



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

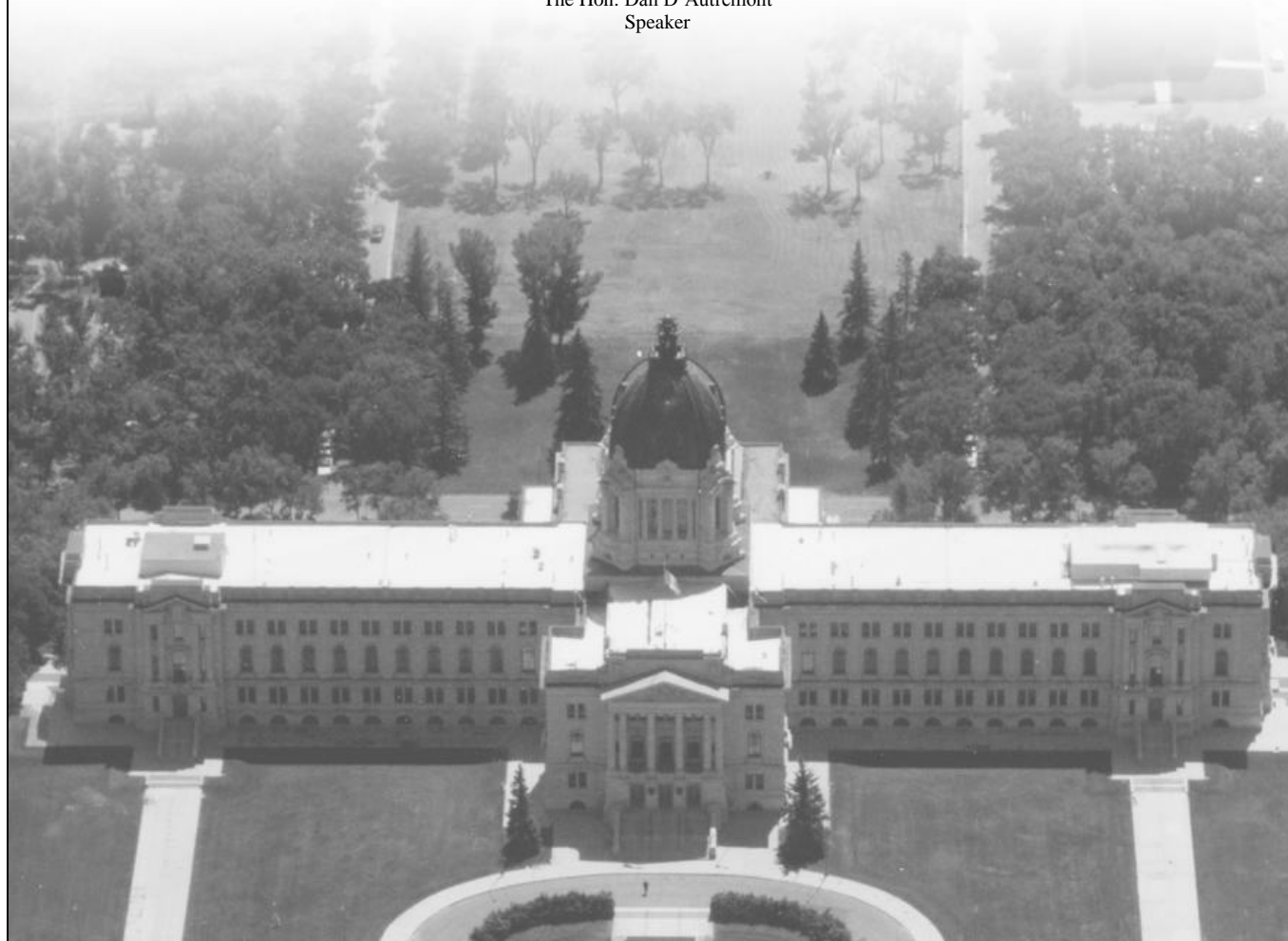
of the

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Merci, monsieur le Président. Je veux vous présenter un groupe des étudiantes de l'école St. Andrew de Regina. Je pense qu'il y a 33 étudiantes avec nous ce matin.

[Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present to you a group of students from St. Andrew School in Regina. I think that there are 33 students with us this morning.]

Mr. Speaker, these students are part of something called Le Club du Souvenir — rough translation, the Remembrance Group. They are led here today by a very special teacher, Madame Carolynne Kobelsky. She is called Colonel Kobelsky during the meetings of this club.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a regular or normal extracurricular club as we have come to understand them. These students from grades 5 through grade 8 — and this has been going on now for, I think I heard six years this morning — are required to apply and sign attestation papers or an oath of loyalty in order to get into the club. Colonel Kobelsky assigns each member a rank and a service number which they are wearing today in the Legislative Assembly with their T-shirts of remembrance. Mr. Speaker, I've even heard that if you're late for a meeting that the colonel requires 10 push-ups. They're all nodding their head. We might want to try that in the legislature maybe, Mr. Speaker.

What makes this group even more unique is their mission statement which is this, and I quote: "To develop and foster a sense of respect, appreciation, and remembrance for the sacrifices of our Canadian forces."

Mr. Speaker, allow me to give members some examples of what they're doing to fulfill this particular mission statement. They help care for over 50 veterans at the Wascana Rehab Centre here in Regina by making them toques that look like poppies and writing them thank you cards for their service. They send care packages to troops, our troops all over the world including, I think lately, a care package to those serving in the Canadian Navy and working in the Arabian Sea fighting piracy today, Mr. Speaker.

They find information for members of the Royal Regina Rifles regiment on loved ones who have served or were lost overseas. Mr. Speaker, they even have what they call a hallway of heroes at their school to document and honour the relatives of students who have served. Mr. Speaker, they also escort veterans through the hallway of heroes before their Remembrance Day service, which I understand is tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, while we may honour those who fought for our freedoms one day a year, these students, grades 5 through 8, under the remarkable leadership of, I might say of the colonel, do this regularly throughout the year.

There is a lot of names here. It would take a long while to read them all in the record, but we're going to do it anyway, Mr. Speaker. So I'm going to read all the names. I apologize for some mispronunciations. And I'm going to go through it quickly and if they would just give us a quick wave as, as I read the name.

We'll start with the colonel, Madame Kobelsky. Jaryd Antonissen, Emily Bumphrey, Jenna Bryksa, Kennedy Cantin, Taryn Dillon, Megan Donnelly, Alex Duesing, Alek Eisler, Nathaniel Hak, Nolan Hansinger, Breanne Harty, Nathan Harty, Jordan Jenkins Natasha Kalmakoff, Paige Kelenc, Kendall Kleisinger, Jack Klippenstein, Jana Laliberte, Sera Lizée, Aiden Lombard, Bailey Mattern, Max McFadden, Lauren Nelson, Kianna Parisloff, Olivia Parker, Dayle Phaneuf, Ainsley Priddell, Madison Randall, Christopher Shikanai, if I pronounced that right; Gabrielle Srochenski, Jessica Stroeder, Madison Zimmer.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have a chance to meet the students again a little bit after the question period is complete. And we had a chance to chat this morning. They sang a beautiful song for those of us who were in the gallery there, and the media as well. Mr. Speaker, I've invited them — I hope it's okay with members with here — I invited them to perform at our Remembrance Day service next year, and I think they've agreed.

Mr. Speaker, this is a remarkable group of kids here in Regina, ensuring that remembrance continues throughout the year, not just here but across the province. We want to thank them for what they do, Mr. Speaker, and we want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly this morning. Welcome.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Merci beaucoup. Je voudrais dire des mots aussi en français pour les élèves avec leur chef, Carolynne Kobelsky, et au part de l'opposition officielle, je voudrais dire félicitations à tout le travail que vous faissiez pour les vétérans et les soldats. Et aussi merci beaucoup, merci beaucoup, au part des toutes des officielles électives, pour le travail que vous faites et votre dedication au sujet de souvenir. Et merci beaucoup à tous. Merci beaucoup.

[Translation: Thank you very much. I would like to say some words in French for the students with their leader, Carolynne Kobelsky, and on behalf of the official opposition, I would like

to say congratulations for all the work that you do for the veterans and the soldiers. And also, thank you very much, thank you very much, on behalf of all the elected officials, for the work that you do and your dedication concerning remembrance. And thank you very much to all. Thank you very much.]

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce some officials in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, from the city of Regina and the municipality of Sherwood.

Mr. Speaker, it's not uncommon anywhere in the country in areas of rapid growth that there's some tensions between adjacent municipalities. That doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker. What matters is how those issues are dealt with. And over the last few months, through mediation, officials from the city and from the RM [rural municipality] have done just a tremendous amount of work and co-operation which culminated last night, Mr. Speaker, in an historic signing on annexation and compensation, and also a memorandum of understanding for future development. Mr. Speaker, you will hear more about that in a few minutes in member statements.

But for now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce, in your gallery, Michael Fougere, the mayor of the city of Regina. With him is his chief of staff, Herman Hulshof, and also Councillor Mike O'Donnell from the city. And we also have from the rural municipality Reeve Kevin Eberle, Deputy Reeve Tim Probe, and Rachel Kunz, the administrator. Mr. Speaker, also as you can imagine, there were a number of other officials including . . . I should mention City Manager Glen Davies for the tremendous amount of work he did, other officials that did great work on this project. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in thanking those members and also in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I am honoured to join with the minister opposite and welcome leaders from the city of Regina and the RM of Sherwood that are here today, and certainly proud to recognize and to thank them for their leadership that they've provided to come together on this annexation plan and also resolving some matters of a relationship and planning for the future.

I found it encouraging this past week when I attended the regional planning summit here in Regina that brought together the rural municipality, businesses, the city, to see Councillor O'Donnell and Deputy Reeve Probe presenting to that summit, and ensuring that the planning that we undertake right now is able to serve the entire region. So it's my pleasure to welcome His Worship Mayor Fougere, Councillor Mike O'Donnell, Reeve Kevin Eberle and Deputy Reeve Tim Probe here today. Thank you for your leadership to our province.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's an honour for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a gentleman seated in the west gallery. And that's Barry Martin. And Mr. Martin is the Chair of the board with CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] Saskatchewan and he's here today to witness the government's response to the Special Committee on Traffic Safety. So we want to welcome him to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, I'd like to join the minister in welcoming the guest here to see the proceedings today and the introduction of a start to try to lessen . . . lives and injuries in Saskatchewan highways. So I'd like to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce some special guests who are seated in your gallery. With us today is Ms. Bev Antal. Bev, could you give us a bit of a wave. She's accompanied by her daughter-in-law Jenny and her son Jon. And I would just mention that Jon is a paramedic with STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society]. Also accompanying the Antal family is my constituency assistant Carol Mellnick.

Mr. Speaker, Bev recently lost her husband, Roy, and of course Jon, his father. Roy grew up just down the road from my home and we started school together in a small country school. I'll have more to say about Roy and our experiences later, Mr. Speaker. So at this time, I'd like to ask all members to help me welcome the Antal family to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce people that are no strangers to the legislature. They are family and friends of the late Howard Willems — Brenda Baergen and, in particular, his son Jesse Todd who I'll say a little bit more about it in a minute or two.

Joining them are representatives of the Canadian Cancer Society, Donna Ziegler and Donna Pasiechnik. They join us in the gallery today for the proclamation of Howard's law. Tomorrow marks one year since Howard Willems passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. He was a tireless advocate for an asbestos registry.

Today the proclamation of Howard's law means that an asbestos registry is becoming mandatory for all public buildings. While Howard is no longer with us, it is our hope that this registry, which is his legacy, will save lives. Mr. Speaker, Jesse Todd spoke to us at the time of his father's passing and looked us in the eye and said, "We cannot stop now. We must continue on." We thank them for being here today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming this important group, with all the important groups, but to welcome this group here today with Jesse Todd, Brenda Baergen, Donna Ziegler, and Donna Pasiechnik.

To the Willems family, with coming up to the anniversary of Howard's death, I am sure there are many emotions that you're feeling, and rightfully so, but I hope in the midst of it and seeing proclamation today of such an important work, and a dream and a vision that Howard had, I hope that there's also a lot of joy in knowing about the work that he did will have a lasting legacy here in Saskatchewan, and our hope is across the country as well. So thank you so much for the work that you've done and how you've shared your family's experience with the province.

And thank you also to Donna and Donna because Howard's law is an example of how this legislature can work really well, with civil society doing its part and with government and opposition working together for common sense things that better the lives of many Saskatchewan people. So thank you so much for being here today.

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

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bienvenue à tout le monde. It's my great pleasure to join with the Premier and other colleagues in thanking Carolynne Kobelsky and the remarkable students from École St. Andrew and the Club du Souvenir for all the work they're doing to support our troops, both current members of the Canadian Forces and of course our veterans.

I'd like to also add that I too will have the pleasure of meeting them a little bit later today. And I'll also have the honour of joining them for their Remembrance Ceremony tomorrow at the school. I'm looking forward to it.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Carolynne for great work that's she's done on another wonderful project in honour of our troops, and that is of course the Trafalgar Day Gala which was held at HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Queen*, with all the proceeds going to Wounded Warriors Canada. I'd like to thank her publicly. It's wonderful to work with you, and I look forward to doing it again next year. Thank you so much.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services the government provides to citizens and that this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence, and that this government has failed to develop a real plan to close the Aboriginal education gap, support English as an additional language for students, and support community schools and their communities and students. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately prioritize education by laying out a long-term vision and plan and the necessary resources to provide the best quality of education for Saskatchewan that reflects Saskatchewan demographic and population changes, that's based on proven educational best practices, that's developed through consultation with the education sector, that builds on strong education infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefit from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building community in our province's beautiful North.

They are signed by many northern people. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gymnasium at Sacred Heart Community School. The petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart in North Central is unsafe, has been falling apart, and has been closed for the immediate future. They point out that there is an interim solution in place, Mr. Speaker, with the refurbishing of the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but that this is not a permanent solution. They point out that any school needs a gym as a place for the school and the community to gather together to engage in cultural and educational activities and to promote physical activity, which is good for the mind, body, and spirit of all children. And they point out that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym. Mr. Speaker, in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

This petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Strasbourg, and Cupar. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Remembering Roy Antal

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Roy Antal spent 41 years as a photographer with the *Leader-Post*, and sadly, Mr. Speaker, last Friday I attended his funeral.

You may have read the tributes to Roy in last week's papers, which outlined his vast array of experiences during his long career at the paper. But as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, Roy grew up just down the road from my home, and we went to a country school. And during the winter months our parents would take turns driving us with horse and sleigh to school, and in the summertime we'd walk. And yes, it was uphill both ways.

But after school, Mr. Speaker, our paths took different directions, and frankly we didn't see each other that often until I was elected back in '99 to this Assembly. After that I'd often see Roy here on Throne Speech days, budget days, and other special events doing what he did — taking pictures for the paper.

But one of the first times that we met after I was elected was back in 1999 when I assisted a caucus colleague who was participating in a goat milking contest. And I agreed to come and hold the goat while my caucus colleague milked the goat. And sure enough, there was Roy taking pictures. And I had a look at those pictures just this morning, Mr. Speaker, and you know, myself and the member from Cannington, we didn't have any grey hair back in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, at Roy's funeral, Rob Vanstone in his eulogy told us about the wall of photos that they have of Roy's photos over at the *Leader-Post*. And he said, and I quote, "If the province can have a Brad Wall, we at the paper can have a Roy wall." And I can think of no better tribute to my friend Roy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Thanking Those Who Serve and Have Served

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we stood together in this legislature in remembrance with a touching ceremony. I was moved by the powerful and eloquent words of Padre D.J. Kim, chaplain of the Royal Regina Rifles, who called upon us to be ever thankful for the service and sacrifice of so many.

It is my humble honour to recognize and thank all the men and women that serve and have served our proud nation in pursuit of freedom and peace. Our province has a strong history of service to our nation. That service to one's nation not only shaped our nation but it has too shaped our province and the families and communities across it. Whether it's a young mom or dad that recently returned to our province from service or a dad or a grandfather that served years before, it's fair to say that service impacts many lives, families, and communities in powerful ways.

Like so many across our province, a history of service to our nation is part of my family's history. We must never forget the

true purpose of pinning on a poppy, and on November 11th while we observe ceremonies, stand at cenotaphs, and come together at Legions, we must never forget to remember and be thankful year-round. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in extending our thanks, our respect to those that serve, have served, and those that we've lost. May we always remember and may our resolve for peace be strong. In the words of John McCrae, ". . . the torch: be yours to hold it high." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

New Relationship Between Municipalities

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to recognize the work done between the RM of Sherwood and the city of Regina. Council meetings were held last night and a new agreement was signed that forges a new relationship between the municipalities.

In September, Regina City Council and the RM of Sherwood Council unanimously approved an MOU [memorandum of understanding] establishing a joint planning area and a mechanism for joint decision making as well as a forum for important communication regarding growth in the joint planning area. This MOU is a critical part of the co-operation between the two municipalities. The RM of Sherwood and the city of Regina have set a fine example of what can happen when municipalities work together.

Saskatchewan is growing in population and also in economic opportunities, and this agreement will allow both municipalities to continue to create more opportunities, provide jobs, not just for the sake of growth but for the benefit of all the citizens of this region. Although this is a very important step, there is more work to do, and I believe they will continue to work together as they move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Legislative Assembly join me in thanking the city of Regina and the RM of Sherwood for all their hard work and collaboration to make this province the best place to live, to work, to play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Thanking Those Who Serve and Have Served

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My father, who was a World War II veteran, taught us that service is deeply important. Mr. Speaker, as a World War II veteran, he is very proud of his sons and his daughters and our entire family for their service, but he was proud of all those that served.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of my family service and of the sacrifices made by the First Nations and Métis people in this country. I'd like to recognize some of my family members: my brother John who was a machinist in the Armed Forces for 27 years; my older brother Wally who was a flight engineer and served close to 30 years; my older sister Dawna, served three years; and my youngest daughter Taylor served at the Esquimalt navy program; my Uncle George who also was a

World War II vet and spent three years overseas; and my cousin Charles also served.

Mr. Speaker, as a family we also enjoy attending a special tribute ceremony back home, that this day I will always specifically think about the service of the over 7,000 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people, and the 500 who gave their lives for this country.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to say thank you to all the veterans, to those that have served, and those that will continue to serve, and especially those that perished. Mr. Speaker, there's no question that there're many people throughout our country and our communities and our RMs that are very thankful for the service. And I want to especially recognize and thank the students that are here today for their tribute and service and to say to all the families that made the greatest sacrifice and those that continue to serve, I sincerely thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you.

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

Change of Command at “F” Division

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, history was made yesterday as Chief Superintendent Brenda Butterworth-Carr was officially sworn in Wednesday as the new commanding officer for Saskatchewan's “F” Division at the change of command ceremony right here in Regina.

Chief Superintendent Butterworth-Carr is Canada's first Aboriginal woman to lead an RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] division. The new leader is from Dawson City, Yukon, and is a member of the Tr'ondëck Hwëch' in Han Nation. Mr. Speaker, Chief Butterworth-Carr joined the RCMP in 1987 as a Native special constable and has served communities in the Yukon, British Columbia, national headquarters, and Saskatchewan.

Chief Superintendent Butterworth-Carr has served on many committees and associations and received numerous awards, including both the Golden and Diamond Queen's Jubilee Medals for her proactive work and outstanding commitment and dedication to Aboriginal communities across Canada.

At yesterday's event, the Assembly of First Nations Chief, Shawn Atleo, addressed the crowd, commenting, and I quote:

This is history being made here in Treaty 4 territory in Regina. With the first Aboriginal woman to accomplish this level of leadership tells the young people, especially the girls, that anything is possible if you set your mind and heart to it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the great accomplishments of this newly appointed chief superintendent and wish her all the best in her new position as the leader for the RCMP “F” Division. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saltcoats-Melville.

Agribition 2013

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to share that the Canadian Western Agribition kicks off this coming Monday, November 11th. From November 11th to 16th, Regina will be hosting the Western Canada's premier agricultural marketplace, trade show, and rodeo. The theme of this year's show is Agribition for Everyone.

Mr. Speaker, Agribition is the largest cattle show in Western Canada, and this will mark its 43rd anniversary. Each year the event attracts more than 125,000 visitors from more than 50 countries.

This prestigious event happens over six days, showcasing some of North America's finest livestock, agriculture equipment, and impressive trade show. It has more than 1,400 head of the best livestock in North America and more than 250,000 square feet of trade show space, containing approximately 400 vendors from around the world. It also includes commercial displays, seminars, heavy horse pull, tours for schoolchildren, youth education, a professional rodeo, grain expo, and an international business centre.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all of my colleagues and everyone to take time out of their busy schedules to check out this world-class event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Policies and Plans

Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it's becoming painfully obvious the Leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party] has no policy and he has no plan. Tuesday my colleague from Carrot River challenged him to release his so-called smart growth plan. No response. Then the Premier asked him to release his environment plan. Again, no response. In fact, when reporters asked the NDP leader about his plan for the environment, he told them, I'm not rolling out my election platform today. How dismissive and arrogant can you get?

Mr. Speaker, no one is asking the NDP leader for his election platform. However, you might expect to find something about the NDP policy on the NDP website, but you can't. The NDP have taken great pains to scrub their website. Their last election platform is gone. The NDP resolutions are gone. Even the policy review book written by the NDP leader himself is gone.

Well, Mr. Speaker, almost every other opposition party has a policy on their website, even the Rhinoceros Party in Alberta. Their platform may be a joke, but at least you can find it, which is more than you can say for the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, it's becoming painfully obvious the Leader of the Opposition has no policy and he has no plan. He likes to complain, but he won't tell anyone what he would do differently. Will the NDP leader table his plan today, or will he just admit that he does not have one?

[10:30]

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — Okay, it's question time. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Special Care Conditions

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last spring, Mr. Speaker, Carrie Klassen came to the legislature to raise concerns about the quality of care in the facility where her mother lived. And she was . . . We also heard from Lynne Seaborne, Mr. Speaker, and we know of many other families that share the concerns that were raised.

Carrie told us about seniors being left unattended on toilets. Carrie told us about call buttons going off and not being answered. Carrie told us about seniors missing their baths. And all this, Mr. Speaker, was because of chronic understaffing. When she brought these concerns forward to this government, Mr. Speaker, they stubbornly dismissed them. In fact they suggested that they were overblown. They said that they were getting regular staffing reports from the facility and that there really was no cause for alarm. Mr. Speaker, in fact there was cause for alarm.

My question to the Premier: after reviewing the CEO [chief executive officer] tour report, what does he have to say about the concerns Carrie Klassen brought forward about the Sunset facility last spring?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right in the hon. member's question there is a bit of conflict of facts because on one hand he says, on one hand he says that this government was dismissive of the concerns that were raised. At the end of his questions, he notes the CEO tour that the minister directed the work, the work that the minister directed be done . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you know, they're saying after the fact. Mr. Speaker, the opposition raised some legitimate questions. That's how this place should work. And this side of the House responded. The minister provided leadership to the CEOs to make sure we were getting on the floor of these facilities.

The report came back, Mr. Speaker, and there was some positive reports in terms of care, and there was some very concerning reports in terms of care. And we released it all. It was all available to the public. This government noted that we need to do better by our long-term care residents. We wanted to also salute the fact that we're doing some very good work, our health care workers are doing some very good work in this area as well.

Mr. Speaker, there's a \$10 million emergency fund that was immediately deployed by the minister. There's an expansion in home care. There's medium- and long-term plans we're going to work on, Mr. Speaker.

The point of the answer I guess is this: this government was anything but dismissive. We take the matter very seriously. We recognize that the member of the opposition has raised them along with members of the public, and we'll respond.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when the concerns were brought forward they said there was no cause for alarm. The dismissive approach continues even when we talk about minimum care standards, Mr. Speaker.

You would think with the serious concerns that Carrie brought forward to the legislature, that this specific facility that she raised with concerns about would actually be included in the CEO tour and the subsequent report, especially if the tour was as comprehensive as this government suggests. But despite all of the spin and the hyping we heard about the CEO tour, Mr. Speaker, the tour report doesn't even include a proper review of the Sunset facility. My question to the Premier: why is this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the minister may want to respond specifically to this facility in regards to the tour. But again I just reject the preamble, the pretext for the Leader of the Opposition's questions. And we do have to do a daily fact check in this regard it seems.

Mr. Speaker, this government was anything but dismissive about the issues that were raised. We're absolutely going to point out though where there is some successes, and that's what was also been happening during the debate, Mr. Speaker. Our health care workers are doing some wonderful work, providing some great care, and that should also be noted as we continue to debate this issue. There seems to be a lack of recognition sometimes with respect to what those workers are doing.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO tour was, I think, very helpful. It's certainly the starting point. Again this government released all of the report back whether it was positive or frankly not very positive. And this government has been clear about its intent to continue to deal with the issue. I would hope that people of the province would see that, rather than closing long-term care beds as we saw under the previous administration, we've been opening new long-term care beds. We've been adding nurses. We've been hiring more doctors. There's more work to do, Mr. Speaker, in this specific area, and we're committed to do it.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, just because this government doesn't like the facts related to its response to the crisis that we have with seniors' care doesn't mean they can simply dismiss the facts. It was the minister, Mr. Speaker, when these concerns were raised in the legislature that said there was no cause for alarm.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO report only has a self-assessment checklist for Sunset which was filled out by Sunset management. It does not have the review document that other facilities have. The self-assessment checklist completed by Sunset management claims that the organization's commitment to resident-centred care is clear and that things are generally rolling along quite well. But we know that's not the case, Mr. Speaker, because of the concerns that have been raised by Carrie Klassen and other families who are concerned about the quality of care in this exact facility.

So my question to the Premier: does he really think that this approach of self-assessment checklists provides an accurate picture of seniors' care facilities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we do support this particular CEO tour. In fact I know the minister has directed regions to make sure that this is a regular occurrence. Is this the only way that we can monitor what's happening in health care in long-term care facilities? No, Mr. Speaker. There are other ways. We hear from the public as well. We listen to health care providers. That's what our patient-first initiative is about. The opposition has a role to play. People like Ms. Klassen have a role to play. We do need to be vigilant. We need to be listening very carefully to all of the input we get, Mr. Speaker. We understand that this a long-term process.

We got to this situation in Saskatchewan over, well, over years where we were closing facilities, over years where we were contemplating — I can say the members opposite were contemplating — massive increases in long-term care fees. And any number of issues that have got us to this point. Mr. Speaker, we are accountable now for the situation. We will be accountable. We are moving with an emergency fund now. We're moving with mid- and long-term initiatives. Mr. Speaker, we are committed to this, but absolutely we think the CEO tour had value, and we're going to continue it on in the future.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech this government tried to hype up how comprehensive its CEO tour was. But I've been hearing repeatedly from individuals that the CEO tour of facilities, Mr. Speaker, barely scratches the surface of concerns that exist.

And now Carrie Klassen is back at the legislature, Mr. Speaker, wondering today why the specific concerns she raised about a facility were not addressed in the way that they needed to be. And she has some specific questions, Mr. Speaker. Carrie wants to know why managers were left to assess their own performance. Carrie wants to know why no one talked to front-line staff. Carrie wants to know why no one talked to family members. And Carrie wants to know why no one talked to seniors living in the facility.

My question to the Premier: what is his response to the questions raised by Carrie?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we have committed to doing on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker, is to direct the CEOs of our health regions and senior leaders within the health regions to undergo this process on an ongoing basis, whether that be through an annual CEO tour of long-term care facilities which we will be conducting, Mr. Speaker. And we'll learn from this process from this first round which we have never done before in this province, Mr. Speaker. I think it's arguably high time that we start spending more time, Mr. Speaker, and having senior

leaders spend more time within facilities, Mr. Speaker.

But we've also put in other ways. The Premier has talked about the \$10 million Urgent Issues Action Fund. Mr. Speaker, what we'll be asking the health region to do is report back on their progress 60, 90, and 120 days after receiving the money from the provincial government to determine whether or not the money has actually addressed the issues that they addressed in their report. Mr. Speaker, as well as we'll provide a survey for the resident and family councils to provide directly to the Minister of Health, something that was never done before, Mr. Speaker.

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

Public-Private Partnerships and Provision of Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of Highways was asked about concerns with P3 [public-private partnership] schools in Alberta. He replied, "There's no basis behind them." The Minister of Highways obviously has selective hearing, Mr. Speaker.

Here's what Bill Stuebing from Red Deer Public School Board had to say about P3 schools just last month:

I do not believe that P3s are the most efficient use of public funds in the long term, and I would not support their continued use. I am disturbed that school districts are being presented with P3s as the only way to secure badly needed facilities.

So my question to the Minister of Education is this: does he support the claim of the Minister of Highways that there's no basis to the concerns about P3 schools in Alberta?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways, the Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds, has indicated and made it abundantly clear that we are going down this road with a great deal of caution and care.

First off, Mr. Speaker, I can advise that there would be a detailed and expert value-for-money calculation. That money calculation would be provided by a professional, external, expert financial advisor, somebody from KPMG, Deloitte's, or somebody like that. They would have a fair, open, and transparent process to determine whether it is value for taxpayers in using a P3 model.

We want to ensure that there is somebody that would be an external fairness advisor for each of the projects that's being undertaken. It would be undertaken by somebody that's external, somebody that has got credibility and competence. We want to make sure that we use well-established Canadian best practices. The Canadian P3 market now is mature. At the present time, there are over 204 P3 projects completed or under way.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister must not have heard the question. But it's disturbing that the Minister of Education simply stands by the Minister of Highways when we're talking about the future of the schools in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when Medicine Hat Public School Board trustee Deborah Forbes was asked if she thought the Alberta government should continue to use P3s for new schools, she had the following to say, "P3 partnerships seem to be an experiment that is failing, so no." Cindy Olsen, an Edmonton Catholic School Board member echoed these comments on P3 schools: "Government says they have learned from the first ones, but have they?" Judy Hehr from the Calgary Board of Education shares this distaste: "It is unfortunate in a province as wealthy as Alberta that its school system has to consider P3s."

My question to the Minister of Education: why is he ignoring educational leaders and the experience from across Alberta that view the P3 school bundles as a failure that has not gotten any better over time?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote John Gibson, director of Alberta school's alternative procurement process. And this is what he said:

We had an auditor general's report on our project. They found that we had, over the net present value, which is an accounting term for bringing cash flow over a long period of time to the present, that we had saved 100 million or \$97 million to be precise.

With regard to the report that the member is referring to, the same John Gibson, director of . . . [inaudible] . . . said:

Never heard of it, because we have in our agreement that the contractor must maintain the building, including the maintenance, any wear and tear necessary due to the joint-use agreements with the municipalities. Every school board has a joint-use agreement with its municipality, even if it's a rural school board.

Mr. Speaker, these processes are taking place in Alberta. I understand there might be critics but, Mr. Speaker, I like the idea of saving tens and hundreds of millions of dollars so that we can continue to provide more and more services to the students and parents in our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the government's moving forward in a stubborn approach with blinders on, ignoring the experience of other jurisdictions, and hanging their hat on the argument that somehow P3 school bundling has evolved. And they're asking us to look to the other, the experiences of other jurisdictions. Well, we are. Outside the shared rejection of P3s for new schools, these educational figures have something else in common. They were all elected as representatives of the Alberta education system last month.

The people of Saskatchewan want a litmus test for how people

feel about the P3 schools in Alberta. Then we should all, in particular the minister, should take a good, hard, long look at what's actually going on there.

My question to the minister: if he hears the warnings of concerned teachers, school board trustees, governments, auditors, parents, and students, and thinks he can still prove them wrong, why won't he just open up his P3 master plan to the fair and open analysis that we're calling for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, earlier I indicated what the process would be, with an external review, an independent analysis for each one of the projects. And, Mr. Speaker, there is a ton of support for this in our province. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a few of the quotes from people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Public School Board Chair Ray Morrison: "To say that I am pleased to be here today for this announcement would be a serious, serious understatement." Vicky Bonnell, Chair, Regina Catholic Service Division: "As long as we have schools to accommodate our students' needs, we're happy." Mr. Speaker, Larry Pavloff, board Chair, Prairie Spirit School Division: "We are very happy to hear this announcement." Diane Boyko, Greater Saskatoon Catholic board Chair — it seems to me that's the same Diane Boyko that ran for a nomination against somebody on the other side of the House — says this: "We are really quite excited about this announcement because it is going to relieve some pressure and it is going to create schools within the community." Mr. Speaker, Katherine Gagne, Chair of the Regina Public Schools, exactly the same type of comment.

[10:45]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, everyone knows we've been calling for new schools for years. We just think they should be in the hands of the public, and built as fast as they can be. That government, that government holds Alberta up as some sort of shining example, but they're not looking at the realities.

In Alberta we've seen that there's been access issues where they wouldn't allow portables, child care facilities to be added on, Mr. Speaker. They blocked the community from utilizing the schools. Or we see the fact that the Alberta value for money is currently being investigated by the auditor or the fact that right now the current bundled bid only has one bidder from a consortia, having no competition for taxpayers, and now having every one of the opposition parties — Wildrose, Liberal, and NDP — united to scrap the P3 plan or the fact that Alberta school boards are stating very clearly that they want to go forward in a public fashion.

My question to the minister: when will this government actually get in touch with the reality of what's actually happening with P3 schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the reality of this, we're going to build schools in the province. We need to build schools. The members opposite have nothing in the tree book about building schools. In fact, Mr. Speaker, their record is closing 176 schools. We built 20 schools since we've been in government. We're going to add another nine joint-use schools.

And Mr. Speaker, I've sat in this House every day since we've been in session, listening to them talk about Sacred Heart School. Mr. Speaker, one of the effects of this package that we're doing with these nine joint-use schools, it will move Sacred Heart's gymnasium to the top of the capital list, Mr. Speaker. So I'd urge those members to get behind it because their citizens and the people that live in their constituencies sure are. They want these things. They need these things, and this is a good way of doing it, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to see them get behind it even if it's not in the tree book.

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

Crop Insurance Claims

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Many farmers are upset with how this government is dealing with insurance claims for wet acres. That's why just yesterday, the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) advised customers to increase their wet acre coverage; and

WHEREAS customers were told that SCIC would base their claims on the declared wet acres;

BE IT RESOLVED that Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation base the wet acre claims on what the customers declared for 2013.

To the minister: what is this government's response to the resolution? Can producers expect action on these concerns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question. The facts are that the program has not changed. Up to \$100 an acre is available now for unseeded acres. I guess one of the major changes over the last number of years is that under the NDP it was \$50 an acre. But it was never intended to compensate producers for permanent water bodies, and that's the only discrepancy these days.

The last two years there were so many flood claims that inspections were not done, and so I think producers wrongly expected that to be the case this year. And we've just gone back to doing inspections the way the Crop Insurance always has done and needs to do to remain sustainable.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister is

correct in saying the program hasn't changed, but what has changed is the way the assessments were being done. The permanent definition was changed after the fact, after these producers had purchased their insurance.

Mr. Speaker, the reeve for the RM of Kellross said this at the convention yesterday: "Last spring Lyle Stewart encouraged us to increase our coverage. Crop insurance customers were told that their claims would be treated in the same manner as other years. Well that obviously didn't happen." The reeve went on to say, "We think we were treated unfairly in this situation and we feel that the government, the Ag minister should revisit these claims."

Mr. Speaker, over the summer I heard the same concern from many farmers. To the minister: is this government going to stubbornly refuse to listen or will it revisit these claims?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member as well. The fact is that the process has not changed. We've just gone back to doing inspections as crop insurance always has done and needs to do in the future. We are and have been flexible with producers, and we continue to do so, as reinforced in a discussion that I had with senior crop insurance officials yesterday.

Many claims have been re-inspected and are continuing to be where producers are not happy with the results. Appeal processes are also available to producers who may have issues, and some appeals have been requested. Since 2010 we've provided \$740 million in unseeded acreage coverage and, I think, generally speaking producers are quite pleased with that.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the SARM convention also passed a resolution yesterday which called for the Crop Insurance Corporation to extend its deadline to July 10th in order to give producers an adequate period of time to apply for eligible flooded acres. SARM delegates noted that the current deadline of June 20th is not an adequate length of time. To the minister: is this government willing to listen to these concerns about crop insurance deadlines, and will it make the necessary adjustments?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we take SARM resolutions very seriously, as we will with this one. This will be discussed with ministry officials and with Crop Insurance and myself.

The facts are we have until June 20th to get seed in the ground under the crop insurance program. And then after that, flooded acres are irrelevant because it's past the seeding date in any event. But you know, we're willing to be flexible as we can with crop insurance, but we must maintain the program on a sustainable fashion.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Support for Home Ownership in Northern Saskatchewan

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing in northern Saskatchewan is a huge concern for families, but it's also a concern for communities and for businesses, Mr. Speaker. And the housing needs in northern Saskatchewan are very special in the sense that less than half of the northerners own their own homes. Over all the rest of the province, that number is about 72 per cent.

Many houses in northern Saskatchewan are overcrowded. It is much more difficult and more expensive getting building supplies for new houses, and it costs more to build. And private developers have less of an incentive to build houses in northern Saskatchewan compared to the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker. But this government stubbornly refuses to recognize those special challenges and dismisses the needs of northern housing, of issues that concern northern housing of Saskatchewan.

To the minister: why does this government have absolutely no plan for recognizing the challenges of housing in northern Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question.

I know that with the housing activity in northern Saskatchewan, there is great needs. And we recognize that we have the most social housing units in all of Canada. And we also, one, we have more units in the North, one in five for the rest of the province. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 we've spent about \$26 million on units that are either completed or in progress. And we do recognize that there is an issue with being able to buy, to purchase units in the North as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have consulted with the northern mayors. We've been in the North to talk to the Pinehouse residents, in La Ronge, and talk about the special challenges. We also know that when we have the consultations to talk about strategies, the mayors were very, very involved.

We've had the opportunity lately to see what can be done, and recognize that there is not only more people working in the North, but the opportunities to be able to own their own home is important. Home ownership is important to us, Mr. Speaker. And dealing with northern people is a big part of our program.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about home ownership, and for the record, that government cancelled the home ownership in northern Saskatchewan for working families, Mr. Speaker. The rental purchase option allowed working families in the North, after a number of years of renting, to have the dignity of owning their own home by buying the government off and getting the government out of their hair when it comes to their own homes.

Many families spent thousands of dollars paying rent year after year, Mr. Speaker, and they had the hope that they'd

be able to own their own home after a number of years of renting. And this government and this minister callously cut the program. The rental purchase option for working families in northern Saskatchewan was cancelled by that minister and by that government, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan, of northern Saskatchewan want to know one thing, Mr. Speaker: how could you turn your backs on working families that wanted the opportunity to finally own their own home and call their house their own home? Why did you do that, Madam Minister?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, the program that the member's talking about was in place from 2001 to 2011, and it helped 138 homeowners get a home. Mr. Speaker, the program was actually intended to be in place for three years. I talked to the member from Cumberland last year in estimates, and we talked about the home ownership and the fact that ensuring that people could own their home also made sure that . . . We had to ensure that they were able to look after their home.

Mr. Speaker, the program actually gave 54 tenants the right to purchase their home for \$1. Mr. Speaker, the way the program was set up wasn't giving everybody a balanced opportunity. We do know that the average price paid for the rest of them was just over \$12,000.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that people who are working and want to be able to own their home are going to pay a price that's comparable. We want to make sure the people who really need government support to have a home will get it from our government. That's what we're working on.

The Speaker: — I would like to remind members that when they're directing questions or answering questions that they do it through the Chair and not directly to the individual that they're speaking about. Order.

An Hon. Member: — Is this your first day in the House?

The Speaker: — It might be your last day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Implementation of Traffic Safety Committee Recommendations

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we are happy to announce significant changes that will save lives and prevent injuries on Saskatchewan roads, based on the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Traffic Safety.

Six changes relates to the unacceptable rate of impaired driving deaths in the province. They include implementing zero drug and alcohol tolerance for drivers under 19 years of age and for all drivers in the graduated driver's licensing program and the

motorcycle driving licensing program. We're subjecting drug-impaired drivers to the same sanctions as alcohol-impaired drivers.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be strengthening administrative sanctions for drinking and driving, based on driver experience and the number of offences, including mandatory ignition interlock for convicted impaired drivers and immediate roadside vehicle impoundments. For example, Mr. Speaker, on a first offence for drinking and driving, new drivers will face a 60-day roadside licence suspension and a three-day immediate roadside vehicle impoundment. Experienced drivers caught drinking and driving will also face immediate vehicle impoundment up to 60 days, depending on the driver's blood alcohol content and the number of offences.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] will work with Corrections and Policing to determine and implement the optimal number of drug recognition experts. SGI will review the impairing factors section of the *Saskatchewan Driver's Handbook* and SGI will analyze impaired driving data.

Mr. Speaker, stronger rules and tougher sanctions are just one component of making roads safer. It is also critical that drivers understand the choices that they make to prevent crashes. These measures should help keep new drivers safe behind the wheel now and they will also help them develop a mentality that drinking and driving don't mix. Changing behaviour will mean safety benefits for as long as these individuals drive. With these drinking and driving countermeasures, Saskatchewan will have one of the toughest packages of impaired driving legislation in Canada.

We're also taking action to address excessive speed, another top contributor to fatal crashes. We're going to be lowering the speed threshold in the Safe Driver Recognition program from 50 kilometres per hour to 35 kilometres per hour. We also will be implementing a two-year photo radar pilot project at three high-risk locations and in school zones. And to help ensure children are travelling safely, we're making booster seats mandatory for children under the age of seven and less than 145 centimetres or 4 feet 9 inches in height and 36 kilograms or 80 pounds in weight.

[11:00]

We will also focus our efforts on traffic safety awareness programs to encourage drivers to make better choices behind the wheel to help make Saskatchewan a safer place to live and drive. More specifically, Mr. Speaker, SGI will continue to work with First Nations and Métis communities to develop targeted traffic safety programming. SGI and the Ministry of Highways will continue to work with First Nations communities to address local traffic safety concerns. And SGI will work with the Ministry of Justice and SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] to research and implement technologies that can be used to make roads safer. SGI will continue to produce traffic safety measuring throughout the year, using various delivery methods, and SGI will review its communications strategy.

This traffic safety action plan reflects steps we can immediately

implement to improve safety on Saskatchewan roads. I would like to thank the committee for all of the work that they did, Mr. Speaker, and we will be looking at the other recommendations as we move forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the minister by saying thank you for sending over the ministerial statement and to go over it a little bit.

And I just want to start out . . . I know there are some guests in the galleries that are here probably to hear the announcement that the government is moving ahead on some of the recommendations, and good recommendations, that the Traffic Safety Special Committee, you know, did a lot of good work. And I want to commend the committee and the Chair, and also my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, who was the Vice-Chair. And I just want to say the good work, and I know they were dedicated to the members on both sides to work together, to lessen fatalities and deaths in our province, and to make sure our roads are safer for Saskatchewan residents.

And there are many . . . You know, there's over 20 recommendations that were brought forward by the committee. I know as an opposition we also had our, you know, minority opinion, and I'm hoping the government will act on that and will take all the necessary steps to improve our roads and safety for all Saskatchewan residents, not only our young children, but our young drivers, our families, and the people working on these roads, Mr. Speaker.

You know, there's a lot of individuals that are out there doing some good work, whether it's highways, whether there's . . . You know, and they try to improve the safety for people travelling on our highways. And I just want to say to the government, it's a good start. I know we have to continue to lessen the fatalities. You know, when you look at the number of fatalities in our province, on our highways, you know, the national rate, I think it's three times when you look at the rate. So this is a good start.

It was identified as a problem with deaths and injuries on our highway and the cost. So I want to say that to families and the families, the grief that families have gone through . . . So if we can do a little bit to improve safety, and I know it's individual choices, and we heard a lot of that, that individuals make those choices and how they conduct themselves on our roads and our highways.

So I just want to say again, it's a good start. We need to do more to make sure our roads are safe. But I just want to say to the minister and the ministry, you know, truly, and to the government, it's a good start. It shows co-operation working to make our roads safe for our Saskatchewan families.

So I'd like to say, thank everyone for the good work, and let's continue. There's more that we have to look at, but we can do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 111 — *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read the first 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 reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 112 — *The Accounting Profession Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act* be now introduced and read a first 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 reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 113 — *The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur les procurations*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 113, *The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 113, *The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read the first 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 reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 114 — *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Amendment Act, 2013*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 114, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 114, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first 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 reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 115 — *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2013*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 115, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved that Bill No. 115, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first 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 reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that the committee has considered revisions to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and is presenting its fifth report. I move:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

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

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

That the revisions to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan as presented in the fifth report be adopted and brought into force effective November 12, 2013; and further,

That upon adoption of this motion, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly shall ensure the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as revised are printed and republished.

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

That the revisions to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan as presented in the fifth report be adopted and brought into force effective November 12, 2013; and further,

That upon adoption of this motion, the Clerk of the

Legislative Assembly shall ensure the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as revised are printed and republished.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 88 through 100.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 88 through 100.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 903 — *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013*

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you. I move that Bill No. 903, *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013* be now read for a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Sutherland that Bill No. 903, *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a 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: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 100, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Hydraulic Fracturing in the Saskatchewan Energy Sector

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to bring a motion forward today:

That this Assembly supports the continued use of fracking (or hydraulic fracturing) in the Saskatchewan energy

sector.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as everybody knows, there's a lot of fearmongering and rhetoric being put around by various different people, so I want to read some of the stuff into the record on an article that was put in *The StarPhoenix*. And I'm going to quote from there. It's called "50 years of safe fracking in Saskatchewan." It was written by Kent Campbell and it was in *The StarPhoenix* February the 10th of 2012. I'm not going to read the whole thing, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to read some of the more important parts of it.

... Multi-stage fracking is used in our province only on horizontal wells to produce oil from a number of important formations, including the Bakken, Shaunavon and Viking.

While use of this technology has increased, it has been applied safely in Saskatchewan for more than 50 years on roughly 33,500 oil and gas wells. It is the combined technologies of horizontal drilling and fracking that have unlocked the energy riches of the renowned Bakken in southeast Saskatchewan — a formation that otherwise would have gone largely undeveloped.

Bakken is now recognized as one of the largest remaining conventional oil pools in North America. Technologies such as fracking are important to the future growth and development of Saskatchewan's oil and gas sector, which currently accounts for about 20 per cent of provincial gross domestic product and provides jobs for more than 32,000 people.

... No fresh water can be used in the process in Saskatchewan without receiving appropriate approvals from provincial water agencies.

Once a fracking operation is complete, the residual fluids that typically are 99 per cent water and sand, are recycled, disposed of at provincially approved waste processing facilities, or stored deep below surface. In all cases, strict environmental criteria must be met. Any discharge or storage of used fluids into the surface environment is strictly prohibited in Saskatchewan.

Overseeing industry practices such as fracking is a shared responsibility that includes the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Occupational Health and Safety, the Environment Ministry, the Saskatchewan Water Corp., and the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

Various provincial regulations are in place to ensure fracking is done safely. The Oil and Gas Conservation Act and Regulations (Ministry of Energy and Resources) are a prime example. In addition, there are industry-recommended practices in common use to ensure safe, responsible development — for example, the recently released environmental reporting guidelines from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

Fracking has been safely applied in oil and gas operations in Saskatchewan for decades.

The comprehensive regulatory system we have in place ensures that the practice helps us continue to realize significant economic benefits from our oil and gas industry while we maximize environmental protection.

Now, Mr. Speaker, hydraulic fracturing in Saskatchewan, as I just said, has been going on for many, many, many years. And this is very important to the economy in Saskatchewan.

[11:15]

In 2012 capital investments were \$4.7 billion in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this puts a lot of people to work. It puts Saskatchewan on the map in not just North America, but it puts Saskatchewan on the map in the world stage. Actually there were 34,100 direct and indirect person-years of employment in the upstream oil and gas industry. Mr. Speaker, these are people that are living, working in Saskatchewan. This is how come Saskatchewan has gained 100,000 people in the last six years. Mr. Speaker, \$12.6 billion combined value of oil and gas sales estimated for 2012.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before, there's a lot of hype. There's some movies out there. There's David Suzukis out there who want to sit there and criticize and talk about how fracking is destroying water; it's destroying drinking water. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, there has not been one documented case, not one documented case in all of Canada as to where fracking has caused polluted water and polluted drinking water.

You have to realize, Mr. Speaker, that when they put the well, first they have the surface casing which goes down well below the water depth, the normal aquifers that people would use, and that is all cemented in. Then you have the intermediate casing that is put down to a far greater depth, and that is cemented in. And then you finally have the production casing, Mr. Speaker, that basically goes to the base of the well, and that is all cemented in.

Mr. Speaker, we do not, we do not have a problem with fracking causing problems with our drinking water. However we have the fearmongers going out there and, you know, we have the David Suzukis of the world going out there and saying, oh, this is a terrible thing, and this is going to destroy, this is going to destroy all the water. It just isn't true and it isn't possible.

Of course David Suzuki likes to say we should all be saving the environment. We are working on saving the environment. But we also have to look at the economy of Saskatchewan. We have to look at the economy of Canada and how we're moving forward, and oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, are not going to disappear in the very near future. The fact is, I don't know if it's going to disappear for years to come.

Now the likes of David Suzuki sit there and say, well we have to be more energy efficient ... [inaudible] ... Mr. Suzuki ... I ... you know. He has five children, I will admit, but does he have to have four houses? Does he have to jet all over? What does he think that those jets run on? They run on kerosene. This is stuff that is made from oil, Mr. Speaker.

And I agree we can use alternate sources of energy, but it's just

oil and gas are the ones that we have to use at the present time. Mr. Suzuki always likes to drive his nice big bus around too and go telling all the people about all the problems of oil. Now that bus runs on diesel fuel, Mr. Speaker, another derivative of oil and gas.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to give credit where credit is due to the NDP when they changed the royalty structure to make Saskatchewan into this economic powerhouse in Canada back in, that was back in 2002. And, Mr. Speaker, like I said, I'll give credit where credit is due. And actually this is a quote from our former premier, Mr. Calvert, and he said, "We are committed to fiscal changes which will grow the Saskatchewan economy and make us the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada." And I also want to give credit to the present Leader of the NDP for supporting the XL pipeline, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is a little catch with the NDP. And I have to bring this up too because what are they going to do with their federal cousins, Mr. Speaker? Now the federal NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, attacked Canada's resource sector by saying, and I'm quoting, "It's by definition the Dutch disease." Mr. Speaker, how is it that the NDP does not want to see, the federal NDP does not want to see this province move forward?

Now are the NDP, our provincial NDP, are they going to go along with their cousins over there down east? Are they going to be all of a sudden maybe changing their tune on how things go? Maybe. Maybe there's a hidden agenda here. Maybe what they're doing is saying, yes, we want the XL pipeline so we can give more money to Mr. Thomas Mulcair of the federal NDP. You know, you've got to sit there and kind of wonder on some of these things as they go on, Mr. Speaker.

Let's go back to their leadership convention, which was just held here a little while ago. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the . . . And I realize he didn't become leader, but Erin Weir made it quite clear that the provincial NDP believe the cure of the Dutch disease is saying, and I quote, "Saskatchewan is well positioned to help implement and benefit from this approach by raising provincial resource royalties."

Mr. Speaker, this is not a good thing. This will drive business out of our province, Mr. Speaker. You know, the provincial NDP when they ran in 2011, they endorsed that cure, and they campaigned on raising royalty rates. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan knew much better than that because obviously when we take a look at the House, we have the nimble nine over there, and the rest of us over here. Mr. Speaker, that made a big difference.

Mr. Speaker, here's the other catch. They had a little bit of a love-in here a while ago, actually it was September the 10th when the federal NDP caucus held their caucus meeting here in Saskatchewan. And the present NDP leader was over, needless to say, was over there, and they were enjoying all these various little things. But you know, one thing we never did hear out of that? We never did hear our provincial NDP leader stand up to the federal NDP leader and say, this money is for Saskatchewan. This is Saskatchewan's money and I'm going to stand behind Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we never heard anything of that.

Another one, Mr. Speaker, of the federal NDP, and this is what worries me a lot. The federal NDP House Leader, Nathan Cullen, you know, Mr. Speaker, he reaffirmed the NDP's desire of implementing a carbon tax, stating that he's, and I'm going to quote here, "more of a cap-and-trade kind of guy," but that it's important to put a price on carbon." Mr. Speaker, this is worrisome. This is worrisome to Saskatchewan. This is worrisome to our way of being, to our growing of this province.

And I can remember fondly of Mr. Calvert when he said, the one quote he said, "We will always be a wee province, in and out of the equalization." Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be in and out of equalization again. I want to be on the good side, on the upside all the time, and this is not a wee province anymore.

As I said before, initially, we have grown by 100,000 people, and that is a very important fact, Mr. Speaker, because of our oil and gas and because of our fracking, which is as safe as safe can be. As I have stated previously, there has never been a tainted water supply documented in all of Canada, let alone Saskatchewan who has very strict environment regulations.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass . . . or I would like to put forward this motion:

That this Assembly supports the continued use of fracking (or hydraulic fracturing) in the Saskatchewan energy sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Carrot River Valley:

That this Assembly supports the continued use of fracking (or hydraulic fracturing) in the Saskatchewan energy sector.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into this debate on fracking. Of course it is an important one. And it's interesting we talk about these issues that are clearly so important to the economy of Saskatchewan and the energy sector, which we know is a major, major driver of the economy in Saskatchewan.

And I appreciate the comments that the member had made earlier about the work around royalties and the good work that the former Premier Calvert did around that, recognizing that we have to use the resources that we have in this province to make sure we get out of being a have-not province and become a have province that we truly should be.

And we have the resources to do that. We truly do have the resources to do that. And he was quoting from an article. And I've read the article, and I found it a very informative article, talking about the history of hydraulic fracking in Saskatchewan over the past 50 years and the relative safety of it and the work that we've done to make sure it is safe. And so in preparing for this debate, I do want to review some of the comments that have been made about this.

But I do want to say that one thing about the energy sector and people in the mining sector, in large I can say business or entrepreneurial sector — I would say it in the education and health, right across the board — we have people who, in this province, who are clear innovators, who see the challenges that lay before them and say, we can do this better. We can do this better. And there's a lot of reasons why they say that, a lot of reasons. And one of it is profit. If you can do it more cheaply and more effectively, the bottom line improves. And that's a good thing.

But also I know in this sector, the energy sector, there is a lot of pressure to improve because of the issues around the environment. And I do want to talk a little bit about what CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, have released in terms of making sure that they're environmentally responsible.

Now the member before had talked about David Suzuki and some of the fearmongers. I don't want to use that kind of language. I think what we need to do is think about having a responsible way, a sustainable way of making sure we make full use of our resources in this province.

And I just want to quote . . . I wasn't here for the speech, but I was interested in hearing the Minister of Environment's comments about the Environmental Code that he's about to release in the next few weeks. And I think this is going to be very interesting, and I am really looking forward to it. I know they've been working on this for several years, and I think that we're anxious to see it.

I do want to say, what's interesting about the work that the Ministry of Environment has been doing, we have not heard nearly the concerns, the clamour from different stakeholders like we have in labour, particularly last year when Bill 85 was introduced, people talking about, whoa, why are we going so fast? I see Environment taking a much more responsible approach to it. We have not heard the same level of concerns. We've not seen the letters in the newspaper that we did around the Environmental Code that we did around the new employment code.

[11:30]

And I wonder, why does this government have two ways of approaching issues that drive our economy to such an extent? We know the workers here . . . You know, when we left the have-not status of the past, it was because of the good work the people who work in this province do to drive the economy.

We also used the resources. And that also, to a huge extent — whether it was potash, oil, uranium, natural gas — that drove us out of that have-not status. And we're really glad to see that.

But I want to just quote from the member from Silver Springs, Saskatoon, the Minister of Environment. And he said:

We don't see it as black and white, Mr. Speaker. It's not mutually exclusive. We can't have one without the other. We want to respect the environment, and we want to ensure that industries and businesses will provide jobs and economic stability for our province.

So he's recognizing that we can both have environmental protection in Saskatchewan and a strong economic growth. And we think that can happen in oil and gas as well. And we look at the strong drivers of innovation that we have in oil and gas, particularly when it comes to fracking and doing it in the right way so we don't have catastrophes. And so I think it's going to be interesting to hear what the Minister of Environment puts before us.

So he says, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, this is from November 4th:

. . . another area that we're leading the way in is the Environmental Code. It's something that we're going to be introducing in the legislature very quickly. The code is being developed as a collaborative and a consensus model. It's based on an unprecedented level of stakeholder involvement and leadership. We are working with industry, and we are working with environmentalists — those that value the environment — to come together with a creative, innovative, results-based regulation that allow for greater flexibility for industry while requiring very high environmental standards, Mr. Speaker.

And if this is the case, this is going to be good work — if this is the case. So we're looking forward to it. And we think maybe we should be having this debate today after seeing the Environmental Code, but I know sometimes that timing can't quite work out. But we want to see that this happens, that you can have economic development and environmental sustainability at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, you would have remembered we had a green strategy that we were trying to release before the election in 2007 that really built on that. And I'm really hoping that that continues on with this.

And I just want to quote from the Petroleum Services Association of Canada when they released their hydraulic fracturing code of conduct for the Canadian oil and gas sector. And, Mr. Speaker, this was released October 30th, 2013. So that is just about, just eight days ago, just before Halloween, October 30th, 2013. So they have a code of conduct for industry when it comes to using fracturing, a fracturing code of conduct. But what he says, and I think this important, and I quote . . . This is Mark Salkeld, president and CEO of PSAC [Petroleum Services Association of Canada]. He says:

Working closely with stakeholders is critical to building trust in oil and gas operations. We've seen public concern surrounding hydraulic fracturing operations increase over the past years.

It was definitely time to address that in a proactive and positive way, but we knew talking to community members wasn't going to be enough. We had to act. That's why we created the hydraulic fracturing code . . ."

And so industry is being proactive and understanding that there is concerns, you know, in the public. When you see things that happen like we've seen . . . Because we're so busy doing work, we're seeing different things that happen to cause people to have concerns. We saw this summer the horrific train accident

in Mégantic, and we're understanding now that part of it might be related to the contents of the oil, what was in the oil when it was being brought up, the fracturing contents. So you understand where people are getting the concern.

So I really appreciate it when the organizations like PSAC here can take a proactive lead and say, we're going to take . . . We're going to get in front of this. We're going to acknowledge that people have concerns. They have concerns, but we're very proud of the work that we've done and the work we're going to do. And they're going to do it even better, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is really, really important.

And so some of the things that they're going to do better. And I just, I see I'm running out of time. And this is the guiding principles for hydraulic fracturing from CAPP:

3. We will support the development of fracturing . . . additives with the least environmental risks.
4. We will support the disclosure of fracturing fluid additives.
5. We will continue to advance, collaborate on and communicate technologies and best practices that reduce the potential environmental risks of hydraulic fracturing.

So I think these folks are on the right track. This is good stuff. So we have a record that we can be proud of in Saskatchewan when it comes to hydraulic fracturing. We feel that's an important piece of work. The member has talked about the number of people working in it. We think that's a good thing, but we want to talk more about the environmental codes to make sure we can continue with this.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to join in on the debate on fracking or hydraulic fracturing, as it may be called in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, contrary to many media reports, hydraulic fracturing is not a drilling process. Hydraulic fracturing is used after the drilled hole is completed.

Put simply, hydraulic fracturing is the use of fluid and material to create or restore small fractures in a formation in order to stimulate production from new and existing oil and gas wells. This creates paths that increase the rate at which fluids can be produced from the reservoir formations, in some cases by many hundreds of per cent.

The process includes steps to protect water supplies, to ensure that neither the fluid that will eventually be pumped through the well nor the oil or gas that will eventually be collected enters the water supply. Steel surface or intermediate casings are inserted into the well to depths of between 1,000 and 4,000 feet. The space between these casings — strings, as it is known — and the drilled hole wellbore, called the annulus, is filled with cement. Once the cement has set, then the drilling continues from the bottom of the surface to the intermediate cemented steel casing to the net depth.

The process is repeated using smaller steel casing each time

until the oil/gas bearing reservoir is reached, generally around 6,000 to 10,000 feet. With these and other precautions taken, high volumes of fracturing fluids are pumped deep into the well at pressures sufficient to create or restore the small fractures in the reservoir rock needed to make production possible.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote parts of a study and a *StarPhoenix* report that Kent Campbell, deputy minister of Energy and Resources did in February of 2012. He states:

. . . Multi-stage fracking is used in our province only on horizontal wells to produce oil from a number of important formations, including the Bakken, Shaunavon and Viking.

While use of this technology has increased, it has been applied safely in Saskatchewan for more than 50 years on roughly . . . [40,000] oil and gas wells. It is the combined technologies of horizontal drilling and fracking that have unlocked the energy riches of the renowned Bakken in southeast Saskatchewan — a formation that otherwise would have gone largely undeveloped.

Bakken is now recognized as one of the largest remaining conventional oil pools in North America. Technologies such as fracking are important to the future growth and development of Saskatchewan's oil and gas sector, which currently accounts for about 20 per cent of provincial gross domestic product and provides jobs for more than . . . [34,000] people.

. . . [Mr. Speaker] No fresh water can be used in the process in Saskatchewan without receiving appropriate approvals from provincial water agencies.

Once a fracking operation is complete, the residual fuels that typically are 99 per cent water and sand, are recycled, disposed of at provincially . . . [owned] waste processing facilities, or stored deep below the surface. In all cases, strict environmental criteria must be met. Any discharge or storage of . . . fluids into the surface environment is strictly prohibited in Saskatchewan.

[Mr. Speaker] Overseeing industry practices such as fracking is a shared responsibility that includes the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Occupational Health and Safety, the Environment Ministry, the Saskatchewan Water Corp., and the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

Various provincial regulations are in place to ensure fracking is done safely. *The Oil and Gas Conservation Act and Regulations*, (Ministry of Energy and Resources) are a prime example. In addition, there are industry-recommended practices in common use to ensure safe, responsible development — for example, the recently released environmental reporting guidelines from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

Fracking has been safely applied in oil and gas operations in Saskatchewan for decades.

The comprehensive regulatory system we have in place ensures that the practice helps us continue to realize

significant economic benefits from our oil and gas industry while we maximize environmental protection.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan takes its responsibility to protect the environment and public very seriously. High environmental standards are maintained for all energy resource development projects. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of the Economy legislative authority pertains to the regulating, the operation of oil and gas industries so that it does not contaminate the existing groundwater or surface water reservoirs during the drilling or production from oil and gas wells. Saskatchewan has had strong regulations and guidelines in place for decades pertaining to the proper design of wells that provide protection for groundwater and aquifers for all operations including hydraulic fracturing.

Mr. Speaker, the use of hydraulic fracturing has revolutionized Saskatchewan's oil fields. Oil trapped in the Bakken reservoirs was not recoverable in significant volumes and produced by conventional means. Bakken production had dwindled to a few hundred barrels a day as recently as 2001. With new innovations such as improved horizontal drilling, multi-stage fracking, CO₂ enhancement recovery, and a wealth of new equipment, production from Saskatchewan's portion of the Bakken has expanded to over 69,000 barrels a day. The same new technologies that have opened up the Bakken have also been applied to other tight oil formations in our province such as the Lower Shaunavon and Viking.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just now move to speak a little bit about what the effects of the energy sector has done to the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, and how he attacked Canada's resource sector by saying, "It's by definition Dutch disease." Quoted from a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio article, May 5th, 2012. I can see I'm going to run out of time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try and explain what this disease has done to the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. While agriculture is still a very important economic driver in the constituency, the energy sector has just simply backstopped everything. There are good-paying jobs locally now for farm families that can work at and not leave the family farm.

Mr. Speaker, many farmers and ranchers not only receive monies from oil and gas leases. Many do custom work such as snow clearing, towing, weed control, trucking, etc. Mr. Speaker, rural municipalities partner with oil and gas companies all the time. This enables the municipalities to upgrade roads with the assistance and sometimes contractor assistance also.

The resource sector adds significantly to the tax base of municipalities, along with load haul agreements which enables municipalities to upgrade their infrastructure. It gives municipalities the opportunities to be more diverse with business opportunities, acreage developments, and basically more stability. Mr. Speaker, in the constituency, we have approximately 120 oil-related businesses throughout the constituency, a significant employer and is as strong as ever.

Mr. Speaker, towns and villages have seen unprecedented growth in jobs and business opportunities. Many communities have seen new homes being built, new industrial buildings to house oil- and gas-related equipment. Vac trucks, flush-bys, service rigs, welding rigs, graders, gravel trucks are everywhere. The spinoffs are in every municipality — new tire shops, restaurants, grocery stores, and so on — and every one of these businesses needs employees.

Mr. Speaker, because of the energy sector's strength, companies are giving back to their communities by way of hockey rinks, curling rinks, sports grounds, and so on. One is the new business plan for Altex at Lashburn, where the RM of Wilton and Altex and CN [Canadian National] have come together. And in that loading dock operation, CN has donated \$300,000 to the town of Lashburn to retire the mortgage on their rink, Altex has donated \$50,000 to remodel the kitchen at the community hall, and the RM of Wilton has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars towards the infrastructure of Lashburn and Marshall, I may say.

Oh, oh, here we go. Our plan for growth is working just as laid out in the Speech from the Throne. I look forward to a plan of any kind from the members opposite. And this disease, as Mr. Mulcair says, we welcome it in Cut Knife-Turtleford.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to enter into the debate. And I want for the record, Mr. Speaker, to send over to all the members from across the way that spoke about fracking and how they're trying to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the NDP are against development and against responsible development of all the resource sector, Mr. Speaker, this is an article from a year and a half ago, Friday, February 10th, 2012, in which the article by Kent Campbell of *The StarPhoenix* says, and I quote the top headline, being, "50 years of safe fracking in Sask," Mr. Speaker. So for the record I want to share that with all the speakers.

So the motion that they're bringing forward today, Mr. Speaker, is only attempting, on their part, to suggest that the NDP are against fracking and that the NDP are against responsible resource development, Mr. Speaker. That could be the furthest thing from the truth, Mr. Speaker. For the last 50 years, Mr. Speaker, for the last 50 years, we have worked very closely with the industry, very closely with many environmental groups, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that resource development has to be sustainable. It's got to be economically aware of some of the challenges attached to that, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the last things that people of Saskatchewan need and industry needs is silly political games by that Saskatchewan Party government trying to point the fact that the NDP are against development, responsible resource development. Mr. Speaker, not true. The NDP have been doing this for years and years. As long as it's done responsibly, Mr. Speaker . . . And this article done a year ago will prove to the Saskatchewan Party that your cheap political ploy, as a result of today's motion, is going to fall on deaf ears.

And from the NDP's perspective, we would say to them, we don't listen to anything in terms of advice from that particular party, Mr. Speaker. And this fracking motion is silly political games on their part, and shame on the Saskatchewan Party for trying to play that silly political game at the expense of a very exciting industry, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out is the article, and I'll ask one of the Pages to bring me . . . to share the article with some of the speakers. And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, this is an article that came a couple of days ago, and I quote, "Brotten criticizes Wall over environment." Now the reason why our leader criticized the Saskatchewan Premier is because the Saskatchewan Premier goes to Washington and tells Washington and the people in the industry there that yes, we have to do a better job when it comes to environmental safeguard . . . or safeguarding our environment overall. Got to have a little bit more elbow room, I think was the phrase that the Premier used.

And, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of the NDP, it's absolutely crucial that we have that balance in between responsible resource development and making sure that the environmental aspect is a big part of that, Mr. Speaker, that the environmental aspect is a big part of it. And also that we make sure we derive as many benefits as we can, for not only jobs, but to make sure that the industry stays here for many, many years and to make sure that it's a huge benefit to the people overall, Mr. Speaker. There are so many components when you look at how you do responsible resource development that a government has to get it right.

And when I see as an MLA here in the Assembly, when I see irresponsible positions put forward by the member from Carrot River, at probably the request and support of their House Leader saying, oh what's fracking all about? Do you guys support it or not? Let us be absolutely clear. As the article says, 50 years of fracking has been going on in Saskatchewan. So what is the motion about today? Silly political games. Let me say it again — 50 years of fracking.

So when the Premier goes to Washington and says we need a bit more elbow room on the environmental front, he needs to back up his talk, Mr. Speaker. He has to make sure that there is action, that there is action in Saskatchewan to convince our customer, who are the Americans, that we're doing things responsibly, that we're doing things responsibly, Mr. Speaker. He has to improve the image of Saskatchewan in the sense of saying to the American people, we do have clean energy. We do have responsible industry. We do have forward thinkers in our province that's going to make sure that any development we have is going to be responsible. It's going to be done for the benefit of Saskatchewan people, and it's going to be to ensure that the customer is satisfied that the product we send them has got all the aspects covered, including the stewardship of the environment, which is really important, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier needs to walk the talk. You don't go there and do it a spin in the PR [public relations] and sound good. We've got to back it up with actions, Mr. Speaker. We've got to do it with solid actions, Mr. Speaker. And that's why today, today we see the activity of this particular government, Mr. Speaker, (a) bringing forward silly little motions like this to waste the

time of the Assembly for their own political ploy, their political gain, Mr. Speaker, is a waste of this Legislative Assembly's time, Mr. Speaker. We should be looking at ways in how we could responsibly look at the environmental stewardship that is required by the American partners, by our American customers, by the industry.

Now I look for leadership on this front, Mr. Speaker. I see more, more leadership from the corporations that are doing exactly some of this work, Mr. Speaker. I see more responsible actions by CAPP to address the fracking issues than by this entire government, Mr. Speaker. They are the ones that know that the customer has to have the assurance that fracking is done responsibly, that fracking is done ethically, and that fracking, the way we do fracking in Saskatchewan, that the world can see how Saskatchewan does it.

So for the last 50 years we have been doing fracking. You know, news flash to the Saskatchewan Party: fracking has been going on for the last 50 years. And of the last 50 years, Mr. Speaker, how many years were the NDP in power in those 50 years? A great number of years, Mr. Speaker.

And today, today responsible resource development is really helping out the Saskatchewan Party. All those billions of dollars that are going into the provincial coffers, Mr. Speaker, they simply inherited. And I'll say one thing to the right wing party called the Saskatchewan Party. I'll say one thing to that party, Mr. Speaker: that you inherited a booming economy, money in the bank, a growing population, and you're still making a huge amount of mistakes when it comes to our teachers, to working with our families, to working with the Aboriginal people, to working with the North, to working with a number of sectors, Mr. Speaker. You're still making a lot of mistakes.

Now what is beyond me is that there's no, there is no province, there's no province in the history of Canada that received so much as a new government. Everything was gift-wrapped and handed to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely everything was gift-wrapped and handed to the Saskatchewan Party. And all we asked, all we asked, all we asked is don't mess it up.

So don't bring those silly little motions here in the Assembly talking about fracking because it's just a total waste of our time in this Assembly. We should be talking about conservation efforts. If you want to prove to the Americans that we're good business people, let the industry lead that, Mr. Speaker. If you want to prove to the Americans that we're good, responsible stewards of our environment, then bring forward green energy plans. Look at the retrofits of homes, Mr. Speaker. Start doing some exciting, innovative things instead of going to Ottawa and saying, well we need more . . . or to Washington to tell the people, well we need more elbow room.

We need to back up our words with solid action, Mr. Speaker. We don't need spin PR, and we certainly don't need a headline saying we should develop more elbow room when it comes to the environment. We need solid action, Mr. Speaker, and we're not getting any of that action from this Premier or that government when it comes to responsible resource development, Mr. Speaker.

So I say again today, I'm very proud to be part of the debate here today to talk about responsible resource development. And there's four things that people ought to know. Number one, we're wasting our time with motions of this sort brought forward by the member from Carrot River, supported by the House Leader from Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, when it's a total waste of time. Fifty years fracking has been going on in Saskatchewan. The industry has been leading the file on fracking. NDP supported the fracking as long as it's done responsibly.

We brought resource development into this province. We've done a great job of rebuilding the tattered, the tattered financial woes of our province left by the Conservatives in the early '90s, Mr. Speaker. We fixed all that. It took us time to fix it. And what really upsets the right wingers over there, Mr. Speaker, it's all the great, all the great opportunity we have in Saskatchewan, all the abilities we have as a province today, all the wealth we have as a province today, all the growing population, the investment, the opportunity we have in Saskatchewan today, what really upsets the right wingers over there, Mr. Speaker, is that they didn't create that. They simply inherited that, Mr. Speaker.

So once again, stop playing these silly games. Fracking has been going on 50 years. And be thankful you had an NDP government to bring this province out of despair and bring it into the opportunity we see today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm proud to stand up and take part in the debate on fracking. I'm not too sure what my hon. colleague from Athabasca talked about for 10 minutes but I'm going to talk about fracking and the role it plays in our economy and how the oil and gas industry plays a large part, a large role in our economy.

I don't think this is a silly motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think it's an important role. It plays a huge role in our economy. Thirty-four thousand people are employed in our province today because of the oil and gas industry, Mr. Speaker, so I think to belittle a motion that talks about that industry and say it's a silly motion is not proper; it's not right. And I think the people that belong to CAPP, I'm not sure they'd appreciate the Athabasca MLA insinuating that he knows what CAPP's thinking. I've had a few meetings with CAPP but I haven't seen him at very many of them. And I've talked to a few of their association members and I'm not sure he'd be quoting them correctly.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of my story, I just want to talk about fracking for a bit. And I know there's a lot of misconceptions out there about what exactly hydraulic fracturing is, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a type of fracture treatment that will use low concentrations, between three and twelve additive chemicals.

It's not a huge chemical process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's about 99.3 per cent of the solution used in fracking is water and sand, Mr. Speaker. And they have to use these for a few

reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And a few things that they add, the additives are called friction reducers. These friction reducers allow fracture fluids and sands or other materials called proppants to be pumped to target zones at a higher rate and reduced pressure than if it was water alone were used. In addition to friction reducers there's a few other additives, some biocides to prevent micro-organism growth and to reduce biofuel fouling.

Mr. Speaker, hydrofracking is used, as my colleagues have said, is used to open up, pumped into rocks to open up holes so that the oil can be recovered through those holes. And the sand is used to keep those holes open so that it is allowed to flow through and the oil can be produced in the well.

Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting environmental conversation we have when we have a former environmental minister across the way talking about fracturing, and it's been going on for 50 years. And he's right, Mr. Speaker. Fracking in Saskatchewan has been going on for 50 years. And actually he doesn't have to send over the article. I read it as well, from our deputy minister of the Economy, Mr. Speaker. And he said fracking has been going on in Saskatchewan; it has a 50-year history of safe use and one of the most robust regulatory regimes in place to ensure responsible and sustainable development.

[12:00]

I listened to a couple of speeches, the speech from the member from Saskatoon Centre, and he's right. We do agree on some things. We agree on a smart, responsible development. And I think we share those goals. And I think the most important thing is to have a plan with smart, sensible, sustainable development.

And on this side we do have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan on environmental targets. We have a plan on some smart development to ensure that the oil and gas industry can continue to grow, can continue to produce jobs, produce economic spinoffs, Mr. Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan who own the resources that we're talking about right now, Mr. Speaker, so the people of Saskatchewan can get the full benefit from the resources that we've been blessed with in our province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I hear the members across the way, especially the member from Athabasca when he gets all wound up and they pull a string and let him go, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear about, the conservatives on this side don't like it that the NDP created all this economic glory in Saskatchewan. But he misses a couple of things that I think are pretty important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One would be that we lived in Saskatchewan under the NDP reign of 16 years, Mr. Speaker, and I think our memories are okay. I don't remember birds singing and halos and angels singing on high for 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

I do remember every one of my friends graduating from high school in Swift Current leaving the province in 2000, which I think would be under their reign, Mr. Speaker. And I remember our population declined in '99, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006. I think that was probably at our lowest population in a few decades, Mr. Speaker. And I think people do still vote

with their feet, and if people keep leaving their province . . . Yet on one history from the member from Athabasca, it's the greatest time in Saskatchewan's history. It's the greatest time in Saskatchewan's history. Why would all of our young people continue to leave? Which begged the question they should maybe ask themselves sometime when they look in the mirror.

We are great. We formed this province. We were able to make a solid foundation. The economy was strong. Everyone was loving it. But people were still leaving, which should be a question they should probably ask themselves every now and then. And I think, and I think, I'm not sure, but eventually you're going to have to go through a policy review. I know the leader doesn't want to release his election platform today or tomorrow, which I totally understand, but at some point in time, they will have to put some policies on their website. And I think some of them should be around their environmental record, that they actually have a record, Mr. Speaker.

And there is a couple of former Environment ministers over there, and I think the Environment critic should have a conversation with them because they always talk about our environmental record and what our environmental policy is. But they had some of their own which were interesting. And one was, over their 16 years, greenhouse gas emissions increased nearly 70 per cent. So that's not good, Mr. Speaker. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I said nearly 70 per cent. So they have their member from Athabasca come over the boards and talk about our environmental record, yet their record isn't very good, Mr. Speaker. And I think he may have even been the minister back then when they had such a horrendous environmental record when it comes in regards to greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, obviously when we come and talk about hydraulic fracturing in the oil and gas sector, there's some things we like to mention around the environment. And, Mr. Speaker, one is we're proud of our environmental record. We're going forward with the carbon capture sequestration that they put on hold the last couple of years of their government, Mr. Speaker. And everything they talk about is their green strategy and their go green initiative, or whatever they called it. They set up this whole emission strategy and didn't fund it. There was no funding there. As the members . . . They had a lot of announcements. And I know how they liked to say, we had flashy brochures with all of our announcements. But they didn't even have a flashy brochure because they didn't fund anything, so they couldn't, Mr. Speaker.

So when they start talking about our environmental record . . . It's always interesting that before you talk about someone else's record, you should be sure you have a leg to stand on when you're talking. Because with their record, Mr. Speaker, I think if you take it to the people of Saskatchewan and say, you know, do you want to look at what we've done or what the NDP say they're going to do. Because I think sometimes when they say they're going to do something, they have a history of really not following through, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one of the things that people enjoy about our government. And when we go door knocking in the constituencies and say, you know, these are some of our plans we have going forward and a policy plan — which people like

to see, a plan moving forward, Mr. Speaker, like a plan for growth — I think they say, hey well they have a plan and they're going to tell us some of the things they're going to do. And I think we can believe them, Mr. Speaker, because they've done what they said they're going to do.

And I really do think that sometimes when you get to go door knocking and every now and then people bring up some of the opposition's critiques — which is fair, because I enjoy talking with all constituents across Saskatchewan, not only in Regina, but all over the place, Mr. Speaker — and they say, well you guys have a plan for some of your critiques. And I said well that's what governments do, Mr. Speaker. You get a plan in place and say, this is what we're going to do if we have the privilege to govern again. And so I said, well we do have a plan in place, and you know, we're not perfect and there is more work to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But on that same note, I have to say — and I think it's fair — you say, well obviously some of the people that critique us may, may support the NDP. I think that's a fair assessment from across the way. I say, well what are your guys' plans?

When you get going into a policy debate, Mr. Speaker, it's very hard to debate policy with an opponent that has no policies. So, Mr. Speaker, when you go back and forth and you're trying to have a lively debate about things like fracking, like hydraulic fracturing, having a debate about fracking, having a debate about the environment — which this involves environmental debate, Mr. Speaker, obviously — if you're going to have those debates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how do you do that when there's nothing on the other side?

And then when you try and debate the other side and you talk about their record, their record when they were in government for 16 years, you say, well you had the go green initiative or the green strategy but no money. Your greenhouse gas emissions went up nearly 70 per cent when you were in government. Oh no, you can't talk about that because they're going to do better. Well if you're going to do better, you have to have goals and targets, which they don't like to set either, as we know that because sometimes if you set a goal, if you don't make it, it's kind of a tough, tough sell, Mr. Speaker.

But I think sometimes when we get involved in these good policy debates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's very hard to be in a policy debate if their side doesn't have a plan.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure to rise to speak about this topic and about the plans that New Democrats have had for Saskatchewan for many years. And what I want to say right off the top is that the Saskatchewan New Democrats, the governments over the years, have shown consistently that they've been very supportive of the extraction of oil and gas in this province, and they want to do it in an environmentally appropriate way using the best technology that we can do.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's very interesting about this particular discussion being raised by the members opposite is that in some ways what has happened in the oil and gas industry is that the

leaders in the industry have said to the Premier and to the present government, just stick with what the New Democrats put in place because it's gotten us to a very good place in Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to hydraulic fracturing to enhance oil recovery, this has been a really important part. I was sitting around the cabinet table in 1997 and '98 when we were having discussions about how we could provide economic incentives to encourage this kind of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing in some of the new, some of the old beds, but also some of the new areas of oil in southeast Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had some very capable advice from many people within the civil service, but we also had some very clear proposals from industry about how to do this. But ultimately it came down for all of us to basically say, we are going to do something which hasn't quite been done before, but we need to do it in a way which makes sure that the people of Saskatchewan benefit, but also that those people who are risking their capital doing this work are going to benefit. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say that some of those decisions made at that time have shown in the last 15 years a very important aspect of development of the whole Williston Basin area.

Now what's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that during the 90s there was a group called the horizontal drilling group. And it was a technical sharing group between Saskatchewan and North Dakota primarily. So the meeting would flip from Bismarck to Regina and back and forth each year. In 2001 they changed the name from the horizontal drilling conference to the horizontal drilling and petroleum conference. And it's out of that particular conference and the work that was done by some very smart people both on both sides of the Canada-US [United States] border that our oil industry and North Dakota's especially has really benefited.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's specifically related to a smart growth plan — and I use that term very directly — that we said we want to have the best science, we want to have the best engineering to make sure that we can extract petroleum and gas from the structures that are part of the province of Saskatchewan and use them for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

And what we knew at that time was that this was some risky propositions, and so therefore the risk had to be shared both on the taxation side and on the capital investment side by the industry. And, Mr. Speaker, what we have now today in Saskatchewan and North Dakota and parts of Montana, but especially in Saskatchewan and North Dakota, is a huge economic activity around this whole area.

And I'm very pleased to say, over the years the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers have been partners in that project, they have worked very carefully and long at making sure that the industry is using the latest science and technology. And obviously they recognize many of the concerns that have come up.

Ultimately the question is about water. It's about how we use our water in this province. And as we've seen over the years,

the amount of water has decreased in use and also is being reused and reused and reused so that you don't end up with huge amounts. And I think it's very clear from the deputy minister in the government, Mr. Campbell, who's presented some information, that that's part of the long-term policy. And I know Mr. Campbell worked very carefully in this area when he was working in the New Democratic Party government years ago as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting week because the members opposite in all of their notes that they had from the central command, if we can call it that, on the other side, kept going after that term, smart growth. But on Monday night we had a reception with the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, and the people there made a point of saying, this place is 38 years old. It was developed by Premier Blakeney in the NDP government during the '70s. And it continued, developed, and in 2000 if you looked at their charts, you could see that smart growth meant that they could go and expand that institution to provide services outside of the agriculture industry. And, Mr. Speaker, we praise that because that's the kind of smart growth.

Then on Tuesday night we met with the Canadian Light Source synchrotron people and they identified that this was part of the smart growth plan of the Romanow and Calvert government. And we made sure, even in years of tight money, to make sure that that particular project was part of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the same kinds of clear thinking and direct use of best-evidence science, technology, engineering is also what's present in the use of hydraulic fracturing as the latest method to extract oil and gas. And we will not stand second to anything that they say because we know, and they know, that they're just building on the things that have been developed in this province.

And I guess what I would say is, let's make some choices that benefit our children, our grandchildren, and future generations around how we do these things. And that's what we're talking about — smart growth. And we raise that point because we see a number of choices that are being made by this government, whether it comes to use of P3s and basically sending debt out to future generations or other kinds of choices like that, that are not of benefit for the people of Saskatchewan.

[12:15]

We know that we're going to have a continued discussion about oil and gas and the revenues from oil and gas and from uranium and from other resources in the province because they're one-time resources. And we can no longer, in Saskatchewan, say that we're just going to spend the money as it comes from extracting all these resources, because there is a finite point where that revenue is coming. And part of the political discussion in Saskatchewan that this motion raises, that this discussion raises is, what are the choices that we're going to make about how we finance the things that people need in the province, and how we do it in a way that's accountable, above board, that's transparent, and how we do it in a way that recognizes we are the trustees. This generation is the trustees for future generations of how we use our resources.

And, Mr. Speaker, using the best science, using the best technology, the best engineering that's possible has allowed us to gain access to a resource which for many decades we thought was not able to be extracted. And so we will continue to support the industry as they support and work with us, but we will make sure we do it in a way that protects the environment and protects future generations.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for the debate has expired. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to ask the first question here and it's a question I want to ask the member from Nipawin. You know, I find this resolution . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Carrot River. My mistake, my mistake. I want to ask him, this resolution seems to be a bit of a Trojan Horse. You know, it says a lot of things that we have an agreement on, but what really lies beneath the resolution? I want to know if he can guarantee us, guarantee this House that this government will not water down or weaken any regulations when it comes to fracking in our province.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, this government takes environment very seriously, and we believe in doing the best possible job and having the best rules put forward as we can possibly have to ensure that we can continue on producing our oil and gas in this province in a safe, in a very safe manner.

I guess what we are concerned about, we're concerned about the NDP and are they going to support their cousins on their so-called Dutch disease and try and send . . . put on a carbon tax on our oil and send it back down east to help out their cousins in Eastern Canada? Thank you.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, technology such as fracking are important to the future growth and development of Saskatchewan's oil and gas sector which accounts for about 20 per cent of our provincial GDP [gross domestic product] and provides more than 35,000 jobs for hard-working people. Fracking has been used safely in Saskatchewan for roughly 50 years without a single documented case harm to groundwater. Yet the Council of Canadians and David Suzuki have been attacking fracking in the industry, opposing fracking directly, and calling it unsafe.

To the member from Athabasca: do you disagree with the Council of Canadians and David Suzuki who've been attacking fracking, the oil and gas sector, and the 34,000 people in the industry employ?

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

Mr. Belanger: — What's really important is that the economy of Saskatchewan is strong. The NDP want to continue seeing

that economy stay strong, Mr. Speaker. We want to continue seeing investment in all sectors of our province. Putting that investment in every basket, or every egg in that basket, Mr. Speaker.

And I think what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that from our perspective you also have to make sure the people of Saskatchewan know that there's also an environmental balance that one must maintain when we look at the development of any resource, Mr. Speaker. That's why, on this side of the Assembly, we ask the Saskatchewan Party, why did you cut the green budget by 73 per cent? Why did you cut the green vehicle rebate and energy efficiency home retrofit program? Why did you cut that, Mr. Speaker? Why didn't you decrease our dependence on the non-renewable energies, Mr. Speaker? Why didn't you talk about the green energies, the exciting opportunity that young people want to talk about, which is a . . .

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we're quite curious why the opposition has raised this question here in this debate. Because it's quite clear that New Democratic governments over the years have worked very closely with the petroleum industry, the oil and gas industry, to develop this. So my question to the member from Regina Walsh Acres is, is this a signal that your government is intending to water down rules as it relates to hydraulic fracturing in Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And first and foremost I'd like to say that we're very proud of our environmental record as a government. And our government, with the Water Security Agency, conducted a risk assessment of fracturing operations, and we've done a lot of due diligence in making sure that fracking is safe in Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things I'd like to talk about right now. For one for this answer is that, Mr. Speaker, when a quote from a former leadership candidate for the NDP . . . And I quote:

We came out of government for the past 16 years and we hadn't reduced carbon emissions or reduced poverty and we're the socialist party. That's supposed to be our priority and instead emissions and poverty increased.

Former NDP leadership candidate Yens Pedersen. Mr. Speaker, when you have a former leadership saying, we failed on all fronts as a socialist party, on environment and on poverty, Mr. Speaker, that's a failure of 16 years. And that's why we're on this side and they're on that side.

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

Mr. Marchuk: — [Inaudible] . . . revitalization of several oil fields in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, including the Bakken, the Shaunavon, and the Viking Formations. Mr. Speaker, the

technology is fuelling a large part of Saskatchewan's economic successes. Indeed the economy is strong, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Athabasca: does he agree that fracking is crucial and a crucial . . . important to the oil and gas industry in Saskatchewan and therefore our economy, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, fracking has been a part of our history. As we mentioned today, 50 years of fracking. The industry knows what they're doing when it comes to fracking. It's got to be responsible. So the answer to the question, fracking is going to be a big part of our future as well, Mr. Speaker. And any threat to the economy of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, this opposition will stand up to that threat and we'll continue building that brave, bold, new Saskatchewan that we talk about, Mr. Speaker.

And once again I would remind those members, all the good news that you inherited — the booming economy, growing population, record money — please don't mess it up.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government seems only focused on the non-renewable resources, and we can tell that from the debate today. And of course we value the 34,000 jobs it creates, but we have to think about expanding into other areas in our economy. And so I have a question for Cut Knife-Turtleford: why won't this government take steps to really diversify this economy?

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

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. Anyway it just seems a little silly that he would ask that question. However there's more people working in Saskatchewan now than there ever has been.

And also in reference to the member from Athabasca about fracturing being 50 years or whatever, the difference is nobody came here to use it. We're using it now. We're producing more oil and gas than we ever have. That's the difference. Thank you.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Centre in his address mentioned the reference to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. Last year, Mr. Speaker, Thomas Mulcair said that CAPP was "pulling a con job" in regards to hydraulic fracturing. Does that member agree with his federal leader?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see the quote that he's

referencing. I can tell you that I have worked with CAPP as a former minister of Environment and had a good relationship. When we were in government we had a great working relationship with CAPP. So I look at the principles and I think that they're strong and there's something we can work with.

But the question we really have is, why have we not seen the Environmental Code from this government yet? The minister talked about this a couple of days ago. We need to see this before we really start talking about whether we can accept the guarantees about watering down or strengthening the regulations around fracturing. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have a simple question for the member from Regina Walsh Acres. Last week the Premier came back from visiting in Washington, DC [District of Columbia], and basically he said that what he had done down there was talk about environmental issues. But then he pivoted; he talked about the word pivot. So do you agree that it appears that the Premier of our province has two different positions when it comes to the environment?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problem to stand up and talk about our government's position on anything, because we have policy, Mr. Speaker. And we have policies in environment and we have policies in energy resources and we have policies going forward. We have a 2020 plan for growth, Mr. Speaker. We're looking five, ten years into the future. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the opposition, you can't see a policy for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 605 — *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to move second reading this afternoon and to speak to Bill 605, *An Act respecting the Transparency and Accountability of Public-Private Partnerships*, a private members' bill that I've brought forward, that we've brought forward as a New Democratic Party opposition.

We do so with respect to Saskatchewan people who go at looking at the issues before them in a very common sense sort of a way, and we do so knowing that Saskatchewan people deserve nothing short of all of the facts. And that's what the aim of this legislation intends to provide. This legislation is necessitated by a new penchant of this government to push forward with private P3 schools in Saskatchewan — something that they never articulated or discussed in the last election, Mr. Speaker, and something that has significant consequences to

both the treasury of this province, to generations moving forward, and certainly to the schools within this province.

And when we're talking about infrastructure in this province, we need to always look at it from a perspective of bringing forward plans that are as effective as they can be, as affordable as they can be, and we have to understand what they mean to communities.

And when we look at schools, Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that schools are the heart of a community, or the hub of a community. They're where families and people connect. They are places that allow a community to come together. And a school isn't simply a place that's 9 to 5. It's a place that, you know, is operational in bringing together community from their earliest moments in a morning to the latest hours in the evening and all through the weekends, all through the summers, Mr. Speaker. And we need to make sure that the schools that we're building reflect the unique and distinct needs of communities across Saskatchewan.

So it's with that context — a government that's stubbornly pushing forward with a P3 agenda that they have popped on Saskatchewan people without any proper consultation — that we need to make sure that the proper transparency and accountability of that plan is in place.

We know the concerns around P3 schools and P3s for infrastructure around P3 schools. We learned from the experiences of other jurisdictions where they've cost significantly more, costing taxpayers for generations, tying the hands of taxpayers for generation, Mr. Speaker, where we see the circumstance where they've denied or caused communities to forfeit access to those schools, control of those schools, and influence of those schools. Or the fact that we know we need the schools that we're calling for here today not to be delayed. And we know that the complex process of establishing P3s, often with private sector international consortias, is a slow and delayed process, and we need to have shovels in the ground as soon as possible.

We also need to recognize some of the concerns that relate to local economic impact, understanding the valuable role of Saskatchewan companies in our economy, Saskatchewan construction companies who have worked incredibly hard to deliver the infrastructure that we need in this province. And they deserve to be a part of the infrastructure build as we move forward, and recognizing that in many experiences of bundled P3 builds, that that economic activity has bypassed the local contractors.

So it's through some of these lenses that we have concern in a common sense way to the P3 agenda of this government. And it's through that lens in hearing the concerns of Saskatchewan people that we bring forward a piece of legislation that aims to bring deserved accountability and transparency to the plan that's being pushed forward in a rather stubborn way by their government.

[12:30]

The bill itself is really straightforward. It's all about ensuring that there's some truly independent, upfront analysis,

evaluation, and then public reporting to Saskatchewan people, and ensuring that all the costs — the full costs, the full life cycle costs — are captured within that analysis. It also calls on government to ensure that there's work done to analyze the local economic impact. What's the impact on jobs? What's the impact on Saskatchewan companies who have worked here for decades, Mr. Speaker?

So this bill in itself is just simply allowing Saskatchewan people to have all the facts on the table and causing the Saskatchewan government to have all of the facts on the table, to allow both the government and Saskatchewan people to look at what's being pushed for with their eyes wide open, with all of the consequences laid out and with all the facts understood. It's a bill to improve transparency and accountability of a process that to date has been secret, Mr. Speaker, and making sure that Saskatchewan people have access to the information that they deserve.

The value in making sure that this is done upfront is of course straightforward, and common sense is that we need schools. We need to get shovels in the ground. And we need to make sure that we get that analysis done upfront so that when all of the true costs, all of the consequences, all of the impacts are laid out to Saskatchewan people, if government listens and chooses the appropriate course forward — which would be a more traditional build process — that we're not delaying the process of getting those shovels in the ground, and that government provides Saskatchewan people that view of all of the information, all of the impacts, all the consequences before they enter into deals that lock future generations in for the long term, these deals in most cases lasting 30 years, Mr. Speaker.

So this is a bill, I guess, in support of no secret deals. It's a bill that ensures that the upfront analysis and accountability will occur and that it will occur in an independent way. And independent is another important piece of this bill. The government opposite suggests that at some point in time they're going to start to detail their purported savings and claims in numbers. They haven't done so yet. In fact it seems that when the minister and the government has been speaking about its projections, it seems to be off sort of almost a napkin-type approach to planning with no evidence of any detailed analysis to support or to substantiate some of the claims that government has been boasting.

So what we need to have in place is something that's truly independent that reports back to the public and independent of government, which is why what we've put forward would be appointed by a committee of the legislature in a unanimous fashion, respectful of all sides of the Assembly and not simply an appointment of Executive Council or of government, for government to set parameters, for government to set terms of reference, for government to receive the information, and for government to pick and choose what it's going to share with the public. That's not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

So when it relates to the schools of our children, when it relates to the dollars of taxpayers, Saskatchewan people deserve better than a government that's simply going to bull forward, to push forward without ensuring they have the answers and facts that they deserve. And quite frankly there shouldn't be public expenditure of this sort, locking into long-term secret deals

without full disclosure of the facts, full understanding of the consequences, and done so in an independent way.

Right now we have a government that's simply making claims. And in many cases where we've heard the minister who's been responsible for the file . . . And I find it interesting in some ways that it's the Minister of Highways that's responsible for the schools that our province needs. But the Minister of Highways has been making all sorts of claims, Mr. Speaker. He was on CBC radio this week making suggestions that facts just simply don't support, Mr. Speaker.

And so what we're calling for is some straight talk and all the evidence and to learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions. And when we think of other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we of course can think of what's gone on in Nova Scotia where the P3 school plan turned into be one of the biggest boondoggles of taxpayers' dollars in the history of Canada in many ways.

And what we learned when we read the auditor's reports, the independent provincial auditor of Nova Scotia's reports that followed on the heels of the private P3 plan at the time it was a Liberal government, I understand, that put this plan forward, and this plan went off the rails. It ended up not delivering what government was pretending or claiming or boasting that it was going to provide. And there were many issues. One of the issues that's certainly paramount and one of the issues that's likely the biggest part of our concern is the massive cost of P3s as opposed to the more efficient, more affordable traditional approach.

And what the provincial auditor found in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, is that actually when the Conservative government that replaced the Liberal government came in and scrapped the P3 plan — the costly plan, the plan that was off the rails, the plan that never delivered what government was promising — when they scrapped that plan, the auditor found that the savings were actually \$2 million per school, Mr. Speaker.

Well \$2 million is not small. It is not insignificant. And those are \$2 million that were going to expensive private sector consortias and structures as opposed to going directly into the classroom where they count, where they make a difference, or for building more schools, Mr. Speaker.

And we can't afford those sort of overruns here in Saskatchewan. We realize that we need to handle the resources of Saskatchewan people, the dollars of taxpayers in the most effective way possible. And quite simply, if we're choosing a route as government's pushing forward, a more expensive route, a private route to build our schools, those dollars that are flowing into those private sector schemes and structures and consortias are dollars that aren't going to where they count and where they matter in the classroom. And this is a government of course that has a failed agenda on education, a government that has a poor track record on supporting the learning of students in this province. And so those resources certainly could be much better used hitting the front lines where they count in the classroom.

But it wasn't just Nova Scotia in Canada that's had bad experiences with this. I know the Highways minister has been

holding up Alberta as a rosy example of P3s. And it's, you know, it's past time for that minister to actually clue in with what's going on in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, because the circumstance in Alberta is not rosy as he suggests. It's something that has come under great opposition from both, all political parties in Alberta, from communities across Alberta, from school board members, and from the Alberta school boards themselves, recognizing big challenges.

So in Nova Scotia you saw the massive cost overruns, the more expensive schools costing more than \$2 million per school. But when we look in Alberta, their example's been different. Of course it's early to assess any purported or claimed savings that government may be suggesting there. I know that those purported savings are being investigated right now by the provincial auditor in Alberta, and that'll be interesting to see what that report is.

And it's also interesting when the Highways minister gets up and points to Alberta and suggests that there were savings in one of the bundles. Of course that same bundle is now being evaluated and investigated by the provincial auditor. And I understand that any value-for-money analysis, if it did go on, hasn't been shared with the provincial auditor which is certainly less than transparent and accountable, Mr. Speaker.

But what I understand as well is that bundle itself, or a set of schools that were stripped down and bare bones and didn't provide communities what they needed. And we have heard the outcry from communities as it related to those schools that were brought forward and how bare bones, how simple those schools were, and how they simply didn't meet the needs of communities. So it's rather interesting that the Highways minister — again I find it strange that it's the Highways minister talking to this instead of the Education minister — but the Highways minister that's holding that up as some sort of shining example.

So when we look at Alberta, certainly there's big questions around cost. And we know the experience in Nova Scotia where they cost more than \$2 million per school. We know in Alberta that there's been big access issues or issues as it relates to the needs of communities. And we know that there were circumstances where portables weren't able to be added on to schools, where child care facilities weren't allowed to be a part of the privately maintained and owned and operated school, or where extracurricular and community activities were prevented from occurring.

Well you know, we're building schools not simply for the work during the school day. We're building a school for a community. And that school needs to be the hub and the heart of a community, a place that brings together community, young and old, and families from across a community. And certainly in the case of Alberta, the lack of access, the control issues, the lack of influence of communities is disturbing and something that we should be heeding as a significant concern here in Saskatchewan.

We also recognize the lack of competition currently going on in Alberta. And this is happening right now as this government's pushing forward in a stubborn way, not looking at the facts with their own plan. We look at the lack of competition, and right

now there's a tender that was put out or RFP [request for proposal] that was placed out and there was only one bidder, one private sector consortia that was bidding on this. And this has been identified as a massive challenge for ensuring value for money for taxpayers. You can understand why. How do you gain proper value when there's no competition to the bidding process? That's happening right now.

And so you see the disarray then that's occurring in Alberta where officials and boards and communities are scrambling to piece together a plan that's going to work because it seems to be identified in a united fashion in Alberta that that is not acceptable, that one bid doesn't cut it. And we should be mindful in learning from that example, not as we see the government where they're sticking their head in the sand on this front and not looking at the facts or realities that are going on.

We also know in Alberta that the school boards themselves have spoken out in a significant way, saying that certainly it's their view that they would value publicly-owned, operated schools into the future and not the privately schemed structures that have been put together by government.

So as it relates to the legislation, of course I've spoken about the upfront analysis that needs to occur — the value-for-money analysis, the full understanding of the cost of credit both public and private, the full understanding of all life cycle costs, understanding of nominal costs, not simply assuming discount rates that allow government to support their agenda — making sure all the facts are on the table.

And we also have built into that legislation a few other safeguards. If government continues to push forward with that P3 agenda following the upfront and independent analysis and with all the facts and consequences and impacts on the table, we have a process to properly oversee and monitor and provide accountability in the life and throughout the life of a P3. We also have a piece of that legislation that would not allow a government to move forward with a P3 if they didn't have less than three bidders out of an RFP process. And that's only reasonable, and I know Saskatchewan taxpayers value ensuring that there's a competitive process to get value for their tax dollar, and certainly this government should be expecting nothing less.

Now we haven't heard officially from this government whether or not they'll be supportive of the legislation that we've put forward. I'm hopeful that there's some consideration from . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, the Premier says no, which is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, okay. I apologize. I didn't mean to put the . . . He was saying no to something else there.

What we are hopeful of is they are considered, for them to be considered in taking a look at this legislation because this legislation itself is about ensuring some needed accountability to Saskatchewan people, some transparency. And a vote against this legislation would be rather strange of a government. In essence it would be a vote in support of secret deals. It would be a vote in support of less transparency.

[12:45]

And you know, government stands up and boasts and makes claims about their P3 school plan, but I guess the ultimate test would be some of that independent analysis. So I guess I would simply say to government, if they're feeling so solid with the plan that they've put together — we certainly haven't heard that plan articulated in any level of detail to date — but if they have confidence in that plan, then they should have no fear, no fear whatsoever in putting it before an independent evaluation, before a very basic test and having some public reporting on that front before it proceeds, locking Saskatchewan people into long, long-term deals, well over 30 years.

Of course there's many aspects that end up making P3 structures cost more. One of the most direct and common sense ones is the high interest scheme that are brought in from the private sector partners to deliver the infrastructure that we need. And quite simply the finance rate, the borrowing rates of the private sector are much higher than that of government, and those costs are ultimately borne back to the taxpayer. And this isn't, you know . . . Government sometimes suggests that its P3 school plan is some sort of a gift from the private sector. Of course it's certainly not that. It's a contract with the private sector.

And you know, at the end of the day, I remember the comments from the Nova Scotia Finance minister, the Conservative Finance minister who was involved when they scrapped the expensive and train wreck of a program that the P3 school plan was in Nova Scotia, saving them \$2 million per school. What he described was this was simply a way for government as well to not own up to its full liabilities, to not own up to its debt, and explained very clearly and correctly that debt is debt is debt.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, and I know Saskatchewan people, whether they're in a business, a farm, or their home, they understand that if you're tying the hands of your treasury for 30-year periods, long-term agreements, long-term capital lease agreements, these are liabilities. These are debts ultimately on the books of the province. And so whether you have 4 or 5 or \$600 million owed to a private sector consortia, with a higher interest scheme built into it, or whether you have a more traditional representation of that liability on your books, I go back to debt is debt is debt.

And we do know that this government likes to play fast and loose with the reporting of our finances. We do know that this government fails to comply with public sector accounting standards. We do know this government is unwilling to provide Saskatchewan people full transparency on the state of their finances. And so certainly it's concerning to see a government pushing forward in an approach that in most other jurisdictions when government has it's been identified very clearly as a way to not fully portray the state of debt or of finances. And we know the Provincial Auditor has weighed in on this in a way that says that that government is both misleading and wrong in how they account for our province's finances and that they're hiding billions of dollars of debt, Mr. Speaker.

And what Saskatchewan people deserve is to have a full understanding of the true, full state of our finances. And they also deserve to understand the state of our debt, Mr. Speaker. So that's important.

Because Alberta's been held up as such a shining example, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that what government pretends is P3 success, it's important to maybe just touch on a few of the issues that are going on there. I know that we spoke already, or I spoke already, a bit about the lack of P3 bidders in Alberta. There's an article from the *Calgary Herald* dated October 28th, 2013, titled "Lack of P3 bidders could delay 19 new schools." Delay 19 new schools, Mr. Speaker.

And what we don't need in this province is further delays. Let's be frank. This government's been late coming to the scene to address the schools that we need. That this announcement to get shovels into the ground is late, Mr. Speaker. And that this New Democratic Party opposition has been repeated and strong in our calls to build the schools that we need. What we don't need is delays as we're seeing in Alberta. We need to learn from the experience next door. And it's disappointing that this government's choosing to stick its head in the sand instead.

Just a comment from the Liberal education critic, Kent Hehr, in Alberta. He says, "The only good thing about P3s is that it's a way for governments to hide debt." Well I don't agree with his statement because I can't see that being a good thing at all, but certainly it is a way for a government to try to manipulate the books and to hide debt. And Saskatchewan people of course are brighter than that. They're more common sense than that. They see through those sort of schemes and ploys of government.

We also recognize from that article that when the Highways minister gets up and makes his confident claims about purported savings next door, that in fact it's being . . . it's just that. It's just that. It's just purported savings. And I quote from this article:

. . . the province's financial watchdog noted with caution that the government had not retained the documents it used to estimate maintenance prices over the contract nor had it validated its estimate of cost overrun . . . if it built and operated the schools itself.

So the provincial auditor has said that they basically didn't have the information that they needed to validate the assertions of that government around purported savings. We know the realities in jurisdictions that are more mature into this process is that the P3s cost far more. So I think we should be heeding caution from that sort of statement from the provincial auditor in Alberta who now is, I understand, investigating and going to be bringing forward a full review and report in February of this year, the actual costs of P3s in Alberta.

Another article from Alberta quoting the . . . From right across the political spectrum there's concern, Mr. Speaker. I quote, "Wildrose urges Tories to pay cash for new schools as P3 plans falter." And I go on with that article. This is from the *Calgary Herald* on October 29th, so just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker. These are recent examples that this government should be listening to: "The Wildrose opposition is calling on the province to scrap its private financing plans and instead pay cash to construct much-needed schools."

And then it goes on to talk about the only one consortia, one private-sector consortia that's bidding on those projects. And it says that the "infrastructure critic is worried taxpayers will be

fleeced," Mr. Speaker. That's strong words.

I quote further:

"If we have a sole-source contract for schools, I hate to think what we would end up paying," Drew Barnes said.

"Where's the competitiveness for taxpayers and where's the results for kids who need these facilities?"

The concerns are many from across Alberta. They're noted by the provincial auditor. They're noted by school boards. They're noted by community leaders.

As I quote from that same report here, "Alberta's auditor general is currently investigating whether the P3 schools offer value for money to taxpayers." We know already from the report I read before, the statement I read in, that the auditor was denied any value-for-money or analysis and they needed documents to support any sort of claims of that government.

But when we're looking at all of this, we know the experience of Nova Scotia. We know the experience in the United Kingdom, Mr. Speaker. We know the experience of P3s costing far more to taxpayers.

One other quote here from this one is, "People do not want to saddle their kids and grandkids with debt." And when we're going into building the schools that we need, we need to be doing so in a way that makes the most sense. And that's where we come at this issue of P3s. We know we need schools. We know that the public sector can build those schools more affordably. We know that they can get shovels in the ground faster by tendering out to the private sector to get those schools built and that those schools should be owned and operated by the public sector.

And you know, this isn't . . . You know, it's interesting as well. This isn't just any infrastructure. I mean these are important . . . The analysis of this legislation is important for infrastructure decisions of this province, but we need to take it, you know, with . . . even to understand that schools are something unique and schools are something different, and looking at what they mean to a community, being the heart of the community.

I think of the Premier who is talking about the grade 6 — I like the story — the grade 6 tuba player in Swift Current who had an influence on the music room within the new school that was being built. That's the kind of community input and influence that builds a school that's of pride and purpose for a community. All that will be lost when you bundle, bulk-buy, and put together these cookie-cutter schools where we see in Alberta clearly didn't meet the needs of communities. So I think he should be listening to his own considerations there.

I think of in Regina here where you have an award-winning design of Arcola School, where you have P3A Architecture, a firm here in Regina that worked directly with the community, that built a community that reflected needs, that reflected visioning, and that reflected a community.

Mr. Speaker, that's a school then that a community can be proud of. And I recognize that that architecture firm, a local

architecture firm, was recently awarded and recognized for their ability to work with community to build infrastructure. That a school that community and kids are proud and excited about, that's all lost when you bulk-buy this cookie-cutter, bare-bones approach to schools. And certainly there's distinct differences in communities across this province, and the ability for a community to have input, influence that design, is important. Just as it's important, as I say, that we understand the consequences of pushing out the construction industry in Saskatchewan or pushing out the design industry in Saskatchewan, which is a direct consequence of this P3 school approach being put forward by this government.

So it's past time that this government start listening to the leaders within our province in education, looking to the experience of other jurisdictions, that they understand the impact on Saskatchewan companies in construction, in design, that they understand the loss of control and influence of building schools that we're proud of, that serve communities for generations forward. And it's past time that this government continue to push forward in a stubborn approach without providing Saskatchewan people the details of their P3 private plan, and that they allow some daylight to be shone upon that plan.

You know, and I look to members opposite and, you know, the Highways minister, he jumps up, makes claims, goes on CBC and makes statements that aren't held up by the facts and realities in other jurisdictions. But I say to that government, if they have such confidence in the plan that they put together, in the full value-for-money costing that should have occurred, in the full business case analysis, in the full understanding of the long-term costs of these agreements, the private sector borrowing, the local economic impact, Mr. Speaker, and the nominal and real costs of these agreements, then they should have no issue supporting what's a very common sense and constructive piece of legislation that Saskatchewan people are calling for.

And we're hopeful that in the days to come . . . And I'm pleased to meet with and talk to whoever on the other side of the Assembly, with government, to speak about the legislation. But we'll be looking for their support. And as I say, to not support legislation or the principles of this legislation, and to move a piece of legislation to ensure upfront, independent evaluation, analysis, and reporting, would be to deny Saskatchewan people with the transparency that they deserve.

We've had some local columnists weigh in as well, Mr. Speaker, on this debate. And I know that one being Murray Mandryk, I quote:

Notwithstanding a couple of hindrances in the NDP's bill that the government could easily . . . tweak or eliminate, why would anyone oppose made-in-Saskatchewan legislation to govern P3 use and ensure . . . [Saskatchewan] is getting . . . the best value for money?

We're ready to work with government. We're ready to be constructive. We're ready to sit down. And if they have any specific concern with the legislation, we'll be ready to hear it. If we need to accept some friendly amendments, we'll be potentially ready to do that as long as the principle and integrity

of the process in the bill is kept intact. I know that there's been concerns relayed from our business columnist Bruce Johnstone who's simply suggesting that this shouldn't be a simple discussion and that there's a broader understanding that's important to doing so. And then I notice as well that there's just so many voices from school board members and community leaders in Alberta that are very recent. And I have quote after quote after quote of those individuals who are standing up and speaking out and calling for a better way forward, one that doesn't tie their hands with the private P3 school schemes that they have been pushing forward.

So it's time for us to learn from other experiences. It's time to build the schools that Saskatchewan people deserve. And we believe that this legislation assists us to do so. We call on government to support this legislation.

But at this point in time, I would now move second reading of Bill No. 605, transparency and accountability of private, public-private partnerships Act. And I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to enter the discussion here today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Rosemont that Bill No. 605, *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act* be now read a 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: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Which committee? Help me out here folks . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry. Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

It now being after the hour of 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister Responsible for The Global
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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