



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

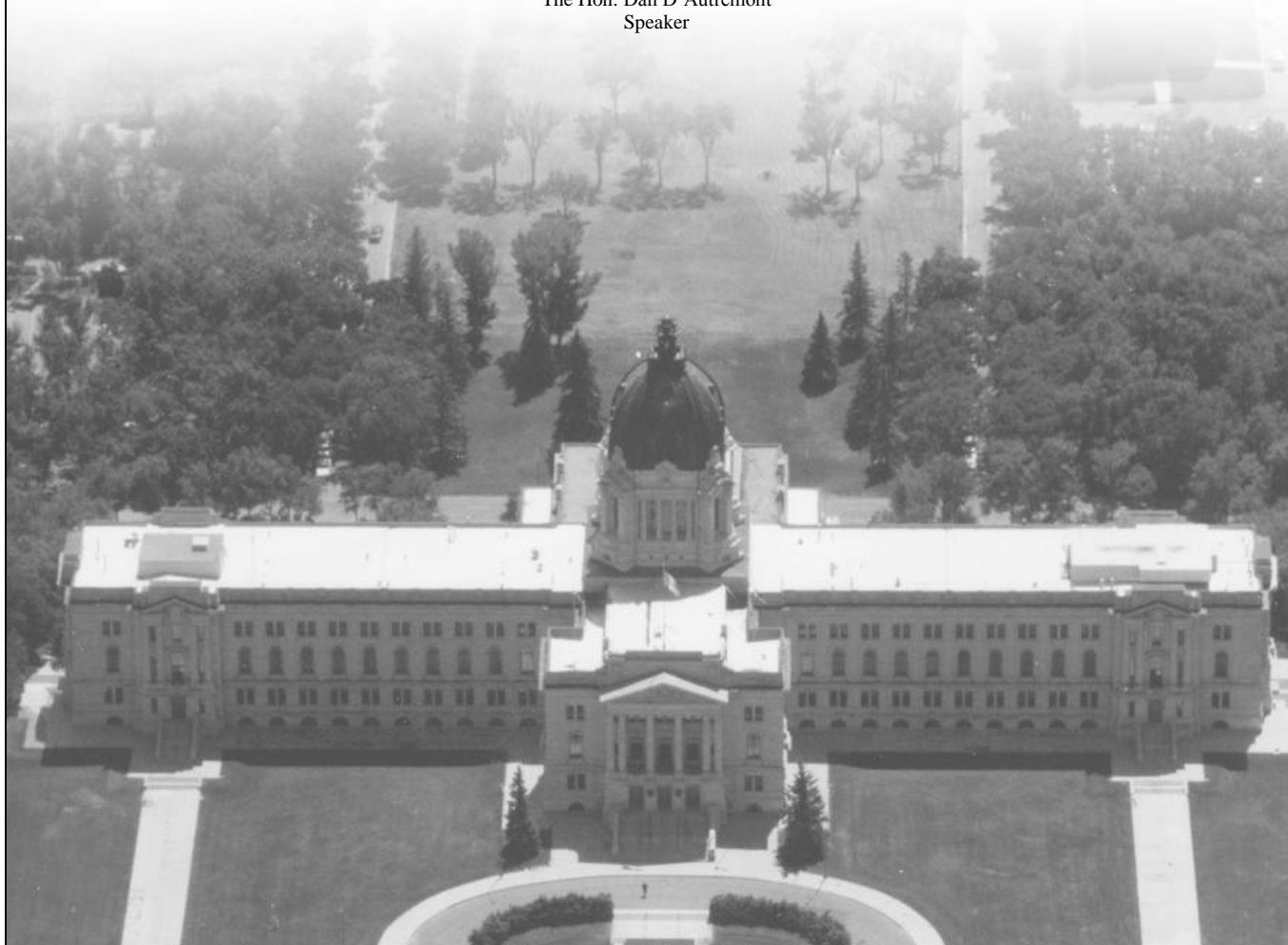
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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The Hon. 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, 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, Hon. 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, Jeremy         | SP                    | Meadow Lake               |
| Hart, Glen               | SP                    | Last Mountain-Touchwood   |
| Heppner, Hon. Nancy      | SP                    | Martensville              |
| Hickie, Darryl           | SP                    | Prince Albert Carlton     |
| Hutchinson, Bill         | SP                    | Regina South              |
| Huyghebaert, 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, Hon. 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, Rob              | SP                    | Saskatoon Greystone       |
| Ottenbreit, Greg         | SP                    | Yorkton                   |
| Parent, Roger            | SP                    | Saskatoon Meewasin        |
| Phillips, Kevin          | SP                    | Melfort                   |
| Reiter, Hon. Jim         | SP                    | Rosetown-Elrose           |
| Ross, Laura              | SP                    | Regina Qu'Appelle Valley  |
| Sproule, Cathy           | NDP                   | Saskatoon Nutana          |
| Steinley, Warren         | SP                    | Regina Walsh Acres        |
| Stewart, Hon. Lyle       | SP                    | Thunder Creek             |
| Tell, Hon. 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, Hon. Randy       | SP                    | Biggar                    |
| Wilson, Nadine           | SP                    | Saskatchewan Rivers       |
| Wotherspoon, Trent       | NDP                   | Regina Rosemont           |
| Wyant, Hon. Gordon       | SP                    | Saskatoon Northwest       |

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask leave of the House to make, it's two introductions, and they will likely take a little more time than usual. So I'd ask for leave for an extended couple of introductions.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked for leave for extended introductions. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave is granted. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks to members for the leave. And, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, we have some very special guests who have joined us today in your gallery. I'm going to begin today with the introduction of a gentleman and his wife who've joined us from Medstead, Saskatchewan, Canada. Mr. Speaker, Reed Ludwig is accompanied today by his wife, Sheryl. Reed, maybe just give us a wave. In a moment . . . You probably didn't have to give us a wave because it's about Movember, and I guess we could tell who he probably was up in the gallery there.

Like many of us, Reed participated in Movember to raise awareness about prostate cancer, to raise money for prostate cancer as well as men's mental health. He's still got his moustache as you can see, Mr. Speaker, today. And it's a lot better than some of them that were grown in this Assembly; I think we'd all agree with that. Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House this: Reed raised \$96,000, Mr. Speaker. In fact I can also tell you and the members this: he raised more money than any of the 1.1 million participants in Movember worldwide.

He works as a maintenance electrician at MEG Energy. This year the company decided to have a grow-off in the days, in October, I think, to see who would actually represent the team, the company in Movember. Reed was the man. I think they made a good choice. I think we might want to do that in the future. He says he's been amazed by the support that he's received from friends and family and colleagues. It's important to point out the MEG Energy matched all employee donations.

Later today I'll have a chance to present a small certificate and a token to Reed in the rotunda to thank him for what he's done and to congratulate him for this great effort. I'm sure that Sheryl and their two kids, Brett and Larissa, are very proud of their dad and his moustache, as they should be and so are all of us. And we welcome him here today to this Legislative Assembly this morning.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it's also a pleasure and a

honour to introduce eight representatives from the Salvation Army who have joined us today. They are seated in your Gallery. I'll maybe just list all of them, and ask as I do if they would just give us a wave. Major Wayne Bungay is the commander of the prairie division, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories; Major Joanne Binner is the Saskatchewan area commander; Captain Tiffany Marshall is the divisional government relations liaison officer; Major Doug Binner, executive director of Haven of Hope Community Ministries; Lieutenant Lynda Wakelin, executive director of Grace Haven/Gemma House; Captain Ben Lippers, executive director of Waterston House and Kate's Place; Captain Isobel Lippers, assistant executive director Waterston House and Kate's Place; and Ivy Scobie, the executive director of the William Booth Special Care Home and Regina Wascana Grace Hospice.

Mr. Speaker, we all know what the Salvation Army does in our communities, not just at this special time of year but all the year round. We want to acknowledge them for this. We want to thank them for ensuring that we all remember what Christmas is all about, Mr. Speaker.

And as we acknowledge them today and visit with them in the rotunda a little bit later and maybe share in some donations that we've been able to collect, we do want to take this chance to remind people right across the province that as they're busy doing their Christmas shopping and heading to find that special gift for someone, that's very important and good, but it's likely that someone we're rushing to buy a gift for probably has a lot of what they need. And they're going to probably walk by, as they do this shopping, many kettles that represent those who don't have quite what they need.

We want all to remember this and to give to the Salvation Army so that they can give to those who are in need, especially at this special time of year. We welcome these individuals to the Legislative Assembly this morning.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll assume I have a little bit of latitude on my time in welcoming the special guests that we have today. It's a great pleasure to welcome both groups, but I'll start with the five representatives of the Movember movement in Saskatchewan.

I have a special connection with you, and you may not know that. But when I was born at Saskatoon City Hospital, my mother took me home to Medstead to the little white parsonage, which you know is in town, and that's my first home. And so there are many good things that come from Medstead. And I say that another person from Medstead that everybody knows is Wayne Rostad from national television.

But anyway I want to say congratulations for the work that you've done. For obvious reasons, I wasn't part of the Movember competition here in the legislature. But it's important to focus attention on both the mental health issues and the prostate issues, and we very much appreciate what you've done.

Also I want to say welcome to the members of the Salvation Army. The work that you do in many places is often unrecognized. But one area where I worked very closely with the Salvation Army over many years was in the criminal justice corrections issues. And those are the kinds of things that the Salvation Army does that don't always get the same profile as everything else. And I want to thank you especially for that work.

I also want to say on behalf of a Parkbeg boy, Mortlach, that the Binners are classmates and friends of the member from Saskatoon Centre and he makes a special point of welcoming you here. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I would like to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming Reed and Sheryl Ludwig, long-time constituents of the Rosthern-Shellbrook area living in Medstead and raising their family there.

I would like to acknowledge both Reed and Sheryl because it is a team effort for their efforts in Movember. It has, as many people in this room can attest to, it is much more than just the man that takes part in Movember. But I would like to acknowledge them for having the largest amount raised in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and in the world as an individual. And your community and most definitely your province is proud of your efforts for this very worthwhile initiative. So thank you very much. And I would like all members of this Legislative Assembly to welcome both Reed and Sheryl Ludwig to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, requesting leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Rosemont has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize and welcome a great friend to all of us, someone that we all care for, that's Mr. Ben Walsh.

Of course we've had the Ben Walsh tie auction that's been ongoing here this week, and many bids have come in from both sides of the Assembly. It has in fact, without any great surprise, has ended in a tie, Mr. Speaker. And that tie will be, is awarded to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland here today, Mr. Speaker, a bid of \$325 that will go directly to the Regina and District Food Bank, Mr. Speaker.

In the spirit of the season, I've spoken with the member from

Weyburn-Big Muddy. We've agreed that we would challenge our caucus colleagues to step forward with a donation or to consider making a donation themselves. There's envelopes on the desk of the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. He'll be circulating those through the beginning of proceedings, and we'll be doing the same on this side here. And we'll be making a presentation to the Regina District Food Bank, recognizing the need that exists.

I would like to thank our Sergeant-at-Arms, our security staff, our commissionaires, specifically Mr. Moe Riou and specifically Mr. Guy MacDougall, for their support of this initiative, urging the bidding and for the goodwill extended by so many MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in this Assembly. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all the members to thank Mr. Ben Walsh for the contribution of his tie that I suspect will have generated quite a few dollars by the end of today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce a group of 13 grade 5 students from the Harvest City Christian Academy. Give us a wave. Excellent. I'm looking forward to have an opportunity to talking with them a little bit later. I already met them in the rotunda. And with them today is their teacher, Mrs. Justine Glover. Give us a wave. And also the parent chaperone for today is Katherine Gagne. And no stranger to the education system; she's the Chair of the Regina Public School Board. So nice to see you, Katherine.

I'll be looking forward to having a chat with the students, probably in an hour. And make sure not to stump me, all right, kids? It's going to be easy. I'd like to offer our welcome from the Legislative Assembly to this group of kids. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the member opposite and welcome the group of students and teacher that's here today from Harvest City and Johnson, but most importantly here today, the Chair of Regina Public Schools, Ms. Katherine Gagne, who's joined us here today. Thank you for your service to the people of our city and our province and to students in Regina public schools. And of course everyone here would know that Ms. Gagne has long roots back to this Assembly. And I believe at one point in time her father sat just right about right here, Mr. Speaker, and has occupied various chairs in this Assembly. So welcome to your Assembly and thank you for your work.

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to the House in the west gallery, a group of 55 grade 12 students from F.W. Johnson Collegiate, their chaperones today, their teachers Donarae Deringer, Mandy Crossman, Shelby Hersberger. They've been at the Assembly three times since

I've been elected only in one year. So it's good to see them again. I look forward to having a chat with them after question period.

**Hon. Mr. D'Autremont:** — I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce, in the Speaker's gallery, Lynn Madsen of Wauchope, Redvers area and from RM [rural municipality] No. 32, which is my RM . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm there very often. I'm getting heckled.

Lynn's wife, Yolanda, is attending a math conference in the city. And this is Lynn's first visit to the legislature since he was in university some decades ago. I would ask that members welcome Lynn to his Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to present a petition on cellphone coverage for northwestern Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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, along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

Mr. Speaker, and the people that have signed the petition are all from throughout northwestern Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan as a whole. And I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of people from across our province as it relates to concern over our finances. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting, reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada, in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of

Lloydminster, Cut Knife, Regina, and Humboldt. I so submit.

[10:15]

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

**Ms. Sproule:** — Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

Mr. Speaker, these are the names of the 14 women that were murdered on December 6th, 1989 at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal. On this day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we remember these women, along with many others who have been murdered, hurt, or violated just because they are women.

This devastating demonstration of misogyny happened 23 years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, Canada is still not a safe place for women. Fifty per cent of Canadian women will face gender-based violence in their lifetime, and the majority of these women will experience this violence before they turn 25. What is worse is the staggering count of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in our county. This not only points to a deep-seated pattern of violence against women but also a deep-seated pattern of racist violence.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to these 14 women and their families to use this day as a mirror in our own lives to reflect on the violence against women that still occurs. On a personal note, my good friend's granddaughter is growing up without her mother who was murdered in Saskatoon six years ago. Daleen Bosse is missed every day by her families, and her daughter Faith is a living reminder of the impact of violence against women. This one's for Faith.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to remind all members that this is the International Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. December 6th marks the anniversary of the 1989 murders of 14 female engineering students at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal, the act of gender-based violence that shocked the world. I'd like to thank the member opposite for reading their names into our history.

Mr. Speaker, violence against women and girls happens in every region, country, and culture, including here in Saskatchewan. In between April the 1st, 2011 and March 31st of this year, more than 1,700 women and girls in Saskatchewan entered emergency shelter.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have the right to live in safety. That's

why our government supports many programs and services delivered by community-based organizations that help people experience interpersonal violence. Today my colleagues and I are wearing white ribbons as a symbol of our pledge to work towards a future with no violence against women and girls.

We are also showing our support for men and boys who must actively participate as allies in solving this problem. I ask that we also take time today to remember the women who live daily with the threat of violence and commit ourselves to helping them however way we can. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise with a thankful heart for the statements made by the two members previous. And I rise today on behalf of the official opposition to state that it's the National Day for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, and I rise to acknowledge the role that men have to play in making sure that this terrible thing in our society shouldn't continue to grow, Mr. Speaker, but should be, should be, should be everything we should do against it as a society should be brought to bear. And I recognize today, Mr. Speaker, the special role that men have to play in this equation.

And I rise today to recognize those people, those men that stood forward to bring the White Ribbon campaign to the attention of the public, to do their part, to take the pledge to do what they could to stand against violence against women, to recognize the role that men play in violence against women, and to recognize that not just as a society we have to do better on this, Mr. Speaker, but we as men have a particular responsibility to do our part.

I'm glad that members today are wearing that white ribbon showing their support for putting an end to the violence against women, not just men but women. And, Mr. Speaker, if we can do that together as men and women, if men can recognize their special responsibility in this, I think we'll be a whole lot better off as a world. And the kind of heartache represented and the kind of loss and tragedy referenced by the two members previous, may that come to an end and may we all do our part in that way. May we as men take that pledge and do our part as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Care & Share Program

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd first of all like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their moving statements this morning.

I rise in the House today to recognize an outstanding Saskatoon business-based partnership, the Care & Share program developed over 15 years ago in an effort to partner local business with inner-city schools. This program began with my mother, Marie, and my father, Ted, working with local businesses to partner with Saskatoon community schools to provide a Christmas meal as well as assisting the school with its ongoing needs.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent Care & Share partner involves Alliance Energy of Saskatoon and Mayfair Community School. After touring the school in September, Alliance was determined to rewire the school kitchen, add a new dishwasher, a proper countertop, and a row of cupboards. Mr. Speaker, Alliance went above and beyond their generosity and donated \$3,000 for the school for miscellaneous needs. They will also be providing a few of their young electricians to train a senior class at Mayfair that will teach students how to build a lamp, with Alliance Energy providing all of the materials.

Mr. Speaker, during this Christmas season it is especially gratifying to hear Saskatoon businesses going the extra mile to lend a helping hand in the community.

I ask that all members join me in thanking Alliance Energy and all the businesses who have participated with the Care & Share program over the last 15 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Community Shows the Spirit of Giving

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, far too often we hear of a very young child being diagnosed with cancer. Such is the case for 11-month-old Peyton Wagner. Peyton was recently diagnosed with a type of cancer that is present in many parts of her body, and she has already undergone one round of chemotherapy.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, these are very difficult days for her parents, Nicky and Danny Wagner. As many communities do in a case like this, my hometown of Cupar has rallied around this family to support them. A trust account has been opened and already \$30,000 has been raised.

Last Friday evening over 300 people crammed into the community hall to support the Wagner family. The Lions Club sold beef on a bun, two silent auctions and a live auction took place, and at the end of the evening, Mr. Speaker, over \$56,000 was raised for the Wagner family.

Although this event took place in the season of giving, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that the timing of this event had anything to do with the generosity of the community since, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Christmas spirit and the spirit of giving is alive and well in this great province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Estevan.

### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

**Ms. Eagles:** — Mr. Speaker, in lieu of the next member's statement, I would ask that all members stand in a moment of silence in recognition of the women that lost their lives in 1989 in Montreal.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Christmas Message

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Christmas is a special time of the year. It is a season filled with joy and anticipation. We all look forward to the gathering of family and friends, the enjoyment of good food, and the giving of gifts.

Mr. Speaker, the Christmas story is also a message of hope, peace, and joy for each and every one of us. I believe Anthony Kelly penned it well when he said:

There's this Christmas song on the radio  
As you fight through the traffic and snow.  
But are you listening, are you listening?  
They're singing about bringing joy to the world  
There'll be presents for all the good boys and girls.  
But are you listening, are you listening?  
Someone's ringing bells at the corner store  
They're collecting coins to give to the poor.  
But are you listening, are you listening?  
There's an ancient tale being told again  
About a boy being born in Bethlehem.  
But are you listening, are you listening?  
While the angels sang on that day  
It was long ago and so far away.  
Someone was listening, shepherds were listening.  
And the message of hope was so loud and clear  
Sung for every age for all to hear.  
But are you listening?  
Are you listening to what is being said?  
It was written down and it's meant to be read  
It says, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."  
But I ask you, friend  
Have you really been listening?

Mr. Speaker, to you, the members of this Assembly, their families, the people of Saskatchewan, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Performance of Government

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been a session where the Sask Party has delivered unwelcome surprises for the people of Saskatchewan. In the past year, they've gutted the entire film industry. They've returned to their 2003 ideology of privatizing the Crowns, starting with ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], and they brought in a massive overhaul of labour laws. Mr. Speaker, the Premier didn't mention this ideological agenda in his platform or his booklet or the Throne Speech. Why has the Sask Party used this session to introduce so many unwelcome surprises for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. I think it's reasonable to review this

fall session, Mr. Speaker, in the light of the growth plan that was released by the government just a few days before we began. The growth plan formed really the largest part of the Speech from the Throne. And, Mr. Speaker, our government has now undertaken to keep the commitments that we made in the growth plan, which can be really summarized in two ways: (1) that we're going to do everything we can on this side of the House to sustain the unprecedented growth that we see in the province of Saskatchewan today, because growth is a good thing; and (2) that we meet the challenges that come along with growth. There are challenges that are new in this province that we haven't seen before; ones that we welcome versus the challenges of decline that we used to face in the past, but they must be dealt with. They relate to infrastructure. They relate to housing. They relate to the labour shortage, Mr. Speaker.

And the measures taken already just in this early part of the session we're in — it'll continue this spring — indicate that this government is committed to implementing that growth plan, to sustaining growth in this province, to ensuring that it is a leader for years to come, and also that we would deal with the challenges of growth and ensure that the people of this province are sharing in the prosperity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier neglects to mention all of the surprises that came in this session. The Sask Party said they wouldn't spend a dime on the labour review, but they went back on their word and spent more than half a million dollars. They said they wouldn't privatize the Crowns, but out of nowhere came this sale of ISC even though the Premier himself has sworn he wouldn't be a privatization Premier.

Mr. Speaker, they said they would admit their mistakes and work to fix them, but when it comes to the film industry, they refuse to admit that they put ideology ahead of common sense. They won't admit a single mistake, Mr. Speaker. Why has the Sask Party failed to own up to its mistakes? Why have they failed to lead an honest, accountable government for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, this is the same line of questioning we've seen from the NDP [New Democratic Party] now for a number of weeks. It's all related to surprises. And, Mr. Speaker, I can understand, as the NDP look around the province today and look around the government today, that they would be surprised, that they would see things that maybe they thought when they sat on these benches that would never happen in the province of Saskatchewan.

That there would be 80,000 new people living in this province in just five years, that's quite a surprise, Mr. Speaker. That there would be 37,000 new jobs created in this province in just five years, I think that caught them by surprise. I don't think they thought that might happen in Saskatchewan. I don't think they ever believed that this province would move out of the middle of the pack or the back of the pack in Confederation to lead this country in almost every economic category. I think that caught them by surprise. I think record investment in highways caught them by surprise. I think 900 more nurses

... serving in this province caught them by surprise. I think more doctors practising in Saskatchewan caught them by surprise.

They never thought it would happen when they sat on this side of the House, but that too has changed, Mr. Speaker, and that I think has been a pleasant surprise.

[10:30]

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

### Labour Legislation

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan waited until the last hours of this session for the Sask Party to table their labour legislation. And after six months and over half a million dollars of expenses, they still haven't finished their work. And we still have the essential services fiasco on top of that.

Mr. Speaker, in committee the minister said the Sask Party needs yet another 200,000 for spin and PR [public relations] to convince a province of something they didn't ask for. Mr. Speaker, clearly the best way to use any further resources on this labour bill would be to allow workers a chance to give their opinions to the minister himself and not just through a website or his email address. Mr. Speaker, will the minister get out of this marble palace and meet with the people of Saskatchewan, hold open and public consultations this spring for real feedback from working people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. To the member opposite and to the citizens of Saskatchewan, I'm pleased to say we've held a large number of meetings in different parts of the province. And I can also add, Mr. Speaker, that we've received correspondence; we've acted on the correspondence.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite seems to be preoccupied with a lot of things on this. Yesterday he did an interview on CJME, and I quote from Don Saxon, the announcer:

An overhaul to the province's labour laws has the NDP concerned about unions are being weakened. David Forbes wonders what the Wall government is hiding in fine print with all this legislation rolled into one.

Mr. Speaker, I quote the member's response:

... a former set of bills that were easily understood because they had titles, and you knew the minimum wage was under *The Minimum Wage Act*. Clearly you have a situation where they're all rolled in together.

So, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, who is a former Labour minister, ought to have known *The Minimum Wage Act* was repealed in 1969.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Very, very clever. Mr. Speaker, I understand, I understand the provincial government has just released its new *Rights and Responsibilities: A Guide to Labour Standards* here in Saskatchewan — another surprise just in time for the holiday season.

Mr. Speaker, sections of this guide appear to be based on the new Saskatchewan employment Act that hasn't even been passed yet. Specifically the section I refer to is the Sask Party's surprise, in the surprise guide, is in regards to layoffs, but there may be other such surprises in this new guide. The Sask Party didn't bother tabling the legislation until a few days ago. It hasn't revealed the complete set of regulations needed to fully inform us of the details of the legislation. But certainly they seem to have had the time to rewrite the guide to labour standards that appears to be based at least on the new legislation.

To the minister: is this government so arrogant that it thinks it can do whatever it wants, whatever it wants, including enacting a new guide for employers before their labour legislation is scrutinized and passed in this legislature?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the members opposite wanting to raise questions and ask questions, and we'll certainly work through all of those as we go forward in the next few months. We will look at their questions on an individual basis, and we will look at them with some sense of wanting to do the right thing with all the issues they raise.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to put the member's issue in context. On the 5th of December, a reporter asked the member opposite:

Some of the other concerns that you mentioned yesterday when you spoke to the press is now employers would be allowed to pay their employees with payment cards. Is that a real broad concern? Are we sort of nitpicking now?

The member from Saskatoon Centre replies, "I think we are into a bit of nitpicking."

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and I will take the question seriously, Mr. Speaker, but I think we're now getting into a fair bit of nitpicking.

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

### Information Services Corporation

**Ms. Sproule:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this session saw the surprising return to the 2003 Sask Party ideology of privatization at any cost in a move no one voted for. The Sask Party trotted out its privatization legislation. Seems that government spent its summer pondering their own policies and were nostalgic for privatization of one of the Crowns. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the Sask Party has repeatedly put ideology ahead of common sense. Saskatchewan people stand to lose tens of millions of dollars of dividends from ISC, all so the Sask Party can launch a fire sale, hoping to temporarily plug the



fiscal hole they've created.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party privatizing ISC when they didn't campaign on it, they didn't put it in their ideas booklet, and they didn't include it in the Throne Speech?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that ISC is in a very good position. It's been serving the people of Saskatchewan very well. We think these services could be broadened, not only across Saskatchewan but other jurisdictions in Canada and internationally. Mr. Speaker, in fact the former government, the NDP, felt that very same thing. They tried to sell ISC.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say it is an ideology of this government that when a company is working as well as ISC is, is that we should probably see if it can grow outside the province. The ideology of the NDP was to try and sell a company that was not functioning very well, Mr. Speaker, and then go out and buy companies for exorbitant prices, such as Navigata and every other company that they tried to buy, and then sell very low. That was the NDP ideology.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the minister bought his broken record of this party trying to sell ISC. That never occurred, it was never intended, and it didn't happen. The minister would rather walk away from the millions of dollars of profits for ISC just for the sake of ideology. It doesn't make any sense. The Sask Party's own Crown dividend policy requires 90 per cent of the dividends of ISC to return to the people to help pay for valuable services. Under the new privatized model, the people of Saskatchewan don't have the same guarantees. In fact they may not receive a penny in dividends under the new corporate structure.

Since the Sask Party has returned to its ideology of privatization, what's next, Mr. Speaker? How many more Crowns is the Sask Party contemplating selling in the spring?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we've gone through this many, many times but it is very curious why the NDP would not only have ISC in their Crown protection legislation and then take it out at hour 11 just before it goes into the House. So they took that out, Mr. Speaker. At the same time they did an evaluation of ISC, Mr. Speaker, to see what it would be worth. Very, very curious.

But do you know what is more curious, Mr. Speaker, is when the Leader of the Opposition, with his photographic memory, who sat on the legislative instruments committee, could have no recollection that ISC was in and now ISC was out, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can coin this session, the end of session, on a lot of different things, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of different phrases, but I would like to coin this session on the session that

John forgot.

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

### Reporting and State of Provincial Finances

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the auditor said clearly that the Sask Party needs to stop its improper creative accounting with the people's money. She said the Sask Party books were "misleading," "wrong," and "contained errors." Unlike this government, other provinces have progressed, stepped up, and made changes to use proper accounting. Now this Sask Party government is out of line with the rest of Canada, out of line with public sector accounting standards, and out of line with common sense, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party clinging to and defending books that the auditor has called misleading?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record for the people of Saskatchewan the actual timetable for when things changed in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, up until 2004-2005 when the NDP were in government, Mr. Speaker, there were one set of books. They were the General Revenue Fund. And, Mr. Speaker, the auditor, along with the Saskatchewan Party, lobbied that the then NDP government, that they needed to move towards summary financial budgeting, Mr. Speaker.

And in 2004-05, as I indicated in this House already once, Mr. Speaker, the government moved. The government of the day, the NDP, introduced summary financial statements. Mr. Speaker, those two systems have been in place since introduced by the NDP. We continue to follow the same two systems, Mr. Speaker. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that with the summary financial statement depicting the entire financial picture of government, it is in fact supported by the NDP.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the public isn't just concerned by the unacceptable accounting of this government. They're also concerned with the management of our books — three consecutive deficits masqueraded as surpluses by that government; \$1 billion more debt this year alone; overestimating resource revenues by more than \$400 million; and a government that's scrambling with short-sighted moves, including the sell-off of a profitable Crown corporation, ISC, affordable homes, and land; a costly private infrastructure scheme; broken promises that mean hiding debt on school boards and universities, ultimately students paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, why won't that Sask Party serve the people of the province instead of their own petty, partisan self-interest?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that in the province of Saskatchewan, we do both systems. We do the summaries and

we do the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker, and in fact, in an article in the Public Accounts Committee of May 2011, I want to quote, and this is the quote, and it says this:

The NDP held the very same position as the Saskatchewan Party government does now [that there is a place for the General Revenue Fund and summary financial statements] and we held that position for five years [as I've indicated].

Mr. Speaker, the quote is by Pat Atkinson, the former NDP leader.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what the member opposite is claiming, he's claiming that in fact there's some degree of secrecy. Mr. Speaker, we have two systems. We have two sets of books that are very understood by the public of Saskatchewan. There's a General Revenue Fund operating budget and there's a summary financial statement, Mr. Speaker. Anyone can understand that. The auditor has indicated that the summary financial statements are reliable.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — “Wrong,” “misleading,” and “contain errors”: that's the words of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. Every other province has progressed while that government stuck its head in the sands. That government has put more effort into its own spin and billboards than putting forward a sound fiscal plan. They cherry-pick the numbers and manipulate the story they want to tell. While municipalities' debts skyrocket, while universities' and school boards' debts skyrocket, while the Crown corporation debt skyrockets, while rate hikes are being forced upon families on their power bills, Mr. Speaker, while that government scrambles with selling off profitable Crown assets, that minister says, that Finance minister says everything is A-okay, Mr. Speaker. When will that government acknowledge the true financial state of this province and put forward a real plan that works for Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What is being recognized across Canada, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan is the only province with a balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, it's not a secret. I was in Toronto on Monday and I met with the financial institutions and many have indicated that they are very, very pleased with the fact that Saskatchewan is in fact the only province with a balanced budget. The comment by Warren Lovely with CIBC World Markets is this. He says, “Consistent with its relative economic outperformance, Saskatchewan maintains a healthier budgetary position than other provinces.”

Mr. Speaker, I understand the NDP's jealousy, the fact that the NDP planned for decline, Mr. Speaker. This is an opportunity for Saskatchewan people and we're going to make sure that Saskatchewan remains number one, with a balanced budget.

[10:45]

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

## Health Care for Refugees

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been a few instances this session, Mr. Speaker, when the government has responded constructively to an issue raised by the opposition. One example is the government's response to refugee health care here in the province.

I'd like to thank the Premier for his harsh words towards the Harper Conservatives on this issue and I'd like to thank the Health minister for stepping up and providing the coverage for the anti-nausea meds for the man in Saskatoon who was denied cancer care by the federal government.

My question to the Health minister: beyond the harsh words that the Premier has had for the Harper Conservatives, what concrete steps has the Health ministry, is the minister currently taking to pressure the federal Conservatives to act in a manner that is based on compassion and that is based on common sense with respect to refugee health care here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, within the province, the Ministry of Health has communicated with all of our health regions to ensure that health regions and our Cancer Agency is continuing to provide coverage to refugees who are in Saskatchewan waiting for their refugee hearing and determining their status, future status. So, Mr. Speaker, we have communicated that information to health regions to ensure that emergent and urgent care is still provided, Mr. Speaker, along the lines of what other provinces — some other provinces, not all — are currently doing.

Mr. Speaker, I have followed up, written a letter to the federal Minister of Immigration asking, not only in this case, but similar cases, but as well as a review of the entire program, Mr. Speaker, and we await his reply.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — I thank the minister for that information. Mr. Speaker, while I certainly agree with the minister's approach in providing cancer care for this man after he was denied by the federal government, I don't fully agree, Mr. Speaker, with the approach that the government has taken in providing care to refugees on a one-off basis. I think when care is provided on a one-off basis, it allows individuals to fall through the cracks. And the fact that the man who needed cancer care had to turn to charity to get the anti-nausea medication is a prime example of how people do fall through the cracks.

Other provinces, as the minister suggests, have responded, Mr. Speaker, by filling the gap left by the federal Conservatives, namely Manitoba. My question to the minister: is it his opinion that the province will continue down the path of one-off addressing of issues for refugees who need health care, or are they prepared to fill the gap as other provinces have done?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is we

are continuing to provide — as I think it's important to note, as we did prior to this issue being raised in the House, prior to it even being public knowledge, Mr. Speaker — we're continuing to provide care when it's urgent and emergent, for example cancer care, Mr. Speaker. But we also want to make sure that we are working with Immigration Canada because there are a number of different programs that still exist where coverage is still provided — whether that be physician care, and other types of care — that have not for some refugees been removed by the federal government.

So in terms of working one by one or one-offs, Mr. Speaker, that's the way that we will continue to progress because there is still some coverage, but it's determined by that specific individual's circumstance, Mr. Speaker. But we'll continue to work with the federal government in pushing this issue forward.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, coverage is provided for the cancer care, as the minister said, and that is, thank goodness, there for the man who needs the care. But the fact that the anti-nausea meds were not covered, as we've discussed here in the House and through the media, Mr. Speaker, put the man in a situation that is not humane, that is not compassionate. And that's because there was a one-off approach. Does the minister recognize that people fall through the cracks when there is a one-off approach?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that individuals that need medical attention in this province while they're awaiting their refugee status hearing, Mr. Speaker, that they do not fall through the cracks. And that's why the deputy minister of Health has had discussions with all of our health regions to ensure that our health regions are paying close attention to any of these situations that do arise. Mr. Speaker, fortunately I think we are not talking about a large number of individuals that may fall in these situations. But we've asked our health regions to pay close attention so that we can provide that medical care when it is needed, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Asbestos in Public Buildings

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another issue where the government responded in a constructive manner, going part of the distance, was with respect to the call for an asbestos registry here in Saskatchewan, in order to ensure that the public has all the information they need to make informed decisions about their health and the health of their families. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Cancer Society was here in the Assembly to lend their support to the call for legislation, legislation that would make the registry mandatory and comprehensive, two very important aspects, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister: while it's the last day of the sitting, Mr. Speaker, there is still time to do the right thing. The

opposition co-operated earlier this week in passing an RESP [registered education savings plan] bill in one day. We can do the right thing, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister: what is the government's position on the establishment of an asbestos registry through legislation that is mandatory, that is comprehensive, and will the Sask Party government pass this legislation today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I had indicated earlier that I had met with the family of the late Mr. Willems and I appreciate the positions that they are putting forward. We are working with the ministry officials to determine what best practices are with regard to asbestos, not just with regard to a registry but by way of signage, notification, and removal processes. We may well want to do something by way of an update and do that in recognition of Mr. Willems's contribution.

With regard to a legislated registry, we want to look and see what information is available. The information is coming in from various government agencies. And, Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite, in some cases it has greater detail and it has sub-links on the page which provide specific information. So we may want to look and see how we may want to advance that. I certainly wouldn't want to rule out having a mandated registry but I'd like to work with all of the agencies that are affected, not just government but also within other semi-government sectors, health care agencies as well as school boards and the like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

#### Mineral Administration Registry Saskatchewan

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today Saskatchewan is taking a major technological step forward that will mark an important milestone in the history of mineral development in Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to inform the House of the launch of the mineral administration registry Saskatchewan better known as the MARS system, that will take the mineral land acquisition into the electronic age.

Today is the go-live date for MARS. It's Saskatchewan's first web-based system for ensuring mineral . . . for issuing mineral dispositions. From now on, all staking will be done online from a computer any time, anywhere in the world. MARS system will allow industry to easily manage mineral dispositions using state of the art information technology.

The former claim-staking system was modelled on one that existed in Eastern Canada prior to settlement. The new system will alleviate a number of problems, including delays over the issuance of claims, especially during staking rushes; uncertainty over the location of claim boundaries in unsurveyed areas; disputes over the order of priority of claim applications.

Offering services through online programs is a major step that

will allow . . . that will make the difference between those that move ahead and those that are left behind. Our province plans to move ahead.

The ability of industry to redirect savings from physical ground staking into actual investments in mineral exploration is a key to both the companies and the province. MARS will also offer industry a 24-7 self-service for a wide variety of activities relating to disposition administration, including transferring the ownership and submitting work from expenditures.

Mining is increasingly important to the Saskatchewan economy, directly contributing 20 per cent to our provincial exports. It employs more than 30,000 people, both directly and indirectly. Mineral exploration expenditures for 2012 are estimated to be about \$325 million. I'd like to express my gratitude to the Saskatchewan Mining Association, the MARS focus group, and those who participated in the training programs for their valuable contribution to making the MARS system a reality today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for his comments. I just would like to respond by first of all commenting on the amazing notion that you can now stake mineral claims in your pyjamas, having coffee in the comfort of your own home. This is truly a significant change in mineral staking in Saskatchewan. So we can all now become mineral stakers. You don't even have to go out of your house, and you can actually make a claim. I think that's a significant accomplishment, and it shows the importance of the electronic age and how we do business, Mr. Speaker.

And indeed the whole notion of the MARS system actually came out of the ISC system and their cadastral layer for the province, actually using GIS [geographic information system] to create a cadastral layer of both the surface of land rights in Saskatchewan but also the mineral layer. And a part of my work in my former job was to work on the mineral layer as a representative of the federal Crown, and we actually saw a lot of effort being put into improving the quality of Information Services Corporation's mineral cadastral layer simply because it was incomplete under the old paper system.

One of the things that's a key feature of Information Services Corporation's suite of responsibilities is something called the abstract directory, and that's not a land registry. It's an abstract directory, and that abstract directory is actually the repository of all the Crown interests that we see still in the control of the Crown either federally or provincially.

And one of the things I think that we need to be concerned about with the conversion of ISC to private interests is that this abstract directory, which is a representation of all the Crown holdings, will now be managed by a private corporation. And that's not something I think that was intended certainly at the time when the land registries were created and certainly the land surveys registry. I think the way that MARS came about — and I was involved at the beginning of it through my work, Mr. Speaker — was that it is a direct reflection of the work of

land titles and the land registry people over at ISC and the good public servants that are working there managing our Crown holdings.

And it's truly, I think, a tribute to the work of those people, and it's a tribute to the efforts of the good folks over at Energy and Resources who saw an opportunity when ISC LAND [land titles automated network development] system came along. They said, you know what? Mr. Speaker, we can do this. We can do this with our mining staking system, and we see other advancements being made with the PRIME [process renewal and infrastructure management enhancement] project as well.

So congratulations, I think, on this amazing achievement. It's an important milestone, as the minister indicated. And also I want to extend congratulations to the very hard work of the good people over at Energy and Resources for making this a reality and for the inspiration that the ISC people have been in this type of technology. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It being the final day prior to the adjournment of the House for the Christmas season, I would ask for leave to make a statement.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to make a statement regarding the final day of the fall session. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

### An Expression of Thanks

**Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As this is the last day that we'll be in session for the next couple of months, I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of the government to express thanks to those that make it possible for all of us to do our jobs here in the legislature.

First are our spouses and families. We are here long hours, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, working over the course of that period of time both here and in the constituency as well. And I think it's very proper and apt that we recognize the sacrifices that our spouses, our families make in order for us to be servants to the people and do our jobs.

I also want to very much thank the staff here in the building. Your staff, Mr. Speaker, the Clerks that do such a great job for us, the Pages, Sergeant-at-Arms, visitor services, the maintenance personnel — all of whom do their job with a great deal of pride and a great deal of professionalism. And it's something that I know all of us here in the Chamber really, really appreciate.

[11:00]

I'd like to thank our staffs, whether that be in the constituency office who do some great work for all of us, the staff in the

ministers' offices, and all of those that really do make it possible for us to do our job here in the Assembly.

I want to thank my friend, the Opposition House Leader, for the very productive and professional relationship that we've developed over the course of the last year-plus. We actually got to the point of joking this morning, Mr. Speaker, about perhaps staging some sort of incident which may have been reminiscent of what happened in another Chamber, but decided, decided against that, Mr. Speaker.

But I do just want to say Merry Christmas to everybody here in the Assembly, here in the building, those that work for us in our constituencies, and to all the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and have a safe season.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — With leave to respond to the statement.

**The Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has asked for leave to make a statement regarding the final day of the fall session. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I guess I just want to start off by saying thank you very much to everybody and Merry Christmas. I want to get in to the record my appreciation for the relationship that exists between the sides in terms of open line of communication and being as good as your word in the dealings. And not to give away too many secrets of what makes that run, Mr. Speaker, but the Government House Leader has undertaken not to yell and swear and threaten me, and I in return have undertaken not to threaten him with my leader.

But in all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, these are the things that need to be done between the sides in order to make sure that the process is addressed and works for the bringing forward of the people's business, which is why we're all here. The government of course has a mandate to bring that business forth and the opposition certainly at this stage of the cycle, Mr. Speaker, has a responsibility to provide that scrutiny, to hold that government to account for those measures.

And of course as has been said, Mr. Speaker, to do those important jobs that the people have sent us here to do, Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of sacrifice on the part of friends and family, for which we are very appreciative. It takes a lot of support and sacrifice as well from staff, both on the different sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the people that make this place go. From the Speaker's office to the Clerk's office to everyone that, you know, from the library to the cafeteria and back again, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people that make this thing possible. There are a lot of people that put in some long hours, and they're very devoted to providing that excellent service. And for that, Mr. Speaker, we are thankful.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of not just the staff in the building, but I know for myself and I know this is the experience for members across the House, those staffers that are keeping the constituency offices rolling and making sure that the needs are being addressed as they're brought forward by constituents, for that we are thankful as well.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, to get back to where I'd started in terms of wishing everyone a Merry Christmas — Christmas, as the member from Moosomin on an annual basis reflects very well in terms of the spirit of the season, this time of hope and of celebration. But also, Mr. Speaker, these are times when it can be particularly hard for folks that are missing a loved one and they have that seat at the table that goes unfilled. But certainly in these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we wish for healing and for the good memories to rise to the fore. And for the heartache that is there, that that may fade. But certainly that everyone has themselves a merry Christmastime.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the opposition, thank you and Merry Christmas.

**The Speaker:** — Well at this time, since both the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader have taken time to do their Christmas message, I will do likewise.

I would like to thank the House leaders and all of the members for their co-operation in this session. I didn't have to wear my voice out with too much responses to the members' enthusiasm. I would like to thank the clerks: Mr. Putz, Mr. Ring, Ms. Lang, and Ms. Burianyk; and the committee staff for their service this session. Also our Pages: Sarah, Samantha, Rikki, Breanna, Lambry, and Joel for their help and their service to all of the members in the Chambers.

I'd like to thank the House leaders and the Whips for the good job they have done. We didn't have too much drama, and that's always a good thing. I'd like to thank the staff in my office, Irene, Sheila, and Connie, as well as the staff in both the caucus and especially the House business staff in both of the caucus in ensuring that the business of the House was organized and moved forward in a professional manner.

I'd like to thank all of the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] staff, the staff in the ministerial offices, and the constituency office staff who are an integral part of this operation but that we don't see on a regular basis when we're in session. So I'd like to wish all of your families and you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and may you spend quality and loving time with your family.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table answers to questions no. 183 through 205.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled answers to question 183 through 205.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

**Investments in Education**

**Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to help us move forward with the 75-minute debate, and at the close of my remarks I'll offer the following motion:

That the Assembly commend the government for its record investments in education after 16 years of NDP neglect.

And as I say, I'll get back to that towards the end of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start with a story from August of 1929. It's August 22nd. It's right here in our capital city. It's in Regina. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a distinguished parliamentarian that's just arrived by rail at that point here into Regina, into our capital, and that is Winston Churchill. And as he addresses a crowd downtown, he speaks directly of the cities of science that he's seen, of the significance of Saskatchewan's agriculture, of our natural resources, and our technology. And he identifies these aspects of our economy as being chariots that will help to drive forward prosperity on our prairies.

Mr. Speaker, all of that was premised on the significance of education, certainly something that our first premier recognized, and the first government of this province, and has been recognized significantly since. Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased with the progress that we've been able to make, with the knowledge and understanding that there's a lot more to do.

I thought what I'd do is speak a little bit about our support for post-secondary education and get into some student supports that we've put in place, also focusing on areas of investment that we've made regarding First Nations and Métis students. I'll talk a little bit about student housing and some of the progress that we've made, some child care initiatives, and then some areas of innovation. I know that others will focus on our pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] system. I'll touch briefly on that as well, as time permits.

Mr. Speaker, I'm especially pleased to say that as we reflect on the opportunity over the course of the last five years to serve the people of this province, we've had a \$3.5 billion record investment for post-secondary education and skills training; \$3.5 billion is an all-time record over the course of five years. What it's allowed, Mr. Speaker, and there will be a number of statistics that come up, but it's allowed us to make significant investments in institutions, which ultimately means that we're investing in our faculty members and our lecturers, in our researchers, and in those running labs. Most especially it's allowed us to make investments in our students and those that support our students.

So for example, in 2007 as we came into office, funding for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] was just over \$118 million. We've increased that funding by more than 21 per cent. It's now at over \$143

million. At the University of Regina, the funding in 2007 was just over \$73 million. Today it's over \$100 million for a 38 per cent increase at the University of Regina in funding from this government. At the University of Saskatchewan in 2007 it was just over \$208 million. Today it's over \$304 million, a 46 per cent increase.

What we had promised in 2007, Mr. Speaker, was that we would increase operating funding by \$125 million over the course of our first four years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we increased funding by \$274 million. We made promises, we kept promises, and we exceeded promises regarding support for our key post-secondary institutions.

I think what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that on occasion from the other side there is a notion that the NDP would be considered the defender of the disadvantaged. But in fact what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is that between 1994 and 2007 we saw an incredible onus and burden put on post-secondary students by the members opposite. So we saw tuition at the University of Regina go up by more than 88 per cent. We saw tuition go up between 1994 and 2007 under the NDP. We saw it go up at the University of Saskatchewan by more than 99 per cent. And again between 1994 and 2007, we saw it go up at SIAST by more than 260 per cent, having a dramatic effect and impact on students, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've not only put real funding into our institutions; we've also put real support in place for our students in a number of ways. We can think about these as a continuum of support essentially stretching from the time that parents want to support their and encourage their children to go into post-secondary education. And we've seen recently, in passing legislation, the creation of the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings.

We then, Mr. Speaker, have put in place the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship to assist grade 12 graduates to help reduce the cost of tuition, where they are now eligible for a lifetime maximum of \$2,000, that it's applied directly to their tuition at \$500 per year. That's significant. It's significant, Mr. Speaker, substantively. That is, it helps students and it helps their families. But it's also symbolic. That is, it serves as a catalyst for parents and for counsellors and for friends to bring up the question, what are you going to do after you graduate? Because these dollars are right there ready for Saskatchewan grade 12 graduates to go to post-secondary education.

We then put in place, Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, the Saskatchewan innovation and opportunity scholarship that provides \$3 million annually to match funding raised by post-secondary institutions. And we did that in response to requests by post-secondary institutions. That has offered real opportunities for more upper-year undergraduates and for graduate students, Mr. Speaker.

And of course we have in place the graduate retention program, the most aggressive youth retention program in the country. And along the way, again listening to feedback that we were receiving from the opposition but also from citizens, we went from just simply focusing on the retention — that is, making sure that Saskatchewan graduates actually stayed here in the province — but that we also used it as a recruitment vehicle,

Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

Today there are more than 40,000 graduates from Saskatchewan institutions and institutions across the country and around the world — more than 40,000 — that are benefiting from the graduate retention program, the most aggressive youth retention program in the country. That's significant, Mr. Speaker, when we begin to think about the population growth of more than 80,000 people. This is helping foster and fuel that kind of population growth, Mr. Speaker. It's also helping to send a strong message about the strength of Saskatchewan's economy and the strength of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we went beyond this. Mr. Speaker, we put in new dollars for student financial assistance — the first new dollars since 1994. We also listened directly to students, and that is we reduced the provincial student loan interest rate from where it was under the NDP to put it at prime. We eliminated the vehicle value from the calculation of student loans, and we allowed full-time students to earn as much as they could and to control their own schedule without being affected by student loans.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the initiatives that we've undertaken to help foster and facilitate the success for students, helping to make sure that we can focus on excellence as well affordability and accessibility for students across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak directly about investments that we've made in partnership with some key partners that we have, and these partners are reflected right across our post-secondary system. Importantly in 2007 there were about 13,000 students in our post-secondary and in our skills training programs — about 13,000, Mr. Speaker, out of about 72,000. Today that number is up over 15,000. We have seen an increase in enrolment at the post-secondary and skills training level by an additional 2,000 First Nations and Métis students. Along the way, we've seen an increase in funding for many of the key institutions that foster and facilitate their success.

For example we've seen under this government a more than 38 per cent increase in funding for SIIT, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, under this government. Compared to 2007, we've seen an increase for First Nations University of 36 per cent. At the Gabriel Dumont Institute, an increase of 34 per cent since 2007. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that there have been millions of dollars put in every year, this current year being \$47 million in direct investment for our First Nations and Métis education and employment supports.

Mr. Speaker, that's just a small sampling of the kind of work through our partners that we think is helping to make a difference. We know there is more to do. In fact, most recently here within Regina, thanks to the leadership of the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce, we've worked with our post-secondary partners and especially with the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce to see a career expo that was focused on all nations with an emphasis on our First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, more than 1,000 people arrived and went through those doors. We had more than 50 employers and, Mr. Speaker,

we know that jobs were on offer. We also know there were many conversations where young participants came and asked questions of employers and they were referred directly to the post-secondary and skills training initiatives and institutions right on the floor. Those are the kind of steps — grassroots-based, community-based — that are helping to make a difference here within the capital but right across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is significant. Its significance speaks to a historic reality that we're also working to overcome that certainly exists for decades, but specifically between 1996 and 2006 the gap in education completion rates between First Nations and non-Aboriginal groups in Saskatchewan actually grew. It was a lost decade between 1996 and 2006. From 1996 to 2006 the gap in high school completion rates grew from 20 per cent to 27 per cent for First Nations people and from 1996 to 2006 the gap in post-secondary education grew from 17 per cent to over 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We know there is much more to do, Mr. Speaker, but we're going to have to work to overcome lost decades like that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight, and I know we don't have much time left, a couple of other areas. I'd like to talk about the 3,000 per cent increase — not 30 per cent increase, not 300 per cent increase, 3,000 per cent increase — over the course of five years in funding for student housing. When we think about communities like La Ronge and Meadow Lake and Prince Albert and Saskatoon and now with work getting under way right here at the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, we know how significant it is. So when we think about the University of Saskatchewan and I think about being a student there, it was obvious and apparent a long time ago that there were new residences that were needed.

Nothing was done under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. So what we did was pledged \$15 million for what we anticipated would be 400 beds and we said it had to be a public-private partnership, Mr. Speaker. Well that public-private partnership helped foster and facilitate a philanthropic gift to the university of millions of dollars. So it's not 400 beds, Mr. Speaker. The university was able and capable of coming forward with the public-private partnership. We've been able to move forward, Mr. Speaker — more than 1,000 new beds on that campus alone — offering new opportunities we're seeing again right across the province, knowing that there's more to do.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more to talk about and we know that, Mr. Speaker, about some of the significant improvements and enhancements that we've made in child care, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to allow other speakers to do that because, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'd like to move:

That this Assembly commend the government for its record investments in education after 16 years of NDP neglect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Greystone:

That this Assembly commend the government for its

record investments in education after 16 years of NDP neglect.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm a little surprised and a little shocked about this motion. I shouldn't say surprised really because it does continue the tradition of this government of its arrogance in face of a real problem that we are facing in Saskatchewan, that it actually would prefer to step back and pat itself on the back, congratulate itself, especially at this time of year, when we should all be resolving to do whatever we can to resolve the issues that are facing our young people in Saskatchewan. But what does this government choose to do but to give itself a little pat on the back as it's closing down the session to say, aren't we great? Aren't we the best? Merry Christmas to us.

You know, we've got a lot of work, a lot of work to do. And I found it really interesting that it took the member 12 minutes to actually acknowledge that there is some more work to be done — after 12 minutes of self-congratulations about we've done that, we've done this, you know. And they still continue over there with this arrogant attitude of what's happening in our classrooms in Saskatchewan. And then they couple it with . . . Now they always love a little throw in the blame. It's not our fault. It's not our fault. It's somebody else's fault. Don't blame us. Don't blame us.

And what the partners and the stakeholders and the educational system are saying, let's get down to work. Let's do something about this. We have the resources in this province. We are blessed with our natural resources. Things are going well. Let's get to work.

But not this government. It wants to celebrate all the things it's done, rightly or wrongly, and paint this picture that everything is A-okay. And we see this arrogance. We saw it in question period today. We saw the Finance minister and other ministers who want to deny the comments that the auditor has made about how we keep track of our financial records. But no, no. It's deny, deny, deny. We are doing great, and we look for outside validators. And they have a real method of spin and PR to make sure that everybody thinks everything is A-okay. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of work to be done. There is a lot of work to be done.

Are there some things that have happened that are good? You bet there are. There are. And I was actually surprised that the member didn't raise today in Saskatoon I believe the St. Mary School is being opened. And that's a really good example of a school being opened. But there are many other circumstances where there is work to be done. And we should congratulate the school boards and the people who have put those things together that we see schools being opened.

But we see down the road, we see down the road, Pleasant Hill School, who's being neglected, that actually was higher up the list of some other schools but got bumped off, got bumped off for no apparent reason. Other things, other schools moved ahead. And here we have the kind of circumstances we have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply, deeply concerned about this motion, that it is so, so flawed and so inappropriate, so absolutely inappropriate, especially this time of year when we see families and communities looking at how can we instill a sense of hope and faith in our communities? And yet what this government does is go to the arrogant place, go to the big-blame place and not accept the responsibility it has as a government.

And we know and when we talk, we can talk about some of the issues that are out there. You know, this government's record of cutting educational assistance is real, is real. And we've gone through that a few years ago, and they love to deny that. And we can talk about how they've pushed school boards to the brink in terms of overcrowding, particularly in the large urban centres because schools are full to the brim. And they force school boards to make very difficult choices not knowing if this government would actually deliver on their PR. They keep waiting. They keep waiting. They're being told that there's financial support coming, and it doesn't, doesn't come.

And there are some real, real issues out there, Mr. Speaker, and I'm surprised that the government over there didn't bring forward a resolution in terms of for example issues around student bullying. That's a real issue. That's something that we have to come to terms with. And we can all work together to improve our student's lives and the mental health of kids in our schools, and that's critically important. But instead this government chooses to congratulate itself, to congratulate itself — how inappropriate.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real concerns about that. And you know, the issues around bullying are not something to be downplayed because we know many, many students wrestle with that on a daily basis, and the social and mental health outcomes of that are real. And you know, one of the issues that we talk about, I can remember talking about it today in terms of physical, and physical abuse and violence against women. And we know we've got work to do. We have huge amounts of work to do. This is not a time to congratulate ourselves. This is a time to commit ourselves to further, further work.

And you know, the other issue I want to just raise on that, on that point of course is the whole issue around suicides and young peoples' suicides and how much more work there is to be done in that area. And clearly when this government instead chooses to talk about, chooses instead to talk about how good it is, how great it is . . . And young people are at real risks. When it comes to mental health and the tragedy of suicides and what that means for families at this time of year, is something . . . We have to do, we have to commit ourselves to doing as much as we can. So I just don't think that it's appropriate that we even be talking at this level about a government congratulating itself when there's so much work to be done.

And of course, you know . . . And I know we'll talk more about this. But our member from Regina Rosemont and the work that he's done around Shannen's dream, and the whole thing about closing the gap in First Nations education, it's not just the passing oh, it's more work to be done. It's not just a passing thing, Mr. Speaker. We have to seriously commit ourselves to this, seriously commit ourselves because of the lost potential, both in terms of economic contributions, whether it's a job as



the member alluded to, but also just having strong, healthy communities and strong, healthy families. This is a real, a real issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that he's just not, he's not dealing . . . This resolution does not deal with the reality of our communities.

I want to take a moment too, Mr. Speaker . . . And it's amazing how quickly time goes by. But we all had a chance to meet with our teachers on October 19th, and they shared this book. And I think this is a much more appropriate perspective or lens to take a look at what's happening in our educational system. And I just want to say that I really think that the member missed the point. He chose to quote Churchill. And that's kind of an interesting thing, you know, that a British politician from back in the '30s and '40s . . . And he's often quoted. But I think that really, I think we have to think about what people are saying here in Saskatchewan, what some of the teachers are looking for.

[11:30]

And I think this is one that the teachers chose to frame the discussion when we talk about education. And it is, the true measure . . . And this is from the UNICEF [United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund]:

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children — their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.

So we've got a lot of work here, Mr. Speaker. And I know the government likes to trot out statistics and all the things that they've done, but this is a thing that we need. This is what we need to commit ourselves to doing. And it's about eradicating poverty in our communities, supporting young children to make sure they have the best start in schools. And we're seeing the report cards that are coming out, whether it's Saskatoon Health Region and their disparities report, talking about kids need a stronger start to school and then they will do better. And so these are the kind of things that we need to deal with. And we need to do all we can to address bullying, suicides, mental health of our young people.

And so, Mr. Speaker, clearly there is work to be done, but I cannot support this resolution. I think at this time of year, with Christmastime, it's so incredibly arrogant that this government would even put forward a resolution to commend themselves on the work they've done in education when clearly there is much, much more work to be done. And we can all get behind that. We can all get behind that as we enter into the season ahead. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to second the motion by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. Education is one of the cornerstones of the new Saskatchewan. Education is the future, not just for each

individual but for our province and our country. Without education you cannot build the other cornerstones of our future. In fact you might say without education there is no future; there is only decline.

The NDP was leading us down a spiralling path of decline. Mr. Speaker, under 16 years of the NDP, 176 schools were closed. Unbelievable — 176 schools were closed. And now the NDP tell us that we're not doing it right. I would say we're doing it right because the left didn't work.

For generations the standard graduation gift in Saskatchewan for a student leaving home was a suitcase because they were going to get a job. For decades and decades our largest and most precious export has been our children. The only positive outcome of this has been the Roughrider nation which spread from east to west following the exodus of former Saskatchewan youth who have yet remained faithful to the Saskatchewan Roughriders. You see, they would have rather stayed in Saskatchewan, but there were no jobs.

Our government had to get the ball rolling at ground level. We introduced schools of opportunity which allowed schools slated for closure to remain open for up to three years to determine if economic activity in that region might result in increased enrolment. A brilliant move, Mr. Speaker, that let communities build on their own future. But this was just a starter of things to come.

One of the biggest steps forward was the historic reduction of the education portion of property tax. Mr. Speaker, that one move saved the Saskatchewan taxpayers over 165 million. What had the former NDP done? And I quote former Premier Lorne Calvert at the 2003 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention: "Our priority in tax reform for government over the next several years must be the matter of the funding of education." And then he said, and again I quote, ". . . the status quo is not on." What really happened after that was the status quo was on, and there was no tax relief. RMs finally went into tax revolution. They couldn't take any more NDP taxes. The whole system was collapsing. Without jobs, we had less people. With less people, we couldn't afford our education. Without education, we were in decline.

Education is the cornerstone and must be built upon. Education is now a lot more complex than years ago. When people my age attended university, they stayed at Aunt Sally's house and off to university they went. Now student housing is very important, very expensive, and in short supply. The former government between 2000 and 2007 spent 700,000 on student housing. That's the NDP record: 700,000 from 2000 to 2007. Since becoming government the Saskatchewan Party has invested 24 million on student housing alone. Mr. Speaker, that's an astounding 3,000 per cent over the NDP. That equals over 1,000 new beds for students in communities like La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. Another win for the people and students of Saskatchewan, where you're no longer in decline and we have a vision of a very bright future.

I have already stated that university students' needs are changing. In the past there was no post-secondary child care. Today it is an urgent need. Our government has set up 624 child care seats at post-secondary institutions. In 2011-2012 alone,

the budget provided over 150 child care spaces for post-secondary institutions. In total we have provided funding for 3,935 — that's quite a number — new child care spaces since 2007 and a promise to create 1,500 more. We have increased post-secondary child care by 80 per cent.

Daycare is very important to the growth of Saskatchewan. We have ever increasing numbers of two-income families. In order to make this work, we must have more high quality daycare. We now have 13,240 licensed child care spaces operating or in development in Saskatchewan. The NDP record on child care is best stated by the former queen of the left, Pat Atkinson. And I would quote from *Hansard*, March 29th, 2011. And I quote:

Saskatchewan has the poorest record when it comes to child daycare. And, Mr. Speaker, I take some responsibility for that because I was part of a government that did not put a lot of new resources into child . . . care.

Mr. Speaker, she also said on May 9th of 2011, and I quote, "More needs to be done, but the opposition agrees that we have come a long way because I agree that this has been a significant ramping up of child care." Mr. Speaker, when you consider who spoke these two quotes, is there any doubt left? Can anyone on that side make any negative comments on how we're handling child care?

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to do an overview of post-secondary education funding. It is very critical to our students and to our province's future. In order for them to facilitate this growth, we have put 3.5 billion for post-secondary education and skills training over the past five years. SIAST has received 143 million, a 21 per cent increase from 2007; U of R [University of Regina], 100.9 million, a 38 per cent increase over 2007; U of S [University of Saskatchewan], 304.5 million, a 46 per cent increase from 2007.

We promised in 2007 campaign to increase operating funding by 125 million over four years. We increased it by 274. Now that shows how much our government depends on our young people, the youth of Saskatchewan. That shows our commitment to their future. We've also made a huge investment of 378 million in post-secondary infrastructure over the past five years, including 112 million for the health science project, 24 million for student housing, and 118 million in combined provincial-federal through infrastructure programs.

The flip side of what the NDP did is from 1994 to 2007 . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member's time has expired. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Never were truer words spoken, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . that last speech. I guess I sort of join along with my colleague from Saskatoon Centre in terms of, you know, different motions that come forward in this House and the way that the Sask Party, you know, they can never resist blaming somebody else for certain circumstances, and they can never resist throwing themselves a self-congratulation parade, Mr. Speaker. The kind of back-patting over there I'm sure has got their massage therapists working overtime, the chiropractors, in terms of the way they must throw themselves out, Mr. Speaker, in terms of

all the back-patting that goes on.

But they want to congratulate themselves for making investments in education. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? It's the job of government. You're supposed to be there as a partner with the sector. And I guess the thing that I find kind of interesting in terms of the speech, a gain it's always I think another sort of hallmark of the way that the Sask Party does their business, you know. The gloss and the hype on the top end of it looks pretty good, but when you get down to where things are on the street, where things are in the communities, Mr. Speaker, there's a different story that emerges.

And again I'll tell you about a speech I'd like to be giving some day, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be giving a speech congratulating that government for completion of the North Central Shared Facility, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to be able to get up on my feet and say, you know, it was number two in the province-wide capital list in the summer of 2007, and you've seen the course and you've made this happen. And it's a valuable institution for the inner city of Regina, and it has triggered the revitalization of Scott Collegiate. And what we've gotten instead from the members opposite on this, and you know, again it's certainly not in keeping with the parade team that they're putting forward today in the motion, Mr. Speaker. What we've gotten instead from that government opposite, you know, we'll have a statue of Walter Scott before we have a revitalized Scott Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, a high school that was named for the premier of this province.

[11:45]

So you know, I'm as fond of a nice statue as much as the next person, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to the way that issues have been addressed on the ground, the way that it's playing out in reality, what we've seen in the case of the North Central Shared Facility I think is instructive when it comes to the way that this government has botched priorities or slow walked what should be a priority project for the city of Regina or indeed for southern Saskatchewan.

Scott Collegiate, I'd remind the speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's right in the middle of North Central, the youngest neighbourhood in the city of Regina. It's a city that has partnerships with entities like the Regina and region chamber of commerce. The member from Saskatoon Greystone referenced their good work. Well there's a school where there's a partnership with the Regina region, Mr. Speaker, where Paul Martin's foundation was brought in to help foster that interest in entrepreneurship, and there are good things like that taking place, Mr. Speaker. It's a very high percentage of First Nations and Métis students. And it should be an anchor institution for the community, and it should be supported much more aggressively, much more adequately than is the case.

But what we've seen instead was the health region and the Regina Public School Board in the earlier part of the last decade, Mr. Speaker, came forward with a proposal around the renewal of Scott Collegiate where they'd have a shared facility that incorporated the community, that incorporated the need for a new library space, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Albert library in the neighbourhood, that would incorporate space for the health region, Mr. Speaker, in terms of addressing different sort of

primary health care needs in the neighbourhood, which again, I know they don't like to talk about the social determinants of health or of population health strategy, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen how they acted when it came to Station 20 West. But again, Mr. Speaker, North Central Shared Facility was a joint project between the health region and the school board, and that was the spirit it was brought forward to the government in at that time.

We were also aided in those days, Mr. Speaker, by a vital inner-city community partnership in the city of Regina. So when it came to who was going to be doing what, well, Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina was able to come forward with funding to nail down their part in terms of the community centre. The library was able to forward the dollars to get that squared away, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Public School Board had made it a priority. And it again had moved to number two on the provincial capital list in the summer of 2007. In February of 2007, planning dollars had been forwarded in the amount of \$2 million for the project overall, and there was a significant health region component to the plan. And then the budget of 2009 came, Mr. Speaker, or pardon me, 2008. It was acknowledged as a priority by that government, and I was glad of that, Mr. Speaker, and I'm on record as saying so.

But what happened after that is that the project got scaled back. The efforts that been extended to the federal government to perhaps interest their federal cousins in the priority of this project, Mr. Speaker, in terms of how it relates to First Nations and Métis education needs in this province, Mr. Speaker, the efforts that were made on the part of those members opposite with their give-peace-a-chance strategy and looking forward to their federal cousins to make sure that priority projects like this were being supported in the manner they should be by those different levels of government, Mr. Speaker, those came up dry. And then they moved the health region in this last couple years, Mr. Speaker, right out of the equation altogether, and suddenly there's no more health support for the project.

And maybe there'll be an anticipation of that in some future date, but as it stands, Mr. Speaker, what we've got was a radically scaled back proposal, which again, they were able to make the education announcement before the election, Mr. Speaker, but we're not seeing the sod being turned, and we're not seeing those plans progress.

And I remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is five years on from when it was declared a priority for the people of Saskatchewan in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] capital list, which leads into another question, Mr. Speaker. The K to 12 capital list used to mean something in this province. And I guess it's not a surprise that when that government moved to take over the total levers of finance in terms of the education system, K to 12, Mr. Speaker, it shouldn't be a surprise that then they said, well you know, the kind of partnership we used to have around the K to 12 capital lists, we're going to start playing a lot of games with that. And the kind of games we see with the K to 12 capital list in terms of what is really a priority and what gets moved up and around and back again, Mr. Speaker, those games continue to this day.

And earlier in this week, Mr. Speaker, we saw that being commented on by the Provincial Auditor in terms of the kind of

manipulation of the province's books that is entailed in the way that the K to 12 capital is being handled by this government and what that means for the capacity of the school boards as they address local priorities.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this isn't the speech I'd like to be giving, but you know, if they don't make progress on the thing that they've said they're going to be addressing as a priority, what are you to do? And I guess all I can do, Mr. Speaker, is say that, you know, it doesn't square with the kind of self-congratulation that is entailed in this motion, let alone the kind of revisionist history they like to get into in the other side of the equation, Mr. Speaker. But again, one of the sure signs to know that something is not right with the picture, Mr. Speaker, is to see those members opposite throwing themselves a self-congratulatory parade because you know that the difference is not there in terms of the way it's being addressed on the ground.

You know, the resolution before us is about education. And the first entrant into the debate talked about post-secondary education, which is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because there's an entirely . . . There's a vital debate that need be had on that as well. But it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, again the kind of selective approach made by a member opposite, which of course that individual served as a member for Advanced Education, Mr. Speaker. And you know, the kind of rendering of the record that we're provided with in this House, I think the actual record speaks something very differently, Mr. Speaker. And it also has a bit more to say about why that member is off to do some other work on part of the government.

And I guess that leads me to another question, Mr. Speaker, in terms of First Nations on-reserve underfunding by the federal government. Again, in terms of the give-peace-a-chance strategy that was lauded by this government opposite, what difference has that made in terms of the terrible underfunding that goes on in terms of on-reserve funding for education, Mr. Speaker? There's a task force loose in the land, and I wish them luck, Mr. Speaker, but if they don't get that support from the federal government that again are the cousins and the fellow party members of the members opposite, if they don't get that support, we're going to have a vital part of the front in the province of Saskatchewan that goes wanting.

So again, for many reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't support this resolution, and I look forward to the question period.

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the House, and I'm happy to support the motion from the member from Saskatoon Greystone. I think it's a very good motion. I certainly have a certain interest in this area, K to 12 education. Being a teacher myself, I served in Regina public for 15 years as a substitute teacher, one of the toughest jobs maybe in the system, but certainly enjoyed that time no doubt, Mr. Speaker. Of course I'm a ratepayer in the government of the day, and also I have three boys that are in the separate system here in Regina. So like I said before, I'm very proud of our record when it comes to education in this

province.

You know, after inheriting a \$1.2 billion deficit from the members opposite, we've gone to work, Mr. Speaker. And just here in Regina I'd like to highlight a few capital projects that are on the go right now. One was just — I was at the opening of it, Mr. Speaker — was Douglas Park School, and it's a beautiful building. It was built right next to the old one. It's a silver LEED [leadership in energy and environmental design] certified building and it'll pay a lot of dividends in terms of energy efficiency, Mr. Speaker, over the years to the board. Arcola School. I drive home a lot that way. You can see it right on Arcola there by Park Street, Mr. Speaker. A beautiful new building, and that'll be officially opened in January. Excited to go to that.

Campbell Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest schools in our province. \$26 million went towards underpinning and working on the foundation, and certainly that's an important build. And there is a new fitness facility. I was talking to the teachers. They are excited to get into that. That was in the basement before, Mr. Speaker. They had to renew that.

Seven Stones School has been announced, Mr. Speaker. It'll replace Herchmer, Wascana School here in the north central area, Mr. Speaker. École St. Andrew renovation and addition and Monseigneur de Laval High School renovation. Again as the member opposite mentioned, the new Scott Collegiate, it's been announced, Mr. Speaker. We're looking forward to that. That is happening in north central.

And in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, Campus Regina Public is transitioning from Cochrane High School to CRP [Campus Regina Public]. Mr. Speaker, I've talked about this a little bit before. I'd like to mention how I was at the opening just recently and they're doing great work, the administration over there. It's a tough thing to transition from a traditional school to more of a trades school, which it's doing. And they're doing a great job over there. They're bringing in sort of a trades campus, as I'd call it, Mr. Speaker. And this year, this year they have the aesthetics, health sciences, social justice, video game design and applications, electrical trek school, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that's a good program and certainly more to come. They're looking to expand into plumbing, into welding, and into auto mechanics, those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker.

And that happens currently in the system, not at every school; some have lower populations. But what it allows us to do is there is significant capital put into that building, Mr. Speaker. I was in the aesthetics area. I didn't have enough hair to get something done, but it's a beautiful new place. And what that allows it to do is students that are serious and they want to try it out and want to maybe get into the trades, Mr. Speaker, they'll have state of the art equipment there. Not every school around the system can have auto equipment for example, diagnostics. That stuff's very expensive. But if they are serious about it, they can go over to Campus Regina Public. So that's an exciting area.

So in total, Mr. Speaker, just in the Regina area alone, 110 million, 110 million in capital spending plus 50 million towards maintenance projects, smaller maintenance projects. So 125 just in the Regina area alone since this government was first elected

in 2007 — 500 million in the total budget, Mr. Speaker.

Now I was listening to the member from Saskatoon Centre I believe it was, talking. And he was saying we haven't done anything; we're failing on all counts. But he mentioned two schools, he mentioned two schools in that part of his speech, one that we did build, one we built and one that was moved slightly down the list, Pleasant Hill School. Well if that's our biggest indictment, I'm pretty happy with that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at the operating side really quick, Mr. Speaker. It's increased in Regina here 6.5 per cent. And that's ahead of enrolment and inflation, Mr. Speaker. And for the first time I believe, and I'm pretty confident of this, there's been . . . recently the minister announced 6.6 million for interim funding, mid-year funding. Of course that never happened under the old government when we were losing students. I'll get to that in a second. But that's a promise. We are going to support growth. We did that just recently, Mr. Speaker.

I was at the North Central Family Centre recently again, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education announced a program for literacy, \$70,000 — \$450,000 provincially — for GED [general educational development] training, GED prep, computer skills, accelerated reading, in partnership with Sacred Heart School, and just to encourage a culture of reading and books and learning in that community, Mr. Speaker. So that's money well spent and part of that increase that we have given schools over the years, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I don't know if . . . The members mentioned self-congratulation. I don't know if I'd call it that. These are facts. And one way to compare is to look in fact to other provinces maybe, but to what we inherited and what the other members did. And I think that's pretty legitimate. And it's certainly not that pretty, Mr. Speaker. As the member from Batoche mentioned, they closed 176 schools, Mr. Speaker.

But I don't think . . . The real cost there, Mr. Speaker, was during their time, 16 years, we had enrolment decline of 30,000 students, Mr. Speaker — 30,000. That's the size of a city the size of Moose Jaw that we lost. That's our future. That's our future leaders. That's part of our future taxpayers, frankly, Mr. Speaker, and we lost those. That's almost a generation gutted under those members there, Mr. Speaker.

And I won't say that schools will never close under this government, but we've done what's called schools of opportunity, giving them a three-year sort of window to see if their enrolments will increase. And there's certainly a better chance of enrolment increases under this government with the increasing population, as compared to those. And nobody knew back then, Mr. Speaker, which schools would be closed. It was sort of an ad hoc approach, and it was certainly stressful on communities around the province.

The other area that we've really stepped up in is property tax. We finally did something with property taxes in the province, Mr. Speaker. After years of sort of half measures, ad hoc approaches, half-hearted promises, now we are dealing and we have dealt with that problem.

[12:00]

Before there was tax revolts. You know, we knew, Mr. Speaker, that those members over there raised taxes 17 times. But not included in that, Mr. Speaker, was yearly, property owners had to pay 5 per cent on average every year increases on their property, Mr. Speaker. And so, you know, we've changed that, you know. The school boards don't have to go to the property owners every time they need more money, Mr. Speaker. And so that was sort of a hidden tax — not hidden but it was every year 5 per cent went up, and that resulted in tax revolts, Mr. Speaker. Now I know that was the old government.

I know currently the opposition, they were worked up where they had a concern about using capital dollars, that we weren't going to use capital dollars for liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. They want liquor stores. Well this side, we want to spend out capital dollars building schools and building hospitals. And I think that's the way we want to go, Mr. Speaker.

Ratepayers now cover 35 per cent of the cost, down from 51 per cent under the NDP. You know, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to my cousins and friend that did move to Alberta over the years, when we discuss things, when it came to property taxes and I told them how much we paid — they hadn't seen my house before — they thought I must have lived in a mansion, Mr. Speaker. With the amount of tax I paid compared to what they paid and the square footage I had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No I don't live in a mansion, Mr. Speaker.

But I think to summarize, Mr. Speaker, we have a growing province. We're proud of that. We've increased enrolment finally in K to 12 education. Record investments, record investments in education as myself and my colleagues have mentioned. We're proud of our record. And certainly there's challenges to growth. The Premier mentioned that earlier in question period. There's challenge in growth, to be sure, but we're going to step up to the plate. And we certainly have — 500 million in capital dollars, Mr. Speaker.

But I think, I think even the members opposite would have to agree — they would have to agree — that what are we going to do with all these students? What are we going to do with them? The members opposite and on our side have mentioned before, we're facing pressures. That always has to be better, and I think they would admit it. That has to be better than what are we going to do with all these empty buildings, Mr. Speaker. What are we going to do with these buildings that aren't being used anymore? And that's a sad thing for a community, to have the doors boarded up, to have nothing going on, no learning, people leaving the province, Mr. Speaker.

We're proud of our record on this side of the House. We're proud to set aggressive goals in the growth plan, Mr. Speaker, aggressive targets in graduation rates for First Nations and all students, Mr. Speaker. And of course, we know the NDP never did that, Mr. Speaker. We're proud of our record on this side. More to do, but we're proud of what we've done.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to enter into this debate, and I have to admit that I chuckled when I read the resolution that was here. Because what we know on this side of

the House and I know that reporters know and that the people of Saskatchewan know, is when the Premier and the ministers and the members opposite start going and attacking 16 years of NDP government, that's a sign they have no answer for what the problems are right now.

And, Mr. Speaker, every time the Minister of Highways, former minister of Health, goes into this rant, we know that he doesn't know what the answer is to a specific problem that's happening now in 2012 and going forward in 2013. And this week was very telling, because the present Minister of Health normally will give a fairly reasoned response to the questions that are raised by our Health critic. But this week, wouldn't you know it, the Minister of Health got into a corner and so where does he go? He goes back to 16 years of something. And what we know is that that's a symbol of them not having an answer.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what's the issue for education today? Well frankly it's financing. I mean you end up looking around. The auditor just a couple of days ago raises big questions about the amounts of money that aren't showing up in the government's books because they're pushing them off onto the school boards. This is just a couple of days ago. And I'm quoting the auditor on education:

In October 2012, we became aware that the Ministry of Education had provided at least \$31 million in loan guarantees for capital projects to certain school divisions. For the year ended March 31, 2012, the Ministry of Education's and the Government's General Revenue Fund's expenses and liabilities were understated by at least \$31 million. During the next six months, we will be reviewing the substance of school division loans to determine if additional promises exist and if additional liabilities should be recorded. School division loans were \$74.5 million as of March 31, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is, not only are the books misleading, but they're misleading in an important area like the education of the public. And this relates to the issues of the K to 12 system, let alone the issues that we have in post-secondary, where the government has stopped the funding for the Health Sciences Building in Saskatoon and forced borrowing. We know that right this week, the board of governors at the U of S is grappling with the issue of how they finance the next phase of that project because the government has reneged on the plans that they gave them just a few short months ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, the issue for the education for the future of this province relates once again back to the books of the province and the concern that everybody has as it relates to those books. And unfortunately some of the members opposite learned a bit about how to govern when they were working with a government that put this province in very, very dire straits, and none of us ever wants to go to that place again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this week we learned about another issue whereby the government is borrowing money to assist in the building of a new stadium in Regina. And we're supportive of building a new stadium. I am happy to have season tickets for four of us for many years but, Mr. Speaker, when that money was borrowed, according to the minister the other night, they borrowed that money at government rates. What they've been

forcing the school boards to do and the universities to do is go and borrow at commercial rates, which are a little bit higher than what the government rates are. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't understand the priorities of this government. When you see this particular motion and you see the kinds of concerns that are here around the financing of our system, then we know that we've got a problem. And when you have a motion like this, there's no answer to the present problems.

What we have, and the school boards across the province, is very tight budgets and they are being told that there's not much flexibility as they move forward into planning for the new year. We know that right now the Treasury Board is working in the Ministry of Finance to prepare the budgets for next year. And frankly we're concerned that some of these tactics that they've used to get themselves through the financial jams that they've been over the last few years, they're going to expand. And that is bad news for teachers. It's bad news for children.

We know that previous moves by the Finance minister, who is a teacher himself, have effectively limited the use of teaching assistants within the education system in the province. And that has caused all kinds of problems. And we know that that Minister of Finance was very definitely saying, oh we're not going to do anything with that, and effectively pushed the decision over to the school boards and basically let them deal with that.

Now we're concerned that as the demands on the school system change, as it relates to the number of new citizens we have in the province — so we have English as an additional language training, that's important — those kinds of cost are over and above the ones that exist already. And when we get a motion like this, which basically we treat and I think the public treats as, we don't know what to do so we'll blame what's gone on before, then we all get very concerned.

Now why wouldn't the Premier tell his Finance minister that we're going to set a priority on where we borrow money at the government rate to make sure it's the cheapest in the system? And it seems to me that they might put the elementary school, or the high school, or the university ahead of a football stadium. But it doesn't appear that that priority is there. I don't understand it personally. I don't think the people of Saskatchewan understand that.

Now when interest rates are as low as they are, the difference isn't great. But what we know, as interest rates are adjusted — and we hope they don't move very much — but if they do start adjusting, then this can be a major concern for our educational system. So I suggest that might be one thing they put into their discussions in Finance, is let's set some priorities around how we borrow money. Let's not push money and hide it the way the auditor has identified here. Let's not mislead the public as it relates to the books of the people.

So when education of our children is the top priority, it shows up in all policies in the government. Unfortunately we're hearing some rhetoric, we're hearing the excuse line of blame back a few years. But we're not hearing about good, solid policy moving forward. And that is one of the questions that we've raised all fall, all last year, is what's the plan, Mr. Premier? What's the plan? Especially what's the plan for our

children and their education? And, Mr. Speaker, we think that there's a major problem because they've got words, but they don't have the financial plans to back it up. And if in fact the auditor comes forward and says, hey, what you're doing in your books isn't accurate, then we have further problems that'll be pushed back, you know, onto our children.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for debate has expired. Questions? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all proud of our growing population in Saskatchewan. But this government is failing to adequately support our classrooms and particularly the diversity of that growing population. Classroom size is growing. Resources have been cut. And specifically, English as an additional language supports are simply not adequate, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Greystone, we understand that not supporting English as an additional language, as this government is not supporting it, has impacts for all students. Why does he sit quietly by?

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

**Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I have a document entitled *Saskatchewan Education Enrolment Projections 2001-2002 to 2010-2011*. It was updated in June 2001.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite anticipated that at this time, in fact in around 2011, that there'd be about 140,000 students in Saskatchewan. And they planned accordingly, Mr. Speaker, allowing for much neglect across our educational system. In fact, Mr. Speaker, because of the population increase of more than 80,000 people over the course of the last five years, it's not 141,000 students. It's actually 165,000 students and growing. Those are their own projections, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member's time has expired. Next question. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government's provided the largest education property tax relief in this province's history. Contrary under the NDP, 51 per cent of the cost of education were dependent upon ratepayers with a disproportionate burden levied on agricultural lands. Provincial education property tax was increasing by nearly 5 per cent each year. The NDP knew this was a problem and they didn't do anything about it. In fact as my colleagues mentioned earlier, former NDP Premier Lorne Calvert stated at the 2003 SARM convention, "The status quo is not on." And yet nothing changed, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Saskatoon Centre, why did the NDP ignore the pleas of Saskatchewan ratepayers for 16 years in regard to property education tax relief?

[12:15]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate, and I also question how these guys can revise history. They know that we commissioned the Ray Boughen report, very instructive of how we should approach. They know that's not true. They know. And he should be embarrassed to stand up, he should be embarrassed to stand up and ask questions like that.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the issues that are facing students today — overcrowded classrooms, class size going through the roof. English as an additional language needs to be addressed, and bullying. And yet he keeps talking 2003. Why doesn't he talk about this year's issues?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd just like to reference, as our leader had made mention of, in terms of the funding that has been brought forward for the proposed stadium project in the city of Regina, there's \$100 million of that will be forwarded to the city of Regina using the Government of Saskatchewan's preferred interest rate.

My question is to the member from Regina Dewdney: should that practice not be extended to school divisions as well as they go forward, for capital expenditures?

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, we're happy we're in a growing province, Mr. Speaker. We know there's school pressures. We are building, Mr. Speaker: 500 million in capital investments, Mr. Speaker, a 217 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker; 31 major projects; 860 smaller projects, Mr. Speaker. We're funding our education system in record amounts, Mr. Speaker. More to do, Mr. Speaker, but we're on our way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government has increased child care spaces by nearly 4,000 since November 2007 with the promise to create 1,500 more. In the last five years of the NDP government they only created nineteen fifty spaces, most of which were developed with federal dollars.

Even a former member of the NDP agrees that they had the poorest record when it comes to child care. On March the 29th, 2011 Pat Atkinson stated, and I quote, "Saskatchewan has the poorest record when it comes to child care. And, Mr. Speaker, I take . . . [full] responsibility for that because I was part of that government . . ." Mr. Speaker, this question is for the member from Saskatoon Centre: do you agree with the Pat Atkinson statement that you had the poorest record of child care?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again, and who's

ever writing these questions for these people should really take a lesson in spin. And these people up here should do a little bit of work about who's been coming to this House.

We know today the issues that are happening in daycare. She gets up really smug, with a smile on her face, because of spaces. But what about the people who are working in these places? The recruitment to people to work in the daycare spaces, what about that? And the embarrassment, the embarrassment of subsidies that can be as low as 25 cents a month. And they've done nothing about that. So I ask the member over there, is she not feeling a little foolish asking this question when they have subsidies as low as 25 cents a month happening today in this province?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously a lot of interest, a lot of questions on this side of the House. I guess my question to the member from Saskatoon Greystone: having served in cabinet, having served through the Treasury Board process — they're going through Treasury Board right now, Mr. Speaker — are they getting this motion out of the way because Education is in fact going to get whacked in the budget to come?

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

**Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I reject, I reject the premise of that member's questions and commentary, Mr. Speaker. For example in post-secondary education, while we know there's more to do, our track record is rock solid — \$3.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. It's an all-time record, Mr. Speaker. And it's going to continue to see that kind of attention, Mr. Speaker, because we know we're placing a priority on the students of Saskatchewan. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, when the Saskatchewan Party formed government, we inherited a \$1.2 billion — billion — school infrastructure deficit. Since our government took over, 65 per cent of schools in Saskatchewan have received much needed upgrades and improvements. As a government, we have invested over 500 million in school capital over the first five years. This is a 217 per cent increase over the last five years of the NDP. In fact some of the money we allocated went to complete projects announced by the NDP in 2003.

To the member from Regina Elphinstone: why did the NDP government underfund education capital and allow schools where our province's children are educated to fall in such poor state of disrepair?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Well I'll give the member that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he sure can read a script with some zip. But I guess

my answer to the member's question is this: in terms of what they're talking about around deficits, it's always kind of interesting what the members talk about around deficits, because certainly when the NDP took over in 1991, they had a deficit deficit to deal with.

When those members took over in 2007, there was \$2 billion cash on hand that had been saved up in conjunction with the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So again, if the members opposite are so concerned about deficits, maybe they should cast their minds back a bit and think about the deficit deficit that they left the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, what's going to be on the topic of a few tables, in fact about 300 families this Christmas are going to be talking about what they're going to be doing about their housing because of a new policy by this government, this minister who's talking about selling off social housing in Saskatchewan and in our communities. And they're wondering where they're going to be moving to. And we know what's a good predictor in school success is stable communities.

So I'm asking the member from Regina Dewdney: what's he going to do when people phone him over the Christmas holidays and ask, what are you going to do about keeping me in my home so my kids can do better in school?

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I can tell by the member from Saskatoon Centre . . . During his speech he clearly didn't read the motion by the member. The member clearly didn't read the motion at all. His speech had nothing to do with it and that question had nothing to do with it, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I'll give the member from Regina Dewdney a few seconds to answer.

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're happy with what we've done in the school system, Mr. Speaker. We've funded it to record levels. We have increasing enrolment, Mr. Speaker. We have more work to do, but we're very happy with what we've done on this side of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for the 75-minute debate has expired.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 604

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Broten that **Bill No. 604** — *The Public Health*

*(Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm very honoured to rise today to speak to this motion and the proposed recommendation found in Bill 604 which is *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. Certainly this is a sober topic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one that might be a bit of a downer after the rather lively exchange that we've just witnessed here in the House. But certainly it's one that's important and I think one that merits a thorough discussion here in the legislature. And I want to bring a few points forward today in relation to this bill and of the motion that we brought forward to introduce this legislation.

Now this government has had fair number of weeks now to . . . opportunity to do the right thing and introduce a mandatory and comprehensive registry through legislation. And indeed we introduced a bill to that effect. And it's a very straightforward bill, and it's one that the government could have and we believe should've acted upon. This is not a partisan issue, Mr. Speaker. This is one that's of concern to people's health.

And I think a good reflection of how urgent and concerning this is, is a story that came out actually yesterday in Manitoba. And what's happened is that there's a school on a First Nation in Manitoba, and it's the Berens River First Nation. And they actually closed their school on Monday about safety concerns. What happened, Mr. Speaker, is that a worker in the school found 25 bags of asbestos stored in a crawl space in the school. Now your first question . . . mine was, well how did the asbestos get there and why was it there?

Well what happened is that two years ago in 2010, there was some work that was done in the school, and what happened is that there was air quality tests done in 2010. They had hired a qualified company to remove and contain the asbestos. And so what happened is that when they captured the asbestos in 2010, they actually stuck it in the crawl space of the school to be temporarily, "temporarily" stored, and it looks like it got forgotten about.

Now this is the kind of example I think, Mr. Speaker, where a mandatory and compulsory registry would have kept track of this asbestos and would have reminded the people and the powers that be that it was still there in the school, that the remediation was not complete, and that there was still a threat to the students and to the children in the school.

And right now the school is closed. It was closed on Tuesday, and it was unsafe for the children to be there. And they've been going to school there for two years with this asbestos stored in the crawl space unbeknownst to everyone. So it's quite scary. And indeed the chief of the First Nation, George Kemp, he said that it's scary and people, you know, people are worried about this because of the illnesses that have been happening in other schools.

There was a number of asbestos-related deaths in Poplar River



which is another First Nations community just north of Berens River. And certainly, you know, the Frontier School Division is one I'm familiar with a little bit because of some work that's being done on the music side of things there through a very popular and successful fiddle program which . . . You know, these are remote communities with little access to what we often take for granted, Mr. Speaker, and if they're not being looked after properly, this is exactly why the call has been made for a registry that is mandatory and comprehensive.

I guess before I go into some of the other work that's been done in this area, I would like to take this opportunity, and it is indeed an honour to be able to stand here in the legislature and just talk a little bit about Howard Willems who was the man who really brought this issue to the forefront recently in Saskatchewan. And he worked on it since 2004 or sooner but officially began his work in this area in 2004. Howard was one of my constituents, and I got to know him well through his work in social causes. He was certainly a proud member of the labour movement, and it was through that movement that a lot of the attention to asbestos has been brought to the forefront because it deals with workers' rights and workers' health. And often these issues aren't brought forward by administrators or managers or bureaucrats, Mr. Speaker. It's the people that are living with the threat that have to bring it forward. And we've seen that time and time again.

Howard was definitely a community man, and he and his wife, Brenda, had all kinds of causes that they worked for. They would do a bikeathon every spring and ride out to the berry farm and raise money for different causes every year. The idea was to give back to your community. And both Howard and Brenda, his wife Brenda, are wonderful examples of that community action at work at the local level. They were both very involved in their workplace and looking after their fellow workers and workers across Canada as part of a national agency. The Public Service Alliance of Canada was the union that they were involved in.

And I want to take a moment to sort of honour Howard and his memory. He passed away last month. And it was obvious at his funeral services that he was a man who was very well-respected, not only in the labour movement but through his church, and that he was a man who was very involved in his church, had a deep and abiding faith and always carried that with him right up until the end when he passed away. And it motivated him and it sustained him, Mr. Speaker.

And so the fact that the family is continuing this call upon this government to salvage a registry that's required and mandatory and that they are encouraging this government to do that and name it in Howard's memory, Howard Willems will live on through his work and through his family. But if this was something that he could be honoured with, it would certainly be something I think the family would be very appreciative of.

[12:30]

Certainly the work is continuing. I just want to talk for a few minutes about the organization that Howard and another fellow named Bob Sass started several years ago. It's called SADAQ, and that's the Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. And Bob Sass and Howard Willems began this

organization, and currently Howard's wife, his widow, Brenda Baergen, is continuing on with the registry or with the organization.

And Bob Sass is one who knows what he's talking about. He was involved in labour studies and industrial relations for many, many years. He was working with occupational health and safety, and he was even an associate deputy minister of Labour back in the Blakeney years, Mr. Speaker, and then he worked on asbestos files since the mid-1970s. So obviously Bob knows his work and what he's up to.

He was the one who introduced asbestos regulations in Saskatchewan under our *Occupational Health and Safety Act* back in 1977, to make some changes then. And as we know, Mr. Speaker, asbestos was seen for many, many decades actually as a miracle material. It was thought to be a wonderful thing to use for building, and there's even a town called Asbestos in Quebec. And this was an industry that employed several hundred if not thousands of people without anyone knowing the deadly effect of asbestos fibres in building materials and in buildings.

So again we see the foibles, I guess, of human nature where we think we've stumbled on something that's wonderful and great only to find out decades later that it's actually quite poisonous and dangerous. And the studies show that actually asbestos becomes more and more dangerous as it deteriorates, and it becomes more likely to cause damage to human health and any kind of animal health.

At any rate, Bob Sass has been working on this furthering the issue of asbestos and health concerns with that throughout his career and his life. And through the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, they worked up a ban asbestos campaign, and then this work evolved to the new organization in 2010. So SADAQ is the driving force behind this. I'm pretty sure the ministry of Labour has met with them or the minister of occupational health and safety and is aware of the work that they're doing.

Again, it's non-partisan work. It's work that's intended to help workers be healthy. And that's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is the health of the workers, the people that do the kind of things that expose them to asbestos in the workplace, and of course beyond that is to other people that are vulnerable to asbestos-related issues. And often the asbestos is found in institutions where we have vulnerable people like seniors, like children, and schools, and care homes. And we've seen examples in our own media of where asbestos scares have happened and the importance of having a mandatory and comprehensive registry with all the information that's available to enhance the safety of workers.

So that's really the main goal of this bill, and again I say it's a very non-partisan thing. We've seen what happens when these two sides of the House co-operate. And it's certainly something that could move forward a very important issue and one that is very important to not just the Willems family and the memory of Howard Willems but to many hundreds of people in Saskatchewan who are working in these types of places.

So SADAQ was busy doing the work. Howard himself was the other co-founder of the organization, and again SADAQ is the

Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. Howard worked for the Government of Canada as an inspector, so he took his work very seriously, and indeed his wife worked in that area as well. And I've got to know a few of the people from Canadian Food Inspection Agency. These are public servants who believe it is an honour to work in the service of the public, Mr. Speaker. And I will speak again and again in this House about the importance of the public service. And they are quietly and steadily looking after people's rights, workers' rights, health care issues, all the ministries' employees. All the people that are in the employ of ministries are out there making sure that our province and our country is a better place for us to be in.

And Howard was one of those committed employees with the Government of Canada. He was also involved in the health issues and worked in local occupational health and safety committees. He was a member of a national health and safety committee for several years. And, unfortunately, in 2010 he was diagnosed with mesothelioma which, as people know, is an asbestos-related cancer of the lungs. Howard underwent treatment starting right away in November of 2010. But even the last time I saw Howard, was in my constituency office in October, he was not able to walk anymore and, you know, had to have actually one lung removed at one point during his treatment. But he still was fighting the fight, Mr. Speaker, and that's something that came through loud and clear at his funeral services as well.

Howard never gave up. He was always chasing the storm and making sure that his voice was heard as long as he could possibly make it be heard. And indeed I think his voice is still being heard through the work that he did.

So at any rate, I think it's not something that's difficult. We heard from my colleague from Saskatoon Massey Place that this is a very straightforward process. It's not one that's difficult and certainly would be one that would encourage people because we know that mandatory requirements often see a better compliance rate than those that aren't, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the government indicated some of the concerns they had, and one of them that the minister indicated was that his fears that a registry would give people a false sense of security. And I'm not sure that that's a valid fear at this point, Mr. Speaker, because I think we could find a number of examples where registries were created and people understand that we're not aware of all the asbestos that was used. It's been in building construction for decades and decades. But where the knowledge is there, people should be required to disclose. And it's much like when you buy a house, Mr. Speaker. When you buy a house from another individual, they are obligated to disclose any knowledge they have of environmental issues or structural issues with that building. And so knowing that you have to will ensure that people are more likely to comply than not being required to and that it's okay to not speak out when they know of issues when they're selling their home.

So I think that, you know, the minister could take another look at this and perhaps think about a way to deal with the worry that he has. This is not an overwhelming concern I think that should prohibit him from stopping and looking at the proposal. As my colleague from Saskatoon Massey Place has indicated, what is

important to Saskatchewan workers and patients and families and students and seniors is that they deserve this registry that is made mandatory through legislation. That's indeed what was proposed here in this legislature. And the registry in that case would be much more comprehensive because making it mandatory would ensure that it's more comprehensive. It's a simple formula. And I think the minister would be very pleased to find out that if it did become mandatory, the number of buildings on the non-mandatory list that exists now would grow and would become much more comprehensive and therefore improve the opportunity for safety for people that are working in these buildings or living in these buildings.

Even Howard's stepson has also echoed those comments, and he has said to the press that the most important thing is they approve what the government has done to date but say it's not enough. And his quote in the press was, "We need to have a mandatory program where all health regions and school districts have to submit information." So this is going beyond government buildings. I think he called them semi-government. Maybe quasi-government might be a better term, Mr. Speaker, but this would extend to all of those government-type agencies as well or municipal governments. There's no reason to limit it to the information that the government currently has.

I would suggest that the information is out there. People are able to determine whether asbestos is located in the building that they're working in or living in or going to school in and that it would just encourage people to take this seriously. If it becomes mandatory through law, this is something that people will take seriously and will comply with. We know that they're likely to comply.

We know that asbestos has been used extensively in construction in Saskatchewan, and it wouldn't take long for us to ensure that the knowledge that is available and out there is recorded and recorded appropriately. Certainly asbestos has been, like I said earlier, an industry that was touted as a great thing. And it's taken a long time for these sicknesses and illnesses to help us realize the dangers associated with asbestos.

And some of the things I'd like to raise just today is a couple more notes about asbestos and its effect on . . . or what the World Health Organization has said about asbestos. And one of the things that was pointed out earlier was what's on the Health Canada website, and it talks about how asbestos can innocently become part of . . . or you can breathe it in, and some of the guidelines for workers and obviously anybody dealing with these kinds of materials. It says that:

Construction and maintenance workers should avoid creating asbestos dust from scraping, brushing, rubbing or cutting damaged insulation. Insulation damage should be reported to the appropriate authority, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Manager. If you work in this area, determine whether asbestos is present before beginning work and take appropriate precautionary measures.

And then it goes on to say that "Public and commercial building owners should keep an inventory of asbestos-containing materials to inform users, authorities and contractors." So this is also a voluntary process that's recommended by Health Canada.

And I think from SADEO's point of view and certainly from our point of view, Mr. Speaker, that's a good start, but it's not enough. We need to move forward into the mandatory requirements that are being recommended.

An article from *Maclean's* in August, or sorry, in 2012 — I'm trying to get the exact date of this article — September 14th, 2012 is reporting on Canada finally stopped fighting international efforts to list asbestos as a dangerous substance. So I think it's kind of alarming that even as late as September of this year, our federal government was fighting against the listing of asbestos as a dangerous substance. And it's beyond me to understand why that is something that was an issue for our federal government because the science is pretty overwhelmingly clear on the effects of this material to human health.

But I think what the *Maclean's* story points out to us, that it was industry pressure that has always led governments to resist the growing evidence of the health and science of asbestos to restrict its development and perhaps even shut down the mining of it. But indeed the knowledge is out there, and the asbestos industry is now on the verge of extinction. And unfortunately that has had an impact on communities, particularly in Quebec where most of our asbestos has been mined from.

And so there's people without jobs and certainly living in uncertainty, but the idea is that that being the justification for not agreeing and fighting against international efforts to have it declared a dangerous substance just doesn't seem to add up. And I think the federal government finally realized that they couldn't resist the complaints anymore and had to go along with what was obvious, the obvious appropriate thing to do.

Obviously asbestos profitability is no longer there, but health experts and human rights advocates have frequently and continuously voiced concerns about this substance. So I guess here's a stat that really evidences the seriousness of asbestos. The World Health Organization estimates that 107,000 people die globally each year from asbestos-related diseases. So that's kind of like half the people in Saskatoon would die every year, or that many people are dying every year from asbestos-related diseases. And the sad thing about this is it takes many, many years for the disease to show up.

So in Howard's case, as a federal public servant he was working for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and his job was to inspect plants, various food plants. And he was there when they were doing repairs because they were usually in the shutdown mode, and that's when he was exposed to the asbestos fibres that eventually took his life.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, the choice is obvious for this government. I don't understand totally the minister's logic when he says, you know, it would cause uncertainty or there's fears that people would become complacent if this registry was mandatory. I really fail to understand the logic that he's following there, and I'm not sure it's sustainable logic. I think that again this is not a partisan issue. This is about human health and the need to act now and not delay again more years because it's taken so long for us to get the proper awareness and attention to this deadly and devastating substance.

[12:45]

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I think I would be prepared to wind up my comments on this issue. And I certainly have appreciated the opportunity to rise today in the legislature and provide these comments and certainly to give my own tribute to the man who was Howard Willems. He was a prime example I think of what we look for in our communities. He was a community supporter. He supported his co-workers, and he worked very, very, very hard to make the world a better place.

So in honour of Howard, I thank the Assembly for the opportunity to provide these words today. And I will move to adjourn debate on this motion.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 604, *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until Monday, March 4th, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. pursuant to rule 3(1).

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:47.]

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