will find 15 to 20 books that have been recently written about the notion that or the theory that peak oil has, we've reached peak oil, and that our supplies are now declining. So we're going to have to spend more and more money finding more and more difficult sources of oil and gas. And indeed the attempts here in our province in relation to our own oil sands is a clear indication of that. It's getting tougher and tougher to find easy, accessible conventional sources of oil. And so that's something to be of concern, that is of concern as well.

The federal government has different ways to . . . I'm just going to call on the article that was referred to earlier. There's different ways to properly tax oil and gas and one of the conventional methods that's being suggested is the cap-and-trade system. So we use the credits and we make sure that they're reinvested into the impacts of this type of industry on our infrastructure and also on our sustainable, the sustainability of it from an environmental perspective. One of the suggestions maybe is that we could use the revenues generated by a potential cap-and-trade system to invest in green, renewable energy, in sustainable infrastructure, and energy saving technologies, Mr. Speaker. That's another part that would turn this into a much more positive dialogue is if the revenues from these . . . and if proper taxation of the oil and gas is properly applied and if we look at the way that the oil and gas, the peak oil . . . Sorry, just one moment to check my notes. That oil and gas has been traditionally underpriced, and it has actually driven the dollar up.

And I think we heard from our Premier recently about the Premier of Ontario being concerned about the Canadian dollar. To me that's a valid concern. And to be calling it divisive is actually, our own Premier is actually driving a wedge into the discussion, because the concern, the concern of the people, the concern of the people of Canada is that it be fairly priced. And so we want to ensure that the price is fair. And if you look at some of the economics about the pricing of oil and gas, it has been traditionally underpriced. So if we have proper taxation that reflects the full cost of oil and gas, then I think we would have a positive message regarding the oil sands, which are Alberta oil sands, which the topic is today.

Of course the biggest concern that we have right now in terms of the oil sands is the impact it may have on the environment. And the problem . . . In fact I have a document that's 300 pages

that I didn't bring in with me today, but it is on my desk if anybody wants to look at it. I don't think I have time to go get it, Mr. Speaker. At any rate, one of the biggest problems that we have with the oil sands industry right now is the rapid pace of development. Again that was something that the former premier of Alberta was concerned about, and it's also of concern in terms of monitoring, Mr. Speaker.

There's been a number of reports done. One that I'd like to quote from right now is from the oil sands advisory panel that was struck by the Government of Alberta, and the article is called *A Foundation for the Future: Building an Environmental Monitoring System for the Oil Sands*. So there's been great difficulty in the monitoring of the impact of the oil sands, and the rapid pace of development is impacting that ability to monitor. The concluding remarks from that report, Mr. Speaker, say this:

The establishment and implementation of an effective oil sands monitoring program is fundamental to the long-term environmental sustainability and economic viability of a rapidly growing oil sands . . . in Canada.

So in order to have a positive message regarding the oil sands, I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the ability to monitor and track what's going on in this situation is really important. What's happening is there's a lot of conflicting science, Mr. Speaker, about the actual impact, and until the scientists are able to get their heads around that, it's something that I think requires a careful, balanced approach to the development of the oil sands.

[11:30]

Indeed, here's a couple of examples of conflicting science. One is from an industry-sponsored study which states that "the differences in sediment quality conditions in the lower Athabasca River and the ARD [that's the delta] as compared to regional baseline sediment quality conditions are classified as negligible or low." That's from the industry.

And from another independent study, the Nunee Health Board Society report, they say that:

Taken together the data indicate that sediment concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon or PAHs in the lower Athabasca River and the adjacent delta can vary greatly in time and space and may at times exceed guidelines.

So again I think that's one of the things that the Alberta study concluded was that there are just a whole bunch of different studies out there and there hasn't been time to correlate or monitor them.

So that's the basic . . . I have lots more to say but I'm afraid I won't be able to say it at this point. But right now I think the idea is that development of oil sands is important to our economy. We need to have a positive approach. We don't need divisive wedge politics coming from the Premier accusing Ontario of being concerned about the Canadian dollar because that is of concern to Canadians. In order to do this together, we need to work together and be balanced and focus on

sustainability and just make sure we're getting it right. Rapid development is causing concerns and I think, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the motion itself, certainly the history of this party has been to support this and the question is doing it right, being balanced, and doing it sustainably. So I will speak in favour of the motion. And I thank you for the time.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The energy sector is an important and essential part of the Saskatchewan economy and that of all of Western provinces. Saskatchewan has benefited from the demand of our natural resources, not just oil but also uranium, potash, diamonds, and agricultural products amongst others. And no doubt Canada also benefits from Saskatchewan's natural resource wealth.

This year Saskatchewan has received glowing economic reviews touting our strong economy growth, balanced budgets, positive business climate, and strong population growth. We continue to be among the national leaders and we intend to keep things that way. Population here is at an all-time high. Saskatchewan is projected to have the second highest economic growth in Canada, second lowest unemployment rate in Canada. 2012 will mark another Saskatchewan Party balanced budget, another of many to come.

The 1990s are behind us, and we're not going back. We're looking to the future, planning to expand our trade, keep our children at work in the province with great careers, attract new residents and employ all available hands, build our province's prosperity. Looking to the long term helped build the prosperity of this nation in which we all live.

Canada is a regional country. We seem to be forever comparing regions and our different ways of life, travelling the country and being amazed by the vastness, by the immense nature of our country. People look to Canada as an international model for development and an international example of a country in which we are all welcome. We will always have challenges in a regional country. However, instead of fighting amongst ourselves, Canadians have used their minds and their innovative nature to develop strategies to resolve their issues, at the same time make our country stronger and more resilient.

The Canadian energy industry is top of mind in Canada now. The media's talking about it. Provinces are weighing in the pros and cons. Citizens are educating themselves, and other countries are weighing in on our important domestic issue. We cannot make this issue go away. We cannot survive with less energy resources. Civilizations fall when they run short of energy. To continue our development as a strong, ambitious, and innovative civilization we need more energy, not less.

The task ahead requires a plan and requires vision. How are we as a nation going to develop our Canadian resources; provide Canadians, the world, with a variety of energy options utilizing the vast natural resources from across the country; develop new energy technology to increase energy supplies in the future; and provide clean, alternative energy sources for all, from a safe, democratic, and stable Canadian democracy?

Questions remain and inhibitions abound. There is a concern in Canada about a national energy strategy. Can we move beyond the failed National Energy Program, glean the positives from the experience while learning from the negatives? It is too easy to write the exercise off as a failure and to leave it in the past. It must be examined in order to ensure that our current national energy strategy moves forward with success. Can we work to lessen our country's environmental impact on the world, providing safe, stable energy sources from a democratic country?

Fortunately a broad, market-focused strategy that defines where Canada is heading as an energy-producing nation is well under way. Recently Premier Wall joined BC [British Columbia] Premier Christy Clark and Alberta Premier Alison Redford to start a national conversation regarding Canadian energy strategy. This strategy is not just about selling more resources. The Canadian energy strategy aims to create a fundamental set of values around coordinated infrastructure, greenhouse gas regulations, immigration and labour shortages, and environmental regulations.

The Saskatchewan Party government believes in co-operating with our neighbours, and Premier Clark expresses the goal of this co-operation best in the following statement:

British Columbia's coast does not just belong to British Columbia. It belongs to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces and it's essential that our ports and our infrastructure all across the west are functioning as well as they can. That's what allows trade to flow inside our country and that's what puts people to work. Certainly in BC we recognize the big contribution the oil sands make to Canada and to our national economy. We need to be thinking about the energy economy in an environmentally sustainable way.

This tone from Premier Clark emphasizes the intention that decisions be made with Canadian public interest as top consideration. The first time the Western premiers met it was under the auspices of the New West Partnership Agreement which focused on breaking down barriers between the Western provinces and improving the economic prospects of the West's 9 million residents.

Since then the perspective has grown. Western Canadian representatives and leaders feel a sense of urgency regarding development, developing an energy strategy. They recognize the energy developments and systems cannot be contained within the provincial jurisdictions. The energy industry operates nationally and internationally and we must be continually aware of this competitive fact. A national energy strategy should stay true to the principle that has served it well — let the free market do its work.

The strategy should enhance this guiding principle by focusing on the following:

Diversity markets. In order to create the markets necessary to enhance prosperity of the Western provinces, available markets must be cultivated. We cannot rely solely on US markets. Other options must be explored. The Western premiers understand the importance of these energy markets, but also realize that, in

order to open them up, the Canadian government must be a partner, and citizens from coast to coast need to be made aware of the benefits of strong energy economies and resource sales. We need to streamline environmental regulations, make regulations surrounding production and transport infrastructure more predictable and less susceptible to outside influence. Canadian regulations to meet and exceed our environmental obligations.

Emissions reductions. Development of CO₂ emissions reductions that address environmental concerns while minimizing economy harm.

Labour. Development of labour markets, encourage labour migration within the country from jurisdictions of high unemployment to areas of low unemployment and increase immigration to address the intensifying labour crunch.

Work with First Nations. Government strategies to address high unemployment rates in First Nations communities through education, training, and innovative partnerships.

A national energy strategy that works solely for the West will not work for Canada. The Canadian energy strategy is one that is of national interest. The prosperity of Canada in the long term requires a Canadian energy system that is reliable, sustainable, efficient, and co-ordinated with Canadian economy supporting inputs and trades.

The Western premiers recognize the abundance of Canadian energy resources and want a strategy that includes these resources from across the country. A true pan-Canadian initiative that will attract a national audience and succeed as policy will require an upfront understanding of what the potential is, what the scope of the strategy will be, who is going to be at the table, and what are the issues of consideration when developing our national energy resources and getting them to new markets.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is moving forward. We are moving away from the history of stagnant population growth, massive out-migration of our youth and high-income earners, low GDP numbers, and low investment in Saskatchewan. We're moving away from a time where everyone looked elsewhere for opportunity. We are a part of a national strategy of extreme importance concerning an industry that we are promoting and improving. A national energy strategy must serve to unite this country. This initiative must aim to improve the prosperity of the nation as a whole while encouraging and creation . . . the technology and solutions that will improve and protect our environment and provide abundant energy resources to support our economies and ways of life in the future. A strong energy strategy will improve the lives of Canadians and provide the world with stable energy resources from a democratic, trustworthy country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this speaks strongly to my constituency where we currently have 5,000 oil wells in production, and with new steam injection possibilities into the oil patch, all these issues need to be addressed. So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion and I thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to join the debate and certainly offer my perspective on the motion that's being brought forward. And, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that, from our point of view, that developing Saskatchewan with all the resources in uranium and in potash and oil and gas and the list goes on, I think that's something that's very important — that every government has to undertake that particular work. And our point is that obviously as an opposition caucus, we want to make sure we continue working to build a brighter future for people of Saskatchewan and of course all the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I remember going to a meeting in Lloydminster — this is a number of years ago when I was minister of Highways — and we met with a couple of folks that were involved with CAPP, and of course CAPP being the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. And it was great, great meeting with CAPP. And I remember the people getting onto the podium, two or three of them, and at the time Stelmach was the premier of Alberta, and what did you hear of the CAPP folks — well not necessarily CAPP but representatives of the association — they were extolling the virtues of then Premier Calvert's policies to attract investment and allow oil and gas opportunities to come to Saskatchewan. In fact that's why I was there in Lloydminster, to announce some roads to oil projects to make sure that we had safe roads to transport oil.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know I have that speech somewhere, but this was a fine speech. And I can tell you the premier was there at the time, and he was being praised by the petroleum producers as the premier that's ushering in a new era of prosperity for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the whole notion, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party is trying to say, we build the economy, we're going to continue building, everybody in Saskatchewan knew that the boom and resource development was coming. Everybody knew. And the most important thing to do is everybody knows that the boom and the resource development will continue, Mr. Speaker. Those are the two principles: they know it is coming, and they know it's going to continue.

But one of the biggest arguments and the difference that we have with the Saskatchewan Party is the notion of balance to benefit. Who benefits the most from all that development? That is where the difference is, Mr. Speaker. That is where the difference is between our caucus and of course the Saskatchewan Party caucus.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that they spoke about the oil and gas sector, of how it's important to embrace their role. There's no question that nobody wants to see capital fleeing their province. We want to attract capital and we want to retain capital. I think that's really important for the development of all of our futures.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the difference that I pointed out, the difference that I pointed out, if you look at some of the stats of some of those members that brought forward and you look at northern development, all the uranium mines that are occurring in northern Saskatchewan, I can say at the outset that Cameco does a terrific job. They do a terrific job, and Cameco should be credited with those numbers of contractors and workers,

Aboriginal and First Nations people. They should get the credit, Mr. Speaker. They should get the credit because they're the ones that initiating all that fine work. And they're the ones who work in the communities to make sure they extract as much of the resource benefits or the benefits of that resource to as many people living in the impacted area, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the key differences that we have between the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

Now on this motion, on this motion, Mr. Speaker, we understand, we understand that the oil and gas sector provide great opportunity for people. We have hundreds of people working in the oil and gas sector. We appreciate that, and we want to see that continue.

But the three principles that we have in our minds, Mr. Speaker, the three principles that we have in our mind is that we must take care of our environment. Environmental protection is pretty darn important, Mr. Speaker. We must engage our skilled labour force. The labour movement, they've got to be part of this process, Mr. Speaker. And we also understand that industry should be appreciated and industry should be welcomed to Saskatchewan. That's what we New Democrats think. Now if it's all about giving away everything and not trying to protect the interests of those three principles, Mr. Speaker, that is what we mean by the balance of benefit.

Now there's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that was a great moment when the CAPP folks that put on the presentation in Lloydminster, they really praised our premier at that day, which was Premier Calvert. And I'm one of the luckiest guys around because I was able to listen to cabinet presentations from people like Clay Serby from Yorkton area, people like Eric Cline from Saskatoon, Eldon Lautermilch from Prince Albert, Maynard Sonntag from Meadow Lake. And, Mr. Speaker, what were they talking about? They were talking about ways in which they could work with the premier of the day to attract investment and get ready for this boom. That was what the whole notion was.

So for the Saskatchewan Party to say, oh, we want to see this continue because we're doing a great job at it, number one is you inherited it. Number two, and our message is that all this was set up for you. And the bottom line is that we will continue asking you what is the difference between what your virtues are on development versus what our virtues are as a party, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, when we ushered in the uranium development in northern Saskatchewan, it was the NDP that brought in uranium development to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And what they done was they made sure they worked with all the communities. The same principle applied with oil and gas, same principle. When you look at northern Saskatchewan as a whole, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that under the service lease agreements, mining companies undertook that type of work, and we're seeing the benefit of that today through Cameco. Cameco should be given great credit for what they have done, but that work must continue, Mr. Speaker. On top of that, on top of that, Mr. Speaker, environmental integrity is also something that's also a

key principle to the New Democrats in general. We make sure that we usher in this new era, but we make sure that we're very responsible in protecting the environment as well.

And my final point I would raise, Mr. Speaker, whether it's potash, which is an American-based company, or whether it's uranium or whether it's oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, we must find ways and means to share the benefits as equally and as fairly as possible in the province of Saskatchewan. So you want to bring in the opportunities, you want to make sure that there's environmental protection, you want to make there's opportunity for the workers, but you also want to make sure there's lasting benefits for everybody, Mr. Speaker. And that is one of the key points.

During the election, we spoke about things like potash. And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party jumped all over that and put words in the NDP's mouth and created fear and havoc amongst the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's what they done. So my point today under the oil and gas sector is very clear. Whether it's uranium development, do it orderly and do it fairly. Whether it's gold development, do it orderly, do it fairly, and make sure you distribute the wealth and look after Saskatchewan well.

And, Mr. Speaker, the final point I would raise on the potash and the resource revenue sharing argument, our point was inclusiveness, Mr. Speaker. Our point was inclusiveness and fairness. Mr. Speaker, their point was . . . They brought the argument forward that it was exclusive to only certain groups of people in Saskatchewan thereby driving a wedge amongst the people of Saskatchewan and angering the people of Saskatchewan. That's what they've done, Mr. Speaker. That's what they've done.

So if you want to talk about fairness in oil and gas development, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about fairness. Let's talk about environmental protection. Let's talk about benefits for all of Saskatchewan of being inclusive to all the people of Saskatchewan. Let us not forget where this began, Mr. Speaker. Let us not forget that it's not going to end any time soon. That's why, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we stand up and we say on motions of this sort, on motions of this sort, that it's always important to look at the notion of the balance of benefits, Mr. Speaker — the benefits of having a good sustainable economy, the benefits of sharing, and the benefits of maximizing the future of our people through a pragmatic manner, Mr. Speaker. That's what this is about.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important people understand the history, and to say again to the Sask Party, you inherited a great economy, a booming population, don't mess it up.

The Speaker: — The time for debate has expired. Oral questions. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and join in the 75-minute debate.

My question is for the member from Regina Northeast. Certainly in the city of Regina we're well familiar with the impact of Federated Co-op upgrader. In his remarks, I don't know if he got into the question of upgrading capacity versus

the shipping of raw bitumen or the shipping of raw product. Certainly we'd want to capture the value and make sure that that value-added proposition is foremost as we approach oil and gas. So as an individual that actually represents a refinery in this province, participating in this debate, could he tell us a little bit more about where the Sask Party's at in terms of upgrading capacity in the province?

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

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Opposition House Leader for the question. And it is true that the Co-op Refinery is in the constituency of Regina Northeast. I've had the opportunity to be out there on several occasions, and I will do so more in the future.

During the course of the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, in door knocking in Regina Northeast and speaking to a number of individuals who actually work there, either during this construction phase for the expansion purposes or have worked there full time, they're quite delighted with the Co-op Refinery.

As I understand it, and perhaps I stand to be corrected, it is at full capacity now which is the reason why they're doing the expansion. And once the expansion is complete later this year, my understanding it will be at full capacity even with that expansion. So we are supplying as much crude to that particular refinery as we possibly can, and our producers in Saskatchewan need the Keystone XL pipeline and need the Northern Gateway pipeline for more capacity to ship that product to new markets, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, and the question goes to the heart of what's an important industry in his constituency. Does he have people in his area who are supportive of expansion of the upgrading capacity so that some of that bitumen can be processed here in Saskatchewan or possibly in Lloydminster, which would be a Saskatchewan-Alberta project, such as being suggested by former Premier Lougheed of Alberta?

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. I first of all would like to clarify as the member from Athabasca spoke about the boom that was already created and how the NDP cleverly put a lid on it, didn't allow it to happen. So now that the Saskatchewan Party has come in and made that happen . . .

An Hon. Member: — We created the boom.

Mr. Doke: — That's right. I would also remind the member from Athabasca that he is a past hockey player. I am too and have been recognized for high elbows.

So, Mr. Speaker, 64 per cent of the voting public put this government in power with strong leadership, and we will move forward under this leadership and this government to create a

Canadian energy strategy. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Moe: — In the fall of last year, two members of the federal NDP went to Washington to spread fear about Canada's oil sands. These same individuals have been cheering on the international efforts to restrict growth in Canada's energy sector, a sector that is vital to our nation's economy. In fact, according to a 2012 news release, NDP MP [Member of Parliament] Nathan Cullen applauded EU [European Union] efforts to unfairly target exports of Canada's oil sands. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: will you encourage your colleagues in the federal NDP to stop promoting an agenda that attacks Canada's oil sands?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. Obviously, as I said earlier, the key goal here is sustainability and balance, and so that's what we're looking for in any sort of energy strategy. We support the development of non-renewable resources, but we're also looking for the development of renewable resources because that will give us the balance moving forward into the future. As peak oil declines and conventional sources of oil become more difficult to find, we have to be ready to move into the future and look at other forms of energy production.

Some of the problems with the current system and the extremely rapid development of the oil sands in Alberta, as I indicated earlier, is problems with monitoring the actual impact of that. And as I mentioned earlier, there's a number of groups looking into it. The paper I referred to, the oil sands advisory panel paper, talked about the various groups that are looking at it. We have the Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program, Cumulative Environmental Management Association or CEMA. We've got the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association, or WBEA, and many other groups that are looking at monitoring. And I think as long as we do that and listen to the cautions of Premier Lougheed, then I think we'll be okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute, the expected investment impact of existing pipeline operations is estimated to contribute 941 billion to Canada's gross domestic product over the 10-year period. Over this same period, Canadian employees' compensation will reach nearly \$268 billion. To the member of Regina Lakeview: will you commit publicly, denouncing future policies and proposals from the federal NDP that seek to undermine this growth which clearly benefits Canadian working families?

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, a bit of advice to all new members: work on your own questions. Don't let the backroom

guys . . . [inaudible].

Mr. Speaker, we know, we know that the oil and gas and mineral policy here in this province is the NDP policy, and it's the policy that has created the boom in this province. We know that the CAPP, the petroleum producers in Calgary, went to Premier Wall when he was elected, when he started ruminating about changing things, and saying, don't you touch what the NDP have set up.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue on the balanced approach which looks at how the environment is treated versus how the product is taken and how the benefits are spread to the whole community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Fairview. I listened to her comments and the member address the issue of Aboriginal employment numbers and job training opportunities.

Under the last term of the Sask Party government, we saw a number of concerning steps when it comes to the area of Aboriginal employment in the province. One such step was the unilateral elimination overnight of the Aboriginal employment development program that was supported by industry and played a very constructive role here in the province. My question to the member, once again, from Saskatoon Fairview: does she think that it was a wise decision to eliminate the Aboriginal employment development program?

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

Ms. Campeau: — I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. As I said before, we will continue to work with our partners across the post-secondary system, including First Nations University, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], GDI, and others to ensure more First Nations and Métis students get the training they need to succeed in their careers here at home.

Sask Party has a great record dealing with First Nations and Métis employment. We have a \$2.8 billion record investment in post-secondary education and over \$46 million in funding for First Nations and Métis education and training. As I said again, 20 per cent increase from the previous year.

[12:00]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask a question of the member from Regina Northeast, again on the question of upgrading and the proper development of the sector. Certainly right after the Sask Party was elected in 2007, the premier at the time invited Peter Lougheed to the province to give some advice, to provide a bit of legitimacy, perhaps borrow some legitimacy, Mr. Speaker, from Peter Lougheed, in terms of succession and all this. But one of the things that

Premier Lougheed provided was advice on the development of oil and gas in this province. And I guess at the time the premier said that they'd offered him up . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed for the 75-minute debate. We will move on then to the private members' motions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Motion No. 2 — First Nations, Métis and Northern Communities

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly to enter into debate on a motion that I will be moving at the conclusion of my remarks.

The motion is one that will highlight the important role that government can play for those who live in the North and in First Nations and Métis communities. So starting out with that, there are many issues facing First Nations, Métis, northern people. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's very concerning when you see the communities that I'm referring to. Many of the First Nations, the Métis, and northern communities, whether they're municipalities, are having many struggles.

There's lots to talk about successes, because there are successes. We have leaders, Aboriginal leaders. We have young people in our communities who are leaders. They're trying to bring forward the issues and concerns, and they're asking us to do that as we visit them. And I know yesterday I asked the minister to come and do a visit, and I hope we'll set up a tour. And I hope the Premier shows up with them and whoever else he can bring to deal with some of the issues. And I'm going to talk about those issues today, and I'm going to go through them. And there's quite a few different issues. But I also want to make sure I talk about success stories that are going on in northern Saskatchewan and many First Nations communities and many Métis communities. Are there challenges? Mr. Speaker, we know that. There are many challenges. We know that.

I want to start out, you know, talking about opportunities to our young people, our children, our grandchildren, my grandchildren, many First Nations and Métis children, northern children. And children in the province want a fair chance, want an opportunity. And it starts out at a very young age. We want to make sure that young people get a good opportunity, good nutrition, a good upbringing, supports that they need in their community so that they can be productive citizens, so they can grow. We want our elders to mentor them. We want our community members and our leaders to be role models and to guide them. That's crucial. And that's what we call success. Many do.

But it's pretty sad when a government doesn't respond to the needs. And I will talk about today about the needs of northern Saskatchewan, Métis, and First Nations communities. And I will talk about the lack, lack of services that this government, the Sask Party government says they're doing. It's shocking to see some of the cuts. It's shocking to see some of the disrespect that these communities and residents of our province are

experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, you look at housing, and I want to start out with housing because I think it's important. You want to raise a family and you expect everyone should have a quality home, quality house, should have a place to call home, to be safe, to lay your head down at night in a bed. But unfortunately sometimes that's not the story for everyone. A lot of young people don't have that opportunity, whether it's overcrowding, whether the conditions of the homes are falling apart, and when you visit some of the northern communities there are many challenges. Whether it's federal responsibility, provincial responsibility, municipality responsibility, or a homeowner's responsibility, the responsibility belongs on all of us. We wear that. When you go into a home and you see a home that's falling apart, and you go into a community and there are no resources to fix the home . . . The windows are broken, the heat. You see seniors . . . And I visited some of the seniors recently. Went to Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows to do a visit and some outreach just to see how things are going in those communities. And I mean I know that these issues have always been there, and we've raised them, housing shortages. But unfortunately the problem's not getting better. For many it's getting worse.

When you see a senior, an elder in their 80s, and their house is falling apart and they don't know where to go, they don't know who to ask, but they figure they have a government — whether it's federal, provincial — and there are leaders in their community trying to get the resources they can get to fix the homes. But it's pretty sad to watch, when you're sitting there having a cup of tea or coffee with them, and they're telling you what they've been through in life and how they've got there. And the respect was . . . And you know it touches the heart like you can't believe when you see the walls falling in, you see the windows are broke. It isn't of their own doing that they've neglected their home. It's unfortunate that the resources are not there.

And, Mr. Speaker, it does . . . And I say this, more needs to be done on all parts, governments. This shouldn't be happening. We live in a province in a country that everyone says is one of the wealthiest, one of the most beautiful provinces to live in, and we should be proud. And I am proud. And she is proud to live in this province. She may live in a community that's a First Nations community. There may be elders who live in Métis communities and municipalities. They may not have the best times and they may have gone through some rough times, but they deserve to be respected. And they deserve to have a home that's warm, that's safe, that has windows. It's not falling apart. It's not all full of caulking, the walls are peeling. You know, you look at these conditions and you say, we have to do more. And the leadership in their communities tries. But it's always limited resources.

And, you know, I plan on taking more tours and more visits. And then, you know, you go to some of the other communities and you see some of the young kids and you see the conditions they live in. It isn't their own doing. It's the times. It's society. But we can't judge. It's not time to judge. It's time to say, let's work together.

And when I invited the minister, and I invite the Premier, I did that sincerely so they can see some of the conditions that

northern people, First Nations, and Métis people are living and dealing with. And I hope they will do the tour, have a look at some of the northern communities and see what the conditions are like and what community members have to deal with — our elders, our mushoms, our kohkom, what our children, our grandchildren, our community members who live in this beautiful province and belong in this province and want to call this province home and are proud to call this province home. It's important that the government respond to that.

And we can go through the tour and everything. But at the end of the day, I want to make it very clear that I hope the tour brings some action. Because if the tour brings no action, then that will be a sad day. And we'll get time to talk about that and question the minister.

So at this point, I know the minister has offered to do that and he has visited me in the constituency office. He's come to the North and he's come to my office and I appreciate that. And I know he did that, and he was sincere when he did the visit. But I want him to spend some time dealing with the issues, the real issues facing our communities, meeting with some of the leadership, meeting with some of the seniors, some of our young people. And we will set up a tour, and I hope at the end of the day he can see some of the issues that our leadership are facing, the challenges our young people are facing, our elders are facing.

Now you want to talk about, I guess, a fair and a level playing field. A lot of the young people I talk to, they don't want handouts. They know that there is opportunity for some of them. And some of them do take the opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and they get educated. Nobody's against education and nobody's saying that there isn't monies put in, funding put in, for education and training.

We could talk about all the numbers and say, oh how great it is. And we can cheerlead all we want. But at the end of the day, when you go back to some of the communities, when there's 300 from age 18 to 25 and they've got nowhere to go, they see no vision, there's no hope, and they start losing hope . . . And I talk to a number of them to truly appreciate what they're going through. And there's no jobs in their community. There's very little training opportunities, and there's very little jobs that they can apply. So where do these individuals go? A lot of them are frustrated. They're overcrowded in houses. They don't see many supports. You know, one community — and we'll get a tour and hopefully the minister will see what I'm talking about — one community in Sandy Bay, they've been waiting, and I think it's over a year, for a mental health worker to come in there and work with the youth. They can't fill that position.

So you know, there's situations where we have to make sure that we have the supports for individuals who want to move forward and get help. We have to make sure that the mental health staff is there. And I know when they are there, they do all they can, but more has to be done.

We've had situations in some of these communities where it's a crisis. And I've had some of the local community members express that to me, that the young people are getting frustrated. They're not feeling like they're being heard. And it isn't that they're going to say, oh it's one government versus another

government. They want some opportunities for education, training, and they'd love to have a job. But they're very frustrated, and some of them unfortunately get caught up in whether it's drugs, alcohol, gangs, the violence that they get pulled into. They started out maybe young individuals — boys and girls — on a good vision. Their elders, their community give them the guidance they need, but they're lost, and we're failing them. And that is a sad day when you fail our young people. And it's not just one or two of them. There are so many of them in northern Saskatchewan, in First Nations communities and Métis communities that we are failing.

And I say this: as a province we are failing them because we have opportunities to reach out. We can fix this problem. We can take advice. We can sit down with the leadership. We can sit down with young people. We can sit down with the grandparents. We can sit around with the resources that are there in their communities who know some of the issues, and talk about a plan, a vision where we can assist and help young people so they're not in the violence. They're not into the drugs, the alcohol, the gangs, and into correction.

The corrections system is waiting for them. It will greet them. There's more jails being built. We'll be tough on crime. But at the end of the day, what have we done to our young people? The system is not working, Mr. Speaker. It is not working for these young people. We have to do better. Our government has to do a better job. We must do a better job for them.

[12:15]

You know, I'm going to come back to our young people and First Nations and Métis communities in the North. I want to talk about some of the roads in northern Saskatchewan. It's important that we have safe roads to travel on. And you know, I've talked to a lot of our elders, community members, leaders and, you know, some of the First Nations communities, some of the municipalities. You talk to the elders about their respiratory problems, and some of them are suffering with that. The dust is so fine, and just constant the traffic's going. There's growth in the population. There's more vehicles so you have more traffic, and they're saying that there are respiratory problems that they're having from the dust because they live on a busy road. And that's happening. And when you listen to them . . . And they are sincere about it. It isn't that they want pavement for show. They want something to quit the dust and stop it. And you can go in there — highways or, you know, the bands, the municipalities. I mean they have dust control, and I understand they use that and they try. But they're limited, and that's limited to what it can do.

So you have those issues. So when you have elders telling you about their breathing problems, respiratory, we have to respond to situations like this. And we have to make sure we make the government aware, especially in a province when we have so much wealth and a government who talks about all the money and all the projects on highways. And they come out with plans, and they make plans for five years for highways and roads. And we don't hear much happening in northern Saskatchewan or First Nations communities because sometimes I guess it gets into the boundaries and we say jurisdiction. It's time that we move forward. It's time that we start doing the right thing for all Saskatchewan residents, all community members. It's very

important that we focus on the issues.

Mr. Speaker, very clearly there are many issues facing First Nations and Métis and northern communities. And I know as a province, the government has a long list and they have a lot of needs to meet all over. There is a number of constituencies in our province. There's lots of problems. We know that. But the government has to do a better job of responding to northern Saskatchewan without cutting all the programs.

I just want to talk about, I was in Sandy Bay, Pelican, and we were doing some casework. And kohkom come into the office, and she just wanted to ask with some help with her home. She's rented her home. I think it was 38 years she has been renting from Sask Housing. And she said, when will I own my home? When will I own this? I pay, pay. We paid.

You know what's unfortunate that I found out recently? We could have helped her, because we've helped some people move forward and apply for the home purchase program. If you qualify, you can ask Sask Housing to see if they will make you a deal and work out some type of thing where you can own your home. It's a good program. It's done well. It's been there for years and it is a good program. So unfortunately Sask Housing, and this government, has cancelled that program. As of November of 2011, that program no longer exists. So you no longer can.

So those individuals who have been renting for years from Sask Housing will never own their home. They won't get the option to even apply and be considered if they qualify to do the home purchase program from Sask Housing. And that's unfortunate. Here's a woman, you know, an elder who has paid years and years, 38 years, and she will not own her home. Now I don't know what the decision was of government to do this, but I guess the government of the day has made that decision. The ministry has made that decision. It's unfortunate.

There is many people who would like to own their own home and, you know, when you rent a home for that many years, you would like to. You'd like to say you've done something and, you know, it's yours. And at the end of the day, she wanted that. And I looked across from her. I'm just saying, well what do I do? I said, you'll have to continue to rent — rent, rent. Now hopefully . . . The government has decided to remove a program that would benefit.

A lot of northern people could have taken advantage of that and I think a lot of people did when the program was introduced. And some individuals I know in La Ronge, there was individuals who actually . . . That's how they owned their home. It was through the purchase home. They secured, you know, a 25-year mortgage with Sask Housing or, you know, CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation]. But at the end of the day, they paid for 25 years, the rent, and they own that home. And there was quite a few people took advantage of that and there was an opportunity. So I'm hoping the government's wisdom, it will come up with a program that will meet the needs of many people who could qualify, and should qualify, who have paid rent for that long.

Now you want to get into addictions service. I want to talk a little bit about that and I think it's important to talk about

addictions and what's facing a lot of community members and communities. We know we have many front-line workers who work with our youth. Our elders work with them, trying to steer them in the right direction. I know La Ronge Indian Band, and I know some of the First Nations communities, they have different groups, whether it's drum groups. They try to get them back on to the culture using the elders, using addiction workers, using the youth workers within the band system to move forward so that these individuals can see that there is a healthy lifestyle, that it's an opportunity, that you don't have to be frustrated and lose hope and go with your friends.

And you know, I had a chance to talk . . . We had about 150 youth at a youth conference in La Ronge about two weeks ago and I had a chance to speak to those young people. And I said, here we are and we're respecting you and we're showing you respect. And the reason that all these individuals . . . You have leaders here, you have so many community members, you have elders, you have support staff, you have addictions people, you have guest speakers, you have many people coming here to help you with this two-day conference because we respect you. And we want to show you respect. You deserve it. But when we give you that respect, you have to keep that respect. And that's important they understand that value. And some of them have choices to make, and they will make the right choice. I know that.

I listened to some of them, and I got to talk to some of them. Do they have challenges? Yes, they share that. But is there hope? I remind them all the time, never lose hope. Because it's a pretty sad day when they do lose hope, and some individuals and young people, and we lose them to suicide. When you have to go pay your respects to a family member, a community member, a mother, a father, to a sister or brother, grandparents, the loss of their loved one because of their hope. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's tough sometimes going out to the communities. And as a leader you're supposed to go and pay your condolences. It's a tough, it's a tough job. You want to support them. You have so many questions, wondering why. Why this young person? Why didn't they have a chance? What was it? What could have I done? What should we have done as a province, as MLAs? There's so many young people in our communities, northern Saskatchewan, First Nations and Métis, that are losing hope.

But we have a lot of resources. And sometimes our leaders ask us, and I guess front-line workers ask for resources and sometimes that goes on a deaf ear. And when that happens, I think people have to make sure we hold our leaders, the government, we have to make sure we make them answer to that, to why, why we can't provide the resources that are needed to make sure young people have a level playing field and a chance at a good quality of life.

That's what these young people want. They didn't ask to be born in a community or in a condition where they're at, but what they want as citizens and whether they're five years old or 12 years old or 35 years old, they want a good quality of life. And I have to say that hasn't been given to a lot of individuals, a lot of residents. They haven't had a level playing field. There's lots to be done; more has to be done.

You know, I think about communities and as I go visiting and

you talk to leadership, you talk about the needs of the communities, whether it's infrastructure. You know, I think of Southend. Southend needs a certified airport so the air ambulance can take community members from their community to a nearest hospital. It's like a five-hour trip. They have to come in by ambulance from La Ronge to Southend. It takes two and a half hours for the ambulance to get in there and it can take up to three hours for the ambulance to get out of the community. This is on gravel road; it's not the best road. But they've been asking for an airport. I know they've got a proposal, you know, forward with the Ministry of Highways. They've been asking, and I know they're moving on that.

So those are communities that are asking and wanting help and deserve to have an airport. It's a large community. It's not a small community. There are smaller communities that have airports with 2, 300 people if you look at the data, and here's a community that has probably about 1,800 people and they don't even have a certified airport. And it's important so that the air ambulance can go to their community and take one of their loved ones out or community members in an emergency.

These are things that have to change, and it's time that the government responds to some of the issues that they're facing. You know, you look at . . . And I'll give you another example. When I was talking about pavement, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, they've got some issues — same things, type of roads where it's dust. But the road is actually the main road that's used to go to the dump and it's not just the La Ronge Indian Band traffic on that. The road is used for all citizens. And that's how we haul our garbage to the dump. But that road is just pounded, pounded. And the dust — and I've had the elders tell me as well, the dust is unbelievable. It's in your home, it's in your clothes, your breathing. So it gets to be a health problem for some of them with respiratory problems. So those are issues we have to work on, and I will work on, and we'll bring forward to the minister, and we will bring forward to the government that these are things that need to be done.

Now we talk about roads to Cumberland House that were previously announced under a previous government, and then the road was cancelled. The money was moved somewhere else. We've established that. It's done; it's there. More work has to be done, and we've seen what Cumberland House road went through, Highway 123. We see what condition that road was. We've seen what the leadership had to deal with, what the community members had to deal with.

And here you have a large First Nations and Métis community. They're isolated. They have one road in. And if you look at the condition of the road, it was amazing to watch. I mean it made the news. How many times we've seen it on the news, talking about it, the condition. How do they get safety?

So they've had a lot of challenges, the leadership. And I commend them over there for what they've done. They've had crisis to have to deal with, flooding, and they've responded well. But I know they would appreciate the government committing to getting that road properly repaired, paved, fixed once and for all, so their community members can travel on safe roads. And I think it's important that they be a part of this provincial economy and boom. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think there is quite a bit of information that they have that they can share

with the ministry, with all individuals, about the reasons why they need this road fixed and repaired.

Now I want to go back into talking about employment opportunities and training. We've had some of the members on the government side talking about the numbers and how proud they are of the track record of the Sask Party. Well we've seen some of the funding, you know, for those opportunities for employment and training dry up. Some of the programs are gone.

So how, in one hand, can you say government is helping and assisting and reflect numbers when I don't believe that's so, that there's challenges. We're hearing from individuals. We're hearing from community members. They're not receiving any of that benefit. They're not receiving any of the benefit. The numbers are, you know, the numbers are here. In northern Saskatchewan, they are not experiencing the numbers that are being referred to, that the member from Saskatoon Fairview referred to. Northern Saskatchewan, a lot of First Nations communities, Métis, are not experiencing the boom.

[12:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about being fair and equal, it isn't fair and equal. In northern Saskatchewan and all of the First Nations and Métis communities that I represent, it isn't fair. Those numbers do not reflect that. Those numbers don't reflect what's happening in my communities that I represent. And I want to make that very clear. We can talk about numbers in certain areas and say, oh this, this, this. I'm talking about northern Saskatchewan, our First Nations and Métis communities. Those numbers don't reflect what we're dealing with.

You have a lot of young people who are unemployed who want an opportunity. They want a chance for an education, for training, for a good-paying job, a good quality job. And we have many companies up there — whether it's Cameco, Areva — there are good companies up there. Truly they are working with northern and First Nations and Métis communities to make sure the employment numbers are high. But I don't believe the Government of Saskatchewan and the Sask Party government has the right to take any credit for that. They don't have that right. It isn't done. It's the commitment of these companies that are truly making the difference in some of our communities.

There's so much work that needs to be done with training dollars in northern Saskatchewan, for opportunities. So when I make it very clear, I don't agree with some of the numbers. And I mean you can cheerlead on certain numbers. That's fine. You can quote all the numbers you want. But I know in my communities I represent, those numbers mean nothing to those young people, mean nothing to the people living in the homes. And the conditions that they're living in isn't because of their own. Because the cost, the affordability cost, it truly does not reflect what they're experiencing. And they are not part of the boom. And they are not part of the growth. They don't see that. They live in a different world. And it isn't so great sometimes to see what they go through and when you talk to them.

I'd say to any of the members on the opposite side, go have a look. Go do some tours. Spend some time. Don't just go by for

a quick little visit. Spend some time and go visit some of the communities in northern Saskatchewan and see. We talk about . . . We can't, you know, at the end of the day, you know, Mr. Speaker, I know individuals will say what they say. And there is, you know, there is a lot of success. And I said that earlier. I know the minister's saying, you've got to talk about success. I understand that. I can hear him from across. I want to make it very clear. I said earlier that the leadership, some of the programs, some of the bands are doing an excellent job when it comes to development, partnerships. They truly are leaders when it comes to that area.

And Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Peter Ball [Ballantyne], there's a number of them, I'm telling you, that are doing an excellent job throughout the province, but I'm referring to northern Saskatchewan. And I want to make it very clear, yes, there is success and some of the members opposite have talked about GDI. They've talked about SIIT. And you know what? It's very clear when you talk about these different institutes, they have done an excellent job. They have taken funding whether it's provincial, federal; they have made partnerships. They've done some amazing things with limited resources, limited funding. It's amazing to watch what they've done, how they stretch things and the excellent job they do. And a lot of them do do an excellent job and nobody can take that away from them, and I'm not ever saying that.

I was fortunate to be a part of GDI and to work with that board, to sit on the board, to be Acting Chair for four years. It does some awesome things. It does create some opportunities — training, education, and good quality jobs for many people. But there's a lot more has to be done. We have . . . [inaudible] . . . you know, you have the different institute and you have many of them that are doing a good job, an excellent job. But is there more work to be done? And I know that a lot of them could use more resources, more funding.

You know, when I think about successes and you talk about challenges and you see some of the young people, some of the programs that are being developed within our own schools, and I want to talk about that because some of the local schools are coming up with different programs to meet the needs of our young people, and that's bringing them back to the trapline. And our elders and our trappers wanted to do that. They wanted to start a program where they could do some training to give some true experience to the young people on the trapline, to connect with their heritage because it is part of their heritage. And you know, they come together; they put a proposal together. They applied for funding, and it was unfortunate that they did not receive the funding. They applied to government asking for some training dollars, an opportunity, a budget. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, their proposal was rejected.

So when we have community members and we have our elders, our trappers, and they come up with opportunities to solve their own problems so that our young people are not getting caught up in all the different activities that are not good for them, when they try to reach out and they try to help and then you have a government who talks about all the resources and all the money it has and it says no to a small, little budget saying, no we can't do that; we can't help out. But we can build more jails and we'll put more money into correctional facilities.

That's a pretty sad day when you see a government, when it can say to community members, elders, trappers, and leaders, yes I see you put a good proposal together and yes, it looks all right, but unfortunately at this time we cannot do anything, and we will not fund it. But on the other hand, you hear the announcement of, we're willing to build more jails. We're going to be harder on crime. Well something's wrong. Something's gone totally wrong here.

There's more that can be done to meet the needs of young people. And when you talk about that, everyone says that. And I know so many people and we hear different comments back and forth. Our young people are our future. Our grandchildren are our future. The youth are the future. But we see legislation coming forward I don't think that really is going to reflect that when you want to take an age group out of boundaries and say, well we're not going to use anyone from 18 and under in our boundaries. Again, I want to talk about that. That's crucial. Some of our communities have a large, young Aboriginal population. I think it's crucial that they be counted, not only in First Nations but we have a lot of rural communities. A lot of people will be affected by this. And I think the government should truly think that one through. And I mean, we'll have a lot of time to debate that Bill, and I know that.

We talk about commitments to government employees in northern Saskatchewan and, you know, some of the community leaders are very concerned about the let-it-burn policy. It used to be known, the wildfire management policy, what it was known as when it came out, but somehow it got changed to let-it-burn policy. And that's fine. We'll refer to it that way. Many of the elders, the community members, whether it's outfitters, fishermen, they're very concerned about the amount of forest that is truly being burned every year with the large fires. Some of these fires are . . . They have never seen it before like this. Some of the areas, traditional lands where they used to hunt and gather food for sustenance, they used to . . . berries. You go talk to them. And the fish, and you talk to the fishermen, and they say from all the fires, even the ash on the water it affects. They talk about what's affecting their environment and what's going on. And now you have studies, and you're talking about the caribou. I was at a conference where they're concerned about the caribou, the woodland caribou. So there's a lot of issues going on.

We've requested that there be a review of the wildfire management policy that the current government has in place. I know it came and was, you know, drafted under the previous government, which is fine. It was done with experts. They thought this was the best plan at the time. But I say to the minister, it's time for a review; to the government, it's time for a review.

Leadership in the North has asked. A lot of individuals want this review: the outfitters — I've been contacted by them — the trappers association. You'll hear many groups, individuals, traditional land users, fishermen. There's lots of people, young people. You have a lot of people who did a lot of I guess trapping and hunting and fishing, and they're telling us it's having a real serious impact on the quality of their life and their tradition. And that's important. But they're really concerned about the environment and they're raising concern.

And the government doesn't seem to want to review the policy. I sent a letter off quite some time ago asking for a review, but the government's response was they are currently happy with the policy and at that point are not willing to review it or to look at it. And that's pretty sad.

So I guess we have to do a lot more work as leadership, as outfitters, the fishermen. I guess there's going to be a lot of groups will have to. I don't know what it takes, if it takes some of the bigger outfitters getting involved in it and maybe getting the attention of the government. Maybe there is some connection there. But I know it needs to happen. It's time. It's gone on long enough, and it's time for a review of it. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, that that review happen, and I hope the government will do a review of this wildfire management policy that it's currently using. It's important that they do that, and I'm hoping they do that.

Now you want to talk about cuts. And I was looking at just some of the Northern Affairs department budget items. And if you go to 2006-2007 year, the government allocated \$5.7 million. And if you go to 2011-2012, Northern Affairs budget is now \$4.4 million. Since 2007 a drop of \$1.64 million has happened in Northern Affairs' budget.

But also some of the leadership in the North has talked about the cuts, and they've seen some of the jobs, the positions in La Ronge and some of the other communities, we're losing jobs. And any time you have a job lost — whether it's one, two, three — it affects a whole community. And it does affect families because some of these individuals, either they're from the area and they have to move or they have extended family — they've been there with their family ties — and they're connected to the community. They have to leave. But it's economics as well. It's homeowners. They buy their goods in the community. When you lose jobs like this, again it's concern.

When we have an area where we have limited resources, limited staff, and we see the cuts, and I think some people are a little concerned with the budget. The Premier has made it very clear there will be cuts. He says, be ready. Don't expect, you know, all this money. And don't expect this. And expectations, we need to bring them down. And you know, everyone's watching closely to see what's going to happen, and we'll see when the budget comes out. We'll get the final. And we'll know. I think people will have to look at it.

But you know, so there's those cuts that we were talking about, Mr. Speaker. And you know, they're challenging. And we want to make sure some of the jobs . . . We don't want to lose any more jobs when you have unemployment as high as it is in northern Saskatchewan. Some of our First Nations and Métis communities, we know that. And sometimes when government jobs are gone and we lose them, you never get those back. It's hard to bring a job back in once the government has made their cuts to it. It's not usually, you know, an opportunity. So before they do that, I guess these are some of the concerns we're hearing, you know.

Now I want to go back into talking about the mental health and addictions because I think it's important. There's so many community members, you know, at the end of the day, have their challenges and they're put in circumstances. But they need

resources. And I wouldn't want to take away from the addictions workers who are on the front line doing the work that they can do. I've talked to a lot of them. They're working hard. They're doing what they can do. But I know a lot of them are tired. They're expected to do a lot. There's so many challenges right now facing a lot of community members, you know, whether it's their own doing, the choices they've made, the path they went down. But we can't turn our backs on those individuals. We have to be there for them. We have to make sure we have all the resources we can, the treatment centres, and that's important.

[12:45]

I think northern Saskatchewan . . . And I know Lac La Ronge Indian Band, they've been trying to get a treatment centre and I know will work closely with any governments. And they will partner with anyone to get a treatment centre in the area so that their community members have access to a good treatment centre done with the culture and the understanding and traditions that they would use and reflect. And maybe this could be very successful in helping some of the young people, some of our community members get their life turned around and move forward.

There's so many issues facing northern people, challenges. But you know, when you ask the people to come together, it's amazing how they will come together, whether it's fundraising, to watch what they do. And I look at . . . And I want to make comments on the fundraising they did for the children's hospital. It was truly amazing to see the North come together. And I did a member's statement in this House talking about some of the success and to see the money, \$625,000 that they raised. And I mean truly there was a lot of individuals who phoned in, you know, and kids brought money. It was amazing to watch the giving, the true . . .

And you know I was at a meeting not too long ago, about two weeks ago, where Cameco has announced it will be matching, again — they were going to have another radiothon, and they're going to fundraise again, next November — and Cameco's already agreed to match dollar for dollar that they fundraise. And that truly is amazing to see the commitment.

So I want to be very clear that there is success and there are things happening in northern Saskatchewan. And I know First Nations and Métis communities that people are very proud of.

And I want to make it very clear that some of our First Nations and Métis institutes are doing an excellent job. Some of the partnerships they are developing with industry and business, it's amazing. Some of the opportunities that they are giving their community members is very . . . I guess it's given them such an opportunity.

But where they lack, I guess, the partnerships, is the education and training. If you look at the education and training, and I've heard this many times, is it a level playing field where a provincial student versus a First Nations student gets the level of funding that's provided? So is that student getting the same level and opportunity as provincial students? And I think more has to be done by our provincial government to work with First Nations to see, where can the provincial government help assist

in the funding of First Nations education?

And I don't mean in small, little partnerships and to have a photo op and to say, oh we're doing this and we're going to do that. That's not what I'm talking about. To be meaningful and sit down and maybe top up what the federal government is not funding. Because if there is a difference in funding, I don't think the federal government should have the opportunity to take away, if a provincial government assists in funding First Nations students on reserve, the federal government should take away their dollars from them saying, well seeing you're getting it here, we're going to pull our . . . I think that has to be made very clear. If we're going to give a level playing field to First Nations students, let's make sure that they're getting the same funding, because that would give them the same opportunity.

And we talk about training, and there is many training opportunities. And when I said that, I talk about the partnerships that they are developing to give their community members an opportunity at a good paying job. But we have to make sure we're ready for that, and that has to be a long plan. It isn't going to start tomorrow, where let's do this tomorrow and they're going to have that. I realize it takes time; it takes commitment and planning. And I think the government has to come up with a better plan. It has to consult First Nations and Métis.

And I know they're talking about a task force, and this task force is supposed to go out and look at different things. And I have to be very clear. I don't know if that task force has even gone out and done anything yet. We're waiting for the report to see if the task force is going to make a report. So it's going to be interesting to see whereabouts the task force is, when you look at education and training for First Nations and Métis. And I'm curious to see the outcome of that report.

But you can put a task force out there and you can get all the reports you want. And you can put it on a shelf and say, yes we've got the report and it's on the shelf. We committed to doing that and we did that. It takes some action. It takes a commitment, and it's going to take a plan. And we didn't get to where we are in this province with the conditions I'm talking about for our students in northern Saskatchewan, First Nations and Métis. We didn't get there three days ago. It's taken time. We've got there. It's going to take a plan and I think it's going to take a commitment. And I'm hoping that the government will take that commitment. And if the task force comes out with some recommendations, that they will move on those recommendations, and not put it on a shelf for a study, and say it's nice but it's going to sit there. Some serious commitment so that First Nations and Métis students, citizens have a fair chance at our jobs, training, a good quality of life, a home, to live in a community where they're productive and feeling positive. So there's a lot of work to be done.

But I also have to say, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that we have a lot to be proud of, our culture as Aboriginal people, our history. It's there and we're proud of it. Yes, we have some challenges. Yes, I've talked about some pretty negative stuff. The government has an opportunity to respond to the leaderships in our communities and to come forward, and I'm hoping that they will do that. It takes time, but let's develop a plan. Let's have a vision. How do we help these young people

so that we don't lose them in suicide, so we don't lose them to drugs, to alcohol, to gangs? We don't have to lose them. We can reach out in a meaningful way.

And when I said earlier, you know, about inviting the minister to come and have a look, and the Premier, and if any other colleagues want to come to have a look at some of the conditions, talk to some of the leadership, the students. I'm setting that up and I hope that that works, that they will truly meet. And when they hear some of the challenges that the leadership, the front-line workers are faced with, they will respond and say it's time to do something. It's time for action. It's time for a plan. It's time for a vision. It's time to include all Saskatchewan people in our economy in this beautiful province.

And you know, everyone has pride and they want to do the best they can. And I talk to a lot of young people, community members, leaders, and I always hear that. They'll give everyone a fair shake. And you know, there's always hope, and they hope the government will respond when there's budgets. And there's a lot of people in First Nations, Métis communities in the North, they're waiting to see what the government will do with all the money. They hear about all the prosperity and the wealth, how good the province is doing, and they wait back home hoping to get part of it.

And I know at the end of the day they hope it isn't about the politics and the, I guess, that side of it. They're not interested in which party is in power and which one's not. All they care about is their quality of life, their home. They just want to be able to feed their family, provide a nice home, a safe home, a safe community for their young people, an opportunity at training, an opportunity at jobs. That's what they're asking.

And I think sometimes that's all they're asking, a fair chance at a quality of life. Is that so much to ask, from our young people, to ask of all of us? Is that so much to ask, to say, give us a chance. Give us the same level playing field. We're not asking that you do this forever, but can we have a plan that says we'll commit resources now? We'll do these things now so that the next generation can have those opportunities, the quality of life, the quality job, can have a good home, safe communities, and continue to be proud citizens of this province.

We owe that to these individuals. There's so much we owe them. But that's one thing I know we can do because I know we have the resources. We have the funds. We have the money. We, I hope, at the end of the day, and I hope soon, will have the will from the government to want to do that, to reach out truly and come up with a plan that addresses the issues that we're talking about. Not to go to meetings and listen to individuals and say, oh yes, we'll have meetings and we'll listen. That's not what I'm talking about. It's time for some action.

And many people are asking for that — northern communities, First Nations and Métis. They just want a level playing field. They don't want anything that's not theirs. They're very proud. They just want a level . . . Should it have to go to courts? And we see some of the challenges going on, and I think that will happen as First Nations and Métis, they have to go to the courts. I hope that we can resolve these issues before. And they should be able to work with their governments to solve the issues before it goes to court. But unfortunately sometimes that

doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, and they have to go to court. And they've been successful on a number of their cases they brought forward to the Supreme Court — very clear, they've been successful. And I think we'll continue to be successful.

There are many challenges. And I know the leadership in the First Nations and Métis communities and our municipal leaders are working hard, and our youth leadership. I watch them. Some of them are doing an excellent job. They're working hard. Is there a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, to be done? Yes, we know that. Are there a lot of challenges? Yes. But I have to also say there is certainly a lot of good things going on in First Nations, Métis communities, northern communities, lots of good partnerships. There's lots of opportunities.

But are a lot of individuals given the same level playing field? I don't believe so. And that's why I've been speaking about this, trying to show the government we have to do a better job to meet the needs of northern First Nations and Métis children in our province. It's such a huge resource. And if we don't, if we don't, Mr. Speaker, if we don't, I think, like Professor Howe said, it will truly be an economic disaster if we don't.

We have an opportunity. I hope that we will move forward, that we will continue to meet with the leadership, with the individual groups. And I encourage this government: not only should you meet with them, but you should act on the meetings you have with them and listen to the recommendations and advice that they are trying to share with you and express to you. It's so crucial and important that you take the advice of the leadership.

Now I know there's many challenges out there, Mr. Speaker, and I've talked about those. And I've talked about some solutions, and I know that many of our leadership have good ideas. I hope the ministries and the ministers, all of the government, will hear when they bring forward their ideas and concerns. We have to address them once and for all. It's time for action. It's time for the government to respond to the needs of First Nations, Métis, and northern children.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly urge the government to stop ignoring First Nations communities, Métis communities, and northern Saskatchewan as a whole to ensure opportunity and prosperity are shared more widely by all Saskatchewan residents and enable everyone to fully participate and contribute to our economy and our society in order for Saskatchewan to meet its full potential.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly urge the government to stop ignoring First Nations communities, Métis communities, and northern Saskatchewan as a whole to ensure opportunity and prosperity are shared more widely by all Saskatchewan residents and enable everyone to fully participate and contribute to our economy and our society in order for Saskatchewan to meet its full potential.

Being that it's past the normal hour of adjournment at 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned till Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:01.]

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