



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

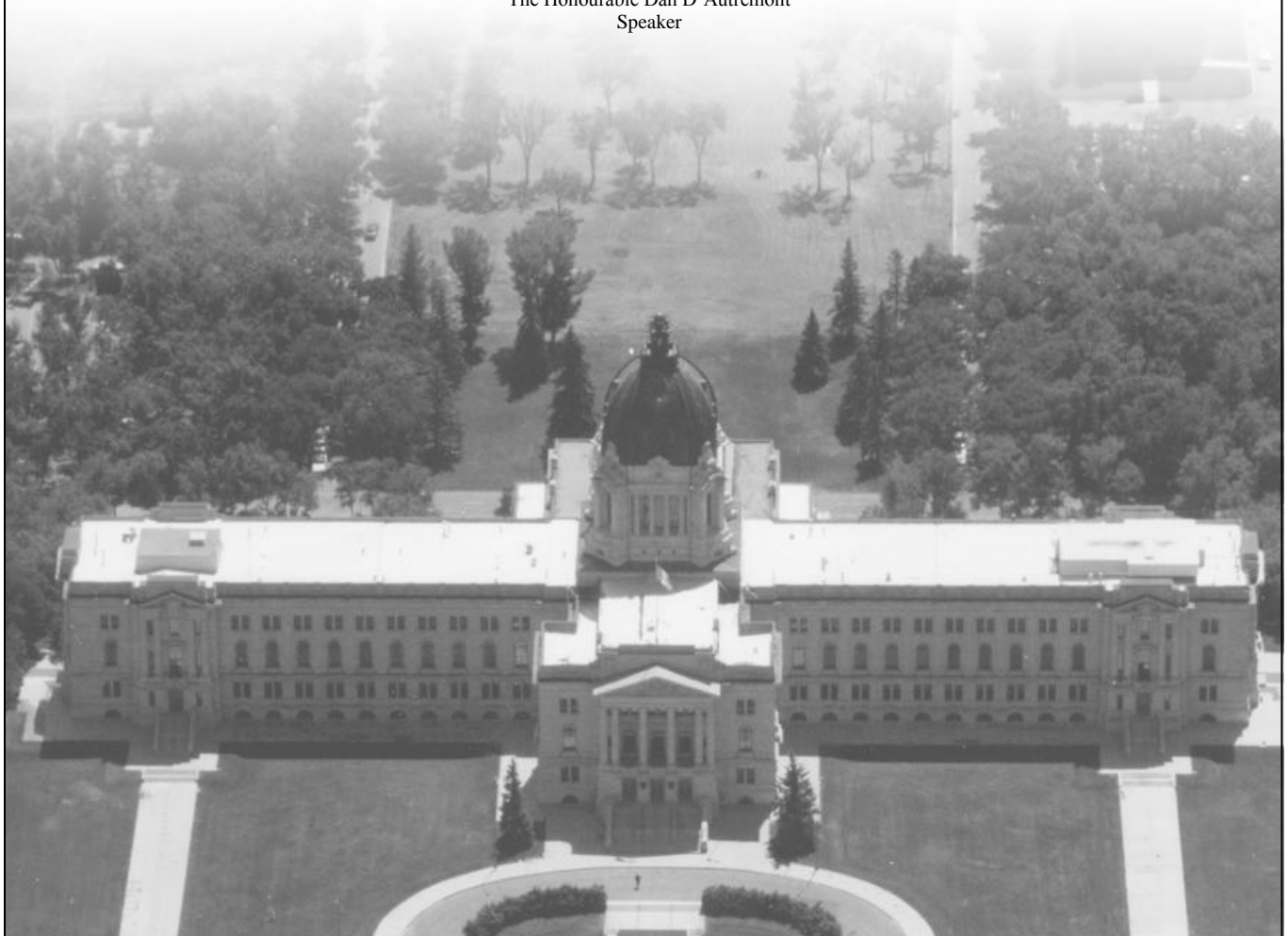
of the

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 member for Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce to all the members of the Assembly a group of grade 12 students from F. W. Johnson Collegiate from Regina Dewdney. About 25 of them are here today along with some of my former colleagues, Mandy Gullickson and Donarae Deringer, two fine members of Regina Public.

A few of the students wanted me to note that the Wildcats hockey team won the city title for the third time in the last four years, and they also raised the most money for the Z99 radiothon of all the schools in the city of Regina. So a proud group of students up there. I look forward to meeting them after routine proceedings. Thank you.

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 that in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot two times and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders.

We know provinces like British Columbia and other provinces have brought in 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, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Regina, Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in the province of Saskatchewan. 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 Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in Hampton Village and Dundonald. The petition is about the need for a new school in Hampton Village:

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 the 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 member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on cell coverage. Therefore:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan undertake as soon as possible to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nations, also known as Dillon; and the neighbouring communities of Michel village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nations, also known as Patuanak and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nations and the community of Turnor Lake including the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Dillon, from Fort Qu'Appelle, and from Saskatoon, and 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 are a concern for 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, firearm use in consultation with traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually standing to ask for leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to introduce a great friend. In the Speaker's gallery is a gentleman by the name of Edward "Eddie" Byhette, and Eddie is originally from Dillon which is Buffalo River First Nation which is near Buffalo Narrows.

And Eddie is a great friend, Mr. Speaker. His father was Francis Byhette and his mother was Agatha Byhette, and Eddie was raised in Clear Lake which is about 100 kilometres west of Turnor Lake. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Byhette has been an ironworker all his life. He's First Nations and he's very proud of his wife, Linda Faye. And the importance of his visit, Mr. Speaker, is Eddie's grandfather, Raphael Young, signed the treaty in 1905 in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And it's a great honour having all these guests here with great history in our area.

And, Mr. Speaker, you should know that as an ironworker, Mr. Byhette has worked in places like Tennessee, Fairbanks, Omaha, the Panama Canal, Mr. Speaker, so he's been all throughout the world. And I'd all ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Mr. Byhette here to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — Why is the Minister of Agriculture on his

feet?

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery I'd like to introduce Don Taylor who is a director for SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], does a lot of great work on behalf of SARM and the municipalities in the southeast corner. Don is also, by the way, a constituent of mine, and we sat on RM [rural municipality] municipal council together, and is a good friend. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Don for all the good work he does and ask all the members to join with me in welcoming to his legislature.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Celebrating Earth Day

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sunday April 22nd is Earth Day, and across Canada and around the globe the people will be celebrating the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day, Mr. Speaker. Millions of Canadians will join people in 170 countries in raising awareness about the critical environmental issues that face our world. Dynamic, aggressive action has the power to capture the attention of our peers and political leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this April, this Earth Day campaign challenge, everyone has to do something that's good for people and the planet. To help, they've launched two campaigns to get everyone involved, running now until the end of April, and have offered up 10 top actions people can start doing right now and all year round.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus was very saddened to learn recently that the federal government is reducing the number of departments and agencies that can do environmental work from 40 to just 3, sacrificing important environmental stewardship to speed up approvals for projects. The government is merely giving big energy companies carte blanche by dismantling the checks and balances that protect our environment.

Our provincial government also made headlines this week for all the wrong reasons. The David Suzuki Foundation issued a report which had this to say, "The Saskatchewan Party government hasn't simply stalled action on climate change — it has reversed it." The information indicates, "It is difficult to imagine a province taking the threats of climate change less seriously."

Mr. Speaker, I can call all members of this Assembly to engage their constituencies and specifically students. Mr. Speaker,

happy Earth Day to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 67 years ago the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps were liberated. Today, people across the world remember victims of the Holocaust. Sirens sounded across Israel and brought the country to a standstill. Millions of Israelis observed a moment of silence in recognition of the 6 million Jewish people killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust of the Second World War. The existence of those victims subjected to life in the Nazi death camps was one that can only be described as a man-made horror.

Auschwitz II, known as Birkenau, was the largest Nazi extermination centre, housing two very large underground gas chambers, two smaller above-ground gas chambers, and an old farmhouse — all used to exterminate the prisoners of the camp. Prisoners subsisted on 200 to 300 calories of food per day, were often worked to death, and many were subjected to medical experimentation with mysterious substances. Those who appeared fit to work were given a shower, their heads were shaved, and a number tattooed on their left forearm. Those not fit to work were taken immediately to the gas chambers. Seventy-five per cent of the Jews in each transport were deemed unfit to work.

We mark these days of remembrance to ensure that monstrous actions such as the Holocaust never happen again. Our country has successfully used its skills in peacekeeping and arbitration to help those in need as situations arise throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to recognize Holocaust Remembrance Day. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

A Week of First Nations Events

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today in the House in recognition of a very successful week last week of events for First Nations people in Saskatchewan.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the 2012 First Nations Winter Games came to a close over the weekend in Saskatoon. Over 3,500 student athletes from across the province participated in six different sports. This year, Mr. Speaker, organizers went the extra mile to make the event accessible to every person across the province by broadcasting the games over the Internet so friends, family, and spectators alike could experience the excitement of the competitions in real time. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the athletes, organizers, sponsors, volunteers, and the city of Saskatoon for their tremendous hard work in making this event such a great success.

I'd also like to highlight, Mr. Speaker, that the 2012 First Nations University of Canada Pow Wow, the 34th annual Spring Celebration Pow Wow, took place April 14th and 15th in Regina. As the first powwow of the year, this highly

anticipated event is considered to be one of the biggest in Saskatchewan, and it attracted more than 7,000 visitors and participants from right across Canada and the United States. Since it began in 1978, the powwow has been held every year to celebrate cultural diversity, to unify families and communities, and to demonstrate First Nations culture.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the volunteers, organizers, and everyone involved at FNUC [First Nations University of Canada] for making this powwow an event to remember. And I'd like to give special thanks to Chairperson Richard Missens and elder, kokum Florence Isaac for their outstanding contributions to building these tremendous events. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night was an evening of pride, accomplishment, and success for business as the Moose Jaw and District Chamber of Commerce presented the Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards. Over 40 nominations in 11 categories celebrated the achievement of business in our community.

It was fascinating to see so many business leaders in attendance to recognize and be recognized for the hard work that they put into their enterprises. That hard work is the foundation upon which Moose Jaw people are creating a growing city and contributing to a growing province that is leading the country in many economic categories.

Mosaic Potash was presented with Business of the Year, which was selected from all the nominees. Mosaic Potash has approximately 340 employees plus hundreds of contractors on site. They contribute generously to many community causes including Hunger in Moose Jaw, which supplies thousands of meals to Moose Jaw school children; the Moose Jaw Cultural Centre, sponsors of our beloved Moose Jaw Warriors; and the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, plus many others.

Charles Vanden Broek was selected as business leader of the year. In his address, Mr. Speaker, he recognized the growth and enthusiasm generated in this city over the past 16 years. People are coming to Moose Jaw to work and to live because they see opportunity and they see success in our city. The success is in part thanks to the hard work of the business people in Moose Jaw. Congratulations to all the nominees and the winners for their diligent work in building a positive business climate and in their celebration of the Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Autism Services Spring Gala

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on April 14th I had the pleasure of bringing greetings on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the Minister of Health at the 14th annual Autism Services Spring Gala in Saskatoon

along with the hon. member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Autism spectrum disorder, ASD, has a profound impact in our society. It is estimated that 1 out of 110 children in Canada is affected by autism. Autism Services is a community-based charitable organization dedicated to providing advocacy, support, education, recreational, social, and residential programs and services to individuals with ASD and their families. Their vision is to make sure that all individuals with autism have the opportunity to live with dignity and to reach their full potential.

Since our government was first elected in 2007, we have recognized that there is a need for increased autism support services. In the most recent budget, we increased funding for autism to \$7.6 million. We have also provided an additional \$4 million for ASD over the next four years.

At the gala, I had the opportunity for conversation with families on a personal level about their struggles and joys. It's by attending galas such as this, Mr. Speaker, that we can help share a greater understanding of autism and support our members in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Military Ball

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend I had the great privilege of attending the 24th annual International Military Ball held in Minot, North Dakota and hosted by the United States Air Force, the city of Minot, and the Minot area Chamber of Commerce. Our delegation was led by Their Honours, Mrs. Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, and Mr. Gordon Schofield and included military units from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and even Ontario.

We Canadian visitors were very warmly welcomed and treated to exceptional hospitality by our American friends. For many the highlight of the week's program was the ball itself. To begin with, the head table was introduced with full military honours and accompanied by the splendid Minot Air Force Base Honor Guard. The program also included a wonderful meal prepared by the Holiday Inn Riverside staff with music provided by the pipes and drums of the 26th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, and the truly amazing USAF [United States Air Force] Heartland of America Band, Raptor.

For others, including myself, the opportunity to tour the base, see its state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, and meet the dedicated personnel was also deeply appreciated. And yes, for a select group, the great selection and value offered by Minot's women's clothing and shoe stores proved to be irresistibly attractive.

To Colonel James Dawkins, commander of 5th Bomb Wing; Colonel Stephen Davis, commander of 91st Missile Wing; Mayor Curt Zimbelman; Mr. F. Bruce Walker, Chair of the Minot Area Chamber of Commerce; and the volunteer team, sincere thanks and best wishes for continued success.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you I'll ask for leave for introductions.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave for introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Due to some inclement weather and some difficult roads, to you and through you I'm happy to introduce students from the Johnson-Shoyama school who are joining us here today. I'll get directly to their names: Everett Berg, Bill Bewer, Shannon Boklaschuk, Bonanle Dansu from the school of public health, Rosina Foli, Phillip Lashley, Jaime Leonard, Nyankomo Marwa, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Whitney Mosley, Justin Redekopp, Julene Restall, Travis Reynolds, Kristopher Schmaltz, Rasheed Soomro, Jordan Teichgrab, Satpal Viridi, Ishmael Wireko, and Lucy Zhang.

Mr. Speaker, these are all inspiring students. They're taking their graduate studies right here at the Johnson-Shoyama school. We know that students today mean that they'll be leaders tomorrow within the province, across the country, and around the world. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these students to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to join in the introductions please.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave to do introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quickly, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming these Johnson-Shoyama students to the Assembly.

Johnson-Shoyama is doing great work here in the province, and we so look forward to the contribution that these scholars will be making here in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and most certainly abroad as well. So welcome today to the legislature and thank you for coming.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Massey Place.

Tobacco Control

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our province's farmers and those who are counting on old age security are not the only individuals feeling the fallout from the federal Conservative budget, Mr. Speaker.

Recently we've learned that the federal Conservatives have also drastically cut the federal tobacco control strategy. This is a move, Mr. Speaker, that will negatively affect tobacco cessation efforts here in Saskatchewan. My specific question to the minister is this: has his ministry undertaken an assessment of what this cut will mean for programs here in Saskatchewan that help people live healthier lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we haven't really looked closely at the cuts from the federal government, but what I will say is that our tobacco control strategy that we put in place, I think, Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years has been very effective. We've done a number of things, not only pieces of legislation that have banned little cigarillos, Mr. Speaker — that was a very popular move, Mr. Speaker — but we've also done a number of things regarding education to make sure that people are aware of the harmful effects of tobacco, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is more to do on this front. We have one of the highest rates of tobacco use in Canada. We are taking steps to make sure that we reduce those numbers in a number of areas, not only through legislation but also through education and so that people can break the habit if they so choose, Mr. Speaker. We have supports through the pharmacies of our province to help with that, Mr. Speaker. More work to do, but we're well on the way to reducing the number of people using tobacco in our province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reduction of funding through the tobacco control strategy is going to be felt here in Saskatchewan, especially when it comes to supporting organizations that help young people to not start smoking as well as to help individuals who wish to kick the habit. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that this will mean fewer enforcement officers here in the province to monitor the display of tobacco products in retail stores. My question to the minister: with the federal . . . with the Sask Party's federal cousins once again pulling the carpet out from underneath Saskatchewan people, what is this minister going to do in order to ensure that big tobacco doesn't regain ground that it has lost here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are a number of other programs that we have in the province that help reduce the use of tobacco. We have a strong program that goes through the school system. It's called a View and Vote. In

fact the member from Regina Dewdney was recently at one of the schools to award, to announce the commercial that was the winning commercial. So there are a number of programs that we have.

Certainly a reduction from the federal government is a concern. But, Mr. Speaker, I would say that today in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan advantage of a balanced budget, a have province is a far cry from what we used to realize under the NDP who were so reliant on the federal government year after year because they just didn't have a growing economy. Mr. Speaker, we have a balanced budget. We are the envy of the nation, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we would always appreciate more money from the federal government but, Mr. Speaker, we are taking steps within our province with the money that we have, that we generate from our province, to see many of these programs through to fruition.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can lament the reduction from the federal government if he wants but that doesn't . . . This isn't simply a theoretical discussion, Mr. Speaker, about federal and provincial relations. This is a cut from the federal government, Mr. Speaker, that will harm the health of Saskatchewan people and will also in turn harm the provincial health budget. We know, Mr. Speaker, for each individual who can quit smoking there's an average savings of \$8,500. So this decision to cut funding at the federal level will have a negative effect here in Saskatchewan.

This is a bad form of downloading from the federal government, Mr. Speaker, and it ought to greatly concern the minister, certainly more than what we just heard in that last answer. My question to the minister: his government has taken very urgent action when it comes to adding more politicians to the province — at a cost of millions, I might add. What urgent action is this minister going to take in order to ensure that tobacco control efforts in Saskatchewan aren't gutted?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we have had a very strong tobacco reduction strategy in this province that combines legislation; it combines education, Mr. Speaker. We have seen and we will continue to see, I think, the rates of tobacco use continue to drop in our province, Mr. Speaker. We have been, quite frankly, when you look at all the jurisdictions, one of the leaders in this front, Mr. Speaker, including issues around First Nations use and the number of cartons that they could buy, Mr. Speaker, which was controversial, that the members opposite failed to do when they were in government for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. We have gone a long ways to help try and reduce tobacco use.

I am not discounting the fact that if the federal government backs away from some of its funding responsibilities, that's a concern, and we'll continue to raise that with them. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it's a far cry from when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were in power that relied so heavily on the federal government because all we would ever be under their watch would have been a have-not province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Provincial efforts in reducing the use of tobacco in the province are of course a good thing, Mr. Speaker, but there has been a traditional role and a positive role here that the federal tobacco control strategy has played in reducing tobacco consumption in the province.

It's an alarming pattern, Mr. Speaker, we see by members opposite on the other side. Whether it's agricultural cuts we see from the federal government, whether it's changes to old age security, Mr. Speaker, that we see, whether it is changes, Mr. Speaker, to health care funding over the long term, and now whether it's tobacco control funding, Mr. Speaker, members opposite are just happy to take these cuts from the federal Conservatives any opportunity that they have. My question to the minister: why won't he do what's right for Saskatchewan patients here in Saskatchewan and stand up and say these cuts are wrong and actually take a stand for once as opposed to simply just taking every cut that the Harper government's willing to give?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, we came in with a strong package of legislation that banned tobacco use in vehicles which had children under the age of 16. We banned tobacco use on school grounds, Mr. Speaker. We've taken a number of steps in the last four years to reduce the amount of tobacco use in this province.

I will say though, Mr. Speaker, there is more work to do. When we took government from the opposition, there was certainly many areas, and this was just one more of those areas that we needed to continue to improve for the health of our citizens.

Again having said that, Mr. Speaker, this isn't, you know, what we want to see, the federal government back away from a program. But as I said in my previous answers, Mr. Speaker, if there's ever a time that the province can take on a challenge, for example, of tobacco use, it's under this government with a growing government and a growing economy.

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

Midwifery Supply and Training

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Midwifery is important to Saskatchewan women and is an option more and more women would like to choose. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan continues to have a shortage of midwifery services. According to a Saskatoon midwife, the number of requests for services is more than double what current capacity allows.

It has been more than four years since the government implemented its midwifery program, yet there are only 10 midwives available to serve women in Saskatchewan and almost half are concentrated in one health region. To the minister: what is he doing to ensure Saskatchewan residents who want to become midwives are able to receive the education

they need here in their own province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

[10:30]

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, again, you know, this answer will maybe mirror one of the other answers that I said because what I'm going to do is compare the record of the NDP to the record of this provincial government over the last four and a half years.

Under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of trying to get it done and talk about it, they passed legislation but they didn't proclaim legislation, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of NDP government, just before the '07 election, guess how many midwives were working in Saskatchewan? None, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the past four and a half years, we've added to the midwife complement, Mr. Speaker, each and every year. I am checking my notes. I think there's around six or seven working in the province right now. Well the members laugh. The members laugh. Six is a heck of a lot more than none.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because Saskatchewan does not have a midwifery education program, if you want to become a midwife you have few options but to pack up and leave the province to get your education. This is not an easy choice for those who have family responsibilities, employment here, or financial constraints. Fortunately there are a handful of degree-granting, nationally accredited programs in the United States offering distance education options, like the Midwives College of Utah or MCU. Students can do a portion of their study from home, but also must do hands-on clinical placements under registered midwives to finish their education.

Currently Saskatchewan refuses to allow its registered midwives to supervise senior MCU students to get their required births. This is despite the fact there are currently more than 25 MCU graduates working as licensed midwives all over Canada, and our neighbour to the west, Alberta, allows its midwives to supervise MCU students. To the minister: why is the level of training offered by the Midwives College of Utah good enough for Alberta but not good enough for our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, like many of or all of the professional associations that we have, whether it's the College of Physicians and Surgeons, whether it's the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, all the different professions, Mr. Speaker, set standards. They are the organization that set standards that is acceptable here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have set up a midwives professional organization that will look at education and accept education that they feel is appropriate, Mr. Speaker. So when those midwives, for example, take training in whichever institution, if

it meets the standard of our professional association which we take advice from, Mr. Speaker . . . It isn't the government that sets standards, Mr. Speaker. It is the professional association that sets standards. Now if she would like to change that, that would be very interesting, Mr. Speaker, because quite frankly they just didn't get it done when they were the government. I'd ask her now if she would respect the professional association, or do you think she knows best?

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what this minister is doing to address the drastic shortage of midwives here in Saskatchewan.

Two of these MCU students are here today. Diane Otterbein has already taken much time away from her family at great financial expense to complete 100 births in Utah and Africa. She only needs nine more births to graduate, Mr. Speaker. Ang Evans was receiving supervision at a midwifery clinic in Alberta. She recently moved to Regina with her family only to learn she cannot work under the supervision of Saskatchewan midwives. Diane and Ang want to finish their degrees so they can take the next steps to become registered midwives here and serve Saskatchewan women and families.

To the minister: will he commit to finding a solution so homegrown midwifery students from nationally accredited programs can complete the hands-on portion of their education here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, we have to rely on the experts in the area. That's who I take my advice from. It doesn't matter whether it's the midwife association or the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Speaker. I've had many people that have come up to me with a doctor, a friend or a doctor that they will say should be practising in Saskatchewan. We have to rely on the professional associations, Mr. Speaker, to make those calls and to make those judgments, and I will continue to do that.

But I will say, Mr. Speaker, again comparing our record to the NDP, I remember the NDP talking about how many nurses we should have but we would never set a number, Mr. Speaker, because we just wouldn't meet it. Under this government, Mr. Speaker, in four and a half years the number of registered nurses increased by 900, Mr. Speaker, in this province. The number of physicians have increased by 200, Mr. Speaker, and the number of midwives have gone from zero to six, or maybe even a couple more until I get the latest numbers.

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

Conference Sponsorship

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this year the World Congress on Information Technology, WCIT, is being held in Montreal, Quebec, between October 22nd to the 24th. This is an information technology conference. Mr. Speaker, we know that

SaskTel International is a platinum title sponsor, spending at least \$51,000 to be on the banner, Mr. Speaker, and certainly it could be more. To the minister: what's the total amount of money being spent, taxpayers' money, by SaskTel International on this conference, and what's the purpose of these dollars?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the current amount that they're dedicating towards this particular function. I'll take notice of that question.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Note that there are no other large telecoms that are sponsoring this conference: no Rogers, Bell, AT & T, Sprint, you name it. No one else is sponsoring this, but that SaskTel International is. So while rates increase under this government, this government's spending thousands of dollars on this out-of-province conference.

But, Mr. Speaker, the spending doesn't stop there. When we look at the WCIT website, 2012 website, SaskPower is also a title silver sponsor, Mr. Speaker. How much money has SaskPower spent of Saskatchewan people's dollars to be an out-of-province sponsor for this conference?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, similarly I'll take notice, and we'll endeavour to get that information.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's sort of interesting. There's no other power companies as well that are sponsoring, title sponsor of this international conference. Not only has SaskTel International been a sponsor, SaskPower has as well, but we also see that Enterprise Saskatchewan is also sponsoring this conference. The WCIT website shows Enterprise Saskatchewan as one of the main public sector sponsors, the other being the host province, Quebec, and Montreal themselves.

We've heard that Enterprise Saskatchewan is sponsoring this conference to the tune of \$35,000, Mr. Speaker, while here in Saskatchewan we see the Saskatchewan Economic Development Association, SEDA, is postponing their conference because of a lack of funding. To the minister: what is the total amount of money that Enterprise Saskatchewan is spending on WCIT, and how's this benefiting the economy of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll take notice of that question and get back to the House with the information.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there's lots of money that's being spent, but not very many answers before Saskatchewan people.

An interesting note, Mr. Speaker: there's no other major telecom that's sponsoring this conference. There's no other power companies, Mr. Speaker, and no other provinces, Mr. Speaker, other than the host jurisdiction. Yet this government sees fit to spend tens of thousands of dollars, taxpayers' dollars, likely more than \$100,000, sponsoring this out-of-province conference. It certainly seems like very pricey banner ads, Mr. Speaker, with little value for Saskatchewan people. It certainly doesn't seem, Mr. Speaker, to be representative of putting Saskatchewan first with this extravagant out-of-province sponsorship. It seems more like ministerial and executive jet-setting with impacts being felt back home.

My question to the minister: other than increased utility rates and local cuts, what are Saskatchewan people getting for the tens of thousands of dollars the Sask Party is sending to this out-of-province conference? What's the value for dollar?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll take notice of that question and return to the House with the appropriate information.

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

Support for Economic Development

Mr. Forbes: — [Inaudible] . . . lots of questions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. You know, Mr. Speaker, in the early stage of this government, their flagship program was to replace Saskatchewan's REDAs [regional economic development authority] with enterprise regions. This government made a clear mistake three years ago in switching from the former municipality-based program to the current province-based enterprise region program, and this Sask Party government experiment has been a failure. For proof we need to only look at the recent provincial budget in which funding to these regions was cut swiftly and without public consultation.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people involved with these enterprise regions are losing their jobs. Communities across this province will be diminished. And these are real people, our citizens, who believed in Saskatchewan first. Promises were made. Now many dreams are broken. Will this minister admit that, in regards to enterprise regions, this ministry and this government has fallen short of its goals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we've said many times over the course of the last number of months, we believe that local economic development is best handled at the local level. To that end, Mr. Speaker, we've increased revenue sharing very, very significantly, 87 per cent over the last four years — \$21 million this year, Mr.

Speaker, \$35 million on top of that \$21 million next year, Mr. Speaker. We've given municipalities the tools to undertake economic development in the best way that they see fit. And what we won't do, Mr. Speaker, is take money away from municipal governments as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this is what some of the folks are saying across this province that had a lot of hopes for this program. "The provincial government's decision to cut funding to Enterprise Saskatchewan could set economic development in the region back a decade or more." So says Courtney Vaudner, a Melville city councillor and a director of Saskatchewan east enterprise region, SEER. And this is a quote: "I'd say we're back to where we were 10 years ago, if not further back," Vaudner told *The Melville Advance*.

To the minister: will the government now look to reinstate the programs like REDA to replace their failed enterprise experiment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, we believe and have been very clear in saying that we believe that local economic development is best handled at the local level. To that end, we've increased resources to municipal governments very, very significantly over the course of the last number of years — \$21 million alone this year, \$35 million next year. Local government does have the opportunity, ability, and resources to direct local economic development as they see fit.

We see it being more appropriate, Mr. Speaker, to focus at the national and international level. To that end we've increased funding for STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] very significantly in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue with aggressive outreach at the national and international level.

And frankly, Mr. Speaker, I find it quite hypocritical on the part of the NDP to be criticizing Enterprise Saskatchewan when frankly it never would have existed under their government, nor would the enterprise regions, so why they're criticizing those cuts I find quite strange.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, you know, this is what people across the province are saying and in fact in the minister's own backyard, in his own constituency, people are unhappy with the decision and even more upset that this government appears to be moving backwards. Corey Bowers, the director of economic development of 55 west enterprise region said, and I quote: "This basically means there's no more operation here." That's what he said — no more operation here.

To the minister: when we have hard-working people striving to make this economy grow, why are they cutting jobs and paying to shut down offices and paying out contracts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the city of Meadow Lake, revenue sharing has increased over 100 per cent to the city of Meadow Lake over the course of the last four years, Mr. Speaker. We've increased that revenue sharing. I think it's over \$500,000.

You know, the city of Meadow Lake frankly is doing very well, Mr. Speaker. We've seen growth in our community like we have never seen before — like we'd never seen under the NDP, that's for sure, Mr. Speaker. I've lived there my whole life and we've never seen things doing as well as they are right now, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the enterprise region he's referring to, I met with the Chair of the 55 west enterprise region only last week, in addition to other meetings, and he was very understanding of the decision that was taken, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — An interesting way to dismiss the officer out of his own backyard there. And I lived in that area too. But when people want to see action, they truly do want to see action, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a case now where we see this government wants to increase politicians. They want to see three more politicians in this legislature rather than develop economic progress here in Saskatchewan. And we need to look no further, no further than the cancellation of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Association, SEDA, conference for 2012, Growing Saskatchewan. And what a shame that is. The Enterprise minister would rather sponsor a conference in Montreal and pull funding here in Saskatchewan, pull funding here. Mr. Speaker, the SEDA conference has been disrupted and delayed for no good reason at all.

[10:45]

To the minister: what other bad news are we waiting for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This member wants to talk about economic progress. Let's talk about economic progress, Mr. Speaker.

Our population is at an all-time high and right now over 1.067 million people in Saskatchewan, more than have ever lived in this province before, Mr. Speaker. We have more people working in this province than we have ever had working in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. We have an unemployment rate of 4.8 per cent, the lowest in the entirety of the country, Mr. Speaker. More than 13,000 jobs posted on saskjobs.ca in February, Mr. Speaker. We've a Stats Canada forecast more than \$20 billion in public and private investment in Saskatchewan this year, double from when those members were in government, Mr. Speaker.

This economy is moving forward under the leadership of this Premier. With a balanced budget, we're going to keep moving

forward without the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Electoral Representation

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter debate here this afternoon on an issue that's increasingly being recognized by Saskatchewan people all across this province — in Swift Current, in Kindersley, in Cypress Hills, Mr. Speaker; did I mention Cypress Hills, Mr. Speaker? — and in every region of the province, all across this fine province.

We're speaking to an issue that is very much out of line with the priorities of Saskatchewan people and has people questioning why this government's pushing forward with changes that certainly aren't in the best interest of Saskatchewan people. At the end of this debate here today or at the end of my introduction of this debate here today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving a motion. I'll introduce that motion at this point in time for the record and which I'll be speaking to here today, motion being and that I would like to move a motion:

That this Assembly recognizes that spending millions of public dollars on more politicians is unnecessary to effectively represent the current constituents of Saskatchewan; and further

That this Assembly calls on the government to withdraw the measures set forth in Bill No. 36 because the government did not consult the people of Saskatchewan before its introduction and the legislation does not address the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, that's the motion we'll be speaking here today, and there's some important points that I'd like to make.

What I would like to say to Saskatchewan people is that I'm incredibly encouraged by the interest that Saskatchewan people are showing in this issue, this circumstance where a government is introducing something that's certainly not in the best interest of Saskatchewan people. And I've been interested with the emails, the phone calls, the petitions that are coming from all across the province, Mr. Speaker. And it's no surprise, Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise when you put forward legislation like this and put forward tricks and manoeuvres like this, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people will be disappointed. It's a matter of being straight with Saskatchewan people, and in this case, this government's been anything but, Mr. Speaker.

I know for certain, Mr. Speaker, that when that government went to the people of Saskatchewan in the fall election, Mr. Speaker, with their flashy and sleek brochures and their platform items, it was never mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that they were going to be increasing the number of politicians in this

province. Not a mention to Saskatchewan people in the election, Mr. Speaker. And further to that, Mr. Speaker, not a mention of it in the Throne Speech once this government was elected with a large mandate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we accept the choice of voters. We accept that there's a large majority over there, Mr. Speaker. What we don't accept, Mr. Speaker, is for a government to betray Saskatchewan people in the fashion that we have and for a government to be acting in a manner that's all about their own political, partisan best interest, Mr. Speaker, and having no reflection to the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So it's with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, that we oppose this Bill. But we also do so . . . This Bill eliminates the voice of children all across this province, of youth, Mr. Speaker, eliminates youth in the counting within our constituents and marginalizes that voice, both of children, of youth, students, but also of young communities, of First Nations, Métis communities, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that's certainly not just something that the opposition is identifying. We're proud to stand up to make sure that the voices of children and students and youth are represented here in this Chamber. We believe they should also be front and centre in the electoral decisions made, Mr. Speaker. We also believe that they should be a full consideration in the budgetary decisions of government. And any move to discount that voice, Mr. Speaker, is an injustice.

And we agree, Mr. Speaker, with the Children's Advocate, Mr. Speaker, who's come out scathing this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. It's important to note that the Children's Advocate in Saskatchewan is an independent role, Mr. Speaker, a non-partisan role, there for the best interests of Saskatchewan children. The Children's Advocate, Mr. Speaker, and I quote that independent provincial Children's Advocate, "To eliminate those under 18 of the eligibility runs contrary to everyone's right to equal representation. Every citizen has the right to effective representation."

You know, listen, there is no valid reason to exclude the voices of children. What we should be doing with children, youth, and students is reaching out to youth and young people and young communities and engaging them in the democratic process, inviting them in to be part of the solutions of today that are going to secure the bright future of tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. To not do so, and to in fact dismiss, discount, and marginalize that voice as we're seeing here, Mr. Speaker, only for the political best interests of their own party, Mr. Speaker, is a sad day in Saskatchewan.

This week we've celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Mr. Speaker. The Charter guarantees effective representation, Mr. Speaker, and we see the actions of this government running counter to both the Charter, Mr. Speaker, in its intent but also to the best interests of Saskatchewan young people all across this province, just as been highlighted by the Children's Advocate who says it runs contrary to everyone's right to equal representation, Mr. Speaker. It's sad, Mr. Speaker, and this is discrimination simply based on age, Mr. Speaker. Incredibly disappointing.

What I know is interesting, many people highlight as well is that in fact we aren't under-represented in Saskatchewan at all,

Mr. Speaker. I know I've had people from La Ronge make contact. We've had people from Kindersley make contact. We've had people from Meadow Lake and Lloydminster make contact, Mr. Speaker. And what they're suggesting, Mr. Speaker, what they're highlighting is that in fact we already have one of the smallest constituencies by way of population here in this province, Mr. Speaker, than the rest of Canada. So they're wondering why this government's pursuing big government for politicians, Mr. Speaker, to spend millions of dollars to pursue the best interests, their own political partisan interests, Mr. Speaker, instead of placing those priorities, those resources into the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

When they're looking, Mr. Speaker, I know some of the folks I was chatting with, this gentleman up in Melville who gave me a phone call, and he had gone online and he had looked at the information. He wanted to just make sure what he was looking at was correct. This individual, as he described to me, doesn't make these kinds of phone calls usually, Mr. Speaker. In fact he described himself as somebody who, well I'll be frank, Mr. Speaker, he said he didn't vote for our party last election. And that's fine; we work for all people, Mr. Speaker.

But when he looked at the literature, Mr. Speaker, and he looked at the numbers, Mr. Speaker, he wanted to clarify because he thought the numbers couldn't be right. Because he said any government in a right mind with an eye to fairness in serving Saskatchewan people simply couldn't be doing what this government is in fact and indeed doing, Mr. Speaker, in adding three more politicians by spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker — people's hard-earned dollars, Mr. Speaker — at the same time as they're piling expenses onto the backs of everyday families all across this province, asking seniors to dig deeper, Mr. Speaker, into their pockets to pay for prescription drugs and other cost of living increases, Mr. Speaker. And that's a sad day, Mr. Speaker, a sad day and it reflects misplaced priorities.

What this individual highlighted, and the questions . . . It was a chart, Mr. Speaker, that highlighted the different provinces and how they relate to the number of constituents within a constituency, Mr. Speaker, I believe in fact he was referencing and been on a Canadian Taxpayers Federation website, Mr. Speaker, that put out a bit of a video I guess on this, Mr. Speaker, highlighting some of this information. And certainly I understand they strongly oppose this reckless move that's certainly not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people or the taxpaying public.

But the individual, what he wanted to raise with me, he says, how can this be? How can this be that British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, their constituencies by way of population, an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in British Columbia has 2.9 more constituents than we do, Mr. Speaker, almost three times more. So here in Saskatchewan we serve roughly 18,000 constituents, Mr. Speaker. And British Columbia, an MLA serves 51,764 constituents, Mr. Speaker — almost three times as many, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know Saskatchewan people pretty well, Mr. Speaker, and there's a special spirit and work ethic about Saskatchewan people, a certain part of their DNA that says we can roll up our sleeves, we can work a little harder and we can tend to what we

need to do, that we can determine our own future, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I have certainly not come across a single individual that somehow thinks that we need to create a cushier environment for politicians, Mr. Speaker. That's simply not the DNA of Saskatchewan people. What I urge, Mr. Speaker, is for members opposite to work a little harder, Mr. Speaker, and that's a shared piece that we can all do, Mr. Speaker. And that's what Saskatchewan people expect.

But now it's not just British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, that is in this circumstance. In Alberta, Mr. Speaker, when we have only 18,000 people in our constituencies, in Alberta we have more. They have 43,915 constituents, Mr. Speaker — two and a half times more than we do, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Wow. Repeat that.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The member from Cumberland says, maybe I should repeat that. That's two and a half times more constituents, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at Ontario, Mr. Speaker, in Ontario, they actually have 6.7 times the number of constituents in their ridings, Mr. Speaker. So here in Saskatchewan when the Sask Party's saying, oh boy, we can't keep up with keeping in touch with 18,000 people, Mr. Speaker, in Ontario they serve more than 120,000 constituents, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm not saying that's the right way to go to have constituencies that large, Mr. Speaker, but it proves to serve a good point when you see members opposite with a little bit of population growth that's going on in the province — something that we're encouraged by, something we've seen for a long time, Mr. Speaker — but to somehow pretend that we need to crank up the number of MLAs, even with the population growth, Mr. Speaker, we have the smallest constituencies by way of population in the country. And that's a disconnect from the way Saskatchewan people are wired and what they expect from us as politicians, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker. I've been on lots of doorsteps, Mr. Speaker. We go out to meetings all across Saskatchewan. We hear from Saskatchewan people. And I can honestly tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have never heard a single person tell me that we need more politicians, Mr. Speaker, other than the members opposite and now a couple of their rabid supporters. But most of their supporters in that last election say this is wrong. This is wrong. It isn't what they were offered. It isn't what they were promised and it's out of line with the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can highlight the discussions that I've had on doorsteps all through my riding, Mr. Speaker. And you know, there's good discussions around tuition, around cost of living, around housing, around education, around health services, Mr. Speaker. Never has a single person mentioned to me that they want to increase the number of politicians. And, Mr. Speaker, it just goes to the point that it just doesn't pass the common sense test, and this speaks to what I've said about the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

So we're greatly concerned with this Bill. It doesn't serve Saskatchewan people. It serves the partisan interests of a

government, Mr. Speaker, a government that I think Saskatchewan people wish would have focused on the mandate that they had been offered and maybe move forward in a humble way as a large majority, Mr. Speaker, instead of losing sight of what they maybe had been elected on or what they had been telling voters before.

Hearing from all Saskatchewan people, or from many Saskatchewan people that there seems to be a change in this government from the election until now, Mr. Speaker, that there seems to be a disconnect and a lack of understanding of the reality Saskatchewan families are facing, Mr. Speaker, a bit of an out-of-touch nature of this government in the short few months, pushing forward a Bill like this that is all about them, Mr. Speaker, and costs Saskatchewan people lots of money and at the same time does nothing to serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

We're disappointed with this piece of legislation. We're disappointed because it's needlessly spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of politicians. We're disappointed because it marginalizes and takes away the voice of young people all across this province when we need to be including and taking actually actions to figure out how to include young people more and more and more in their democratic process and in the decisions that'll be made to ensure their bright future and our bright future as a province, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

This is a piece of legislation that was put forward without any consultation, Mr. Speaker. It runs counter, Mr. Speaker, to what the Children's Advocate, the independent, non-partisan Children's Advocate here in Saskatchewan is telling the government, who's saying this is wrong, that it takes away the voice of children, Mr. Speaker.

And for all these reasons, we strongly oppose this piece of legislation. And we call on this government to withdraw, to pull this reckless Bill that's all about them, Mr. Speaker, and nothing about Saskatchewan people. And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to move a motion:

That this Assembly recognizes that spending millions of public dollars on more politicians is unnecessary to effectively represent the current constituents of Saskatchewan; and further

That this Assembly calls on the government to withdraw the measures set forth in Bill No. 36 because the government did not consult the people of Saskatchewan before its introduction and the legislation does not address the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, that's the motion I put before the Assembly for debate here today. We strongly oppose the Bill that's been put forward, strongly support the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Rosemont has moved:

That this Assembly recognizes that spending millions of public dollars on more politicians is unnecessary to effectively represent the current constituents of Saskatchewan; and further

That this Assembly calls on the government to withdraw the measures set forth in Bill No. 36 because the government did not consult the people of Saskatchewan before its introduction and the legislation does not address the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

Is the Assembly ready for the . . . I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've often said in previous instances, it's a pleasure for me to join in this debate. And this one genuinely is a pleasure to join into because it's so pertinent to my own personal set of circumstances, the people of Cypress Hills, and the ability of me to represent them fairly and adequately. And I think that there is a lot riding on this particular piece of legislation, that is being addressed in the motion today, that is going to be of benefit to the people of not just Cypress Hills but to the entire province.

You know, I looked at the motion, Mr. Speaker, and it references the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people. As one wag has said, the problem with common sense is that it's not all that common any more. And I'm not so sure that what our hon. colleague has introduced in this motion represents the common sense sensibilities of the people of Saskatchewan. In fact I would argue today, and I'm going to, that when you put the facts in front of the people of Saskatchewan, don't scare them with hyperbole and drama, they will come to understand, and many of them have in my conversations with them, that this is an appropriate thing to do in Saskatchewan, to increase the number of seats in the province by three at this very important time of growth and expansion in the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, we wouldn't find it necessary to even consider this if the province wasn't growing, and that's the fundamental part of this equation that the NDP have just sort of ignored. Maybe it's because they aren't used to growth. They have a record of overseeing decay and diminishment of the province. But now that there's growth happening here, they can't adjust to the realities of the new situation facing the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out for the benefit of those that are following this debate today that the Conference Board of Canada has growth projected at 5.1 per cent for the overall year of 2011 for the province of Saskatchewan — the final figures are now in — and for the upcoming year, 2012, they're talking about 2.8 per cent growth. Those numbers are among the highest and certainly no less than second highest growth rates in the entire nation, and we can be very proud of that.

But with that growth, we've had some other real benefits accrue to the province. At 435,600 full-time jobs, that's the highest number on record for any point in our history. We have a 5.1 per cent unemployment rate. That's the second lowest in the country. Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings are the highest on record, and we have exceeded the national average

since August of 2011. Every month since last August, our average weekly earnings have been the highest on record and have exceeded the national average. The population jumped by 17,000 people in the year 2011 to an all-time high of 1,067,612 people. That's the biggest increase in one year since 1953 when the population at that time grew by 18,000.

So, Mr. Speaker, just from a statistical point of view, you can see that a growing economy has one major benefit. It attracts people. And it's brought a number of people — records of numbers of people — to this province, and we can expect the same going forward.

The reality is that, as I indicated in the outset of my comments, the NDP had the worst job creation record in Canada from the year 2001 to 2007. That's a sad record, but it's their record. And they saw the population drop by 35,000 people in that same period. Thirty-five thousand people left the province of Saskatchewan in that same period of 2001 to 2007. The premier at that time even called this a wee province. That's w-e-e. And you know, references like that have a psychological impact. And when people heard the premier talk about us as being a wee province, they thought we better look elsewhere, and that was the outcome that resulted in the huge population loss. So you know, we could read headlines from the paper that used to talk about the population declining and being the worst in the country, that taxes are going up. Jobs are cut. There's budget hikes in sales and sin taxes. Those are the kinds of circumstances we lived with when the NDP were the party in power.

Now the circumstances have changed. There's optimism here. There's people here. There's jobs and economic growth here. And as a consequence of that, there is a population requirement that would ask us or would demand of us that we provide adequate and fair representation for the people across the entire province. Right now we're seeing most of the population growth in the city of Saskatoon. There's huge growth in the city of Regina. There's substantial growth just north of Saskatoon in the Martensville, Warman area.

But if we looked at the redistribution of the provincial electoral map, which is required by law, and didn't take into account the addition of three seats, we would see a very unfair and imbalanced proportion of voters in some constituencies versus others. And so this legislation that has got the NDP all hot and bothered is really good for the province, but it's good for the individual voters who will have their vote represented roughly equally with others that have already resided in the province. The new people coming to this province deserve to have their vote count at the same level and for the same value as anybody else's, and the legislation that the NDP oppose is intended to benefit those people who are coming to our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reference this whole issue in another facet. The member for Athabasca when he first saw this legislation commented about it in the legislature here in very positive terms, and I want to congratulate him for having taken that common sense approach because I know that the area that he represents is a huge area geographically. There's a small population; they're spread all over, and he knows how difficult it is to provide proper representation in those circumstances. And his automatic response when he saw this legislation, Mr.

Speaker, was to talk very positively about it because it made sense.

It wasn't until a day or two later when the NDP realized that 100,000 people that have come to this province over the last number of years, and who will come to this province in the next number of years, probably wouldn't vote for them and they had a lot at stake politically because all those new people were going to vote some other way, and they didn't want to lose the advantage of the current boundary map that operates in this province. But the member from Athabasca when he looked at this just from his own instinctive consideration saw that this legislation was good and really recognized the value of having more MLAs in the province, more equal representation in the province, and having a fairer situation for the people who are making the province of Saskatchewan home.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in my own case — and I've referenced this, and I want to put it on the record again — I have one voter per square kilometre in the constituency of Cypress Hills. That's probably more than the member from Athabasca has, I'll grant you that, but nevertheless it is a very rural area, a very large geographic area, and it makes representation of that region very difficult. If nothing was done in terms of adding MLAs to the mix when the boundaries are redrawn the next time in the course of legal requirement, the chances are that the constituency of Cypress Hills and most other rural constituencies would get significantly larger. And I really believe that if you're going to take this job seriously, you have to make yourself available to the people not just in your office, not just by phone or fax or email, but you have to make yourself available to the people in person. And going to where they are is an important part of this job.

Last Friday night, after a couple of ridiculous letters appeared in the *Leader-Post*, I had the privilege of going to Leader to attend to a couple of events there. Mr. Speaker, I drove from here to Leader, participated in those two events, and at 10:30 at night I drove from Leader to my home. I put on 654 kilometres Friday night. I would venture to say that there's isn't hardly a single member in the NDP caucus who have put on 654 kilometres since the new year started, let alone in one night, to represent their constituents.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's been a pleasure to participate in this debate, and I yield the floor at this point.

The Speaker: — Well if a member will stand up, I will . . . I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still familiarizing myself with the procedures and so I apologize for that.

Here we are again talking about Bill 36, and I'm speaking particularly to the motion that our opposition has brought again today, trying to talk some sense and common sense into this government.

So the motion that we're speaking to is based in two parts, and the first part is that about the spending. This Bill is expensive. And no matter how the Minister of Justice tries to slice and dice it and say, well we'll have efficiencies in other areas so it

makes it okay, let's think about those efficiencies for a moment, Mr. Speaker. If he has abilities to create efficiencies in other areas, then perhaps it would go better placed to helping seniors pay for their prescriptions, or maybe helping municipalities dealing with the off-loading of the enterprise regions, or all sorts of things that we see, cuts in the public service. So perhaps those efficiencies could, the public deserves to see those efficiencies across the board and not just to justify adding three more politicians to the mix. It just doesn't wash.

And we've seen this math from the other side over the last couple of weeks, and I think it's insulting to the public to suggest that we can increase spending in this reckless way without . . . and somehow find efficiencies across the way in ministries in the form of cuts to justify adding three politicians. So that change in rhetoric has really surprised me, and I'm most disappointed to see that being headed up by our Minister of Justice because I think it's not fair, and it certainly doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

So that's the first part of the motion. The second part of the motion is about the fact that they didn't consult with the people of Saskatchewan before the introduction and it does not address the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

So before I get into my comments on that, I just want to refresh a little bit the introduction of this Bill back in December, the very late stages of the fall session. It certainly wasn't brought to the public's attention at any point during the election campaign. And I suspect if anybody of us, any one of us who was out door knocking or any of our helpers were out door knocking, if they had asked and seen a platform item on the Sask Party government's campaign that said, would you like to see more politicians added to the mix? Do you think 58 is enough, or do you think there needs to more? I can pretty much guess what the answer would have been. And I think members opposite recognize that and have to admit that, that no one on the doorstep would have asked for more politicians.

[11:15]

Certainly the Minister of Justice's riding has grown exponentially in the last 10 years since the census was taken, and that's why we have censuses, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we have *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*. That's the exact purpose of that Act is to take a look at changes in population, take a look at changes in demographics. There's a commission appointed. There's three of them put together. They have hearings. They go out and talk to people. They take a look at the census data. It's their job to decide how to properly realign population changes in this province. And certainly that happens in every province in Canada, and it happens federally as well. That's the whole point of *The Constituency Boundaries Act*, and it was brought in with good reason in 1993, and it deals with those population demographic changes that we keep hearing about across the way.

There's no need to add politicians to the mix just to deal with population changes. Some ridings have less people; some ridings have more. And my colleague from city centre has provided statistics where 10 years ago his riding was the largest; now it is the Minister of Justice's riding that's the largest in Saskatoon. Those things happen, and that's the exact

reason why *The Constituency Boundaries Act* and our former NDP government had the foresight to pass that Bill to ensure that those changes were looked after. It makes total sense, and there's no need to change that.

So that's the first part of it, but some of the comments . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member opposite is questioning about gerrymandering. And it's pretty clear that in 1993 there was no gerrymandering because there was no changes to the number of constituencies. So it made total sense at that time that they just left it as it was.

There was no need to add ridings in 1993. There was no need to add ridings after the last census because the idea was the population was still able to be reflected equally across the constituencies, not so much in terms of the increase in population. The increase in population is a completely separate issue, the increase in population overall. And when we look at what this government is trying to do, it is clear that there are attempts to benefit themselves in future elections. That's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker.

So at any rate, the minister was talking in his comments back in December, as I mentioned, the very last day of the session, tucked in just before Christmas, certainly not mentioned in the election platform of the Sask Party government. And oddly enough, it wasn't mentioned even in the Throne Speech of the Government of Saskatchewan at the beginning of December. So they had lots of time in the election period to raise this with people. They had time at the Throne Speech. At the time of the Throne Speech, it could have been introduced. We have no indication why all of a sudden instead of Bill No. 1, this was Bill No. 36, and the last Bill that was introduced at the time of the fall session.

So the questions are starting to come in now, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing concerns raised not only from supporters of social democracy but also from Sask Party supporters. We're seeing letters to the editor that say this is a problem. We're seeing the Canadian Taxpayers Federation saying, this is a problem. And it is a problem. We've repeatedly pointed out the fact that the ratio of voters in Saskatchewan is considerably lower than in almost all provinces and certainly every province that has over 1 million people in population. So the rationale that's being provided simply doesn't wash. So somebody has to question, what is the rationale? What is the motive behind this?

One of the things the minister said was that ". . . given that census participation is mandatory, we feel it is a better source for this information, rather than a voluntary enumeration." He's talking about the voters list there. And he said, "While the census data may include citizens over 18 years of age who are ineligible to vote, it will certainly include far fewer ineligible voters than is currently the case."

But now I want to talk about some other ineligible voters, and that's the people that are under 18. They may be ineligible at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, but there are a lot of those people under 18 who will be eligible voters. And one of them for example is my son, Sam. They'll be able to vote, but they won't be counted as a participatory member in the count that creates the constituency. That's the issue, Mr. Speaker. It's the creating of the constituency. It's not whether he'll be able to

vote or not, but he's being excluded because of his age.

And certainly we've seen the Children's Advocate, someone who's there advocating for children, has now recently come out and told us that in his view, in his legal view that this is actually a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And it's a sad thing to hear that coming out on the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There's two sections of the Charter that the Children's Advocate is claiming are being violated here.

First of all, it's section 15 and that's the section that protects people from discrimination. In this case there's two counts where we could say this is a possible infraction of these children's rights. First of all, on the basis of age, clearly excluding somebody from being counted in the formation of constituencies on the basis of their age could clearly be construed as a violation of the Charter. And these are vulnerable people in our society, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they can't vote, and that's exactly why they should be included in and part of it.

And it's discriminatory to families, people that are of lower economic levels who have large families and are struggling to make ends meet, who are required to go the food bank now in increasing numbers because rental rates have increased and skyrocketed. And then we're telling them that we're not going to count them and their issues in terms of how the boundaries and constituencies are formed. That is, and the Children's Advocate is saying that, that is discriminatory.

But the other more disturbing feature of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is its impact on Aboriginal communities. We know that the population in Aboriginal communities, often under 18, children form up to 50 per cent of that population. And by creating a constituency boundary that discounts those children is discounting the issues and the very serious issues that those communities face.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that there's some biases in this Bill that we hope the public are starting to realize. We're getting more and more petitions in now that people are truly concerned about the double whammy of this notion of excluding children from the count. It can be discrimination on the basis of age and it can also be discrimination on the basis of race. And I for one, Mr. Speaker, certainly don't look forward to having to go to the courts to resolve this. And it appears that's the way we're headed if the government continues to press for this Bill to be passed into law. It's unfortunate. It's disturbing, and it's something I think people and the public are taking great note of. And we worry that this government has gone off the rails. It doesn't make sense. It may be discriminatory. And it is simply unnecessary particularly in light of the costs and the cuts that we have seen from this government in other areas.

And so I'm speaking in favour of the motion, Mr. Speaker, and I would hope that this government does the right thing.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to join in this

debate today. I mean, what we're talking about is increasing the number of constituencies from 58 to 61 by adding three seats south of the dividing line. To me, that's important because we talk about that we have the northern boundary line that exists. And I support that because I understand, coming from a large constituency, how things would work up there compared to mine. If it wasn't for that rule, there would probably only be one northern voice in this legislature. But I support, with that rule, that they should be allowed that. And I feel that's why the member from Athabasca supported that, like my colleague pointed out. And when he first looked at this Bill, he realized the fairness of it. Because I represent rural Saskatchewan. I represent a large constituency. Both of the northern MLAs represent very large ones in themselves, and they know that it would, how hard it is to get around.

I'll use a couple of quotes on the member from Athabasca that he made when he first talked about this Bill, supporting it. This is a quote from *Hansard*, page 294: "There is no question that as our population growth continues that the question has to be asked when we're getting more seats."

Then you move, carrying on on page 294:

And the obvious answer is yes, as the population grows. And you should have more MLAs as the population should reflect that in the number of seats that we have in the Assembly.

You go to page 296, he was still talking about it: "I think in the overall thrust of the Bill in terms of have more MLAs, and we think it's a great idea . . ."

There, page 297, he also references there's a growing population: ". . . that there's a growing population and we need more seats. We agree with that, that there's a growing population and more seats are necessary. We would applaud that . . ."

That is the member from Athabasca that made them quotes. And I appreciate that he's respecting the fact of his large constituency and how it relates to the southern ones.

Now as we go on, you look at my constituency. The population of Saskatchewan right now is at an all-time high of 1,663,535 people. Now that's just, that's what we have now. The growth just this year has been 15,241 people, and this province is growing. But if you talk to — whether it's western Canada or eastern Canada, southern states, northern states, Australia, Europe — your population growth will always be in the larger urban centres. That's where most population is growing. The rurals are growing but not at the same rate as the urban areas.

So as we move forward in time, urban areas are going to have more . . . [inaudible] . . . than the rural seats. And that's recognized in the States. It's recognized in Australia. It's recognized in a lot of European countries that they have to reflect the voice out in rural Saskatchewan against the city centres. And you look in many of the huge cities in the States, of the growth there, and yet they still make sure that there is a voice out in the rural parts of the States. And that's all we're asking here with this Bill, as myself as an MLA.

As we go forward, if you look at my constituency, if we were to look at the eastern part of it, I would have to, if we don't make this adjustment, we would have to add probably 4 to 5,000 people to my constituency. If you start on, I'll say, the northeastern, you take Allan — I'll just use some towns — LeRoy, 4 or 500 people. I would have to push into Lanigan; I would have to take Lanigan. I would have to push up to Humboldt, which would then, the member from Humboldt is going to have to be pushed more north.

We move again to my eastern, as we move eastern towards Wynyard, that area there. I could look at going up Punnichy, which is, I think, a couple hundred people; Lestock, a couple hundred people; Leross, you know, 4 or 500 maybe. I would have to push to Yorkton. I would be on the edge of Yorkton.

As we keep moving towards Highway No. 2, I would grab Strasbourg. There's a couple other little towns between here and Regina. I would have to be pushed into Regina. If I do into No. 11, we go up Craik, 500 people; Aylesbury, 68; Chamberlain, a couple hundred; Findlater, a couple hundred; Bethune, maybe it's 7 or 800. I would have to basically push into Regina Beach, into the edge of Regina.

We go up No. 2 Highway. If they're going to move me in that direction, where would I go? There's what, on number Highway 42, you have Marquis, Keeler, Eyebrow — very small towns growing slowly, but at a rate, but not as fast growth as what's happening in the cities. So I would have to grab a piece of Moose Jaw. Or I can go along the Lake Diefenbaker. I would have to cross the lake and the river and go on the other side. Or we go up to No. 11, I come to past Dundurn. So basically you would push me into the city. You would grab 3 or 4,000 people.

And when I talk to my constituents, you know, one of the things they have mentioned to me over the years is that they favour a rural seat, that representatives should be from a rural seat, that you shouldn't have a split with urban and rural. And I agree with that. And also the federal NDP agree with that. Layton, Mulcair have stated in the province of Saskatchewan that you shouldn't have seats going into the cities, that you should have rural MPs [Member of Parliament] who should just represent the rural area and you should have MPs representing an urban area. Now that's the federal NDPs that have come out on that quite, quite a lot. I've read that, them articles over the past election quite a bit. So obviously this provincial NDP is not in favour with their federal cousins on that. There must be a huge disagreement, or they just don't care what they think about that.

But I know from talking to constituents that is an issue, that they do not want to have . . . represent part of an urban . . . Now if it works out that I have to represent part of an urban, I will represent them as equally as I would the rural. But I'm talking about my constituents' point of views. That's what they feel that a rural seat should be represented. And if we don't make some adjustments, in time that is what's going to happen. Some of these rural seats will have to go into the urban centres.

And also we talk about the size of constituencies. I know that in the States and in Eastern Canada they represent more people, but when I've been down there talking to their MLAs, to their State representatives, you know, they envy us that we can

actually get out to our towns and talk to people. They say, you know, we're trying to figure out ways how to use the social media to pick up information because we can't get out and do a one-on-one.

I have about 20, as we sit right now, I have about 20 towns that are between towns — villages, hamlets — I'm like the member from Cypress, that I visit as much as I can, either through hockey games, sports days, auction sales. If you add another 10 or 15 towns, it gets pretty hard. And I know that that's where I get most of my feedback from my constituents. You'll be at an event, whether it's you're watching hockey, whether you'll be at an auction sale, or sports, they'll come up. They'll talk to you. This is where they'll express their ideas.

[11:30]

Because a lot of them, they're getting pretty fairly computer literate, but they're still not much on firing emails on a certain issue. That's where they want to talk to you face to face. And they want to see you at the coffee shops in the morning. They like to see you just stopping in in the afternoon, which I'll do in some towns if I'm up visiting an event. I'll say Wynyard, then I'll stop, if I have time. I'll go to the local RM office and I'll go to the local town office and I'll stop at the local businesses for a few minutes here and then, you know, you just talk to the customers. And they all want to . . . That's where they can express their concerns, how they want to see the province moving forward, of the job you're doing, and different things.

But as we get bigger, our constituencies, if they make them huge amounts, we're going to lose that contact. And I'll tell you what, my constituents don't want to lose that. And I think, and I'm pretty sure it's even in the urban centres, I'm pretty sure they're the same way. They like the contact that you can have with your MLA, that, you know, that it's the constituencies are still balanced enough that they feel you're actually representing them because they can get a hold of you at any time. You still have the time, whether urban or rural, that you can go visit each and every one of the ones that say, come to my house.

Because in my place, I'll have a lot of people say they want to talk to you. When they have a problem, especially older people, they want to talk to you one-on-one. So they say, can you come to my house or can you meet me at the coffee shop? And I'll say, yes, I'll be in this town at a certain time next week. Can we meet then? And they'll say, yes, we can wait. Or I say, I can handle your problem now. And they'll say, no, I'd sooner talk to you face to face. I can wait a few days before I express my concern.

But, you know, if our constituencies get much bigger and much larger, you know, we're going to lose that. And I don't want that. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? My constituents, they don't want that either. They still like to have the contact of an MLA. And that's why I'm in favour of the member of Athabasca when he first looked at this thought this was probably a good Bill. This is a good Bill. This is going to help our constituents. So that's why I support what we're doing for the good of the constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it is a pleasure to rise again and hear some of the comments from the opposite side in terms of this, but I do want to get it on the record that I do support this motion. I think it's a reasonable, common sense motion, that many people in Saskatchewan are asking, why are we doing this? Why are we increasing three more MLAs, three more politicians? Nobody has a problem with the Boundaries Commission as it's set up under the current legislation. They're just saying, why is it? Why is it that we have to do this? So the motion that we provided the House today is that:

This Assembly recognizes that spending millions of public dollars [and it is millions of public dollars on more politicians] is unnecessary to effectively represent the current constituents of Saskatchewan; and further

That this Assembly calls on the government to withdraw the measures set forth in Bill No. 36 because the government did not consult the people of Saskatchewan before its introduction and its legislation, and the legislation does not address the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

And I just wanted to go through some of that. But I just want to address some of the comments that were just made by the previous speaker, the member from Arm River, where he discussed the whole idea of contact with your constituents. And whether they're 18 or not, I think that's a big issue too, but that's not the issue before us. But we all want to be able to connect with our constituents and we all have challenges in doing that. We all have challenges. One challenge is the distance. The other challenge is finding them at home if they're homeless, all of those things.

But I do want to say this is what the member from Thunder Creek had to say about this just a few weeks ago on March 15th, 2012. He said — and clearly it's on page 583 of *Hansard* — he said:

We are not interfering in the process in any way, Mr. Speaker. We are providing no direction in the Bill or the legislation itself as to where these three new seats may be situated. This will be for the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission to determine under its standing terms of reference in the Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're getting mixed messages. We see one member saying, this is going to happen in one area of the province and not in another area of the province. And we have another government member saying, oh no, we're not interfering; we're not interfering. So how can you have it both ways? How can you have it both ways? Here we have some members under the expectation this will go to certain parts of the province, and others are saying, hey, we're going to respect the commission.

And you know, and the other interesting thing, and he was quite rightfully quoting the federal party in some of those things, but I do have to say that he's omitted a pretty key part of what happens at the federal level. They've gone through the discussion. They've gone through the discussion about where new seats need to go for the House of Commons. And it took a

long time, and it happened before the last election. There was a separation between the time the number of seats were given for the House of Commons and the election and now where they will be placed. So that's what happens at the federal level.

And we've made this point here several times, several times: that we knew this population in this province has been growing. And we think that's great; we're very happy about it. But the time to add more politicians was to do it before the last election. And if these folks had the courage of conviction to knock on the doors and say, we think what we need is more politicians, that was the time to do it. It was not after. I mean these folks didn't even mention it in the Throne Speech. It happened the day before, right at the very end of the winter, the Christmas session. We got the Bill then, and that's when the discussion started.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that the constituents, our people that we talk to, are most engaged, most paying attention, and rightfully so, during the campaign, during the campaign when we talk about issues and we say, these are our choices; these are our priorities. This is what we think we should do with taxpayers' money. And then they vote, and they did vote. But one of the things they didn't, they weren't told by this government was, by the way, we want to spend millions on three more politicians.

Everybody knew . . . And I have yet to hear any of those people stand up over there and say, you know what? I actually did campaign on that and here's the piece of literature that shows I wanted more politicians. I wanted more politicians. We have not heard from them about that because they were strangely silent on this matter when they had an opportunity to go to the people of this province and say, listen, we believe so strongly in this. We have the courage of our convictions to actually stand and say, listen, of all the priorities that we can talk to you about today on the doorstep is, this is the one we want you to think about: do you think we need more politicians, or do you think we need more services? They did not. They did not. And I think that shows a lack of courage, a weakness; that shows that this Bill should be withdrawn.

If they believed so strongly in this, why don't they do like the federal government did and talk about this in an open and transparent manner, and people can make choices? That's what they did in BC [British Columbia]. They did the same process. They said, what do you think? Our population is growing. But they had a commission, and they set out to hear the thoughts of the people. And as the member from Arm River said, maybe we have to have this discussion about rural and urban. But this is not the place to do it.

There's over 1 million people in this province who have an opinion on this, and that's the place to engage people and say, so what do you think? And then it should come back to us, Mr. Speaker. It should come back to us, but only after a well-discussed and -reasoned discussion about the makeup of this legislature. Because this legislature is not our legislature, and I think this government here is thinking it's their legislature. No, it's not our legislature. It's the peoples of Saskatchewan's legislature, and they have a right . . . It's their, it's their prerogative to say, we want three more politicians and we don't want other things.

It's choices we have to make: choices, priorities, and then you plan. And this is no plan here. And it shows a mixed message in terms of priorities and choices. And, Mr. Speaker, today in question period, we had questions about whether you should spend money in Montreal on advertising or whether you should support economic development here in Saskatchewan in our communities. Those are choices a government makes. And they were elected to make those choices, but they were not elected to make the kind of choice they have in Bill No. 36 where they're saying, three more politicians. That will cost money. That will cost money. And they will try to spin that to say no, we've saved money and it's not going to cost any money. That's simply not true. We know everything costs money. You have to make some choices. And you can cut programs here, cut programs there, but I think that we all know everything costs and therefore you have to set your priorities.

And this is a misguided priority, an odd priority, because I think we all know that we value knocking on doors, talking to our people. That's for sure. But we've been able to do it. We've been able to do it with the new committee structure. We've been able to work on how can we make sure people get out to talk to the people in their constituency. We now have a new calendar where we're in our constituencies on Fridays. We've been able to double our work up here, be much more efficient in the House here so we can have a 65-day sitting calendar which is just an amazing, I think, very progressive. But we've been able to work on that; we've been able to solve those problems so people can be at home and they can do the best job that they can.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the province is happy the population is growing. I don't know anybody who says gee, I wish we could cut it back. I don't think so. I think people see the economic opportunities. But the problem is they didn't say, we want more population so we can have more politicians. That's not what they said. That's not what they said. We want a stronger tax base that's fair, so we can have more services. Our health care can be better. We can treat our seniors better. We can have more child care. We can do all those things that we take a lot of pride in, Mr. Speaker.

And so as I said, I think this is really a misplaced priority — three more politicians at millions of dollars. And I really believe that this government has not done the right thing because they did not campaign on this. They did not campaign on this and they are silent on this. And they will add up the odd story about how they might have talked to somebody in an odd way about this and how they all value talking to people. We do as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion and I think it's important that everyone on this side and the whole House vote.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to enter debate on the motion before this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, over the last few days I've heard a great deal from members opposite about common sense priorities of the Saskatchewan people. In fact I've heard odd priorities, misplaced priorities, misguided

priorities. Well, Mr. Speaker, our priorities, our priorities are the common sense priorities of the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. And for me, Mr. Speaker, the common sense priorities are very clearly, very clearly articulated in our platform, in the platform document of my government.

We talked about health care. We talked about highways. We talked about seniors. We talked about people with disabilities. We talked about agriculture. We talked about education. We talked about fiscal responsibility, lower taxes, lower debt, and, Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget. If those aren't common sense priorities, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what are. However, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to revisit the platform nor am I going to revisit the budget. We've been there.

Mr. Speaker, it frustrates me to listen to the banter regarding criticisms from members opposite as they pertain to our children and how they don't count. Mr. Speaker, our children are our future, and this party is prepared to take the steps necessary to ensure that our children's future is guaranteed. Mr. Speaker, for me it's about creating an environment conducive to growth. It's about creating an environment of well-being that will guarantee and ensure that future.

[11:45]

Mr. Minister, in my former life I was a teacher, a school administrator, and a school trustee. I know about cultural environments. Mr. Speaker, from 2003 to 2007 while I was a trustee, an average of 3,645 students left this province — 3,645 students, on average, left this province. Mr. Speaker, I can speak from first-hand experience, the effect, the effect that this loss of students on school divisions, on communities, and school staffs have in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I recall a young lady coming into my office one morning — a very talented young lady, 97 per cent average at mid-term, on mid-term exams of semester 1, absolutely outstanding musician, academic leader — to explain to me, to explain to me that she was leaving our province. Her parents had finally found some work in Alberta, and they were off. Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere, Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere in the school, the environment in our school changed. The band program lost, the teachers were lost, the teachers were affected, academic leadership took a hit, our SRC [student representative council] lost a leader, and I said to myself, Mr. Speaker, something's not right here. The effect of migration of families out of our province, out of this province, was catastrophic.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's talk a little bit about common sense priorities. Let's talk about ensuring the future of our children. And I'll begin with education because that's what's most familiar to me. Number one, new funding formula for school divisions, a very much common sense priority.

You know the principles of public education, a cornerstone of this democracy, a principle that we've talked and teach our children about, is that of equity. For years, Mr. Speaker, the foundation operating grant in this province really didn't do justice to the concept of equity. We had unequal programs all over the province. As hard as school divisions and trustees tried to make ends meet, that just wasn't happening. Sixteen years of government that did not adequately address the funding needs

of school divisions is finally getting a good look at through this new funding formula.

Mr. Speaker, \$1.74 billion in education funding, the largest increase in the budget, 5 per cent overall for education — funding for teachers, funding for music and athletics, funding for academic success, funding for students with individual differences, and funding for the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, \$4.3 million committed to First Nations and Métis initiatives. \$112 million in capital funding for 21 capital school projects. Two new schools in Douglas Park, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you that there's a lot of excitement in my community. Increased support for child care, Mr. Speaker, common sense. Five hundred new spaces for schools or post-secondary institutions. Fifteen new pre-kindergarten programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, these aren't pilot projects. These aren't pilot programs. You know, in fact in my travels around the Treaty 4 area in doing some work with First Nations over the last number of years, an elder told me, he says, this isn't another one of those pilot programs, is it? He says, the pile is high enough and we don't need to pile it any higher.

Literacy, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that literacy and improved outcomes for all of our children lies in their readiness to come to school. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that literacy is key. \$500,000 committed to summer literacy camps to be held in 20 communities across our province. But, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many other aspects to literacy. There's family literacy, health literacy, technological literacy, and I could go on.

But, Mr. Speaker, my government is committed to eliminating those silos and is committed to delivering services for children, youth, and families using an integrated services approach. Witness the development of the initiative of Scott Collegiate in Regina, the integrated services model. Common sense priorities, Mr. Speaker. We are speaking to the common sense priorities of Saskatchewan people.

What about child welfare? Since 2007, my government has increased funding to child and family services by 124 per cent.

[Applause]

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you. This government has established a seven-member cabinet review committee on child welfare to see how best to integrate services of which I just referred to: \$34 million for the child and youth agenda, 85 new child protection workers.

Let's talk about common sense priorities: increased funding to extended family caregivers and family finders; \$15 million for a new case management system, the final rollout will happen this spring; the second year of the child welfare funding, a multi-ministerial task force. And as a result of these initiatives, Mr. Speaker, the number of children in care is down for the first time in over a decade. Forty-eight per cent reduction in children living in overcrowded foster homes. Increased the number of children placed permanently with extended family by . . . [inaudible] . . . per cent since 2007. Mr. Speaker, we have the best interests of our children at heart. There's no question.

What about the active families benefit? The active families benefit was legislated by Saskatchewan Party government and has been in effect since January 1st of 2009. The active families benefit provides a tax benefit of up to \$150 per child to help Saskatchewan families with the cost of their children's sport, cultural, and recreational activities. To date, the active families benefit has provided tax rebates to nearly 26,000 Saskatchewan families with the majority having a household income of less than \$80,000.

And what about scholarships dedicated to those under 18? The Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, \$2,000 for high school graduates attending post-secondary education used directly for tuition up to a maximum of \$500 a year. The Saskatchewan youth apprenticeship industry scholarship, \$1,000 to be awarded to 80 eligible students.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on and on. We haven't touched on health. We haven't touched on highways. We haven't touched on seniors. We haven't touched on the disadvantaged. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to addressing common sense priorities of the Saskatchewan people. And so, Mr. Speaker, here's the deal . . .

The Speaker: — The time for debate has elapsed. I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Steinley: — Mr. Speaker, in 2007, when the member from Saskatoon Centre sat at the cabinet table, the NDP spent \$13.5 million on their political staff salaries. This compared to the Sask Party's 2012 spending of \$11.09 million. That means the NDP spent nearly 2.4 million more on political staff than the current government. Mr. Speaker, not only will the cost of new MLAs be absorbed in the Legislative Assembly budget, but will be a fraction of what the NDP spent on their political staff.

To a member from Saskatoon Centre: why does the NDP think spending millions more on political staff is more important than ensuring the people of this province have effective representation in the legislature?

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

Mr. Forbes: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question and I know this question is very near and dear to this member because he came out of the political staff regime. And he's very close to these folks and he watches us very closely. But he knows, he knows he's got to get in the real world. He's not in the political world of spin any more. He's got to get out of that political world or spin. Everything costs in this world and you make choices. And how can he defend to seniors and young people who are seeing their drug plans go up, go up and we need to pay millions more for politicians? How can he possibly live with that decision?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I appreciate that member setting the record straight on that front. But last fall, Mr. Speaker, we all went before voters. We went to the doorsteps, Mr. Speaker. Whether it was the member from Douglas Park or the member from Arm River, no one mentioned in their literature that they

were going to be increasing the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker, at the costs of millions of dollars.

I understand though that the member from Arm River-Watrous did suggest and did say that he would be supporting Nokomis School in its fight to remain open, Mr. Speaker. Instead we see nothing on that front from that member to support that school. So we see, what we do see is in those glossy brochures, Mr. Speaker, things that haven't come forward. Instead they're spending millions on more politicians, adding costs to seniors, eliminating the property tax discount, Mr. Speaker, and cutting in education.

To the minister from Arm River: did the member from Arm River, did he tell any of his constituents his real intentions and did any of the people on his doorsteps suggest that they need more politicians, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Brkich: — If that member wants to talk about education, now we put \$1.74 billion in total school operating funding, a 5 per cent increase. That government under its regime closed over 167 schools. We've met with parents. We've put in, we've put in a limit where schools can be under review. We brought in schools of opportunity, schools of necessity, a 40 K [kilometre] . . . where a school kid can't be on the bus more than 40 Ks.

You closed 167 schools and did nothing. You did nothing. You decreased funding. You let 167 schools close under your regime, and you have the audacity to get up and talk about education. We've increased funding. We're working with parents to keep our school open, unlike you that closed 167.

The Speaker: — I would remind members to put their questions and answers through the Speaker. I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's motion for debate states that more politicians are unnecessary to effectively represent the current constituents of Saskatchewan. However, Mr. Speaker, on March the 5th the member from Athabasca said in this House, "There is no question that our population growth continues that the question has to be asked when we're getting more seats." To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: now that the population has in fact grown, is there still a divide in the NDP caucus over this issue or has the member from Athabasca, has he been told to keep his views to himself?

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

Ms. Sproule: — I'd like to thank the member for his question, Mr. Speaker. The issue here is about Bill 36 and whether it's necessary or not. Do we need to spend millions of dollars on more politicians? Do we need to exclude our children from the count when we form our electoral boundaries? It's going to have a serious impact. Do we need to listen to what the Children's Advocate is saying and saying that this could be unconstitutional? Do we need a long court case to go through this to find out whether it is?

This is unnecessary. It's uncalled for. Population growth is well within the national average. We are well below the national average. We don't need more constituencies. We don't need more MLAs. We can do this work ourselves. There's enough politicians already and that's the focus. And we're saying in this motion that this Bill should just disappear. In fact let's throw it, tie it to a rock, and throw it in the bottom of any lake in Saskatchewan because it's completely unnecessary. And this is what the debate is about today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We had an interesting speech there from the member from Douglas Park and he seems to be gunning for a cabinet position because he never really talked about the motion at hand, talked about everything else. But I really want to know this answer from him. How many seniors did he tell to their face when he was out knocking on doors during the election that he would be gunning for three more politicians and they would be paying more for their prescriptions?

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the opposition for the question. You know, our entire platform was about the growth of this province. It's about addressing the common sense priorities of the people, and certainly seniors are dealt with in the program. We've increased the funding for the seniors' income plan, Mr. Speaker. It's all about creating an environment that's conducive to growth so that we can continue to look after the seniors and their welfare. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has posed the question quoting that our legislation does not address the common sense priorities of the Saskatchewan people. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: what were the common sense priorities governing the former NDP government when it watched thousands of its citizens out-migrate from the province, lost millions on expensive boondoggles, created an economic environment with the worst job creation in the nation, and neglected such fundamental tasks as regular water quality tests in Lake Diefenbaker? Thank you.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member for his question. Once again the debate is about the Bill 36, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're talking about today. Common sense, if we used common sense and applied it to this Bill, this government would get rid of it immediately because we know there's concerns about Charter violations in sections 3, in section 15 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We've celebrated that anniversary of that important part of our history as a country yesterday, the 30th anniversary. And here we see the Children's Advocate saying that this is a possible

violation of the Charter. In his view, it is a violation of the Charter. Of course, we don't know what the courts are going to say, and it's up to the courts. If it's up to the courts to decide this, if this government's going to force it through, it will cost taxpayers more money including the money that it will cost to have extra politicians in this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's a bit like popcorn here today. I would like to ask the member from Douglas Park a question, and it's actually a math question. I know he's a teacher, so I'm hoping he can help me out with this. So tell me this, I'm asking the member to tell us this: does 700,000 times four years equal more than \$1 million? For example, would he agree that three new politicians will spend millions of dollars more?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Douglas Park.

Mr. Marchuk: — Again, Mr. Speaker, one of the fundamental principles of democracy in this country is that each vote should have roughly equal value. Mr. Speaker, our government is all about creating that environment that's conducive to people living in this province and staying in this province, and we want to be able to best represent them in a fair and equitable way, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last four years of the NDP government the population of Saskatchewan only grew by 7,832 people. But since the Saskatchewan Party government was elected in 2007, Saskatchewan's population has grown by 58,452. That's seven times the population, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: given our record-breaking population growth and the fact that the NDP member from Athabasca said in March, and I quote, "we need more seats," why does the NDP insist that our government is nothing for representing . . .

The Speaker: — Time for 75-minute debate has elapsed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Support for the Keystone XL Pipeline

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter the debate on the private members' motion made by the member from Thunder Creek, and the motion read:

That this Assembly calls upon all parties in the federal Parliament of Canada to unite in support of the Keystone XL pipeline project without further delay.

And certainly it's a very important question that it poses. It's interesting, today on the news there's been some developments down in the United States. The House of Representatives have passed approving the construction of the pipeline, but I understand, of course, the Obama administration will probably veto it because of their concerns. But also TransCanada also announced that they're applying to have a different route in Nebraska, which is the contentious issue, trying to go around an aquifer that is . . . there is some concern in the US [United States] government and citizens in Nebraska, if there was a potential leak.

Mr. Speaker, on that very topic of safety, I would just like to read into the record the work that was done by TransCanada. And TransCanada's worked with US Department of State in the past three years in what has been by far the most exhaustive and detailed review ever conducted of a crude oil pipeline in the United States to ensure Keystone XL would be the safest pipeline ever built. A draft supplement, a supplemental draft and final environmental impact statement were all issued for Keystone XL, totalling over 10,000 pages.

Since 2008 more than 100 open houses and public meetings in six states took place. Thousands of pages of supplemental information and responses to questions were submitted to state and federal agencies, and the DOS [Department of State] received over 400,000 comments on the project. Fourteen different routes for the Keystone XL were studied, eight that impacted Nebraska. They include one potential turn of route in Nebraska that would have avoided the entire sand hills region and Ogallala Aquifer and six alternatives that would have reduced pipeline mileage crossing the sand hills or the aquifer. TransCanada hopes this will serve as a starting point for the additional review and help expedite the review process.

So, Mr. Speaker, as in Canada and the United States, there's very intensive studies done in environmental impact, and naturally the public has a lot of input into the construction of various projects that come up. And I guess what the point I want to make though is what we're doing in Canada and what the motion is speaking to is the hope that all federal parties and the federal parliament would support this pipeline because it's very important to Canada. It's very important to Alberta, Saskatchewan, moving oil sands oil into the US [United States] market.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the problem is that not all Canadian federal parties were united in support of this project, in particular the federal NDP. And it's quite outstanding to hear what the now leader of the federal NDP had to say about various topics, and there's a couple here that I just want to put on the record. Thomas Mulcair speaking on the oil sands, and I quote, "As a result, the tar sands might now be taking more money out of the Canadian economy than they are putting in," Mulcair wrote in *Policy Options*.

And it's an incredible statement to make, but I guess when you look at the NDP policy and NDP governments provincially in the past, well I guess you're not surprised by those types of

comments because, at the end of the day, the NDP party both federally and provincially and in many different provinces have been very anti-business, anti-development. I'm not quite sure I understand how the NDP party expect to form government federally with comments like that, how they're going to run a country basically putting down one of the major projects — the oil sands projects — in Canada and basically running it down and discounting it as something that's good for the Canadian economy.

My colleague that spoke before me has entered a number of statistics concerning the job creation and the economic development from the oil sands and from the construction that will take place when the pipeline is built. So it's very . . . Well it's quite disturbing to see that the new NDP leader federally, which is the Leader of the Opposition federally now, that would make comments about. Of course you notice he says the tar sands and it's not the tar sands; it's oil sands. And it's very fundamental to the economy of Western Canada.

But I'll go on to state some of the important facts that need to be put on record. Speaking of the NDP and the new leader of the NDP, Thomas Mulcair, if their opposition is rooted in ignorance to the facts, I would like to use this opportunity to inform them of the state of energy in Canada and Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan is Canada's second largest producer of oil, home to a large part of the Bakken play — a formation the US geological survey says is the largest conventional play in North America and one we share with both Montana and North Dakota. Our province is the third largest producer of natural gas. In Saskatchewan we produce 20 per cent of the world's uranium, and 5 per cent of the lights in the US are lit up by Saskatchewan's uranium. We have 45.6 billion barrels of oil in place and more than 38 billion barrels of oil that cannot be recovered using existing technology. If we would increase our recovery rate through innovation and technology by just 5 per cent, it would be triple our recoverable reserves of oil. Increasing our recovery rate by 10 per cent would increase our recoverable reserves sixfold.

Today's motion is that energy security in North America in general is also specifically the Keystone XL pipeline. Here are the facts for the Keystone XL pipeline. There will be 20,000 new North American jobs in construction and related manufacturing created by this project. There will be more than 118,000 spinoff jobs generated during the two years of construction.

Without Canada's oil, America's dependence of oil from Venezuela and the Middle East will continue. A life cycle comparison of North America and imported crude prepared by Jacobs Consultancy shows that oil from Venezuela and Iraq has about the same carbon dioxide footprint as Canadian oil sands oil and less than California heavy oil and Nigerian crude. These findings were confirmed by the United States Department of Energy.

The Keystone XL pipeline enters Saskatchewan near McNeill, Alberta and continues southeast to Monchy, Saskatchewan. The total length of the pipeline in Saskatchewan is approximately 259 kilometres. The Keystone XL pipeline is a National Energy

Board regulated pipeline. The majority of the route follows the existing Foothills pipeline construction in 1981 within Great Sand Hills, and the same route is followed. Routing through the Great Sand Hills includes crossing through approximately 3.1 kilometres on the extreme southwest edge of the Great Sand Hills. Environmentally sensitive areas within the Great Sand Hills are zoned as either environmentally sensitive 1, ES1, no development allowed, or environmentally sensitive 2, ES2, development allowed following the submission of environmental protection plan and adhering to strict development conditions. The portion of the Keystone pipeline that crosses the Great Sand Hills fall entirely within the ES2 area.

The crossing of the pipeline is not within the proposed biodiversity conservation area identified within the Great Sand Hills regional environmental study. The Great Sand Hills advisory committee and rural municipalities influenced by the program have been consulted. No concerns have been raised to date. Some of the special development conditions included: all main watercourses to be directionally bored, main line valves to be installed on both sides of major watercourses, specific mitigation for identification of species. In addition, a specific reclamation plan for the Great Sand Hills areas have developed and submitted as requested by the National Energy Board.

Mr. Speaker, we now know that the state of Nebraska voiced concerns in the past over this pipeline being routed through environmentally sensitive areas. But TransCanada has since agreed to divert the 1,700-mile project away from the sensitive Nebraska sand hills region. Investors are also united in their support for this pipeline. In fact, Murray Edwards, one of the top investors and entrepreneurs in Canada's energy sector, regards — quoting — building pipelines as one of the top issues in 2012. A November 29th op-ed piece in the *National Post* quotes: Edwards said, "Existing pipelines will likely fill up around 2015 to 2016 as oil sands production expands. That gives the sector a window of only three or four years to obtain regulatory approval and build . . . [one] capacity."

Pipelines such as the proposed Keystone XL one serve an important purpose, one that is obviously overlooked by those blinded by partisan ideology. Oil needs to get to market and most markets are not located near the oil. It would appear to be a no-brainer, but I wouldn't assume what does or doesn't go on in the minds of the NDP. Local demand isn't sufficient to consume the amount of oil extracted from the oil sands and in some cases there isn't enough labour or resources to handle the sheer number of projects going on. A lack of labour and resources can make these projects economically unfeasible, thus jeopardizing a province's economic strength through the loss of jobs. This pipeline means jobs on both sides of the border.

[12:15]

In fact support of this pipeline is overwhelming. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, AFL-CIO, has voiced its support for the Keystone XL pipeline. On November 17th, the building and construction trade department of the AFL-CIO announced that it "unreservedly supports the Keystone XL Pipeline." They also said, and I quote:

Keystone XL will create longer term employment in both Canada and the United States in refinery conversion projects, operation, and maintenance. Moreover these jobs will keep an enormous amount of money circulating within North America. Energy security for North America comes from developing the oil sands and other Canadian energy projects.

That same news release went on to quote Joseph Maloney, chairman of the CBDT Canadian executive board and international vice-president for the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, stating that:

Jobs in Canada's oil sands are vital to North America. They support a standard of living and to be blunt, what is better for the North American economy, to support the United States and Canada or to support unfriendly foreign regimes?

The NDP has apparently turned its back on this country's labour movement by effectively ignoring the concerns of an organization that represents over a dozen labour organizations, including: United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada; International Union of Operating Engineers; Sheet Metal Workers' International Association; International Association of Heat and Frost Allied Workers; International Union of Elevator Contractors, Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association; Teamsters Canada; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; International Union of Painters and Allied Trades; Laborers' International Union of North America; International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers; United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; and the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers.

So why would the NDP be so opposed to something that is vital to the interests of Canadians and which also has the unreserved support of Canada's labour movement? Well, Mr. Speaker, we can only assume that NDP has become star-struck. Yes, Mr. Speaker, they saw an opportunity to rub elbows with a few celebrities who turned faltering acting careers into a launch pad for ill-informed activism.

How else would you explain the fact that two federal NDP MPs went to Washington to lobby against the Keystone pipeline? Megan Leslie, the NDP Environment critic, and Claude Gravelle, the NDP Natural Resources critic, both lobbied the US federal government to reconsider the Keystone project. With their new-found status as official opposition, these two might be extending themselves a bit too far. Why they would take the side of Robert Redford, star of the innocent proposal, and Daryl Hannah, star of the TV movie, *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, over the side of jobs for tens of thousands and energy security, Mr. Speaker, is confusing the situation. This pipeline isn't about star-struck NDP MPs; it's about jobs and energy security for North America.

We know that objections to this project for fear of an environmental catastrophe are unfounded. In August of 2011, the United States Department of State bureau of oceans and international environmental and scientific affairs released its final environmental impact statement for the proposed

Keystone XL project. This report consulted the pipeline and hazardous materials safety administration, which is the primary federal regulatory agency responsible for ensuring the safety of America's energy pipelines. Both organizations determined that with Keystone agreeing to special conditions, the Keystone XL pipeline would "result in a project that would have a degree of safety greater than any typical constructed domestic oil pipeline system under the current regulations, and a degree of safety along the entire length of the pipeline system that would be similar to that required in high consequence areas as defined in the regulations."

Mr. Speaker, this may be one of the most heavily scrutinized pipelines, and for good reasons. It's important that energy security does not come at the expense of public safety and the environment. Most importantly we've seen TransCanada Corp and the governor of Nebraska agree to reroute the proposed pipeline after concerns were raised by environmentalists. Everyone from state governments to organized labour to private industry has done their homework on this project, and the evidence is overwhelmingly in support of this pipeline. The only ones who haven't are a handful of ill-informed celebrities, and a few of them remaining fans in the federal NDP.

Here are a few more facts about this pipeline — facts. A recent report by The Heritage Foundation stated the following, and I quote:

Delaying or even rejecting the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline will not achieve the environmentalists' goal — to shut down Canadian tar sands production itself. Whether the pipeline crosses through the U.S. or not, the oil from Canadian tar sands is not staying in the ground. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper told President Obama that while the U.S. delays its decision, Canada will begin diversifying by shipping its oil to Asian markets. Harper said of the delay: "This highlights why Canada must increase its efforts to ensure it can supply its energy outside the U.S. and into Asia in particular. Canada will step up its efforts in that regard and I communicated that clearly to the President."

Again, Mr. Speaker, we see that opposition to this pipeline is not rooted in any reasonable agreement. The same report also highlights how opposition to this project may have led to undesirable, unintended consequences for environmentalists. And I quote:

With . . . [Canada's] rapid economic growth, it is no surprise that that country would welcome the opportunity to import more oil from Canada. In fact, Canadian Natural Resource Minister Joe Oliver said that China was ". . . eager" to import oil from Canada. In addition, Enbridge, another Canadian company, is proposing to build a pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia to ship the oil to refineries in China. From an environmental standpoint, this means that Canada will ship the oil overseas in tankers, a much less efficient method of transporting oil. It also means that China will refine the oil in refineries that are subject to fewer regulations than those in the United States — causing more, not less, environmental harm than if the pipeline were built in the

U.S. Furthermore, the U.S. will have to import more oil via tankers from overseas, or carry crude oil from Canada in trucks or rails. The pipeline would also support the dramatic increase in oil production in North Dakota, where pipeline infrastructure is lacking. Shutting down the Keystone XL pipeline project means that the environment — and Americans who would benefit from jobs and economic growth — lose out.

Is this the scenario the NDP have in mind? Less efficient shipping routes, jobs overseas, increased reliance on foreign oil from oppressive regimes, the risk of greater environmental danger — these are the consequence of delaying and preventing this project. In addition to being on the wrong side of energy and food security, the federal NDP has resorted to insulting supporters of the Keystone XL in our House of Commons. When the NDP's Megan Leslie isn't chasing celebrities who are long past their prime or supporting efforts that jeopardize hundreds of thousands of North American jobs, she's lowering decorum in our House of Commons by calling Canada's Natural Resources minister a, I quote, "grumpy old man" during debate proceeding about the Keystone pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, name-calling isn't appropriate for this important issue. Yet this is what the federal NDP has been reduced to. We are, however, pleased to see that yesterday where the US House of Representatives were able to pass legislation forcing a quick decision on Keystone XL pipeline. It is our hope that President Obama along with the US Senate and all federal parties join in the support of this very important project.

So, Mr. Speaker, here's what the oil and gas industry contribute to Saskatchewan's economy. The oil and natural gas sector represents 16.3 per cent of the economic value created in Saskatchewan measuring current GDP [gross domestic product]. The oil and gas producing industry continues to be one of the largest contributors among . . . [inaudible] . . . industries to the provincial GDP. Industry investment in new exploration and development in 2011 was approximately \$4.5 billion and \$4.3 billion estimated for 2011. In 2010 . . . [inaudible] . . . oil and gas industry accounted for approximately 30,400 direct and indirect jobs, and 31,850 estimated for 2011. Sixty-five per cent to 70 per cent of Saskatchewan crude oil production is exported to the United States.

On average during 2010, Saskatchewan produced 423,000 barrels of oil per day, and 662 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. The combined value of oil and gas sales for 2010 was approximately \$10.8 billion and 11.7 billion estimated for 2011; 2,730 oil wells were drilled in 2010. As of the 1st of November, 2,899 oil wells had been drilled in 2011; 1,531 horizontal oil wells drilled in 2010. As of the 1st of November, 1,643 horizontal oil wells have been drilled in 2011. Total land sale value for the 2011 calendar year amounted to \$248.8 million, making 2011 the fourth best on record for land sale values. There are approximately 81,500 oil and gas wells currently capable of production in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we can see that our oil and gas sector is vitally important to Saskatchewan's economy. Of course it's reasonable to assume that the oil and gas sector is equally important to other economies within North America —

pipelines, essentially, to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of oil in various states of production.

If Canada only produced as much oil as it consumed, the national economy would be decimated. Exporting oil from Saskatchewan and Canada is vital to the national interests. For the US, importing oil from Canada is better than the alternative of importing oil from countries that do not aspire to the democratic values of Canadians. So in a sense, Mr. Speaker, this is not just about energy and food security, nor is it simply about creating new jobs for Canadians and Americans, although these are worthy goals of themselves. Mr. Speaker, this is about providing our neighbours to the south with a product that is recovered and transported from a country that is ethical. Our oil and oil sands are without a doubt ethical when you compare our nation's policy to that of other major oil producing nations.

On all fronts, this Keystone XL project has been shown to benefit all stakeholders, notwithstanding the whining and bleeding of a few ill-informed NDP MPs and celebrities. And with the new leader, we hope that the provincial and federal NDP will now throw its support behind the Keystone XL pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, one more quote I'd like to make just before closing, from Thomas Mulcair. It was a quote that he made on temporary foreign workers, and I quote, "... the already large-scale importation of low-paid foreign labourers deprived of [all] their full rights is eerily reminiscent of the opening up of the Canadian West by the Chinese workers who were brought to BC to build the first railway," he wrote in *Policy Options*.

Mr. Speaker, I think the federal NDP and its new leader is, well, out to lunch or delusionary. They don't live in the same century that the rest of us do. And it's that kind of attitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that causes concern in not only in Saskatchewan, across Canada, but across North America about the position of the NDP both federally and provincially.

And this motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, really speaks to what is the position of the provincial NDP and do they agree with their new federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, and the federal NDP on this topic as well as many other that the federal NDP come out that is detrimental to Saskatchewan and Western Canada. So thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this important motion.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatchewan Rivers has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this afternoon, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:30.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskTel
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

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

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

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

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

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

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

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

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

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

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services