



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

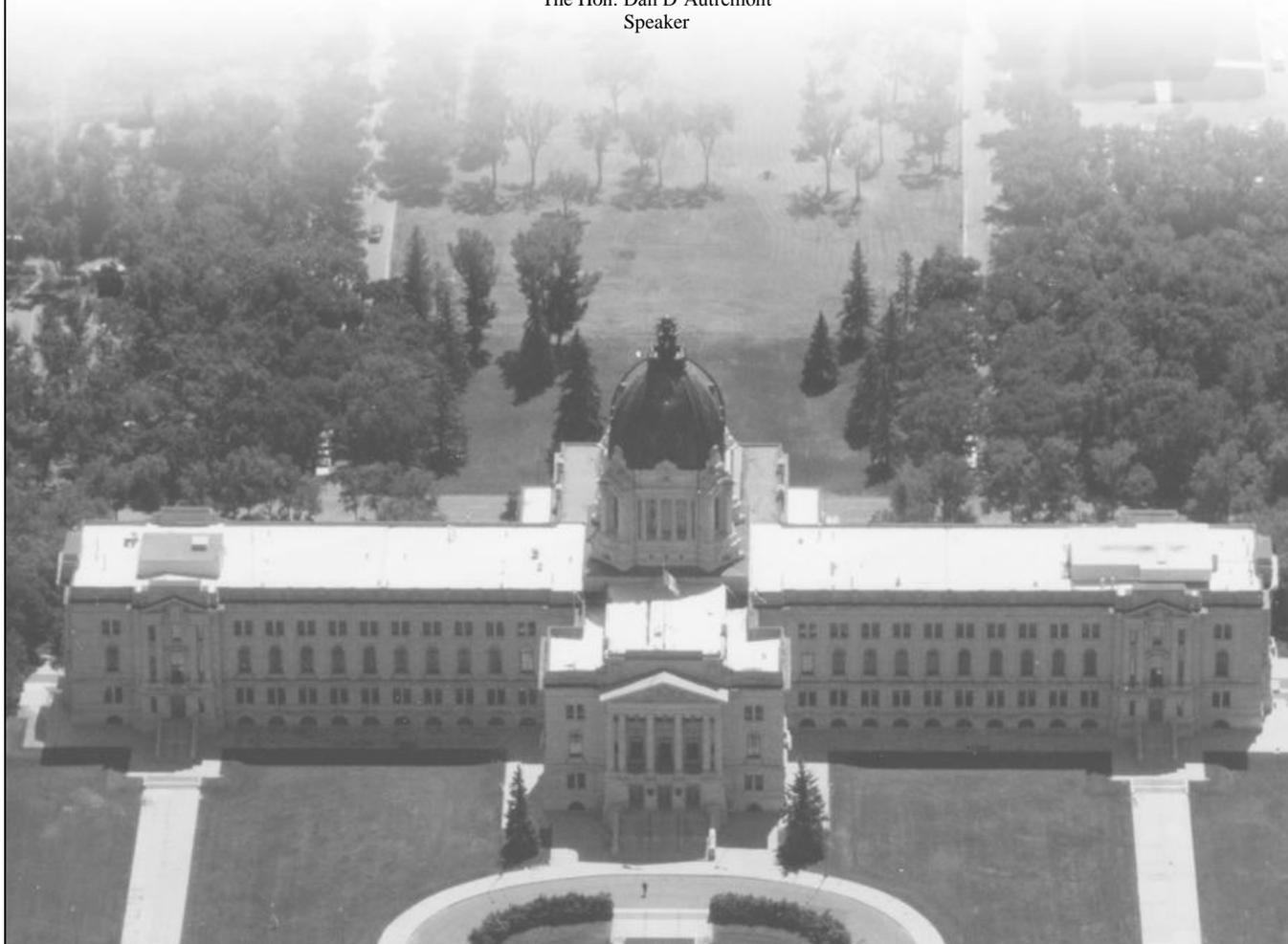
of the

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 — Cam Broten

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
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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
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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]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — At this time I would like to table the annual report for *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would seek leave for an extended introduction, please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for leave. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, in honour of Juno Week I would like to introduce some special musical guests in the legislature here today.

Seated in the government gallery, Mr. Speaker — and I'm going to ask them to give a wave when I introduce them — is Juno Award-winning singer, songwriter, and producer, Jason Plumb. Where is Jason sitting? Right there. Jason won a Juno for the best new group with the band the Waltons in 1994, and has built a solid 25-year career in the music business, most recently with his band The Willing.

Jason has written some great music over the years, including one titled "Here and Now" which is featured on an inspiring Tourism Saskatchewan video showcasing Saskatchewan musical talent and our stellar tourist attractions. Jason is currently working with the Regina-based Fly Points, producing their first studio album with the help from friend and fellow musician, Mike Thompson.

Mr. Speaker, also with us today from the band Fly Points . . . Where are the Fly Points? Sitting right there are Danny Goertz, lead vocal and guitar; Billy Vancise, lead guitar; Julien Johnson, keyboards. And I understand Graeme Watson, bass, and Robby Vancise who is the drummer were unable to be with us this morning, Mr. Speaker, because they're writing exams at university.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to hear Fly Points play just last month when we announced the lineup of public events happening in Regina and Moose Jaw as part of the 2013 Juno Week celebrations. According to their bios, I understand the five long-time friends will be graduating university this year,

with three of them completing engineering programs at the same time they're playing in this musical band, Mr. Speaker. It's quite an accomplishment.

Also joining us today from another rising Regina group are the members of The Dead South. We have them sitting here. We have Nate Hilts, guitar and lead vocals; Colton Crawford on the banjo; Scott Pringle, bass and backing vocals. And my understanding is Danny Kenyon on cello is not able to be here this morning. Mr. Speaker, they will be playing at the Regina International Airport today, greeting visitors as they arrive for the Juno Weekend. Their unique folk and bluegrass sound will be the first of many Saskatchewan bands heard by the hundreds of out-of-town guests.

Accompanying the musicians this morning, Mr. Speaker, is J.P. Ellson, the executive director of SaskMusic. J.P. was a driving force behind the winning bid to host the Junos as well as organizing the week-long festival.

Mr. Speaker, Juno Week runs through this weekend with scores of live music performances at venues around Regina and Moose Jaw, many showcasing talented Saskatchewan performers such as these folks joining us in the gallery today. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in welcoming these talented guests to their legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege on behalf of the official opposition to welcome the folks from Fly Points and The Dead South, and J.P. Ellson here today, and Jason Plumb.

I know on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] this morning . . . I tried my darnedest to get down to the Good Earth Cafe, and sure enjoyed listening from my apartment on my way to work before our caucus meeting, listening to you perform on CBC. You sure could feel the excitement. It's already . . . Well all week long, but this morning it seemed to be at a . . . It's building for this weekend. So it was great to hear you this morning and great to have you all here today.

I just want to say, Jason, too, I know your comments in *The StarPhoenix* today . . . This week is about music, but I know the film workers really appreciated your comments. So with that . . . And J.P., I think I welcomed you, but J.P.'s done a ton of work on Creative Saskatchewan and has done huge things for music here in Saskatchewan. So on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to your legislature and have tons of fun this weekend.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you 32 grade 12 students from the Winston Knoll school. They are accompanied by Scott McKillop, their teacher, and Tabitha Booth. Scott brings his grade 12 classes every year to the Legislative Assembly. So thank you again for making the time.

I was sitting here looking up seeing 32 students, and then I didn't realize that the musicians at first were sitting in front. I thought we have got some very mature-looking grade 12 students. So hopefully in fact the students will have an opportunity to maybe mix and mingle a little bit with the musical artists. So thank you very much for coming out today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, I'd like to introduce some individuals who have joined us today to see third reading of Howard's Law later on this morning. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Brenda Baergen, Howard Willems's wife; Jesse Todd, Howard's stepson, Chair of the Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization and also an employee with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Marianne Hladun, the regional executive vice-president for Public Service Alliance of Canada, prairie region; Dan Demers who is the national director for public issues with the Canadian Cancer Society; and here in Saskatchewan, Donna Ziegler, the director of cancer control, as well as Donna Pasiechnik, the manager of media and government relations here in the province as well for the Cancer Society.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have been working very hard over a long period of time to improve awareness and safety measures as it relates to cancer. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to welcome them here today, and ask all members to thank them for the work that they have been doing and thank them in advance for the work they will continue to do in the months and years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to take the opportunity to join with the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming our special guests here this morning. I think it's an important day for the province, and we're so very fortunate that they could be here with us to really witness something historic in our legislature and something that will set the standard for the rest of the country. And so I just want to join with the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming our guests that are joining us here today.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and ask for an introduction to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, an individual seated in your gallery. I'm speaking of Jenna Orban. Jenna has been working with me in the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. If I've been sounding especially intelligent or eloquent, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you'll figure that out. And if I go back to my normal sort of status, Mr. Speaker, you'll know that tomorrow is the last day of Jenna working with me.

So she did what she could, Mr. Speaker. But it's been a real pleasure working with Jenna. I should point out for the students in the gallery as well that Jenna is a Winston Knoll grad, class of 2009. So Winston Knoll students, please keep the legislative internship program in mind.

Going to the University of Regina and will finish a degree in 2014. Jenna's been a real pleasure to work with and I welcome the opportunity to very publicly state the great work that she has done in this and the work she'll, I'm sure, do with the member from Saskatoon Fairview on the other side of the internship. But please join with me, Mr. Speaker, and all members in welcoming Jenna Orban to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's in a similar vein that I rise today and ask all members to join me in welcoming Michelle Neufeld to her Legislative Assembly.

Michelle is a University of Saskatchewan student. She has a major in sociology, a minor in political studies and, over the course of the last number of weeks, she's been working with me. She's done very, very solid research. She offers important insights, especially into key areas of First Nations and Métis peoples within Saskatchewan and well beyond. And I'm delighted to see that she's going to be joining the member for Saskatoon Nutana. It will be an environment that will continue to improve her skills and tap into her expertise.

And so on behalf of the people of Saskatoon Greystone where she's had an opportunity to come and spend a little bit of time, we want to say a special thanks to Michelle for her service. And we wish her all the best as she continues not just in the internship program but into her studies and hopefully into a career in the public service. So, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I ask all members to join me in offering Michelle our sincere thanks for her service.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, to all members of the legislature, I too would like to introduce my intern with the Saskatchewan legislative internship program, Ms. Paula Steckler.

Paula's been with me since January and we've had lots of fun tackling all kinds of things. She's written a member's statement for me. I think one of the biggest things she has done for me is researching traffic safety laws across Canada — which I think will better improve the outcomes for the committee that's in place right now — and to touring and learning a little bit more about Saskatoon Riversdale, the community that I'm so proud to represent. Paula has been eager and excited about what I think sometimes are the most mundane tasks. This is an enthusiastic young woman. She's been eager to learn and willing to tackle any project and I will miss Paula, but I know she'll have a great learning experience on the other side of the House. So I'd ask all my colleagues to join with me in saying thank you to Paula and wishing her well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Request leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce a number of producers and agriculture industry stakeholders and leaders seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask them to give us a wave as I introduce them: Morgan Nunweiler, Chair of Sask Pulse Growers; Lee Moats, director with Sask Pulse Growers; Brett Halstead, past Chair and current director of SaskCanola; Levi Wood, new president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association; Reed Andrew, new president of the Western Canadian Agribition, Canadian Western Agribition; Marty Seymour, CEO [chief executive officer] of Agribition; Bryce Thompson, director of Agribition; Rob O'Connor, show manager with Canada's Farm Progress Show; Mark Elford, Chair of Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association; Chad MacPherson, general manager, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had some very good Stats Canada export numbers come out. They indicated that 2012 was a record year for Saskatchewan exports and we have now surpassed BC [British Columbia] as the fourth largest exporting province. Agriculture products are a large part of these numbers, accounting for over 30 per cent of our total provincial exports. And with \$11.2 billion in ag exports in 2012, we are the largest agriculture exporting province in Canada again this year.

These strong numbers are thanks to the hard work of industry and people seated in the gallery today. I'd ask all members to welcome these important guests to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to rise and welcome the who's who of the agriculture and cattle industry in Saskatchewan here to our Legislative Assembly this morning, and I hope you've had fruitful discussions with the minister. I certainly have enjoyed the opportunity to work with some of you already in my role as critic for Agriculture, and look forward to working with the rest of you in that role.

So on behalf on the official opposition, welcome to your Legislative Assembly and I wish you the best with your meetings with the minister.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to ask for leave for a short introduction, but I don't think I need that.

Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce another band that's here from Regina, from south Regina, and that's Indigo Joseph, sitting up in the east gallery. Indigo Joseph is Etienne Fletcher, Eric Tessier, Byron

Boutin-Maloney, and Sean McCanell, and they're accompanied by Connie Yakimchuk.

Indigo Joseph will be playing in JunoFest and be part of the celebration. But this is a local Regina band like Fly Points and the others. On this side of the House, I think all of us are excited about the music that's here. We want to thank J.P. Ellson for all the work that he has done with all of his various committees. But we especially want to welcome a young, new band, Indigo Joseph.

[10:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't take the chance to join with the members in welcoming the musicians that have joined us today, specifically the bands.

And we should probably take the opportunity, as well as introducing them, to ask through them that we extend a warm welcome on behalf of this legislature to all of the musicians from across the country that'll be coming to the Queen City to enjoy the Junos here. Mr. Speaker, it's obviously going to be a very, very important event for this in the life of our capital city and the province, and we're going to be proud to showcase it.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to thank Fly Points for their example. We have a son who's had a band, is determined to make music his career, and we're encouraging that. We also encourage him to have a plan B, and now I have an example to go back with when I see him later this day. Mr. Speaker, welcome to our guests here to the Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to welcome 21 master's and Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] students from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. They're seated at the back of the west gallery.

Here today are Monica Brar, Matt Dow, Nicole Callihoo, Nancy Carlson, Jaime Leonard, Lokpriy Sharma, Kathy Johnson Jo Anne Relf-Eckstein, Darcy Overland, Daniel Dodd, Gulnaz M., Yuzhu Lui, Hongsen Zow, Mohammad Adel Panihi, Giovanni Bastidas, Ana Moldonado, Max Poelzer, Tom Lynch, Phillip Lashley, Heemel Dutta, and Shokoufa Toukhi.

They are in Regina today as part of the activities for the annual Johnson-Shoyama Tansley Lecture. I will have the opportunity to meet with them shortly after question period, so I look forward to hearing about their experiences in graduate school. And I also look forward to hearing their commentary on how badly mispronounced I have done with their names. In any event, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of students to their legislature today.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to ask for leave to make an extended critique of the minister's

pronunciation of the names from Johnson-Shoyama, but I think he did a fine job, so we'll proceed as planned.

I just want to join with the minister in welcoming the graduate students from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy to their Legislative Assembly. Certainly the Tansley Lecture is a pretty serious high point in the year of Johnson-Shoyama. And I look forward to joining them, with the minister, at the dinner later today. But welcome these individuals to their Legislative Assembly, please.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'd like to introduce my legislative intern, Simon Hutton. Similar to my colleague from Saskatoon Greystone and my colleagues from Saskatoon Riversdale and Regina Elphinstone, I want to thank the students for coming out and helping us.

Simon and I have had some very interesting experiences. We got to go to Balgonie to watch the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in some interesting highway conditions. And we also joined the chamber event, the chamber address by John Hopkins, and it was a very interesting speech. And Simon always has some great feedback when we go to events. And he got to go to the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] event also.

And we've learned a lot from each other, and I appreciate his help. And I appreciate him helping with member statements, and helping go to the constituency office and seeing how Walsh Acres is doing. And we had a great tour of Regina Walsh Acres one of our first days, and it was interesting to see his feedback and having some good conversation with him. And I thank him very much for all the help he gave me. And I know that you're going to help the person on the other side of the hall here in the next couple of months as well. So he's a great young man and I just want to say thank you for all your help.

The Speaker: — It's my privilege to inform the House of an important event that occurred three score and five years ago. Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Patrick "Scooter" Shaw, was born.

As well I would like to inform the House that our Page, Breanna Goertzen, this is her last day as she is moving on to the Ministry of Environment to keep an eye on any potential forest fires in the Cypress Hills. So I'd ask the members to thank her for her service to the Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today to present a petition in reference to cellphone coverage. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nation along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans

Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation along with the community of Turnor Lake, including the all neighbouring communities in area.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition impressively are from all throughout Saskatchewan. But on this particular page, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from the Canoe Lake area, which includes Canoe Lake, Cole Bay, and Jans Bay. 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*. We know the employment Act was introduced in December 2012 as a sweeping rewrite of our labour laws, including but not limited to *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and *The Trade Union Act*.

And we know that since it was introduced, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interests of due diligence. And if it does become the new labour law of our province, working people — particularly young workers, immigrant workers, and other vulnerable workers — will suffer from a hasty watering down of our current labour standards which set the mandatory minimums for all Saskatchewan workers:

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, people signing this petition come from Pleasantdale, Saskatoon, Vanscoy, Regina, Regina Beach. And, Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you very much.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Local Band Performs at JunoFest

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as some of you may know, I have many eclectic interests including the independent music scene in Regina. And I'm proud to have Indigo Joseph, a local Regina-based band, present with us here in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, Indigo Joseph is a four-piece band consisting of Etienne Fletcher, Eric Tessier, Byrun Boutin-Maloney, and Sean McCanell. This is a talented group of people, Mr. Speaker, as they each play multiple instruments ranging from the standard guitar, bass, and drums to the harmonica, various bongos, and non-traditional instruments like industrial tubing.

They describe their music as a high-energy blend of Prairie rock and roll with engaging lyrics that are delivered in both English and French. They have a passion for storytelling and entertaining their audience with a dynamic live show.

Mr. Speaker, there'll be plenty of opportunity to see Indigo Joseph this weekend as they will be taking part in JunoFest. They'll be playing tonight at the main stage showcase at 6:15 and tomorrow at The Owl with Rococode, Hannah Georgas, and Yukon Blonde.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating the members of Indigo Joseph on their success. I wish them the best of luck this weekend and I look forward to following their success as they grow as a band. And I encourage all members to celebrate our Saskatchewan and Canadian artists as we all party with the Juno Awards this weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Junos Week

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned during the introduction of guests, this is Junos Week. In a recent blog, Andrea Warner, a music writer from Vancouver, writes, and I quote:

Several weeks ago, I was tasked with vetting Regina's submission for round one of CBC Music's *Searchlight* to discover Canada's best new artist. My ears almost fell off in surprise at how much undiscovered talent there is in Regina's burgeoning music scene. It's time to declare Regina as the next music capital of Canada.

She also says these bands owe some of their success to the province's commitment to putting money into its music scenes. In her interview with Derek Bachman of SaskMusic, he says investment dollars help bands tour, market, and perfect their craft, all of which ultimately puts Regina on the map and attracts big business to the city.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud our government has invested \$1.5 million in this prominent event that will generate economic activity and showcase this great province.

Some of the events that people can attend this week include: Juno Cup, Juno Fan Fare, Juno Songwriters' Circle, JunoFest, and finally, the 2013 Juno Awards show, Sunday evening, which will be broadcast live across Canada on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.].

Mr. Speaker, the Junos are here, and let me tell you, it's going to get loud. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce celebrated the success of the local entrepreneurs

last night with their 12th annual Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards. The award categories ranged from community involvement to business innovation to job creation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of our communities is the creativity and innovation of our entrepreneurs. This innovation takes many forms, and Yvette Moore's contribution to the community in Moose Jaw is one example of that with her gallery and café showcasing the creativity of local artists. At last night's gala, Yvette was awarded Business Leader of the Year.

Other awards went out to the Moose Jaw Co-op Association for community involvement, Alison Anderson for Young Entrepreneur for her consulting enterprise, Masyndic Consulting Ltd. Wow Factor Media won the Marketing Award, and Yoga Loft took home the award for new business venture. W.J. Jones & Son Funeral Home was recognized for their outstanding work by receiving both the Customer Service and the Business of the Year Awards.

Mr. Speaker, local businesses are vital to our communities, and I am thankful for the opportunity to recognize their contributions in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in congratulating the recipients of the Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards and to thank the Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce for hosting these important awards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I along with the Minister of Environment and the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Moose Jaw North actually had the honour of attending the 2013 Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards presented by the chamber of commerce and Mosaic. The 12th annual banquet honoured businesses in 10 different categories and also singled out a local business leader.

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

W.J. Jones & Son Funeral Home was presented with both the Customer Service Award and the Business of the Year Award. Saskatchewan artist Yvette Moore was honoured for her long-time promotion of her city and her dedication to the city with the 2013 Business Leader of the Year Award. People are coming to Moose Jaw to live and to work because they see the opportunity and success in our great city. This success is in a great part thanks to the hard work of the businesses and entrepreneurs in Moose Jaw.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating all of the winners and nominees for their diligent work in building a positive business climate in Moose Jaw. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for

Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Agricultural Market Development Program

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today our Agriculture minister, along with the federal government, announced \$9 million in funding over the next five years for a new market development program.

Mr. Speaker, the market development program builds on the previous Saskatchewan international market development program. This program will help businesses, organizations, and producer groups to develop and expand their international and domestic markets for their agricultural products. It is designed to increase Saskatchewan's market presence, increase the number and value of incoming trade missions, and open and protect and expand market access for Saskatchewan products, and build capacity in the industry to help broaden Saskatchewan's marketing reach.

Mr. Speaker, this program is very important to Saskatchewan, as we are an exporting province. In 2012 Saskatchewan exported a record high \$11.2 billion worth of agri-food products and remains Canada's top agri-food exporter for the second year in a row. Our government has set some ambitious goals for agriculture in the Saskatchewan plan for growth. This includes increasing our agricultural exports by 50 per cent to \$15 billion by the year 2020.

Mr. Speaker, with programming such as the market development program, the hard work of our Saskatchewan producers, and by working with our industry partners, we are well on our way to achieving this goal. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

20th Annual Parkinson's Curling Classic

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you. I rise in the House today to recognize an event I had the honour of attending last weekend in Regina. April is Parkinson's month, and last Saturday the annual Parkinson's Curling Classic was held once again at the Callie Curling Club, with silent and live auctions taking place the evening prior at the Victoria Club.

Mr. Speaker, \$54,000 was raised this year, with a 20-year running total of \$874,000. All the money raised goes directly to Parkinson's research in our province. Doctors Ali and Alex Rajput are world-leading researchers who do their work right here in Saskatchewan and are able to continue their work with the help of this event.

The event was started by founding members Hank Dorsch, Harry Duke, Sally Cross and Jim Brass, who were recognized at the auction for their 20 years of dedication. This group wanted to do something to help Parkinson's research when their dear friends, Bill Clarke and Howard Spence, were diagnosed with this terrible disease. Once again in attendance was Mrs. Phyllis Fox, mother of actor Michael J Fox, who has been attending the classic for years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the committee Chair Debra Dorsch-Poitras, her team of volunteers, and all the participants who took part in another successful Parkinson's Curling Classic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Congratulations to Melfort Collegiate Cheer Team

Mr. Phillips: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand today to offer congratulations to the Melfort Collegiate Cheer Team, who captured first place in the Scholastic Senior Small category, and they were also named overall grand champions in the Scholastic category at the Saskatchewan Cheerleading Association provincials. This is the second title win for the team since the program began. The title of grand champion goes to the squad with the highest overall score out of all the school senior teams in every level. The Melfort squad was also chosen the Spirit Award winners for demonstrating the highest energy, spirit, and encouragement on the competition floor.

Members of the team are Holi Kurtenbach, Courtney Durell, Emily Neigel, Kyra McLellan, Shea Fidyk, Teagan Kulyk, Mack Kerr, Alex Fecke, Kristin Puetz, Patience Whitelaw, Kayla Puetz, Kara Brown, Lauryn Martin, Taylor Barnett, Danielle Simms, Jasmin Ogren, Danielle Letain, Akura Wallington, Megan Ogren, and coaches Lindsay Meyer, Raime Eggerman, and Leah Taylor.

I think part of the excitement is the teams they have to cheer for, but I'll leave that for another day. So please join me in congratulating these young ladies on their accomplishments.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Long-Term Care and Home Care

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few weeks, we've heard many stories, Mr. Speaker, of seniors' care that just hasn't been up to the standards we expect for our parents, we expect for our grandparents.

Last week Carrie Klassen came to the legislature to demand better seniors' care. Carrie's mother lives in a care facility here in Regina and, because of chronic understaffing, Carrie has seen seniors left unattended on toilets for hours, Mr. Speaker, has seen calls not answered for help, Mr. Speaker, as well, seniors missing their baths for a number of weeks. The facility was so short-staffed, Mr. Speaker, that at one point there was one staff person responsible for 19 residents.

The sad reality is that Carrie's experience with her mother's care is not isolated. My question to the Premier: does he agree that staffing levels in care facilities are a major problem, and what is he doing to address that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The government has believed for

some time since it was first elected that having an increased complement of front-line health care workers is absolutely the priority that should guide our provincial health system. And more than that, we've acted on it, Mr. Speaker, with the recruitment efforts around nurses: 1,000 more nurses practising in the province today, more doctors now than when we were first elected to government, with more work to be done, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the minister has met with Ms. Klassen with respect to this specific case that he referenced. He's also provided some clear direction to the regions. Some of the homes have residents' councils. He wants the regions, he's asked the regions to be in constant contact with those councils to ensure that we're monitoring, we're watching for situations like this, we're preventing situations like this.

For those that don't have the councils, Mr. Speaker, the minister has directed that the CEOs of the regions get on the floor of those facilities — help facilitate those councils, frankly — and also just be very much more hands-on in terms of quality of care in those long-term facilities.

So in addition to the government's long-term plan of having the right complement, an increased complement of health care workers, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work very hard through the minister's efforts, through the regions, through the CEOs and the front-line staff to be vigilant and to be very, very diligent about the care that our seniors are getting either at home or through home care or in institutions.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following the sharing of Carrie's story about her mother's care, CBC program, *Blue Sky*, had a call-in show where many other people called in with their concerns about chronic understaffing.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just family members who have called in. It's also front-line workers. One woman called in to say her job at the care home in Saskatoon was the hardest of her career because they were always short of staff, and she felt she didn't have the time to care for the residents, the seniors as she wanted to. A recent nursing grad said that her classmates avoided placements in care facilities, Mr. Speaker, because of the stress that they were placed under and because they were unable to care for residents in the way that they truly wanted to, Mr. Speaker.

These kinds of reviews, Mr. Speaker, are not what we want for our health care system, not what we want for our grandparents who are living in care facilities. My question to the Premier: what is the Sask Party's plan to improve seniors' care so that families do not have these stories of neglect for their loved ones?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, again I want to be very clear. More than just talking about the issue of human resources in the health care system — which frankly is what we did get from the previous administration who were even hesitant to even set any goals around recruiting the proper number of nurses for the

province, never mind the number that we could have deployed and have working in long-term care facilities in the province — so, Mr. Speaker, more than talking about that, as the opposition used to do in government, we've been acting on it, Mr. Speaker.

We know there's more work to be done with respect to long-term care institutions in the province. The minister has undertaken the directions to the regions that I've already answered in the first question, Mr. Speaker. And you know, with respect to a very vigorous assessment of the level of care and the complement of staff, I think the process is ongoing. It's going to continue under the leadership of this government.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do think the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour for both sides of this House. From that side of the House when they were in government, we got talk and no action.

From this side of the House over the last five years, it has been markedly different, whether it's wait times for surgery, whether it's recruiting more nurses, whether it's more doctors practising in the province, whether it's STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] providing better care for rural Saskatchewan that have emergencies, Mr. Speaker, this is the record of the government. Work will continue on into the future to ensure better care for seniors either at home or in institutions.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, physicians and RNs [registered nurses] are hugely important to our health care system and in delivering care. So too are LPNs [licensed practical nurses] and care aids in delivering care to seniors who are living in long-term care facilities.

It's not only care facilities where we see concerns, Mr. Speaker, it's also with home care. Yesterday the member from Lakeview raised the case of Michael Lilley, a senior in Regina who has had his home care cut off by the health region only to eventually be told to find private help and to submit the bills to Social Services. It's a case of red tape, Mr. Speaker. It's a case of added bureaucracy. And it's a case of adding additional burdens onto a senior who frankly deserves so much better.

I was happy to hear the minister say that the health region should have been more caring for this man, Mr. Speaker. But again this is not an isolated incident. It is systemic, as home care services are being scaled back because of the Sask Party government's budget decisions, Mr. Speaker. Home care is a vital component to our health care system. It's preventative. It's affordable, Mr. Speaker, and it allows individuals to have healthier lives and stay in their homes longer. It's simply the common sense thing to do.

My question to the Premier: why has the Sask Party government let the quality and the scope of home care slide in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to stand and correct the errors made in the Leader of the Opposition's preamble, Mr. Speaker. In fact while he does

acknowledge that physician numbers are up in this province and nursing numbers are up, all health care provider numbers are up in this province.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the complement that are represented by the health sciences, up 21 per cent in this province in only six years, Mr. Speaker. When you look in general at regional health authority and affiliate staffing numbers, up 12 per cent. Over 3,300 new employees working in the health care system, Mr. Speaker. And in fact the budget, as I was able to indicate yesterday, up to health regions in six years of \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker, up nearly 50 per cent than just six years ago, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are adding new programs to complement the work that is already provided within the system, Mr. Speaker, including a pilot program that I was able to discuss yesterday in this very House, Mr. Speaker. We hope to be able to demonstrate and pilot the success of that program in this city and expand it to other regions in the short term.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what we see in Saskatchewan by the Sask Party government is a pattern of neglect when it comes to seniors' care here in the province. Mr. Speaker, I will take the word of Michael Lilley who had his home care cut off. I will take the word of Carrie Klassen who has been dealing with her mother's care, Mr. Speaker. I will take the word of people calling into shows talking about the concerns that they have for their loved ones. And, Mr. Speaker, I will take the word of the Provincial Auditor who issued a report last December highlighting concerns in care facilities, one being, Mr. Speaker, the lack of proper sanitation and access to soap in some instances.

Mr. Speaker, what we see is the Sask Party government stubbornly ignoring these issues. My question to the Premier: seniors in this province deserve so much better. Why is the Sask Party government not making seniors' care a top priority?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, under this government, seniors are getting better care than the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. We are replacing long-term care facilities that were long neglected by the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker. They closed facilities across this province, Mr. Speaker — 16 facilities, 1,200 beds that were closed by the NDP when they were in government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have increased benefits to seniors in this province, including a seniors' income plan, which I don't believe was increased in 16 years of NDP government, Mr. Speaker. We have increased that each and every year that this government has been in office, Mr. Speaker. And we have a personal care home benefit for those seniors that are living in private personal care homes, Mr. Speaker, to subsidize their care. Mr. Speaker, I will gladly stand and defend this government's record on seniors' care compared to the members opposite.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Riversdale.

Support for Children in Care

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's Children's Advocate report shows there's a lack of staff in Social Services to ensure children are safe and protected. To support children and their caregivers in group homes, extended family care, and foster families, the Children's Advocate points out there needs to be appropriate levels of ministry staffing to prevent problems.

Mr. Speaker, it's a clear problem with a common sense solution. When a caseworker is overloaded, they just don't have the time and the resources to do everything that's asked of them for the children. When will this minister take the recommendations of the Children's Advocate seriously? When will she put in place the resources so that children are safe, supported, and protected from all forms of harm?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And first of all, I'd like to thank the advocate for the report that was put out this morning because I know that he constantly has a vision of having children safe in mind, as do we.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had the opportunity to tell the public we were changing the name from the child and youth agenda to the child and family agenda to ensure that we're talking about not just the child by themselves, but with the family.

And the results of the work that we've been doing in this last six years means that children living in low-income homes is down by 35 per cent. Child caseload numbers are down by 19 per cent, and the number of front-line staff is up by 90 workers, Mr. Speaker. There are more workers and there are fewer children. The contact between the various caseloads and the workers is improving all the time.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know there's always more work to do. We know there is. But at the same time, our goal is to make sure we support the families, and the apprehension of children is not our goal.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Is the minister meeting the recommended standards for children in care in contact, is a big question here. This is not the first time the Children's Advocate has raised how the staffing levels are not meeting the needs of children and their caregivers. The report says the habitual overloading of child protection and family services caseworkers is making problems worse. But the report also says reducing the caseloads would help prevent problems. It says, "The return on investment of giving caseworkers simply more time to spend with children and youth in care would be significant and could prevent many of the concerns referred to our office."

Mr. Speaker, how does the minister justify reducing her staff when the Children's Advocate clearly states reducing the caseloads is the way to prevent problems for children and youth

in care?

[10:45]

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, maybe I just have to say more clearly to the member opposite, the number of children in care is down. It's down 19 per cent. The number of front-line workers that we have in this province is up. That gives us the opportunity to make sure that the children are being contacted more often, that their families are being supported, and that there are work within the communities and the community-based organizations like 601 Outreach and SIGN [The Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours] in Yorkton and CUMFI [Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.] in Saskatoon, FoxValley here in Regina. They're all groups that are helping us and support us with our families and our children.

Mr. Speaker, our goal as government is to ensure that we support the family to ensure that they all have the opportunity to be part of our beautiful province. And, Mr. Speaker, I would think that that would be what the member opposite would want too.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not me saying it's the problem; it's the Children's Advocate. The Children's Advocate has said it to me, to the ministers, and in his report. Children and families need regular contact and the necessary supports from their caseworkers. This would prevent problems and keep kids from falling through the cracks.

The staff on the front lines do the best they can with the resources that they have. But the minister has chosen to cut 145 positions in her ministry in the last two years. She had those resources in her budget, but she chose to cut them. The Children's Advocate clearly states lowering the caseloads for front-line staff is the best way to connect with families and children, provide the right resources, and prevent problems.

Why would the minister cut her staff when the Children's Advocate recommends exactly the opposite?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I may, I would like to try to answer the hon. member's question because I want to add something that you will not hear the minister say in the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we recognize more work needs to be done. We accept the report of the child advocate. We know we're going to focus on the recommendations that are in the report. Mr. Speaker, what the child advocate also said this very morning when he presented his report, while acknowledging that more work needs to be done, is that, and I'm quoting now, "June Draude's leadership should be commended," Mr. Speaker.

Why would he say this, Mr. Speaker? He might say it because there's 53 million more dollars invested precisely in these

issues because the minister raises them at cabinet. The cabinet supports it, the government supports it. He might say that because there are 90 more workers on the front line helping kids in need in this province because of the efforts of this minister. He might say it, Mr. Speaker, because children living in low-income families is down by 35 per cent, child welfare caseloads down by 19 per cent, and a 60 per cent reduction of children in foster homes, Mr. Speaker. That's the record of the minister and the government.

We know there is more work to do, but it stacks up very favourably from anything we got when members opposite were in government.

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

Monitoring Forests for Fires

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government doesn't seem to be taking fighting fires seriously. The Sask Party's budget will cut the staff who work in the towers that monitor Saskatchewan's forests for fires.

At the end of this fire season, these employees will no longer be on the front lines watching out for forest fires. They'll be replaced, Mr. Speaker, by video cameras. The new plan involves replacing real people with years of experience of alerting officials of forest fires, with a video camera that will still need to be operated, maintained, and constantly watched.

Mr. Speaker, why would the Sask Party government replace the employees who watch for forest fires with video cameras?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the member opposite. It is an important question. It's something of great concern to this government. There have been concerns raised by occupational health and safety as far as the wildfire detection towers for quite some time.

As we examine what's happening across North America, when we look at places like Oregon and others and try to examine best practices, we understand that there is technology available, there is automation that can actually improve the detection, and that is what we are looking at. We're consulting with those that work in the industry.

The 42-tower network will be upgraded to infrared camera technology with centralized oversights which will provide safety, improve detection, reliability, and efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, replacing front-line staff with video cameras just isn't common sense. A video camera will require a technician to install it and then continuously maintain it on the tower. It also requires that there be a signal sent and received from the camera to some station to monitor the video

which requires a fail-safe communication system. It simply cannot break down, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these fire towers are in the forest for a common sense reason. The staff who are on alert for fires have training and equipment to monitor the forest and when they're replaced, their expertise will be lost. Why would the Sask Party government put the safety of northern forest communities at risk and rely on video cameras instead of experts at forest suppression to monitor the forest fire conditions of this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much again for the question. The safety of those individuals is of prime concern to members of this government and to the Ministry of Environment. Those operations are single individuals operating in a very dangerous situation. This has been documented by occupational health and safety. This again is where the industry is going across North America. I know SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] and others are asking for two people to be put in the towers at each time, but again, when we look at the situations, even that does not relay the concerns of occupational health and safety.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House, members opposite and on this side can be rest assured, we will do what is in the utmost importance of safety for those individuals and the efficiency of the operation as well. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to look outside the boundaries of Canada to find good reasons why this is not a good idea. Australia tried these automated cameras and found the results to be disastrous. After a horrendous bushfire season in 2009, the Australian government commissioned a study of the cameras, using real field tests of their accuracy and ability compared to real staff. In this study the Australians concluded:

Detection by the camera systems was slower and less reliable than by a trained human observer. At present it's not possible to rely on cameras as a sole primary detection method, and they are not a suitable replacement for trained fire observers.

Mr. Speaker, if early fire detection by people in the forest is superior in all ways to video cameras, the province should use real staff. Why would the Sask Party use an inferior technology proven in a scientific study to not work to replace real forest fire suppression staff with video cameras?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question, although once again the member opposite has her facts wrong. The technology has been operationally proven in North America and can provide more extensive and reliable information to the wildlife management program. The cameras of course can operate 24 hours a day,

seven days a week, operate night and day, Mr. Speaker. This will enable the program to improve its responses to new wildfires. Improved response will allow for better control of wildfires to be controlled: smaller sizes, less costly.

And staff that work alone, Mr. Speaker, are a concern for us — travel to isolated locations, and they climb 80 to 90 feet up in a tower numerous times. Indeed it is, and I'm sure members opposite will agree, a very high, risky situation. Automation will reduce the risk in order to prevent unnecessary workplace accidents. And as we know in this House, there's too many accidents happening in this province. This is an action that we're doing that we believe is in the best interests of those in the employ of the Ministry of Environment and the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Funding for Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday evening the president of SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] sent out an email to the institution staff about SIAST's 2013-14 operating and capital plan. From that email, I quote:

The 2012-13 SIAST operating and capital plan noted that a gap between revenue and expense this year would be covered by accumulated surpluses. At the end of this fiscal year, those surpluses will have been depleted. SIAST received a 3.1 per cent provincial general grant increase in fiscal year 2013-14. However, if SIAST were to maintain status quo operations, we would continue to face a revenue shortfall of \$5.4 million. This situation is not acceptable nor sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how this unacceptable, unsustainable situation will impact the students and staff at SIAST?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House that we have provided record funding for SIAST, Mr. Speaker. And we have increased funding since '07-08 by 23 per cent, by \$147 million. We are fully supportive of SIAST in their efforts to maximize funding dollars and to ensure stability.

I have a quote from Dr. Rosia, who said on budget day, "We're getting more money, which is great news for us. For us, it's all about creating jobs." Mr. Speaker, we know that our various post-secondary institutions are going through either a transforming process or internal review. Those are healthy processes to go through. If there is extended workers that are affected or impacted by that, we'll work with them to try and find alternate employment. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the members opposite, we are fully supportive of the efforts of SIAST.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, SIAST is yet another example of a post-secondary institution in Saskatchewan that is confronted with tough budget decisions to be made in the days and weeks ahead. This is a hard reality that is very much at odds with Sask Party spin. And worse, it doesn't line up with the huge expectations the province has for SIAST, and it doesn't support the role that SIAST plays in giving Saskatchewan people the tools to get the job done to make the economy go and grow.

Last year, the budget shortfall for SIAST was made up by spending the reserves. Can the minister explain how the budget shortfall will be made up at SIAST this year? Will students be forced to pay more? Will programs be cut? Will staff be laid off? How will this work?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd indicated in my first answer that there was a 23 per cent operating increase since '07-08. Since '07-08, we have provided for SIAST an additional \$31.1 million in capital funding. Over the last five years, Mr. Speaker, there has been a 73 per cent increase in the number of Saskatchewan apprentices receiving technical training.

Mr. Speaker, between 1994 and the year 2007, the NDP allowed tuition at SIAST to increase by 263 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that's the record of the members opposite.

We're going through a rebuilding and a rehabilitation process at all of our universities, all of our post-secondary institutions and, Mr. Speaker, the process is going very well. And, Mr. Speaker, under the members opposite, it did not go particularly well. And, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to our institutions and to the students that go there.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the budget shortfall at SIAST last year forced the institution to make it up by spending reserves. And to quote the president of SIAST again, he has said that "If SIAST were to maintain status quo operations, we would continue to face a revenue shortfall of \$5.4 million. This situation is not acceptable nor sustainable."

The SIAST budget shortfall this year will demand a contingency planning exercise. Again to the minister: can he explain to the people of Saskatchewan how this unsustainable, unacceptable budgetary situation will impact the ability of SIAST to respond to industry to get the job done? And how will it impact students and staff as they seek to get the tools to get the job done in the Saskatchewan economy?

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

[11:00]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, our institutions, such as SIAST and the regional colleges, are graduating more students than ever before. Mr. Speaker, those students are performing a valuable service in our economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I can advise you, we on this side of the House take a great deal of pride in U of S [University of Saskatchewan], U of R [University of Regina], SIAST, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. Those people are preparing the next generation and they're doing a very good job. And, Mr. Speaker, we are providing them amazing amounts of resources, far better than what happened when the members opposite were in.

Mr. Speaker, another example in our regional colleges. We've increased operating funding by \$55 million this year; \$51 million for capital funding since '07-08. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a very good record with regard to our Aboriginal First Nations students: 4,681 students enrolled in '11-12 with over 50 per cent of those students being First Nations and Métis. Mr. Speaker, I'm a proud graduate of SIAST. We do a good job there, and the people there are to be commended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 80, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that this bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 80, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed with third reading. I recognize the Government House Leader.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 80 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012*

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 80, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 71 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* and that the bill now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 77 — *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Human Services Committee.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill 604 with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 604 and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave is granted. When shall the amendments be read the first time? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 604 — *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*

Mr. Broten: — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition that the amendments now be read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — I recognize . . . The Leader of the Opposition may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 604 — *The Public Health (Howard's Law) Amendment Act*

Mr. Broten: — I move that Bill No. 604, *The Public Health*

(Howard's Law) Amendment Act be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition that Bill No. 604, *The Public Health (Howard's Law) Amendment Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Should I do it now, or wait?

The Speaker: — This is orders of the day, so you do it now. I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday during statements by members the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley made a statement about access to physician services. And I quote her comment, which is not correct, and I would ask that it be corrected by the member. On page 3261 there's a statement she makes:

Since 2007-2008, medical education seats at the college have increased from 40 to 100 . . .

Mr. Speaker, the actual number is 68 to 100, and in 2008 the number was 84. Now, Mr. Speaker, when there are errors on the record, I think they should be corrected. And I make this point today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is clearly an issue of facts under dispute, Mr. Speaker, and the point of order should not be well taken.

The Speaker: — Matters of facts are left up to the members to debate. This point of order is not well taken.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. And that includes the Minister of

Parks.

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 364 through 419.

The Speaker: — The Government Deputy Whip has tabled answers for questions 364 to 419 inclusive.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Importance of Entrepreneurs to Saskatchewan

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and talk about the importance of entrepreneurs to our province. Mr. Speaker, prior to my being elected as the MLA for The Battlefords . . . And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of those in The Battlefords that have shown confidence in me and let them know that I certainly respect their confidence in me and I'm pleased to represent them every day in this Assembly.

Prior to that election, Mr. Speaker, I spent 38 years as a real estate professional, both as a broker/owner and as a salesperson. And over that 38-year span, Mr. Speaker, of course we've seen a lot of different trends and a lot of different market conditions.

And I look back to several years ago. I had spent three different terms as president of that association. At one time in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, we had 13 real estate offices in The Battlefords and approximately 83 salespeople. In the mid-'90s when people were leaving this province in drastic numbers, the economy was kind of in a skid. We were down to two offices and less than 20 salespeople at that time. It was definitely a time of great belt-tightening in our industry and it was definitely a kind of testament to Darwin's theory of . . . It was survival of the fittest, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to report that now we're back up to four offices in The Battlefords and approximately 25 salespeople, and I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all my former colleagues great success in their careers in real estate.

But during those years, Mr. Speaker, you know, in the mid-'90s, our best customers were the banks with repossessed houses, relocation companies with people that had left our province and, you know, couldn't sell their houses because of the market. It definitely led to a spiral, a downturn in our market, hardship on the people who were trying to sell their homes moving into other homes. It also led to, you know, an attitude in our area where people said, you know, we're not going to spend any money in, you know, improving our houses.

You know, a lot of homes I think about on our west side of our city that were built in the, you know, mid-'50s or early '60s, they were in need of renovation. But people said to me . . . I would go out and do a market evaluation for somebody thinking of selling their house, and they would say to me, you know, we haven't done any upgrades on this house because we don't know whether we're going to lose our job next year or the company I'm working for may close up. I'm not going to spend any money on this house. I can't get it back. And again, that

just led to more of a downturn, more of a spiral down.

But I'm happy to report that since that time, starting in about 2008, our market started to turn around. People started to realize that there was value in their home and they could improve the value. And you know, they started to replace their kitchen cabinets, put in new carpets, put in low-E [low-emissivity] windows, energy-efficient furnace, all kinds of things. And what that did, Mr. Speaker, that opened up opportunities for many of our entrepreneurs and small businesses. Whether they were plumbers, whether they were carpenters, electricians, floor covering people, that created jobs for everyone. And I think that, you know, shows the sign of what was happening in this province starting in about 2008.

You know, and fast forward to today. You know, there's more agents in The Battlefords, there's more jobs being created, and I think that's again a testament to our entrepreneurs in this province.

Last week I had an opportunity to attend a trade show put on by a local business, Anderson Pump House and at that trade show they also made a presentation to the owner, Howard Kirby, for 30 years in business in The Battlefords. Anderson Pump House is a business that, obviously by their name, provides water pumps to the area. They do business with the towns, villages, RMs [rural municipality], farms, and also individuals. They sell things like water softeners, pressure systems, RO [reverse osmosis] systems, those kinds of things.

And I've been a customer of Anderson Pump House for many years and I've come to know Howard very well. So at his trade fair and his 30th anniversary celebration, I went over and talked to Howard for a few minutes. And you know, one of the first things that Howard mentioned to me, in our conversation . . . I asked him how things were going and what he had lined up for the summer, and he said, you know what, Herb, he said, I've got a lot of contracts on the table, a lot of opportunities for business this summer. But you know, my greatest fear is that I'm not going to be able to fill the jobs. I can't find employees. And that's a message we hear quite often, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the Anderson Pump House story is not the only success story in The Battlefords. We've got three of our major main implement dealers in the province: Norsask equipment, which is our Case IH dealer, they're just in their new building; JayDee AgTech, the John Deere dealer's in their new building. And I've had the opportunity to tour both of those buildings and they are state of the art buildings. They're great facilities for customers. They're great facilities for their employees to work in. And you know, when I toured those buildings, I talked to the owners there as well, and the managers, and their greatest concern was trying to find employees, a situation that seems to be right across The Battlefords, perhaps right across this province. We know that from our statistics.

And I kind of think this reinforces what our Minister of the Economy said last week in this House when he gave the statistics that on saskjobs.ca there's 337 jobs posted in The Battlefords. And I think probably these dealers and this business are probably some of those jobs that are being posted on there. And again this is also reinforced by a Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey that notes that, of

the businesses they surveyed, 46 per cent, that concerns over hiring staff was one of their first concerns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear a lot of talk lately about climate change. And of course I guess some people call it global warming, but you look outside and it's pretty hard to grasp that concept. But there's one climate change in this province, Mr. Speaker, that I think is a good thing, and that's the change in the business climate, the change in the business climate that has been created in the last five years in small part by this Sask Party government.

[11:15]

And that climate change, you know, has in turn increased the business activity in this province. And I think that's our job as a government is to create that atmosphere, that climate that's conducive to a good business atmosphere because when those businesses prosper, and as I mentioned, hire more employees, that increases the number of employees in this province. And that in turn creates a demand for workers, which of course — demand and supply — that increases the wages that are going to be paid for those employees.

That in turn, Mr. Speaker, increases our tax base, and I think that's important. We can increase our tax base, and it lowers the burden on all of us. And that's driven up our weekly wage earnings. I think in the StatsCan figures come out here lately, our weekly wage rate in Saskatchewan is now third in the nation at \$918.85 a week. That's the highest that it has ever been in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And along with that, we also have more people working in this province than we've ever had before — 547,700 people working here. Again as I mentioned, that helps us lower taxes for all.

Since we have come into government, we've lowered the taxes in this province by \$473 million. That's \$473 million more that's in the pockets of the residents of The Battlefords. But even with that tremendous decrease in our taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we still had \$360 million more in our tax revenues last year. Again that's a definite result of having more people working here and having each person earning more per week. That allows us to continue with our growth plan. It allows us to put dollars back into our communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again speak of The Battlefords because of course that's the constituency that I know the most about. We're very proud that we've now completed our new CUplex in The Battlefords, and we certainly appreciate the \$7 million that this government contributed to that project.

And you know, in my real estate career, when we had people moving into The Battlefords, we would tell them what we had to offer, the amenities in our cities. And of course when somebody comes, they always want to know what's in their city if they want to move there. And these days of course in the high-tech days, before they ever take to the asphalt highway, I think they take to the information highway. They check out what's in the city. If they decide that they're going to move to Saskatchewan or Manitoba or Alberta or British Columbia, they want to know what's there.

Now they can look in The Battlefords and they can see that we have a great indoor soccer field if their children are into playing soccer. We have a state-of-the-art swimming pool if their kids are in the swim club or they want recreational swimming. We have a great centre for the arts, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of things people look at, and it's been great.

We've also seen the \$6 million contribution from this province to our urban connector program in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, through Highway 4 through the town of Battleford. That was an improvement that was greatly needed. We've seen a great improvement in traffic in our area. Our oil and gas sector is booming. We're seeing more truck traffic. And as somebody who travels that road mostly every day, back and forth from my office, the flow of that traffic is tremendous in there, not only for convenience but for safety for the residents of The Battlefords. And that's something that they appreciate greatly.

Not only those major projects — and there's more of them that I won't go into today — but I'd like to talk about our revenue sharing for The Battlefords. In '07 the revenue sharing for the city of North Battleford, \$1.1 million. In this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's \$2.95 million. That's 155 per cent increase for the city of North Battleford. The town of Battleford, Mr. Deputy Speaker, same sort of figures. In '07 they received \$407,000 from the budget at that time. This year in this current budget, \$909,000 — 123 per cent increase.

We know that our government is concerned about The Battlefords, and they're working towards The Battlefords. And because of our businesses, the appreciation we have for our entrepreneurs allow us to do that.

But both in The Battlefords and province-wide we've made commitments. In '07, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we committed to hire 800 more nurses in this province. We knew we had the longest wait times in the nation, the greatest problems in our health care system. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've not hired 800 nurses. We've hired over 1,000 more nurses, and there's 200 more doctors working in this province.

And speaking of health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd just highlight one thing here again from my constituency in The Battlefords. A CBC survey has just been completed, and they've rated our Battlefords Union Hospital with an A rating in the province, the highest rating among what they call "medium-sized hospitals." And we're second only to the City Hospital in Saskatoon provincially. And I'd like to commend and congratulate and thank the doctors, the nurses, the staff in our Battlefords Union Hospital on receiving that recognition. It was very well done.

Another success story that I'd like to highlight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about entrepreneurs in this province, I had an occasion some time ago to attend I think it was a United Way dinner. And the guest speaker at that dinner was a young First Nations person, Kendal Netmaker. And Kendal told his story about being a First Nations person growing up in Saskatchewan, going to a non-First Nations school. A very athletic young fellow, ended up being captain of his volleyball team at the school, went on with a volleyball scholarship to college, and he had a dream. He had a dream about making athletic gear.

And Kendal has now fulfilled that dream. He now owns a company called Neechie Gear. And he's won several awards, and one of the awards that he won was a spot in a mall in Saskatoon. He's opened a store there, and we're happy to say that now Kendal has also opened his line of Neechie Gear in our FF2 store in the Co-op mall in The Battlefords. And I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Kendal and wish him all the best with his business in the future.

We have created a very positive, stable, and progressive growth plan for this province. And that's helped our businesses, who in turn as I mentioned have helped our growth plan and allowed us to do things for this province.

I think it was back in 2006 or '07 I think, prior to being elected as government in this province, our leader at that time and our current Premier had made a prediction and set a goal that this province would have a population of 1.1 million. I think it was by 2015 he set that goal at. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're presently at 1,089,807 people. That's a 95,000 people increase in six years alone. And at 21,000 in the last 12 months, I think we're easily going to attain that goal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do set goals. We set ambitious goals, but they're achievable goals. And we have a plan to reach those goals. Okay? And this is the efforts of businesses that have allowed us to do this. They've allowed us with the opportunity to plan for the future. We appreciate what small business has done, but in turn we've created that climate for small businesses.

In 2011 we reduced the small-business tax from four and a half per cent to 2 per cent, allowing those small-business people to have more money in their pockets, more money to do the expansion they needed. In 2009 we reduced the educational property tax — the largest decrease in our province — reduced it by \$165.7 million. In 2008 we further reduced personal income tax, allowing again more people in Saskatchewan to keep more money in their pockets.

You know, we can contrast that to some of the spending that's taken place, you know, in the previous NDP government, when they embarked on several enterprises that they thought they wanted to get into. And that's certainly not the policy of our government. You know, that amounted to between 300 and \$400 million of wasteful spending.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to move the following motion:

That this Assembly commend and support the hard work of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, which has helped move Saskatchewan forward.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for The Battlefords has moved:

That this Assembly commend and support the hard work of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, which has helped move Saskatchewan forward.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into discussion here this afternoon as it relates to a motion that I'm actually fond of speaking to here today, as it relates to commending the hard work and role of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs in building a stronger Saskatchewan. This is something that I'm proud to speak to. Certainly I'm proud to be very supportive of a motion that sheds a positive light on the hard-working entrepreneurs of our province.

So it's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly here today and place some recognition onto those entrepreneurs that add such vibrancy to local communities and that add such a quality of life to our province. So I appreciate the motion that's been put forward by the member opposite and my pleasure to speak to it here today.

And in doing so we need to make clear just how vital the role of a Saskatchewan entrepreneur and local business are in, as I say, the vibrancy and life of communities across Saskatchewan. Not just that, they're also so important in the lives of so many through their role in providing employment and making sure that opportunities are extended and provided to build strong communities, strong families, making sure that workers are in profitable enterprises, able to do well and be able to make sure they're sharing in the opportunity of our province.

Now when I speak about Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, I may take a little bit of a different approach than members opposite. And you know, often we hear a lot of celebration and back-patting of themselves on this front, Mr. Speaker. I believe we should be giving credit where credit's due, and that's to the Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, the local businesses that have worked so hard in this province to build their businesses, to put forward plans that are sound and responsible and that look to the future and that have taken on risk and placed that investment to certainly further their operations but also further our economy.

And it does bother me, Mr. Speaker, at times when I hear members opposite and certainly our Premier repeatedly focus on their own partisan role or their party's focus as opposed to putting credit where credit's due, and that's the hard-working entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan. Whether it's in North Battleford, whether it's in Nipawin, whether it's up in Melfort, whether it's down in Estevan, Mr. Speaker, we have such vibrant and strong communities, made stronger by our entrepreneurs. And this is something we need to support.

Now my view of a strong Saskatchewan, one that's building a brighter future, is one that has strong, profitable private sector businesses and the vital role those entrepreneurs play. It also has a very strong focus on making sure we've got strong, healthy Crown corporations and a co-operative sector. And on the front of the Crown sector, certainly we see undermining under this government, but that's not going to be the focus of my debate here today. I want to keep my focus and attention on that of the motion to commend and support the hard work of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs.

I believe that building out that profitable environment for our entrepreneurs is also built on a thriving, strong middle class. And that's why it's so important from my perspective, our perspective, to make sure that we're building out conditions for strong families, that we're respecting workers, that we're making sure there's a dollar in the pocket of households to put back into those local businesses and to support the activity within those local economies.

When we're looking at so many of the strengths of these businesses and these entrepreneurs, we also have to look at how can we support their efforts. And I think of the skilled labour shortage and the fact that we need to do a much better job by way of education, by way of extending that opportunity, whether it be from the pre-K [pre-kindergarten] through grade 12 system right through to apprenticeship and training and certainly university and making sure that we're making sure that that's as accessible as it can be and as robust a program as we can by way of the trades and by way of those apprenticeship opportunities. These are opportunities that then are extended to all.

And when I look at the phenomenal opportunity we're presented as a province, this is where we can make sure that that manifests itself in the lives of Saskatchewan people and in the communities of Saskatchewan for generations forward. And this is an area quite simply we need to do a better job of.

And when I'm speaking of these supports, I'm speaking of course of making sure we're addressing those challenges and pressures of child care and early learning right through to the opportunity to connect with post-secondary training and studies and apprenticeship and skill training opportunities. And this is something we need to do a better job of as a province.

I also recognize that for those businesses, we need to make sure that we're creating an environment that provides some cost protection. And that's why I'm such a strong believer in the health of our Crown corporations to provide power and energy back to the operations all across Saskatchewan at the most affordable rate that we can. And they play such an important role for Saskatchewan people.

So certainly those costs are important when the Crowns play a role that's important there. And that's something that we will certainly continue to focus on.

[11:30]

We need to focus as well and have an attention towards the small business tax rate. It seems the current government is focused on the tax rate of the large corporate rate right now. We think our attention is better dedicated to making sure that we're addressing the challenges and pressures of the small businesses across Saskatchewan which, you know, certainly account for the largest majority of businesses here in this province.

And I know that all across Saskatchewan, with the tremendous growth that many communities are witnessing, housing is also something we need to have our attention to. And I hear it from our chambers of commerce, our board of trade, from our business leaders across Saskatchewan. We need to make sure we're doing a better job of making sure that communities can

address the needs of their residents, that families can build out their lives, that workers can find safe and affordable places to live. And that's really about building stronger communities for tomorrow.

And of course we need to make sure we're addressing the network of transportation — our highways system across Saskatchewan — giving it the attention it requires, listening to an entire province in doing so. Not dismissing the North as we see right now, not dismissing the voices from southeast Saskatchewan with Highway 6 and 39, but making sure that we're addressing that network and understanding of course that that system plays such an important role in the lives of Saskatchewan people but also in the commerce of Saskatchewan.

And I think of certainly Prince Albert as a prime example as well, and understanding the importance of those transportation arteries and of the bridge proposal that's been on the table and that's been not supported by the current government. We need to understand what that means, not just for that community and region but for the economic life of our province.

But when I think of the hardworking entrepreneurs across Saskatchewan, I recognize the role they play in placing investment back into our province. I recognize the role they play in employment. I think of, in many ways, they as well create an identity and a pride for communities and they do so all across our proud province. I see the current government undermining some of these opportunities and we need to do a better job there. This is as it relates to the middle class losing ground. We need to make sure that we have circumstances where households are in a position to put that dollar back in to those businesses and be consumers within their communities, and that's important.

We need to make sure that we're supporting Aboriginal development by way of economic opportunities and employment opportunities, educational opportunities. This government's really dropped the ball on this front when we've been presented a tremendous opportunity. We see the very harmful cuts to the film employment tax credit that have driven away investment, driven away jobs. We've seen the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan that has taken away the local decisions made by those entrepreneurs who have made those investments, who have some skin in the game, now having that all taken over by government with government's control.

We see the Enterprise Saskatchewan boondoggle, which was once touted as the Premier's premier economic platform item, and now we see the entire dismantling of that, and in many ways lost ground by way of capacity in the role of local economic development and lost ground by way of giving voice to those that are in communities, that understand communities, that have a care for those communities, and certainly understand the life of that community, but as well those economies.

We see, as well, cuts and reductions and tinkering around with important programs like the labour-sponsored venture funds here recently, where we have over \$500 million of capital that's been placed into the economy of Saskatchewan, and as well the investments of over 55,000 Saskatchewan people that are now

being denied by this Premier, this government, the fair return, the full return that they should deserve.

So those are some of the unhelpful pieces. But I'm so proud to speak with pride of the role of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs in our province. Certainly we need to all work towards improving the conditions that will allow those entrepreneurs to thrive, but it's those entrepreneurs who deserve the credit, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter debate here today.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to talk today about being an entrepreneur in the province of Saskatchewan, when the NDP were in power and now.

Mr. Speaker, for several months I've heard the opposition talk about their seeming experience in business and what they would do, and asking questions of the government to what we do for small business and whatever.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say that there is limited, at the best, business experience on that side of the House. Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, sorry, my colleague from The Battlefords and myself, I think combined we have a total of 70 years experience in business in this corner. Now I don't know if that makes us old or knowledgeable, but I think it's knowledgeable.

My last 15 years during this dark time in business, it was hard to grow your business because your main focus was to stay in business. Mr. Deputy Speaker, during this time our population was declining. Our young grads were leaving the province. Apprenticeship program was weak, and anyone who graduated from the program moved on. Provincial attitude was poor, to say the least. The only positive during this time was business people learned to do more with less. Saskatchewan entrepreneurs were and are part of the backbone of the province. They persevered through PST [provincial sales tax] being raised three times. They persevered through income taxes being raised twice. They persevered through business taxes being raised four times. They persevered through fuel taxes being raised twice. This is quite a plan to raise funds for their ill-founded budgets — less services and higher taxes.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a business operator some 80 miles from the Alberta border, it was an everyday challenge to keep people shopping at home. With no sales tax, lower fuel prices, and major box stores opening in Alberta, the NDP not only drove people out of the province, they also drove our shoppers away. A very clever plan for growth, don't you think?

Mr. Speaker, entrepreneurs stayed solid in their support for community projects and programs with donations to health, sport, and cultural programs and putting their names forward for committees and councils.

As a past city councillor during the dark time, it was hard to budget. You never knew what was coming from the government for support. I remember one time our economic development officer came to council and he wanted to do an ad in Alberta and BC. He wanted to invite people to move to

Saskatchewan and in particular to our community. I asked him what he was going to say at this time. Under the NDP government we had the longest surgical wait times in all of Canada. We were short 800 nurses, short doctors. They closed 52 rural hospitals. We boasted the highest crime rates in Canada, and we were short 200 police officers. Our roads were falling apart and there was no plan for anything. Now I ask you, would you move here? We didn't do the ad.

Mr. Speaker, if you owned a house or property of any kind and you wanted to sell it, you wondered first of all if it would sell, and if it did, you'd just have to worry about how much money you were going to lose. Property taxes were at an all-time high and education mill rates climbed. In my own municipality it got to 22.5 mills. Mr. Speaker, that was then. Now let's talk about now.

On the topic of real estate, we have seen assessment reach an all-time high and education property tax mill rates at an all-time low. Then NDP talked about lowering EPT [education property tax] but that's all it did. This government has fulfilled its promise to lower EPT to an all-time low — 2.67 mills for ag land, 5.03 mills for residential, and 8.28 mills on commercial. This shows a positive environment for homeowners and business.

Contractors are now spec'ing homes, condos, and commercial space, creating jobs for carpenters, electricians, plumbers, cement finishers, and so on. These people in turn shop and buy products from our business people, whether it be grocers, car dealers, clothing stores, etc.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to talk about the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. This constituency is located entirely between The Battlefords and Lloydminster. Many of our constituents work in Lloydminster or The Battlefords. We are also considered to be the trading area for The Battlefords to the west and Lloydminster to the east. In the last five years, we have major growth in both communities — big box stores, new office building for Husky Energy in Lloyd, along with supporting businesses needed in the booming oil and gas industry.

In The Battlefords, as my colleague clarified this week, from The Battlefords, there are expansions in all farm implement dealerships, three of which are in new buildings. All the car dealerships have expanded or been remodelled. New restaurants, box stores, and a new multi-purpose facility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, throughout the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, there is growth — new businesses in Edam, Turtleford, Maidstone, Lashburn, Cut Knife, Neilburg, and so on. There is a positive attitude in rural Saskatchewan and for sure in Cut Knife-Turtleford. Homes are being built. People are moving back to have that small-town feeling. Farming, ranching, and resource businesses are as strong as they've ever been.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past six years our population has grown by 95,000 people, the fastest and most sustained period of population growth in decades. There was 24,400 new jobs created last year, and we now boast 3.8 per cent unemployment, the lowest in Canada. "Anyone who wants to work in

Saskatchewan is working,” said Don Henry, chief operating officer of Morris Industries in Saskatoon, a maker of farm equipment.

“Another boost in optimism allowed Saskatchewan to regain its number one ranking as home to the most optimistic small business owners in Canada in March,” said Marilyn Braun-Pollon, CFIB’s [Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses] vice-president, prairie and Agri-Business. “We’re pleased the recent Saskatchewan and federal budgets both contained a number of measures that will keep Saskatchewan moving forward.”

Fifty-seven per cent of business in Saskatchewan say that the overall state of business is good. Thirty-six per cent of Saskatchewan businesses plan to increase full-time employment in the next three to four months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year’s highways budget represents a 9 per cent increase since our first budget in 2008 and puts us halfway to meeting our campaign commitment to invest 2.2 billion into our highways and roads over four years. We’ve invested more than half a billion dollars per year in transportation each year since coming into office — a total of \$3.4 billion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, municipalities will receive record revenue sharing for the third straight year, helping to foster economic growth and enhance the quality of life for Saskatchewan people. In 2013-14, 264.4 million in municipal revenue sharing will be provided — an 11.4 per cent increase from the previous year and 108 per cent increase over the 2007-08 budget overall. Funding to municipalities in 2013-14 will be \$362 million.

Apprenticeship programs have increased 1.544 million to purchase an additional 300 training seats over those provided in the 2012-13 budget. This employer-demand driven program ensures there is a skilled workforce to meet existing and future labour market demands and meets the plan for growth commitment to add 300 training seats in the 2013-14 budget. There’s \$119,000 increase for the apprenticeship training allowance which provides income support to increase numbers of individuals who are taking training, and 900,000 increase to support increases in living allowance.

The health budget is the biggest ever at \$4.8 billion. This supports rural doctor program and the new collaborate emergency system initiative which . . . one will be in Maidstone. Over 1,000 new nurses have been hired since 2007. Surgical initiative plan will receive 70.5 million in the 2013-14 budget. There are 61 per cent fewer people waiting more than six months for surgery and 46 per cent waiting more than three months for surgery since 2007.

Having a good plan for growth and six balanced budgets is what entrepreneurs want along with programming I have just mentioned. Entrepreneurs will keep us moving forward now. I second this motion by the member from The Battlefords. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m very proud to stand today to join in the debate and certainly in talking about the opportunity when it comes to the business community of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I want to be able to spend some of my time that I have here in relation to the motion that, quite frankly, commends and supports the hard work of the Saskatchewan entrepreneurs that have helped Saskatchewan move forward, Mr. Speaker.

There’s no question that as we look throughout southern Saskatchewan that there’s been many vibrant opportunities to commend the business folks that have created a lot of employment, paid their taxes, and provided services, much-needed services, to the people of the province.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, I think what’s really important is that we also point out that in northern Saskatchewan, that the people of northern Saskatchewan are indeed a very integral part of our province. And many of the small entrepreneurs in our northern communities, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great opportunity to recognize some of the entrepreneurs that I’ve had experience with. And certainly as you travel throughout my constituency, there are many — La Loche and Patuanak and Canoe Lake, the list goes on, Green Lake — as to the amount of folks that have contributed a great amount of their own investment, their own dollars, Mr. Speaker, to create jobs for local people. And it is an incredible risk that many of these entrepreneurs undertake on their own to create that opportunity, to provide that service, and hopefully at the end of their years of work that they do have a vibrant, thriving business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what’s really important . . . I just want to make one very small comment in relation to the member from the North Battleford area when he spoke about the dire consequences that the province was under in the 1990s. And again he alludes to the fact that because the NDP were in power, that all these problems were existent.

Mr. Speaker, what’s really important to note — and the member would know this, from The Battlefords, as well — that quite frankly in the 1990s the Saskatchewan NDP were in power. They were in power in 1991. And the first few years that . . . quite frankly the debt that we had to sustain, the amount of payments we had to make on the interest were something like \$100,000 per hour, Mr. Speaker. That’s something that a lot of people don’t know. And what happened there was the Conservatives left the provincial government deeply in debt, fifteen and a half billion dollars in debt at that year.

And Mr. Speaker, quite frankly the people of many parts of our province were suffering, and the NDP certainly come along to clean up the mess. And it took us 12 to 14 years to clean up that mess. And when the economy started chugging along, which everybody expected, Mr. Speaker — this obviously is important to note — that of course the Saskatchewan Party government tries to take credit for that. Absolutely everybody and their dog in the province of Saskatchewan knew that the economy was going to move forward. They absolutely knew that Saskatchewan was on the rise, Mr. Speaker. And certainly what I want to make sure people understand, is the history of the

province is really important to look at and to judge as to where we're at and which government's led as they should have, Mr. Speaker.

But that being said, I want to point out that some of the communities that I want to pay tribute to in terms of developing their business community, Mr. Speaker, are places like Buffalo Narrows. As I mentioned at the outset, Buffalo Narrows is a very strong, vibrant community, and I always commend them as the MLA. I've always made reference to Buffalo Narrows as a community that had a lot of business leadership in the community. And as you travel throughout the community of Buffalo Narrows, on the main street, absolutely almost every business in the community is owned by local people, many of them Aboriginal, Mr. Speaker. And it's a tribute to the fact that the entrepreneurial spirit of the community of Buffalo Narrows is very, very strong. And I'll always make the comment as the MLA for the area that I'm very, very proud of the work that the community of Buffalo Narrows has done in developing their own economy and strengthening their business community overall.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are tons of examples that I could use in Buffalo Narrows, but other than to say that they have done an incredible job over the years. Because you look at some of the challenges that they face, Mr. Speaker. It takes a lot of commitment, a lot of dedication to make things happen.

The other community that's really important, Mr. Speaker, that I want to pay tribute to is Beauval. The community of Beauval, as many people know, it's a very strong community. It's a population of 1,000-plus. And, Mr. Speaker, there are tons of examples of how the community of Beauval has done very well on its own. As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, that they have a lot of challenges ahead of them, whether it's housing, whether it's employment, and kind of the list goes on, that the community itself turned to the business community. And now we're seeing great examples of how the entrepreneurs locally have made a significant difference to the community of Beauval.

We have new businesses popping up at the Beauval Forks, places like the Blueberry Hills Water store. I don't know if I have the name exactly right, but Gilbert Daigneault set that up. And now we have a water store at the junction, and many, many people will take advantage of the Blueberry Hills Water store.

And most recently last year, March of last year, 2012, the English River band, also known as the Patuanak band, they opened up the English River Travel Centre and general store. And they found an excellent manager and manageress, the couple known as Don and Linda Tegenkamp. They have done an incredible job, Mr. Speaker, of getting the store started. They employ about 35 people, and both Don and Linda work very, very closely with the community. And I want to commend them for their effort and thank them for their service to the Beauval area. But more importantly is to recognize that the parent company, the English River band, has certainly done their work to invest in a very, very important service. And, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the store itself will do remarkably well because of the good management, sound investment, and certainly turning as much of the benefits to the region as

possible, all the while running a business. We understand that that is how it's got to work. But they certainly have reinvested their communities admirably.

They have other employers, Mr. Speaker, that have for many, many years — and I'm talking about the new businesses in the Beauval area — but they have employers that have been there for many, many years. People like Don and Leda Corrigan who have operated a construction business for years and years. They have people like Phillip Kyplain who runs a paint contracting business. They have created opportunity and employment for many people as well. Maggie and Darryl Natomagan who own MDeez Confectionery and Gas Bar. These folks have employed people for many, many years.

And, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the people that I want to spend a bit of time with. Also the Sandy Beach service that's operated by Bruce and Judy Roy. And I think the Sandy Beach overnight stay, you can go there, and you can enjoy yourself, and they put up with many, many guests. It's a great location. It's a great facility, Mr. Speaker. You look at Polar Oils. You look at Walter Hood and some of the work that he's done with his trucking company, Cipi. And the list goes on of some of the companies in the Beauval area that have done a tremendous amount of work for the community.

So for me to stand up today and talk to them about their effort and to thank them as entrepreneurs for making a significant difference to communities like Buffalo Narrows, like Beauval, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important.

My final few minutes I want to spend, Mr. Speaker, is to also commend a high school friend of mine. The guy's name is Emile Burnouf. And Emile Burnouf is from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Assembly that certainly as the MLA for the area, I'm very proud of some of the contributions that Mr. Burnouf has made to creating not only a number of businesses but a number of employment positions for many, many, people in my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. We don't do that enough, to thank people like Mr. Emile Burnouf for all the countless hours that he puts in, in not only making sure that he provides a good service as an entrepreneur but to make sure that he creates jobs.

And I can remember fresh out of school, Mr. Speaker, that Emile began the work of building his business expertise. He created a store. He's had a construction company, Mr. Speaker. He's had an outfitting camp. And pretty much every other business that you can imagine happening in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Burnouf has really tried to become very, very active in that business. And when he gets involved with this particular business, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that he creates employment opportunities for others and for families.

So I want to say as the MLA for Athabasca, that I want to say very clearly and very openly that I'm very proud of Mr. Burnouf's accomplishment, his contribution to our local economy, and that the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse should be very proud of him and that we should do all we can to help him because of his past service and his past effort to build a strong business community in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I want to commend him 100 per cent on some of that work, Mr. Speaker.

So on that note, I think it's important . . . I've got tons of other businesses that I want to speak about, Mr. Speaker. And overall, overall, the examples of Beauval, the examples of Buffalo Narrows, the examples of Mr. Burnouf just shows that there is a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit in northwestern Saskatchewan. And as your MLA, I say thank you, and I'm very proud of your work.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to go into this debate on this motion which I certainly support, Mr. Speaker. I guess part of it is we have to explain to the other side what an entrepreneur actually is. Because to tell the truth, I don't think any of them over there — and I could be wrong — but I don't think any of them have been entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker. Like you just talk to us . . . The last two speakers on this side of the House before and myself are entrepreneurs or have been entrepreneurs. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a big difference between an entrepreneur and a person who's just out there working. I know that those people on the other side don't realize this, but entrepreneurs, they're the ones that write out T4s; they just don't receive them, Mr. Speaker. And that's a big difference. That's a big difference.

Now I have been on both sides. I've been out working for wages. I've been an entrepreneur. And there's good and bad with both sides. But the entrepreneurship is something that you can definitely be proud of. And you know something, Mr. Speaker? It is not an eight-hour workday. When you are an entrepreneur, you are out there going hard way more than eight hours. I'd like to say . . . [inaudible] . . . I'd like to say, but unfortunately it's unparliamentary language. But honestly, Mr. Speaker, there's times when entrepreneurs are going out there and they're working 80 hours a week just to make things work. That's why we have to support them. And this government certainly believes in supporting entrepreneurs because, like I said, the vast majority on this side are entrepreneurs. So consequently we want to support them.

A very good example of the entrepreneurial spirit that shows through on what could happen from this side . . . Now my friend from Melfort has Bourgault Industries in his constituency. And for years — for years — Bourgault industry couldn't move product. And they sell product all over the world. But they couldn't move product out. Why? Because the NDP would never redo the highway. And they were having a terrible time, making it an added cost to get their raw equipment in, the raw steel in to build stuff and to build that product and move it back out.

This government actually went back and finally redid Highway 368. And it's kind of funny. I look at today's paper and it says, "Opposition wants more highways spending." Mr. Speaker, this government has spent way more on the highways. We're still fighting a deficit that that NDP government left us on highways. And it's going to be a long time, but we're going to get those highways fixed so the people in Saskatchewan are proud to drive on them. And it helps our entrepreneurs in rural Saskatchewan move their businesses forward, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that, you know, they tried to

be entrepreneurs in the sense as a government, but government can't be entrepreneurs. You know, the previous CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government, well they had shoebox factories, and they had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, they tried make shoes, everything. Of course then when they became the NDP, they tried to make potatoes, but that didn't work out that well either. You have to let the entrepreneurs do that end of the business. And I know that they can't figure it out.

But what they should do, what they should actually do is take a look, Mr. Speaker, at what some of those other countries have tried to do in the past. Like you take the former Soviet Union. The former Soviet Union, now they tried to run everything through the government. Well that worked out well, didn't it, Mr. Speaker? And you look at every country that's down in the bottom of the totem pole, and all of them, they had the government who thought they could do better than the entrepreneurs — totally wrong, Mr. Speaker. The entrepreneurs will move it through every time, but the entrepreneurs work very hard at doing it.

Mr. Speaker, I can still remember some of . . . And you know, I would question why the other side wouldn't just go right along with this. But I can still remember the member from Ituna on her maiden speech actually talked about the evils of capitalism, Mr. Speaker. Now you know, I kind of thought that that mentality would be gone, but obviously it's still out there.

Mr. Speaker, there's other things that we have done also. We've lowered the taxes for these small businesses. We've lowered the education portion of property taxes on land, on buildings which the other side always said they were going to do but, needless to say, never did it. You know, it's strange as many of us stuck around here to be entrepreneurs as we did because during that NDP period of time, there was a terrible out-migration of people. And some of us actually were bullheaded enough to be able to stick around here, stick it out, become entrepreneurs, and move the province forward.

[12:00]

Now the member from Athabasca would like to claim that, you know, they were all to do with this, to move Saskatchewan forward. But he was there all that time that the people were moving out. You know what it was, Mr. Speaker? In the end, everybody knew that the NDP was on their way out. And people, yes they did start coming in before the 2007 election but they knew that the NDP was toast; the NDP was going to be gone.

And with this government, with this Premier, I think the NDP's going to be gone for a long time. Like I mean they're down to nine members. They'll be lucky if they have that many next time, and I doubt very much that they will, Mr. Speaker, because the people of Saskatchewan know.

And it's not just the people of Saskatchewan. Our Premier has been out there touting our province all over the world. That is how come Saskatchewan has this phenomenal growth, just a phenomenal growth coming in, way more than it has ever seen before because people are looking to Saskatchewan. They're saying, this Saskatchewan Party is a party that knows how

business should work. This is a party that will help out — not hinder — entrepreneurs. This is a party that will supply roads to us, supply health care to us, supply education to us, move this province forward. And of course, that's what our growth plan is.

Now the other side never could figure out a growth plan because they actually, they actually had a plan for decline, Mr. Speaker. They were actually bragging, I think it was in 2006, about the out-migration was going down; it wasn't as bad as what it used to be.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know when you take a look at this province and when you go into the States, when you go . . . I haven't travelled that much, but I go into the States. People never even knew, they couldn't even pronounce Saskatchewan, let alone know where it was. Now, Mr. Speaker, now they know where Saskatchewan is. And I found it quite amazing. I was down in Mobile, Alabama, and you know something? They knew where Saskatchewan was. They had heard of Saskatchewan, the good things that were going on in this province. A far, far cry different than when the NDP was in power.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have to give credit to our entrepreneurs, to the ones that stayed through the terror years of the NDP and the ones that are moving into this province now, setting up businesses, moving forward, and seeing this great province for what it is, this great province for what it is when we have the resources that we have. And speaking of resources, we've actually moved past British Columbia now, and I think we're number four in Canada on export markets, Mr. Speaker. This, this is because of the entrepreneurship that we have in Saskatchewan and the good people who will work very hard to move this province forward and to move Canada forward as a whole.

So obviously, Mr. Speaker, I certainly, I certainly support this motion from my good friend from North Battleford, Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's my pleasure today to rise in this 75-minute debate to debate the motion that we support, the "Assembly commend and support the hard work of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, which has helped move Saskatchewan forward." And I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I couldn't agree more with the motion.

I certainly come from a long line of entrepreneurs, and I've been one myself and understand the particular challenges that's faced by people who want to start out fresh with a new idea or with an innovative new approach to whatever area they're interested in. We've seen lots of amazing young entrepreneurs here in this Assembly in the last few months, people that have a passion in their heart and that are willing to do the work that's required to get that passion developed into an idea and then, with the proper planning and financing and support, then they can actually roll it out and start business. And there's nothing more exciting than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I just want to talk a little bit about my models for entrepreneurial leadership, and that's certainly in the farming community that I come from. And I come from a long line of farmers. And farmers are, I think, the backbone of entrepreneurialism in Saskatchewan and have been for many decades from the years when my grandfather came out from Nova Scotia looking for a new life with a passion for being on the land. And he found his quarter section. He was given his quarter section and proved up his patent and was able to get the grant to that quarter section down near Lafleche — 10 miles south of Lafleche right north of the correction line. And we had, you know, we had . . . He raised a family of 10, and my father took over the farm from him in the 1950s, and he raised a family of six on the farm and, you know, struggling through all the farming issues of those years. And now my two brothers are continuing to farm and have a really nice mixed operation there. So we received our 100-year farm certificate from the Information Services Corporation in 2009, and we had a great celebration out at the farm to celebrate that.

And certainly the work that our farming community does, not just, you know, in the traditional forms of farming where you seed your crop and then you grow your cows and you feed the chickens and all that kind of thing and, you know, grow a big garden, which my brothers both do, it's also the innovation that our farming community has brought to all aspects of farming. And certainly when you drive around the countryside these days, I'm always amazed at the type of industry that's sprung up in the last few decades that is a result I think of the hard work of the farming community and the innovative and entrepreneurial souls that all these farmers have brought to our economy and to our province.

And certainly you will see that not only in the farms of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the entrepreneurial spirit is also evident in the North when you look at the development of tourism. It's incredibly evident in the cities where you see people starting up businesses all the time. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not easy to start a business. I was able to participate in some programming that helped me out immensely when I was starting out our business in the North. And one of the things I was able to take advantage of was a program through Women Entrepreneurs. So we know that with good government supports for people who have that song in their heart and people who have a passion for a new idea, there are ways and supports out there.

And in my business planning class that I took, one of the things that stuck with me for a long, long time was that, you know, in order to be successful in business, only 5 per cent of businesses succeed and only 5 per cent of businesses have a fully prepared business plan. So obviously planning and having the supports for figuring out where you want to get to and how you're going to get there are things that I think, as a government, we've been very successful in helping people with those plans.

One of the things my grandfather was very keenly involved in was farmers working together, and you can certainly see that in his history with a group called the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, which was one of the largest farmer co-operatives ever formed. And it was a group of farmers that were facing great adversity in the marketing of their wheat.

And he was fully committed to his entrepreneurial enterprise as an individual building a life for his family on the land, but saw the negative effects of large corporate entities being able to manipulate these independent farmers and take advantage of their need to have access to rails and their need for transport of their product. And so in that case he was firmly committed not only to being independent on his own farm but also to work with other farmers who had similar circumstances to ensure that they weren't defeated by the corporate interests of larger companies and railways. And he worked very hard in the 1920s and '30s to gather 50,000 signatures of farmers in order to form the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

And we certainly know the history of that farmers' enterprise throughout the history of our province. And it introduced things like Co-operators insurance. They were very involved in ensuring these entrepreneurial farmers had access to proper insurance, life insurance. And they were very supportive of other social enterprises which gave farmers the security and the network they needed to raise their families, to live in Saskatchewan, to grow a crop or raise a herd, and also impart on their children the values of community, the values of sharing, and the values of spiritual support and community building in that sense as well.

So it's something I'm very proud of and certainly I think my work as an entrepreneur, despite the member's opposite concern that there is no experience on this side of the House . . . I hate to correct him but certainly many of us do have entrepreneurial experience. And I know I've had significant experience with a tourism operation in northern Saskatchewan and if he wanted to check that out he could probably just look at our disclosure statements through the Privacy Commissioner, if he's interested in knowing more about that.

One of the things I noted last year when I attended the top 100 businesses in Saskatchewan dinner in Saskatoon was the number of these organizations that actually are entrepreneurial organizations but they're built on a foundation of people working together. And I think one of the most significant examples of that in Saskatchewan, of which we have a proud history, is the success of the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan, and it permeates throughout our culture. It's part of who we are as Saskatchewan people, where groups of people have taken that entrepreneurial spirit one step further and they've built impressive and very successful businesses in banking through the credit union movement and also in retail through the co-operative movement, and even in areas such as insurance, with the Co-operators insurance. And there's a whole host of institutions, entrepreneurial, co-operative institutions in Saskatchewan that have been key players in the development of many, many communities and continue to be key players in many, many communities in Saskatchewan.

And I need look no further than Affinity Credit Union in Saskatoon which has, through its entrepreneurial enterprises, has been able to support countless, countless community organizations in start-ups for non-profits and all kinds of projects that I think the Affinity Credit Union has a proud history of. And I know other credit union organizations in Saskatchewan also have been able to support community initiatives. And indeed, when you look at the co-operative principles — which is not something we hear a lot of reference

to on the other side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker — the underpinning of co-operatives, of course, is enterprise, it's business. But it's built on seven principles which include looking out after your community and making sure that your community is enriched as well.

So other corporations that you can see that are in the top list, Co-operators Life Insurance Company was number 9. And that's an entrepreneurial company built upon the co-operative spirit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that's something that Saskatchewan people can be proud of. There are corporations, many Crown corporations that are very successful — SGI Canada, built upon the notion of co-operative service; Farm Credit Canada is a federal organization that's on the list.

We have the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board at 21. So this is a socially owned entrepreneurial business that's helping out workers. SaskCentral for the credit unions — I'm only on page 2 — Conexus, Concentra Financial. There's a whole number of companies here I think that are amply reflecting the importance of co-operative entrepreneurialism here in Saskatchewan.

And so as I indicated earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been an honour to get up and speak to this motion today. I can't support it more, and I think we need to recognize the hard work of entrepreneurs here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to speak about the important role of entrepreneurs all across Saskatchewan here today. Important to that as well and important to supporting that is the next generation of skilled workers and entrepreneurs, supported by our early learning, child care through to post-secondary and trades supports.

And I guess my question to the member from North Battlefords would be, recognizing the importance of supporting these young people and these students becoming those skilled workers for tomorrow and those entrepreneurs for tomorrow, how does it make sense to be making cuts to his local school division at the same time as they're pushing forward an agenda, an expensive agenda that has no evidence behind it, on standardized testing across Saskatchewan?

[12:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak and answer some questions from the opposition here today.

But before I do that, I'd just like to talk about a little bit of the growth. And we've talked about the growth of the entrepreneurs in this province, the Conference Board of Canada estimate that our economy grew by 2.9 per cent in 2012 and by 3 per cent in 2013. These are the some of the things that our growth is doing.

We're doing a lot of other things too with our growth initiatives. In 2012 the Aboriginal employment in this province was the highest level ever — 39,700 people employed. In 2013, the off-reserve employment rose by 2,200 people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's a 5.6 per cent increase. Our unemployment is down by 3.6 per cent. I think that these are the things that the entrepreneurs have helped us do and allowed our government to proceed with. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to making Saskatchewan one of the best places in the country to live, work, and raise a family. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Marilyn Braun-Pollon with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said:

Another boost in optimism allowed Saskatchewan to gain its number one ranking as home to the most optimistic small business owners in Canada in March . . . We're pleased the recent Saskatchewan and federal budgets both contained a number of measures that will keep Saskatchewan moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, to the member from Nutana: why is it that you can stand up and talk about the evils of capitalism in one speech, and then in the next speech stand up and talk about how great the entrepreneurial spirit is in Canada? How do those two make sense, Mr. Speaker?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the point here is that entrepreneurialism is something that's important in Saskatchewan and it's something that comes from individuals. And we want to have supports.

My concern with this government is that they do not support the establishment . . . I don't see anything from this government for getting young people established in farming these days. And this is one of the concerns I hear about a lot from young farmers is, how are we supposed to get into this, into farming? And there's no support from the start-up for that kind of business, and that's one thing I think this government has failed miserably on is looking after that kind of thing.

As I said, my grandfather was able as an entrepreneur, my grandfather was able as an entrepreneur to successfully establish his farm business, but he had to join with other farmers — 50,000 other farmers — in order to find proper markets and fair markets for his grain. And those contributions from people like my . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, in relation to the fifteen and a half billion dollar debt that we're saddled under from Grant Devine's Conservatives in 1991 when the NDP took over, does he think paying \$100,000 an hour in interest payments, does he think that the effects of that in Cut Knife and

The Battlefords area paying \$100,000 an hour in interest payments, does he think that might be a little deterrent for the business community to invest in that particular area? Is that a factor when businesses look at investing and coming to create opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan? What does he think, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And to the question from the hon. member, I'd be curious to know if that debt increased under their watch. I'm sure it did.

Mr. Speaker, from 2001 to 2007 our province lost more than 35,000 people to net out-migration. We now have a population that is growing and diverse, an economy that is the envy of the nation, and a business community that is most optimistic in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tochor: — In the last year alone, Saskatchewan's population has grown to an all-time high of 1,089,807 people. Unemployment rate has dropped to the lowest in Canada, and the province's average weekly earnings have continued to rise to record levels, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these are just the few of the indications of a growing economy.

There are thousands of workers in Saskatchewan that are in the upstream oil and gas sector and with the Keystone XL will only increase the benefits to our province. Can the member for Saskatoon Nutana tell us if she has advocated for the Keystone XL with their federal leader, Thomas Mulcair? And if not, why not?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've had the pleasure of speaking with the federal NDP critic for Energy, and we've had a team set up across Canada; we're in constant contact with the federal party on these issues. And we certainly agree that this government's done nothing in terms of looking at value-added for jobs that are being shipped down those pipes and also shipping it away from Canada when it could be used through a trans-Canada pipeline project. So we don't see any support from this government on that area.

What we should see from this government is more initiatives for people that are wanting to get into small businesses. And that's the topic that's at discussion today, is entrepreneurial support for smaller businesses. And that's where this government should pay attention and not worry so much about things that are being well looked after.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, we all agree that entrepreneurs are a very important part of our economy, and we should do all we can to support them

in all areas of making sure our economy goes forward. And one important part of that is safety. Last week we had at least four deaths of owner-operators of businesses that were part of the 60 deaths.

To the member from Nipawin: exactly how much more work is left to reach the Mission: Zero for everyone, including entrepreneurs?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government, this government is working hard on doing this, as the Premier well alluded to last week. Mr. Speaker, this government is working hard to also get more jobs within Saskatchewan, to move Saskatchewan forward, supporting our entrepreneurs and moving this province in a forward manner — that's where our growth 2020 comes in.

Mr. Speaker, we won't take anything from the NDP. When they shipped everybody out of this province, including probably a bunch of their own kids left this province because . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I was reminded, I was reminded by some of my other members that yes, a person, Eldon Lautermilch, said, well when more leave, there will be more left . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the member from Carrot River would relate to the cut of his government to the film employment tax credit and the film industry in Saskatchewan — driving away investment, driving away jobs, driving away entrepreneurs. Does he support that wrong-headed decision, or would he have chosen a different approach of admitting a mistake and working to rebuild that important film industry? That question is to the member from Carrot River.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll tell you what, this government supports all the jobs within this province. We especially, especially support jobs where we have, like the XL pipeline where we have, contrary to the member from Nutana who said, who said that we wouldn't get any jobs out of it, we have a pile of jobs, Mr. Speaker, going through the oil industry. That's people that supply the small oil rigs, people that supply stuff to the trucking companies. We're fixing up the highways for them also, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 3 — Labour Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and introduce a motion, and I'll be

reading the motion at the end of my remarks. But really what it is is what we're calling for the minister to take some time, take some time and listen to the advisory committee on Bill 85 that says, what is the rush? What is the rush? Why are we in such a panic to get Bill 85 done?

And I do think it's an interesting day, I do think it's an interesting day in that we have seen some really good progress, particularly around the asbestos file. And I do want to recognize the contributions of the ministers, the members of the Human Services Committee, and all the members of this legislature in moving that forward. You know, when we get fired up and we say we won't take advice from either side, but we do actually listen to each other and we do think about common sense solutions.

And I want to say that was a really good piece of work, and it's really made possible by the co-operation of this House, and it was really a common sense thing to do. So I do want to thank all members, and particularly the government side, because it is something when we break out of our old habits that we all have and say what's the best thing for people of Saskatchewan?

And so in that spirit, I do think that we should do more along that way if possible. And in that spirit, I'm thinking that in terms of Bill 85, which is a consolidation of some 12 bills, we're not disputing the fact that the government has the right and the mandate to do this kind of thing. We're just saying, let's take the time to get it right. Let's make sure that people have the confidence that they will be protected. And not only from the employees' side, and clearly we are worried because many of us and there are many people out in the public who thinks that the balance of power has shifted dramatically in favour of one side of the equation.

And what we want to see, we want to make sure the balance of power is, there is a balance between the employee and the employer, respecting the rights of the employer, the entrepreneur to be able to make a profit, to be able to do the kind of work that they feel that drives them forward. And that's really important that we recognize that and we honour that, but at the same time that we recognize the other side of the equation that we will not tolerate exploitation, that people should be paid a fair wage, and that safety is paramount, that we want to make sure that that is respected. So that's the balance that we want to see happen.

And as societies mature and evolve we see that balance moving forward, neither side getting an advantage, but actually that they both can do much better in their own spheres. And in some ways sometimes those spheres overlap, and that's a good thing too. But we would like to see entrepreneurs, owners, and the Crowns flourish as much as possible that they can make a return on their investment, but so can workers have better wages, more secure tenure, and more safety in their workplace.

So we move this forward and it's very important that we recognize . . . And we've just been debating about the role of entrepreneurs and how well they've been doing in Saskatchewan. And that's important that we think about that. But we know that a lot of what's happened in Saskatchewan over the last several years has been in a climate of labour laws that are in existence right now. And if we mess with that, if we

take those certainties away, then we might be causing, might be causing problems.

And one of the things that people look for in investments is some predictability, what will happen in the area that you're going to invest. Is it predictable? What will happen with the elections?

In Canada we are very fortunate that we have a predictable democracy and we can know what happens with that. We have an ability to change parties without huge ramifications, generally speaking. Some of us will say that there are significant changes, but when you see around the world sometimes with the elections, you wonder why people would invest in that country. And in Saskatchewan it's relatively stable, relatively predictable, and that's really important. And so we think that it's important to move forward with this in a way where all sides understand what's happening, what's at stake, and how can we do the best that we could possibly do.

Now I do want to . . . And you know, I have talked about this before, so in many ways somebody will say, it sounds like the same speech and is it going to be the same speech? It won't be the same speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there's two areas that I do want to talk about. I want to talk about workplace safety, and I will get into that in a minute because particularly over the release of the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] report last week, it really was a wake-up call and we have a real crisis when it comes to workplace safety. And we have a real opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make a real difference when it comes to making Saskatchewan a place where workers want to come because they feel that it's safe, but as well, employers want to be because the regulations are fair, but secure and rigorous.

[12:30]

So they know that it's not an unlevel playing field between companies, that we all have to be . . . We're all being inspected. We all know what the rules are. And that's really important, because some employers feel that others get an unfair advantage because they are taking advantage of the regulations, not following them. And that's just not on. So I want to talk a little bit about that in a few minutes.

I also want to talk about the freedom of information or Saskatchewan information Privacy Commissioner, his response to and concerns around Bill 85, and how he cautions us to move or be more reflective on the process and how we can improve the bill. And again no one is saying, you can't do it; don't do it — just saying, take the time to do it right. Do it right, because the stakes are way too high. And we're talking about livelihoods and you're talking about safety, and that's an issue.

But my motion talks about how the minister is failing to take the advice of the members of the Minister of Labour's advisory committee. And I think that's unfortunate because when we do set up advisory committees and they give us advice, we have the choice to either follow it or not to follow it. But these folks that belong to the minister's advisory committee feel very strongly, and to the point that they issued a press release. They've had media on it. And it's not just a low-key suggestion that he go slower, but that they really are deeply worried about

the ramifications of rushing this forward too fast.

And so I would like to, though, read into the record and reflect on some of the parts that Hugh Wagner . . . He's on the minister's advisory committee, but also is from the Grain Services Union, and he wrote a commentary in the *Leader-Post* just over a month ago, March 6th, 2013. And I'm going to read big parts of it because I do think it's important to have on the record and for us to be thinking about. Because as we're finishing up the bills and we're moving into committee now in the House, that it's really time for us to think, is there really a necessity? Is there really a necessity for us to move as quickly on this as we need to?

And we do see the government saying, you know, we need more time. The lobbyist registry is a perfect example of where the minister said, for us to get this right we need to take more time. There you go. That seems like a straightforward, reasonable thing — get it right. Because, you know, the unfortunate thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we do not want to see a repeat of history. And we would hope the government would learn from history, where we've seen the Central Services bill end up in court. And now it's been some five years of that in development.

And ironically for Bill 85, there's a placeholder for essential services. But I think it's much more logical, much more common sense to invest in the front end, get it right, and not be thinking about how we're going to end up in court when this is all said and done. If we can keep it out of court as much as possible, that's the best thing. That's the best thing. And so if we can do that, let's aim for that, because . . . And people have taken, and I have said, literally hundreds of hours of due diligence trying to understand this bill, all the ramifications.

And we still have people asking significant questions about, what does it mean? And it's more than we agree or we disagree. It's what do you mean, and the big questions around the idea of what's going to happen in regulations. Are regulations going to be just transferred over? How is the bill going to come into force? Is it going to be section by section, part by part? We have some real concerns about that.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Hugh Wagner writes, and the title of the commentary is "New Saskatchewan labour law: why the rush?" And he starts out by saying:

As labour leaders, business leaders and government we have a responsibility to work together to maintain a stable, balanced and fair work environment for all people in Saskatchewan. We have been charged to preserve the rights and freedoms of choice we all enjoy resulting from the solid foundation of labour legislation we have built together over the past 70 years.

And so he's talking about, all political stripes have all added something or taken away something from the evolution of our labour law. And interestingly, and I did talk about this about a week ago, about the idea of Walter Scott and what his contribution to labour law was, and it was pretty amazing. He was pretty committed to the idea that we had to make sure we paid a fair wage in Saskatchewan and we had to protect vulnerable workers. And that was at a time when we were

building the building we're in today. It's 100 years . . . It was 100 years old; we celebrated that last year. But it was the major project at the time here in Saskatchewan, and we had to have safe and fair working environments.

Now the project before that was the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] and that brought the railroad unions into Saskatchewan in the local labour council. But Walter Scott, as a Premier, saw his responsibility in terms of labour law as a significant one. And he thought and he believed that unions could play a significant . . . or organized labour play a significant part in the development of Saskatchewan as we know. So it's very interesting when we've talked about how labour law has developed.

We challenge ourselves to be thorough in our review of any major legislative challenges so we may reduce the risk of unexpected or unintended outcomes that could harm the livelihoods of people we serve in the community we seek to enhance. And we are all . . . I mean, I just want to stop there and just reflect on that for a minute, because we are all deeply, deeply committed to the growth and prosperity of this province. There's absolutely no question about that. We are all deeply committed to that. And I think that that sometimes is the problem, is how do we articulate that? So we need to take the time to get that right.

But Mr. Wagner goes on and says:

Saskatchewan stands at the precipice of labour instability with the introduction of a sweeping and rushed overhaul of the province's labour laws in Bill 85 — the new Saskatchewan Employment Act.

And he talks about that the history of that, the forced . . . The minister talked of 14 pieces of legislation, 15 pieces of legislation being rolled into one. But actually, only 12 made that cut into that and what that all means. And then he talks about:

An advisory committee, comprising both business and organized labour representatives, was established by Labour Relations Minister Don Morgan to provide input on the changes being contemplated. What may come as a surprise to many was that this committee reached relative consensus on most issues relating to the changes. It is therefore even more surprising this consensus is not reflected in Bill 85.

It raises a question: what is driving the government's rushed efforts to pass Bill 85 in the spring sitting of the legislature? There's always a danger that far-reaching legislative changes, when driven by undue haste, can create unplanned consequences, as seems to be the case in this instance.

What is of equal concern is if the people of Saskatchewan understand how these changes will impact them, their families and their businesses.

For individual workers, the balance of current legislation will shift dramatically in favour of employers.

So that's the concern, the shift of power. Now, the minister may

not see it that way. He may see it as the balance. But we're saying, we don't understand that. We don't see that. Take the time to demonstrate. Take the time to illustrate that, because if you don't, then the consequences will be instability in the workplace, and it could end up in court. And so we have some real concerns about it.

And, you know, and we do see some of the basic changes, whether it's the end of the eight-hour day to the 10-hour day, or whether it's minimum wage or really means . . . What's going to happen with that? We have not seen the regulations that the minister said would be forthcoming in terms of indexing it to the cost of living. All these are questions that we have, but we need to understand this better. And I think the minister should take the time to make sure that we're all under the same understanding.

He goes on and he writes:

Under Bill 85, employers will have the discretionary power to limit whether employees are able to access the traditional two consecutive days off in a work week. Scheduled lunch and rest breaks may no longer be the common standard as employers will be able to unilaterally deem breaks to be unreasonable, and eight-hour work days could potentially be extended to 10 hours, raising the overtime threshold without employee consent. This amounts to an unwarranted erosion of individual rights in the workplace.

For unions, businesses and government alike, costs could soar as all are forced into negotiating and administering multiple contracts as a result of changes to employee and supervisor definitions. The same would apply for health care, provincial institutions and the civil service, with taxpayers footing the bill.

There are clearly many unknowns and much work still to be done to get Bill 85 to a place where it works for everyone.

And I think that's really key. That's really key. We want it to work for everyone. It's really important that at the end of the day that everybody can say, hey, this makes sense. It seems to work. It's one big code. I still have some questions about that, because in the day of technology, it's pretty easy to put things together. That's not such a necessity. And we see, we see actually within the bill, there's at least four different definitions of employee and a couple of different definitions of employer. And this kind of instability, when you thought this was going to be much easier to understand but yet you have multiple definitions of a concept in one bill, that adds, that adds instability, I believe.

Mr. Wagner goes on, saying:

We are all part of the "Saskatchewan advantage" and the biggest economic boom in our province's history. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and more people are moving to our province than ever before.

All of this has been . . . [done] under our current labour legislation — there clearly is no crisis requiring a hasty

fix.

He goes on to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Modernization of laws is a good thing, but it requires thoughtful and inclusive review and that will take time. There is no harm in taking time, but there is a worrying potential for real damage if passage of this . . . legislation is rushed.

And that is what Hugh Wagner, general secretary of the Grain Services Union, writes. And I think there's a lot of wisdom in that column. I think it's one that we have raised a lot of concerns about where we see the government in many times saying we want to take some time and get it right, and it's demonstrated that on several issues. In fact we even talked about bullying and we talked about putting information about gay-straight alliances up on websites. And they say, can't do that right away, because we want to get it right.

We think that's relatively straightforward, but we don't know what the timeline is on that piece. But we know the timeline on this piece. And we don't know, as I said earlier, we don't know how it's going to come into force because we are anxious to get the bill passed, but what does it mean in terms of regulations? When will it come into force? So we have some real, real concerns.

But, Mr. Speaker, the piece that's . . . There's two I said. But one piece I really do want to speak about is the idea around what are our priorities in Saskatchewan workplaces. And I believe the number one workplace issue today is workplace safety. And it was only reinforced unfortunately, tragically, by the numbers that WCB released last week. And if you add in the farm workplace deaths, it would actually be up to 75 — I think there were about 15 deaths.

And so this is really clearly becoming a crisis. And you know, the minister quoted me in my agreement with him that this needs to be a priority, and it should be. It should be the priority for this House and for this government.

If it was to make one commitment, one contribution to Saskatchewan workplaces that I believe is important, it's to tackle the issue around workplace safety. It was a wake-up call, it really, truly was a wake-up call last week when we were all shocked by the numbers from WCB. And we could see that the folks from WCB even were horrified by the information because they just, they think they're doing the right thing. And I think in many ways they are, but it's something that really needs to take full attention of this government and not be distracted by Bill 85 in its rush to get it done, you know. And I think this is really important.

[12:45]

And I think that, and I want to quote, and we often quote Murray Mandryk, but his column from Wednesday, April 2013. And he talks about "Job safety should bridge labour divide." And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw that today with the asbestos registry. And last night in committee we heard it over and over again, that that legislation will save lives. Simply it will save lives. And so we need to do more of that.

And we'd be very interested on this side to talk more about that issue. That's the kind of thing that we need to see happen. But Murray Mandryk says, and I quote:

Lost in the politically charged debate over Saskatchewan labour law, where battle lines are always drawn between union and non-union, is the reality that labour laws impacts us in ways that go well beyond just our workplaces.

And he talks about how we have to really tackle the issues around that really affect us and our families. And actually interestingly last night, some folks talked about how asbestos not only affects the person who's got it, who is going to pass away from the illnesses related to asbestos, but also their families, their children, their spouses. But he goes on to say:

But if there is one labour issue that should bridge the interests of both workers and employers, it is clearly workplace safety. This takes us to Tuesday's release of the 2012 Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) annual report, which unveiled an alarming 60 job-related deaths in 2012 — the worst fatality rate in 30 years.

"Every category that the WCB maintains for the cause of death and every age group saw an increase in the number of fatalities compared with 2011," the WCB reported in its 2012 summation that compares last year's 60 deaths with 36, 31, 32, 44 and 36 deaths from 2007 to 2011 . . .

And it talks about 14 construction deaths and 43 fatalities resulting from injuries in 2012 and the increased cancer deaths from past exposure to asbestos.

And interestingly, just even as we were debating entrepreneurs, at least four that I could tell from the list were owners of the business in which they died. So this is not just a remote thing, and it's not just in Saskatoon or Regina or Moose Jaw or Prince Albert. It's right across this province, right across this province.

So it's an issue that we have known about and that we have tackled with many initiatives, but it needs even more, more attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So clearly we think this is the time to get it right.

Now we are talking about another bill in front of us, the Workers' Compensation Board bill, and we need to talk about that. What are the implications of that? And there's lots of interesting questions we'll have about that in committee. So there's lots of work to be done in the area of labour.

And the other one that we need to talk about was temporary foreign workers, and there is a bill before the House on that issue. And clearly we've seen the implications of what can go horribly wrong if we don't have the legislative laws in place to deal with that issue. We can look at the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] fiasco that happened just a couple of weeks ago, when that's not done well. So, Mr. Speaker, I just think that we've got to take a good, long look at that issue.

Lori Johb. I want to read the letter that Lori Johb wrote on April 16th, or April 13th I believe it was. And she writes:

I find it extremely alarming that in 2012, Saskatchewan recorded its largest number of workplace fatalities in more than 30 years. Over the past couple of years, it actually seemed like we were making positive progress in the area of occupational health and safety.

In 2012, in fact, considerable increases were made to the fines that are levied for failure to comply with safety legislation. Last week, however, in response to the devastating number of workplace deaths last year, the minister of workplace safety boasted about a new omnibus . . . 85, that will rewrite labour legislation in our province. The minister claimed that Bill 85 will somehow address the dramatic increase in workplace deaths that we saw in 2012.

She writes:

Make no mistake, the government's omnibus Bill . . . will do absolutely nothing to improve safety for working people in Saskatchewan. I would think that something as important as keeping workers safe and healthy would be a priority for the Saskatchewan Party government, especially when we have a larger number of people working in the province than ever before, but the sole purpose of Bill 85 is to reduce labour standards and to unfairly side with employers over working people.

To try and suggest that the omnibus bill will somehow protect working people, especially those who are in danger of losing their lives, is absolutely wrong and it is extremely unfortunate that the minister tried to make such a claim.

Lori Johb. Lori Johb is Chair of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's occupational health and safety committee.

So clearly we have significant differences of opinions here and significant different opinions about what really is happening in terms of occupational health and safety. And so I think the onus on us as legislators is to get it right, to get it right. Take some time and deal with these concerns that people like Lori is talking about or rise up to the challenge that columnists such as Murray Mandryk is saying. Let's get it right. This is one issue we can all agree really needs attention.

We have more workers than ever working in this province. And when we see the numbers that came out from WCB last week, it is the time, the time to get it right. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that it would be just a really important signal to labour, and it was a great one today in Bill 604, Howard's law, that we do actually value people's workplaces and that they should be safe, that we do take the time to get it right.

Now the other issue I wanted to take just a couple of minutes before we finish up for the week, I want to take a minute and reflect on the letter that Mr. Gary Dickson, the Saskatchewan Information Privacy Commissioner, wrote to the minister on March 1, 2013 in regards to Bill 85, the employment Act. And I always value his comments because they are very thoughtful and he takes a look at it from how do we serve the people of Saskatchewan in the best way.

So he's talking about privacy, and again I think this is really important. And I'll read some of his comments into the record because I think that, I hope that, and I do know that the other side does actually read through this. And I hope that the minister does take some time to take a look at his letter again, take a look at Mr. Dickson's letter and say, are we meeting the kind of standard we should be having in Saskatchewan in this day and age? He talks about some general comments, and I quote:

Before dealing with the provisions in the Bill, I might offer some general comments. I recognize some of the elements of the Bill are not new and appeared in earlier iterations of Saskatchewan labour legislation.

But he talks about:

. . . since the 2003 proclamation of HIPA and the adoption by the Saskatchewan Government of the *Overarching Personal Information Privacy Framework for Executive Government*, and increased awareness about privacy rights of the individual in the information age, a number of those older elements may no longer be appropriate or at the very least . . . require modification to align with public expectations and current privacy legislation.

So he is making a case, and it fits quite well into what the government is saying — time to modernize. He's saying, let's take a look. One of his primary concerns is around no privacy regulation on private sector employee information. He says, and I quote:

A further observation is that Saskatchewan has still not made any move to align our privacy regime for employees of the private sector with the modern privacy laws utilized by our partners in the New West Partnership [particularly] (British Columbia and Alberta). Those privacy laws, the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA), in both provinces are focused on small and medium-sized businesses . . . [Some] private businesses in Saskatchewan are still subject to the . . . federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) they are disadvantaged relative to businesses in British Columbia and . . . [BC] that have much clearer and simpler rules for the private sector.

So again there is an example of privacy issues that we need to take a look at, to modernize. He talks about asymmetrical privacy protection in Saskatchewan. He talks about:

As a general observation, the privacy rules that apply to . . . [privacy] information (PI) and personal health information (PHI) of employees of government institutions and local authorities may be of limited benefit overall if the private sector organizations, which will be collecting, using and disclosing . . . [the privacy information] and PHI of their employees, are for the most part unregulated.

So they have some real differences there, and that's really important that they get them on the same page. He raises a concern about no whistleblower protection for FOIP [*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*],

LAFOIP [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*], and HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*], that there's no protection for those people. And that really is an issue because:

The Bill fails to address the question of protection for employees who, in good faith, alert our oversight office to actions by government institutions or local authorities that violate FOIP, LA FOIP or HIPA.

So it's really important that you get that. So he talks about Bill 85 as both too little and too much. And so I think it's important that we get that balance, the balancing is right.

So I think this is really, really important. And he talks about the fact that sometimes . . . He says quite clearly, "The employer is not entitled to specific diagnosis of illness but is entitled to a medical certificate confirming disability and the expected date of return . . ." So an employer cannot require a medical certificate for suspicious absences.

So he really goes into a lot of detail. And I see that my time is running out, but we've not had a really good answer in terms of privacy, and I think that this is very important.

I just also want to read this one last quote, but I will be asking a lot of questions in committee going through this letter in quite some detail actually. He says:

In my respectful submission, absent a compelling business interest or a suspicious circumstance that would warrant an inquiry into the diagnosis of the illness or disability . . . there should only be the need for a medical certificate that would verify the absence is for appropriate cause.

So he says there's a balance in there. And this is what we're . . . All of it is about balance, isn't it? The employer is only entitled to know just what he needs to know or what she needs to know — was it reasonable for the person to be gone? — and not to get into the details of the illness. That's a privacy issue. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that's really, really important that we deal with people who have legitimate questions like this.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see that if we want to develop the very best legislation that we possibly can that will govern this province for decades to come . . . And we really hope that all legislation that we do in this Chamber is both — has very little unintended consequences but can stand the test of time and can stand challenges in court. And I don't see that with this piece of legislation. There's too many questions, and so we have a lot of worries and concerns about this bill.

We do not challenge government in its authority of having a mandate to take a look at labour. In fact we welcome it, and in fact it looks like for example the Privacy Commissioner very much welcomes that as well. But we need to deal with this. So to that end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move:

That this Assembly urge the government to listen to the advice of members of the Minister of Labour's advisory committee and delay the passage of Bill No. 85.

I do so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved:

That this Assembly urge the government to listen to the advice of members of the Minister of Labour's advisory committee and delay the passage of Bill No. 85.

It now being past the hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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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

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk

Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan

Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
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