



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

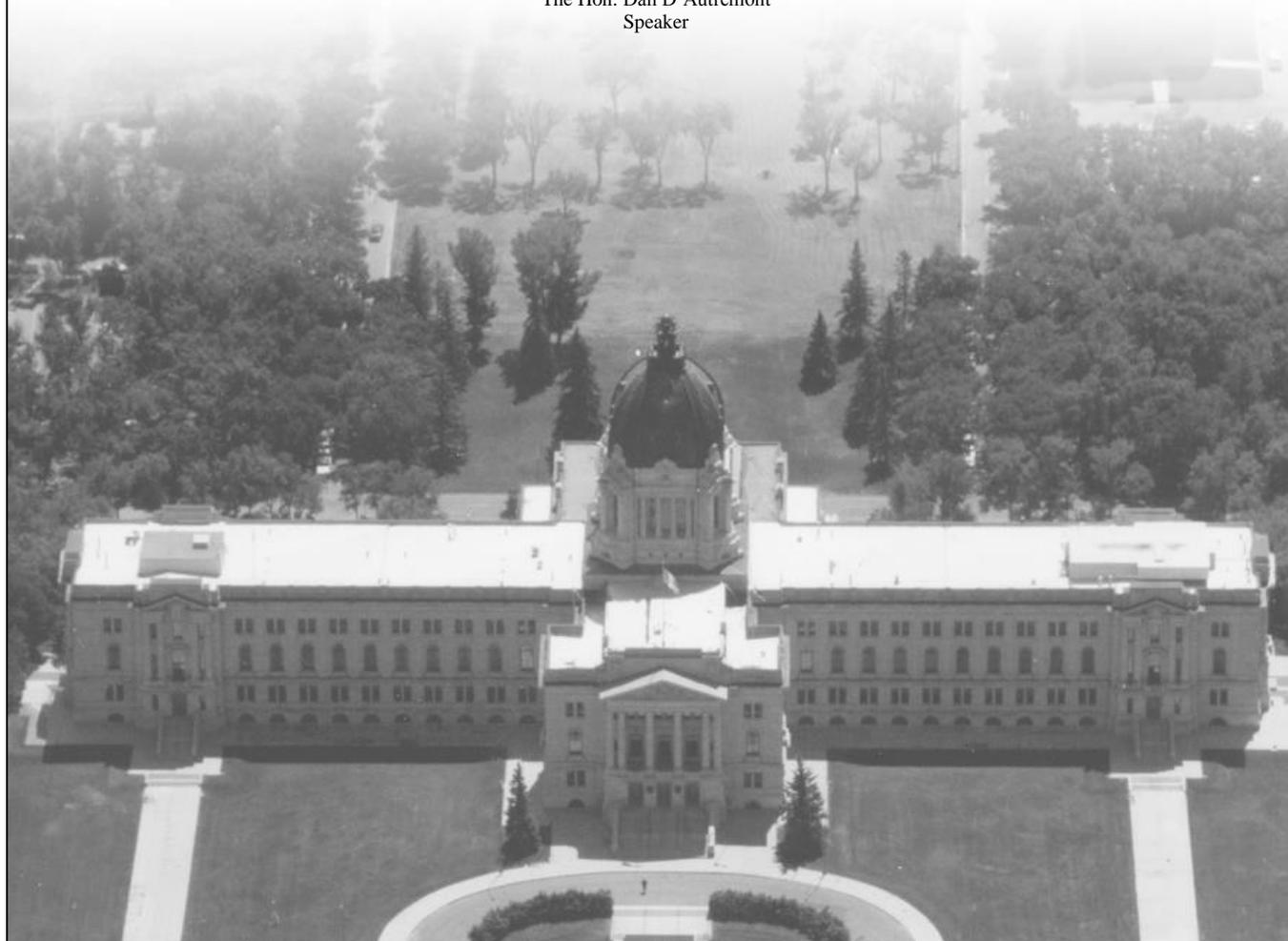
of the

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 Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had the privilege of joining the Minister of Rural and Remote Health for an announcement regarding nurse practitioners, and we're delighted that some of the participants from this morning are able to join us in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Lia Boxall is here, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners. Lia practises in Tisdale. Leland Sommer is here, vice-president of the Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners, and he practises in Cupar, in Southey, and Regina Beach. Barb Warkentin is here, past president of the SANP [Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners] and a nurse practitioner in Spiritwood — she said she was going to do that; I said it was her legislature — Mary Ann Denton, an advocacy committee member and a nurse practitioner with the Home First project and home care in Saskatoon. And they're joined by Lynn Digney-Davies, the chief nursing officer for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming these members of a very, very important profession that contribute mightily to enhanced health services right across the province. I ask all members to join me in welcoming all of them to their Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege on behalf of the opposition to join the minister in welcoming the guests from the Association of Nurse Practitioners. I know you've got meetings and a banquet tonight, and I'm sure you're looking forward to that as well. And I just want to thank you for all the work that you do as a really important part of the primary health care teams across Saskatchewan.

So on behalf of the official opposition, thank you so much for all the work that you do and the leadership that you provide. And with that, I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in the west gallery, I'm pleased to introduce a couple of people that are very special to me. My brother Larry and his wife Linda are here visiting from the beautiful town of Killarney, Manitoba.

Larry and Linda have just both recently retired: Larry from the Westoba Credit Union system in Manitoba; Linda's been an educator for many years and still substitutes somewhat. But they're enjoying travelling and enjoying curling and looking forward to getting out on that beautiful Killarney golf course this summer.

But I think more importantly, Mr. Speaker, along with myself and my Linda, they became grandparents for the first time six days after I did, so they're very much looking forward to spending some time with Easton. And I would like to ask all my colleagues to welcome them to a much nicer legislature than they have back home.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery today, we have 10 grade 7, 8, 9 students from the Wheatland Christian School in Neilburg in the great constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford. And they're accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Kim Adams, and along with a good bunch of chaperones here: Rob and Shannon Wiebe, Evan and Bonita Loetkeman, Lowell and Audrey Dueck, Lorne and Sonya Wiebe, Eileen Schmidt, Irene Loewen. And I would like everybody to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly I'd like to say a special hi to Barb Warkentin. Her and I worked together in the west side of the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region when I was working in community dietetics, so I got to see first-hand the value of nurse practitioners. So please everyone, join me in welcoming Barb Warkentin to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in your gallery is a young man that I guess works with a lot of . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not that young.

Mr. Vermette: — Well he says he's pretty young. But anyhow I just want to acknowledge him. He's my CA [constituency assistant]. He's here just seeing how the procedures go and meeting individuals that he has contact with and just doing some interesting things that he wanted to learn and see how our staff work, how the system works here. And he's here to get a little bit of a PD [professional development], and he had a little fun last night as well. It was good to have and laughter and everything.

So I just want to say to him, thank you for all you do back home. He does an excellent job dealing with the individuals. So to Devin Bernatchez, I just want to say to you, thank you so much. You do an awesome job, and you care about the people. It's in your heart, and you serve northern Saskatchewan well. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Keep up the good

work. Tēniki.

The Speaker: — I hope the commentary in introductions does not cause any border incidents with Manitoba, as I live on the border.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater support for education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services that government provides to its 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 we know that this government has failed to deliver a real plan that would close the Aboriginal education gap, support English as an additional language students, support community schools and their communities and their students. And we know that we must build the best education system for today and for Saskatchewan's future.

I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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 with the necessary resources to provide the best quality education for Saskatchewan, that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed in consultation with the education sector, and that builds strong educational infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

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

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents here in Regina as it relates to the unsafe conditions on Dewdney Avenue and the need to ensure safety and the need to reroute the heavy-haul truck traffic that's inundated Dewdney Avenue. The petitioners note that this is an issue that was created by that government and any further delays to address it are entirely unacceptable. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by good people of Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government stubbornly ignored the call to maintain this program. Instead it cancelled it, the RPO. That means that the dream of home ownership is destroyed for many families in the North. 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 communities in our province's beautiful North.

Signed by many people of this province. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am once again pleased to stand in my place today to present a petition on highway improvements necessary for northern Saskatchewan. We've presented petitions for a number of communities. In this particular petition, Mr. Speaker, the petition is for Highway 908, the highway that serves the Ile-a-la-Crosse community. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And the prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to commit to repairing and upgrading Highway 908.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present this petition.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to present a petition to the Assembly today for real action on climate change. It's signed by a number of residents from Saskatchewan who wish to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada; that Saskatchewan's emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes as reported by Environment Canada in October 2013 and show no signs of decreasing; that the Saskatchewan government has failed to tackle climate change, reduce emissions to the province's own targets, or put in a real plan to protect the natural environment; that slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy efficiency program set the province on a backwards course; and that since 2009 the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact a real plan and allocate appropriate funding in the provincial budget to tackle climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, helping families transition to energy-efficient homes, and encouraging everyone in the province to take real action to protect the environment.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is submitted by citizens from Vanscoy and Saskatoon and Meadow Lake. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Community Resource Provides Connection and Support

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize an important program in Saskatoon. OASIS, which stands for opportunity, acceptance, support, invitation, safe, recently celebrated its third anniversary.

Based out of the Westside Community Clinic, OASIS provides its participants a chance to connect and support one another while providing learning opportunities, knowledge about community resources, and fun along the way. OASIS shows the spirit of collaboration. Saskatoon Health Region's mental health and addiction services, KidsFirst, and the Westside Community Clinic have all helped to make this important resource a possibility.

I am proud to say the OASIS group was recently awarded the SHEA award, the Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Award in the health of the population category. One of the group members had this to say about her experience with OASIS:

Since OASIS has started, the women and men have grown, overcome many obstacles, learned to trust, love, and forgive ourselves and others. Our self-esteem has returned to us to where we are proud of who we are. The OASIS program is possible because of people caring and showing their support.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the participants in the OASIS group, the staff at the Westside Community Clinic, and all their partners who have made this valuable community resource a possibility. Thank you.

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

Daffodil Month

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month, when the Canadian Cancer Society raises money for research, prevention, and support for people affected by cancer. In Saskatchewan during 2013, an estimated 6,410 people were diagnosed with a form of cancer. The disease claimed the lives of 2,300 people.

However there is reason to hope. The Canadian Cancer Society

reports that people diagnosed with cancer today have a better chance of surviving five years after their diagnosis than they had just a decade ago.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget our government increased funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency by 4.9 million, up 3.3 per cent from last year. Since 2007-2008, funding has increased 98 per cent for their work in cancer research, prevention, and treatment. We are committed to providing effective, timely treatment. Our government has announced funding for a new linear accelerator at Regina's Allan Blair Cancer Centre to enhance the precision of radiation therapy.

We can all take steps, Mr. Speaker, to model healthy habits such as maintaining healthy weights and getting proper exercise. These do not guarantee a clean bill of health, but they reduce the likelihood of developing a wide range of health conditions and disease, including cancer. I ask my fellow members to join me in proudly wearing a daffodil this month as a symbol of the fight against cancer. I wear it for my mother and my sister.

[10:15]

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

Asbestos Awareness Week

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week is Asbestos Awareness Week, marked globally by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. This week is a time to raise awareness about asbestos-related diseases. This is also a time to remember those who have lost their courageous battles and to collectively work towards the day when no one is lost to those diseases. We cannot ignore our grief from those lost, but there is comfort in our memories.

It is important to be reminded that we can make a difference and we have a very special role here in the legislature. And it was incredibly encouraging to have members from both sides of the House co-operate in the creation of Howard's law, a mandatory registry of public buildings. This system is the first of its kind in Canada and allows individuals to make their own choices that might affect their health and their futures.

Over 100,000 workers across the globe die of asbestos-related disease each year. In fact, Howard's law was brought forward on behalf of Howard Willems, a Saskatoon man who was lost to a rare form of cancer caused by inhaling asbestos fibres.

Mr. Speaker, there's no greater priority than the health and safety of Saskatchewan people. I call on all members to recognize this week as a time to raise awareness about asbestos-related diseases, to remember those lost, and to remain vigilant in the protection of workers in their workplaces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2013 Grey Cup Festival Receives Sport Tourism Award

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, Saskatchewan is quickly becoming recognized as one of the best places to hold sporting events in the nation. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that the Celebration in Rider Nation yesterday received national-wide attention as a memorable party held last November.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance has announced the 2014 PRESTIGE [Program Recognizing Exceptional Sport Tourism Initiatives, Games & Events] Award for Sport Event of the Year has been given to our very own 101st Grey Cup Festival.

The PRESTIGE Awards celebrate the people, places, and events that make the Canadian sport tourism industry so dynamic and important to the economic fabric of our communities. The hardware was presented at the 8th annual PRESTIGE Awards luncheon yesterday in Edmonton.

Neil Donnelly, executive director of the 101st Grey Cup Festival, summed up the success by saying:

After more than two years of planning and five days of the biggest celebration that Saskatchewan has ever hosted, the 101st Grey Cup Festival left a tremendous imprint on the entire province and experienced a Celebration in Rider Nation — the passion of the CFL, football, sport, special events, and entertainment in true Saskatchewan style.

Mr. Speaker, we should be very proud of our city and the province's ability of hosting such a first-class event, one that was very deserving of this award.

I'll ask all members to join me in thanking everyone who made this award possible, including the 2013 Grey Cup Festival organizing committee, the over 2,400 volunteers that gave their time, sponsors, partners, and of course our Saskatchewan Roughriders. Our province is once again very proud of the whole organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Celebrate Success Business Awards Presented in Yorkton

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, last night I had the opportunity to attend the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce Celebrate Success Business Awards, which has been celebrating success of Yorkton businesses and community organizations since 1998. SaskPower is a proud sponsor of the Celebrate Success Business Awards by donating \$3,500 to help recognize business excellence in the Yorkton area.

Businesses that won in their categories were: diversity leadership, Tim Hortons; work and family balance, Fedorowich Construction; community merit was Yail Harbor, Yorkton Skateboard Park, and Yorkton Sno Riders; new business venture, Mr. Mike's Steakhouse Casual; property restoration, Logan Stevens Construction; community involvement, Painted Hand Casino; business growth and expansion, Royal Auto Group; customer service, Dustin Nehring and Taylor Lang of NL Construction; and Award of Excellence, Bailey's Funeral Home and Cremation Centre, LR Future Investments and Insurance, and Penguin Refrigeration.

On behalf of SaskPower and the government, I was honoured to be able to present the awards for Large and Small Businesses of the Year, which were awarded to R.H. Electric and Wagner's Flooring respectively.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to all business people for their investment and commitment to our province. Without their investment, Saskatchewan would not be as economically strong as it is today. I invite all members to join with me in thanking the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce for hosting, SaskPower for sponsoring Celebrate Success Business Awards, and congratulate all winners and nominees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

University of Saskatchewan Anniversary

Mr. Tochor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to wish a happy anniversary to the University of Saskatchewan today, which is celebrating its 107th year since its foundation as an agriculture college in 1907.

After Saskatoon was chosen as the city to host the university, 300 acres were set aside for the university buildings and 1,000 acres for the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] farm and agriculture fields. Only two years junior to the Legislative Building, the University of Saskatchewan has a long history deeply embedded within our province. Mr. Speaker, the University of Saskatchewan was the first Canadian university to combine both arts and agriculture. It was very involved in serving the province's major industries.

The University of Saskatchewan has come a long way since 1907, Mr. Speaker. Over the years it has grown from its beginnings as an agriculture university to include a wide array of academic offerings, providing our hometown Saskatchewan students a place to expand their knowledge right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

We are proud to support the University of Saskatchewan and have this year committed an additional \$13.2 million, an increase of 3.7 per cent in funding, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to support the University of Saskatchewan, and once again wish the institution a happy 107th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Executive Finalist for Generation Next Award

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to recognize Doug Campbell, the director of business development for Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw.

With events like ZZ Top, the Backstreet Boys, the Telus Cup coming right up, and the Scotties coming in 2015, it's not a surprise that Doug has been honoured as one of the best in the business. He has been named as one of the 30 finalists for a prestigious industry award as one of the brightest young executives in North American entertainment business. The

industry-leading publication, *Venues Today*, is recognizing management aged 35 or younger with its Generation Next Award.

Doug is proud of the shows and events they've held so far, admitting that it's taken a lot of work to attract the very best. He works diligently to form relationships with promoters and agents and prove Moose Jaw and area is a very viable location. Prior to his current role, Doug worked in events and sports marketing in Lethbridge before jumping at the opportunity to come work for a brand new facility.

Doug will find out how he fared over the next couple of months.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Doug Campbell on this award and all he has done for the success of Mosaic Place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Social Services Expenditures and Responsibilities

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Social Services said she stayed with a friend while in Ghana. To the minister: why does her expense claim show \$326.08 for accommodations if she was staying with a friend, and will she pay that back to taxpayers?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — There was one night that I stayed in a hotel room when I was in Ghana. The rest of the time, I stayed with a friend. I will not pay that one back because I definitely was working at the convention. I was asked to speak as one of the guest speakers at this conference.

I am proud of the work that we're doing as a government on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't make apologies for helping people that need our support in this area.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Social Services also said she didn't go out for any meals while in Ghana. To the minister: why did she bill taxpayers \$389.54 for meals when she says she didn't go out for any meals while she was in Ghana, and will she pay that back to taxpayers?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I claimed the per diems when I was over there. I had a chance to pay the person that I was staying with. They made the meals. And I had a per diem and I gave it to that individual so that they would . . . [inaudible] . . . for the food when we were over there. I don't expect my friends to feed me for nothing. And at the same time, I would try and save taxpayers' dollars.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is the answer to the questions. The members opposite can continue on this line if you want to. I am

proud of the work that we are doing in this area.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said she had five or six meetings during the four-day layover she had in London. Despite having just 1.5 meetings per day, she billed the taxpayers to have a limo service at her beck and call. To the minister: did she use that limo service for any sightseeing or shopping with her friend? Is that why she finally agreed to pay back that part of this very expensive trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the expense with respect to the car service was not a part of the ministry's expenses. It was part of an official's expenses that was attending with the minister, and the minister was unaware of the amount. So what she has done is looked at the amount, Mr. Speaker, overnight, looked at the schedule she had, and she's made the determination that another mode of transportation would have been possible. And rather than simply reimburse the difference of what those two modes of transportation might have been, what one was and what one could have been, she just paid all the money back to taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, the other important point here is that on the way to Ghana, the minister would have had the option, because it's government policy when flights last a certain period of time, to fly business class. She chose to fly economy. She did choose in Ghana to stay with friends, Mr. Speaker. Moreover, last year her travel expenses as a minister, in terms of ministerial travel, were \$28,000.

Mr. Speaker, in the last year of the New Democrats in office, she would have had a lower travel bill than 15 New Democratic ministers. Mr. Speaker, this is a minister who is well reputed in her file and one who has always taken the utmost care with taxpayers' dollars. That's why she has the support of members on this side and people right across the province.

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

Mr. Forbes: — The minister determined yesterday that nothing personal was paid for by taxpayers, but we know that taxpayers did cover a \$200 lunch with a friend. And now we know that the minister admits that the \$3,600 limo service was also inappropriate. To the minister: how can we trust that taxpayers didn't cover any other personal expenses on this trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the lunch, it was noted yesterday that this particular invoice or receipt for lunch was at the official's level, not by the minister, incorrectly included with the expenses to be reimbursed and also has since been reimbursed. Mr. Speaker, this was an office mistake that was made.

Again with respect to this particular minister and her own budget for travel, we would happily compare what she has spent in all of her years as a minister of the Crown versus the majority of ministers from the other side of the House, even unadjusted

for inflation, Mr. Speaker. What we have seen from this minister is a review overnight of the incident, a review of the facts of the case, and a reimbursement to the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

And with respect to the minister's question, which really goes to the integrity of the minister and the veracity of what she is now presenting today and what she also said yesterday in the House and outside on the rotunda and on the public record, Mr. Speaker, again members on this side of the House, colleagues of this minister know the kind of person this is. This is a woman of character. This is a woman of integrity that has served this province in ways that are hard to measure in terms of her professionalism and her contribution. And we stand with the minister today.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, we did not get an answer to the question. Did she use the limo service for any sightseeing or shopping with her friend? Is that why she finally agreed to pay back that part of the very expensive trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, travel by ministers of the Saskatchewan Party government is down 50 per cent over travel by NDP [New Democratic Party] ministers in their last year in office. And of course we as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] also have expenses.

And so I wonder if the hon. member is prepared, the one who is asking the questions is prepared to compare the record of members opposite with how they do their travel. I wonder if he is prepared to claim in this Assembly that every per diem he has taken, there was actually a meal attached to it that he paid for. I don't know the answer, but Mr. Speaker, if this is the questions he's asking of the minister, these are the questions he should be prepared to answer himself.

[10:30]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Again, Mr. Speaker, did she use that limo service for any sightseeing or shopping with her friend? Is that why she finally agreed to pay back the money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The money has been paid back already. The minister has agreed to pay back the money, and it's happened with respect to the car service in question.

Let us remember again and put on the record again that this minister had the choice, because of government policy, of flying business class to Ghana. She chose to fly economy. This minister had the option to be in a hotel for the entire duration of the conference at which she was a guest speaker. She chose to stay with acquaintances, Mr. Speaker.

This minister had a total travel budget last year of \$28,000, less than 15 of the NDP ministers from their last year in office. This

minister looks after the taxpayers' dollars as though they were her children's dollars, as though they were the dollars of her family members because, Mr. Speaker, frankly that's been her approach to public life. And it is why today I note, interestingly not just in the Assembly, the people of the province and many of those who have dealt with her in her files in the disability sector, in the area of social services, are today supporting the minister because they know the kind of person that she is.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister table her complete itinerary and all the receipts for her trip, today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the minister, I believe in the scum, indicated the meetings that she was having while in London with respect to the Social Services file around the disability question, around housing, Mr. Speaker, public housing. And of course the members will know that the minister is also responsible for Sask Housing. She also took a meeting for the Minister of Finance related to financial matters, and I expect a summary of those meetings will be presented today.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Will she table her complete itinerary and all the receipts in the House today? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would expect that the response to the FOI [freedom of information] has offered up the expenses involved in the trip. That is the genesis of the nature of these questions and the ones from yesterday in the first place. Moreover I just said to the member and all members in the House that the meetings the minister was attending to on her behalf, in terms of her file and also on behalf of the Minister of Finance, will provided to the public.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, the minister struggled yesterday to explain what she actually learned on this costly trip that is of benefit to Saskatchewan people. What policy changes have occurred or will occur as a result of this minister's trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, many, many policies of the Government of Saskatchewan in the area of social services have changed because of that minister, Mr. Speaker. Many, many policies of the government have changed with respect to housing in this province, as also has been her responsibility over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, as we have seen a build-out just in public housing, incentives for new home ownership that is related to FIP [Family Income Plan] as we've discussed in this House before, and are seeing new home starts in this province and new home ownership.

Mr. Speaker, changes that have occurred under this minister

include SAID, the Saskatchewan assured income for disability, Mr. Speaker, an historic program that recognizes disabilities for what they are, led and championed by this minister and then backs it up with extra resources. Mr. Speaker, because while the social democrats were in office they did a lot of talking about these things. They did a lot of talking about those with disabilities and the supports they needed but they left it at talk, Mr. Speaker. The changes this minister has made is the talk is now action.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Simply, Mr. Speaker, what changed because of this trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member attended the International Labour Conference in Geneva. I expect he spent taxpayers' dollars to do it. What changed in NDP policy and the policy of the opposition as a result of that trip?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, why are there no reports for any of her meetings in London or Ghana?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Will the member table all of his receipts related to the trip to Geneva for the labour conference as well as table all the reports from his attendance at that meeting at taxpayers' expense?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Again, why are there no reports from her meetings from London or Ghana?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, why are there no reports from this minister's attendance at that very important International Labour Conference in Geneva, Mr. Speaker? Or maybe there are, in which case we should have a look at those.

I know that there were notes taken at some of the meetings. I believe some of them were attached to the FOI, notes that were taken at the meeting and as a result of the conference. The minister was actually a speaker at the conference in Africa, Mr. Speaker, a keynote speaker. She was asked to present because of the work that she has led here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Sometimes we go to conferences and attend them or go to trade missions with objectives. Sometimes we're asked to present on what we've done in Saskatchewan. The Minister of Finance may well be asked by the federal government or by those involved in the Ukrainian community in this country to be involved in reconstruction, basically, in Ukraine. And if he's asked, we're going to support that he would go, Mr. Speaker, because that's also what we do in the province of

Saskatchewan. And that was also a big part of this particular trip.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, will the minister table her presentation at Ghana and the agenda of that convention with her name in it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I hope the minister does share her remarks on FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] that she made there and that she's made around the province so that members opposite might learn a little bit about acting instead of talking about an issue.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the hon. member to also table his presentation to the International Labour Conference he went to in Geneva at taxpayers' expense, but I bet he wasn't asked to make a presentation.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this sounds more and more like it was mostly a personal trip to visit friends in Ghana and spend some time in London. Will the minister repay the full expenses to taxpayers today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this minister has taken one international trip in her seven years in cabinet. And again I would point out, I believe the total amount for travel, ministerial travel, was \$28,000 last year.

Fifteen NDP ministers in the dying days of that government, if you want to talk about entitlement, spent much more than that. In fact it was about a \$1 million bill a year we got in terms of ministerial travel from the NDP. That number's now cut in half, Mr. Speaker. It's been cut in half.

And part of that success story, by the way, is that we have people like the Minister of Social Services at the cabinet table and at our caucus table reminding us always that we are not spending our money. We're spending the money of the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan. It's why, it's why . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, these are apples . . . We hear them heckling now, that isn't a fair comparison. It is precisely the same comparison. Fifty per cent more under the NDP, Mr. Speaker — it's why their travel bills were up in office and why they're down to nine members, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services said that she billed over \$3,600 for a limo service because "I did what everybody was doing." My question is for the Premier: who else in government is billing over \$3,600 for limo service?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, at times when we travel on trade missions there is the use of a car service. Certainly it depends on the nature of the program and the meetings we've set up. I've certainly used a car service in the past, Mr. Speaker, in relation to our deal with embassies around the world.

Mr. Speaker, if there are successive meetings, hour on hour, in different parts of large centres in other countries, we will in fact utilize a car service. If the programs don't warrant one, then we'll cab it, and sometimes we'll walk. But frankly, Mr. Speaker, we'll do whatever we can do to optimize the use of tax dollars.

Mr. Speaker, in the future, although there has been always an informal contact with embassies with high commissions around the world to determine what is the best way to achieve the logistics of transportation issues for these trade missions, while there has been an informal contact, we're going to formalize that as a policy of the Government of Saskatchewan, that ministers when they're travelling, or myself will contact the embassy and the high commission and get their recommendation as to when it is wise to use a car service, based on the program and when it's wise to use a taxi.

Mr. Speaker, though I would put this forward to members on both sides of the aisle today, I would expect that car services have been a fact in trade missions, in the travel of ministers, through successive governments. We need to make sure we're optimizing the value for taxpayers. We are going to continue to do that on this side of House. And we'll formalize the process with DFAIT [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade], the Department of Foreign Affairs embassies and high commissions around the world, and we'll get their advice in terms of what's the appropriate ground transportation.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this was not a DFAIT trip, and the Premier said the car services and limo services are used in instances where there are consecutive meetings stacked on top of each other. As the member from Centre clearly said, there was an average of 1.5 meetings a day in this instance.

While in London, Mr. Speaker, over \$200 was billed to taxpayers for a lunch the Minister of Social Services had in London with her friend from Saskatchewan. The government claims, Mr. Speaker, their claim is that was a mistake. My question is for the Premier: who designated this lunch as an official debrief meeting and who signed off on that expense claim?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the amount that the hon. member is referring to with respect to ground transportation has been repaid. This particular invoice, this \$200 bill has also been repaid.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Broten: — The question, Mr. Speaker, was who deemed this lunch to be an official debrief? Who did that, and who signed off on that claim?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I don't know the specific answer to that question, Mr. Speaker. I see the minister now nodding, and I don't want to get this wrong, but she did not approve that particular expenditure, is my understanding today. Neither was it approved that there would be ground transportation to the extent that's happened. That's why this minister has taken the appropriate steps and taken them immediately, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the ground transportation and the bill in question.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, no answer on who signed off. My question: if it's not the minister, who is it that deemed this trip to be an official debrief, official government work? And then who signed off on that expense?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — We'll get that information to the member. I do not know the answer to that question.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the cabinet secretary has a very senior role within government. The job description is to support the Premier in his role as President of Executive Council, provide administrative support to cabinet and cabinet committees, and maintain a public record of all cabinet decisions. My question to the Premier: why would the cabinet secretary be accompanying the minister on such a trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the cabinet secretary is involved in a number of different issues in government, including the Ukraine file, Mr. Speaker, which has been very active of late. It's due to the many contacts and networks he has with respect to the Ukrainian community here in the country, Mr. Speaker. That's the simple answer to the question. The cabinet secretary is involved in a number of things. He delivers on the job description as read by the Leader of the Opposition, and there are a number of other duties as assigned.

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

Mr. Broten: — Okay, Mr. Speaker, that was a response as to why the cabinet secretary may be in Ukraine. But my question, Mr. Speaker, is why the cabinet secretary would accompany this minister on this particular trip. I assume the minister has ministerial assistants and a chief of staff like all the ministers on the front benches. It seems peculiar that the cabinet secretary, who I would think has a lot of work to do here in Saskatchewan, would be on such a trip. Why is that?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Whether, Mr. Speaker, the cabinet secretary attends with the minister or her chief of staff or another staff person on her file, I don't understand the great difference here,

especially if the cabinet secretary is, as a result of that particular trip, going on to work on the Ukraine file. That's my understanding in this case. And so instead of you having multiple flights with different staff, some staff going to the Ghana portion and then a longer flight for the cabinet secretary on the Ukraine file, these were brought under one trip, Mr. Speaker. That's my understanding.

Moreover, let's re-emphasize some of the facts here. The Minister of Social Services had the opportunity, and certainly the option by government policy, to fly business class to Ghana. She chose to fly economy. Mr. Speaker, she had the option to stay in a hotel for the entire duration of the conference. She chose to stay at a friend's.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line here is, we have a minister, and frankly we have a government, that takes the matter of the taxpayers' dollars very, very seriously. We work hard to be good stewards of those dollars, and we will continue to do that as long as we have the honour of serving in government in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister had the option of not going to Ghana. It's interesting also, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting in listening to the Premier's spin as to how savings are achieved, Mr. Speaker, as a rationalization for this trip and who's attended it and who is in fact billing business class tickets and regular tickets, Mr. Speaker.

A different question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, and the member from Centre touched on this earlier on: will the Premier ensure that all of the detailed receipts from this trip will be tabled today in the Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's a problem. I think the information's been forthcoming in the FOI. I don't see why there would be any issues with respect to receipts or with respect to the meetings that were held.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's right. I guess the minister had the option not to go. Other ministers and members of the legislature, by the way, in terms of CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] trips — maybe my friend's been on one — have the option of not going. The critic who asked the question had the option of not going to the International Labour Conference in Geneva. He chose to go. So, Mr. Speaker, fair questions to this side apply also to that side of the House.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the FOI did not contain the receipts from the trip. I believe I heard the Premier reference that there wouldn't be a problem. Just to be perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker: will the government today submit, table in the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, the detailed receipts from the minister's trip to Ghana and London?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I just don't see a problem in terms of the receipts. And I guess the same would go for the member for Riversdale, who chose to go to Germany using taxpayers' dollars. And I expect the Leader of the Opposition went on a few CPA trips during his time in the legislature. I'm sure he'll do the proper thing in terms of receipts. Or maybe he wants to just answer the question, why didn't he simply in those times that he's gone on these trips, why did he choose not to go?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Rural and Remote Nurse Practitioner Recruitment Agency

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is fortunate to have highly skilled nurse practitioners who serve as key members of primary health care teams. Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with advanced education. This allows them to perform physical assessments, order diagnostic tests, diagnose and treat common medical conditions, prescribe medications, and perform minor surgical procedures.

Today I am pleased to advise that our government has launched a new strategy to help bring more nurse practitioners to rural and remote areas of the province. Earlier this morning, I announced the Rural and Remote Nurse Practitioner Recruitment Agency aimed at encouraging nurse practitioners to work in communities with a population of 10,000 people or less.

Mr. Speaker, there are four initiatives in this strategy. The first one is the grow your own initiative. This is for registered nurses who are interested in becoming nurse practitioners. Registered nurses will receive wages and benefits for up to two years while they receive full-time nurse practitioner training. In return, they agree to work in their sponsoring health region for five years.

We are also establishing a locum pool of rural nurse practitioners. This team of nurse practitioners will provide itinerant service on a temporary basis in communities that are without nurse practitioner services. The program will provide relief for vacation, sick leave, and maternity leave.

The third piece of the strategy addresses position transfers. Health regions will be able to move vacant, hard-to-fill nursing positions within health regions to communities where no positions exist.

The last piece of the strategy which will support rural nurse practitioner recruitment is the introduction of relocation grants. Nurse practitioners will be eligible for incentive grants of up to \$40,000 over five years for practising in hard-to-recruit positions or locations. The funding for this strategy is being drawn from this year's ministry and RHA [Regional Health Authority] budgets, using existing funds already towards recruitment initiatives. We expect the annual costs of the strategy to be about \$250,000.

Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank the Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners for the major role they've

played in developing this strategy. Without their leadership and guidance, this would not be possible.

As this strategy is still in its introductory stages, it will require ongoing consultation and negotiation with SANP as well as the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association, and our regional health authorities. We value the input of these stakeholder groups and will continue to work with them as we implement the various pieces of this strategy.

This nurse practitioner recruitment strategy supports our growth plan goal of ensuring that health services are available to all Saskatchewan residents regardless of where they live. It provides a variety of incentives that will help us attract and keep more nurse practitioners in rural and remote communities. We look forward to seeing the results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, thank you to the minister for sending his remarks over a little bit ago. I appreciate that.

With respect to the nurse practitioner recruitment strategy, this is definitely a welcome program, Mr. Speaker. Coincidentally enough, I had an opportunity just this week to speak to some councillors in Regina Beach who spoke of Leland, actually, and the work that he does there, and some of the stresses that they're concerned about Leland needing another nurse practitioner, or their community needing a second nurse practitioner because they're worried about losing the services of their nurse practitioner and him burning out.

So this I know will be a welcome strategy or initiative from people living throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Nurse practitioners are an incredibly important part of the primary health care team and in providing services to people both in rural and urban Saskatchewan.

And I do have a couple of questions. I know that the minister has mentioned the close consultation with the Association of Nurse Practitioners and that because this is in the beginning stages of that process, it will require ongoing consultation. So I look forward to seeing how this rolls out and hearing from the Association of Nurse Practitioners that it is in fact doing the work, that this initiative is doing the work that it needs to do.

I did have one question, and perhaps I'll have an opportunity to chat with the nurse practitioners and the minister about this, where it says health regions will, the minister had mentioned that health regions will be able to move vacant, hard-to-fill nursing positions within health regions to communities where no positions exist. I do have a few questions or thoughts about that. Does that mean that because . . . I'm wondering if when a position is hard to fill, instead of moving that position, how you figure out how you in fact fill that position.

But again we need to ensure that people in Saskatchewan have good quality health care, and this is a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker. So thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Patient Care and the Lean Initiative

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It'll be my privilege in just a few minutes to move a motion that will . . . that this Assembly call on the government to cancel the lean John Black and Associates contract with the Ministry of Health and condemn the government's waste of public dollars. So in the next . . . At the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving that motion.

And what this is essentially about, Mr. Speaker, this, Mr. Speaker, is in fact a debate about priorities. We've heard story after story, Mr. Speaker, about health and seniors' care in this province getting worse in recent years under this government, not getting better. We have some concerns that the reality is this government should be fixing the basics and achieving real improvement in health care and in seniors' care. And instead this government is choosing to enter into a \$40 million contract with an American consultant, Mr. Speaker, with an American consultant, and spending untold millions on top of that, Mr. Speaker.

Health regions are also spending money. There's money being spent on, as I said, untold millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. We've asked many questions and the ministry has not provided many of those answers, so we in fact still don't know what the total is. It is a running total, Mr. Speaker, and we do have some serious concerns about that. The clock is still ticking.

The reality is, what is needed right now, Mr. Speaker, is good listening to front-line health care workers, commitment to actually listen to them and learn from both health care workers, patients, their families. What are the issues, and how can they be fixed?

I know one of the things that my dad always has said about consultants: we hire someone to look at our watch and tell us what time it is, Mr. Speaker. I think that that's what we've done with John Black and Associates. We have someone from the United States with a very different health care system coming in and telling us what to do, Mr. Speaker, when in fact we should be listening to those who work in our health care system like the nurse practitioners here and other health practitioners and families who continue to have story after story, who have flagged the lack of staffing in our acute care facilities, in our long-term care facilities. The core of the health care crisis, Mr. Speaker, is a lack of staffing in all our facilities. People are working under-staffed on a regular basis.

We had last year, we flagged about this time last year, a little bit earlier when we, in March of last year started bringing forward stories about challenges in long-term care facilities again around staffing ratios 1 to 30, really not acceptable staffing-to-resident ratios, Mr. Speaker. And initially that was dismissed by the minister: oh no, no, we don't have a problem in long-term care, in seniors' care; nothing to see here. And

then the stories continued to emerge, Mr. Speaker, and at that point the minister finally agreed that he needed to do something. And so he sent his CEOs [chief executive officer] out to tour long-term care facilities in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And they eventually reported back that yes, in fact there is some serious concern in long-term and seniors' care, Mr. Speaker.

And this again is a debate about priorities. Is it about \$40 million-plus as the tally rises, Mr. Speaker, or is this about investing in the care of our seniors who really need more than they're getting, Mr. Speaker?

So some of the issues that emerge, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to identify some of the care homes with major issues identified in the CEO tour. We had, at the Spruce Manor Special Care Home in Dalmeny, staffing levels are inadequate to meet the needs of residents due to the increased level of acuity. We have, at Stensrud Lodge in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, they can hear people crying for help in the evening because of staffing shortages — a 1 to 25 care aid ratio on evenings. We have, at the Central Parkland Lodge, staff members commented they sometimes struggle with priorities. For example, when feeding one resident and another rings to be toileted, they don't know if they should interrupt the meal which in turns get cold for that resident, or if they should go toilet the person who may soil themselves, end quote, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is this is about priorities. So in the fall, after a freedom of information request and the extended, and the extended . . . You get 30 days, the government gets 30 days to respond to a freedom of information request, and the possibility of an extension. The government asked for an extension. When we asked for the CEO tour report, we wanted to see what was in it, Mr. Speaker. And the day that the report was due, this government had a news conference and made public some of the very, the awful things that are going on in some of our seniors' care homes, Mr. Speaker, because of a lack of staffing.

So the minister came forward and put together a fund that he asked health regions for what some of their priorities were, and he denied \$8.5 million. So he wanted urgent requests. Like what do health regions really need to meet the needs of their seniors, Mr. Speaker? So these weren't extras, Mr. Speaker. These were call bells that didn't work, the bare minimum that people should be getting in seniors' care, Mr. Speaker, call bells. The lack of that infrastructure, the lack of staff, over and over and over people identified the lack of staff.

[11:00]

In Saskatoon alone actually, the Saskatoon Health Region, the largest health region in the province, Mr. Speaker, asked for . . . Or they need; they didn't ask for it. The Saskatoon Health Region identified the need for 1,700 lifts, Mr. Speaker. They only asked for 100 in their urgent action request, Mr. Speaker. So they pared the urgent action. At the request of the government they pared back their urgent request and they only received 56 lifts, Mr. Speaker. They needed, they have identified a need in the Saskatoon Health Region for 450 more special care aids, Mr. Speaker, 450 more. They only asked for 38 and they received 19, Mr. Speaker.

So again this debate about lean is a debate about priorities, Mr. Speaker — \$40 million-plus for John Black, an American consultant, to come in and look at our watch and tell us what time it is instead of having our very competent, well-paid CEOs and other managers think about how do you engage front-line staff, Mr. Speaker. Because that is one of the things that needs to be done, engaging front-line staff. There's no doubt about that, Mr. Speaker. And the deputy minister responsible for lean actually has said that all the positives that have come out from the lean work have been because they have in fact listened to front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker.

Front-line health care workers right now are saying there are in fact some very real concerns with lean. And it's not just front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker. It is also people who are going through the lean training process who are identifying problems. I know I've had an opportunity to have conversations with people in the Saskatoon Health Region who have done some of the travelling and training, and they have some very real issues with how lean is rolling out. In fact the comment that I've had is that the Saskatoon Health Region is holding their breath waiting for the John Black contract to be finished, Mr. Speaker. And that's coming from management.

But some of the comments from front-line workers, one needs only to either check out the Saskatoon Health Region website or the SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] website or the SUN Facebook page, Mr. Speaker. There's comments from nurses who . . . One nurse, Denise, says:

We have never been so short of supplies since this started, everything from IV solutions, suction tubing, syringes, alcohol swabs, and clean linens. This process only takes us away from the bedside, running all over the hospital looking for supplies.

We are taken away from the bedside to porter patients and run lab specimens to the lab. Our ward clerks often helped with these tasks, allowing us to remain on the floor to care for the patients, but since lean we have lost two ward clerk positions, leaving us nurses to do those duties. I spend far too much time answering phones and running around the hospital instead of providing direct patient care. This leaves me to wonder how secure my job is and to seriously consider the safety of the patients during this process.

Another nurse, Rory, on the SUN web page says:

They are comparing patient care to a Toyota manufacturing line. Cut and dry not okay. I hope Brad Wall is my patient some day.

Donna has this to say:

Many of us had serious doubts from the onset, especially when lean classes involved having us make paper airplanes more efficiently. Not a single word revolved around safe, effective, professional care of patients. Can we put a halt to this massive, costly government-driven directive? I fear not, at least not until the next election. In the meantime, I will continue to be hopeful there is someone out there in authority with eyes to see and the will to listen.

Linda, another nurse, had this to say:

I had the opportunity to attend my first ever paid educational kaizen day on Monday. You could feel the frustration in the room from not only nurses but from other departments. Other staff were very vocal with their concerns as well.

Concern regarding the lean concept is the variability of the human factor and how a patient's status can change. And how can we compare this to a Toyota factory? A light lit up on a board if there was a problem with the factory assembly line. Our patients' bodies do not light up if something is going wrong. Can we truly compare patient groups and have them follow standard work outlined by lean?

And she goes on, Mr. Speaker.

So we have managers flagging concerns about the John Black contract, Mr. Speaker. We have front-line workers who are not feeling engaged.

One of the hallmarks, Mr. Speaker, if you read any literature about lean, is in fact the engagement of front-line workers in the process. And clearly that is not the case. You don't have engagement or buy-in. This government, despite the fact I think people were very hopeful and optimistic in the beginning, Mr. Speaker, that this government has lost their way and has completely bought it all, hook, line, and sinker, Mr. Speaker, that this is . . . and have blinders on and in fact have blinders on, Mr. Speaker, and can't see that people are saying that there is a problem that needs to be corrected here.

So we have the \$40-million-plus contract. We have kaizen promotion offices popping up all across the province, Mr. Speaker. And it was interesting, the minister has made the comment that the kaizen promotion offices were just previously existing offices, that they weren't, these aren't new offices, Mr. Speaker. They were policy offices who've had their names changed. And I believe the minister said something to the effect that it's not additional positions within the ministry or within the regions, it's really reorganizing how the ministry works.

But it's interesting because I have a health region, a Saskatoon Health Region posting, Mr. Speaker, for three kaizen specialists in the kaizen promotion office; three permanent full-time positions which clearly isn't just about reorganizing and redeployment of staff, Mr. Speaker. The position is:

KPO specialist will be proficient in leading and supporting replication and standard work, RPIWs, 3P events, kanban, and the Saskatoon Health Region 5S campaign, as well as training within. The KPO specialist will rotate among these roles as directed by the kaizen promotion office to meet the changing needs of the organization.

So when the minister talks about this isn't new money or the kaizen promotion offices are just basically renames and redistribution of staff, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. I have a Saskatchewan ad . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are talking about keeping it classy. I actually have no idea . . . I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker, I am

talking about, Mr. Speaker, kaizen promotion offices that, kaizen promotion offices that the minister said were just reorganizations. With the job posting, clearly that is not the case.

But, Mr. Speaker, again the reality is this debate is about priorities. Is this about a \$40 million contract with an American consultant, or should we be putting our money into front-line services for our seniors, Mr. Speaker, and for people who are in acute care facilities? And we think that the latter is where we should be putting our money, Mr. Speaker. The number of special care aids, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses that could be afforded, Mr. Speaker, if we cut this \$40 million John Black contract is something that we should . . . this government should be looking at. So I would like to move a motion:

That this Assembly condemns this government for neglecting the basics in health care and seniors' care and failing to listen to front-line health care workers, while wasting millions of dollars on its massive lean project in health care, including \$40 million for one US consultant, over \$17 million for kaizen promotion offices, and \$3,500 per day for Japanese senseis.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

That this Assembly condemns the government for neglecting the basics in health care and seniors care and failing to listen to front-line health care workers, while wasting millions of dollars on its massive lean project in health care, including \$40 million for one US consultant, over \$17 million for kaizen promotion offices, and \$3,500 per day for Japanese senseis.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to stand here today in the Assembly to talk about our government's commitment to provide good quality health care to the people of Saskatchewan — the people who are our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers, our sons, and our daughters and, in my case, grandchildren.

This budget's investment in health care demonstrates an investment in people. This budget invests in infrastructure such as the new children's hospital in Saskatoon or the 237 million committed to replace 13 outdated long-term care facilities or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the planning for more long-term care beds in La Ronge.

Just this very hour the Minister of Rural and Remote Health care made a great announcement regarding the nurse practitioner strategy. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a great investment in people, an investment in Saskatchewan, here. This government's commitment to health care hits very close to my home in the Prince Albert area and region north of the city.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is investing the 2 million

into Prince Albert's Victoria Hospital to begin planning the renewal of it. It's a great, significant announcement for the area of Saskatchewan. 6.5 million for continued construction of the Health Sciences facility at the U of S is also investing in people.

One of my family members, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was just recently at the University Hospital in Saskatoon and the care there was wonderful. The quality of the surgeon who performed the surgery and all the rest of the health care providers was great, and I am very grateful to these people, the quality of the care that these men and women give. Some of our colleagues have spouses who are in the health care field as well, and they realize the commitment and the care given to the residents of Saskatchewan. So I would just like to say thank you to these people who look after the residents of Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a 25 per cent increase in specialists under our government. Some of my children have chosen the health care field for careers. Our daughter and son-in-law combined have degrees in social work, nursing, and medicine. Chris has a practice in the city and also in the rural area. He drives out to a health facility once a week to deliver health care in a town with a population of approximately 800 people. It's good to see these young professionals investing in Saskatchewan, believing in Saskatchewan's vision.

Our government's budget increased 2.6 million to support rural physicians such as this rural physician's locum pool. Also our government is forgiving up to 120,000 in students loans for new rural doctors. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is our government in action. Our government is investing in rural health professions, investing in Saskatchewan people.

One of my daughters, Lacey received her master's in speech pathology, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She had a job option of either California or Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — Well, and I didn't say where she went. But she did, she did go to Yorkton, Saskatchewan. She came back to invest in Saskatchewan. So in choosing Saskatchewan, our government was able to invest in another Saskatchewan resident helping Saskatchewan grow.

Our daughter Lacey grew up on the farm. She's a 4-H member, a great volunteer in Saskatchewan. She's typical of our grassroots rural residents. Describing her, she would be big-hearted, sensitive, empathetic. And Lacey currently works with stroke victims and seniors. So I am very grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for Lacey planning her life in Saskatchewan. I'm grateful that these young people that I've described are living in Saskatchewan, raising their families, and working for us in Saskatchewan. They are contributing to the economy, the health, and fabric of our great province.

[11:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government recognizes the vital role that the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency in our province has. Cancer of course is very near and dear to me because I lost my mother to cancer. So I'm very proud to say that our government budgeted over 155 million in total funding. This budget will

evaluate cancer care throughout Saskatchewan and it will help save lives and families from heartache and loss. And thank you to the workers in the Cancer Agency for their caring and support.

I also have a friend who is recovering from breast cancer, and I'm grateful our government is providing timely care for those around us. Our government has invested in people by increasing funding by 98 per cent over the last seven years for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Investing in added medical training seats and medical residency positions will help us all, rural and urban. And I'm very grateful to the qualified men and women working in these front lines in health care in our province. Their presence in Saskatchewan benefits us all.

Yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke up about World Autism Awareness Day. And to mark this day, we raised the autism awareness flag in front of the Legislative Building. I belong to adopt-an-MLA program where a nice young man, Brian, has adopted me into his family. And he has taught me very much about autism. This is a very valuable opportunity for all of us to learn more about the autism spectrum disorder and to build a better understanding of this complex condition that has an impact on so many Saskatchewan families.

It's estimated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one out of 93 children in Canada is affected by ASD [autism spectrum disorder]. And that is why our government supports a comprehensive approach and responsive system for individuals and families affected by autism. Our government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very proud to provide funding for support-enhanced autism interventions. In 2014-15 we are investing over \$7 million towards targeted autism supports, and that is a 1,400 per cent increase since 2007-08. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this investment will go towards education, training, specialists, support workers, and diagnostic assessment.

I'm very proud of our government, and our government and health regions work very closely with other interested parties to build comprehensive autism services in Saskatchewan. This is investing in people and families. I am grateful for all the qualified men and women working in this field of service, helping the children of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you would like to compare health regions, we have a very long list. I know there's some more colleagues on my side that would like to discuss them. But in Saskatchewan Party, we have 300 more doctors practising in Saskatchewan now than six years ago. On the NDP side, they lost 173 doctors in the last five full years in government. So I do believe our government is making headway.

I would like to talk about the announcement of the nurse practitioner strategy, which is a great initiative throughout Saskatchewan, especially in the rural area that I represent of Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am so proud of all our government's achievements. I would like to stand behind our record. We can compare our health records any day. And I would also like to put on record I do not support the motion. Thank you very

much, sir.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm glad to join the debate today on the motion. I guess it's . . . This is Saskatchewan. This is a debate about health care. This is a debate about priorities, so obviously there are a lot of different ways that each of us in this Assembly connect and interact with the health care system and with the question of health care in this province.

And I guess the thing I'd state off the bat, Mr. Speaker, in terms of . . . This is very specifically about the contract with the United States consultant, John Black and Associates, for \$40 million. It's about the fact that this government has apparently not just drank the Kool-Aid when it comes to lean but are now buying it wholesale at \$40 million a crack. They're putting up the money to bring in the senseis for I think \$2,000 flights and \$3,500 a day retainer. And this, Mr. Speaker, is against a backdrop of what's happening more broadly in our health care system today.

And in terms of whether or not there are good things that have happened in recent history in terms of nurse hires or even the announcement we saw today around nurse practitioners and the way that they bring value to the continuum of care in health care, Mr. Speaker, I guess it is about that. But it's not to say, in terms of the problems that we have with the way that this government has gone so far overboard with lean, that it takes away from those other good things.

And I guess to turn that question on its head a bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question would be, you know, how many nurse practitioners have been hired as a result of this \$40 million contract with John Black and Associates from the United States? I would submit none, Mr. Speaker.

I'll look to the Deputy Speaker, if he's . . . Give me the high sign, so I'll just keep going. Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the contract that this government has signed with the lean consultant out of the United States, John Black and Associates, their penchant for sensei, their penchant for kaizen exercises, their penchant for all the different sort of panoply of lean exercises that come with that, I would submit, is an example of a government that's gone way overboard.

And it's funny, Mr. Speaker, in terms of lean itself, you know, and questions of process engineering, that they're as old as assembly lines themselves, Mr. Speaker. You go back to the earlier sort of stop time studies of the late 1800s and the way that that has moved forward to immediately after post World War II and the work that the Toyota motor company introduced around what has now come to be regarded as lean, the way that that has moved through different sort of fads and ebbs and flows as regards performance management.

Again, Mr. Speaker, lean is not all bad. This may surprise some members to hear me say this, but it's not all bad. And there are some lessons that we can learn from this, Mr. Speaker. And before members opposite get into, you know, quoting me out of context as we've seen, as we've seen demonstrated from the top

down over there, Mr. Speaker, with the Premier yesterday being called to account for pulling out of context quotes from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses on this very question, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the good that is there to be drawn from lean management, lean processes, I will say this: in terms of the health care professionals I talk to, in terms of nurses that I come into contact with, they do say that their supply cabinets have never been better organized. They do say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But they also say that in terms of the work that you need to do with human beings and remembering that health care is not an assembly line, is not, you know, building widgets but dealing with patients, it would seem that again with the way that this government has gotten into a \$40 million contract with a United States consultant, the way that they've gotten into flying in the senseis for that special attention and consultation, it seems that they've gotten away from what is I think a common sense Saskatchewan value in terms of, you know, you've got to be reasonable about these things. You've got to make sure that it all adds up.

And in terms of the \$40 million that that government says has already paid for itself in terms of lean savings, that are supposedly attributed to the work with the senseis and with John Black and Associates and on, well, Mr. Speaker, it's sort of like a faith-based system where if you repeat it enough and you believe hard enough, then of course these things are true, and you can't understand why that would be brought into question.

But I think, you know, and maybe that's because they've just gone so far overboard in terms of this slavish devotion to lean as witnessed by the \$40 million contract and the flying in of the senseis and the urgent paper airplane exercises and on but, you know, whatever good lean may have had to offer to the system as a whole, Mr. Speaker, you stack that up alongside the fact that you've still got emergency rooms that are vastly overcrowded and where people are waiting too long to get to those emergent services.

You've got good work that was done in terms of health care recruitment, and I'll say that very clearly on the record here, Mr. Speaker. In terms of taking those health care professionals and hiving them off into lean exercises instead of making sure that their practice of care and their credentialing is better attended to, and we've heard those concerns brought forward by nurses on the floor of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

We see the work that again holds out some promise in terms of hot spotting or in terms of home care initiatives where alongside that, the very hopeful story that is spun in the press releases and in the rhetoric doesn't match up with the resources being brought to bear on the shop floor, or on the gemba, Mr. Speaker, to use a lean expression, where we see health care professionals saying, you know, is this about doing a more effective, efficient job of delivering health care services which serves patients first? Or is this about the things that are known euphemistically right now around voluntary management, where it's about doing away with positions and downgrading the services that people should be looking to their health care system to provide?

And I guess lastly, Mr. Speaker, in terms of, you know, how far this government has gotten away from the basics in this system, I mean, you know, my colleague from Riversdale who has brought this motion forward has been a very tireless champion in terms of what's happening around long-term care and seniors' care in this province and again the way that you see a \$10 million urgent action fund, which in and of itself was pared back in terms of what health regions could or could not apply for. And then the way that that translates, Mr. Speaker, into the way that care is not being delivered in the manner that our seniors so richly deserve in terms of what's happening on the floor. And that \$10 million urgent action fund and the kind of, you know, some of it doing some good, no doubt, but not meeting the need that is there in the system.

But alongside that you've got the \$40 million for a United States consultant to fly in Japanese senseis to do the various sort of exercises associated with lean. And people look at that and they wonder, you know, what the heck is this government thinking, Mr. Speaker? And if I was seated in those benches, Mr. Speaker, I'd be wondering the same thing because there is some good work that has taken place in the health care system on this government's watch.

But there are things like this that erode that progress, that erode that good work that people look and say, you know, how is it they've got \$40 million for a consultant with a United States corporation? How is it that they've got to spend the time flying in the senseis? How is it that they've got to roll everything into this lean approach to management? How is it that we've got, you know, lean black belts from right here in Saskatchewan that say that, you know, this government's bought a bill of goods, hook, line, and sinker? How do all those things add up, Mr. Speaker?

And you put that alongside the other good initiatives that are in the system, and you can't help but think that those are being poorly served and that it's not about patient first, but it's about a government that has lost its way.

[11:30]

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter into the debate today, but I'd like to start by saying I reject the premise of this motion. This motion states that we are neglecting the basics of health care and senior care in this province. This government has in fact done anything but. We have a Health minister that has instructed CEOs to roll up their sleeves and go into facilities to ensure that health care is being delivered in the most efficient way possible, but also to ensure that nothing is left behind.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of being the legislative secretary to a minister of Health in this province. And one of my roles was to look at nurse recruitment and retention for this province. This government was not afraid to set targets; previous government, very afraid to set targets. We're not afraid to set targets. We set a target of hiring 800 nurses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had to roll up our sleeves and go out and

encourage young nurses to continue to stay here, to not leave the province. We also did international recruitment, and I had the opportunity to participate in that. And we brought over 200 nurses from the Philippines who have been a wonderful addition to our health care system here in the province. But we didn't just hire 800 nurses, Mr. Speaker; we hired 1,000 nurses. And, Mr. Speaker, so this is a really good indication of a government that is not neglecting the basics of health care or neglecting seniors' care.

Mr. Speaker, I also had the opportunity to spend time talking to all level of health care providers when I was doing the nurse recruitment and retention strategy. So I had the opportunity to meet them face to face and listen to the front-line workers. And we are paying attention to them. We have today a very good announcement for nurse practitioners. We are meeting the challenges of health care head-on.

I also had the opportunity as legislative secretary to the minister of Health to work on a senior care strategy. And the motion indicates that in fact we are neglecting senior care in this province. Mr. Speaker, we are doing anything but neglecting senior care health care in this province. This is a government that takes the continuum of care of seniors very, very seriously.

When I went throughout the province doing consultations with seniors, with caregivers, with family members to put together some information on a senior care strategy, we went across the whole province, from north to south to east to west. And it was interesting because the residents of this province said, you know what, this is the first time in a long time that someone has ever come out and asked us what we think. This is the first time in a long time that anyone has asked us, how can we help? What suggestions can we make to help make health care better in this province? And we took those suggestions very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

In the continuum of care of seniors, one of the things they brought forward to us was that most seniors would like to stay within their own home, but sometimes they just can't. And so because of that, they would like to be able to maybe move into a personal care home. Well one of the things, a lot of our seniors in the province felt that they just didn't have the financial wherewithal to be able to move into a personal care home. And so what our government did was put forward a personal care home benefit, and that was \$1,875. And now within this last budget, that has been increased to \$1,950. That'll be increased in July. So, Mr. Speaker, this was one of the suggestions that people in Saskatchewan made to us. And we took it very seriously and we put it into practice.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that seniors, their family members, and caregivers conveyed to us was the concern they had for vulnerable people in this province, not just seniors but vulnerable people. So this session the Ministry of Justice is bringing forward legislation in fact to help with decision makers for legislation for vulnerable people.

So, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite to state in their motion that we are not listening to front-line workers, that we are not listening to the people of Saskatchewan, couldn't be further from the truth, because whenever we've had the opportunity to go out, meet with people, we take their

suggestions very seriously and we put them into practice.

We have also gone forward with a very aggressive recruitment for physicians. And to date, we have over 200 more or 300 — whoa, I short-changed ourselves there — 300 more doctors practising today than when we took office.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that in fact makes health care a priority. But we don't just speak about it; we in fact have put this into practice. We do not . . . You know, I think that one of the things we always hear the opposition tout that, you know, this is the home of medicare. But you know, Mr. Speaker, it takes action. It takes rolling up your sleeves and getting to work to ensure that health care is sustainable. We can't just keep shovelling money into the health care budget and think that taxpayers are going to feel that that's a good use of their money. They want to know that in fact we are living within our means; we're spending within our means. And that's what our health care budget is doing. It's making sure that people's concerns are being heard and that we are dealing with them in a very prudent manner.

One of the problems that the opposition has, and I think that all of us can attest to that, is that they keep looking backwards to the good old days. Well you know what, Mr. Speaker? People in Saskatchewan want to keep moving forward. They've had enough of their old days. They are supportive of a Saskatchewan Party government that believes in moving the ball forward. They believe, Saskatchewan people believe that this is a government that puts people top. People are our priority — listening to the people in the province, going across, having conversations, and then putting their concerns into practice. Mr. Speaker, that is the whole objective of our government is to ensure that we are listening and that we are acting upon their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, we have paid attention to the wait times. We are not letting ideology get in the way of ensuring that health care is being delivered to the people of the province. People of Saskatchewan deserve timely health care, and that's a priority of this government. So for the members opposite to bring forward a motion that says we're not listening to the people of this province, couldn't be further from the truth. Mr. Speaker. People are our number one priority.

And that is why our government has made record investments in long-term care facilities, in surgical wait times, in nurse practitioners, nurse recruitment and retention, physician recruitment and retention. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that gets it. This is a government that puts health care . . . I'll put our record of health care up against the NDP's record any day. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're coming out on top.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's my pleasure to rise in this debate today. I really appreciate the fact that my colleague has brought forth this motion, and I think it's an important debate that we are continuing to have here in the legislature as well as in the province. And I know a number of folks are talking about this issue in the province as well

because obviously, as my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre said, this is about health care and this is Saskatchewan and this is an important issue to everyone in this province and has a strong, rich history here in this province.

I've listened to the comments of the speakers earlier, and I have to say I am in agreement with a lot of what's been said, particularly about the quality of care and the quality of work that our health care workers are putting in every day in hospitals and care homes across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I witnessed that first-hand last night. My father is in the hospital in Moose Jaw. He's getting excellent, excellent care. He's a very sick man, but he's getting excellent care. And it's something I think that's really important for us to acknowledge the work that the workers are doing. And I know my colleague from Saskatchewan Rivers talked about her family and the good work that they do in the health system in Saskatchewan. Many of my constituents are workers in the health care system, and I think we can be very, very proud of the work they do and in the importance of the work they do here in Saskatchewan.

What we're talking about today though is the choices this government has made and how to improve the quality of that care. And we're looking at choices about how to implement systems that will make things work better. And certainly that intention is good.

And it's not something new. It's not an idea that started in 2007. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would be willing to bet that if we go back in the history of this province, regardless of which party is in power and what kind of partisan politics are at play, people in the health care system have always wanted to find efficiencies. We know that's true for any government department. We know that's true for the education system, and we know that's true for pretty much every bureaucracy that's ever been created. Of course we want to find efficiencies. Of course we want to have savings. And of course we want to have our people in the trenches doing the work supported as best as they can be and also being able to help their clients as best as can be.

I think the questions we're asking right now is the choices this government has made. And one of the speakers talked about shovelling buckets of money into the health care system and how they're not going to do that. But, Mr. Speaker, that's the whole point. By contracting with a consultant from the United States — which implies that people here don't have the good common sense to be able to figure out these efficiencies if they'd just sit down and listen to front-line workers — we are shovelling millions of dollars into a consultancy. And I mean you've heard all my colleagues speak about this, and certainly people in the public are talking about some of the crazy expenses that are involved in this particular consultancy. It's not about finding efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. It's about the choices and the type of services that this government is engaging to find those efficiencies.

And we've set out time and time again and I know the health care workers, and as I said, it's not just health care, but we have a number of health care workers that are coming forward and saying that they feel a lot of this imposed-upon framework is actually very contrary to the type of work we're doing. And remember this is a system that's designed, as one of my

colleagues said, to improve efficiencies in a factory where you are creating cars.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you create thousands of cars, they're all identical and you can use identical systems to treat them. But as everybody knows, human beings don't quite act that way. And when you're talking about someone like my dad who's now got, you know, various tubes coming out of parts of his body when I go visit him in the hospital, he is an individual that has a very specific need and a very specific health concern. And we have a lot of really good people helping him right now. Dr. Miller and some of the nurses are treating him wonderfully, and they're doing their absolute very best. And so that kind of treatment you can't widgetize, Mr. Speaker. And that's the problem when you use a Toyota factory approach to dealing with actual human issues.

We see that in the seniors' homes. We know that there's a lot of need for good quality delivery of services in seniors' homes. And indeed, you know, if my dad gets through this health issue he has — you know, he's 87 years old — and the next reality for our family is looking at where is he going to spend the rest of his time if he doesn't get through this and isn't able to go home. So there's a lot of questions about things like that.

But one of the things we've heard this government talk about a lot, and I want to raise this, Mr. Speaker, is the claim, and we've heard our Premier repeatedly claim that this \$40,000 consultancy is resulting in millions and millions of dollars of savings. And he's claimed that several times here in the House, Mr. Speaker. He's also claimed it out in the rotunda. And we aren't able to really understand what the basis of those claims are.

[11:45]

And I'd like to talk a little bit this morning about an article in *The StarPhoenix* by a health professional named Mr. Mark Lemstra. And Mr. Lemstra makes a pretty good case that what the Premier is claiming is actually unsustainable. And what we hear from Mr. Lemstra is a report of a meeting he had, and this is with members of the Health Quality Council. And he has great regard for these individuals as do I. I know these people work very hard and believe very strongly in what they're doing in health quality. To improve health quality is the goal of everyone in this province. It's not something that only certain people are interested in.

But he had a meeting with them, and the problem with the Health Quality Council is their repeated claims that lean management has begun to make care safer and increase patient satisfaction and save money. So Mr. Lemstra then said, well let's have a look at this. He went in to the Health Quality Council's website. And he says, yes, if they're make these claims, then let's have a look at what the Health Quality Council website has to say.

So he tested their claim. And in his article in *The StarPhoenix* this morning, he gives a whole bunch of different indicators that are reported on the Health Quality Council's website talking about all the different measurements that they have. And we see that for example adverse events are actually somewhat higher, going up in the health region. Also they have data on patient

satisfaction, and in there we see that patient satisfaction is actually declining. He's talking about patient health outcomes, and also the self-reported health is actually down over the last few years. The five-day in-hospital mortality rate is going up.

And then he has a number of other statistics that he reports, and I would encourage all members to have a look at these numbers because I think they're pretty relevant to the discussion that's going on here today. And he also looks at, he says advocacy is another claim that he looks at. And he said there's numerous yet unreferenced statements on the Health Quality Council's website that says that lean increases patient's safety, patient satisfaction, reduces costs, and improves health outcomes. And he said none, Mr. Speaker, "... none of the indicators available on the Health Quality Council website support these conclusions."

So you have to really wonder where the Premier is getting his information. In fact Mr. Lemstra goes on to say:

... the opposite is true. This despite the fact that their survey data shows [I'm quoting this] the aboriginal population is severely under-sampled. It is likely that the results would be much worse if this discriminated against population is fully represented in the sample.

And then he goes on to talk about an interview with Thomas Rotter who was, in the University of Saskatchewan, Chair in health quality improvement. And what he says is, Mr. Rotter said in April 2013, so a year ago, "... little hard data is available." And I'm going to quote this as well, Mr. Speaker. This is a quote:

... little hard data is available on how, or even if, processes such as lean contribute to health care quality improvement. If Health Quality Council must advocate for lean, it would be more accurate to state that the council is hopeful that positive outcomes will be realized one day, but that data collected to date has shown no impact whatsoever.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is something that the Premier needs to actually take a look at. And if at all possible, I think Mr. Lemstra and all of us in the House here and indeed the people of Saskatchewan would like to understand how it is he continues to reiterate that there is millions of dollars of savings in lean when our own Health Quality Council website cannot demonstrate any improvements at all. So we hope there's improvements. Certainly with \$40 million to an outside consultant, one would hope that there were improvements. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid that the evidence just isn't there.

So I think it's important that we support this motion. I'm very pleased that my colleague brought this motion today. And I think it's important that we all pay attention to it, and I would like to see the Assembly support the motion.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in the House today to speak to a motion that I certainly won't be supporting.

I'm very, very proud of our health care system, and I'm certainly proud of the number of initiatives that we've certainly undertaken. And I will always defend any actions that are going to try to improve our health system, which brings me . . . After reading the motion, I was a little bit stumped. I was trying to figure out what the members opposite are scared about. Or was it just fear? I'm not exactly sure. Maybe it's fear of change.

So I thought I'd go through an exercise of trying to explain, you know, what change is, and just maybe to alleviate some of their fears. I mean you do have to be innovative. Maybe they also were scared of P3s [public-private partnership]. And I can understand why they'd be scared of P3s because they have no plan, no policy, and no platform. So they should be scared of those as well. I mean I can understand that. I mean the naysayers opposite. I mean we're talking about Turkey Lurkey and Chicken Little and Henny Penny, you know, maybe Pinocchio sometimes, and Geppetto. But, you know, they can self-see it. They can figure it out for themselves. But apparently the sky is falling and it's falling all the time. But, no, no, it's certainly not, certainly not, certainly not, certainly not falling.

But on this side of the House, we believe in the people of this province. We believe in serving the public. We believe that 12 words in Japanese does not constitute a dictionary for instance. But you know, I'll help you through that. There's 91 words in the lean, well, let's call it a glossary. That's probably a more accurate description. It's a glossary. And there's 12 words in Japanese. I'll also help you understand what a dictionary is. It's a book that lists the words of a language in alphabetical order and gives their meaning. It's a book. A glossary is an alphabetical list of terms and words found in it relating to a specific subject. So just so we know, let's be very accurate. The lean dictionary is actually a lean glossary. So let's be very clear about that.

I've had the opportunity in many years of government to work in the health system. I was actually an employee of . . . I've worked for SUN. I've worked for the health region, and I worked for Health. So I have a little understanding of the health system in an awful lot of ways.

During my time, before this government was elected, I saw a massive exodus of my co-workers out of this province, a massive exodus off to, you know, Alberta. It was absolutely shameful. I mean for instance we lost over 1,160 health care workers and the members opposite when they were in government in their last five years, 1,160 health care workers, 173 doctors in the last five full years in government, 455 nurses in the last five years of government, 155 pharmacists in the last five full years of government, 95 physiotherapists in the last five full years of government. I mean I find that to be shameful and rather sad.

I also tried to figure out what the NDP's lean plan would be and I'm left with this. Their lean plan was, they promised to cut surgical wait lists by 30 per cent in 1999, but they actually increased wait lists by 61 per cent. So leaned it out, I don't know, backwards? Maybe the vacuum hose was reversed. I'm not sure. But they eliminated 52 hospitals. Fifty of those hospitals were closed in one year alone, 50, 50 hospitals completely closed. I mean that's a lean plan. That's a lean plan. Absolutely. Eliminated 19 long-term care facilities. At the same

time, we built or are building 15 new long-term care facilities. Okay, you eliminate; we build. Eliminated, as I said, those 52 hospitals.

Okay. Well we're building a new hospital in Moose Jaw, a new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford, new children's hospital, where? Saskatoon. Again, amazing.

As I said, in terms of their cutting the surgical wait times, in 1999 they've increased by 61 per cent. Well the number of people waiting since we've been a government, more than 18 months, they're waiting for more than 18 months, that's down 97 per cent. More than one year? That's down 93 per cent. More than six months? Down 83 per cent. More than three months? Down 70 per cent. The total number of people waiting, down 40 per cent since November 2007.

An Hon. Member: — Do we take advice from them?

Mr. Docherty: — I don't think we're going to take any advice from the members opposite. So better health care under the Sask Party. Well here's some more examples. The government investment in health care is up 45 per cent in seven years, all within a balanced budget; 70 per cent increase in transfers to regional health authorities over the last seven years, 98 per cent increase in funding over the last seven years; and to the Sask Cancer Agency, 17 per cent more doctors in Saskatchewan since 2007; a 25 per cent increase in specialists in seven years. I mean, I can keep going on and on.

But I found something particularly interesting in today's paper and it might be of a particular interest to the Leader of the Opposition as a former employee of the Saskatchewan Medical Association. But here's a letter to the editor that was in *The StarPhoenix* from the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] president, Clare Kozroski, who said:

Recent media focus on lean has centred around the public expenditures devoted to its startup and early implementation across Saskatchewan. This discussion is important. The Saskatchewan Medical Association last year passed a resolution that called for an audit of lean to measure its effectiveness and impact so far. Physicians are proponents of appropriateness and accountability in health care. We also support much-needed health care transformation. Lean is one proven tool among many used for transformation.

Wow, that's quite an assertion there.

Another SMA resolution from November 2013 urged every physician in Saskatchewan to do basic lean training. Many have also committed to lean leadership programs. As the population ages and demand for complex health services climbs, current funding and operating models are inadequate and unsustainable. Recognizing inefficiencies and poor resource use in health care is essential, and a provincial process to reduce waste and increase productivity is overdue.

As physicians, we want to ensure that our patients' needs are being met, and that they get the care needed to maintain and improve their health. Continual change is

needed to improve the care system, wait times, and health outcomes.

The SMA has dedicated millions of dollars to quality initiatives such as multi-level Chronic Disease Management. To ensure that our health system can meet the needs of people requires a major investment in quality improvement.

This is more than spending on consultants [she goes on]. It also includes time invested in quality improvement initiatives by doctors, nurses, therapists and other care providers. It includes time invested by patients and families who are involved with planning and implementation, experiencing the results and providing feedback on our efforts.

The costs down the road, both in terms of our health and our budget, will surely be much higher if we don't make the correct investments now.

An Hon. Member: — Who was that from again?

Mr. Docherty: — That's from the president of the SMA.

An Hon. Member: — SMA.

Mr. Docherty: — Yes. You betcha. I also spent some time teaching nurses, LPNs [licensed practical nurse], when I worked at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. I taught, well, I didn't actually teach them the theory of nursing, but I certainly taught them in their electives for five years. And I'll just reiterate in terms of the NDP record. Due to the NDP nurse training program cutbacks throughout the '90s, 385 nursing training seats were eliminated. Absolutely shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my comments for now, but I won't be supporting the motion. And with that, I'll wrap up my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Sixty-five minutes has elapsed. Questions. I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the record of this government speaks very well of its commitment to health care and the priorities of meeting the needs of seniors in this province. The opposition opposite seems to think that they have the inside track on how well we look after seniors, and yet they forget about the 19 long-term care facilities and 1,200 long-term care beds that were taken out of the system under their term in government. This budget is putting \$27 million into the continued construction of long-term care facilities in Biggar, Kelvington, Kipling, Maple Creek, and Prince Albert. And it is now also committing to new long-term care facilities in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and La Ronge.

Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member from Cumberland present multiple petitions for La Ronge to receive long-term care beds, how can the member from Saskatoon Riversdale ignore the people of northern Saskatchewan and vote against this government's budget that actually puts the money in place

to meet the needs of the long-term care, long-term care needs in La Ronge?

[12:00]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a debate about priorities, and this government is choosing a \$40 million contract with an American consultant over providing the bare basics, Mr. Speaker, in seniors' care: call buttons, front-line staff. This government is prioritizing a \$40 million contract with an American consultant and \$3,500-a-day senseis over seniors' care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of interest in what nurses have to say in this debate. And I've got a question from Donna, a nurse in Saskatchewan here, via the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses' Facebook site, stating:

Many of us had serious doubts from the . . . [outset], especially when lean classes involved having us make paper airplanes more efficiently. Not a single word revolved around safe, effective, professional care of patients. Can we put a halt to this massive costly government-driven directive?

My question to the member from Coronation Park who talks about his interest in what nurses have to say: does he agree with that nurse, or does he agree with his government about the value of \$40 million contracts with US [United States] consultants and Japanese senseis?

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

Mr. Docherty: — I'd like to thank the member for the question. I absolutely, completely back our nurses and have complete faith in them, so I won't be, certainly won't be criticizing nurses because they're one of the backbones of our health care system. So I'd like to actually thank nurses for the work that they do.

But again we didn't . . . [inaudible] . . . this government. This government didn't eliminate 19 long-term care facilities — the members opposite did — which is nurses' jobs apparently, didn't eliminate 1,200 long-term care beds. And I certainly won't be taking any lessons from the members opposite in terms of how they treated nurses, since we've hired at least 1,000. Thank you.

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

Mr. Parent: — Mr. Speaker, health care has been a priority of this government since day one. Our government has announced funding for new hospitals in Moose Jaw, a new psychiatric hospital in North Battleford, and a new children's hospital in my city of Saskatoon. We have invested \$1 billion in health care capital in our first six years in government, which is three

times as much as the NDP spent in their last six years.

Mr. Speaker, instead the NDP chose to close 52 hospitals. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: The people of Saskatchewan know that your party likes to talk the talk, but with your party's record of chronically underfunding health care, why should the people of Saskatchewan see your new-found interest in health care as anything but empty promises?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, you know, I have a lot of health care workers in my riding. In fact Saskatoon Nutana I think has a lot of health care professionals per capita. And what I'm hearing and what I know is that these people work really, really hard, and they want to provide the best service they can for their clients. And I think we're all in agreement on that, Mr. Speaker.

What we don't want to see is a \$40 million consultancy from the United States coming into Saskatchewan, paying senseis \$3,500 a day to be here to teach these intelligent, hard-working people how to make paper airplanes. That doesn't make any sense at all, particularly when this Premier continues to tout the fact that there are savings but he cannot give any actual evidence of savings. And we know the Health Quality Council, who is supporting this program, cannot give any empirical data to prove that there's any savings at all.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, from a nurse, Denise, here in Saskatchewan:

Our ward clerks often helped with these tasks allowing us to remain on the floor to care for the patients, but since lean we have lost two ward clerk positions, leaving us nurses to do those duties. I spend far too much time answering phones and running around the hospital instead of providing direct patient care.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is a nurse out there on the front line, the people that these folks say they'd listened to, across the way. This government is clearly not listening to the front-line care workers. So to the member from Coronation Park: does he agree with this nurse, who he claims to have an interest in her opinion, or does he disagree and instead goes to support his government in the \$40 million contract for US consultants and Japanese senseis?

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thanks for the member opposite's question. I absolutely support nurses. And as I've said, I've worked with SUN and I've also taught LPNs for a number of years. So my support for nurses and the nursing profession is absolute. So I absolutely think that lean itself is a step in the right direction, and the nurses that I've talked to have been fully supportive of this process. So my information from nurses and the feedback I get is they're totally supportive of this process. And thank you for the question.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite, our government has not forgotten about health care in rural Saskatchewan. In fact we have invested an increase of \$3.4 million in this budget to build three collaborative emergency centres in Spiritwood, Canora, and Wakaw and to support the existing centres in Maidstone and Shaunavon. Also an increase of 2.6 million will be invested to continue incentives that encourage physicians to work in rural communities and provide support for the rural physician locum pool.

To the member from Regina Elphinstone: how could your party abandon the health care needs of residents living in rural Saskatchewan by closing 52 hospitals when you were in government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In terms of what the member's asking — the question — you'll note that it bears no resemblance in the slightest to the topic of the motion. And the topic of the motion is of course \$40 million that this government is putting forward for a United States consultant, Japanese senseis, and for paper airplane exercises, Mr. Speaker. In terms of what this member's putting forward, I know . . . I get the picture. I realize they don't want to talk about this \$40 million fat cash cow contract with an American consultant, but we see this in the questions and we certainly see it in the speeches, that this government . . . You know, I don't know if they're quite to being embarrassed but they should be embarrassed about this contract, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it very interesting in this debate that we've had for 75 minutes now . . . I think what we should call it is the EBL debate because these guys, it's everything but lean. They won't discuss it. They won't acknowledge it. They don't want to talk about it, and you have to wonder why. And when we see articles like this from Mark Lemstra telling us there are no tangible savings that are provable by this contract, I'd like to hear from the member for Coronation Park and ask him if he thinks he can demonstrate there's any tangible savings from this program at all — \$40 million.

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

Mr. Docherty: — I thank the member opposite for the question. I've been very fortunate to have been engaged in lean training myself as a public servant and I've got nothing but positive things to say in regards to lean. And we certainly didn't sit around making paper airplanes as certainly one of the exercises — I'd like to call that an icebreaker. And if any of you have actually participated in training, you certainly understand what an icebreaking exercise is. So please, so let's make it very clear. But I am totally supportive of lean, and the health care professionals that I've been in contact with are totally, totally happy and satisfied with the process as well. So I'm going to

not, certainly won't be . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Plans for New Schools

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

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am once again very pleased to rejoin into this debate about what's going on within our school system in Saskatoon, Regina, and surrounding the rest of Saskatchewan. The good news is, Mr. Speaker, things are going well in our school. Our teachers are very, very pleased at some of the announcements that we've done.

We've done some capital announcements that I'll talk about, Mr. Speaker. We've done some investment in nine joint-use schools throughout Saskatchewan to meet an emergent need of a population growth — something that maybe the members opposite couldn't understand. And I think they're having, frankly, a very difficult time understanding anything to do with growth, Mr. Speaker.

In our vision 2020 plan, Mr. Speaker, this government is continuing to look forward. It's looking forward beyond political terms, Mr. Speaker. It's trying to show what is happening in Saskatchewan, and the best part it is, it's showing the potential that Saskatchewan has, something that hasn't been developed and hasn't been nurtured. We are very excited about what Saskatchewan has on the horizon, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm here in the legislature. I've mentioned this several times when I get up and to speak, is I'm here for my children. Those children are actually attending schools in Saskatoon. I have a stepdaughter and a daughter at Holy Cross. They're going through some renovations right now, which we're very proud to say that this government supported, and I have a son that is at St. Luke School. So I would like to be able to say hello to them. And again I'm thanking them for being able to support me while I'm down here and understanding that I have to miss some hockey games and I have to miss some events up there, Mr. Speaker.

But what is important is when I go into the school systems now, Mr. Speaker, when I go to pick them up from school and I go and talk to the teachers, I talk to the front-line workers. They are very well aware that I'm an elected member with the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. They are happy. They are very excited about what is going on with the new schools. They're excited about the development of these joint new schools and they're very excited about where the schools are going.

They're going into key areas in Saskatoon, and we are working with the stakeholders to make sure that those are meeting the emergent needs of the growth in Saskatoon and in Regina. And I'm sure when my colleagues on this side of the House go in and talk to the schools and talk to the parents when they're out knocking on doors, Mr. Speaker, they're hearing the exact same thing. They're hearing thank you. Thank you for getting these schools out there. Thank you very much for the renovations.

And I'll talk a little bit more about the specific dollars amount and the percentage increase of what we've been able to do within the school systems because, Mr. Speaker, it's very shameful what we inherited, Mr. Speaker. It is very . . . when we go into schools and there was mould in 2007. The teachers were very upset with the size of the classroom. They had heating issues. All they kept saying is, how can you help us?

The ministers of Education, all of the ministers of Education since forming government have worked very closely with the school boards, very closely with the trustees, with the parents, with the students to make sure that they are able to meet the needs of what is a growing economy, Mr. Speaker.

But again, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on why the economy is growing. It is, as the Premier said many times, it's good . . . some of it is good fortune. Some of it is policy that the government is . But for the first time in Saskatchewan's history, Saskatchewan people feel the potential of growth. They understand that Saskatchewan doesn't have to be the place that you are from. It is the place that you want to be now, Mr. Speaker, and it is very exciting to have that type of enthusiasm no matter where you go in this province.

Travelling around on vacation with my wife this past winter, we bump into people at the airport and everybody seems to know where Saskatchewan is, what's happening there. They want to know, Mr. Speaker, frankly, what's our secret? What is it that we've done to be able to weather the storm of the international recession? What is it that we are able to do? And I simply tell them that we're allowed to develop our natural resources and we work with local businesses and local stakeholders to see how we can help them grow. Because it's not a matter of the government growing. We're not growing Saskatchewan for the sake of growth. We're making sure that Saskatchewan is growing for the right reasons and that the businesses and the industries and all of the sectors within our province are starting to grow at a nice, steady pace.

Mr. Speaker, I want to step back in time. And I know the opposition doesn't like this, but I want to step back in time and talk about some of the quotes when we said, as an opposition we said, we can grow the province by 100,000 people.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely shameful that the government at the time in 2003 had no optimism about the potential for this province. They were completely satisfied with the status quo, but even on top of that, they could explain decline. They were talking about stemming decline and this is actually . . . We've slowed down the reduction of out-migration out of the province. They were proud of that, Mr. Speaker. How could you be proud about temporarily slowing down a leak, Mr. Speaker? And this

isn't just a small leak. This is a 100-year leak that we've had in this province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, while the dark days of the NDP, the greatest export that we had throughout our whole province was our children. Our children were getting luggage as graduation set from high school. If we could actually keep them here for university, as soon as they got their university degree, they were gone. This side of government, this side of government we've actually put in programs like the graduate retention program with the Minister of Advanced Education is where we have had 40,000 people access the graduate retention program . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 50,000, just . . . Thank you very much. I just got an update. It is now up to 50,000 people that we were able to hold in Saskatchewan and this number again is growing, Mr. Speaker.

But here's a couple of quotes of what the NDP said back in the day: "The Saskatchewan Party's plan to increase our population by 100,000 in 10 years is more wishful thinking that statistically attainable." That was the NDP MLA, Doreen Hamilton, on February 11th, 2003.

This is my personal favourite and I think this is one that we've used quite a bit but it has to go back into the record because it is so accurate of their mindset at the time, Mr. Speaker:

They propose to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over . . . I forget what number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Well it's so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality.

That was NDP MLA Harry Mulligen in *Hansard*, March 24th 2003.

That just goes to show their mindset, Mr. Speaker. They were so boxed in in trying to save their own skins, Mr. Speaker, that they could not look forward to be able to say, what could we do in Saskatchewan? How can we grow? All they wanted was the status quo.

Well I don't know if any of them over there actually have run a business. I've run a business myself, and my wife has a small business. And for the business people that are out there listening, if you're standing still, you're dead. And that's what was happening with Saskatchewan for 16 years under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit more about the mess we inherited. It wasn't just within the schools, Mr. Speaker. The schools was one of the primary eyesores in 2007 when we stepped into government, Mr. Speaker. We saw infrastructure holds in the highways. We saw infrastructure problems within the health care system. And what did we . . . How would the NDP have solved those problems? They simply would have locked the doors and chained the doors and say, oh, problem solved. Closed another school down, closed another long-term care facility, closed another rural hospital. They didn't solve problems. They just eliminated them. They just put them out of sight, Mr. Speaker. They didn't actually try to solve anything. This side of the government is.

We're investing in our schools by announcing nine new joint schools. And you know what? When you go out and talk to the general public, Mr. Speaker, they're not very concerned about how . . . They understand the financing of the public-private partnership. They understand this. They understand there is a certain way, there is a few ways that we could do this.

We could do the traditional build, Mr. Speaker. We could do that. But do you know what the difference is, Mr. Speaker? It would take 10 to 15 years to be able to get that traditional build done. So when those schools are built in the next 10 to 15 years, I'd like some recommendations from the members opposite as to which ones should go where. Who should be first if we're going to do the traditional build? And which school is going to be the one that's going to be done 12 years from now?

This is an emergent need we have, Mr. Speaker. We need to be able to, we need to be able to fill this problem, and we need to make sure that our classroom sizes are manageable in the growing cities of Saskatoon, Regina, and Martensville. This is where the growth is happening, a lot of the growth. Growth is happening across the province in all areas of the province, but a lot of the people that are choosing Saskatchewan home are now moving into the major centres. That puts pressure on our school system.

We have to react very quickly and we have to be nimble. And sometimes government, it's difficult for us to be nimble. But this is one of those opportunities that we have to be able to solve a large problem, and we can solve it quickly. And why we're going through this model of the P3 model is because of the economy of scale. Everybody knows if you build one thing, whatever it is, it's going to take you more time and you have to go through the process. But if you're building more of multiples in the same time, you can make efficiencies. You can put it in with contracts.

And this isn't just outside contracts. There is a huge component in here for local contractors as well to help have their input on (a) how the schools are built, and (b) supplying either the material or the labour to be able to build those schools, Mr. Speaker. That's critically important because these schools aren't just being picked up and transported and dropped in from some other place. They are actually going to have a local component, a local maintenance component to be able to make sure that the schools are maintained in a proper way so 10 to 15 years from now, we don't have the same problem that we inherited, Mr. Speaker. We're setting up some proactive measures to make sure that these schools are going to be able to meet their full lifespan and they're going to be able to meet the needs of all the kids in Saskatoon.

That's why it's important again to me, Mr. Speaker, is because my kids are in these schools. And it's very, very important that when talking to the parents and when talking to all of the people that are in and around the school . . . Because as everybody knows who has kids or has been to a school, the school is the heartbeat of the community. And what we've done in Saskatoon and Regina and Martensville is we've created some more heartbeats in the community to be able to go out there and talk to people and be able to bring them into the school system no matter where these people have decided to come from. Mr. Speaker, it is one of those where we want to make sure that the

school system is able to meet the needs of the community.

And what was even more depressing, Mr. Speaker, was when we announced these 52 schools . . . The Leader of the Opposition stood up in this Chamber for every day, 51 times talked about a school in his constituency. It was very, very sad to see that this member, when we announced a school in his constituency, he wasn't there. He wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. He didn't even show up. I'd like to ask him, when was the last time a new school came into his constituency? And I understand maybe he hasn't been around quite as long as the member from Lakeview in the Chamber. But, Mr. Speaker, his community has a school now. We are in the process of building that school, not just from the top down from government. We're working with all the community stakeholders to be able to build that school in his community. The Leader of the Opposition didn't even show up. It was very sad.

We had a very important vote yesterday also on P3s, talking about bridges in Saskatoon. And I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say this, but I think it's on record: he wasn't here for the vote for that either. That's very sad, Mr. Speaker, that he is not going to be involved in what's going on within Saskatoon's community. I'm out talking to people. They don't see him at events. They don't see their leader at the groundbreaking of certain events. He's a mystery, Mr. Speaker. And then when something so critical like having a school in his backyard, he doesn't even go. As a father I would think that that's extremely important to him, that he would be able to register his children in a new school. And I think he should be very proud that that school is . . . But the difference is, Mr. Speaker, he's stuck on ideology. It has nothing to do with the new school. It has nothing to do with how we're financing the school. It is strictly about old politics. It has nothing to do with what we're doing. He's just against anything we're doing over there, Mr. Speaker. That's sad.

It was great to hear within the 75-minute debate that some of the members opposite say that there are things going well in the lean programs within our hospital system. I don't understand why they can't say the schools are a good thing. It's a very simple thing, Mr. Speaker. They need to understand and get out and actually talk to people in the community and talk to some of their other NDP counterparts across Canada. We've got their federal leader saying P3s are a good thing. We've got the leader . . . or we've got people, the Finance minister from Manitoba saying, you know what? In certain circumstances, P3 models can work. What we've done is the economy of scale, Mr. Speaker, and we've had that threshold of in and around \$100 million, Mr. Speaker. That seems to be the point where all of a sudden things can change, and we can show some generated savings.

I want to talk a little bit about, Mr. Speaker, about the investment that we have done within our school system. The NDP, in the last six years of their office, they spent \$165 million on school systems. We spent \$450 million in our first six years, Mr. Speaker. The government needed to come up with a solution to be able to meet the needs of our community.

Mr. Speaker, what they have put out in the media and what they're putting out to their base is that P3s cost more. Quality is compromised. P3s hurt local construction sector. This is what

the rhetoric is that they're putting out so people don't understand the process. All they're doing again over there, which I've seen since I would say probably the mid-'90s when they formed government, all they have is a fear factor. Let's scare everybody. Let's scare everybody of any type of change. Anything that isn't created by the NDP is a bad thing, Mr. Speaker. And that is wearing really thin on the Saskatchewan people. People are not going to be living . . . The new Saskatchewan does not live in fear, Mr. Speaker. The new Saskatchewan lives in the world of optimism, the world of looking forward, looking into the future, and growing, and growing in all areas of our economy, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to talk a little about the SaskBuilds, about what they've done in some other areas in Canada because we're not the first ones that . . . We didn't create this P3 process. We understand that there were some difficulties with P3. Like when you start any new project, there's going to be a learning curve. The good news is, Mr. Speaker, is that we didn't have to go through any of those troubled times. We've learned from other jurisdictions. We've talked to them. We've consulted with them and say, how does this work? How is this going to make sure that we can do it in the best scale of economy and that we can find efficiencies out there? What are the things that went wrong with you, and how can we improve on that?

Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia, and New Brunswick have all used P3 programs. There are over 204 projects built or under way in Canada since the early '90s using a P3 model. From 2009 to 2011, P3 deals that were worth \$21.7 billion were finalized within Canada. There is a municipal P3 project in Calgary, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina.

Mr. Speaker, this is the new way of financing. I discussed this yesterday again when we were talking about the bridges, Mr. Speaker. This is the way that we as a government are being very fiscally responsible and making sure that we will get the best bang for our dollar.

But we're also solving a problem because I really don't think that this government would be able to do a traditional build on this. And the minister has looked at this. We looked at all options. Unfortunately on that side of the House, they only want to look at one option. That's all they're going to look at, Mr. Speaker. They're going to do the same thing over and over and over again. Mr. Speaker, doing the same thing and expecting a different result, I've been told that's the unofficial definition of insanity.

[12:30]

We need to look at things in a different way, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure that we're looking at all options on the table about every project that we do because we as a government and as MLAs are responsible to the people of Saskatchewan. When we walk out of this Chamber and we go back to our houses and we meet people in the grocery store or at the park or at the hockey rink, we need to be able to look them in the eye and say, we did the best job with your money. Because this isn't our money, Mr. Speaker. This is their money. And we need to be able to make sure that we can honestly hold our head up high and say, yes, on these P3 projects with the school, we are going to save millions of dollars. And I think that's very significant,

Mr. Speaker, that we can actually do that, hold our heads high.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit about . . . Because the NDP claims that they've never actually touched P3s. They've never actually looked at P3s. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Between 2000 and 2005, they actually had a P3 office. And I think it might be under the member from Lakeview when he was there at the time. The NDP government opened a public-private partnership corporate development division from 2000 to 2005. Oh, my apologies. It wasn't the member from Lakeview. It was under Maynard Sonntag and Pat Atkinson.

An Hon. Member: — What was the title again? That was a good title. What was it called again?

Mr. Merriman: — It was called the corporate development division of public-private partnerships. It sounds like it was a great place. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. I'd have to check back in the records to see if actually anything came out of that office or if it was just a really nice office with some nice furniture and some . . . But even on top of that, when they did come out and say, we actually have a public-private partnership — and I know this side of the House is very familiar with it, and I know that side of the House doesn't want to talk about it — but it's SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Mr. Speaker. They said that they were actually invested with another external company. They finally admitted after six years that they had put \$9 million while their partner, which would be a private industry, so that would be a public-private partnership, they only invested \$153, \$153. That's their version of a public-private partnership: \$9 million of government money and \$153. They admitted this. That's in essence a public-private partnership. An extremely bad example, Mr. Speaker, of a public-private partnership, but that's exactly what they did, Mr. Speaker.

They also had . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I just had to take a sip of water. My wife will be very happy tonight that I've talked for 45 minutes and got it all out of my system. I'd like to talk about . . . Because this isn't just us saying this about the schools, Mr. Speaker. It's the community. It's community leaders. It's people that are on the front ground, the school boards, all of that. Here's a quote: "We have heard from students and staff over the past few years, and the growth pressures in some areas of the province have caused overcrowded classrooms," said association president, Janet Foord. "Thankfully announcements such as this will alleviate those concerns." That was October 22nd, 2013. Janet Foord, president, Saskatchewan School Boards Association, is saying that this is a positive move, Mr. Speaker.

Here's a quote from Ray Morrison, *The StarPhoenix*, October 23rd, 2013: "To say that I'm pleased to be here today for this announcement would be a serious, serious understatement." These are the leaders that are out there that are listening to the school board directors. They are listening to the teachers. They are listening to the students. And they're listening to the community. They're happy with what's going on with this, with these new schools, Mr. Speaker.

I don't understand why they're not talking to the people over on the opposition side, or why the opposition isn't engaging these people and say, how is this working for you? I think again, Mr.

Speaker, it comes back to the ideology that they're stuck in.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this isn't just us. I've talked a little bit about how I've talked to the teachers. I've talked to the students when I go into the schools. And one of the things that I did under the advice and guidance of the previous minister of Education, the MLA for Regina . . .

An Hon. Member: — Douglas Park.

Mr. Merriman: — Douglas Park, thank you. Was every time after session, Mr. Speaker, I go to each school in my constituency. I go to talk to them. I go and make an appointment with the principal. I make an appointment with the council, whoever would like to speak to me, and I go directly to the source. I go and talk to them about, how's things going in your school? This is a direct link for them to the minister through me. It's a very simple process. And there are quite a few schools in Saskatoon Sutherland. My best guess is there's about 12 to 14 schools, including the high school. I go and touch base with them. Every year I talk to the principals and I talk to whoever wants to talk to me about what's going on within the school system.

Because I would rather hear it directly from them as opposed to the torque and rhetoric when it comes from the opposition, when they pull something out of nowhere and say, this is what the schools are saying. Well they're not saying that in my area.

When I would have had that thing, I would put all of the information down, and I would give it to the minister and say, here's a snapshot of what's happening in Saskatoon Sutherland. Here's what's absolutely going on at the ground level.

Now in saying that, Mr. Speaker, the teachers were a little hesitant as to why an elected official was coming in to talk to them about that. I said, I have no agenda; the floor is yours. I have an hour and a half of time, please tell me what's going on. And I would get some extremely valuable information from that, Mr. Speaker, on to actually what's happening.

Even on top of that, they take me on a tour of the school. They'd be proud of the programs that they've got going on. They would show the pride of their school spirit, their staff, their students, and the projects that are going on in those schools, Mr. Speaker. It was absolutely fabulous. I highly recommend it to everybody to go to a school in their constituency and just sit down and talk. Mr. Speaker, it's a great experience and you will actually hear . . . [inaudible]. Because what I was hearing from the opposition was all this doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker — oh, the schools are this.

Well you know what? Instead of actually . . . We really don't, we don't listen to what exactly is going on over there. And I thought, you know what, Mr. Speaker, as a rookie MLA I better go check this out with the schools within my community. So I went and talked to them. And I just didn't stick in my community, not just in the borders of Saskatoon Sutherland. I was over in the west side visiting St. Mary's, a fabulous school that has a community clinic in it. It has a theatre in it. It has a . . . and it's open to the community.

And that school is there, is because of this government, Mr.

Speaker. It was not there before. It was on their list; again, one of their lists. My guess is if we look back in the records, they probably made three or four announcements about it. But they never actually did anything.

When this government came into power, that was one of the first things that they did, was put up St. Mary's School and make sure that it was a community school. The facility in there is absolutely fabulous. They're working with the city of Saskatoon to be able to open it up, to be able to talk about how the community can access it. They've got a gym in there. They've got training facilities, something that the west side of Saskatoon, and I don't think anywhere in Saskatoon, has seen such a quality facility.

And absolutely, the shared services that are going on within there, within the community, within the civic area, within education, within health, dentistry. They have a studio in there for aesthetics as well, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely fabulous, and the students are doing this. And again of course including our elder community; we've got something very special going on in that school. And it is set up, when you come into the reception it is set up in the round. Just like what the elders recommend, that this is very welcoming for the community.

So again a demonstration of how we're listening to what's going on. But we're taking the step past that, Mr. Speaker. We're not just listening, we're acting. I can't say if they listened over there, Mr. Speaker, but I know they didn't act. I know that they did not do anything within the school systems, other than just completely let them crumble. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we've invested money in this side of the government and have renovated over 65 per cent of the schools in Saskatchewan.

Here's another quote about a positive impact of the results within the school, is from Diane Boyko, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education Chair, on October 23rd, 2013:

We know we need space for the education for our kids and the extracurricular is also part of that education . . . we hopefully will be able to come to some good terms on how we deal with that in this new venture that we are all experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely fabulous that we have both systems within Saskatoon all saying the same thing: the Chair from the Public School, the Chair from the Separate School.

But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, on top of the schools that we're using the P3 model, we're also continuing the traditional builds. In this budget, I'm very happy that our Finance minister, working with the Minister of Education, was able to stand up and meet two emergent needs right here in our capital city, of Connaught School and Sacred Heart, Mr. Speaker.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I might be stepping on toes, but after the budget announcement . . . I'm not sure if this is inside politics or what, but I saw the member from across come and over and shake our Minister of Education's hand and thank him for that, Mr. Speaker, which I thought was a very honourable thing because he knew how important it was into the community and how we could help Sacred Heart School and Connaught School because those schools again were left

crumbling. And now unfortunately, they're at a point of non-repair, so we have to build an entire new school, Mr. Speaker.

And this is something again, we need to do this for the kids. We have multiple programs going on to address the growing student base within our province. We have to make sure that we can do a traditional build in some areas, a very quick . . . But on a grander scale, we have to be able to make sure that we can have some joint-use schools that are going to meet the needs of our growing cities, our larger areas in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in response to the P3s, there's one more quote that I think is very important. The quote is:

I think that it offers more exciting opportunities for our school divisions to look at, whether we address efficiencies, that's a great thing. Holding someone to account to timelines, that's a good thing. We are excited to see what this looks like.

And that is from Katherine Gagne, chairperson of the Regina Public School, scum in October 22nd right out here in the rotunda, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the bigger picture, about building for growth. Our province has committed to invest over \$2.5 billion over the next three years in growth. The government has been increasing the capital budget each year for investment within the schools going forward. The province is committed to exploring, as I've said, public-private partnerships, something that the NDP obviously again looked at, Mr. Speaker, but didn't actually do. It's one of those things, it's like a Seinfeld reference, they know how to take the reservation but they didn't know what to actually do with the reservation, Mr. Speaker. They could take the information in, but that's as far as it got. So there was a lot of people that are sitting there going, you have my reservation but you didn't do anything with it.

Here's my issue again, did you do anything with it? No, had to wait till our government came into power in 2007, and then the rubber actually started hitting the road, Mr. Speaker. We were actually starting to move forward with St. Mary's, with now building nine joint new schools with traditional builds and, on top of that, investing in the existing school infrastructure to make sure that we had millions of dollars flowing in there to be able to help out the schools that are in need, that needed a fix up, the schools that were just to left to shame.

Mr. Speaker, the province has committed to exploring public-private partnerships for a vast majority of 80 to 90 per cent of projects, but will still proceed through traditional channels. I think that's important because the opposition over there has everybody so focused on this P3s that they don't actually, the public doesn't know there are traditional builds going on, Mr. Speaker. There's builds going on around this province as we speak.

The high school that my daughter and my stepdaughter are going to at Holy Cross, they have been in renovation mode for a long time. And they're coming along, Mr. Speaker. It's very difficult to do renovations while the school year is in, but they

seem to be doing rather well. And my daughter, who's in a modified class program, she's been shuffled around quite a few times. The good news is that she thinks this is exciting because she gets to see different areas of the school. She gets to move around. The students are interacting with what's going on with the construction people. They're actually talking about what's going on and they're making . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do have one other thing that I would like to talk about. I'd like to talk about the opportunities for local businesses within our P3s. These are some quotes of some projects that are P3s that have been happening around the country. The experience for local trades has been very positive in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. Patrick Waunch, president and CEO of Rambow Mechanical in Kelowna, BC [British Columbia] said, the P3 experience has been generally very positive for construction within British Columbia. And I think that's important that our local contractors hear that, that we are going to be working with them.

[12:45]

This isn't an exclusive out-of-province bill. We're going to work with them because we know that those contractors are not just working within our school systems, but they're working in and around our community. Those are the contractors that are donating the time to be able to help with the hockey rink ice. They're the contractors that are going out and doing stuff in the baseball diamonds of their own free will. Those are the contractors around Saskatchewan that this government wants to be able to support and wants to be able to make sure that they're involved in this process. And they don't buy into the fearmongering that the NDP are continually cranking out over there with their propaganda.

Mr. Speaker, another quote from John Schubert, past Chair of the Canadian Construction Association: "Across Canada, P3s have been a stable method of alternate delivery. In some jurisdictions local contractors have been able to participate . . . [extremely] successfully."

Now how is that that happening, Mr. Speaker? Why are there some local contractors that are able to participate and some won't? I can't comment on that, but I can tell you exactly what we're doing. We're making sure that local contractors are included in the process from the word go so they understand what we're doing, why we're doing it, what we're trying to achieve, and how can they . . . [inaudible] . . . their local expertise into helping us be able to achieve our needs for the growing population within the students across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in Alberta and BC where the two provinces have undertaken more than 50 P3 projects . . . And again, Mr. Speaker, this is what we're able to do. We're able to go to these people who have done these P3 projects — whether they're on bridges, schools, whatever the facility is — and learn from them. We're not trying to recreate the wheel here, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to learn from them, glean from their expertise, be able to bring them in and be able to talk to them and the stakeholders and say, how did it work? What worked best for you? What didn't work for you? How can we improve? We want to make this efficient because again we have to answer to

the taxpayers within Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk about a couple of the projects that are actually going on in Alberta. The Alberta government has built 40 schools, so I would say they kind of know what they're doing, Mr. Speaker. They're not the new kid on the block. In over three phases — this is the interesting stat — 40 schools have saved \$245 million by doing these through a P3 and bundling these schools, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely . . . Where do you think that that \$245 million from the Alberta government that they saved, that probably went back into other infrastructure projects, and it freed up some money so they could do some other things.

And that's exactly what we're doing here with our bundling and our P3. We will be able to save money with this model and be able to take that and put it into other infrastructure projects, whether it's twinning of highways, whether it's into the health care system, whether it's into social services. We can take the money that we've saved directly from this and we can prove it to the people of Saskatchewan and say, here's exactly where the savings were and here's what we did with those savings. We can show a direct line of how we're going to improve the cost efficiencies of building these schools, which again, Mr. Speaker, is an emergent need.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch base on a couple of things on what the member opposite has talked about. I've heard the member from Saskatoon Centre get up and say his petition — this is on a daily basis, this is out of yesterday's *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker — he continually talks about how we are neglecting the school system. It absolutely boggles my mind and the many . . . all the members on this House is . . . How can they say that when we are investing in nine joint-use schools? We're building new schools as fast as we possibly can, Mr. Speaker.

We've been able to work with the teachers, we've been able to work with administrators to make sure that their needs are being met because we want to make sure — and this is a big thing, Mr. Speaker — we want to make sure that things are working well not from the government's perspective, not from the teachers' perspective, not from the administrators' perspective, but from the students' perspective because that's the most important thing, Mr. Speaker.

When the member from Saskatoon city centre got up and he did his petition again today, I couldn't but shake my head because I knew I was going to be talking about this, Mr. Speaker. I would like them to maybe, instead of complaining about what we're constantly doing over there, I'd like them to come up with a plan. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how difficult it is. The Leader of the Opposition has been in there for over a year. He's been in this. This isn't something new.

When is his plan going to come out and talk about how he would do things? He's just complaining about what we're doing, but he actually doesn't have a plan. If he has, maybe they're keeping it secret over there because I don't understand. Nobody else has seen it. I don't think that the general public knows what's going on. I haven't checked their website lately because there's really nothing interesting on there. So I don't think that there's anything in there. What I have noticed is, they have removed a few things off of their website like they did

back in there. I believe they removed the *Regina Manifesto*. I think that's gone, which seems to be something that was on there forever.

So they seem to be trying to change their image over there, trying to go from the old NDP to the new NDP, but the thing is they don't have any new ideas. They have nothing, Mr. Speaker. We're waiting for it. We want to hear. Come up with a good idea. Talk to us about it. We're still waiting. I've been elected over two and a half years, Mr. Speaker. I haven't heard them come up with anything as of yet. Same thing, same questions every period, same questions every day. They're not doing anything original. And you know what? The new Saskatchewan sees through that, Mr. Speaker. They see through that because they're expecting more out of their politicians. They have seen the bar be raised by this government over here on how a responsible government should act, and they don't have a clue on what to do. They don't have anything to understand on how a government should be run, Mr. Speaker.

It is very, very different times from when they were in government, in those 16 dark years back in the NDP when we all saw friends, family, children, grandchildren leave this province, Mr. Speaker. It is very, very sad state back then.

But the good news is, is finally . . . When I moved here from 1988 from Toronto with my family, I saw the potential in this province. You could see it from the people, and you could see exactly that they had the drive to be able to become the great province.

But what they needed, Mr. Speaker, was they needed to get rid of the old skeletons in the closet. And those old skeletons over there, they're gone, Mr. Speaker. They've been reduced. They were cut down in 2007. They were cut down again in 2011. Why? Because they have no ideas, and people in Saskatchewan will not be intimidated by simply fear. Our Premier said it after the election in 2007. He came out, and it was one of the best lines I've heard from a politician is, hope beat fear. It's been used several times before, Mr. Speaker, on lots of different occasions, but that's what happened in Saskatchewan.

Now we've caught that hope bug. We have got it. We've got potential. We've got planned . . . We have a vision 2020 plan, something that's very bold for governments to do. It's very bold for a government to say, we're going to start planning beyond the next election term. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have this vision 2020 plan, and we want to make sure that this plan is understood by everybody.

That's why we're having to do the new schools, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're having to build new hospitals in Moose Jaw. That's why we're building the children's hospital in Saskatoon, again something they talked about for years and years and years. But again, Mr. Speaker, the rubber actually never hit the road with them. Again, talk versus action.

Those members over there would be very good at talking and scaring people. I remember knocking doors way back in 2002-2003 in by-elections, and people were just scared. Why would a government need to scare people into voting for them? That's not democracy, Mr. Speaker. That's fearmongering. That's all it is, Mr. Speaker, is you're intimidating people. They

were so . . . They had everybody so wound up. And now everybody sees what the Saskatchewan Party government is doing. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? They're really happy about it. They're very excited about what we're doing and they're very excited about where this party is going in the future.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk just about one more thing, about Saskatchewan builds. I want to talk about the Saskatchewan Construction Association and what they have said on a positive thing about Saskatchewan builds: It says, "We do not . . ." This is the Saskatchewan Construction Association, Mark Cooper, on October 29, 2013:

We do not oppose P3s. We believe that they are viable and legitimate procurement options. Working in partnership, I am confident we can address the concerns of the construction industry and move forward with the P3 schools.

That's from the Construction Association. We have the Construction Association on board.

We have the school boards on board. We have the trustees on board. We have the teachers wanting new schools. We have the parents wanting new schools. Everybody in the continuum seems to be understanding this process except for one component. That is Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, Mr. Speaker. They don't understand this. They can't wrap their heads around a new idea. They fear new ideas. They fear progress. They fear growth.

They do not understand why the people of Saskatchewan are so behind this Saskatchewan Party and so behind our Premier. They can't understand it. They keep thinking that there's something wrong in the world. The alignment of the stars are off. They blame snowstorms. They blame this. Oh, it must be something wrong. They don't fundamentally understand that they have made a mistake with the Saskatchewan people and the biggest mistake that they ever made with the Saskatchewan people is they underestimated them, Mr. Speaker.

And when they underestimate the Saskatchewan people, we see the potential of the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why we have 49 members over there. They have nine members over there, Mr. Speaker. It is because they don't understand and they're not prepared to . . . it's like the Fonz saying, "I was wr-wr-wr-wrong." It was also like Otto from *A Fish Called Wanda*. And I won't exactly quote it but it was . . . oh I have to say it, Mr. Speaker: "Don't call me stupid." That's what Otto from *A Fish Called Wanda* would continuously say. The NDP will not look at themselves and say, we made a mistake. I couldn't be wrong. How could I be wrong? We're the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. How could they possibly be wrong? Well they are wrong. They won't admit that they're wrong. But they keep going on and on about excuses why they're plummeting in popularity.

They're going on in excuses about these P3 projects. They don't understand that the people of Saskatchewan have certainly moved past them. And you know what? They've moved past them at light speed. Almost up to ludicrous speed, Mr. Speaker, they've gone that fast past them. And you know what? They

someday, someday maybe the members opposite will be able to look back and say, you know what? Maybe Mr. Mulcair in Ottawa was right and P3s can be used. Maybe the Minister of Finance in Manitoba was right and P3s can actually be used.

Maybe we should back up on this. But no, Mr. Speaker, they've got their heads down and they're just plowing forward, Mr. Speaker. They cannot see any of the light. They cannot see exactly why these models don't work, when everybody else sees it. Everybody in the spectrum from the students to the administrators, all points in between. The communities want this.

And the most ironic thing is, the Leader of the Opposition, he wanted it. He wanted a school in his area. And wow, look what happened. We made an announcement of a school in his area. And where was he? He wasn't there. He wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. He was nowhere to be seen. Again, nowhere to be seen on the P3 vote yesterday when we were talking about a bridge in Saskatoon. Wasn't present for the vote. I guess maybe, Mr. Speaker, I'm giving too much credit. Maybe they just don't understand it over there. Maybe if they had a briefing note or they read one of our news releases or actually talked to people that have been through the P3 process, they might now understand exactly why these models are working and why we have to do them. We have to do them because our population is growing.

We have to make sure that we're meeting the needs of the students. And that's why I applaud the Minister of Education, his predecessor, and his predecessor in being able to say, we're going to look at this from the students' perspective.

The Speaker: — It being near the hour of adjournment, it is my duty pursuant to rule 27(4) to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and that every question necessary to dispose of the motion will now be put.

The motion before the Assembly is the one moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park:

That this Assembly supports this government's plan to build nine new schools in order to help meet the challenges of a growing province.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 13:00 until 13:03.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 40]

Wall	Stewart	Krawetz
Eagles	McMorris	Harpauer
Toth	Huyghebaert	Doherty
Norris	Reiter	Heppner
Harrison	Wyant	Tell

Weekes	Elhard	Hart
Bradshaw	Bjornerud	Hutchinson
Makowsky	Ottenbreit	Wilson
Marchuk	Ross	Kirsch
Michelson	Doke	Cox
Merriman	Jurgens	Steinley
Hickie	Lawrence	Tochor
Moe	Parent	Phillips
Docherty		

The Speaker: — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 2]

McCall	Nilson
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Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 40; those opposed, 2.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. It now being after the hour of 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:05.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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