



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

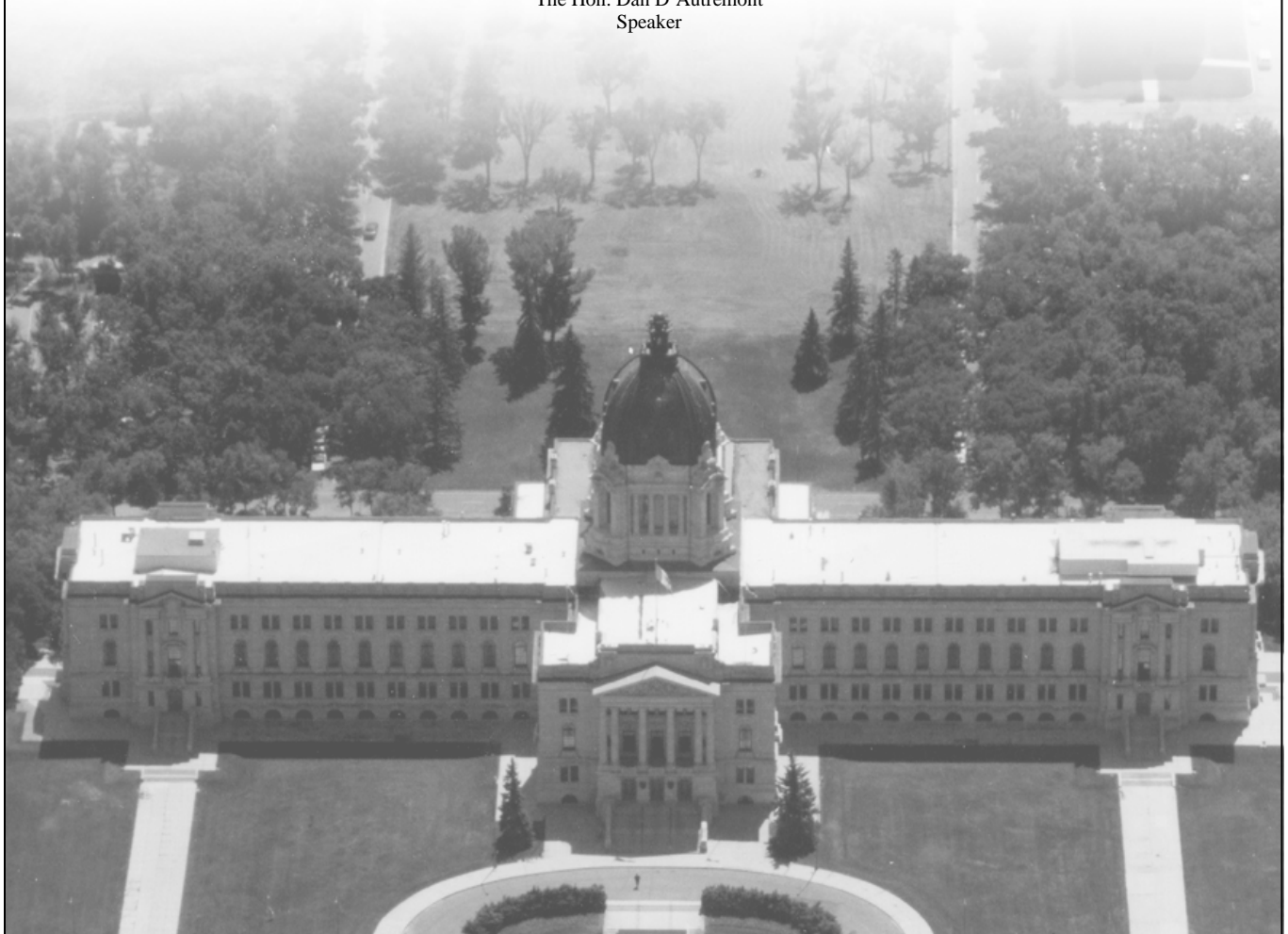
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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]

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — I would like to table the reports from the Provincial Auditor, *Report to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the 2013 Financial Statements of CIC Crown Corporations and Related Entities* in accordance with the provisions of section 14(1) of *The Provincial Auditor Act*.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, and to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce some special guests seated in your gallery, some people I've gotten to know well, constituents, the family of Lindy Kasperski: Sharon Kasperski, Jay Kasperski, Daniel, and their one and a half year old son, Oliver.

It's with heavy heart we give them our condolences on the fact Lindy passed away last Friday. He gave his life to the people of Regina. He was a coach in soccer and very integral in the Mosaic Polish pavilion. And we'll hear a little more on his life and the life he dedicated to serving the people of Regina here in a member's statement from the member from Canora-Pelly.

So I wish everyone would join me in honouring the Kasperski family and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — I would like to join with the member in welcoming the Kasperski family to the legislature. This was a very special place for Lindy, as we all know, and the family grew up with their father working here. And to come here and acknowledge Lindy's life I think is an important thing for us, but also for the children and spouse and especially for Oliver, grandchild.

I had the privilege of bringing greetings at the funeral last Friday on behalf of all of us in the Assembly, and I know that the Deputy Premier will be very pleased to give an honourable statement today. But Lindy was a part of all of our lives, and we thank God for his presence among us. And we especially welcome you as the family here today. Thank you.

**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 to all members of the Assembly, I'm very pleased to highlight the presence of and help introduce two distinguished guests.

One is Dr. John Meehan, president of Campion College. He's a graduate of McGill, of Oxford, and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins. And Dr. Meehan assumed the presidency of Campion College in 2013. As almost everyone in this Assembly will know, Campion is the largest Jesuit college east of Montreal, known for its intellectual rigour and really the opportunities that it affords its students.

Dr. Meehan is joined today by Ms. Sarah Hanna who just a few short weeks ago defended her master's thesis, and today is her very first day on the job as the engaged learning coordinator at Campion College. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask members from both sides of this Assembly to help welcome these two distinguished guests to their Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we welcome Dr. Meehan and Sarah.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming Father Dr. John Meehan. He's got a lot of titles there, Mr. Speaker, but certainly as president of Campion College does a tremendous job on behalf of one of the great learning institutions in the province. And as well, welcome Sarah to her legislature, wish her all the best with the job. But it's good to see these representatives from Campion here today. And as a Campion grad, I couldn't be prouder, Mr. Speaker. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome a group of 17 grade 5 students sitting in the west gallery. Give us all a wave. The Harvest City Christian School, 17. With them today is teacher Justine Glover and chaperone parent Elizabeth Strom. And I'll be looking forward to getting stumped again in questions as I usually do by students but looking forward to it. And I'd like all the members to join me in welcoming this great group from Regina Coronation Park and the Harvest City Christian School to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Request leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Douglas Park. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the world of business, it happens from time to time that a family-run business is in operation for 100 years or more. But, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone would agree that that doesn't happen very often.

In the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, up in the very top row is the Hipperson family, representing four generations of Hipperson Construction and Hy-Grade Millwork, 108 years of construction and 87 years of millwork manufacturing in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'll have an opportunity later to elaborate in a member's statement.

In the top row are Donald Sr. and his wife Nancy, of 62 years. Don is the son of William Hipperson, founder of Hipperson Construction in Regina in 1906 and of Hy-Grade Millwork in Saskatoon in 1927. With them are son Gordon and daughter-in-law Rhonda Hipperson — Rhonda, Gord. And they represent the third generation of Hipperson Construction. And with them are two of their children, Anna and Rhys in the next row — Anna, Rhys, thank you.

Next are Donald and Dawn Hipperson, third generation of Hy-Grade Millwork in Saskatoon, and their son Greg, Greg representing the fourth generation of Hy-Grade Millwork in Saskatoon. Also in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, are family members: son, Douglas — thanks, Doug — and great-granddaughter, Avery Bankowski. Hi, Avery. Avery, Mr. Speaker, I was informed this morning, is in town and in Moose Jaw for the annual Moose Jaw dance festival, and I was informed just this morning that Avery indeed won a medal yesterday. We wish her luck on the weekend.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, Don and Nancy's eldest, their daughter Karen, my wife, my best friend, and most ardent supporter — Karen. I'm sure I'll pay for that eldest comment a little later. I think there's no doubt about that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating and thanking the Hipperson family for 108 years of contribution to the success and the growth of this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member in welcoming the Hipperson family to the legislature. Don and Nancy are constituents of Regina Lakeview, and have been neighbours for almost three decades now. But the important part for me is that all of us are neighbours when we've been sitting in the basketball stands at games right across Canada, because one of the Hipperson granddaughters, Mary, was a teammate of my daughter. So in that connection the Hippersons have become friends of ours over many, many years. And it's a great opportunity for me to honour this family and their history in Saskatchewan. So I welcome them to the legislature today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce my second group in seven years, so I'm very honoured and privileged to have them here today. It's Se-Se-Wa-Hum from Big River, 23 high school students. Welcome to your Assembly. Accompanied by their teacher, Marla Netmaker and Doreen Netmaker; chaperones, Rose Whitefish and Roderick Rabbitskin. So I look forward to meeting with them later this morning. I would like everyone to

give them a warm greeting in their Assembly. Thank you.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning I'd like to present a petition calling for greater support for anti-bullying initiatives. And we know that the consequences of bullying are devastating, including depression, self-harm, addictions, and suicide. And we know that other provinces have brought forward legislation, various tools and programs showing swift and effective government action. And we know that this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for gay and transgender students or students bullied because of their sexual identity. And this government must act so that students have simple, easy-to-understand information about gay-straight alliances in their schools and how to form a GSA [gay-straight alliance] and who they should talk to in order to form a GSA today. We know, Mr. Speaker, that bullying is a human rights issue, one of safety and inclusion. I would like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: we call on the government to take immediate and meaningful action to protect Saskatchewan's children from bullying because the lives of young people are at stake and this government must do more to protect our youth.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to safety on Dewdney Avenue and the inundation of heavy-haul truck traffic and semis on to Dewdney Avenue, a consequence of decisions of this government, recognizing that there's an unsafe condition, circumstance on that road that needs to be resolved. Residents note that this is an issue created by that government and any further delays to address this unsafe condition 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 families, communities, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting of 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 concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO [rental purchase option]. 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 the RPO. That means the dream of home ownership is destroyed for many families in the North. And the prayer reads:

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

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I once again stand today to present a petition on building a second bridge to Prince Albert. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to guarantee that a second bridge that serves central and northern Saskatchewan and as well as the city of Prince Albert will receive a commitment from senior government.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these three pages of petitions are primarily from Saskatoon, but we have a number of other petitions that have been signed from people from all throughout Saskatchewan. And I so present the petition on the second bridge for Prince Albert.

[10:15]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition for real action on climate change. And the undersigned residents wish to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada; 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; and, since 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent, including another 35 per

cent cut in the 2014-15 budget:

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 the people that signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the good city of Saskatoon. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — Reading and receiving petitions. Statements . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Sorry.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**An Hon. Member:** — Good anticipation.

**The Speaker:** — You're not supposed to anticipate. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

### May Day

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today in solidarity with workers across the world as we recognize May Day, also known as International Labour Day.

May Day has its origins in the movement for an eight-hour workday that swept the United States and Canada during the mid-1880s. It was on this day in 1886 that thousands of North American workers mobilized and protested in Haymarket Square in Chicago. Now for over a century, May Day has become a time for workers around the world to acknowledge how far we've come and to celebrate what has been achieved. But it's also a time to refocus and to reaffirm our conviction to support workers' rights moving forward.

The tenacious and revolutionary spirit of May Day extends beyond our borders as people fight for safe and fair workplaces across the globe. Now more than ever, we should be setting the bar for labour standards and standing with workers around the world who are being denied their basic, fundamental labour rights. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." Let us all celebrate May Day with this in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this House join with me in recognizing May Day. I'm honoured to stand in solidarity with workers throughout the world in calling for fair and safe working conditions for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Remembering Lindy Kasperski

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

it was with great sadness that I learned about the passing of Lindy Kasperski on April 18th. Lindy was a devoted MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], a passionate historian, and an encouraging friend.

The eldest of four siblings, Lindy was born in Regina but spent the majority of his childhood in Moose Jaw. His eagerness to learn was evident from a young age. Lindy skipped the fifth grade and, at the age of 17, was the youngest student to attend the University of Regina in over 20 years.

In 1973 Lindy accepted his first job as the multicultural coordinator with the Department of Culture and Youth, and in 1995 he was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the MLA for Regina Sherwood. Lindy received perfect attendance records during his early years in the legislature and was always eager to talk with constituents, the public, and fellow MLAs. As an MLA, Lindy spoke French in many proceedings and read member statements in Polish, Ukrainian, and German. He was a founding member of the Regina Open Door Society, Regina Mosaic festival, and an important resource for many multicultural groups in Saskatchewan.

Lindy encouraged me to explore and find the roots of my Ukrainian ancestry and for that I am grateful. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the many contributions of Lindy Kasperski.

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

#### **Record Corporate Donation to Heritage Centre**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to recognize an important event I had the opportunity to attend last week, along with colleagues. On April 24th the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Heritage Centre received a \$1 million donation from Mosaic potash company.

This is the largest single corporate donation the beautiful facility has received since opening its doors. The Heritage Centre is integral in relaying the strong history of the RCMP. This investment will make sure that the centre will be able to enhance its important contribution to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, the centre is certainly worthy of this generous gift. The main gallery takes visitors on a journey through the history of the Mounted Police and how it has evolved from its early days as a frontier police to a world-recognized force.

CEO [chief executive officer] Al Nicholson announced last week they are planning to enrich exhibits and add more interactive components, extend community education and outreach initiatives.

I'd like to thank Al Nicholson and his team at the Heritage Centre for their incredible work, and the Friends of the Heritage Centre for all their support. The RCMP are an integral part of Canadian history and also have a truly special place in Saskatchewan's history and future. So it is greatly valued to see Mosaic, as well as all generous friends and donors, recognizing the importance of sharing its story.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me to say thank you

and extend our appreciation to all.

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

#### **Construction Company's Century of Achievements**

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four generations of Hippersons have helped build and continue to build Saskatchewan. Hipperson Construction was established in 1906 by William Hipperson after he relocated to Regina from Ontario to supervise the construction of the Ackerman Building located on Dewdney Avenue.

Notable Regina properties completed in those early years included the Qu'Appelle Apartments on the corner of 14th Avenue and Hamilton Street and the historic St. Mary's Anglican Church on 15th Avenue.

William's son Donald took over the company in 1952 and over the next 45 years more Saskatchewan landmarks were completed, including many of Regina's churches and schools and the award-winning power plant at the U of R [University of Regina].

In 1991, Don's son Gordon took charge and developed Hipperson Construction into one of Saskatchewan's top 100 companies.

Hy-Grade Millwork in Saskatoon, another successful Hipperson company, was born out of necessity in 1927 when William Hipperson determined that it was too expensive to freight millwork to Saskatoon from Manitoba. Through the years, Hy-Grade was run by William, then Donald Sr., his son Donald, and now William's great-grandson Greg, making for four generations of Hipperson ownership.

Their work can be seen in the Bessborough hotel in Saskatoon, City Hospital, the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], and just about every other major institution in Saskatchewan. Alumni of the U of S and active supporters of Huskie athletics, the Hippersons provided the resources and expertise to renovate and refurbish Huskie basketball team rooms at the U of S.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in acknowledging the contributions of Hipperson Construction and Hy-Grade Millwork to the success and growth of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Moose Jaw Chosen as Reading Town Canada**

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that Moose Jaw has been proclaimed as the first ever Reading Town Canada to take place all next week.

Reading Town Canada is a national reading campaign dedicated to the principles that reading is essential to the happiness of individuals and to that person's capacity to act as a citizen in democracy. It is a coalition of writers, educators, librarians, publishers, and readers from all across Canada. Its mission is to make reading a national priority for all Canadians. High voting

rates, volunteerism, a sense of belonging, and physical, emotional, and mental health are all fostered by reading for pleasure. When Canada reads, Canada grows.

To show people what the Reading Town Canada would look like, a national reading program created by Reading Town Canada project . . . I'm proud to say that Moose Jaw has been chosen to host this project because it is simply the best place to do this. The enthusiastic arts community, the substantial success of the Festival of Words, the community infrastructure, and the great can-do attitude of the citizens of all Moose Jaw are ideal to host this event. There are several events planned throughout the week for people of all ages.

I encourage all members to show their support for Reading Town Canada by either visiting Moose Jaw and taking in some of the many events or taking time to read something new each day for a week, next week, May 3rd to 10th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Missing Children's Month

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to announce that the government has proclaimed the month of May as Missing Children's Month in Saskatchewan.

This year marks the 23rd Green Ribbon Campaign by Child Find Saskatchewan, which culminates with National Missing Children's Day on May 25th. According to Child Find Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, thousands of children are reported missing in Canada every year. Having a Missing Children's Month is a vital opportunity to raise awareness in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada on behalf of missing children and their families. The Green Ribbon campaign is a nationally recognized symbol to remember missing children and hope for their safe return.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to the safety and well-being of all Saskatchewan children, including those who are missing, and their families. That is why we are wearing the green ribbon today. Green ribbons and Green Ribbon donation boxes can be found at Saskatchewan Liquor Board stores across the province during the month of May. Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all Saskatchewan citizens to wear a Green Ribbon of Hope to show their support and help raise awareness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### National Immunization Awareness Week

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April 26th to May 3rd is National Immunization Awareness Week. Immunization is the most effective way to prevent and control infectious diseases. Previous generations were threatened by serious illnesses caused by infectious diseases. We now have easy access to vaccines to help protect us.

Our province offers a comprehensive package of publicly funded immunization programs. We provide routine

vaccinations for infants, pre-school, and school children. Since 2010 we've been offering flu shots free of charge to all Saskatchewan residents six months and older.

Mr. Speaker, this awareness week is an opportunity to encourage everyone to make sure their immunizations are up to date. This is very important for children so they can stay healthy and safe. Getting immunized on schedule provides them with the best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank the public health staff across the province. They work tirelessly every day to deliver immunization programs and keep children, parents, and families safe. They worked very hard during the last influenza season and did an amazing job providing the vaccine quickly to people who needed it most. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing these valuable health professionals for their contributions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### University of Saskatchewan Review Process

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we brought forward concerns we've been hearing from professors and students about TransformUS and its long-term ramifications for the university, the minister said that everything is fine and that he has full confidence in the TransformUS process. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: does he share this lack of concern?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the reasons that we as a government invested more than \$350 million in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, that marks a 65 per cent increase in operating support to the University of Saskatchewan since we've had the honour of serving government. Here's what the TransformUS has to say about government support, and I quote:

To respond more fully to the question of how well the university is supported by the government, one needs to compare how we are doing relative to other provincial sectors in terms of total funding and comparatively with our western Canadian peers. In the March 2014 provincial budget, the allocation for Advanced Education increased by 3.7%. The resulting increase to the University of Saskatchewan was approximately 4.4%.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say, "When we compare across provincial sectors, post-secondary education received the largest increase in 2014." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the question was about the concerns being raised on campus about the TransformUS

process and its long-term implications for the university, and whether the Premier shares the lack of concern that we just saw once again from the Minister of Advanced Ed.

Mr. Speaker, there's a big difference, there's a big difference between interfering in university affairs and ensuring that the right questions are asked and taking a proper interest in what's happening at our publicly funded university. This government is failing to do that, Mr. Speaker, but instead they've given carte blanche to the TransformUS process, and they are stubbornly dismissing the very real concerns that are being brought forward by respected faculty and by students.

One of the big concerns is about the elimination of jobs, Mr. Speaker. We've already seen the elimination of 248 jobs on campus, and yesterday we learned that there will be even more cuts. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier: how many jobs will be eliminated at the University of Saskatchewan at the conclusion of TransformUS?

[10:30]

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I reject completely the notion that we are in any way overlooking the concerns of students, of scholars, of faculty. In fact just this morning, I sent an email off to Dr. Sandy Ervin. Sandy has an op-ed piece today in *The StarPhoenix*, to which I responded:

While there are points worthy of discussion for us as a result of your op-ed piece, my most direct and immediate concern is for the student that you reference. If and as she's interested in following up directly, please feel free to provide her with this email address or the ones listed below.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted with our investments. We know what's going on at the University of Saskatchewan. We know that's meant to help meet a promise of making sure that this is one of the world's leading institutions. That's why we're making record investments, Mr. Speaker, record investments — more than \$350 million in this year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, we're attentive to what's going on. At the same time, we're very respectful of the governance and independence, the rightful independence of the University of Saskatchewan to continue on its trajectory towards world-class education for our students in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose it's good that the minister is sharing his email address. I didn't know that was such a guarded secret.

But the concern, Mr. Speaker, is when respected faculty, when the USSU [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union], when the faculty association have voiced their concerns about TransformUS, we saw the minister say as recently as this week that he had confidence in the TransformUS process and that it

was fine as it is. There were no alarm bells that the minister saw.

Students, faculty, and staff, Mr. Speaker, have been on edge on campus for months now. And, Mr. Speaker, they remain on edge because there was some information released yesterday in the report, but the final details are not there. It's understandable that the mood on campus is very grim. One program that will be greatly affected, Mr. Speaker, is the school of public health, which just recently received international accreditation which is vital to its ongoing success. But the TransformUS report yesterday stated that the school of public health should be rolled into the College of Medicine. The concerns that I'm hearing, Mr. Speaker, is that this could jeopardize the recent accreditation that it received.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: is he aware of this concern, and what is this government doing to ensure that our school of public health maintains its accreditation and maintains its very well-earned reputation?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a fair and legitimate question. In fact it's one that we've been working on with the university for a considerable period of time. In fact, Mr. Speaker, just this week I've received reassurance from the president. I'll read it in for the record, and that is:

Nothing is decided until it goes through the governance bodies. And in this internal matter that the university must manage, we believe that the restructuring will make health care provision better, not worse, and that it will force better accountability and collaboration and that we would [quote] never jeopardize accreditation.

That's directly from the University of Saskatchewan. I'm asking those questions, Mr. Speaker. They're fair and legitimate. We are on the case.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — That's an interesting response, Mr. Speaker, because just two days ago this very same minister, when we asked about the outcomes of the TransformUS process, he said it's too early to say anything. And so it's interesting now to know that there's been, it sounds like detailed discussions about the implications of TransformUS. Those are two very different stories we're hearing just recently.

Mr. Speaker, another area that's being affected by TransformUS is the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, which is slated to be gutted. The centre offers, Mr. Speaker, language courses, music, business and leadership programs, and personal and professional interest programs. It's an important centre, Mr. Speaker, for the city of Saskatoon, but important for the entire province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier: is he concerned to hear that the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education at the University of Saskatchewan is on the chopping block?



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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, a fair and legitimate question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we do know is that key functions that the centre has undertaken will actually be shifted to some academic programming. It may actually create more opportunities for graduate students or retired faculty members to get out and actually engage with members of the community.

What's important here, Mr. Speaker, what's important is that this is an internal university matter. And, Mr. Speaker, we're very, very pleased to talk about post-secondary education. We're very pleased to talk about \$5.5 billion of investment as our track record. We're pleased to talk about the more than \$350 million invested in the University of Saskatchewan. We're also very, very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the independence of the University of Saskatchewan and allowing the university to do its business.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, he says, allow the university to do its business, but he needs to take an interest in what is happening. They need to have an opinion, Mr. Speaker, whether it's appropriate at the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education to eliminate the language courses, eliminate the music courses, eliminate the business and leadership programs for people here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday's report, Mr. Speaker, provided some information but lacked concrete details about the full impact of TransformUS on our province's largest university. As the details come out, Mr. Speaker, what I'm hearing from the university community is that there needs to be proper discussion and scrutiny by campus and by all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. The right questions need to be asked and the Deputy Premier knows that. It's the beginning of May, Mr. Speaker. Students are off campus. Many faculty are away. And what I've heard from deans, what I've heard from student leaders, is that this cannot be rushed.

My question is to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: will he ensure that proper scrutiny occurs, and major decisions that have long-term ramifications for the university for decades to come, Mr. Speaker, will not be rushed through?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the member opposite knows that there will be due deliberation and that the governance structures, which include the council, will be fully engaged by this, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, talking about a couple of days ago, the member opposite, and I quote this, Mr. Speaker, he offered this, he said, "... that we might as well at the end of TransformUS rename the university Meewasin Valley community college."

Now, Mr. Speaker, he may quote a few individuals, Mr. Speaker, but here's who I'd like to quote, Mr. Speaker, when it

comes to the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the creation of the University of Saskatchewan where he said, "There is no doubt that this university will in time be one of the world's greatest." And, Mr. Speaker, he went on to say, "Let a university arise here which may be a worthy disciple of Oxford, Cambridge, and other universities which have done so much." From July 29th, 1910, it's in that spirit that we defend the University of Saskatchewan's independence, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to do that.

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

#### Costs and Benefits of the Lean Initiative

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Lean refused to reveal what this government has spent to date on its lean pet project. So let me put this question in terms all Saskatchewan people will understand. To the Minister of Lean: government-wide across ministries, agencies, and Crowns for this government's lean pet project, do we have a total?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that when the NDP [New Democratic Party] come into question period, their information they bring with them is not always correct. So I'd like to take this opportunity to correct the record on some lean initiatives.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, hung up on Christmas trees, said those were, the ones that were being thrown away, were for fundraising purposes. That is wrong, Mr. Speaker. They were donated to the hospital. The NDP's crack research team phoned the foundation yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and they knew that.

Yesterday the NDP said that government was throwing away Christmas trees. Wrong again. It wasn't government. It was an initiative of the local health authority. If the Leader of the Opposition had just read committee *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, he would have known that. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP blamed this government for Christmas trees. Wrong again. The initiative was undertaken by the CEO at the time. And what time was that, Mr. Speaker? 2006.

So, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can turn around in his little chair and direct his feigned outrage to the member from Lakeview, who would have been Health minister when this lean initiative was undertaken.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — I know the minister doesn't want to answer the question, Mr. Speaker, but we'll certainly try again. We know about a \$40 million contract in Health, which is in addition to an annual cost of more than \$17 million on kaizen promotion offices. And there are millions more to pay for various websites to promote lean in health care, physician training for lean, and extra contracts for lean consultants. Mr. Speaker, that's not to forget the salary costs it takes for senior administrators to become John Black certified lean leaders, what some are apparently called getting kaizen black belts, Mr. Speaker.

All told, Mr. Speaker, a very conservative estimate for lean costs in health care alone is now more than \$76 million, more than \$76 million in health care alone, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't include the rest of government. So to the Minister of Lean, again: what is the total cost of the government's lean pet project?

**The Speaker:** — It would be helpful if both sides were prepared to listen to the questions and to the answers. I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the member for Elphinstone and his new-found interest in this critic area. I've been the minister for about two years and he's never asked a question. He didn't ask any questions at committee. We had an hour and a half on lean estimates, Mr. Speaker.

But if the members opposite would like to know, the Minister of Health has been on his feet several times. As of January this year, Health has spent \$26 million on lean initiatives. Executive government, which includes Education and Advanced Education as third party sectors, is about \$5.3 million. Mr. Speaker, it's a total of \$31 million to date. Cost avoidance has been \$18.2 million. We have accumulative savings of \$46 million, Mr. Speaker, and that doesn't even include the improved customer service that our government is offering to the people of this province.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, it may have started out as the Premier's pet project, but more and more lean costs make it look like Godzilla, Mr. Speaker. A very conservative calculation of the costs to taxpayers of this government's lean pet project, based on the incomplete information provided so far, the amount is somewhere near more around \$100 million, Mr. Speaker. And the meter keeps running each and every day, and we hear about more millions in costs.

So the minister could clear up the uncertainty around the total figure if she would stand in the House and answer the question today. Again to the minister: what is the total cost for the lean pet project?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe I just did that. Yesterday the NDP opposition critic said it was 92 million. And today he's ran it up to 100 million — again, Mr. Speaker, their crack research team at work.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just said, Health as of January of this year, \$26 million; executive government, third party Education, Advanced Education sectors, \$5.3 million, Mr. Speaker; cumulative savings of \$45.9 million; cost avoidance of almost \$20 million, Mr. Speaker; and improved customer service to the people of our province.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, this government could do the right thing and table all of the expenses on the lean pet

project. They could finish answering the written questions the opposition has asked and table those answers in the House today. Taxpayers have a right to the truth and to the whole picture.

To the minister: why won't she answer that question? Is it because she doesn't know the answer or because she doesn't want taxpayers to know the answer? Why won't they table the answers to the written questions? Why won't they come clean?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the member opposite's earpiece isn't working, but for the third time today I will tell him. Health, as of January of this year, of the \$40 million contract has spent \$26 million; executive government, including third party Education and Advanced Education sectors, \$5.3 million. To do the math, Mr. Speaker, \$31.3 million. That includes cost avoidance of almost \$20 million across government, a cumulative savings of \$45.9 million, Mr. Speaker, and improved customer service to the people of this province.

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

### Traffic Safety in the North

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government is once again not listening to the people of Prince Albert about highway safety concerns. We've been hearing that Highway No. 2 north of Prince Albert has a number of safety issues. Community members are saying traffic on No. 2 North is too heavy, turning is hazardous, and it's getting dangerous to share the road with speeding semis on a stretch of highway with so few turning lanes and shoulders. So, Mr. Speaker, when community members who use the Red Wing intersection reached out to the local MLAs, they felt that their valid concerns were dismissed.

My question to the minister: when will the members from Prince Albert and this minister start listening to the concerns from the people of Prince Albert and area to fix these problems once and for all?

[10:45]

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll say on the outset that through the Ministry of Highways and this government, the Sask Party government, we take traffic safety as our number one priority absolutely, Mr. Speaker, across the province.

We have seen the traffic increase over the province on every highway over the last number of years and with that, we've taken safety precautions in many areas. I can tell you that the MLAs from those areas — whether it's from Prince Albert or surrounding MLAs, Mr. Speaker, from Saskatchewan Rivers, for example — have been raising issues, Mr. Speaker, of that area. They know the traffic volumes have increased.

We want to look at what can be done to make sure that the traffic in that area can travel those roads safely. But I do know, Mr. Speaker, volumes are going up across the province. We're addressing many of those issues. There's more work to be done. That's why this year, Mr. Speaker, you see a record amount of spending in Highways with a budget of \$664.5 million, more money spent in Highways than ever in the history of this province.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, this minister should be aware of the safety issues on this stretch of highway, and there are many. The people of Prince Albert have been calling for a second bridge to ease the congestion for this area for a number of years. And after a deadly three-car collision at the Red Wing intersection where a woman lost her life, Jim Miller, the Buckland fire chief, pointed out how busy it was and labelled it a high-collision intersection.

One of the unhelpful suggestions that community members were given by their local MLA was to use another intersection. My question to the minister: a detour, Mr. Speaker, is how this government's way is to handle the serious traffic safety concerns that have been expressed to them.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, again, we continue to evaluate all highways across this province to see how we can make improvements, whether it's on the surface or whether it's engineering, to make sure intersections are safer.

I'm trying to figure out quite, and perhaps he can answer this in his next question, how a second bridge, when No. 2 highway is the main artery up through the North — so past the Red Wing School for example, as you go further north, it is the main artery — how a second bridge going across the Saskatchewan River, which will then no doubt join up with No. 2 where these issues are, how that impacts the traffic safety of No. 2 North, Mr. Speaker? I think he just weaved it in because it was written in the question, Mr. Speaker.

We do take those concerns serious. That's why we're spending record amounts of money. You'll continue to see that, Mr. Speaker, far outweighing what was spent in previous years under the NDP.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, with that answer, the people of Prince Albert are shaking their heads. The people of Prince Albert are feeling deserted by this government. The Prince Albert MLAs campaigned for a second bridge. Now they sit silently and look on as the people that they represent get more and more frustrated with answers like that, Mr. Speaker.

Prince Albert is in a traffic crisis, yet this government continues to make excuses about their broken bridge commitment. At the same time, when residents raise their concerns to government, they are dismissed and simply told to go and figure it out, as the minister just did just now, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister: these Prince Albert MLAs are not delivering on their campaign commitment for a second bridge for the area, but can they at least lobby this minister and their government to put in immediate measures to keep the men, women, and children who use the Red Wing intersection and the congested Highway No. 2 safe?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, absolutely the MLAs in that area are very aware with the increase of traffic in that area and have certainly talked to me on many different occasions, Mr. Speaker, when we have had the opportunity.

It's too bad that after three and a half hours of estimates, Mr. Speaker, we had three and a half hours, one-on-one estimates where that critic could ask whatever questions he wanted to regarding highways across this province, and not once did he drop below the northern authority, Mr. Speaker. After three and a half hours of asking questions in estimates, Mr. Speaker, where were these questions? These questions never came up once, Mr. Speaker. He all of a sudden has a new-found love for the area of P.A. [Prince Albert], Mr. Speaker, only in question period?

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the MLAs on this side have done more for Prince Albert and will continue to doing more for Prince Albert than any NDP MLA has ever done in the history of this province.

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

### Camping Fee Increases

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, in the dark, cold days of January, the government again increased fees for camping. And later this month, Saskatchewan families will start paying a much higher price. For a full-service site, this government had no problem increasing fees \$9 a night. Mr. Speaker, that means that Sask Party increased total fees in the range of 4 to \$11 per site per night. For an economy site, the government has increased fees 32 per cent, once you factor in their additional booking fee for their failed booking site that has overcharged campers hundreds of thousands of dollars. And for a full-service site, the fees have skyrocketed 41 per cent.

To the minister: at a time when people are thinking about their summer holidays, how can the government justify a 41 per cent increase in camping fees?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member's question, our costs have gone up over the last seven years by 42 per cent. There has not been a fee increase on park fees in the last five years, Mr. Speaker, so since 2009. We have increased the fees by about 35 per cent over the last five years, Mr. Speaker. That compares with the NDP's seven years of 1995 to 2000 where they

increased fees by 43 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the premise of the question the hon. member referenced in the cold, dark days of January, we actually start allowing campers to book towards the end of January on seasonal sites and the beginning of March for the sites, in comparison, Mr. Speaker, in comparison, Mr. Speaker, to the NDP days when the member from Athabasca was the minister responsible for Parks, they announced a fee increase three days before the long weekend in May, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the former minister for camping fee increases said people wanted to pay more for campsites. It was one of the most bizarre things to ever come out of a minister's mouth.

The new fees for camping have made a weekend camping trip an expensive event, Mr. Speaker, and may discourage people from checking out our beautiful parks and lakes. That new \$9 fee is equivalent to a pack of wieners, a pack of buns, and a bag of marshmallows. This government is sitting on its hands while the cost of living, the cost of having a nice family camping trip are skyrocketing.

To the Minister: why would the government let camp fees skyrocket, bungle up its online booking system after it leaned it and privatized it, and then tell campers they just weren't appreciating the value of the campsites?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. We went through a couple, three or four hours of estimates the other night. There wasn't any discussion with respect to the actual parks' fees themselves. There was some discussion about the online camping system, Mr. Speaker.

This government has increased investments into our provincial parks over the last five or six years by some 200 per cent over what the NDP invest in our provincial parks. Equate that, Mr. Speaker, with the record visitations over the last three years. Every successive year, we've had more people utilizing our camps, our provincial parks in this province than ever before in the history of our province, Mr. Speaker. Couple that with the fact that this year — even with the fee increases where our costs have gone up some 42 per cent, no fee increases in the last five years — we're on record pace for another record visitation this year to our provincial parks.

Unlike when the NDP charged for firewood and for the wiener roast tax on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to do that. We invest in our parks in this province.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

#### Standing Committee on House Services

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its seventh report. I move:

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair of the House Services Committee:

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 340 through 346.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 340 through 346.

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Aboriginal Engagement in the Provincial Economy

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to lead off this debate today and at the end of my comments to move a motion in support of our government's actions and policies to foster greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy.

I would like to begin today with a quote from a First Nations elder from my area, Elder Theresa, who said, "Working together is better than talking about each other." Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more with that, and I think that sums up perfectly what our Saskatchewan Party government has been doing since we formed government in '07.

So what I would like to do today is highlight some of our actions that have proven to be very successful over the past six and a half years. Mr. Speaker, you only need to look at some of the priorities outlined in our plan for growth to see that we are absolutely committed to ensuring that First Nations and Métis people are ready and able to participate in the economic opportunities that are available in our province today.

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that if Saskatchewan businesses employed Aboriginal people at an

equivalent rate to non-Aboriginal people, economic activity in this province would increase by \$1.34 billion by 2015. A staggering figure, Mr. Speaker.

And we know that in order to close that employment gap we need to first close the gap in educational achievement, and that is why we are aiming to reduce the graduation rate gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 50 per cent by 2020.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to outline a few of our educational initiatives that are proving to be very effective in achieving those goals. Some weeks ago I had the opportunity to travel to Saskatoon with our Education minister and make an announcement with regards to Microsoft licensing agreement. Our government was very pleased to have contributed \$120,000 towards this Microsoft licensing agreement. What this agreement will do, Mr. Speaker, it's going to provide computer access, computer programming for 91 First Nations schools around this province. That gives those students the same opportunity as the students in our urban schools to have access to computers, to computer learning and other programs that are provided through those computers.

Early last fall, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of bringing greetings on behalf of this Saskatchewan Party government in my own constituency at the Atoskewin Success Centre. This is a success centre that was started by the Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs, and myself along with the federal minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Valcourt, we opened that facility in September of 2013. And I'm proud to say that our government contributed \$227,000 to that facility.

And what they do at the Atoskewin Success Centre is they're providing GED [general equivalency diploma] preparation for First Nations and Métis people. They're providing adult basic education seats, and they're working diligently to close that gap that we're talking about between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

[11:00]

I'd like to talk a little bit about our First Nations and Métis achievement fund. This fund is committing \$3.8 million for three years and this is going to provide funding for school boards to use in programs and initiatives that they see fit to help First Nations and Métis people become ready to work in our economy.

Our northern career quest program, Mr. Speaker. Since 2008 the total funding from all partners for this program has been \$50 million, with our government's share some \$10.8 million. To date, Mr. Speaker, this program has resulted in approximately 1,450 jobs and it is expected that by 2015 another 625 jobs will be created for First Nations and Métis people.

Earlier in this session I talked about our Crown Investments Corporation's bursary program, the Aboriginal bursaries program where they're providing 85 bursaries of \$5,000 apiece, Mr. Speaker. And these bursaries are available to students at the U of R, U of S, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and the Lakeland College.

What these bursaries do, Mr. Speaker, is plain and simple. They provide funding to help students ease the burden a little bit of financial responsibilities. And we all know that students have a lot of constraints on the money that they have available to them when they're going to school. And I'd just like to quote one of the students that received this bursary, if I could, Mr. Speaker: "Please thank everyone who made this possible. I am forever grateful. Even after this scholarship is gone, I will have an education and that will never go away."

Mr. Speaker, since that expansion . . . Originally this program was just offered in the U of R. In 2009 we expanded it to include the U of R, SIIT, SIAST, and in 2010 we expanded it to include Lakeland College as well. Since that expansion, Mr. Speaker, we have provided 337 bursaries. A total of \$1.69 million has been provided by Crown Investments Corporation. That is very substantial funding for our post-secondary students in this province. In 2012, Mr. Speaker, we commissioned the joint task force and have already begun to implement some of the recommendations that were made in that task force.

I talked about the Atoskewin learning centre here a moment ago, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that the instructors and the management of that school told me, when the students first come to their school, one of the first things they have to do is get them a driver's licence. A lot of our First Nations students weren't getting their driver's licence. Through SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and this government, we have engaged in a program to provide driver education in First Nations schools, on-reserve schools. We expect that the uptake on that program this year, Mr. Speaker, is going to be approximately 2,600 students. So that's going to be 2,600 First Nations students that are going to be more ready to participate in the opportunities available in this province today.

Another time when . . . people that I've talked to with regard to the driver's licensing issue was the SIIT office in my town of The Battlefords. They also pointed out the first thing they did to help students be job ready was to get the driver's licence. So again this program's going to help.

Okay. Last year we pledged \$3 million to address the initiatives and recommendations made in that joint task force. In the 2014-15 budget, we have doubled that to \$6 million for initiatives in that program.

Last year we dedicated \$1.5 million to the invitational shared services initiative. And that provided support to First Nations schools as the same support that was available in the provincial schools. This support will provide, among other things, programs for reading and literacy and will assist First Nations schools to meet the goals set out in our recently announced education sector strategic plan.

Mr. Speaker, these are goals that have been set in and through and with co-operation and consultation with First Nations stakeholders to ensure our First Nations students meet provincial assessments and have the same level of success as do non-Aboriginal students.

Mr. Speaker, another \$1.5 million was dedicated to funding for Help Me Tell My Story. This initiative offered iPad technology to assess First Nations children's oral language skills and

provide feedback to parents, elders, and teachers and enable them to be more involved in the children's education. Parents can now become teachers in their own home. Mr. Speaker, I believe learning begins in the home and now it can continue in the home as well.

I think that FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] Vice-chief Bobby Cameron said it best when he said this about the JTF [joint task force] funding, and I quote: "It's about creating opportunities and opening those doors, making our children want to come to school and learn in a healthy environment. And these JTF recommendations, they're going to do that." And that is why we are implementing them, Mr. Speaker.

So those are just a few of the specific initiatives that we have undertaken. In total, Mr. Speaker, we have committed \$49 million directly to First Nations and Métis education. That's including 5.4 million for pre-kindergarten programs. That's a \$1.2 million increase. Our total spending in this sector since we formed government has been \$295 million.

And one of the institutions that are benefiting from some of the funding outlined in our 2014 budget was another school in my own constituency of North Battleford and that was funding for the Sakewew High School. I was very pleased to see in the budget \$11 million that was allocated for independent schools and for the Sakewew High School. This high school has been very, very effective, Mr. Speaker, in graduating First Nations students and getting them their high school degree so that they are ready to move on to post-secondary and take advantage of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, we are fully aware that the weight of the future is through our youth, but we must also engage our First Nations population in our plan if we are to improve their chance to participate in our robust economy. Towards that end we have again expanded our adult basic education program with \$5.9 million targeted specifically to First Nations and Métis, and of that amount 25 per cent is allocated for on-reserve programming, Mr. Speaker.

Fully 68 per cent of the adult basic education learners in our province are First Nations or Métis. These students are continuing to learn and to prepare themselves for the workplace. In 2012-2013, 13.8 per cent of the apprentices in this province identified as Aboriginal descent. That's close to what Stats Canada said the percentage of . . . [inaudible] . . . in our province is, at 15.6 per cent. Yes, we have more to do, but our programs are working.

Mr. Speaker, our programs are working, but in order to fully assess how successful they are, we need to know where we have come from. Mr. Speaker, under that NDP government, First Nations off-reserve unemployment was at its highest level in March of 2006. A staggering 29 per cent of Aboriginal people were unemployed.

The education gap actually widened from 1996 to 2006. The high school completion rate gap for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students went from 17.3 per cent to 21.6 per cent. The gap was even worse when you consider just First Nations students, as it grew from 20.1 per cent to 27 per cent.

Self-employed Aboriginal people declined from '01 to '06 to approximately 2 per cent. Now let's compare that — or I should say contrast that — to what has been happening in Saskatchewan since we took office. Aboriginal employment continues to grow for the 14th month in a row. In March, it's up 800 people, and that adds to the 42,400 that were employed here in Saskatchewan in February. Mr. Speaker, that amounts to a total increase, since we took office in '07, of 24 per cent.

Aboriginal youth employment shows 900 more jobs than one year ago, a sizable increase of 10.8 per cent. We are very pleased to see that northern Saskatchewan, 44 per cent of Cameco's workforce is of Aboriginal descent, further proof that our programs and the programs that we are partnered with industry are working. They are producing jobs for our Aboriginal people.

And, Mr. Speaker, these jobs are not only being created in the North. Right here in Regina, according to the Regina & District Chamber Of Commerce, the rate for First Nations population employment in recent years has grown in the age group 25 to 64 from 41 per cent to 62 per cent. And that's a figure from the *ChamberLink* publication in September of 2013.

In wrapping up here, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add a few points. Our efforts in the education sector are working. In February 2014, 2,000 students in the U of S were self-declared Aboriginal descent. That's approximately 10 per cent of the total enrolment of that institution. And further to that, a total of 15,000 Aboriginal students are enrolled in various post-secondary institutions in this province, and that's an impressive increase of 19 per cent since '08-09.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that we don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk. Our Crowns are actively recruiting and hiring Aboriginal employees. Currently 14 per cent of the workforce is now Aboriginal, again very close to what Stats Canada says our percentage of Aboriginal people in the province are at 15.6. Furthermore in the last five years, 21 per cent of external hires are of Aboriginal descent. Very, very worthy to note that, Mr. Speaker.

Again I'd like to just make one short comment about an Aboriginal youth symposium that I attended earlier this spring in Saskatoon. I had the opportunity to speak to 17 young youth, Aboriginal people, between the ages of 18 and 29. This was the first ever Aboriginal symposium held, and it was in conjunction with the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to say that our government contributed \$20,000 to that symposium and let me tell you, those young people at that symposium definitely are going to be the future leaders of this province.

This government's total program funding for First Nations and Métis for 2014-15 is \$189.2 million, an increase of 4.4 million from last year, Mr. Speaker. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we ensure that all First Nations people have opportunity to participate in all of these facilities available in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports this government's actions and

policies to foster greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

That this Assembly supports this government's actions and policies to foster greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to have the opportunity to rise this afternoon in the House, or I guess still this morning, and have an opportunity to discuss the motion that has been brought forward. There's a number of concerns with the motion, and I want to take the short time that's allocated to me to address a few of those concerns.

For 17 years I had the honour, before becoming an elected official, to work with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada as their legal adviser for the Department of Justice Canada, and during that time we saw the successful implementation of Saskatchewan Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement.

When I started working there, the agreement had been signed and I was involved with some of the first additions to reserve under the program. And you know, there were certainly a lot of issues to be worked out during that time. And I think at the day, you know, all governments were engaged in a significant way to ensure that the program succeeded.

But one of the things that I worked on a lot was the economic development projects that First Nations identified. And the Saskatchewan Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement has given those First Nations with outstanding entitlements a great opportunity to seek out and find economic development opportunities that would be situated on-reserve. And I think one of the most significant pieces of the framework agreement, when they finally broke through the difficulties that had come up because all the available land had been dispersed, one of the breakthrough points for the framework agreement was that bands could actually buy land anywhere in Saskatchewan and it didn't have to be contiguous to their reserves.

This is a remarkable achievement, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think that many people in the province or even in Canada really appreciate the significance of that. Because what happened when we gave First Nations that opportunity — and we know that a lot of the First Nations home reserves are in fairly remote areas where opportunities for economic development are not all that easy to come by — then the ability for them to purchase land closer to economic activity in the province has made a significant difference.

[11:15]

And there's a couple of notable examples, I think, of where this

has occurred where First Nations have done very, very well and been able to pursue their own economic development opportunities as a First Nation. And I think it's making a significant difference in their political and cultural and all aspects of their life as a First Nation.

One of the ones I'd like to single out and I think is really important is the grasslands gas station in Saskatoon that many of us drive by all the time. It's the Shell station . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Grasswood, thank you for the correction. It's the Grasswood Shell, and it's actually 160 acres. I spent a lot of time working on that file and working hard to ensure that the concerns raised by all the parties, including the municipalities, the urban and rural municipalities in the area, were dealt with appropriately under the framework agreement.

But this one single reserve, and this is the English River First Nation, whose home reserve is in my colleague from the North's home riding, but they actually saw an opportunity. They had also bought some property within the city limits in Saskatoon and had done some work there as a mining support company. They bought a company that services the mines in northern Saskatchewan, and they decided to move out there.

And when you drive by there, Mr. Speaker, you can see a very proud First Nations economic development area. They have been improving it all along, and there's still a lot that they plan to do on those 160 acres that they have just south of the railway. I think that's an example of what First Nations have been asking for, is the opportunity to do it themselves. And I think the treaty land entitlement agreement has certainly given that opportunity to many, many First Nations who have been able to establish an entitlement under that program.

Another good example, I think, of economic development opportunities that First Nations have pursued and been successful with, with a lot of hard work and a lot, a lot, a lot of negotiations with all levels of government, are the casinos, the on-reserve casinos. And again, Mr. Speaker, in my time working for the federal government I was able to be involved in the Prince Albert casino's establishment as an on-reserve casino; the one in Yorkton, that was a specific claim that wasn't under treaty land entitlement; and also the one in Swift Current and the one in North Battleford. White Bear casino had already been established by the time I started working. But I think it's a good example of how, when a First Nation has a dream and they have the ability to reach the dream, that they will be able to succeed.

Another very, very good example of that is the Whitecap Dakota First Nation just south of Saskatoon, where they established not only a casino but a beautiful golf course. And I understand they're now moving forward with a major hotel complex. And these kinds of projects I think First Nations are proud of. And they're able to point to them and say, we can do this, we can do this ourselves if we're given the opportunity. That leads to a number of other on-reserve economic opportunities that First Nations are pursuing, and I think we'll continue to see those in the future.

So I think my point, Mr. Speaker, is that First Nations can do this if given the opportunity. And the treaty land entitlement program has certainly afforded them that opportunity. But what

we see from this government is that they're not willing to go outside that particular box.

And a good example of that is in the community pastures program. And we know that when the federal government dumped the entire community pastures program a couple of years ago, many of the First Nation leaders and First Nation people interested in economic development and opportunities for their members came forward and said look, this is a good opportunity for us. And they came forward with a proposal, and they brought it to the table. And they were downright rejected, and they weren't even given the time of day by the minister. So I think that's an example of this government not even wanting to entertain the opportunity for First Nations to get engaged in different kinds of enterprises in this province.

We know that there is still a significant education gap for First Nations. It's stark. It's startling. It's very, very concerning, Mr. Speaker. And we have people like economic analysts like Eric Howe from the University of Saskatchewan who actually put the numbers together and analyzed it, and we know that if we could significantly reduce the gap by ensuring that First Nations children finish high school and get those opportunities of advanced education, that we would actually bring more money into our provincial coffers than even the potash industry is bringing in. And that's pretty significant, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We know that gap still exists. We don't see a whole lot on the part of this government to make any significant efforts to reduce that gap. We know they should be pushing harder with the federal government, but also just taking it into their own hands and ensuring that the . . . I understand it's as high as a gap of 60 per cent or 40 per cent difference for the amount of funding that these schools are receiving. And that's very, very concerning.

We've heard my colleague from Cumberland repeatedly bring forward a petition from the people in the North about owning their own home. We know that this is something that gives stability. And there's all kinds of reports that are available on homelessness and the effects of high rental costs for people that are living below the poverty line. And we see these stories this week, even here in the Queen City, of seniors that are homeless. And this is something that I think has not been dealt with adequately at all by this government. So we're concerned about that.

We know the rental purchase option program was working. It was giving northern people the pride they needed in owning their own home through a significant program. And it was just heartlessly cut without any consideration for the impact it would have on people that had engaged in the program, that believed that this was a way for them to have the pride and dignity of owning their own home. It was an opportunity that was snatched away, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was a shameful example of the misunderstanding on the part of this government of what's important to northerners and ways that we can actually set northerners forward on the first step to independence and economic independence.

We know that homelessness and poverty are some of the most significant social issues that are facing our people today, especially and particularly in a time when we know the

economy is doing so well. And unfortunately I think, when we talk about lean, Mr. Speaker, there's the need to walk the gamba here a little bit and go to the gamba when we talk about homelessness. And I would like to challenge the members of Executive Council to think about that and to actually go and see what the conditions are that many people are living in on-reserve and actually experience maybe some one or two days in the lives of those clients under this lean kind of government that we have.

We would also suggest perhaps spending a night or two with some homeless people and trying to find out. And indeed one of our members or citizens in Saskatoon right now is undergoing a challenge to live below the poverty line. Her and her husband are trying to eat on \$1.75 a day. And her blog is very interesting, and I would suggest everybody take a look at it.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity for comment, and I'll pass it on to the next speaker.

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

**Ms. Campeau:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is with great honour that I rise today to speak to the motion:

That this Assembly supports this government's actions and policies to foster greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy.

And just listening to what the member opposite, the few points that she made towards the end of her speech, I just want to reiterate — and I'm not sure if I've said this in the House and I probably have — but I actually have lived on a reserve before. And I'm probably the only member in this House that's lived on-reserve before. And I've also been homeless, so just to let that be on the record.

And I'd also like to reiterate that Aboriginal populations are dispersed across the province, not just in the northern area of Saskatchewan.

So in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., their destiny is tied to our destiny, and our success in this province is dependent on the success of Aboriginal people in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, our government is cognizant of this. And this is why, in this year's budget, the 2014 budget highlights are . . . And I think I need to read this again because this does not seem to get across the floor very often, or they're not listening, of how much money is in our budget for this year.

So 189.2 million is for targeted program funding for both individuals and organizations that benefit First Nations and Métis people, up to 4.4 million or 2.4 per cent compared to last year. And our government is investing 49 million in funding directly for First Nations and Métis education training. With this year's budget, this amounts to over 295 million since we took office.

I hear a lot of rhetoric across the floor and have heard in the last decade and also heard from family members who are older than me, who have lived through the effects of what the NDP government have put in place in order, you know, for



Aboriginal people. So I just want to let the members across the floor . . . the difference between us is they're rhetoric and ours is action.

We also have 6 million for the joint task force improving education and employment outcomes, and 5.4 million for targeted pre-K programs, an increase over 1.2 million over last year. And these increases keep coming, Mr. Speaker: 76.6 million in gaming agreements, an increase of 3 million over last year. And as a graduate of SIIT, and also GDI [Gabriel Dumont Institute] has seen 4.1 and 4.2 per cent increases compared to the previous budget in Northlands regional college. And I just want to reiterate across the floor again, there's nothing wrong with community college education because that opened the door for me to get an actual degree and also a graduate degree.

So since the beginning of our first term in government, employment for off-reserve Aboriginals has increased by 24.7 per cent. And in February, Aboriginal employment was up forty-two, four hundred, the highest record for the month. In March, off-reserve Aboriginal employment grew to 14th consecutive month, added 800 more workers to the payroll, increasing 1.9 per cent over last year. And I'd appreciate it if the member across the floor would listen to what I had to say, instead of chirping across the floor. And Aboriginal youth also found success in March of this year, with 900 jobs added to the job market compared to last March, an increase of 10.8 per cent in the 10th consecutive month of year-over-year increases.

So adult basic education, I also benefited from adult basic education because I was one of those ones who left school early and started a family early. So 5.9 per cent is targeted specifically for First Nations and Métis learners to continue to close education and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. And I think, I believe it's more effective when somebody actually has gone through what the members across the floor speak about in terms of having to access this programming in order for education . . . to get an education and for that to open the doors for success.

So approximately 25 per cent of the ABE [adult basic education] budget is allocated for on-reserve programs, which is a first. This government has chosen not to let jurisdictions get in the way of making sure that our Aboriginal population can access this ABE.

So apprenticeship training, Aboriginal participation increased to 1,383 in 2012-13, which represents 13.8 per cent of total apprentices. I have a few members of my family who are apprenticing right now, and they've been able to look after their families as well as eventually maybe even buy a house once they are done their apprenticeship. So this exceeds the 4.3 per cent of the total Canadian population that identified as Aboriginal in the 2011 national household survey and close to Saskatchewan's 15.6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to travel with the Minister of Advanced Education across the province and listen to youth last summer, and their concerns, and what roadblocks are definitely . . . what are they facing in order for them to access ABE programs or post-secondary or training programs. And you know, some of those consultations, we were able to come back and pass on to our colleagues here and a lot of it's

reflected in this budget.

So this government is very concerned about the Aboriginal employment rate in our province, and we recognize the correlation between education and employment. Aboriginal participation in the economy is critical for the future growth of prosperity of Saskatchewan.

And there was the challenge, you know, to Executive Council to go and, you know, spend a night on a reserve. I challenge the members across the floor to do the same, you know, to actually go spend, you know, more than one night on a reserve as well as, maybe even in the summertime. You know, we have a lot of cultural things going on and we have, you know, we have ceremonies where we go into the bush and fast. And maybe perhaps a few of them would like to come along. More than welcome. I'm from a community that's very welcoming and should they want to participate, definitely.

I would love for them to come along and to see and also to listen to a different perspective because at this one particular . . . And I've told this story before. Last summer I had a group of female elders basically sit down with me and let me know, you know, the difference between their grandchildren and their children, the future in terms of the employment opportunities since this government has come into office, which is very significant. And it's very meaningful and it means a lot for them to pretty much let me know, you know, what's affecting them and not just rhetoric and not just academics who study and actually don't experience what, you know, the First Nations and Métis world is.

[11:30]

And, Mr. Speaker, I come from, you know, one of the oldest Métis families in Saskatchewan as well. So we have a history here, you know — my dad's family, the Campeau family. But I also am very well tied into my First Nation, Yellow Quill First Nation, which is very, very rich in our cultural preservation. And we've been able to do a lot of things what is considered old style and not contemporary cultural preservation that's been passed down. So I'm very proud to be part of Yellow Quill and I'm very, very proud to be Saulteaux, and as well as acknowledge my Cree side on my dad's side.

So you know, I've been able to, you know . . . It's like two worlds apart in terms of how my Campeau family embraced economic development and how they've been able to use that in order to move forward and also, you know, create a legacy. My uncle, Clarence Campeau, has been able to create an economic development legacy moving forward for Métis people.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, this government is . . . We know the value of including our Aboriginal population in, you know, the success. We don't claim to be, you know, the reason for a lot of the entrepreneurship activities that have gone on. But definitely we would like to foster and encourage that, support as well, and definitely, you know, working trying to help, you know, fill the gap and, you know, narrow it in terms of education and training.

So with that, I'm very supportive of this motion, and I thank you for letting me speak to it. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join in the debate, the 75-minute debate in terms of talking about the greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy, Mr. Speaker, which is very, very important that we do.

And I want to talk about four or five different areas that I think we need to do a historical romp, if you will, in terms of some of the actions of this particular government and their previous cousins. The conservative governments have certainly hindered the First Nations and Métis populations over the years and some of the actions that they have undertaken caused great harm to the First Nations and Métis people.

I listened with interest to what the member just spoke about in terms of the First Nations and Métis points that she was raising. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to send to the member a couple of articles I think are really important, that the people that may be watching this, we need to refresh their memory on a number of things and maybe even refresh her memory.

The first article I want to send over, Mr. Speaker, is an article being done by Murray Mandryk, which is written in reference to the resource revenue-sharing issue that people were talking about when we addressed the whole notion of First Nations involvement with the economy. It's very relevant. And the headline reads, "Wall writes off First Nations." That's the headline. And the reason why I think it's important to reflect what the article is talking about is the last election, the Premier got up and he made an election issue on resource revenue sharing for First Nations people, an issue that is meant to divide the people of Saskatchewan, which was unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

And the second article I want to send to the member, Mr. Speaker, which is really important, Mr. Speaker, is another article. And the article reads, "Sask. Party candidate apologizes over First Nations remark." And, Mr. Speaker, I want to send both of these articles over to the member that just spoke about what the NDP have done to hurt the First Nations and Métis people, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's really important that we also remember that during the Devine era, the province spoke to a number of First Nations people in which they talked about potash opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan. The then premier at the time spoke about giving the First Nations communities 7 per cent of the action, if you will — he used that phrase — over the potash development of Saskatchewan. And once the Tories were elected under Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker, the First Nations leaders never heard a mention of that 7 per cent revenue-sharing plan that they had negotiated and agreed to with the premier at the time, which was Grant Devine. That was one of the historical wrongs that the First Nations suffered under many of the Conservative governments, cousins I might add to the Sask Party.

Now we also talk about some of the cuts to the programs in northern Saskatchewan and also southern Saskatchewan. The member is absolutely right. We know that there are many First

Nations and Métis people throughout the whole entire province of Saskatchewan. We know that. We don't have to take a lesson from her.

What's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that if you look at what was done to specific areas of the province historically that negatively affected First Nations and Métis people, the conservative governments across the way and the Sask Party have done more irreparable harm to First Nations and Métis people in the history of any political party. And that's why on this side of the Assembly we often ask ourselves, why would anybody of Aboriginal ancestry defend and endorse the Sask Party who have done so many things wrong, historically wrong to the First Nations and Métis people?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go into the detail about the articles because obviously one article talks about a comment being made, and the individual has since apologized. And First Nations and Métis people are very generous people and they accept apologies. So I won't read into the record what was said. But I want to share with that member these two articles, and I hope one of the Pages are able to deliver that to the member that just spoke.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the examples we talked about. When we talked about the Cameco comment, when the Premier said to a packed audience in Prince Albert that if the First Nations want an answer to the economic woes, something to the effect of that, that the answer is Cameco, well, Mr. Speaker, that just shows the short-sightedness of the Saskatchewan Party when dealing with the First Nations and Métis people. And many people were very angry over that comment.

You look at some of the First Nations attack ads at the last election, Mr. Speaker, the First Nations attack ads that were under way by the Saskatchewan Party. And is that bringing the people of Saskatchewan together? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not.

When you look at in northern Saskatchewan when you're kicking out working families from their homes . . . They have the opportunity to buy their homes, Mr. Speaker. What this government is doing, they're saying no, you're going to rent forever and we're going to increase your rent for years to come. And you'll never seek home ownership, you'll never achieve home ownership in northern Saskatchewan because that party cancelled that program, Mr. Speaker.

And then you look at the lack of support in general for First Nations overall, whether it's roads in northern Saskatchewan and even pavement for some of the southern bands, Mr. Speaker. Nothing, Mr. Speaker, is being supported that the First Nation and Métis leaders have put forward, by the Saskatchewan Party government. And that's why on this side of the Assembly we sit here and we shake our heads when we hear comments of that sort. And, Mr. Speaker, First Nations and Métis leaders cannot find in any way, shape, or form how they can endorse and support the right wing government of the Saskatchewan Party or the conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue I think is really important is that in Ottawa right now there is a huge fight. There's a huge fight

around First Nations education. The chiefs and many of the people that are impacted by the decision by the Harper government to deal with First Nations education, Mr. Speaker, they're in Ottawa right now fighting. And, Mr. Speaker, not a peep from the Saskatchewan Party, not a peep from their Premier, not a peep from that member or any of the members across to help the First Nations people. As the Government of Saskatchewan . . . They just finished talking about the Government of Saskatchewan. As the Government of Saskatchewan, they have not afforded any help whatsoever to the First Nations leaders out there that have taken on Ottawa over the control of education on First Nations lands, in particular First Nations schools.

Now, Mr. Speaker, look at all the examples. Look at all of the examples. The history of wrongs created by the right wing government of the conservatives or, in this case, the Saskatchewan Party. They have continually, they have continually attacked the First Nations and Métis people because it's in their politics to do so. It's in their best political interest to do so. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not leadership. That is not leadership in any way, shape, or form. The challenge that Saskatchewan has to do is we have to bring all our people together. "From many peoples, strength" is the provincial motto. That's what we undertake to determine as a province. We should practise it. We should preach it. We should show it through leadership, Mr. Speaker, and we're not getting any example of that and any support from this current government when it talks about First Nations and Métis people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to also talk about the Clarence Campeau Development Fund. There is reference to the Clarence Campeau Development Fund in the sense that today we see that the Clarence Campeau Development Fund is doing very well. They are functioning well. They are operating their entity professionally. They are sending resources out to the community. And, Mr. Speaker, before the government starts patting themselves on the back, those revenues came from the gaming agreement, and that gaming framework agreement was negotiated by the NDP with FSIN and with the Métis Nation. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what's happening with the First Nations and the Métis, it has absolutely nothing to do with the government. It has everything to do with the booming economy and the fact that many of these industries and sectors that create these employment opportunities need First Nations and Métis people.

Now I'll say this on my final comment, Mr. Speaker. It's Professor Howe from the University of Saskatchewan done an in-depth study, done an in-depth study and determined that if you have proper engagement — which is not happening now, which is not happening now — if you have proper engagement with the First Nations and Métis people across this province, it could mean as much as \$90 billion to our provincial economy. And I want to make sure it's 90 billion, not 90 million — \$90 billion.

So it makes not only fairness sense to engage the First Nations and Métis people to the extent they should. It makes economic sense, Mr. Speaker. You need to empower the community leaders. You need to empower the young people. You need to train them and give them the proper resources instead of gutting programs, instead of sitting idly by as the federal government

taxes First Nations and Métis communities, instead of trying to protect and to prevent any harm to a party that historically done many, many things wrong to the First Nations and Métis people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we see that evidence all the time. We see it every single day in this Assembly. And how anybody could stand up and protect and defend the cuts that the Saskatchewan Party government have undertaken to many of the First Nations programs and the Métis community programs, how they have evicted working families out of northern communities and out of their northern homes, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on and on.

And for the life of me, I still can't understand why anybody could stand up and defend the history of the conservative government, or in this case, the right wing Saskatchewan Party when it talked about dealing with the First Nations and Métis people. She will never convince me nor convince anybody in my area that what they're doing is correct for the First Nations and Métis people. It is absolutely wrong.

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

**Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's an honour for me as well to enter into this debate on moving this motion:

That this Assembly supports this government's actions and policies to foster greater Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's worth noting that in order for anyone to participate in the economy, whether it's the provincial or the national economy, the first thing that you require, Mr. Speaker, is a strong and vibrant economy that people would like to participate in, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to say that here in Saskatchewan at the moment and for the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, that our economy has been hitting on virtually all cylinders.

Mr. Speaker, we have an economy that is reliant on export markets — whether it be manufactured goods; whether it be agriculture, Mr. Speaker, agricultural exports in the raw product or in the value-added product; whether it be lumber and timber industry as it comes back on stream, Mr. Speaker; our fertilizer exports, most notably potash; and as well some of our energy products that we export out of this province, Mr. Speaker. But the fact remains that the economy in Saskatchewan right now is very vibrant, very strong, and one that has the potential for all members, most notably Aboriginal members of the province to participate in.

This government, Mr. Speaker, with the policies that we develop will continue to foster that strong economic activity through a number of different initiatives, Mr. Speaker. And many of these initiatives were communicated in the last couple of years, most notably through the Saskatchewan plan for growth, where the growth plan talked about the different ministries, Mr. Speaker, and goals for Saskatchewan to ensure that we continue to foster this economy, not just lay the groundwork so to speak, Mr. Speaker, but very specific goals on where the Saskatchewan economy can go in the next number

of years.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, action items in the plan for growth often show up in the budgets. And most notably in this last budget that was released by our Finance minister just a number of days ago in the Assembly here, there was \$189 million in this budget, Mr. Speaker, that was dedicated to initiatives that directly benefit First Nations and Métis people in the province of Saskatchewan. This includes \$6 million or a doubling of the funding for initiatives related to the joint task force on First Nations and Métis education and employment.

Mr. Speaker, we know, as people of Saskatchewan and as a Government of Saskatchewan, that participation in the economy is critical by Aboriginal people and by all people of Saskatchewan. It is critical to the growth and prosperity of Saskatchewan. We want to be a meaningful partner with not only the FSIN, but with tribal councils, with chiefs, with First Nations businesses as well as individual entrepreneurs to try to deal with the issues as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we see some progress in these areas, but we always do realize there is more that needs to be done. But there is, Mr. Speaker, some signs of improvement in the last number of years, and I'd like to allude to a couple of statistics here. And first of all, the off-reserve Aboriginal employment was, in last September was 12 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The off-reserve Aboriginal unemployment was 12 per cent, Mr. Speaker, down from 14.6 per cent a year previous.

The Aboriginal youth employment was up 1,600 jobs, Mr. Speaker, to a total of 10,500. This represents an 18 per cent increase year over year, Mr. Speaker, with Aboriginal youth. This is important, as the youth of Saskatchewan are the future of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that they are participating in the vibrant Saskatchewan economy is a tremendous sign.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to allude to a number of engagement pieces I think that I see up in the area where I live, up in the forest fringe I guess you would call it, Mr. Speaker, or the northern part of Saskatchewan.

And the member opposite alluded to Cameco. Well, Mr. Speaker, I did pull off a couple of facts just off Cameco's web page. In 2011, about 50 per cent of the employees at the northern Saskatchewan Cameco operations were from the local communities, Mr. Speaker, in the North. And 74 per cent of the services to Cameco's northern mine sites, which is approximately \$393 million, went to northern businesses, Mr. Speaker, which speaks to the economy that is available for many to participate in.

Mr. Speaker, a little closer to where I live, I see the investment opportunities that have been undertaken by the Muskeg Lake First Nations, Mr. Speaker, and Chief Cliff Tawpisin there, whom I know quite well, Mr. Speaker, with their purchase of some property in Saskatoon and some of the property development that is taking place there, Mr. Speaker, into the service industry and the property management industry. But also, Mr. Speaker, through a TLE [treaty land entitlement]

claim, they have a property known as Pitihkwakew Lake, Mr. Speaker, where there's an opportunity for camping and some regional fishing and whatnot, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's also opportunities in the area where I live with regards to agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And the agriculture economy the last couple of years has been quite strong. It's the economy quite often in rural Saskatchewan.

And Mr. Speaker, I see opportunities where everyone has been engaged, but most notably to this motion, there's been Aboriginal engagement in all parts of that economy — whether it be in the transport of the product out of the area, Mr. Speaker; whether it be in the crop services and protection industry, Mr. Speaker, and the supply of those crop production services to producers, Mr. Speaker; whether it be in the grain procurement end of the agriculture industry; whether it be in the manufacturing end, Mr. Speaker, on the north side of Saskatoon; or whether it be right in the primary production end of agricultural products, Mr. Speaker, either working with other producers or producing themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the timber industry starts to take shape along the forest fringe, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw some attention to a forest management group in the area, Mr. Speaker, known as Sakâw Askiy Management, which is actually Cree, Mr. Speaker, for forest land. And I'd like to read just a couple of paragraphs off their website, Mr. Speaker, which explains just a little bit about what Sakâw Askiy Management is:

Sakâw Askiy Management Inc. is a unique partnership of six forest companies with Saskatchewan operations and two First Nations partners. The entity was formed to jointly assume the FMA and its management responsibilities.

Sakâw shareholders bring a proven track record in business and sustainable forest management, along with the traditional knowledge and investment interests of First Nations. Sakâw itself does not own any mills, but several of its member companies own processing facilities in Saskatchewan which will use timber from . . . [this FMA].

Mr. Speaker, I've toured most of . . . Just the members, Mr. Speaker: Carrier Forest Products, Edgewood Forest Products, Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp, L&M Forest Products, Meadow Lake OSB, NorSask Forest Products, as well, Mr. Speaker, as A.C. Forestry and Montreal Lake Business Ventures.

I've toured many of these actual sites, Mr. Speaker, and I must say that First Nations engagement in the timber industry is all throughout the levels of the industry, Mr. Speaker, from ownership of a number of these mills and enterprises, to the forestry operations in the forest itself, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, and to working in the mill, as well as all of the spinoff industries that come as the timber industry ramps up, Mr. Speaker, and the trucking and the service industries, Mr. Speaker. And again it speaks to the fact of having a strong economy provides opportunities for everyone and, in particular, Aboriginal engagement in that economy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to address one item with regards to investment in the North that came up in the last statements,

Mr. Speaker. And I would like to talk just a little bit about municipal revenue sharing in the North, Mr. Speaker. And I have a couple of communities here that I would like to mention. And the first is Air Ronge, Mr. Speaker, it's up from 2007 and '08 numbers, Mr. Speaker, 213 per cent in that community; Ile-a-la-Crosse, 88 per cent; Buffalo Narrows, up 133 per cent; Patuanak, up 101 per cent; and Stony Rapids, up 157 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The investment in the North, and there's other investments, it was just an example of one.

Mr. Speaker, the facts remain when it comes to Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy. Aboriginal unemployment is down. Aboriginal youth employment is up 18 per cent, as a matter of fact. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan employment numbers are leading the nation. This is due to a prosperous economy that we're fortunate to have here in the province. People are able to participate in it, including First Nations people, Mr. Speaker. And this government will do everything it can do to foster that strong Saskatchewan economy going forward. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's an underlying premise for all of the discussions in this House today that Aboriginal involvement in the economy is crucial for the future of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, what's difficult about talking about this is that so often when the government sets out some nice words about this, they then come forward with actions that cause a great deal of difficulty for First Nations and Métis people, but also for the rest of us in this province who have this sick feeling in our gut about what the government has done.

I think the biggest example of that is the number of ads that have a racist undertone to them that are funded by the Sask Party and shown again and again and again on the television at exactly the time when the Premier's out trying to talk about how we need to build this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think all members across need to look very carefully at how they campaign, how they create divisions in our community, and how they say and do these things. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's about that issue, it's about that issue of how we make sure we include everybody in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan is that they have lived here a long time. They belong to this place. They can teach us about how to connect to this place, how to be part of the land. And, Mr. Speaker, we have learned much about that from the stories and from the things that have happened in this community. But unfortunately, when we get into some of these discussions, there's a great deal of hope and then things pull back. Now we see it both on the national level and on the provincial level.

One of the areas where we know, from some of the research that has been done now, that a decision made by this government has had, well more than a couple of years experience with it, that was the decision to cancel the Aboriginal employment development program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that particular program had a very clear

focus, and it worked well. And there were many people who were involved with that who said, why are you doing this? We still don't really have an answer, but what we do have is a University of Saskatchewan professor, Eric Howe, who took a look at the effect of the elimination of this program. And he said that this was a mistake and that the government should reinstate it.

Now when the program was cancelled, there were many words about how we're going to replace it with something else, we're going to do some other things. But, Mr. Speaker, we haven't seen that. And so, Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that we have is that sense that things go wrong.

Another example is from northern Saskatchewan. In 2000, there was a program put forward which allowed effectively First Nations and Métis people living in communities to rent to own their properties. They paid rent to effectively a house owned, I think through Sask Housing. And the expectation was, as they bettered their position, they'd be in a position to buy that home.

All of a sudden, the government cancelled that program. I don't think there was any discussion in the communities, and there wasn't a discussion or even a thought about how this policy change affects northern communities. Because one of the aspects of this is that . . . And one of the parts that I think we're all proud of, of Saskatchewan people, is how many of the jobs in the northern mining industry and other parts of industry in the North are held by northern people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that my former colleague or our former colleague, Keith Goulet, worked on that issue for years to make sure that the jobs would be for those people in northern communities as a first choice. Obviously many skills and things were needed from all over Western Canada to make sure the projects were developed. But part of the I guess whole program was that there would be housing, good housing in many of these northern communities. And that housing was being built and developed and, as we know, where you don't have a road into a community sometimes, or you don't have a good road or you don't have an all-year road, the housing costs are higher to build.

And so practically people knew that they could, with their good jobs in some of the northern mines, eventually buy their house. Well all of a sudden that policy was changed. People who had been working on that premise for quite a number of years were told no, we're not doing that anymore. And in fact we're going to charge you a rent that's dramatically increased and makes it almost, well it makes it impossible to live in these communities.

And so what you then have is people choosing to move out of the North or stay up in the North. And it's those kinds of things that cause all kinds of difficulties for people in our province. Now practically what we all want I think is that we have a very strong First Nation and Métis community that works in business, works in education, works in health care. And we have many things to be proud of, but it's these sort of gut-wrenching decisions that hit our whole community. And it's in election campaigns or at other times, when one of our major parties playing this race card, that it causes a lot of difficulty.

[12:00]

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that what all of us need to recognize is that this is our community for all of us. And practically what we have to do is make sure that everybody's included. And that means that we fight hard as a province dealing with First Nations education issues. How is it that a huge part of our population who go to school on First Nations have so much, so many fewer resources for their education than the children of the rest of us? That's not right. Why do we allow that to happen? I mean it's a very difficult issue because you end up with looking at the Constitution of Canada. But it's not tolerable, I don't think on any level, for that type of a situation to continue. We see it, and not as much on the health side because there's a substantial integration of health services, but there are some disparities there that we also need to look at. But all of these things will make our community stronger.

And we know that some of the estimates that you hear, it's an annual theme or I wouldn't say . . . It's a constant theme of discussion with the chamber of commerce about how to have more people involved in all of the aspects of the community, both as business owners and others but also as consumers. Because the more people that we have who are part of our community, the better it is for our whole community. So practically, what we have to do is continue to make sure that we work hard to include everyone.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to ask a question on this topic. I think it is a very important topic for us to be discussing here in the legislature. I would like to pose the following question to the member for Shellbrook. Here it is: University of Saskatchewan Professor Eric Howe released a report last spring that states, "The government's decision to cancel the Aboriginal employment development program was a mistake, and the government should reinstate it." Does the member agree with the professor, or does he stubbornly dismiss that academic study?

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

**Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to engagement in the provincial economy, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition governed the Saskatchewan economy they had no plan for growth for this economy. They had no plan for population growth in the economy. They didn't have faith in Saskatchewan's economy, and thereby they did not have faith in the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

They failed to invest in highways. They failed to invest in schools. They failed to invest in hospitals. And they failed to invest in training. Mr. Speaker, this failure prevented many from also investing in Saskatchewan's economy, including First Nations people.

This all happened under the period of time when the NDP had a policy for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine what would happen now, Mr. Speaker, when they don't have one?

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

**Mr. Parent:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been over a year since the NDP chose their leader, and still we have not heard the opposition's policy on Aboriginal economic engagement. So far all they do is flip-flop.

During the 2011 election campaign, the NDP pledged that they would push for a resource revenue-sharing agreement between the province and the First Nations community. A *Leader-Post* article from December 2011 quoted the member from Rosemont as saying that they were not continuing to push that agenda item. The very next day he was quoted in the same article saying that the revenue-sharing agreement stands as a viable mechanism to bring about the shared prosperity that the treaties had envisioned.

To the member from Athabasca: what is your party's policy on resource revenue-sharing agreement with the First Nations?

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, what's really important is First Nations leaders and Métis leaders have always strived to be part of the economy of Saskatchewan. They have always advocated that nobody wants a special deal, Mr. Speaker. We all want fairness. We want equality. Now what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that I find it surprising that members of the Saskatchewan Party stand up and make accusations about the NDP trying to work with First Nations and Métis people. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a history and we'll continue building on that rich history, Mr. Speaker.

But the First Nations leaders and the Métis people want to be involved with the economy. They want fairness. My question is to the member that just posed the question. Overall I want to ask him back, what has he got to say about the article that I sent over there for them to all have a look at, when the headline writes, "Wall writes off First Nations"? What is his comment, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — My question is for the member from The Battlefords. There must have been a discussion within the caucus opposite when they decided to run some of the ads that they ran over the last year, especially the ones that were attacking our new leader. And I would ask that member if he was part of that discussion and whether he agreed with the fact that these ads went ahead.

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

**Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with that premise that he's saying. I don't believe that our ads were racist ads or they were negative ads. We have been pointing out the things that we're doing for First Nations and Métis people across this province. Whether it's in the natives in the North, increasing our spending, for example in our highways revenue, highway spending for the North, \$40 million. That is almost double what

we're spending per person for the south side of this province. Those are the kind of things we're doing.

We heard earlier on discussions about the revenue sharing that member talked about. He likes history lessons. Historically the NDP have rejected resource revenue sharing for First Nations. However then when the panic was on in 2011 before the election, they thought it would be a good idea. Two days after election, the member from Rosemont said it wasn't a good idea. Two days after that he said it was a good idea. Where do they really stand, Mr. Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

**Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite continue to use scare tactics and misinformation for their own political gain. In regards to a possible memorandum of understanding with FSIN, the opposition accused us of "secret negotiation," when in fact the Leader of the Opposition was informed of the proposal three days after it was raised. They claimed our government was "ramming through a deal" when in fact they were informed that changes could happen in the fall. Roland Crowe, a senator for FSIN, was commenting on the NDP and was quoted in *The StarPhoenix* as saying they "failed us terribly, all for the sake of politics and three-minute clips."

To the member from Athabasca: what is your plan to empower First Nations to improve their education and economic development outcomes?

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well for starters, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't gut a bunch of programs that encourage Aboriginal employment and training opportunities throughout the entire province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

For starters, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't be kicking out working men and women in northern Saskatchewan from their homes because they simply can't afford rent, Mr. Speaker.

For starters, we wouldn't make deals with them as they did with the 7 per cent of potash revenues when Grant Devine was the minister, or the premier, and then gut that program as soon as the Conservatives got elected, Mr. Speaker.

And for starters, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't run a phone bank during the election that divided the people of Saskatchewan over the resource royalty revenue issues, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm going to ask that member that just asked the question, would he be willing to share with the opposition the transcripts of that phone bank when they phoned thousands of people of Saskatchewan during the election to ask them whether they want the resource royalty revenue-sharing agreement with the Indians, or the First Nations and Métis people? Will he share that transcript of what was said . . .

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, on March 21st, 2013, the Premier of this province was giving an address in Prince Albert. And this is what he said. He said:

You know, the best program for First Nations, Métis people in Saskatchewan is not a program at all — it's Cameco.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook whether he agrees with that statement and whether he agrees with his Premier's abdication of his responsibility to First Nations people.

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

**Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, one of the best programs for Aboriginal engagement in the provincial economy is the Saskatchewan provincial economy and the strength of it, Mr. Speaker. The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, the off-reserve Aboriginal unemployment rate is down. The youth Aboriginal employment rate in Saskatchewan is up.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have not been engaged in fostering the Saskatchewan economy and thereby they have not possessed the ability for anyone else to engage in that economy, Mr. Speaker. This is why Chief Perry Bellegarde stated at the signing of the new bilateral agreement with this government, and I quote, "By working co-operatively, we reinforce the principles of a peaceful coexistence and mutual respect as we create a future where First Nations people also benefit from the prosperous economy."

Mr. Speaker, the facts again, our Aboriginal unemployment is down, Mr. Speaker. Aboriginal youth employment in this province is up.

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Athabasca keeps answering what he wouldn't do. We're asking what would you do. What is your party's policy, current policy now on revenue resource sharing with First Nations? Answer that question.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, what's really important is that the member that looked around him would see that they have 49 MLAs and we have nine. We have nine. We have nine, so I think that makes you government. So as they'd say in northern Saskatchewan, figure it out.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we know in Saskatchewan right now First Nations people have an unemployment rate of almost 17 per cent and Métis people have an unemployment rate about half that, about 8.5 per cent. This is March 2014. That is three times the rate of non-First Nations and Métis people. To the

member for Rosthern-Shellbrook, how does he justify that figure?

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

**Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, again, in 2010, Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal employment . . .

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 606

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Chartier that **Bill No. 606** — *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to rise today and speak on Bill 606, a private member's bill, *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*. And I know my good friend and colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale's put a lot of thought into this, and I hope we all take some time over the next little while to really reflect on how important this is.

You know, we've seen good bipartisan efforts, especially when it comes to private member bills, and I that it's important for both sides of the House to put aside partisan thoughts on or stances on this issue and think what's really in the best interests for the residents in special care facilities and personal care homes. And many, many, by the vast majority of course are seniors, but some are not. And we hear those tragic circumstances where by chance of either an accident or some misfortune, younger people are part of personal care homes or special care facilities, but we all absolutely, absolutely deserve the dignity and respect of treatment, no matter what we find ourselves in. And in terms of that, I think this is an important bill.

And we've seen success in private member bills where they get passed, as we've seen with Howard's law and the asbestos registry. It seemed only to make sense. And I think of, for example, the reservist legislation that the other side put forward when they were in opposition, and we were able to take it and incorporate it into labour standards legislation that was before the House, and it worked out really well. But definitely the Sask Party at the time seized the opportunity to do the right thing, and they did. And we worked together.

But we've seen situations where a former minister of Agriculture . . . Or I've put forward legislation about protection

of service animals, and the minister of Agriculture at the time saw fit and thought it was a wise thing to incorporate it into the legislation that was before the House, and it worked out really well. And that's what we want at the end of the day, common sense solutions for the people of Saskatchewan. And that worked out well. We know that there were groups at that point who were advocating for protection for service animals. They were both the police service in terms of their canine unit, but also people with disabilities, their organizations for people who use service animals in a day-to-day situation. And they knew this was an important issue. It was above politics.

[12:15]

And this is the beauty of this Chamber and of private member bills, is that people can bring forward ideas. And I hope that we can take a look at this and say, this actually makes a lot of sense. And it's not just my colleague, and she's very . . . You know, we should really listen to her in that, but we know that the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan is actually advocating for such a thing. And we see that's happening right across Canada. So really it does make sense.

So I think when it comes time to vote, we should be voting in favour. And I would urge the other side to consider this and take some time and review Bill 606 and how important it is to do the right thing by our Saskatchewan residents who are living in special care facilities and personal care homes. It's an important thing but something that should not be voted on necessarily along party lines. It would be great if the Sask Party government endorsed it completely and said yes, we're going to be behind it.

But we've seen instances in the House this term, this session where, for example, around the P3 [public-private partnership] bill, which made a lot of sense, made a lot of sense, we still can't understand why the government would be against transparency and accountability and what would be the best interests of Saskatchewan citizens. But they felt that it was the thing to do. I wouldn't even say, you know, that was the right thing because I think that it doesn't make any sense at all. And this is what the beauty of private member bills are, that they really do address common sense solutions to problems that we know that are occurring.

And we have seen . . . And I just want to take a minute to reflect on the member from Saskatoon Riversdale who gave a great introduction to this bill, and I think that she laid it out so well on March 13th, 2014. And I want to reflect on some of the things she said on *Hansard* because I think that she really hit it on the mark in talking about what this bill really is all about. She talks about dignity, respect, and safety. And that's the concern that we're hearing and we hear too many times, too many times.

And sometimes we get the sense that a paternalistic attitude exists in too many homes. Now I wouldn't want to venture a guess at how many, but even if it's one home, that's not the proper attitude when it comes to dealing with our Saskatchewan people in these homes. People should be treated with dignity and respect, and really that's the key to being successful. It's really the key to a successful, welcoming, nurturing home. And all of our brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents



deserve such a situation.

And she reflects on her own parents. In my case, my mom, you know, is still with us, and she celebrated her 90th birthday back in November. We're very happy that's the situation. And she is living quite well. But we all worry about the situation that may happen where that's not the case, and we really empathize and sympathize with the folks who do find their parents or brothers and sisters in personal care homes because it's a tough, tough situation and we want to make that as best as we can, as best as we can. So this is what this bill talks about. But we've had too many situations where, and we know this has happened in the House, where people have come to the legislature to bring their concerns forward because it seems to be falling on deaf ears within the system. And we really need to take leadership and this is the opportunity for this Chamber to take leadership in passing Bill 606. I think it's important.

But when people come forward like Carrie Klassen over a year ago, and then came back again just a few short weeks ago, to talk about her experience with her mother . . . And she doesn't blame the staff, you know. She made it clear that even with the place at full staffing, it is still understaffed and people are left in unseemly situations, whether it deals with in terms of going to the bathroom, getting woken up in the morning, all of those things, to the point that people are having to quit their jobs so they can look after their parents. That's not the kind of situation we want to see in Saskatchewan. So this is why this bill of rights is so, so important. And we need to make sure that the situation we find out, as I said, our parents, grandparents, and others can't be tolerated.

So Carrie Klassen came and talked about her situation. But then I want to take a minute and just address — and this is something that I know my colleague from Riversdale talked about — the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan. And it was a final report that suggests and made six recommendations about this particular situation. And they entitled it, *Civil Rights in Saskatchewan Long-term Care Facilities*. And I quote, and this is May 2013. Elderly people, I quote:

Elderly people and others in long-term care are entitled to the same respect as other citizens . . .

Violation of civil rights of long-term residents is a . . . [form] of abuse . . . [which] may range from life threatening abuse to simple disrespect for the autonomy and privacy of residents . . .

They go on talk about:

The focus of this paper is on violations of the rights of residents, particularly when they do not involve physical abuse, and particularly when they may not be effectively addressed by . . . [existing] protocols . . .

They go on, and I quote: "New steps should be taken to ensure civil rights are recognized in long-term care." That's so, so critical. And I think we're at a point in Saskatchewan, you know, that we should step up. And we understand that you look across Canada, Ontario, Manitoba, BC [British Columbia], all have taken up this call.

So they have really made six proactive reports:

1. A residents' bill of rights should be required for all long-term care homes.
2. Legislation should set out a minimum standard for a residents' bill of rights, with each long-term care home drafting its own document.
3. Legislation should provide a default residents' bill of rights to apply in the event a long-term care home does not draft its own.
4. Each long-term care home should be required to prominently post its residents' bill of rights.
5. Legislation should provide an enforcement mechanism for the residents' bill of rights.
6. Reporting incidents of abuse against residents should be mandatory for staff and operators of long-term care homes . . .

So that's what it really talks about is proactive. They do talk about whether you need to have an independent agency. They felt not at this time and/or an independent advocate is not needed at this time.

But it goes and talks about how critically important this is. And we know that they have been talking about this for quite a while. And they talk about a report that has been dealt with at the federal, provincial, territorial ministers responsible for seniors talking about this. And they talk about studies across Canada.

And they talk about the issue that about paternalism, which I just alluded to, that we want to make sure that that's not the case in long-term care homes. In fact it's an atmosphere of dignity and respect. It talks about, quoting CNPEA [Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse] that "In institutional settings, such forms of abuse are not always obvious. Subtle emotional harms may occur such as treating older people like children . . . and disregarding their wishes."

So it goes on and talks about this is something that they've been talking about for almost ten years, 2006. So that would be coming up fairly quickly. So we really need to step up and do the right thing here.

So they talk about really how we need to improve education. This is a step towards improving living conditions. And training in abuse awareness provided to staff is uneven across the provinces, that in fact that this is something that needs to be consistent. And my colleague from Riversdale addressed the inconsistent, uneven treatment and services provided to residents needs to be, really needs to be addressed.

Now they talk about Manitoba having a really proactive approach. They say in Manitoba, all long-term care homes must develop a residents' bill of rights that meet a legislative standard. That's what we're suggesting here. But both Ontario and British Columbia have legislative specific bills of rights for long-term care residents.

So this is something that's really, really important. It says, and I quote:

The Commission prefers the Manitoba approach because it actively engages the facilities and residents in designing protections for civil rights. Engaging these partners will assist in furthering the education function of the bill of rights.

So that's a good thing. So, Mr. Speaker, it's not just my colleague from Riversdale who's brought this forward. No, this is something that the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan is advocating for. And I think it's time that we do step up and we do pass Bill 606.

It does talk about . . . And I just want to take a minute to reflect on the preamble because that really sets the tone for the bill:

WHEREAS residents in care have the right to dignity, respect and safety;

WHEREAS residents in care deserve basic guarantees of the quality of care they ought to receive;

WHEREAS residents in care have the right to individualized care that meets or exceeds minimum quality of care standards; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of the provincial government to ensure consistent standards of care in facilities throughout Saskatchewan.

So that's the whereas. That's the frame that my colleague is suggesting, and I think this is appropriate. This is really appropriate, talking about basic guarantees, that people do have the right to individual care standards.

But we also have minimum quality of care standards. You can have both. You can have both, and it's really important that we understand that it is the responsibility of the government to set minimum quality of care standards. And we've had debates, we've had questions in the House at length about this. We understand and we support and this Act calls for residents in care having individual care, and that being prescribed or written out, and that people understand that that's the case.

Best practices really indicate individualized care. But there has to be a base, a minimum quality of care that people cannot fall below, and that staffing really needs to be there to address at least that. That has to be addressed at the very minimum, but hopefully we can get to a higher standard than that.

So it talks about what a bill must contain, and of course care plans that:

are specific to each resident;

are based on their abilities, physical, social, and emotional needs . . . cultural and spiritual preferences

[but also] comply with the minimum quality of care standards established by the provincial government through regulations.

. . . the right of residents [are] to be treated with courtesy and respect in a way that promotes their dignity and individuality;

the right of residents to be sheltered, fed, dressed, groomed, and cared for in a manner consistent with their needs;

the right of residents or their supporters to have the right to give or refuse consent to treatment, including medication, in accordance with the law.

the rights of residents, subject to safety regulations and the privacy rights of other residents, to be encouraged to exercise their freedom of choice whenever possible, including the freedom to do the following:

exercise their choice of religion, culture, or language;

communicate with . . . [visitors and friends and family];

choose their recreational activities;

choose the personal items that . . . [they may keep in the rooms];

select the clothing to be worn each day [their food];

And the rights of residents of reasonable privacy, and the right to be provided with a safe and clean environment, and the right of residents or their supporters to transparency and accountability, including several other things.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important piece of legislation. And I do really want to call on both sides of the House to give some consideration of this. I hope this gets to a vote. And I do hope that it can have some success and that people can give this some due consideration because I think it is a bill that we should be all passing. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll now take my place and adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:30.]



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