



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

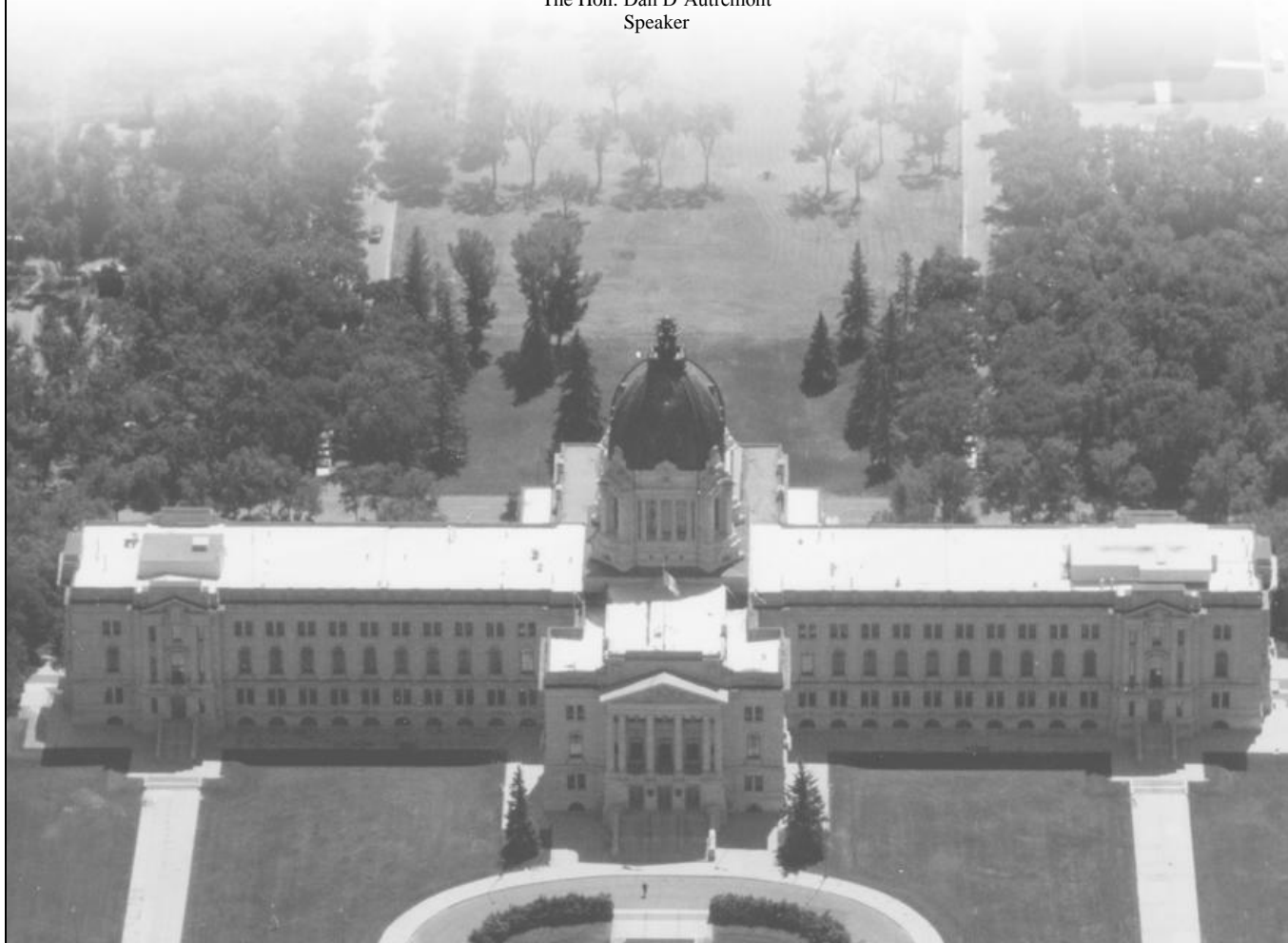
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
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, Hon. 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 Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would request leave for an extended introduction, please.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to colleagues.

There are a number of individuals, Mr. Speaker, who are here today to witness the debate around Bill No. 604, Mr. Speaker, the asbestos right-to-know Act. I'd like to introduce these individuals who are seated in your gallery.

We have Jesse Todd who is Howard Willems's stepson and Chair of the Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, or SADAO. We have Brenda Baergen, Howard's wife, also with SADAO; Marianne Hladun, regional executive vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada; Donna Pasiechnik of the Canadian Cancer Society; Jennifer Miller of the Lung Association of Saskatchewan; Lori Johb, representing the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour; Fabian Murphy, first vice-president, Agriculture Union, Public Service Alliance of Canada; Cathy Murphy who is a psychological health and safety expert; Sonny Rioux of the United Steelworkers District 3; Terry Parker, business manager of the Saskatchewan Building Trades; also Chuck Rudder with the Building Trades; Bryan Glazer, president of CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] Locals 892 and 890; Don Boucher, administrative vice-president for western region CEP; Gary Schoenfeldt, vice-president of CEP area council; Clayton Burkholder, recording secretary of CEP, Local 892; Maureen Eckstein with the Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees; Corey Liebrecht of the United Steelworkers; as well as Rob Desnomie of the United Steelworkers.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have been watching the debate in the province around the issue of asbestos and this legislation for some time and they're here to lend their support today. I should also add, Mr. Speaker, that they gave to me a petition which was not an order for the Assembly but a petition that calls for the support of this asbestos right-to-know legislation via the Canadian Cancer Society, SADAO, the Lung Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association, with over 1,100 signatures as of this morning, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd like the Assembly to welcome all of these guests to the

legislature today, please.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister . . . Oh sorry. Carry on.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just a couple of other introductions. In the front row of the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Benji Noon and Meagan Noon who are from Thunderchild First Nation but live here in Regina, good friends, and follow politics closely in this province, and it's great to see them here in the Assembly.

And also guests that I'm very happy who are here today, my wife, Ruth Eliason, on the top bench with our daughter, Ingrid. So thank you for being here today.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests, please.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the guests to the gallery today. We're pleased that these people are here. I'd especially like to recognize Jesse Todd and Brenda Baergen, as well as Donna Pasiechnik from the Canadian Cancer Society and Jennifer Miller from the Lung Association of Saskatchewan. I'm also pleased to see that a number of members of various labour groups are here today as well in support of this significant initiative.

Jesse and Brenda are family members of the late Howard Willems, and they are here today to witness a vote later on Bill 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. They have carried on the advocacy work that Howard did in regard to the creation of a mandatory asbestos registry. Last year we created a voluntary asbestos registry, the first of its kind in Canada. We want to thank all of the organizations that have submitted information thus far.

Last year Bill 604 was introduced by the members opposite. I asked my officials to look at the merits of this and to see if there is something else that we should consider. After giving it careful consideration, we feel that there are some very positive aspects of this bill, and therefore government members will be supporting it. Later today we will be supporting the bill on second reading and looking forward to it going to committee. In committee we will have discussion with the members opposite regarding various amendments. We will of course be supporting

the positive and the mandatory aspects of what we were looking for, amendments that will particularize the type of information that will be provided and requiring the information to be held on site as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to be moving forward with this, and I want to thank Jesse, Brenda, and all of the people that they have done to carry on the good work that Howard has done in regard to raising awareness about asbestos. On Monday I, along with the Minister of Health, was happy to attend an award ceremony where Howard Willems was given a posthumous award by the Canadian Cancer Society with regard to his work with regard to the workplace and health hazards of asbestos.

I want to ask all members to join in welcoming them to their Assembly, as well as the other members that are here in the gallery, and thank all of them for the good work that they have done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery I would like to introduce three individuals. We are joined today by Dr. Josef Hormes. He's the executive director of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. He has more than 200 scientific publications, more than seven patents, has spent his career in Germany and the United Kingdom and Sweden and the United States, and we're delighted to have him play a key leadership role at the Canadian Light Source synchrotron.

Accompanying Dr. Hormes is Dr. Jeff Cutler, another example of brain gain here within Saskatchewan. He is very well-known for having hosted Prince Philip as part of the royal tour of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. He's the director of industrial science at the Canadian Light Source synchrotron and also the deputy director. And a gentleman joining them, who needs little introduction in this house, Doug Richardson.

When we think about the role of Doug Richardson and the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, we can think of Dean Acheson's memoirs. He's the former secretary of state in the United States, and his memoirs were entitled *Present at the Creation*. And Doug Richardson played an absolutely essential and instrumental role in making sure the Canadian Light Source synchrotron was not put at the University of Western Ontario in London where the smart money said it was going, that it came to our fine and fair province.

We know the importance of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, Mr. Speaker, for its work in nuclear medicine, for its work in helping to facilitate success in the uranium sector, food security, water security, and also better understanding — importantly, as we know Commander Hadfield is up in the stars and looking at a better understanding of our universe — because the CLS [Canadian Light Source] is also working on satellite and advanced materials for spacecraft development. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join our three esteemed guests.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Drs. Hormes, Cutler, and Mr. Doug Richardson to their Legislative Assembly. Certainly the Canadian Light Source synchrotron is something of which all people in Saskatchewan are very proud — the largest science project once upon a time in Canada, doing such great work in research and innovation and really adding to that, adding to value on so many fronts here in Saskatchewan. So keep up the great work. Thank you for the work that you've done and the work that is yet to be done.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome good friends, not just to myself, but to the Assembly generally. I'm speaking of course of Debbie McKenzie-Pelletier. She's here with her granddaughter. She's in good Deb fashion. I'm now going to get it after question period, Mr. Speaker. But as all would know, the Legislative Assembly can be quite like a big extended family here, and Deb is, was, and she'll always be a really valued member of this family.

And Mr. Speaker saw wisely to bestow the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal upon Deb, and for that so many of us were proud of the great work that Deb does and glad to see that recognition.

So beyond all that, Mr. Speaker, she's also a great friend and neighbour in the mighty community of north central Regina. So it's really good to see Deb McKenzie-Pelletier here in her Legislative Assembly here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to introduce a group of officials from the great community of Pinehouse. They're in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. We have Mayor Mike Natomagan. We have Deputy Mayor Conrad Misponas, and we have councillor Greg Ross. And along with them we also have a couple of board members from the Métis local. We have Dominic Tinker and Alex Ross.

Mr. Speaker, they're in the gallery today to watch the proceedings, and they've been meeting with a number of my colleagues on various issues. I had a chance to chat with them this morning. I'm hoping to have an opportunity to chat with them a little bit later today. Mr. Speaker, they're doing very good work up in Pinehouse. I've known Mike for a number of years now and certainly would like to commend all the good work that him and his officials are doing. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, it's my privilege today to introduce the first school group that's come here from my constituency, The Battlefords. And they are a great group of 13 grade 8 students from the St. Vital School in Battleford. And I would like to introduce as well their teachers, Mr. Cawood, Mrs. Arbeau, and Mrs. Caswell, and also a parent, Mark Baier. Met with these

students this morning for the first time and had a very good exchange with them. And I did find out one point that I understand Mr. Cawood is still the three-time undisputed champion of laser tag, and he's going to carry that championship through till next year.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to join the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister Responsible for Labour and introduce a special friend of mine in your gallery. Mr. Clayton Burkholder is here with the group. Clayton and I go back probably three decades or so — fellow gearhead, fellow Chevy enthusiast. So I just want to welcome my friend Clayton to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in the welcoming of the Pinehouse guests, Mr. Speaker. No question that having the mayor here today is a really important and also of course his support team. Joining Mayor Mike is of course Greg Ross, Dominic Tinker, and Conrad Misponas.

I think it all really important to note that it's great to see Greg bring his son here, Alex. But for the record, when Alex gets home, the reason why he's a good-looking man is because of his mother. So make sure he hugs his mom and hugs his mom lots. And of course his mother's name is Shirley.

But all joking aside, I just want to say that I certainly concur that the community of Pinehouse is at an exciting time, and I want to commend the local leadership that is here today and to basically tell them in Cree:

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

So the translation is, I'm very, very happy that they're here today and to not be afraid of the Assembly because this Assembly belongs to the people of Pinehouse and the entire people of the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join the member opposite in welcoming Debbie McKenzie-Pelletier and her great-granddaughter Mia to this Assembly. Debbie retired last year, in August I believe, after serving this legislature with Government Services for 29 years. So she is certainly no stranger to this Assembly. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming Debbie.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome all of our guests to the Assembly and to remind our guests not to participate in events on the floor, and that includes applause. Thank you.

[10:15]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today to present a petition in reference to cellphone coverage. And the petition reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To 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 of course Birch Narrows First Nations and the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

Mr. Speaker, and the most impressive thing about this petition, Mr. Speaker, is it's being signed by people from all throughout Saskatchewan. And the people that have signed the petition here, Mr. Speaker, are from Moose Jaw; they're from Weyburn. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

And we know since the Act was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interests of due diligence. And we know that there's no labour relations crisis to fix and no necessity to rush this omnibus bill through that'll likely govern workplace relations for decades to come. And this bill runs the risk of throwing into turmoil the stable labour relations that we have. Thousands of represented workers stand to lose their rights to bargain collectively and be represented by the union of their choice.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, in this current session before the end of May and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Saskatoon and Prince Albert. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Pope Francis I

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a momentous day

for the over 300,000 Catholics here in our province and the 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide with the celebration of the papacy of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the 266th pope in the Catholic Church's history. On behalf of the official opposition, it is my sincere pleasure to rise this morning to extend warm wishes to His Holiness Pope Francis I as he ascends to the Chair of St. Peter and commences his papacy.

I'm confident that the new pope's reputation as a humble man, who uses public transit and cooks his own meals, and most importantly as someone who is a strong advocate for the poor, will serve his church and our world well. Mr. Speaker, we know that so many Catholics both here in Saskatchewan and throughout the world are similarly devoted to living out their faith by acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly. Our province is grateful for those lives of sacrifice and devotion to building a better world.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the Assembly join with me in congratulating Pope Francis and extending warm regards to all Saskatchewan Catholics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I too feel blessed with the opportunity to rise in the Assembly today in recognition of the newly elected pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who's the former archbishop of Buenos Aires, made history by being elected the first pope of the Americas, the first Jesuit, and the first non-European pope in more than 1,000 years. He's now known as Pope Francis, the name in honour of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment, who dedicated his life in helping the poor.

Mr. Speaker, Pope Francis is known for his humility, including living in a small apartment instead of a large church residence and riding the bus to work instead of using the chauffeured limousine. Pope Francis is now the 260th pontiff in the 2,000-year history of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Francis is now the leader of the world's estimated 1.1 billion Catholics, and in that I wish him strength and success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this Assembly to recognize Pope Francis, the new leader of the Roman Catholic Church, and in joining me in wishing him faith, courage, and vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Student at Centre of Idle No More Movement

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this week is Aboriginal Achievement Week at the University of Saskatchewan, a perfect time to recognize the work of a young, active U of S [University of Saskatchewan] student and constituent of Saskatoon Centre, Erica Lee, who has been at the centre of the Idle No More movement.

Erica is the cultural coordinator for the Indigenous Students' Council, a well-established group on campus; has been running the Idle No More Saskatoon Facebook page. This is the hub where people from around the world go to find help organizing rallies, sharing stories, and supporting the cause. Lee has helped organize events here in Saskatoon, across California, and many other places.

Mr. Speaker, Erica Lee was at the first Idle No More event before it was Idle No More. She spoke at the event — I was also able to attend, along with my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana — at Station 20 West last November. She got involved through her former teacher and friend, Sheelah McLean, one of the co-founders of the movement. As written in a *StarPhoenix* article featuring Erica Lee, and I quote:

As a political studies and philosophy major at the U of S, Lee is living what she studies. She says her school work hasn't suffered despite immersing herself at the very root of the national grassroots movement. Lee, who is the first person in her family to finish high school, refuses to let her grades slip.

Lee said, "It's important for me to finish my degree and get into a position of power."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the hard work and passion Erica Lee has put into making this world a better place, and I hope to see her sometime in the near future in a position of power. Thank you.

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

University of Regina Hosts Women's Basketball Championships

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All eyes will be on the University of Regina campus this weekend as they host the CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] women's basketball championships. I wish to welcome all the visiting student athletes from across the country to this great province. Competing in this championship are the University of Regina Cougars who won the Canada West conference title on March 2nd to qualify for this weekend's national championship.

Mr. Speaker, the U of R [University of Regina] Cougars had a record of 19 wins and 3 losses. They rank third in Canada and are one of eight teams to have qualified for this national title. And I'd like to extend my best wishes to them this weekend as they play as the host team. The tournament kicks off tomorrow night when the Cougars play the McGill Redmen.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in expressing our thanks to the coaches, tournament organizers, and volunteers who'll be working hard this weekend at the CIS championships. Please join me in expressing our support for the U of R Cougars and their quest for their second women's basketball national championship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Huskies Host University Hockey Championship

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to rise today to recognize the PotashCorp CIS Men's Hockey University Cup which begins today and wraps up on Sunday. This national championship is being held in Saskatoon where the University of Saskatchewan Huskies will be the host team.

Mr. Speaker, the Huskies will compete with five other teams for the 51st University Cup and will make their province proud. Also playing in the tournament are teams from the University of Alberta, University of Northern BC [British Columbia], Université du Québec, Saint Mary's University, and University of Waterloo.

PotashCorp was generously named as the title sponsor for this year's championship, as well as next year's championship which will again be hosted by the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. Mr. Speaker, this tournament will put the men's hockey spotlight on our province, on the city of Saskatoon, and on the Huskies. For that I wish to thank the PotashCorp University Cup host committee for all their hard work and dedication in putting this championship together in our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Assembly join in me in wishing the Huskies the best of luck at the 2013 PotashCorp University Cup. Go Huskies.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize that March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. In 2012 colorectal cancer was the second most diagnosed form of cancer in both men and women, yet it is 90 per cent preventable and easily treatable if detected early.

Our government works to prevent colorectal cancer or find it in its early stages. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, working along with our health regions and the Saskatchewan Disease Control Lab, recently extended its colorectal cancer screening program to the whole province. Saskatchewan men and women from 50 to 74 years of age are contacted every two years with an easy-to-use test kit that helps detect blood in the stool that is invisible to the eye.

Mr. Speaker, more than 70 per cent of people with abnormal test results are found to have colorectal cancer or precancerous growths. This program saves lives by identifying colorectal cancer long before there are any symptoms present. Our government has committed to maintain this program at the Cancer Agency at an annual cost of about \$3.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that all members of this Assembly acknowledge the good work of the organizations running this screening program for the work that they do to prevent this disease and improve the quality of life for the people of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

First Impression

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, they say you never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's really too bad for the Leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party] because his first week was terrible.

First he came out in support of Dwain Lingenfelter's plan to cut a special deal with First Nations on resource revenue, an idea that was soundly rejected in the last provincial election. Then when asked by supporters, he said he couldn't find one single thing in Lingenfelter's disastrous election platform that he would change — not one thing.

Then he won't tell Saskatchewan people where he stands on Keystone XL because he wanted to wait for the National Energy Board to approve the project, which they already did three years ago. Yesterday he finally said he supports Keystone, even though that's not what he said on Tuesday and even though that's what he voted against, Keystone XL, back on May 3rd. Mr. Speaker, that's quite a first week — one misstep after another.

You know, some people are saying it's not fair to compare the new NDP leader with the old NDP leader, Dwain Lingenfelter. I actually agree, Mr. Speaker. It is unfair. Dwain Lingenfelter never had that bad of a week.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Asbestos Registry Legislation

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier on in the introductions this morning, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour said that they would be supporting legislation, the private members' bill on Howard's law or the asbestos right-to-know Act.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate these steps. I commend the Sask Party for doing this. The initial steps of a voluntary registry did not go far enough, so I'm pleased that we're moving with progress on this legislation. A central driving force behind this legislation was Howard Willems who passed away just months ago, Mr. Speaker. And as covered in introductions this morning, there are family members and many friends and co-workers of Howard here in the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. He was a champion for better occupational health and safety, and his friends have carried on his work.

My question to the minister: in honour of Howard's work, will the Sask Party government agree in the committee stage to change the name of the bill to Howard's law?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. I think all members want to recognize the contribution of Howard Willems and offer our sincere sympathies to his family who are here today. What we have before us, Mr. Speaker, is a bill that amends *The Public Health Act* and we

would not want to be able to change the name of *The Public Health Act*. But I think it would probably be appropriate while in committee to have some kind of discussion about how we might want to better memorialize or recognize Howard Willems in some permanent way, but we were not in a position to amend the name of *The Public Health Act*. But we certainly have other options, and it's something to discuss at committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're pleased that this bill will be moving now to the committee stage. It's a very important bill. It's a Canadian first, and the opposition wants to deal with this in a very quick manner — a thorough manner but a quick manner — and not have a delay.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Deputy Premier: this is an important piece of legislation, and we've seen legislation go to committee before, Mr. Speaker, where it is stalled, where there has been delay tactics, where the legislation has been slow-walked by government members. My question to the Deputy Premier: do we have his clear commitment today, his word today, the Sask Party government will not use delay tactics, will not stall this legislation, but they will deal with this legislation in the committee process in a quick and efficient manner?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm to the Leader of the Opposition this legislation will move forward in an expeditious fashion.

[10:30]

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

Mr. Broten: — I thank the Government House Leader for that clear answer with respect to their willingness to have this go in a quick manner.

In the minister's earlier remarks talking about possible amendments that may occur at the committee stage, he brought up the prospect of strengthening the legislation. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that any amendment that is brought forward would in fact strengthen the legislation. Could the minister please provide a bit more detail about the types of amendments that will be coming forward at the committee stage on this piece of legislation?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question and, Mr. Speaker, I can advise the type of thing that we would want to be having discussion about would be the nature and type of information that we would be provided at on the registry.

We saw during the voluntary phase of this registration process that the level of information, level of detail varied greatly from the different providers that were there. Some provided a minimal amount of information; some of the entities had a great

deal of depth and detail. So I think it would be appropriate for us to have some discussion at a committee level, provide the information that the officials have gathered together as to the type of things that should be there.

We also would want to include a provision that the information be kept on site so that if somebody didn't have access to a computer, didn't think of it, or whatever, was working on the site, that they knew that a certain portion of a building would have asbestos or may have had asbestos in it. So we want to give people the opportunity to understand and know; to simply have a registry that isn't accessed isn't beneficial. But we want to make sure we have good detail, and the amendments would support the purpose of the bill.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we look at amendments at the committee stage, it's important that we have a proper discussion and we look thoroughly at the issues that government is bringing forward through amendments. Part of that is using the officials, yes, but part of that also, Mr. Speaker, I think, is hearing from experts within society — many of whom are here in the Speaker's gallery today, who have been working on this, who have information and have views that they want to share.

As we go into the committee stage now, Mr. Speaker, it's the opposition's willingness to have these individuals involved in the committee process in some way through providing information, by providing, Mr. Speaker, testimony if necessary. I know that is the desire of SADAQ, the Willems family, as well as many of the other advocates who are up in the gallery. The opposition is willing to do this.

My question to government members: are they willing to have experts involved in the committee process now as we look at possible amendments coming forward from the government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course it is the practice of committees to be able to call witnesses as they see fit. The government's open to hearing testimony from experts in the field on this matter and, you know, we'll be open to doing that in the context of moving forward with this in an expeditious fashion.

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

Lobbyist Registry Legislation

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in December of 2011 just after the election, the Premier announced that a committee would study whether Saskatchewan should have a lobbyist registry. He called the registry long overdue. He said he wanted to strike a balance between access to decision makers by lobbyists and the public's need to know who is trying to influence the government. After six months, the committee recommended a lobbyist registry last May. But the public is still in the dark about who is trying to influence government because a lobbyist registry has yet to be developed.

Mr. Speaker, after the Premier was so adamant about getting a registry, why has the Sask Party failed to introduce a lobbyist registry for Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. In December of 2011, the issue of the lobbyist legislation was referred to the standing committee for review and to provide recommendations back to the Legislative Assembly. And that standing committee did provide a final majority report with a minority report in the spring session of 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the intention of the government is that we won't be introducing a bill this session. We are seeking some further input. I did have some discussions with members of the committee, including the member on the committee from the opposition. I indicated that we did want to have some further consultations on this matter. Mr. Speaker, we will be having those consultations with the intention of introducing legislation in the fall session.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think these discussions were probably about six months ago. So Saskatchewan will be one of the last provinces in Canada to implement a lobbyist registry. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report on lobbying shows that the people of Saskatchewan have no idea what is going on behind the scenes between those who try to influence government's decisions. If the government really treated this issue as a priority, the legislation would have been introduced and passed this session. Instead the government hopes no one remembers the Premier's commitment. They just don't like admitting mistakes, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: what is the holdup that prevents a lobbyist registry from being implemented?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I find the premise of the question to be very interesting. Mr. Speaker, we're providing, we're providing an opportunity for further consultation, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure that we get this legislation right the first time, so we're going to proceed with further consultation. We have circulated a consultation paper, Mr. Speaker. We'll have those consultations this spring, Mr. Speaker, and we will be bringing forward legislation in the fall. We know that this is an important piece of legislation. We know this is an important piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and we will be bringing it forward.

The Speaker: — I'd like to have the opportunity to hear the answer and the question, if I may, so I request that members please keep it down. I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier seemed to be in quite a hurry about this lobbyist registry in December 2011. This report has been available. But I do like the attitude of this

minister about waiting and listening to the public and maybe working a little better to get the legislation right. And it's, you know, perhaps he can convey that attitude to the Minister of Labour because he has a similar, huge piece of legislation that isn't right, that needs more consultation. It needs public consultation.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister as it relates to this lobbyist registry is, why have they delayed it for a year and a half? Are they worried about releasing some information? So, Mr. Speaker, why are they delayed it so long?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for agreeing that having further consultations on this matter is a good thing. We want to make sure we get this legislation right, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard from some stakeholders that wanted to have some further consultation. We want to have those consultations, Mr. Speaker. We've circulated a discussion paper, Mr. Speaker. We will be bringing legislation forward, but we do think that this is an important piece. We take this matter very, very seriously and we want to make sure that we have the legislation in place as quickly as we can, Mr. Speaker, having regard to the fact that we need to have proper consultations.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that I do appreciate that minister's willingness to work and get proper consultation on quite a small, on quite a small bill. But I don't understand why the previous Justice minister doesn't do that in his new role now as, role as Minister of Labour.

Next week is the provincial budget. Will the minister commit today that the lobbyist registry will be in place by this fall, and we're willing to pass it through in the fall session, so that the public knows who has lobbied the government in the preparation of the next provincial budget?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, the government appreciates the fact that having a lobbyist legislation in place is a good thing, and we want to make sure that we proceed with it as expeditiously as we can, having regard to the fact that we want to have further consultations, Mr. Speaker. We will have those consultations this spring, and we will be bringing legislation forward in the fall. We're committed to this, Mr. Speaker, and they will see legislation on the floor of this House this fall.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Forest Management Plan

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to sustainable forestry, it seems that the Sask Party government can't manage new or old growth. There are four Island Forests that encompass more than 200 000 hectares of Crown forest

land in the Prince Albert area. It's an area, Mr. Speaker, of beautiful old-growth Jack pine and trembling aspen forest. These forests are islands surrounded by development and communities who have enjoyed their beauty for decades. In fact I cross-country skied in the beautiful Nisbet Forest a couple of weeks ago.

There's very little Jack pine forest of this age anywhere else in Canada, and that's exactly why protecting that old-growth forest should be part of the smart growth of our forestry industry. However the Ministry of the Environment is developing a forest management plan to clear-cut the Saskatchewan Island Forests. Mr. Speaker, protecting old-growth forests should be a priority for the Sask Party. So to the minister: why isn't it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question from the hon. member. But I must say we're seeing more of the same misinformation. There is no clear-cutting. There is no plan for clear-cutting. What we have is a government focused on the long-term sustainability for our forests rather than short-term gain.

The forests are mature. They are in decline. And they are at an increasing risk from fire, wind, insects, and disease. Through long-term forest management, we can ensure that the forests are protected. That is what's happening. That's what will continue to happen, and that's in the long-term interest of the province. That's what this government is most interested in, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, in the Torch River area, the forest provides amazing economic spinoffs that do not involve destroying the old-growth forest. The harvesting of Torch River chanterelle mushrooms, considered the best in the world, and the rare and expensive lactarius indigo mushroom fuels local businesses there. The clear-cutting in the Island Forest threatens these thriving small businesses, in addition to destroying what Tayler Krawczyk of Hatchet & Seed Contracting describes as an amazing biological lifeboat within an increasingly sterilized and plantation-driven province.

The friends of the Torch River Forest say the province's so-called plan for growth misses those important economic opportunities that will be lost as well as the bigger picture. One could say, the government can't see the forest through the trees they want to clear-cut.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the government foregoing the small-business growth opportunities in mushrooms, pharmaceuticals, recreation, hunting, and fishing in order to clear-cut the old growth of the Torch Island Forest?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question. I understand members opposite are having a little trouble filling question period time, but again there is no plan to clear-cut the forest. There is absolutely . . . That is misinformation that is being brought by that member to this

House.

There is only a small fraction of the forest's total area that would be harvested over a 20-year plan, approximately 5 per cent per year, to ensure that the forest is indeed renewed. It is overmature at this time. It is in decline. It's an increasing risk for fire. If there was a fire, that would devastate the entire forest. That indeed would be crippling for the industry.

So once again, this government is working with a long-term forest management plan. There is indeed no clear-cutting planned. That is again just misinformation that has been brought forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I read the plan and clear-cut is obviously on the table as part of the planning that the Ministry of the Environment is doing. So I don't know what report he is referring to, but the report that I've read, clear-cutting is on the table as part of the possible forest planning. And on February 22nd, the minister closed a brief consultation phase for public comments, and many concerned citizens have taken the time to express their grave concerns about this forest management plan.

In the ministry's 95-page document about the new plan to clear-cut the Island Forest, the phrase old growth is mentioned exactly once — one mention for trees that have outlived this Legislative Assembly, one mention for the forests that are older than the province itself. Mr. Speaker, the old-growth forests cannot be replaced. And once these forests are clear-cut, they're gone forever.

We know the economic opportunities for small businesses exist to use the forests sustainably, but what we don't know is who plans to benefit from clear-cutting these islands of forest. Why does the Sask Party want to erase over 140 years of forest with one fell swoop?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question. And for the third time now on the floor of this legislature I will say that there is no clear-cutting planned, Mr. Speaker. I hope the members opposite understand that. The overall plan is to ensure the forest's long-term sustainability and health so it will continue to support a range of ecological and economic values for present and future generations.

The government of course recognizes the importance of the mushroom harvest to the local economy and will work with local harvesters to ensure that their needs are taken into account. Mr. Speaker, the long-term interests of forests and forestry are at the heart of what this government is trying to do. And it's a lot more than the one tree that they have a concern about, and this is the one tree that they should be concerned about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I would like to remind members not to use exhibits. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Financial Management and Reporting

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a concern to many that we are out of line with the rest of Canada, in every other province, in proper accounting standards in how we report our finances. The province reports on two sets of books, something the Provincial Auditor has called both misleading and wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the government has an opportunity to fix this next week and report our numbers using summary financials, one set of books, and providing the straight goods to Saskatchewan people. To the Finance minister: will he commit next week to table the budget with one set of books and the right set of books?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question. As many times as he has repeated that question in this Assembly, I will repeat the answer. In 2004 the NDP, after being convinced by the opposition and the Provincial Auditor, moved from only General Revenue Fund budgeting to General Revenue Fund budgeting and summary financial statement production, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to follow that policy. We continue to follow the rules and regulations as provided through the financial administrative Act, Mr. Speaker, that was changed in 2004, then under the leadership of Finance minister Melnychuk who indicated that they were going to move forward with providing summary financial statements in the public accounts. Mr. Speaker, we do that twice a year — we do it at mid-year and we do it in budget. Stay tuned to next Wednesday.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic government's made substantial improvements to both our financial position and the reporting of our finances. That being said, that work was not complete, and further progress in reporting is certainly required and was required. Instead of taking those steps, as other provinces have, since taking office now for over five years, Mr. Speaker, the current government has stuck its head in the sand, thumbed its nose at accounting standards, ignored changes made by other provinces including our neighbours, and has dismissed and disrespected the Provincial Auditor in this province. How does that cut it, and why does this minister feel Saskatchewan people deserve anything less than in the true and full state of our finances?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, we provide accurate accounting statements to the people of Saskatchewan through two methods. Two methods, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated: the summary financial statements and the General Revenue Fund. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing, there's nothing secret about it.

The Provincial Auditor, who does great work for the province of Saskatchewan, has indicated that the summary financial statements published in the public accounts documents are accurate, Mr. Speaker. So for the member to suggest that

there's something irregular, I dare him to go to the C.D. Howe report, as I quoted yesterday, that says, and I quote on page 4: "Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia also get an A for preparing their budgets and public accounts on a common accounting basis . . ." I can't understand why that member can't understand that.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty interesting that our Finance minister would reference the very report for which he won the award, the Pinocchio Award, Mr. Speaker. And we see in this Assembly, we see in this Assembly that our Finance minister's nose may not get longer, but his voice certainly gets louder, Mr. Speaker.

And he also referenced the Provincial Auditor's report. The Provincial Auditor has stated very clearly in the reports that he's referencing that the way this government reports its financing is misleading and wrong. We consistently see a government that spins its books, prints one thing on expensive billboards and ads, yet the black and white print in public accounts in the books says something entirely different. We see right now a government that's running expensive ads — \$92,000, Mr. Speaker — in fact to, I guess, set the table for a tough budget on Saskatchewan families.

My question is this: how does that minister expect Saskatchewan families to accept cuts when he won't even be straight with Saskatchewan people about the true state of our finances?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues might suggest that I speak quite loud at most times, Mr. Speaker. But we'll try to ensure that the member opposite does hear me, but I will try to keep my voice down so that we don't disturb the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the balanced budget that we have in this province is in envy by all other provinces, Mr. Speaker. We are balanced on the General Revenue Fund side, Mr. Speaker, which I've indicated is a subset of what the summary financial statements are. And, Mr. Speaker, after including all of the other components of the province of Saskatchewan, everything from the Crown corporations to WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], to the Saskatchewan crop insurance Act, we have a balanced budget as well, Mr. Speaker, that is the envy of many finance ministers in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — As far as the envy of other provinces, I noted just a little while ago that the deputy premier of Alberta actually called these guys out, Mr. Speaker, as it related to the tricky budget that they put forward. And this government's building a reputation of not being able to admit their mistakes, whether it's the film tax credit, whether it's three more MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], whether it's cuts to educational assistance.

And we also see a growing trend of a lack of accountability, and we see that alarming lack of accountability as it relates to the IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂] affair, Mr. Speaker, and the misleading statements, the conflicts of interest, and the waste of public money. And we see that as well in the reporting of our public finances, that lack of accountability, something called by our Provincial Auditor as misleading and wrong. To the minister: why is he failing to provide Saskatchewan people with the accountability that they deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, in light of the comments coming from the members opposite, I guess I will have to speak louder to make sure everybody in this Assembly understands that what the member is saying, what the member is saying, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely not true, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not true.

We have a situation where the member opposite was part of the Dwain Lingenfelter program. The Dwain Lingenfelter program, Mr. Speaker, was to spend \$5 billion, put this province, put this province back into debt by \$5 billion. Mr. Speaker, he just ran for the leadership and — guess what? — that was his same plan, spend another \$5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to do that. We're going to produce a budget that's balanced. We're going to produce a budget that continues to pay down debt, Mr. Speaker. That's the plan for the people of Saskatchewan, and that's why there's 49 members on this side and the negative nine over there.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I gather spring is springing early in here. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave of the Assembly to move a number of motions regarding committee membership changes.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move motions regarding committee changes. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTIONS

Committee Membership

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Rob Norris be substituted for the name of Darryl Hickie on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the name of Rob Norris be substituted for the name of Darryl Hickie on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Is the motion agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Laura Ross be substituted for the name of Warren Michelson on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the name of Laura Ross be substituted for the name of Warren Michelson on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Roger Parent be substituted for the name of Laura Ross on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the name of Roger Parent be substituted for the name of Laura Ross in the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I move:

That the name of Nadine Wilson be substituted for the name of Doreen Eagles on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the name of Nadine Wilson be substituted for the name of Doreen Eagles on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Darryl Hickie be substituted for the name of Nadine Wilson on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the name of Darryl Hickie be substituted for the name of Nadine Wilson on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Why is the Opposition House Leader on her feet?

Ms. Sproule: — I have some motions to make regarding names of members on committee . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I need leave. Can I have leave to do that, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has requested leave to move motions regarding committee changes. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you. Thank you to the Assembly for agreeing. I would like to move:

That the name of Cathy Sproule be substituted for the name of Warren McCall on the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the name of Cathy Sproule be substituted for the name of Warren McCall on the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Sproule: — I would like to move:

That the name of Doyle Vermette be substituted for the name of Cathy Sproule on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has moved:

That the name of Doyle Vermette be substituted for the name of Cathy Sproule on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[11:00]

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you. I would like to move:

That the name of David Forbes be substituted for the name of Cam Broten on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the name of David Forbes be substituted for the name of Cam Broten on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you. I would like to move:

That the name of Cathy Sproule be substituted for the name of Warren McCall on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the name of Cathy Sproule be substituted for the name of Warren McCall on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And last but not least, I'd like to move:

That the name of Warren McCall be added to the

membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts pursuant to an order dated March 4th, 2013.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the name of Warren McCall be added to the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts pursuant to an order dated March 4th, 2013.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 209 to 212.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 209 to 212 inclusive.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Commendation of Government Policies

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to join in the debate today as we talk about and commend our government for policies such as balanced budget, low taxes, a stable royalty regime, which has led to record unemployment rates and a nation-leading economic growth, Mr. Speaker.

And first and foremost I'd like to thank the NDP caucus researchers for writing the questions for the member from Rosemont because they tie in nicely to my debate for the next 15 minutes. So I want to thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, there is some points that . . . You know, growing up on the farm in southwestern Saskatchewan, we listened to the radio when we were on the tractor and we always heard Paul Harvey and *The Rest of the Story*. So, Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosemont gave us half the story today on question period and the Finance minister tried to fill him in on the rest of the story, and I think it's up to me as representing the people of Walsh Acres to finalize the rest of the story and let him really talk about what the C.D. Howe Institute report actually said about our government's accounting principles.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll read from the C.D. Howe report for a couple minutes here and say, "Over the past 10 years, Canada's senior government spent around \$53 billion more than they had originally planned for in the spring, with the Prairie provinces and territories being the worst offenders."

But it goes on to say, "Encouragingly, however, the tendency to overshoot in both spending and revenue was less pronounced in the second half of the decade than in the first half."

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm no mathematician, but for 10 years, I believe that the former NDP government was in power for five of those first 10 and I think we were in power for the last five. So it's nice that the C.D. Howe report comes out and confirms that, that most people in Saskatchewan realize that over the last five years our government has done a much better job in budgeting and a much better job in spending the money of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. So I'd like to say thank you very much to the C.D. Howe report for that endorsement.

Mr. Speaker, the C.D. Howe report goes on to talk, as my colleague from Regina Rosemont probably does know, and states, "Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia also get an A for preparing their budgets and public accounts on a common accounting basis."

And it's been a long time, oh a while since I've been in school, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues, some have been out of school a little bit longer . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . About 30 years, my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow says. But I think an A is a quite high mark and I don't think you can get much higher than A. And for the C.D. Howe Institute to be giving us an A, an A for preparing budgets and public accounts, I think . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you very much. The member from Athabasca says A is a high mark. I don't know if he got too many, but I think he might've recognized something on his siblings' report cards.

Mr. Speaker, and last but not least, I would like to talk about a table found on page 6 of the C.D. Howe report, Mr. Speaker. And it talks about Saskatchewan, and for budget presentation consistent with public reports, Mr. Speaker, it says, yes, the budget figures match. And that's an A for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our grade for the use of reconciliation tables and figures, explanations of deviations, placement in the document, Mr. Speaker, it says, "Good use of reconciliation tables, detailed explanation for variation, results appearing at beginning of document," Mr. Speaker. That grade is an A. Mr. Speaker, two out of two As. That's not too bad.

And the member from Regina Rosemont tends to spin and likes to spin a little bit of the relationship we have with our auditor, Mr. Speaker. But we went through this table and it says that the date of audit approval — and that's when the auditor goes through and approves the budget for the provinces, Mr. Speaker — and ours is June 14th, 2012. That's actually the earliest approval of any budget by an audit approval in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Speaker. So I think that that's a pretty good recognition of how the C.D. Howe report presents our budgets and how they feel we do in budgeting, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess he talks about the Pinocchio award affair a bit, and I guess I want to make it clear for everyone out there watching — I know there's a lot of people watching right now — and I want to make it clear that the Pinocchio award is given over a 10-year period. The first five years of that 10-year period was the NDP government; the last five years was our Saskatchewan Party government. And the C.D. Howe says that the last five

years budgeting has been done a lot better, a lot more consistent and a lot clearer than the first five years of that 10-year report, Mr. Speaker. So I hope I could clear the air a little bit with that demonstration of how the C.D. Howe actually feels we report our budgets in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our population is now at an all-time high: 1,086,564. I'm going to throw a few numbers at you and then kind of go back and talk about them in a second, Mr. Speaker. Our population has grown by 23,000 people in the past year, making Saskatchewan the second fastest growing province in Canada. The province's population has now increased for 26 consecutive quarters, and in the past six years, Saskatchewan has grown by nearly 94,000 people, the fastest and most sustained population growth in decades, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan unemployment rate now stands at 4 per cent, the lowest in Canada and well below the national average of 7 per cent. And this is a very true fact, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings increased by 5 per cent in December, 2012, the highest growth rate among the provinces compared to December of 2011, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, employment for women increased by 5.1 per cent to 254,000 in January, hitting an all-time high for the number of women employed in our province. Mr. Speaker, employment for men increased by 4.4 per cent to 291,300. This is the highest level recorded for male employment in the province for the month of January, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that small-business optimism continues to be the highest in Saskatchewan as the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] has reported recently, and most years, Mr. Speaker, we have a high optimism rate for small businesses in our province, Mr. Speaker. Our employment numbers coupled with the strength of our economic indicators, high average weekly earnings and optimism among our businesses signals that there's going to be continued momentum for our economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've been able to talk to many people across our province in the last two years, being able to represent the Regina Walsh Acres constituency. And it gives me great hope for our future.

I've been able to become part of an organization called SYPE, which is the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs, and they have ... [inaudible interjection] ... Thank you, member for Moose Jaw Wakamow. And, Mr. Speaker, they have little factions all over the province, SYPE, and they're all young people that have come back to our province. I know on our board — there's 10 people on our board, Mr. Speaker — one's come back from BC; one's come back from Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

And it's something that you never really saw in the '90s. And I think it had a lot to do with the philosophy — the '90s and 2000s, sorry — a lot to do with the philosophy of the government of the day, Mr. Speaker. And that can be summed up very well by one of their senior ministers that said, the more people that leave, that's a good thing because there's more left for the rest of us, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a philosophy that really, when you think about it, it's no wonder

that people left.

And I have close family relatives that had to leave this province because they didn't think they could make a go of it, Mr. Speaker. My brother, my brother left. My two sisters had to leave the province, Mr. Speaker. Thankfully though, now in our new Saskatchewan, under a government that believes that we need more people in this province to contribute to an economy to make this economy grow, Mr. Speaker, my brother's moved back and he's in Lloydminster now, Mr. Speaker. He started up his own company and works in the oil and gas sector. For the member from Lloydminster, it is the Saskatchewan side that he lives on, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that he's come back, he's come back to the province, he's felt that he has a lot of opportunity to grow. He's working with oil and gas companies. He's a pressure test truck driver, and he's doing quite well.

And, Mr. Speaker, not only that, but his wife, his wife has the opportunity on the Saskatchewan side. She's opened a clothing store. And I believe the member from Lloydminster and his wife has visited the clothing store a couple of times and went out with some of the fantastic wares that she's selling.

And, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to — they have two young children — a young family that has the courage and the optimism to go and start two businesses, Mr. Speaker, in a time when you look around the world, that's not happening in a lot of different jurisdictions in this country and in North America, Mr. Speaker. The fact that there's young people willing to take a chance and having the confidence that the economy's going to continue to grow speaks well for not only for this year and the next year, Mr. Speaker, but well into the future because we have those young people, and we're not experiencing the brain drain that we experienced under the former administration in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

Mr. Speaker, conveniently the member for Rosemont brought this up about spending — spending on budgets, spending on advertising — which is interesting because I don't think he did quite the research he needed to do on budget advertising. So I just, I'd like to put into the record some of the numbers that were spent on budget advertising previously under the old reign of terror, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to say that in 2005-2006, 2006-2007, the spending for the budget was \$447,127. Mr. Speaker, that's a hefty amount of money to be spending on glossy brochures, as they like to say. '07-08, Mr. Speaker, the total spending for the budget, budget advertising in '07-08 was \$315,246. That's quite substantial. And they like to say sometimes on this side, our priorities may be a little misplaced, but that's almost \$1 million over two years for spending on a budget, which is quite substantial.

So let's see what perhaps was spent in 2011-12 and 2012-13. So 2011-12, the total spending on the budget was \$192,257. Mr. Speaker, 2012-13 is \$101,375. Mr. Speaker, that is substantially less than what the former administration spent on shameless self-promotion, Mr. Speaker. And I think that being proper caretakers of the public purse is a thing that we're very well-known for throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that we take care. We respect the taxpayers' dollars. We want to use them in the most useful way possible. I think that's a reason why there's probably a fair number more MLAs over here than on that side to date, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few other things I'd like to talk about, especially representing a seat in Regina. I'd like to talk about how, through economic progress and through expansion in our fine city of Regina . . . and talk about how the Conference Board of Canada feels our city is going to be doing in the next couple of years and kind of lay down the groundwork for some numbers that we think are quite optimistic. And we think that if Regina moves forward like this, we are going to be very well off and well served, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's unemployment rate will fall . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, growth in Regina's gross domestic product remains strong at an estimated 4.2 per cent in 2012 on the heels of two years with the growth being above 5 per cent. This pace of economic expansion was much stronger than the average annual gain of 2.9 per cent recorded in the past two decades. So, Mr. Speaker, in the past two decades, the average GDP [gross domestic product] growth in Regina was 2.9 per cent, and for the two years prior to this year, it was 5 per cent and 5 per cent, and projected to be 4.2 per cent.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, that's some great economic news for the people of Regina and for the citizens of Regina, where people are choosing to live, work, and play right here in our fine city. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I want to go through some of the forecasts for unemployment and for average weekly earnings for our great city, for the Queen City of Regina. Mr. Speaker, the total employment for 2010 was 119,000; 2011, 123,000; 2012, 126,000; and forecasts for 130,000 in 2013. Mr. Speaker, that's a lot more people in Saskatchewan working, paying taxes right here, and contributing to our great quality of life in our Queen City.

Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in Regina: 2010, 4.8; 2011, 4.7; 2012, 4; in 2013, 4.1. Mr. Speaker, that's a staggering number when you think about it. Across this country people are . . . Unemployment's rising, Mr. Speaker. Unemployment at the national level is 7 per cent.

So right here in Regina we're quite proud of our companies. Our small business people are helping put people in Saskatchewan to work and helping people in Regina have great jobs and be able to afford the type of living that they want to and a high quality of living.

Mr. Speaker, just one more thing is that sometimes you talk and we talk about the raising in the consumer price index and the rate of inflation, so it would be nice to see how much wages are going up compared to the consumer price index, Mr. Speaker. And right now in Regina the percentage of the personal income per capita was: 2007, 43,951; 2011, 46,363; 2012, 47,722; 2013, forecast to be 48,985; and 2014 — I think this is a threshold that we're proud to get a hold of — is \$50,662.

The average person . . . And they always say, you don't think about the average citizen. You don't think about that average citizen. Average weekly earnings . . . Average earnings per capita in Regina being over \$50,000 in 2014, that's fantastic news. And that's something we're very proud, and we're proud to be able to make sure that the standard of living for everyone in Saskatchewan continues to be high.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the motion into record right now, Mr. Speaker. And the motion:

That this Assembly commend the government for policies such as balanced budgets, low taxes, and a stable royalty regime, which have led to record-low unemployment rates and nation-leading economic growth.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And of course I'll be speaking in favour of this motion.

The Speaker: — It has moved by the member for Regina Walsh Acres:

That this Assembly commend the government for policies such as balanced budgets, low taxes, and a stable royalty regime, which have led to record-low unemployment rates and nation-leading economic growth.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've got a few questions for the question, and of course first a few comments. But again with the motion, and reading it into the record one more time:

That this Assembly commend the government for policies such as balanced budgets, low taxes, and a stable royalty regime, which have led to record-low unemployment rates and nation-leading economic growth.

You know, leave it to the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, to move a motion commending themselves. You know, in terms of the work that the people of Saskatchewan have done in terms of growing economy, in terms of creating jobs, in terms of being out there on the front lines to make the Saskatchewan that we all are so proud of even better, in the context of that, Mr. Speaker, leave it to the Sask Party to throw themselves a self-congratulation party with the motion.

This motion, if anything, should be commending the people of Saskatchewan instead of that government. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I understand maybe how it works in terms of the psychology on this side. You've got, you know, members that want to make sure that they're shining up the apples and making sure that the powers that be in the in-group across the way are well placated and well shined up themselves, Mr. Speaker. But the people that should be commended in this motion are the people of Saskatchewan, not that government. You know, if we want to talk about the record of the members opposite, it's been mixed at best.

And certainly we heard about some of that in the question period here today in terms of, you know, they've got one set of books that says one thing, and again it forms part of this motion in terms of balanced budgets. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think if the people were, you know, squarely in mind and not just the government themselves, I think if the people were in mind, they'd be interested in getting the straight goods. And of course to get the straight goods you can go to the Provincial Auditor, and the Provincial Auditor says that the books that this government keeps are wrong and misleading and that when

they say it's a balanced budget, something else has happened.

I guess one of the other things that is interesting to think about, this motion coming forward in the context of today — again, this self-centred, self-congratulatory Sask Party-focused motion which instead should be focused on the people of Saskatchewan — to see this motion come forward in the context of today, when part of the debate we're having in this House is around labour legislation, and one of the bills before the House of course is Bill 85. And I guess if things have gone well to date, Mr. Speaker, it begs the question in the main, why do you want to change the labour legislation that has governed the workplaces that have seen workers make a solid contribution to their own incomes and their average earnings but also to the productivity of corporations and to enterprise across this province?

And that balance in fact, by a fairly objective standard . . . And you know, again this motion sort of walks past it, and there's some things in it that you could agree with, and there are some things that are kind of disagreeable, Mr. Speaker. But one of the key ingredients of the advantages that we have — to use one of the words the members opposite are fond of — is that balance between worker and employer, between management and labour.

And again there have been . . . You know, it casts your mind back to Bill 80 where the members opposite set out to fix problems that didn't exist. And again, you wonder why they did that, why they moved into the building trades to take a bit of a hammer to the labour legislation that was governing it. And you saw that with Bills 5 and 6 and the way that that wound up and the fact that we now have a Supreme Court hearing pending.

Again it doesn't, it not only doesn't recognize the balance that has been essential to moving Saskatchewan forward together — it doesn't recognize that balance — it threatens that balance, Mr. Speaker.

And again, in terms of if you're going to make sure that benefit in an economy as blessed with natural resources as the one we are confronted with or possessed of here in Saskatchewan, for the innovation and the bright minds that have gone forward in enterprise . . . If you're going to leave labour out of that equation or seek to diminish the contribution of labour in what should be a partnership, Mr. Speaker, then you're going to be leaving a whole lot of families behind. And already too much of that we see, Mr. Speaker.

And I think in particular of what's happened on this government's watch as regards Aboriginal employment, and the records speak for themselves. In December 2007 when members opposite had taken over from the then NDP government, the Aboriginal unemployment was 11.8 per cent, First Nations unemployment was 12.8 per cent, Métis unemployment was 10.9 per cent. And again, Mr. Speaker, one of the central challenges we have in this province is to make sure that we live up to the promise of our provincial motto, that in fact we are drawing from many peoples that strength that would seem to be boasted at by the members opposite. But if we're going to be strong as a province, we've got to recognize that we're in this together and that we've got to move forward together.

So what happens on the watch of members opposite as regarded this critical question of Aboriginal employment? Well by 2012 unemployment was 11.8 per cent. Then it was up 15.7 per cent for First Nations people. And it's 9.2 per cent for Métis people. Again, Mr. Speaker, in this time of a booming economy and prosperity for many, that we have far too many First Nations and Métis people standing on the outside still looking in, it's not just a shame, Mr. Speaker; it's work that goes directly against the self-interest of the province because if we are going to succeed as a province, we have to succeed for all. We can't have 13.5 per cent of our population, in the main, standing on the outside looking in.

So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of different steps that this government has taken, I think back to the budget of 2010 when that government unilaterally cut the Aboriginal employment development program, AEDP. And this was after some earlier hopeful sort of gestures to it — signing partnerships and running around and shining up the different partnership agreements. And there was work that needed to be done in terms of bolstering the mandate and the resources of that program. I wouldn't deny that, Mr. Speaker. But perhaps members opposite were too busy doing ribbon cuttings and photo opportunities to attend to that work of making sure that First Nations and Métis people were engaged four-square in the economy of this province.

And the minister at the time, the member from Regina South, who's since been kicked out of cabinet but his deeds live on, Mr. Speaker, when he was asked about the cuts that were taking place in the First Nations and Métis Relations ministry at the time, which itself has since been rolled into the government relations branch as a junior branch in that ministry . . . And you know, I think that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. There's a First Nations, Métis Relations branch of government, ministry of government for a reason, and it should have continued.

But what did then minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, the member from Regina South, have to say about the cuts to Aboriginal employment development and other cuts that took place? The reporter asked him, you've had some cuts to your ministry today. Any response? Quote, Bill Hutchinson: "We've had all kinds of exciting news." And that was the response of the minister on the day that they killed, you know, upwards of 110 Aboriginal employment development program agreements unilaterally, Mr. Speaker.

And since then, as the work of the well-regarded, well-known, well-renowned economist from the University of Saskatchewan, the head of the economics department, Eric Howe, the work that that individual has done in terms of detailing the damage that has taken place on the watch of members opposite and the service that he has done the province of Saskatchewan in sounding the alarm of what has gone on in terms of First Nations and Métis employment in this province, the guy should get a medal for his work, Mr. Speaker. And I guess more than even than a medal. I just wish that members opposite would listen to the words of someone like Eric Howe and that you would see it reflected in things like the motion that we're here debating today.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate today, and I support the motion on the floor. I also thank the historical Legislative Assembly of 1916 for giving women the vote, the right to vote, on this day.

Mr. Speaker, since the Sask Party was given our mandate to govern this province, we have delivered five consecutive budgets and soon will be delivering our sixth. Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, we were called the place to be from. Now we are called Saskatchewan, the place to be. Our province is now viewed from all parts of Canada and indeed the world as a leader in economic development and good governance.

Mr. Speaker, as I discuss this motion, I will share with this Assembly a true story of one family from Saskatchewan. In the late '80s this family had a mom, a dad, and three children. That mom, Mr. Speaker, is me. I went to university at our esteemed U of S, and I achieved an honours degree in psychology. This degree has been a great asset and has assisted me in many aspects of my life and career. I continued my education and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition, which was followed by a year of internship so that I could be granted the status of registered dietitian.

[11:30]

That was so exciting for me. It was very exciting for my family. Together we set a goal, a big goal, and we achieved it. Mr. Speaker, in just a minute you will see how this story relates to this debate. Those that attend post-secondary school while raising a family will understand how important it is to have support of your family. And I'd like to take this time to sincerely thank my husband and our three children for their unwavering support and help.

As I was saying, graduation was a very exciting time, one of hope for the future and the anticipation of working in my chosen field. Well, Mr. Speaker, that excitement was short-lived. My hope for a brighter future right here in Saskatchewan was dashed when I realized what I had done. I had graduated at the very same time that the NDP took power in this province.

You see, Mr. Speaker, that meant there were no jobs for dietitians. Here I was, a wife and a mom with student loans and no jobs, a registered dietitian ready to help lead healthier lives, yet no dietitian positions. In fact I was told over and over again, sorry, we're downsizing. I watched many, many of my fellow graduands leave this province so they could get a job in their chosen field. I really didn't blame my friends or colleagues. After all it was the NDP that said it was perfectly all right for people to leave our province. In the backward thinking of the NDP, there would be more for those left behind.

Mr. Speaker, you can well imagine my dismay at not being able to find a job in my chosen field. Having no jobs for dietitians was a slap in the face for me and a very hard lesson in just how backward the policies of the NDP really are. They say health care is important to them. They say healthy people are important to them. The reality of the difference between what the NDP say and what they do was forced upon me.

Did the NDP have a graduate retention program? No. Did my student loans come due? Yes. I took a job outside my chosen field . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You can laugh, but there were people without jobs. So I took a job outside of my chosen field and contributed in some small way to the well-being of my family.

Mr. Speaker, let's fast forward a few more years to the late '90s. Our children have graduated, and guess what? The NDP are still in power, and true to their word, the NDP made Saskatchewan a very unfriendly place for business to me. And true to the NDP way, there were no jobs — no jobs for our children, no jobs for the children of my friends and family. You see, Mr. Speaker, the NDP can say it is just fine to be a wee province, but that is backward thinking.

Let's fast forward again to another time in Saskatchewan's history and the history of this family, my family, and so many families just like us. It is now early 2007, and there is a dynamic, young leader and a caring, determined team of women and men ready to change the history of Saskatchewan. This dynamic, young leader, who is now the Premier of this province, helped all of us to see the promise of Saskatchewan. I must say that my timing was spot-on. I graduated with an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] at that time. That fall, the fall of 2007, the people of this province mandated that the Saskatchewan Party should govern and lead this province into the future.

Fast forward once again and we arrive at today. Many families have reunited. Young people are staying in the province to live, to work, and to raise a family. Newcomers are making their home here, and more of our First Peoples are working or going to school to be trained in the skilled labour this province needs. Mr. Speaker, all of this adds up to the highest population Saskatchewan has ever seen.

Our Saskatchewan Party government set a goal and achieved it. Now Saskatchewan is a business-friendly place, and that is a good thing. Businesses create jobs, jobs that provide an income, an income that pays the bills and provides for our families, an income that supports a better future for our children's grandchildren, an income that generates caring and support for those that need a helping hand up.

Because of good governance that our Premier and my colleagues on this side of the House attribute to listening to the people of this province and then implementing policies that make sense, we now have a AAA rating from Standard & Poor's. Think about it. At a time when the rest of the world and indeed many parts of Canada are having a challenging time with their economies, we have an economy that is the envy of this nation. We have a balanced budget. We have record low unemployment. We have economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, it takes hard work, whether it is through education or employment or both. It takes hard work to get ahead and move forward. That family from the '90s knows what that's like. I know what it feels like. When I talk to people, I understand their struggles and I share in their excitement of accomplishment. Mr. Speaker, to have a government in place that supports your efforts to have a better quality of life and that has policies in place to promote accomplishment is 1,086,564

times better than having a tired, old NDP that promotes mediocrity and fear.

Our government sets big goals with achievable targets. Those goals and targets are found in *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*. Mr. Speaker, people want an open and transparent government, one that is accountable. This plan for growth and our vision is readily available.

Mr. Speaker, please tell the people of our province that their voice and ideas created the Saskatchewan plan for growth. This is a plan for economic growth that builds on the strength of Saskatchewan's people, resources, and innovation to sustain Saskatchewan's place among Canada's economic leaders. An expanding economy is the foundation for a growing and prosperous province. The purpose of growth is to build a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, please tell the people of Prince Albert Northcote that they will see themselves and their goals reflected as well. From building the workforce in many ways, such as working with First Nations and Métis organizations to adding 300 more apprenticeship spaces, from innovation in nuclear medicine that extended the lives of millions of cancer patients to research in food security and agriculture, from the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship to the Saskatchewan graduate retention program, from supporting Habitat for Humanity housing for those of moderate means to improving the senior income supplement program, we see a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, an approach that keeps both our economy and social conscience strong.

Saskatchewan is a province rich in resources with a growing population and a growing economy. We are truly blessed as a people and a province. The Saskatchewan plan for growth is a road map to sustain the growth we enjoy today and ensure we continue realizing our full promise as a province moving forward.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today to enter into the 75-minute debate. Again we see the backbenches of the government side contorting themselves to commend the government for policies such as balanced budgets, low taxes, and stable regime but not really talking about the work that needs to be done. They're too busy patting themselves on the back where there's too many people, too many people left out of the things that are happening in Saskatchewan.

Now we have said on this side we recognize the good things that are happening here, and we are, well we are . . . We think this is a good thing, and we think we should support that. But too many people over there . . . And just the member we heard, the way she was speaking, it sounded like on November or October of 2007, things were in a wreck here. And then all of a sudden in early November, November 7th, things, people start coming in. All of a sudden the royalty rates changed for potash. All of a sudden things changed. This abrupt appearance theory that they have over there is kind of odd. And it shows the depth of thinking and the depth of commitment to people here in the

province.

And so we have some concerns. We have some deep concerns about this kind of motion when we should be doing real work in this legislature about things that really affect people. And they're busy patting themselves on the back. And I really worry about this, particularly when we're just waiting for the budget where they've spent some \$92,000 out advertising, warning people, don't get your hopes up too high; things aren't as they might be here in Saskatchewan. But here we are on the Thursday, six days before and they're telling us, you know, things are great. We're doing a good job. The backbench fully supports everything that the front bench is doing. And I have some real concerns, you know.

And I know my colleague here from Elphinstone-Centre, from north central, the community, has talked about the challenges that this government has done. And I don't know if those members over there, the two that have spoken about the Aboriginal employment development program, AEDP, whether they think that was a good thing to cut that. And they're very happy about that and they would have included that in the motion, but they wanted to make sure it wasn't too long. Were they going to include that?

Today we heard during question period that in fact we have the Minister of Justice who's willing to delay passing a very important bill about lobbyist registration because he wants to get it right. He wants to consult. He wants to consult more. But yet we still see the Minister of Labour ramming it through, ramming that bill through, ramming that bill through. Because they, for some strange reason they feel that it's necessary. But it's the same legislation that got us to where we are today, that got us to a strong economy today. So why do you want to put that at risk? What is the value of putting that kind of chance, or that kind of gamble on the table? This is really not long-sighted thinking. This is very short-sighted.

And so we have some real concerns. We have some real concerns and we have raised this. And every day I present petitions from real people in Saskatchewan. I don't know if they want to think that they're not, but we have petitions who say, we want to take the time to get it right. We want to get Bill 85 right. They're not saying, don't do it. They're saying, let's take a longer legislative track to get it right.

Because you know, all those bills, and they've amalgamated 12, but the impact is on 33 bills of legislation that deals with labour issues. And if that isn't the core issues around the economy here in Saskatchewan, then I think we need to really rethink this resolution, Mr. Speaker, you know, because at the heart of it it's the people here who make a difference in our province, isn't it? The people who work every day in our mines, in our hospitals, in our schools, in our care homes — those are the people who make a difference.

And so when we're putting that at risk, you know, making it . . . taking away the stability of that and the predictability of that and saying, we have an ideology, an ideology that we want to ram through the legislation, and while we're doing it, we can commend ourselves on how good we are, I think we have some real problems here with a government that's out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan.

People are worried about this. It's a bit of a shock and awe. It's so huge, this Bill 85. It's almost unbelievable when you're taking out the word, Sunday; taking out the weekend; changing 40-hour work weeks to . . . or the 8-hour day to a 10-hour day; 40 to 44 hours. We need to understand all of this. We need to understand all of this and make sure we get it right. So I really think the intention of this motion is misplaced. And I think that they really need to think about it because there's a lot of work that really needs to be done.

Yesterday I raised in the House questions about how the government is working on priorities in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12]. And they seem committed to certain things, but other things they don't really care about. They don't care about the size, the number of kids in our classrooms. They say that's a school board issue, but we want you to have standardized tests. They don't care how many kindergarten kids are in a room, but they want to know that they start after Labour Day because they want to have holidays.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is wrongheaded. If they're going to be so involved, we need to see their plan. And yet the backbenches back there will say, good work, good work, Ministry of Education; you're on the right track. I think they're not. I think they're not. When you're talking about crowded classrooms, you've got some real, real problems. And when you've got disparity rates in our graduation rates, that's a real problem because people aren't connecting to the economy as much as they should.

And I think until all the work is done, they should hold back on patting themselves on the back. They should hold back. You know, I think this is really, really important. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have some real concerns about this.

[11:45]

You know, we know that at a school in Saskatoon, there will be over 95 kids when they were expecting much lower numbers. But yet what does the minister say? He talks about, he talks about the research isn't quite in on it yet, but he still goes, barrels ahead with standardized testing because they know best. They know best. So this is a real problem.

And he talks about platitudes and I mean, I've got to tell you, we're hearing a lot of platitudes today. We're hearing a lot of platitudes today. You know, what the minister would say is, evidence to support enhanced outcomes is evidence, and investing in school infrastructure is an investment. Well that's pretty straightforward.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, some of the issues that they've done, some of the initiatives they've done are just not, not in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan. And I go back to the labour issues and how we are concerned about some of the changes that are happening there, particularly when it comes to the organized workplace . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I realize that some other members would like to enter into the debate, but currently it's the member from Saskatoon Centre has the floor, and I would ask other members to respect that member's right. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — [Inaudible] . . . have to speak louder and I appreciate saving of the voice. But I do want to say that I do have some concerns about the different priorities of this government, particularly how they seem to operate by surprises. And I don't know if the backbenches like that.

They didn't campaign on three more MLAs that are going to cost us millions of dollars. But you know, the fact of the matter is, people want to know when they elect a government and they say what they're going to do, that they're actually going to do it. And they didn't campaign on that. They didn't campaign on that. And they didn't campaign on cutting the film tax credit. They didn't campaign on that. And all of a sudden, one year later, here they have a cut.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real issues here about the credibility, and particularly when this government wants to congratulate itself on a job well done. Well we have some real concerns. We have some real concerns about that. And so, you know, when we talk about the labour bill, what it means for people who are not in the organized workplace, what they mean in terms of the labour standards, there's some real challenges around that. *The Trade Union Act*, we have some real challenges around that. And we have some real challenges about the fact that they have not solved the fiasco of the essential services bill. It's been well over five years, now going on six years, for something that was a priority. And they have not dealt with the essential services legislation. And Mr. Speaker, if that's not connected to the economy, I don't know what is. I don't know what is.

And here we have more damaging legislation coming down the line, and yet what they want to do is pat themselves on the back for something that's not well thought out. And we have some real concerns about that, Mr. Speaker.

So I would urge the members on the backbench to think about the issues that are facing real families today, and that is overcrowded classrooms. Think about holding back on the labour bill. Make sure it's done right. Take the time to consult on that. Get that essential services legislation worked out so we're not dealing with it for another four years, and I'm afraid that we will. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no way, there is no way I can support this bill because there's just too much work to be done. They're always saying that. There is too much more work to be done. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, It's a pleasure to rise today and enter into the debate about this important motion. It's a motion, Mr. Speaker, that when I was growing up, the government of the day could not put forward. Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in Saskatchewan and in the '90s I was going through high school and the government of the day was the NDP. And, Mr. Speaker, the government had high taxes, unbalanced budgets, and it really led to an exodus of businesses and people, Mr. Speaker. It was, unfortunately, it was a time of tough times in the province of Saskatchewan.

And just compare that from the energy that we feel today. It's

exciting. It's exciting, Mr. Speaker, because things are different. This government realizes that governments can get in the way of growth. And if we can concentrate on activities from the government's side that would actually encourage growth . . . And we've seen that with a decrease in taxes. And we've also seen the importance of that, Mr. Speaker, with balanced budgets.

Mr. Speaker, balanced budgets are important. When we got elected, the Sask Party in 2007, we had inherited from the NDP a debt of \$6.8 billion, Mr. Speaker. Through balanced budgets, we've actually incorporated into law that half of any surplus goes against the debt. This is something that we're very proud of, that we were able to decrease our debt by 40 per cent. Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite at different NDP convention after NDP convention always talked about paying off the debt. But, Mr. Speaker, they never got it done.

Mr. Speaker, after forming government we lowered the debt down to \$3.8 billion. And why that's important, Mr. Speaker, is that, as many people would realize, is when you have debt you have interest payments, and under the NDP government in the '90s it was over \$900 million every year was getting paid to service the debt.

Since forming government, we've been able to decrease our debt which also decreased the interest payments of such. So right now we're only paying — which is still a significant amount of money — but \$392 million. So that money frees up the government to put more money into education, more money into health care, and also more money to pay down the debt, because the ultimate goal is to be a debt-free province. And with the confidence that the people of Saskatchewan have put in this government, we'll continue to do that important work to pay off that debt.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of taxes, this government has in 2008, with the basic and spouse income tax exemption amounts, increased by \$4,000. In 2008 we also significantly enhanced the refundable Saskatchewan low-income credit. Then further in 2009, active family benefits was introduced by this government. So what this has done is that we had — this is for the 2013 taxation year — the changes, the reduction in taxes from this government is \$473 million. That is a significant reduction in taxes that the Saskatchewan people pay the Government of Saskatchewan.

Now this is a comparison to the NDP. The NDP, while they were in government, Mr. Speaker, raised the PST [provincial sales tax] three times. They also raised income taxes twice, Mr. Speaker. They raised business taxes four times. They raised fuel taxes twice. Mr. Speaker, that is what caused the decline in Saskatchewan was all the taxes that the NDP, the taxes they put on the people.

Mr. Speaker, another important indicator of how we are doing as a province . . . I could get up here and most people in the province agree that we're on the right track, but it's also important to speak to people that are independent, that are outside the province, that look at different provinces and compare how they're doing. And it's an important indicator if these non-partisan people believe or view how this government's been carrying on the important work that we've

done.

In 2009 the Dominion Bond Rating Service increased our bond rating to AA. That's important, Mr. Speaker. This is an outside body that for a living compares and judges . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd ask the member from Athabasca to come to order, and I'd also ask the government members that are interfering in the debate. I'm having great difficulty hearing the member from Saskatoon Eastview, and I would ask all members to co-operate in the rules of this Assembly. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll rise again here, and maybe I'll change . . . The opposition doesn't want to talk about reduction in debt. They don't want to talk about decreases in the personal taxes. They don't want to talk about the improvement of bond ratings for Saskatchewan. The negative nine over there just want to talk about negatives. So, Mr. Speaker, maybe I'll switch gears a little bit.

And we'll talk a little bit, I'm going to quote from the tree book, the tree book that now Leader of the Opposition wrote. And this is what the last 2011 election was campaigned on. The platform was developed by the leader now, now Leader of the Opposition. And this is important because in this document they talk about a dozen times that they're listening. They're listening. So what the Leader of the Opposition, back when Dwain Lingenfelter was their leader, just to quote him, "We have listened to your ideas and we have shared your dreams for a better Saskatchewan. Working together we can turn those dreams into reality."

Mr. Speaker, the reality of the NDP platform that they ran on in 2011 was \$5 billion in increased spending, \$5 billion that would be put onto the backs of Saskatchewan. That would jump the debt significantly higher, which also in turn means that we would have higher interest payments, Mr. Speaker, which means we would have less money to spend on health care, less money to spend on education. This philosophy and going back with the NDP is something that we will not let happen to this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also just briefly talk about the Leader of the Opposition. And he clarified his position on Keystone earlier this week, and I'd like to thank him for seeing the light. But really, Mr. Speaker, this clarification is a flip-flop. Mr. Speaker, the leadership for the NDP was decided last weekend, and I wonder, I wonder what the result of that vote would be if the now Leader of the NDP would have flip-flopped before the convention, that the people, the members of the NDP, would have known, if they would know, would have known that he supports Keystone? Now this is the 49 per cent that did not vote for the Leader of the Opposition. And of the 51 per cent that did vote, I wonder if there was any of them that would consider that this flip-flop is important, that it goes to the character, or sorry, to the leadership that they would be able . . . that he would switch views. And we welcome that. We welcome the fact that he has clarified his position that Keystone is important. But I'm a little concerned that he might flip-flop again. Or if Thomas Mulcair, which is the federal NDP leader, would be campaigning against the interest of this province and Western Canada and Canada itself, is a betrayal. And I've yet to hear

that the Leader of the Opposition condemn Mulcair for going to Washington and working against the interests of Canadians. And, Mr. Speaker, you can clarify, but really that flip-flop is encouraged from us, but we'd like to see more action. We'd like to see him stand up, stand up for Saskatchewan and against his federal leadership that is determined to derail the economy in Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, just in conclusion, the motion which is important because the activity of this government, which is lower taxes, balanced budget, is encouraged because people vote with their feet, Mr. Speaker. As you know, since 2007, since forming government, we have had over 80,000 people move to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That is outstanding. That we would never see under the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, what those people that are now moving to Saskatchewan, the importance of such, is that we have the lowest unemployment rate in the Dominion of Canada which is something we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker. Just this past year we've had a growth of 23,000 people that have been employed in the province of Saskatchewan making it the second fastest growing province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. So with that I'd like to end and support the motion on the floor. Thank you.

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

Mr. Witherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here this afternoon on a motion that has been put forward by a government that seems to be much more focused on sort of a self-congratulation, back-patting of one another, certainly a limited focus on the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I find it interesting. We have such tremendous opportunity in this province. We have a lot of good work that's going on in this province as well. That good work is being done by the workers of this province, the hard workers all across this province, the entrepreneurs, who are making those investments in communities across this province.

And what I recognize with the members opposite is they're far too willing all of the time to try to take all of the credit, for which very little should be attributed towards their actual policies or action. In fact there's fair critique to be placed at the feet of this government by way of many of the policy changes that it's made. And then we see members get up and speak in this sort of a disturbing way, where it's sort of backbench members getting up to pat the backs of cabinet and self-congratulate themselves and have a little bit of an internal, self-interested lovefest as opposed to giving credit where credit's due, Mr. Speaker — the hard workers all across this province, the entrepreneurs all across this province that build out strong, thriving local economies, Mr. Speaker. And it's pretty interesting that the members would rather sort of congratulate one another than focus where credit is due.

[12:00]

I heard one of the members talking about SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] yesterday.

And certainly I enjoyed meeting with our rural leaders yesterday, at SARM yesterday and hearing about some of the realities that they're facing by way of infrastructure, by way of health care that are needed, some of the concerns around spring flooding and lack of actions of this government that's perceived by those members of SARM in that preparation, Mr. Speaker.

And it's that sort of focus that we should be talking about here today. In fact this would have been a better motion, for us to be talking about some of those concerns that we heard at SARM yesterday — whether it was the access to those community doctors, whether it's making sure we're prepared for flooding or making sure that we're supporting the infrastructure in this province.

Now part of the reference in this motion talks about an economy, an economy that has a lot of potential, an economy for which we should have tremendous pride, and an economy for which we should be ready to take those next steps. And we have a government that's actually undermining the balance and strength of that economy with their actions, their policies, Mr. Speaker. We see that in a very direct way when we know our history has been to support a strong private sector, a strong Crown sector, support the place for workers within that economy, support entrepreneurs in this province.

Where we see many aspects of that economy being undermined and in a very specific way is that of our Crown sector. That adds value to this province and has an incredibly important place, not just in the history of this province, but in meeting the challenges and opportunities of our future. And it disturbs many, Mr. Speaker, that we see our Crown sector being eroded and raided and attacked in very deliberate fashion by this government now actually breaking their campaign promises, Mr. Speaker, of at once committing to not sell off our Crowns. Now we see direct privatization — a sell-off of ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]. We see as well an indirect privatization where we basically see many of our Crowns being gutted, many of the contracts . . . a culture of contracting out that's tying the hands of those Crowns in future generations.

But it's also been the direct actions of this government by way of raiding our Crowns — over \$2 billion of dollars over its term, over the past five years, Mr. Speaker, and this year alone having a surprise rate of \$120 million on our Crown sector. Last year they did this to SaskPower and, surprise, surprise, rates went up, Mr. Speaker, direct consequences of the irresponsible actions of that government.

So when we look at the whole economy, we have to do a better job of making sure we're supporting the private sector and local entrepreneurs and also making sure we're supporting that Crown sector being direct, something that's being directly undermined by this government.

When this government gets up and starts talking about its notions of its budget and suggestions and of being balanced, Mr. Speaker, most Saskatchewan people are laughing at these suggestions because they've looked at the black and white of the public accounts at the end of each year and realize that there's an inconsistency, Mr. Speaker, from what this government boasts about at budget time and then what the

reality's been for Saskatchewan people. And sadly we've had a government that's boasted at budget times, the past three years, past four years, about a pretend or perceived balanced budget and then we've seen the numbers roll in and we're three consecutive years into deficit and debt growth, Mr. Speaker, all of which comes at a consequence for Saskatchewan people.

Of course, Saskatchewan people also are calling on this government to provide the kind of accountability and transparency they deserve, certainly the straight goods and the full, true state of our finances, something that's being denied by this government. And if we look back in our history, we had a nice trend and I'll say, under New Democratic Party governments, of both improving our financial position but also our reporting.

Reporting though, reporting that was being progressed but reporting that needed to continue to be moved forward, and this is a government that simply stuck its head in the sand while every other province has come forward with changes and is now compliant with public sector reporting. And this government continues to report our finances in a way that's improper and, as the auditor says, is both misleading and wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And so when you look at the expensive billboards and ads that are being run by this government, it's of concern to Saskatchewan people that the reality is something else. In fact it's a concern to Saskatchewan people that this government is willing to go right directly into sending out these messages with taxpayers' money that don't match the reality, that don't match the facts, Mr. Speaker.

And this year alone, as one example, we actually have debt increasing by \$950 million this year, yet we have members opposite that still get up and pretend that something else is the case. We see a government that's recently been awarded the Pinocchio award, Mr. Speaker, something that doesn't really engender a level of trust with Saskatchewan people and all areas where we need to be making progress. So it's a concern where we see the record of this government. It's also a concern where we see the improper reporting.

One other point that I'd like to touch on, by being able to fully realize our true potential as a province is that of employment and the harmful cuts to the Aboriginal economic development program, the AEDP program that played a very important role in making sure we were making progress. And it's a real concern to me and to many across this province that in 2007 we had what was at that point an unacceptable level of unemployment for First Nations and Métis people, but one that had seen significant progress. And instead of taking this tremendous economic opportunity and making strides, making progress, this government's taken it directly in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. And this is of consequence to families today, to our economy today, but also tomorrow. And we have to do a better job of providing and extending opportunity to all, Mr. Speaker, and it is about building that better, stronger future for tomorrow.

So when I look at the self-congratulatory, self-interested motion put forward, inaccurate motion put forward by government here today, I think most Saskatchewan people would be disappointed

that that's the approach that's being taken by those that have been elected to serve them, that should be more focused on capturing the tremendous opportunity we have as a province in making a difference in the lives of Saskatchewan people all across our province, Mr. Speaker. And as I say, that relates to the erosion and attack on our Crown sector. That relates to the poor condition this government's placed our finances, Mr. Speaker, the impact then that's felt by Saskatchewan people, and its poor record on Aboriginal employment in this province when we know the tremendous importance of that to Saskatchewan people. I certainly won't be supporting that motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Time for debate has elapsed. Oral questions. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — There's a lot of good going on in the province, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly support that. We also believe we need to do a better job of supporting our province and the people of our province to reach our full potential. That's why the cuts to the AEDP program make no sense, Mr. Speaker. That's also why it doesn't make any sense that the government opposite and members opposite don't support building a bridge in Prince Albert.

Question to the member from Prince Albert Northcote: why does she and her government not support building this important infrastructure, a bridge in Prince Albert?

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his question. Over and over and over, we hear the NDP pleading, pleading for us to fix their mistakes and their lack of action. Is it a guilty conscience for doing nothing? Or is it the envy of our government for implementing common sense policies?

Our population is now at an all-time high, 1,086,564 people. It has grown by 23,024 people in the past year. Mr. Speaker, from '01 to '07, Saskatchewan lost more than 35,000 people to net out-migration. Now we have an economy that is the envy of the nation as well as a population that is growing and diverse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2011 election campaign, the NDP promised to fund only half the cost for a second bridge in P.A. [Prince Albert] . . .

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

Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, we know numbers have never been the NDP's forte. This includes confusion with basic economics as well. We've seen this many times, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP vote against our government's budget because they are unfamiliar with the concept of a balanced budget or a booming economy. One would think that what they have learned from their past . . . and figure out that cutting jobs and raising taxes don't stimulate economic growth.

To the member from Saskatoon Centre: when will your caucus learn what it takes to make an economy grow and agree that

balanced budgets, lower taxes, and job creation are the way to keep Saskatchewan moving forward?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find that question kind of interesting and it's very . . . You know I have to say, I have to say that, you know, the credibility of this Finance minister and the whole idea of this balanced budget and how they're attacking the Crowns is alarming.

But I've just got to tell you one thing about the credibility: that someone, a minister who has won the Pinocchio Award . . . Is that right? The Pinocchio Award? Did he win the Pinocchio Award? And then you ask us about credibility? I think they've got to figure something out about credibility and honest reporting of a budget and the accounts related to the budget. Somebody who has won the Pinocchio Award has no right to be calling anybody else down on credibility.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What's really important I think from our perspective as an opposition is to make sure that we respect the voters in each of our areas when we make certain commitments and certain dedication of support.

Now my question goes to the member from P.A. Carlton or the member from P.A. Northcote — both members. The bottom line is that both members made commitments and solid commitments to the bridge in Prince Albert. My colleague asked the member from P.A. Northcote if . . . a simple question — yes or no. And she refused to answer the question. My perspective and my point, Mr. Speaker, is that it is a serious matter. It is a very important issue for the people of Prince Albert, and I think Prince Albert deserves an answer — yes or no? Are you going to build them that bridge? And if it's going to be no, come clean with your answer and tell the people of Prince Albert that you cannot deliver.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. It's curious that when he was the Highways minister and the NDP were in government, he did not build that second bridge. In the 2011 election campaign, the NDP promised to fund only half the cost for a second bridge in Prince Albert. Yet in '03 when the Diefenbaker bridge needed repairs, the NDP wouldn't even honour the agreement that required the government to pay for 50 per cent of the cost. Again, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are begging and pleading for us to fix their mistakes and their inaction.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before 2007 Saskatchewan was a very different place. Taxes were on the rise; jobs were being cut. Citizens were leaving in droves to pursue employment opportunities and build their families in neighbouring provinces. Saskatchewan led the nation by having

the worst job creation record coupled with steep population decline.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 our government has turned this province around and has it moving forward. Now we lead the nation in job creation and have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. To the member from Saskatoon Centre: why does your caucus continue to reject policies that are clearly keeping our province moving in the right direction?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. And to this member I just have one question for her. Actually . . . well, one. Does she agree with the report, the Howe report, about what a disaster this government has around Aboriginal employment? What does she think about that? Yes or no?

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again we see a motion brought forward to this House that is self-congratulatory, self-interested, and doesn't, you know . . . addresses more the Sask Party than Saskatchewan people. Certainly the role that working men and women have played in terms of creating an economy that is prosperous and innovative, the role that those working men and women have played is essential. But it's not recognized in this motion. And instead, Mr. Speaker, we see this government attacking the rights of working men and women with Bill 85. If they're going to live up to their words around wanting a prosperous Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, my question to the member for Regina Walsh Acres: why are they attacking working men and women with Bill 85?

[12:15]

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And in the spirit of how my colleague from Saskatoon Centre answered: why did you attack Saskatchewan for 16 years and drive everyone out of our province, lower wages, and want everyone to leave, Mr. Speaker? That will be my question to them. Why did 35,000 people pick to leave this province instead of stay under your reign of terror, across to members to the aisle?

Mr. Speaker, why on earth did they put farmers on the streets of Albert Street so that they would not be on their farms working because they didn't think they could make a go of it, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions that aren't being answered here today, but I'm very proud of our government's record. And I think I'll stand behind our government's record, our platform, ahead of the Lingenfelter platform any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

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

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP's low

expectations for this province is well documented. As people and jobs left in droves, NDP minister Eldon Lautermilch said, “What it looks like to me is more wealth for a similar number of people.” While the NDP will not admit to deliberately driving people out of this province, their record suggests something completely different.

Throughout 16 years of NDP government, they raised the PST three times. They raised the income tax twice, and business taxes four times. They also raised the fuel tax twice. Mr. Speaker, that is an awful lot of taxation.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: given the economic growth under our government, will the NDP finally admit that their tax increases scared people and business out of this great province?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I would suggest, that given the rare opportunity that those backbench members have to speak, that they shouldn’t read the rubbish that’s written for them on their caucus papers, and they should focus on the reality of this province. It’s sort of the sort of storytelling, Mr. Speaker, that we hear from the Minister of Finance who’s now won the Pinocchio Award, Mr. Speaker.

We have a lot of opportunity in this province. We need to do a better job supporting the workers of this province, the communities of this province, building out that strong Crown sector that’s been directly undermined and attacked by members opposite and truly capturing the opportunity, not this phony baloney sort of message that we hear from members opposite and denying the voice that they’ve been elected to provide to their constituents, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres to talk about why this government wants to attack working men and women with Bill 85, and whether or not they’ve played a role in . . .

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to make a few

brief remarks on Bill 604, which is the asbestos right-to-know Act, and we hope it’ll be called Howard’s law. It’s an amendment to *The Public Health Act* and so this is amendment legislation. It’s a piece of common sense legislation that will give our citizens more information so that they can make informed, safe decisions, especially when they’re working in some of these buildings.

Asbestos is deadly. It causes all kinds of problems, not necessarily always immediately. But over the long term we’ve seen some very, very difficult situations and we know that it’s absolutely deadly and a substance that we need to change the use of.

A mandatory registry of public buildings is necessary for people who use buildings. Students, patients, workers, they all have the right to know if there’s asbestos present in a building that they’re going to use. A voluntary registry doesn’t go far enough, and I think the minister has acknowledged that, because it’s not always clear which information should be provided and how much information. I think when we’re talking about the health of our people here in Saskatchewan, we need to be clear and we need to make sure that they’re protected.

As we know, this legislation is here because of Howard Willems and the Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization and other allies who have worked with him while he was still alive and now work with the organization. The work’s being carried out by many, many people. And we have guests that were introduced earlier and who are here now who are very supportive of this legislation going forward.

As the New Democratic Party opposition, we’re committed to getting this passed through committee in a timely manner. And I understand that’s the government’s position as well. We don’t want it watered down, so we’ll look very carefully at the amendments that are going to be proposed. And it’ll also be important that we get proper consultation with people in the committee process.

One of the things that we can do with certain types of legislation, and I believe this is one of them, is that our processes here in the legislature allow for public attention and public information to be given to the whole community through the committee process. And so I know that both sides will be working together to make sure that we can assist in that as well.

As I said before, we would like to have this bill named Howard’s bill to honour Howard Willems for what he’s done. I’d like to give a special thank you to all of the supporters and all the people who have been working very hard to have this asbestos registry go forward. We as New Democrats have been very honoured to work with all of the people who have been on this project. We know that the government has responded as well, and that’s one of the reasons we can have this bill going forward now.

So obviously we’ll be voting in favour of the legislation and we look forward to it being moved to the Human Services Committee as soon as possible so that the appropriate processes can be put in place to have the bill go forward. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is second reading of Bill No. . . . moved by the Opposition House Leader, excuse me, the Opposition Leader now, is 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: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be referred?

Mr. Broten: — I designate that Bill No. 604 be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — Bill No. 604 is committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader 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 House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:24.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

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Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General