



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

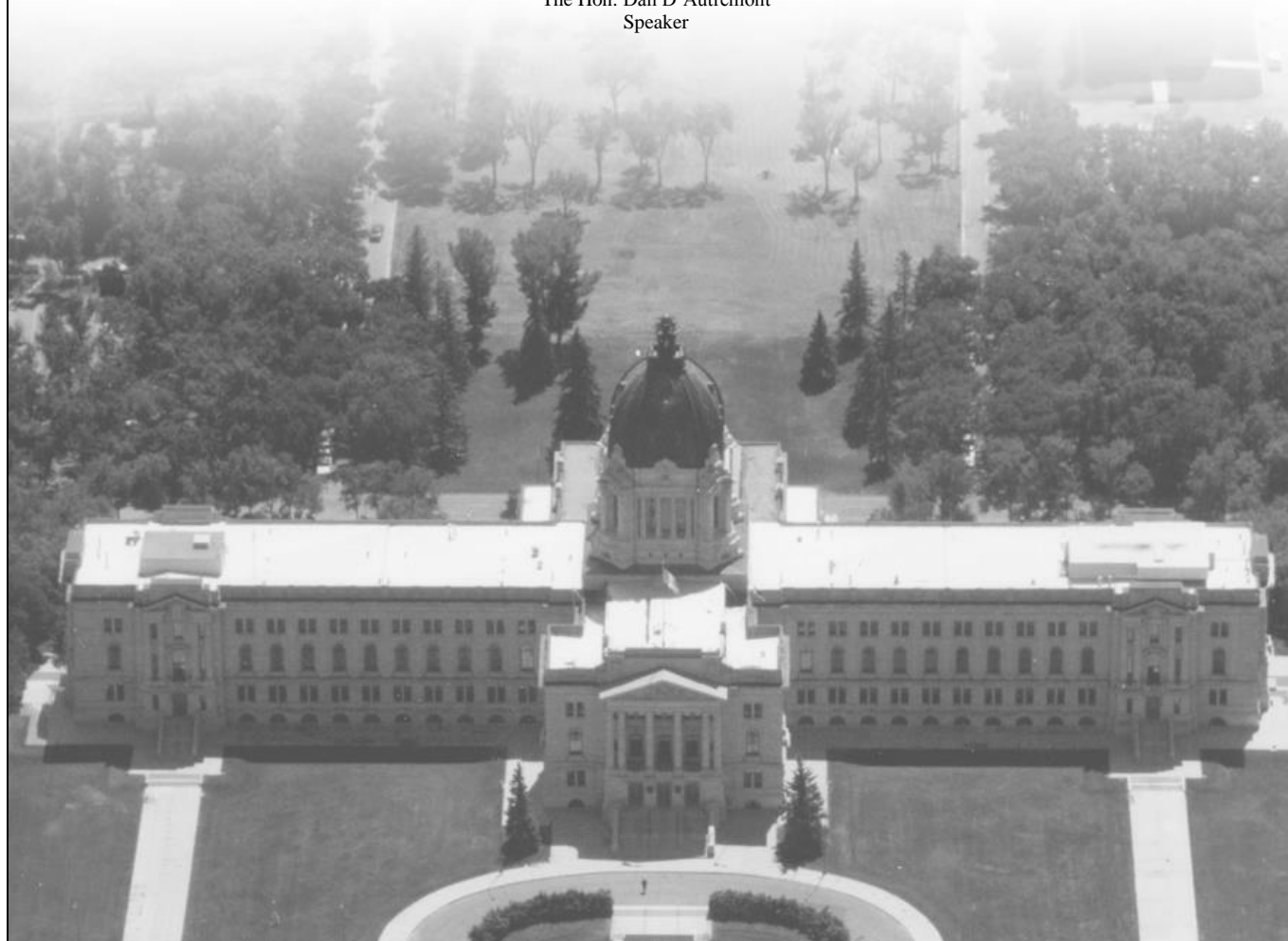
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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
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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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured this morning to introduce six special guests seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, joining us today are three university students from the Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas in Ukraine. They are in Saskatchewan under the Canada-Ukraine science internship program that has been in place for 14 years and provides student exchanges between the University of Regina, SaskPower, and Ivano-Frankivsk University in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Iryna Blyshchak. Iryna is a business management student who is working in the head office of SaskPower. Thank you, Iryna. Oleksandr Kravchuk is a petroleum engineering student who is working at the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, the PTRC, at the University of Regina. And Yulia Savchyn, Yulia is an electrical engineering student who is working at SaskPower's powerhouse building here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome Bob Ivanochko, who needs no introduction. He's been here many, many times. Bob is one of the hosts providing room and board to the students. As well as, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Janet Lysyk and Ken Mazur, both very active and dedicated members of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members in the House to join me in welcoming Iryna, Oleksandr, and Yulia. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I would like to join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming this fine delegation to the Assembly today. To Iryna, Oleksandr, and Yulia, I want to welcome you all to Saskatchewan. And thank you for the contributions that you are making while you are here, contributions that build upon a strong history that our province has with Ukraine and also the strong ties that we will have into the future. So it's wonderful to have you here in Saskatchewan contributing and learning through your different experiences.

And I would also, Mr. Speaker, like to add my word of thanks to Ms. Lysyk, Bob Ivanochko, and Ken Mazur for their hospitality in welcoming. It's a typical thing in a way, which is a good thing to have, good Saskatchewan hospitality. And I'm sure they're treating the guests extremely well, as they always have. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to thank these individuals for visiting the legislature today and welcome them. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Parks, Culture

and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, guests joining us in the west gallery today.

The Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies strives to conserve and protect the natural environment in the hearts of our cities and create recreational areas where people and wildlife can coexist. While Saskatchewan's seven conservation and development agencies are independent organizations, they share many common goals and work together through the association and through public programs, workshops, and fundraising.

Representatives of these agencies here today are Carey Schoeffler and Margaret Moran from Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw; Andy Toth and Travis Bullied from Chinook Parkway in Swift Current; Alissa Baker from Pehonan Parkway in Prince Albert; Ryan Whippler and Bernadette McIntyre from Wascana Centre Authority in Regina — well half of them, okay; Nancy Styles and Katelyn Gateman from Tatagwa Parkway in Weyburn; Mr. Doug Porteous from Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon; Tim Yeamen from The Battlefords River Valley in North Battleford. And as well from the organization are Andrew Exelby, Lisa Dale-Burnett, and Irene Pisula.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the guests here today, please join me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition I too would like to welcome all of you to your Legislative Assembly. My riding touches along the Saskatchewan River in Saskatoon, and certainly the Meewasin Valley is a very important part of the culture of our city and the fabric of our city. So the work you do as volunteers is incredibly important, and we want to just thank you for that and welcome you here to your Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts with the Saskatchewan government. And I'd 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: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province; to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

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

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 the unacceptable danger created by that government with the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue, their failure to plan. Of course the west bypass is an important long-term solution, but this requires interim action to ensure safety. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents from right across Regina, including directly on Dewdney Avenue. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm proud to stand in my place to present a petition on the Prince Albert bridge. 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 the city of Prince Albert will receive a commitment from senior governments.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Melville, from Saskatoon, and all from throughout Saskatchewan. And I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. The petitioners point out, Mr. Speaker, that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government; that the Government of Saskatchewan actually recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents; that the government is failing to fix the basics in long-term care, including rejecting the further urgent requests from long-term care facilities for increased and needed staffing levels; and that fixing the basics in achieving real improvement in long-term care services requires a firm commitment to actually listen to front-line health care workers, residents and their families as

opposed to failing to properly listen to their concerns. They point out other things as well, Mr. Speaker, but the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks in Saskatoon. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition condemning this government's dangerous smart meter program. The petitioners in the prayer that reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to take responsibility for its failure to act on readily available information about safety concerns with its smart meter program, including through the immediate resignation of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower and a fully independent inquiry into the concerning chain of events that severely compromised the safety of Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from the good city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of better health care in Saskatchewan. The individuals who have signed this petition bring a number of concerns to this Legislative Assembly. And the prayer reads as follows, they:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to recognize health care is getting worse under its watch and begin fixing the basics by listening to health care workers, patients, and their families, properly maintaining hospitals and care facilities, and focusing its resources on front-line care instead of spending millions on its pet lean project.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from my riding in Saskatoon Nutana. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Bullying Awareness Week

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to recognize November 15th to the 21st as

Bullying Awareness Week in Canada. This year's theme is Stand Up! and it encourages youth to speak out against bullying.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we are committed to taking a stand against bullying and dedicated to creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for students. In an effort to combat bullying we are working with a number of programs and organizations which were recommended in *Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying*. This includes the Kids Help Phone and the Red Cross. We also formed a partnership with SaskTel and the I Am Stronger website to provide students, educators, and families with access to anti-bullying resources as an anonymous, online new reporting tool, as well as providing the opportunity to be engaged in building a caring and respectful online community.

Mr. Speaker, the second annual Student First Anti-Bullying Forum was held yesterday in Saskatoon. My colleague, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, was able to attend on behalf of the government. This forum was one of the recommendations outlined in Saskatchewan's action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying completed last year by the Legislative Secretary for Education. It's an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to develop the skills to build safe and accepting environments in their schools and online.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to support Bullying Awareness Week in Canada and to stand up against bullying in our community. Thank you very much.

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

Holodomor Remembrance Day

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to recognize a solemn day for Ukrainian people here in Saskatchewan and around the world — Holodomor Remembrance Day. Holodomor Remembrance Day is the time to acknowledge the engineered famine that killed as many as 10 million Ukrainians in 1932 and 1933. One-third of the victims of this terrible genocide were children.

What makes this atrocity even more unbearable, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that Ukrainian farms were experiencing prosperity and producing vast quantities of grain that would have alleviated the hunger and starvation. Unfortunately the Soviet forces seized the crops from the Ukrainian people and left them to starve.

We must always remember the tragedies of the past and look to the future to build a more peaceful and tolerant world free from conflict, fear, and genocide.

Mr. Speaker, the event of Holodomor hit even closer to home this year in light of current events. Russian aggressors are again interfering in Ukrainian affairs and exerting unacceptable influence on the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people. I hope that all members will join with me on this day and this week of reflection and will express their solidarity with the Ukrainian people in their time of need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Addictions Awareness Week

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November 17th to the 23rd is Saskatchewan Addictions Awareness Week. This week highlights the issues of addictions and focuses on ways to reduce the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. Mr. Speaker, we know that both addictions and mental health issues directly affect one out of every five residents. That is why our government has increased funding for mental health services by 34 per cent in the last seven years. But we know there's more that needs to be done.

One year ago the Minister of Health called for the development of a 10-year mental health and addictions action plan. Over this past year, Commissioner Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder has undertaken an extensive consultation process in numerous communities all across Saskatchewan. The mental health and addictions action plan will help guide new ways to strengthen services and break down barriers. Our government expects the final report will be released later this year.

Mr. Speaker, today we are providing a continuum of evidence-based addictions programs and support through regional health authorities and non-profit organizations. Our government recognizes all the work that is happening across Saskatchewan and all those involved in the addictions field for their ongoing efforts, and we thank them. I ask all members to join me in acknowledging Addictions Awareness Week. Thank you.

[10:15]

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

Children's Rights Day

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to recognize Children's Rights Day. Today we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is an important document for children and youth in our community and around the world.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines the protections and privileges that ought to be provided to every child in every home in every community. The kid-friendly version of the convention summarizes the document nicely, and I quote:

“Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important.

We know there's still much to do in Saskatchewan when it comes to children and youth. The Canadian Council of Child & Youth Advocates recently said, and I quote:

A particular area of concern is the vast overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and youth in the child welfare system. Concerted and dedicated action and special effort is required to consider and address the rights and

well-being of this group of children and youth.

I hope all members will join me in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and will commit to building a province where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Cities Rank High in Gross Domestic Product Per Capita

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Recently Statistics Canada released a study of metropolitan gross domestic product between 2001 and 2009. I am proud to announce that this study showed that Regina was the most productive city in Canada in 2009 with a nominal GDP [gross domestic product] of \$65,404 per capita. 2009 is the most recent year for which data is available. According to the study, GDP per capita is a measure of the value of output per person living in a metropolitan area. Regina is leading the nation in GDP per capita, in part due to increased activity, increase in the value of oil and gas, manufacturing goods, and agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, Regina's ranking among 33 census metropolitan areas has increased notably over the years, raising from sixth place in 2001 and fourth place in 2005 to the top spot in 2009. Saskatoon has also seen their ranking improved over the last eight years, starting in 20th place in 2001 and jumping to sixth place in 2009.

Saskatchewan cities have seen their national position improve as the national economy has shifted away from manufacturing towards more resource- and agricultural-based sector. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the hard-working people of Regina, Saskatoon, and the entire province who continue to strengthen our economy. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Strong Economy Produces Opportunities

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday on the front page of the *Leader-Post* was a Fraser Institute study on economic opportunities for young adults throughout Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today not only to commend our government on the prosperity of the Saskatchewan economy but to commend all of the hard-working individuals who have made our province so desirable. This recent study compares all 10 provinces on employment rates, income levels, private sector investment, and population patterns. And as we in Saskatchewan already know, the study said that in general if one seeks opportunity — money, jobs, and employment security — the opportunities are in Western Canada, especially Alberta and Saskatchewan.

We have seen a net gain of 581 young adults to our population, and our youth unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the

country. In addition to this, our average per person income is just over \$42,000, far higher than our friends in the East. We have these opportunities because Saskatchewan has the third-highest per capita private sector investment of all Canadian provinces.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is strong. I would like all members to join me in recognizing the hard work of our citizens, even though we admit there is always more work to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Invests in Housing in Nipawin

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about the opening of a new rental housing project in Nipawin that will enable 24 individuals and families to live in a safe and affordable home.

Together with the Government of Canada, I am pleased that our government contributed a combined total of \$560,000 toward 14 of the 24 apartments. This funding was made available through the capital rent subsidy from the federal-provincial Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2014 agreement. This project also received funding under the province's rental construction incentive. Under this incentive we are contributing about \$156,000 over two years to the town of Nipawin.

This is only part of what has been accomplished in Nipawin, Mr. Speaker. Since November 2007 I'm proud that we have invested \$869,000 in the community to create 32 affordable rental and homeowner units.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that our government takes housing seriously. Together with our housing partners, we are doing what we can to make life more affordable for all Saskatchewan people. These homes in Nipawin are an example of that commitment in action, as are other housing projects currently under way throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work together to tackle housing challenges across the province and to keep Saskatchewan strong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Standards in Care Facilities

Mr. Broten: — Yesterday Margaret Warholm's children came to the legislature. Margaret was in a seniors' care facility, but she was horribly neglected. She was severely malnourished, had untreated broken bones, a massive bedsore, and she died prematurely.

Yesterday when Margaret's family was here, Mr. Speaker, they were treated to disgusting heckling from the member from Estevan and the member from Martensville. Mr. Speaker, the family took that personally, and those members should be ashamed. Mr. Speaker, but the message from the Health

minister was dismissive in its own way and was also hugely disappointing for the family. He simply referred Margaret's children to the Ombudsman and failed to recognize that this is a widespread problem.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Does he actually think, does he actually think that this an isolated case, or will he at least recognize that there are serious problems throughout our seniors' care system that must be fixed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the government.

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I can say that members on this side of the House treat these situations very seriously. Mr. Speaker, certainly I think the track record of this government shows that we take seniors' issues, seniors' care, and the care that our seniors receive, whether they're in long-term care or whether they're living in their own home, Mr. Speaker, we take that absolutely serious.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to this case, first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I would just say that each and every day we have thousands of people that work in long-term care, whether they be care aids or LPNs [licensed practical nurse] or RNs [registered nurse], that provide care in a manner that is with warmth and love and compassion for their residents.

But in a case like yesterday, where we have what seems to be a breakdown in that care, Mr. Speaker, we take that absolutely seriously. I can inform the House that this morning I wrote to the Ombudsman asking the Ombudsman to look into this specific case and report back to me and to the public, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be happy to table that letter today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Margaret's family spoke about their own experience with Margaret's treatment, with her premature death. And they spoke, Mr. Speaker, about their treatment yesterday with their very own words. What's incredible, Mr. Speaker, is for the minister to pretend that this is an isolated case and simply a one-off.

Margaret's experience is not an isolated case. I hear these stories, Mr. Speaker, far too often, and it is incredibly frustrating to have a government that will not recognize that this is a widespread problem. Margaret's family believes, as do I, that we need minimum care standards which apply to all care facilities province wide to ensure that this type of neglect stops. They're frustrated, Mr. Speaker, that this government removed minimum care standards instead of strengthening them, and I agree with Margaret's family, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. Does he agree, does he agree that we need minimum care standards, or will he still stubbornly dismiss the call to fix what needs to be fixed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker. Again I do want to stress the fact that in this province we have over 7,300 residents that are in care each and every day. We have thousands of people that work in the system, whether they are care aids or LPNs or RNs, Mr. Speaker, and they provide care that is in a way provides for compassion and warmth and love. These are people that in many ways become a part of their own family, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the work that they do and the relationship that they build.

Mr. Speaker, in cases like these though, we take this very seriously. That is why . . . And I will quote from the letter that I wrote to the Ombudsman this morning. I quote:

I am requesting that you investigate the circumstances surrounding Margaret Warholm's care and death and whether the provincial special care home guidelines were followed in this case and that I would request that you would report any finding and recommendations that you have.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll table the letter this morning, and I look forward to the Ombudsman's report in this matter.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can try to remove this from his office, but he should be taking and should have been taking a much more direct interest in this, Mr. Speaker, as it was raised.

And it's interesting for the minister to bring up the guidelines, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is absolutely laughable for the minister to suggest that somehow, somehow that the program guidelines for special care homes are meaningful minimum care standards. It's simply not believable.

We have obtained, Mr. Speaker, internal emails from the minister's very own office, his very own office that show that his political staff do not even buy those lines. His former chief of staff wrote to ministry officials, "Is there any further policy development or requirements under each of the items under section 1.4 for care standards? These are good but extremely general." A ministry official writes back and says, "I do not believe there are more specifics, unless that is done at the regional level." Well clearly, Mr. Speaker, it is not being done. Not even the own minister's political staff sees these guidelines as having substance, as having specifics.

My question is for the Premier. How can this government possibly keep pretending that we have minimum care standards when officials say that there are no specifics and even the minister's political staff have said that they are just simply extremely general guidelines?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker.

I will again indicate that I've asked the Ombudsman to look into this case. I'll table the letter for the House, Mr. Speaker, so members can see exactly what I've asked for.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also perhaps suggest, because I don't know the context in which the member opposite is quoting from the email, so perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will also table what he is quoting from so that I can have a look at what he's tabling from.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would say this, that the guidelines that are in place are comprehensive. They're 193 pages, Mr. Speaker. They are requirements for all special care homes in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we had in the past legislation that called for, for example, the inspection of long-term care facilities by the ministry. However, Mr. Speaker, that section was removed by the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker, when they were the government of the day.

Mr. Speaker, we are working hard to improve care for seniors in this province, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what we have built in terms of capacity, in terms of what we have done in terms of FTE [full-time equivalent] improvements. Mr. Speaker, I'll take no lessons from . . .

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, he should take lessons from Margaret's family. He should take lessons, Mr. Speaker, from his own political staff.

If he's curious about the emails, I'll give the dates for his staff to look it up: Sunday, October 22nd, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend, there was a flurry of emails going back between the minister's political staff and those in the ministry, and that is when, Mr. Speaker, the former chief of staff for the minister said that they are extremely general guidelines. My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the minister. Does he believe, does he agree with his political staff that the guidelines that are in place are extremely general?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, considering that the guidelines replaced bills and regulations that numbered just a couple of pages, Mr. Speaker, 193 pages make up the guidelines today, Mr. Speaker, which I believe are comprehensive in terms of what they require from a special care home. I think that they clearly state the rights and the responsibilities of not only the staff and the administration of special care homes but also the rights and responsibilities of residents and their families, Mr. Speaker. I think it goes into great detail, over 193 pages, what the expectations are in terms of the care that is provided, Mr. Speaker.

But in cases where that care appears to not have been the case, we take that very seriously. That is why this morning I contacted, by letter, the Ombudsman's office, asking the Ombudsman to look into this particular case and report back the

findings to the public.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, a bunch of extremely general guidelines do not count as minimum care standards. It's simply not believable, and the minister's refusal to recognize that goes to the heart of this problem. There is the specific case that we have of Margaret's family, but this is much broader, much wider. And this is about a minister that refuses to admit that we need minimum care standards.

The government is starting, Mr. Speaker, to require hourly check-ins with residents in some facilities. That's good, Mr. Speaker. That's an example of a minimum care standard, but that should be there for all facilities, Mr. Speaker, on a province-wide basis. This government should work with those on the front lines to develop a clear minimum level of care, a base level of care with the standards associated with that. And those standards, Mr. Speaker, should apply province wide.

To the Premier: how can he possibly, how can he possibly be opposed to clear minimum care standards? Why does he keep hiding behind extremely general guidelines that clearly are not working?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take this question on behalf of the government. Mr. Speaker, again it is incorrect to say that there are no minimum standards in place in special care homes in this province. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the ministry works with the regional health authorities and all of our facilities to ensure that the administration and the front-line staff know what are the expectations, the rights, and the responsibilities of facilities, as well, the rights and responsibility of residents and their families, Mr. Speaker. Those care guidelines are in place. The document totals 193 pages, Mr. Speaker. I think that speaks volumes in terms of the amount of detail that are in those guidelines.

But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we have staff that provide care in a loving and a compassionate and a warm manner. But, Mr. Speaker, when that care fails for a resident, we take that seriously, Mr. Speaker. That is why I am asking the Ombudsman to look into this case.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Yesterday I reintroduced *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act* which would require the government to implement clear, province-wide minimum care standards. To the minister: will the government agree to pass *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act*? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we have minimum care guidelines in this province that

has been put in place through a 193-page document that is required for all facilities to operate, Mr. Speaker. But again, and I'm looking at and just had a brief look at the member's bill because certainly, Mr. Speaker, there were deficiencies.

I will note though, Mr. Speaker, that the bill continues to request or provide for ready access of a copy of most routine inspections of facilities, Mr. Speaker. The inspection process that was put in place was in place during the 1990s, Mr. Speaker. The ministry responds back to me that that requirement wasn't actually followed by about 1996. Inspections stopped under the members opposite. In fact that legislation was repealed in 2002 by the members opposite when they were in government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — This government can't keep pretending that poor quality of care is a rare occurrence. The reality is that poor quality of care is the norm because of chronic short-staffing and because there are no clear minimum care standards. There are just extremely general guidelines. To the minister: how can he keep standing behind extremely general guidelines? Why won't he pass our legislation and develop clear province-wide minimum care standards?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the member opposite just said that poor quality of care is the norm in special care homes in this province. Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of people that work in long-term care — care aids, LPNs, RNs — in over 150 facilities in this province I think that would be shocked to hear that poor quality of care is the norm on a day-to-day basis in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would disagree with the member opposite, and I think that the thousands of people that work in long-term care and I think the thousands of families that have residents in care would disagree with that sentiment, Mr. Speaker. We take these issues seriously, Mr. Speaker, but we believe that the care that is provided to the vast majority of our residents is done in a loving way, in a respectful way, Mr. Speaker, and I wish the member opposite would share that sentiment.

The Speaker: — I would ask members to listen to the question and to the response from both sides including the members that asked the question. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Costs and Benefits of the Lean Initiative

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan taxpayers have paid \$790,890.22 to John Black for airfare — nearly \$800,000 just for airfare. And that's just up until March 31st, so that doesn't include all of John Black's flights since then. To the minister: how much in total have taxpayers already spent flying around this highly paid American lean consultant? What's the number?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, the contract that will end in June of 2015 will see the government spend on the John Black contract \$35.5 million. To date, as of July, Mr. Speaker, so a couple of months ago, we've already spent nearly \$26 million.

But, Mr. Speaker, through all the work beginning in 2008, in fact a little bit of work that was done under the NDP when it comes to lean, Mr. Speaker, we've been able to see savings of \$57 million. Mr. Speaker, we've also been able to reduce what we believe will be the ongoing operational costs in places like the new Moose Jaw Hospital, the new children's hospital, both which are under development, Mr. Speaker, in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we've also been able to see some quality improvement work, quite a bit of it done throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, because of our use of lean throughout the system, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some enhancements in long-term care, but we still have more work to do, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, but I think that this shows that the province and this government is committed to quality improvement within health care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Loosely translated, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the meter's still running. The monthly airfare costs for John Black appear to be about \$30,000 over the last couple of years, so we've probably spent another \$210,000 since March just to fly John Black around. That's a whopping \$1 million just for John Black flights.

We also know that John Black's hotel bills were \$963,513.87, and again that's only up until March 31st. So to the minister: how much have we paid for this high-priced American lean consultant's hotel bills in total? What's the number?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as of July of 2014, so far we've spent about \$26 million on the JBA [John Black and Associates] contract. Mr. Speaker, it'll be close to \$35 million by the time the contract is exited on June of 2015.

But, Mr. Speaker, certainly I've been able to share with members of the House and the public some of the work we've been able to do through using a lean consultant over the last number of years.

But here's, Mr. Speaker, an example I think that speaks to patient-first care, resident-first care in the province. In Heartland Health Region in one of their long-term care facilities, they were able to reorganize and standardize how something as important, Mr. Speaker, as how breakfast was served.

Prior to using lean, Mr. Speaker, all residents received their breakfast at 8:30 regardless of whether they wanted to be up at that time or whether or not they were prepared at that time. But thanks to improved scheduling using lean processes, they've expanded the breakfast hours from 7:45 to 9 o'clock to give more variety for those residents, as well as breakfast is now served 72 per cent faster, when the resident is ready for their

breakfast, Mr. Speaker. It speaks directly to what we're trying to do with improved quality improvement.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the monthly hotel costs for John Black appear to be about \$38,000 per month over the last couple of years, so that means we've probably spent another \$266,000 on John Black hotel bills since March. In total that's well over \$1.2 million just for John Black's hotel bills.

We also know that taxpayers have already given John Black \$402,122 for per diems, \$209,419 for miscellaneous expenses, and those numbers are just up until March 31st. The gravy train, or in this case, Mr. Speaker, the gravy plane just keeps rolling over there.

To the minister: what's the total amount to date the taxpayers have paid to John Black for per diems and miscellaneous expenses?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again as a part of the contract, as of June 31st of this year, so earlier this summer, \$25 million has been spent through the JBA contract, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be, as I've said publicly, exiting that contract June of next year. The total will be less than the 40 million that we had initially thought. It'll be about \$35 million, Mr. Speaker.

But through that work, what we've been able to see is quality improvement throughout the health system, Mr. Speaker. Obviously some regions would be more advanced in terms of the work that they've been able to do, but all regions have been able to certainly learn, in terms of new methodologies, a new way to do daily work within the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, as an example, and I believe I've shared this one: pediatric cardiology patients, so some of our youngest, most vulnerable patients, Mr. Speaker. The time from registration to discharge in Saskatoon was reduced from two and a half hours down to one hour, a 50 per cent reduction, Mr. Speaker, for those patients. It's quality improvement that we're focused on.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. In today's *StarPhoenix*, the title of a column or an article on John Black states, "Tout lean success, not cost, Black says." You know, interesting advice from the consultant, but it would seem that the minister is taking that in spades.

The minister has claimed that John Black submits receipts for all these expenses. There are huge travel bills and hotel bills from the American lean consultant, and Saskatchewan taxpayers deserve to know what we're paying for. Again to the minister: will he table detailed receipts today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, again we have spent to date \$25.2 million as of July,

Mr. Speaker. Our contract costs with John Black will be \$35 million by the time the contract ends. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, we've been able to see some significant savings and efficiencies within the system, Mr. Speaker, knowing that we need to make the health care system in this province, as all provinces are struggling with, Mr. Speaker, to be more efficient so that we can see the sustainability of public health care across Saskatchewan and across Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will know that in this year our budget is a 3 per cent increase. Last year it was a three and a half per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, a far cry from about 10 years ago when the increase in the health budget was 6.3 per cent. And yet at that time, 15 communities lost long-term care beds, and seven lost acute care beds, Mr. Speaker, and 120 people in the health system lost their jobs in a 6 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. We need to do a better job of how, Mr. Speaker, we ensure that this system is sustainable in this province.

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

Costs for Boundary Dam Carbon Capture Project

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are still waiting for answers on this government's massive Boundary dam project which cost somewhere between 1.4 and 1.6 billion. The minister admitted last week that we don't own the technology, that we can't commercialize it, and that Alberta's Cenovus is paying only \$25 per tonne for the captured carbon.

So in light of that, my question is for the SaskPower minister. What does he expect to be the net gains or losses over the next 30 years?

[10:45]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, this is a very good project for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has some 300 years of coal supply. We generate approximately 60 per cent of the electricity in this province with coal from the southeast part of our province.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of federal regulations around emissions, the project was undertaken. The federal government has contributed about \$230 million to the project, the province of Saskatchewan about 1.2, \$1.3 billion to the project, Mr. Speaker. It has received acclaim from around the world. We have had visitors to the project. Some 20 countries and businesses from around the world have visited the facility to take a look at it, Mr. Speaker. This is a good project for the people of Saskatchewan. It clearly meets the standards in terms of emissions going forward, and it is a project that is receiving acclaim from around the world.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Industry experts estimate that Cenovus will take huge profits back home to Alberta, leaving taxpayers with

a massive deficit. They say that \$25 a tonne is a bargain basement deal. If the minister won't reveal the projected net gains or losses that Saskatchewan people should expect, perhaps he'll answer this: why are we only getting \$25 a tonne for the captured carbon when the benefits to Cenovus is in the billions? Why didn't we ask for more than that to make this project financially viable for Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this project is getting acclaim from around the world. Environmentalists are certainly onside with it. The business community is certainly onside with it.

And it is in sharp contrast to how the members opposite, when they were in government, managed these types of files. For example, when they were in government, Mr. Speaker, they lost \$2 million on a power project in Guyana. Not one dime was ever recovered from that. In addition to that, then they went and decided that, because they're such captains of industry over there, Mr. Speaker, they were going to go into the telecommunications business, and then they lost \$25 million down in Atlanta. Then in addition to that on the next one that they were involved in — you'd have thought they'd have learned on the first one, Mr. Speaker, but no, they pushed back right into it again — and in Nashville they lose another \$7 million, Mr. Speaker.

And then it didn't matter what kind of business the members opposite were involved in, Mr. Speaker. They lost millions upon millions of taxpayers' dollars, project after project. We'll take no lessons from the members opposite about how to run business.

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Request leave for introductions.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce some special guests in the Legislative Assembly. Today seated in the west gallery, we have more than 50 grade 8 students, teachers, and chaperones from Redvers School in southeastern Saskatchewan and Westmount Community School in Saskatoon. These students are accompanied by their teachers: Morgan Wasylyk from Redvers School and Christopher Clark from Westmount.

They're here today to participate in A Day in the Legislative Assembly organized by the Provincial Capital Commission where they will get a chance to learn about the Legislative Building, the structure of government, and the democratic process. I'm proud that we're able to host them here today. I

look forward to meeting them this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members, please join me in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. I'd like to take a moment and join in the minister to welcome the school groups, and in particular Westmount School. It's my community; I represent downtown Saskatoon. So thank you very much for coming down here and we'll talk more later. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 113 to 331.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to questions 113 through 131. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave to introduce a motion regarding the length of debate this morning.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion regarding length of debate. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Length of Debate

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

That notwithstanding the length of debate specified under rule 25(3)(a), on session day 16, being Thursday, November 20th, 2014, the period of debate under the said rule shall be 45 minutes, with the mover of the motion having a maximum of 15 minutes to speak and each subsequent member having no more than 10 minutes in which to speak to the motion; and further, that the provisions of the rule for the 10-minute period for questions and comments shall remain unaffected.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It is moved by the Government House Leader by leave:

That notwithstanding the length of debate specified under rule 25(3)(a), on session day 16, being Thursday, November 20th, 2014, the period of debate under the said rule shall be 45 minutes, with the mover of the motion having a maximum of 15 minutes to speak and each subsequent member having no more than 10 minutes in which to speak to the motion; and further, that the provisions of the rule for the 10-minute period for questions and comments shall remain unchanged.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 904 — *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014*

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I move the second reading of this bill, just a few comments about Mohyla Institute.

It was established in 1917 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan as a residential, educational, and cultural facility for students for the promotion of Ukrainian religion, history, and the arts. The institute was originally on Main Street in Saskatoon but moved to its current location on Temperance Street in 1965. It houses students from home and abroad that primarily attend the University of Saskatchewan. It also serves as a youth hostel during the summer months. As well, it is the practice facility for the Lastiwka Youth Choir.

Several members of my extended family over the years have attended Mohyla proudly. And of course there's a few people in the building that have attended Mohyla, who serve this province so capably. David Cooper is one. Kathy Burianyak from the Clerk's office, and of course the Minister of Finance is also an alumnus.

Mohyla was incorporated by an Act in 1958. The bill before the Assembly today seeks to amend the 1958 Act by amending the requirements for the winding up of the affairs of the corporation. It's my pleasure to move that Bill No. 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 104, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Pursuant to the previous motion, 55-minute debate.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Government Vision for Economic Growth

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to take part in today's 75-minute debate. I'll be moving a motion at the end of my remarks:

That this Assembly supports the government's vision for a growing province by keeping taxes competitive, practising prudent fiscal management, and keeping the economic climate positive while seizing opportunities and innovation; furthermore

That the vision is creating a business climate that has produced one of Canada's strongest economies that is a benefit to all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks today will be more of a history lesson or a then-and-now speaking of the successes of this government and the dismal performance of that NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, an article in the November 19th *Leader-Post* by Bruce Johnstone with comments of the Fraser Institute reads as follows:

In the 21st century, the Fraser Institute is telling young Canadians that Alberta and Saskatchewan offer the most opportunity for jobs and prosperity . . . Western Canada is the land of opportunity while Ontario and Quebec, the two most populous provinces, now resemble Atlantic Canada with its gloomy economic outlook and relatively poor prospects for young people . . .

Clearly, where there's more private sector investment there are more jobs and greater opportunities for young Canadians to enjoy a middle-class lifestyle . . . In general, if one seeks opportunity — money, jobs, and employment security — the opportunities are in Western Canada, especially in Alberta and Saskatchewan . . .

Mr. Speaker, this is a far cry from the 16 years of the NDP government, for the NDP government basically kept this province in a recession.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were treated to a little bit of poetry in the Assembly, and I wondered about that. I thought maybe that, you know, I've got nothing against poetry, but maybe poetry should be read at home or to your children or your grandchildren. And I would strongly suggest to the members opposite that they read the Speech from the Throne 2014. They

would be well more advised to do that.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada for 23 consecutive months since January 2013, the lowest youth unemployment rate in Canada at 6.3 per cent, where nationally it is 12.6. Mr. Speaker, Regina has had the lowest unemployment rate among all CMAs [census metropolitan area] in Canada, in October 2014 at 3 per cent, the ninth straight month for the lowest CMA. Saskatoon had the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 4.4 per cent in October of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, 576,200 people employed in October: an increase of 19,700 jobs compared to October 2013, an increase of 71,700 compared to October of 2007. Employment has increased year over year for the past 35 months. Saskatchewan's employment growth of 3.5 per cent was the highest above the national increase of 1.1 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, over the past seven years there have been 70,400 new jobs created in Saskatchewan. Fewer than 10 per cent of those jobs, 6,600 were created in the resource sector. This following breakdown is of the 70,400 jobs since 2007: the construction industry, 18,000; health care, 10,700; resources, 6,600; science and technology, 6,200; education, 5,800; agriculture, 5,300; all other sectors, 17,800; for a total of 70,400. Clearly a province that is very diversified.

Mr. Speaker, in June, employment hit a record of 577,000 people working in our province. Saskatchewan's population is now at an all-time high of over 1.125 million people. That represents an increase of more than 123,000 people in the past seven years, a far cry from the previous seven years when Saskatchewan's population actually declined.

Mr. Speaker, our province remains on track to reach the population target set by our government of 1.2 million people by 2020, while Statistics Canada has predicted Saskatchewan's population could surpass 1.5 million people.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to just read a few quotes from members opposite previous on the population issue. One being, "... the Saskatchewan Party's plan to increase our population by 100,000 in 10 years is more wishful thinking than statistically attainable." NDP MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Doreen Hamilton.

"... they propose to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over ... I forget what number of years, Mr. Speaker. Well it's so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality." NDP MLA Harry Van Mulligen.

"Of course he says that he wants to increase the population of the province by 100,000 people. Well who would disagree with that? That's fine, but the question is, do you have a plan to achieve it, Mr. Speaker? And I say they do not have a plan or at least they do not have a plan that makes any sense." Eric Cline.

Just one more, Mr. Speaker: "We've heard this, we've heard this so-called plan. It's a plan that says all you've got to do is

cut all the taxes — cut taxes particularly for the corporate folks — cut all the taxes, you know, you sell off [some of] the Crowns, and ... you'll get rid of labour legislation that protects workers, and somehow this is magically going to turn into 100,000 people. Well we know what the experts have said about it." Lorne Calvert, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, these people definitely were not in touch. Mr. Speaker, in July, unemployment hit a record low of 3.2 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded. In September, Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate and the fastest rate of job creation anywhere in Canada. Saskatchewan people are earning more than ever before and they are keeping more of what they earn, thanks to lower taxes.

Mr. Speaker, on the topic of taxes, I would just like to bring a few things to mind. When the NDP always talked about taxes, it was about implementing more taxes, basically. The Saskatchewan Party government is committed to keeping taxes low to encourage investment and make life more affordable. Since 2007 the Saskatchewan Party government's tax reductions have saved families almost \$2.8 billion. Saskatchewan residents will save 480 million this year due to these tax cuts.

Since 2007 our government has increased the personal, spousal, and child exemption amounts and introduced a new low-income tax credit. For example, an individual taxpayer pays no tax on the first \$18,650. A family of four with a \$50,000 annual income will pay just \$166 in provincial income tax in 2014, compared to \$2,302 in 2007. By the end of 2014, this family will have saved \$14,000 over seven years. We have removed 114,000 Saskatchewan residents from the provincial income tax roll.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, property tax payers funded 60 per cent of the cost of K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education. In 2009 the Saskatchewan Party government delivered the largest education property tax reduction in our province's history, reducing the amount to 35 per cent. Mill rates were reduced in 2009 and 2011, which has saved Saskatchewan residents a cumulative 728 million. We reduced education property tax on agricultural land also by 80 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP record is that they closed 176 schools while raising education property taxes. Under the NDP, approximately 150 rural municipalities launched a tax revolt in 2005 to protest paying the highest education property taxes in the country. They raised taxes at least 17 times while in government, including raising the PST [provincial sales tax] three times and income tax twice. They raised the PST after the 2000 election after saying they wouldn't. And a statement by then Finance minister Harry Van Mulligen was, "Why don't parties want to talk about tax hikes during elections? I don't know. I suspect anyone who talks about tax hikes is not likely to be very popular during the course of an election campaign."

Mr. Speaker, where I live, I can remember, 2003 my EPT [education property tax] tax or mill rate was 22.5 and our municipal mill rate was around ... I believe it was around 8 or 9. Right now with the EPT at 5.03 on residential and the mill rate of 4.5, total mills of 9.53, a huge saving in property taxes. Mr. Speaker, the NDP talked about EPT but that's all they did.

The Saskatchewan Party acted on EPT and the 2014 EPT mill rates will remain the same as the 2013. And they are as follows: agriculture, 2.67 mills; residential, 5.03; commercial, industrial, 8.28; and 11.04 for the resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about agriculture sector in our province. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy, and under the NDP they did everything possible to destroy it. Just a couple of things I would like to talk about. Under the Agri-Food Equity Fund from 1994 to 2002, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government invested 31 million in private business. Over 24 million in losses to date. There were 25 investments, 20 losses to date. Mr. Speaker, this government is getting out of private business. If I was to total up the losses on other ventures of the NDP, would it not have been much wiser to put that money into the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] which they cancelled, drought assistance, education tax rebates, improving crop insurance, fully funding CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization], irrigation expansion, gopher control programs, livestock assistance, and many more?

Mr. Speaker, the good news story in agriculture is record 11.7 billion in ag and exports in 2013, the third consecutive year of record exports. Under the NDP in 2007, it was 6.4 billion, an 83 per cent increase since 2007. Wheat was the top export commodity in 2013. Strong cattle and hog prices, record crop production in 2013. From Stats Canada, 38.4 million tonnes, 1.8 million tonnes above the growth plan which was up 36.6 million tonnes, 40 per cent above the 2012 production and 48 per cent above the 10-year average. Realized net farm incomes in 2013 was \$2.63 billion, 187 per cent increase since 2007. The western stock price insurance program was created, along many, many other things.

I'm running out of time here, Mr. Speaker, and I've got many things to talk about, some very important initiatives, Mr. Speaker, by this government. It's the largest education tax reduction in Saskatchewan history. Western livestock price program was introduced in 2014. One hundred sixty-two dollar acre coverage now, for 88 acres under the NDP in 2007, and so we've nearly doubled that. One hundred dollars per acre in unseeded acres now available versus \$50 under the NDP. Committing to fully funding federal-provincial programs upfront. NDP refused to do this. Mr. Speaker, there are many, many programs that we have initiated moving Saskatchewan forward, strong leadership, standing up for Saskatchewan, and the plan for growth and record growth.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit of some facts, for instance, on the construction industry. Since 2007 building permit values have totalled 14.6 billion, an increase of 223,000 from the previous seven years of the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, a few facts on the oil and gas industry. I always hear about the pot of gold that was left to this government by the member from Athabasca. Well I just want to set a few things straight. In 2001 to 2007, there were 15,800 oil well licences issued; from 2008 to 2014 under this government, 24,071. Now one may say that that was created because of the price of oil. I pulled off the stats of the Alberta oil and their records. From '92 to 2007, there was a steady increase of oil drilling in Alberta. Since 2007 it has come down and we have

gained. Is it possible now oil companies recognize that this is the place to do business? Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. I would love to get into highways and infrastructure, but time doesn't permit. And at this point, I'd like to introduce this motion:

That this Assembly supports the government's vision for a growing province by keeping taxes competitive, practising prudent fiscal management, and keeping the economic climate positive while seizing opportunities and innovation; and further

That this vision is creating a business climate that has produced one of Canada's strongest economies that is a benefit to all Saskatchewan people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford:

That this Assembly support the government's vision for our growing province by keeping taxes competitive, practising prudent fiscal management, and keeping the . . .

[Interjections]

Does the member, does the minister want the opportunity to get up and speak?

. . . and keeping the economic climate positive while seizing opportunities and innovation; and further

That this vision is creating a business climate that has produced one of Canada's strongest economies that is a benefit to all Saskatchewan people.

I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was ready to get up here, but I was being heckled by members opposite. You know, I was being harassed a bit by the member who is responsible or was responsible in part for the undoing and eliminating of the film tax credit, something that was building a bright future in our province, the member from Northeast. And I was being shouted across by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow who we rarely hear in this Assembly other than if it is a heckle. So in many ways, it was actually good to hear him actually speak today, although it might have been productive for him to say something that related directly to his constituents.

I am pleased to enter into dialogue here today, to debate here today. You know, the motion that was put forward by the member, you know, is really again sort of what we see from this government, a lot more back-patting of itself and really a lot of partisan cheerleading and all about their own partisan interests, and very much less so about the real interests of Saskatchewan people. It's sort of all about them, Mr. Speaker, less so about all Saskatchewan people, and that's a concern, Mr. Speaker.

And I think this is where, you know, I mean government has sort of got into this space here now where they're really just one big spin machine, Mr. Speaker, trying to tout their own record

and pat themselves on the back. And I think that Saskatchewan people expect a little more humility, and they expect a little bit more reflection of the realities that they're facing, Mr. Speaker.

And this motion put forward is, you know, is one that really, you know, doesn't reflect the realities of Saskatchewan people when I think about what they're facing. Certainly we have incredible economic opportunity in this province for which we should be fully capturing, and we know that that's coming from our resources. We know that it comes from our people and our workers. We know that it comes from our fine entrepreneurs and businesses — those that are investing and those that are hiring, those that are providing opportunity in our province. What we recognize with this government is that they're all too willing to try to take that credit, something that they're not responsible for, and sort of tout their own supposed plan as being the genesis of some of the good economic activity.

And what we see is that this government just isn't holding up their end of the bargain. We see that this government isn't actually allowing Saskatchewan to be all it can be, to capture the full opportunity. And we can look at that on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker. When we look at it from a sheer economic perspective, we see how this government is sitting on their hands and dragging their feet as it relates to improving procurement for Saskatchewan people, something that's so critically important for certainly the businesses of this province who, yes, invest in this province, who, yes, employ in this province, who, yes, pay taxes in this province along with those workers who are also doing the same thing, Mr. Speaker, who deserve a level playing field and a fair shot at government procurement, Mr. Speaker.

But this government drags its feet and has way more interest having a whole bunch of Texas licence plates tripping around this province, creating all sorts of problems, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to building on Saskatchewan opportunity, selling out, selling out those very businesses. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the approach to trade by this government and its procurement policy is naive, simplistic, and ideological, Mr. Speaker, instead of rooted in good common sense, practical steps that could serve the fine businesses, the manufacturers, the construction companies of our province in truly capturing the full opportunity that Saskatchewan people deserve, Mr. Speaker. Critically important steps.

Not only is improving a procurement policy, Mr. Speaker, going to be good for our economy and good for those businesses who are creating investment here . . . or providing investment here in our province, it's about providing better value for taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. And that ultimately needs to be the most important piece.

[11:15]

We look as well at the opportunities we have economically. And where this government is simply dropping the ball and not allowing us to be all we can be, Mr. Speaker, is where they went out and outright eliminated the film industry here in Saskatchewan, taking a once thriving industry that provided economic returns to the people of the province but also created a sense of pride and excitement and quality of life for many, Mr. Speaker, and eliminated a film tax credit and drove out of

this province all sorts of entrepreneurs who were investing in our province and hard-working people in the film industry, Mr. Speaker, many of whom made a big and direct investment in our province.

And I just think, you know, it's just such a shame, Mr. Speaker, that you have this time of resource strength and economic potential, and you have a government that's actively choosing to be less instead of being more, Mr. Speaker, choosing to be less instead of choosing to be more.

And if you think of all of the people, all of the people that are moving to Saskatchewan, something we're excited about around population growth, our ability over the long haul to retain those individuals and be as strong as we can be is to make sure we have that quality of life in place, to make sure that we have a strong cultural component, to make sure we have a strong arts component and, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that life is affordable in Saskatchewan.

And what we've seen under this government on the affordability side of the equation is a government that just doesn't get the reality of Saskatchewan families, just doesn't get it. And you know, they can heckle away from Walsh Acres or from Regina Northeast or from Wakamow all they want. But what I think they need to do is go listen to the people of this province, the everyday families of this province who have had the cost of living jacked up on them in a way that has caused real hardship for so many families across Saskatchewan.

You've got people working harder than ever, harder than ever. Many taking two and three jobs on, Mr. Speaker, just to make ends meet. You've got people that are trying to take care of their families whose wages have been relatively flat but whose cost of . . . at a time where the cost of living has been jacked up and skyrocketed in this province, Mr. Speaker, with no recognition by that government. And this harms the middle class from being all it can be. It harms Saskatchewan from being all it can be.

And you think of all those hits on the pocketbooks of everyday families that are facing these costs. We see the inaction on housing by this government, the real inaction on housing, Mr. Speaker. We see the property tax issue, Mr. Speaker, where this government is unwilling to provide the important, proper dedicated infrastructure funding to our growing communities, Mr. Speaker, and as a result they leave the heavy lifting to the municipalities, Mr. Speaker. And we have a property tax, Mr. Speaker, then that's having to be the tool that is going to fund the growth of communities and the infrastructure renewal. That's a heavy hit on families across Saskatchewan, one that many can't afford.

And this government, that is blessed with all sorts of revenue and revenue tools, needs to do a better job of supporting our municipalities so that there's not this big, heavy tax burden being downloaded and off-loaded to the families and businesses paying property taxes and subjected to big property tax increases.

We see it on their power bills, Mr. Speaker, with the approach of this government that sells out opportunity, that created the smart meter debacle where they basically strapped these

dangerous explosive devices to the homes of Saskatchewan people, for which now this government is leaving both Saskatchewan people at risk, Mr. Speaker, leaving Saskatchewan people at risk, Mr. Speaker, but also wasted their hard-earned ratepayers' dollars, putting that on top of other choices by this government when it comes to our Crowns. All sorts of outsourcing or the dividend raids we've seen of this government, that surprise one of just a couple of years ago where they, at the end of the year they dipped in and grabbed another \$120 million from SaskPower, all land up directly on the property tax, or the power bill, sorry, of families and businesses all across Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's tremendous opportunity in Saskatchewan for which we'd like to build upon. We would like to work together. We're putting plans . . .

[Interjections]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The members are shouting, how? They should start supporting some of the private member bills that are before them here today to make sure that economic opportunity is extended to all, to address the realities and pressures on everyday houses, homes, Mr. Speaker, and to start to make a difference for the many, Mr. Speaker.

And what's not going to work is the heckling and shouting from across, Mr. Speaker, through debate like this. What's not going to work is sitting on their hands while there's meaningful, important improvements that could be made in areas like procurement, or continuing to sell out the interests of Saskatchewan people when it comes to our Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

What we need to do is to truly focus in on what matters to Saskatchewan people. I'm running short of time. I wish I wasn't because I could address other areas here as well, Mr. Speaker, where it's clear that this government needs to stop back-patting itself and simply congratulating and focusing on themselves in a partisan way. It's not all about them, Mr. Speaker. It should be about Saskatchewan people. It should be about all of us working together to address the realities they're facing, to fully capture the economic opportunities in our province, build that better, bright future for all Saskatchewan people, and build on the strength of our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, as this debate occurred here today and the congratulatory sort of nature of the motion to government itself instead of the people of Saskatchewan, and then the endless heckling we hear from government instead of focusing on realities people are facing, I'm rather disappointed with the approach of government instead of focusing on what really matters.

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd like to remind members that today is private members' day, that it's meant for private members to participate in debate. And I would also remind members that the Speaker and Deputy Speaker need to hear what the member is speaking when the member is speaking. I would ask all members to provide that courtesy to the member on his feet. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very

honoured . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thanks. I'm very honoured to be here and be able to speak to this debate today. And I would like to start off with that I fully support this motion presented by my colleague.

With that said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask you if you remember the movie, *The Dirty Dozen*. It was a great movie. I really enjoyed it. Well if you didn't, Mr. Speaker, how about the movie, *Ocean's Eleven*? Do you remember that movie, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe you remember *The Whole Ten Yards*. Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you remember the nimble nine. Oh yes, that wasn't a movie. That's the members across, opposite.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, you remember the original eight. As the deputy minister, you knew that the Speaker was one of the eight. If it were not for the determination and vision of these eight MLAs, we sure wouldn't have the fantastic economy we have here today. These eight MLAs that had created the Saskatchewan Party in 1997, and with all their hard work in going from community to community to meet with people and travelling hundreds of miles and maybe only having two people show up, but they built this Saskatchewan Party and that's why our economy is the way it is today.

The Sask Party group of eight was led by only one female from the constituency of Kelvington-Wadena, as she stated at our convention this year when they thanked them for all the hard work they did. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, there were seven other members of that group: past Agriculture minister from Saltcoats constituency, a good colleague friend of mine; the Speaker of this House from Cannington constituency; also previous Speaker from Moosomin constituency; our Finance minister from Canora-Pelly constituency; and of course our very own Minister of the Economy from Kindersley constituency.

No longer sitting as an MLA is our good Rod Gantefoer who is now one of the executive of the fabulous STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air program. And what a program that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course, Ben Heppner who I really didn't know that well, but I heard some fantastic stories about him, like when he was the caucus Chair and if he looked at you over his rimmed glasses, you knew — shut up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during member statements yesterday, while my colleague friend, the member from Carrot River was speaking of how we have reduced the waiting list for seniors waiting for long-term care, one of the members opposite on the other side, started beaking: brag, brag, brag, brag, brag. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to brag some more as to the accomplishments we have done. And I also know that they couldn't brag when they were the governing party because they never did anything but chase away jobs and create population declines.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here are some highlights and changes to this province since the Saskatchewan Party became the governing party of this great province seven years ago. Lowest unemployment rate in Canada for 23 consecutive months, since January 2013. That's 3.5 per cent in October 2014. Nationally it's 6.5 per cent. Lowest youth unemployment rate in Canada at 6.3 per cent. The national average is 12.6 per cent. Regina had

the lowest unemployment rate among all CMAs in Canada in October 2014 at 3 per cent. Ninth straight month it's been the lowest. Saskatoon had the second-lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 4.4 per cent.

567,200 people employed in October, an increase of 19,700 jobs compared to 2013 in October; an increase of 71,700 compared to 2007. Employment has increased year over year over the past 35 months. Saskatchewan employment growth rate of 3.5 per cent was the highest, above national increases of 1.1 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, record highs, all-time historical highs, population aged 15 and over, 846,100. And a female employment rate of 264,300. Record highs for the months of October, labour force 593,300. Employment, 576,200. Full-time employment, 475,800. And a male employment of 311,900. Far greater than what was here years ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, year-over-year employment: employment up 19,700 jobs since last year. Saskatchewan growth rate of 3.5 per cent, ranked first among provinces compared to the national average of 1.1 per cent. Full-time employment up 14,000, part-time up 5,700. Gender: female employment up 11,300 and male employment up 8,500. Youth employment up by 2,900 people. Saskatoon unemployment up 5,900 which is a 3.6 per cent increase, and Regina employment up 1,400 which is a 1 per cent increase over the year.

Mr. Speaker, month-to-month employment: Saskatchewan employment up 2,300. Saskatchewan employment growth of 4.4 per cent, ranked fifth among provinces. Full-time employment and part-time employment, up and down. Some are down. Gender, female employment up 2,500. Saskatoon employment up 500 and Regina employment up 1,400.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment is down 700 from a year ago and Regina unemployment down 600 from a year ago. Saskatoon unemployment up 100 from a year ago. Youth unemployment down 400 from a year ago. Aboriginal unemployment down 400 from a year ago. Aboriginal youth unemployment down 500 from a year ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP tabled *The Fairness for Saskatchewan Businesses in Government Procurement Act* on Monday, "... which is aimed at ensuring Saskatchewan businesses do not keep losing out while government contracts are continually handed to companies from other provinces or countries."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP also stated, "For a year and a half, Saskatchewan's steel fabrication industry has been pressuring the government behind the scenes for changes to its procurement policies, but the government continues to fail..." Let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been talking with those companies all along and bringing that information to our party so we could react to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you wouldn't know. I know the businesses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, here's a quote from the member opposite: "All Saskatchewan businesses want is a level playing field," said Wotherspoon. Well we know that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've been talking to them...

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd remind the member not to refer to members by their name but by their riding.

Mr. Parent: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in June our government created Priority Saskatchewan to ensure businesses are treated fairly when bidding on government contracts. This new branch at SaskBuilds has a mandate to improve procurement across the government and Crown sector by consulting with businesses and removing barriers that create an uneven playing field for Saskatchewan businesses. Consultations are under way with businesses, government, and Crown corporations across the province to understand what is working well and what is not, challenges that they may be facing.

[11:30]

Priority Saskatchewan has now passed through 100 meetings representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders. While respecting our trade agreements, our government will take decisive action to maximize opportunities for local businesses. And might I remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's all they used to do is meet, meet, meet, meet, meet, and never did anything to respond to it.

Over the past seven years there have been 70,400 new jobs created in Saskatchewan because of this government working hard to create a better business environment. Fewer than 10 per cent of those jobs, 6,600, were created in the resource sector. Here is a breakdown of the 70,400 new jobs since 2007: construction, 18,000 new jobs; health care, 10,700 new jobs; resource sector, 6,600 jobs; science and technology, 6,200 jobs; education, 5,800; agriculture, 5,300; all other sectors, 17,800.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has created work, has made an atmosphere in this province where companies want to come here and work here, not chased away like that government has done over the years prior to that. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that I support this motion, and I thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to enter into this debate. And it's an important one because as I look at the motion, it really shows where this government is at when I... especially the last sentence. But there's many parts of it that I just find really problematic, when they say that it's a benefit for all Saskatchewan people. And if anybody happened to read the paper, in *The StarPhoenix*, and I think, I hope the member from Saskatoon Meewasin... It's his home community. We all woke up with a tragic story about "Homeless man found dead." Something's wrong. Something's wrong.

And so you put forward a motion like this and not understand that things are not all good for everyone in this province. We have a problem. We have a problem. And even if the heckles over there want to deny that and want to deny that in fact people are in crisis and this is what the front-line workers — and in fact the Minister of Social Services will call them the boots on the ground — are saying, people are in crisis. And that is a real issue. That is a real issue. So I expected maybe that the

government would say, and there's more work to do. That's their favourite tag line when they're kind of in a jam. They say, for the last seven years, there's more work to do; they've just got to get around to it.

But this is a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a situation where this government . . . And we heard the member from Meewasin say, we will brag and we will brag and we will brag and we will continue to brag. Where is the humility? Where is a little humbleness? When we see these kind of things happening when we are coming into the Christmas season, and they just spout off stats after stats after stats.

And here is one. And I don't know, maybe the two members haven't seen this stat. They haven't seen this stat. But this is one clearly we should not be proud of, and this is, "Sask. food banks see largest provincial increase." This is crazy, Mr. Speaker. Where we see other provinces having an annual increase of some 1 per cent, 1 per cent increase, what is our increase year over year? 19.4. That's not 1.94. That's 19.4. Why is it that more people, more people are going to the food bank? Why is that in Saskatchewan? And half of them are children. Half of them are children.

So when they get up and say that all Saskatchewan people are benefiting, I think they need to say, can we dial it back here and understand that not all people are benefiting. We need to get serious about this.

We were happy to hear that they're talking about an anti-poverty strategy. We've been calling for that for many years, and we're glad to see that Poverty Costs will be involved. But it's an important, it's very important to get that work going. It's very, very important to get going. And we have a problem here in Saskatchewan with poverty. When so many people are doing well, some are not doing so well.

And when we think when we have that kind of economic growth . . . Now this government, I couldn't believe the member opposite would say that he's giving all the credit to the people who met to form this party — after being so horribly embarrassed by their former antics in the '80s — as somehow they did it all. I mean, again, this is that brag, brag, brag, deny the realities of what's happening in a province like this.

But we see a situation, and you know, it is interesting. And I really appreciate the comments that my colleague made earlier about the film industry. And isn't it interesting, isn't this interesting; where is the Premier this week? Where is the Premier this week? Well he is in India on a trade mission.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the member knows full well that a member may refer to the absence of a member but not to reflect on it. So I would caution the member in his remarks.

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know the government is doing its work in India, right? There is a trade mission in India. But this is what a columnist wrote about this, and he talked about the curtain trade mission that's happening to India, talking to exports of Saskatchewan's resources like oilseeds and potash.

But, and I quote: "But if such trade missions are to be truly

successful, one would hope the Saskatchewan premier would have his eyes wide open as to whatever possibilities he might see," even if those possibilities might be the ones that he's rejected. "One might hope . . . [the Premier] would be reminded that Saskatchewan is more than resources and that things like the film industry in this province still do reach around the world."

He ends this story by saying . . . But it's interesting, it's interesting what's happening over in India where they're having this film conference. And he says, "But it does seem more than a little ironic that India seems more supportive of Saskatchewan-based film projects than the government of Saskatchewan."

So how does that work? How does that work? And we see this government pick and choose winners and losers all the time. And people in the film industry who are clearly . . . Even the chamber of commerce, the chamber commerce said that was wrong-headed. That was wrong-headed. The chamber of commerce said that. They're picking winners and losers over there, Mr. Speaker, and this is a problem.

But I want to get back to, you know, the fact is when we see that some people in Saskatchewan are not doing well, this is a problem. And you know it's funny, the member, the minister will go on and on about how we have, how we have good things happening here in Saskatchewan. And it does remind me of the gravy plane, and if you're John Black, you are doing well. This is a good place to be. This is a very good place to be.

And the kind of . . . When we had questions today about how much he was spending on hotels, clearly that's an economic incentive for somebody — John Black — and he's on the gravy plane. Roughly \$1 million on flights. \$1.4 million on John Black hotels. Mr. Speaker, that's something else. I've just got to tell you that when we see the situation like we have in terms of poverty, and this government has talked about transparency . . . Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to raise this in the House, but we know, we know a year ago over 12,000 children were in families that were receiving social assistance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, every year, twice a year I ask written questions to get an update to how many children on social assistance. The minister this year ordered those questions. Refused to answer the question about how many children are living in families where they're on social assistance. Why is that? Why is this government afraid of the truth? Why are they afraid of the truth?

She ordered the questions about how many people are on social assistance, how many people are on TEA [transitional employment allowance], how many people on SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], how many children on social assistance. We don't know. And she will say, well, that she will quote the Stats Canada, but we know the state of Stats Canada and how accurate their numbers are.

We could have accurate numbers, but this government would not answer those questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as they have for over 10 times since they've taken power. Why is this one unusual? So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see a lot of inconsistencies. I said there's a lot of problems with this motion. I know John

Black's doing very well. John Black is doing very well by this government. And so if he's the all people, then we would . . . We might support this motion if it was . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Pursuant to today's order, time for debate has expired. Questions? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to government procurement, what we're hearing is all Saskatchewan businesses want is a levelling of the playing field. What Saskatchewan taxpayers deserve is best value for their dollars. Businesses have been pushing for well over a year and a half, all across the province, heavily in Saskatoon as well, but the government has really just dragged its feet and continues to do so instead of having any real action.

We've introduced a bill here this week and we'd like to see something get done, not later but sooner. We'd like to see that happen during this session. We definitely need a more sophisticated procurement policy that ensures fairness for Saskatchewan businesses and value for taxpayers. Certainly businesses deserve that. So do taxpayers.

My question to the member from Meewasin: how can he possibly oppose that? Why won't he work with us to get that done for Saskatchewan people?

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you for the questions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have created the jobs. We have been listening. That's why we created Priority Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan initiatives. That's why we've done it. That's why we're out there with our friend, CEO [chief executive officer] is Lionel LaBelle, and he's out there. He's had over 100 meetings already with different Crowns, government, businesses, different groups like the Construction Association, etc., to find out what they are seeing so that they can bring it back to us and present it to cabinet.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what we are doing. And we started this back in June. You only just started looking at it last week. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the people of Saskatchewan deserve to hear is what the NDP policies and plans are. Yet it is painfully obvious that the leader of the NDP has no plans and no policy. Even their website has been wiped clean of any election platform or resolution.

We hear a lot from the negative nine over there, but nothing very productive, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Regina Rosemont: your leader has been at the helm for 19 months, and I can imagine even you would agree that it is time that everyone gets the pleasure of hearing about the smart growth plan. So, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Regina Rosemont: if you were the leader, would you already have the plan on your website? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to serve with the leader of this opposition every day in this House, and I'm pleased that we're actively listening and proposing solutions to Saskatchewan people — the kind of proposing, Mr. Speaker, that's going to make a difference in our classrooms as opposed to cutting educational assistants and driving up class size, making sure that that's being capped. Making sure that you're restoring the role of educational assistants. Putting forward legislation as we've seen this session, such as the buy-local day, Mr. Speaker, or improving procurement as we put forward a bill here this week, Mr. Speaker, to allow for economic opportunities. To commit to rebuilding the film industry here in this province and to address affordability in a meaningful way that, you know, really runs counter to what this government's done with costly, expensive, dangerous smart meter debacles, ripping dollars out of our rainy-day fund, Mr. Speaker, ripping dollars out of our Crowns and hiking up the bills of Saskatchewan people. We have a plan that will put Saskatchewan people first, and their priorities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are very proud to put forward a very important initiative called buy-local day. It's being supported by small businesses right across the province, entrepreneurs. They think this is exciting, an exciting opportunity to profile our small businesses, our community. Even CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] agree with this, think this is really important. So to the member in Meewasin: does he support buy-local day? Will he support our bill?

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you for the question. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To buying in Saskatchewan and purchasing in Saskatchewan, we support all businesses that we can no matter where they are in Saskatchewan, whether they're large or small. Our Crowns in this province, they do the purchasing for their businesses. The governments do the purchasing for . . . [inaudible] . . . They buy where they have to and they support our small businesses in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Even our farmers, who you never helped at all in all the time that you were in power, they buy from local businesses all over this province. And most of them are small businesses, besides some of the large implement dealers of course. And they all pay PST in their purchases. Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes we do support all the small businesses in Saskatchewan as well as the large businesses in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

[11:45]

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate for the day. And my question will be to the member from Regina

Rosemont. He gets up on his soapbox and he talks a lot about what he would do. And besides omitting lots of facts with his stories usually, he also omits the fact that he has no plan. His leader has no plan. The party has no plan on how to move Saskatchewan forward.

So my question would be, when the member from Rosemont goes on the doorsteps talking with the people of Regina Rosemont and all over the province — because he does make a lot of mileage, Mr. Deputy Speaker — what does he tell the people that he's talking on their doorsteps of, how he's going to move the province forward? And does he omit some facts with them as well as when he's in a question period, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question from the member, nice to receive it. It seemed it was difficult for him to deliver.

The plan that we're pleased to propose every day is about putting Saskatchewan families first, Saskatchewan businesses first. Everything from an economic perspective around procurement, around buying local, around supporting a film industry, and of course scrapping the tens and tens of millions of dollars that are being wasted right now on the out-of-country consultants engaged in this toxic John Black lean project. Putting those dollars to where they count in our health care system, improving, and actually respecting our educators, not running attack ads as we've seen the government opposite do, but actually supporting, listening, working with them and making sure they have the needs they need and that their supports are there, Mr. Speaker.

And first and foremost, what we all need to have a focus on, something that's clearly our focus, is affordability for Saskatchewan families.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things we haven't heard a single word from across the way and we don't hear in the Speech from the Throne is about the situation with First Nation employment. We know that last year Eric Howe gave a report that said if Saskatchewan would employ First Nations at the same rate as Alberta and Manitoba, more than 6,000 First Nations people would have jobs.

Why can't this government help find jobs for 6,000 First Nations people like the other Prairie provinces are doing? Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my question to the member for Saskatoon Meewasin and would be interested in his view on that.

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you for the question. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have helped companies come into this province and create more jobs for Aboriginal people than anybody else. I was involved with a lot of those

businesses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I became an MLA. I was helping a lot of the Aboriginals start businesses. I was helping a lot of the northern Aboriginals get jobs with some of the various companies.

We also have created various, various educational programs like ironworking program, which members opposite wouldn't even look at when we asked them to, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes we did, we did start that program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thanks to one of my colleagues who went out of his way to make sure that we delivered that program. And it has helped a lot of the Aboriginals get jobs in the steel industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm proud of what we've done in that. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before the Saskatchewan Party was government, our members had a plan to increase Saskatchewan's population by 100,000 people in 10 years. The former NDP MLA, Harry Van Mulligen, was quoted, quoted in 2003 as saying:

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

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

Well our government did it and in significantly less than 10 years. Now we are on a track to meet our goal of 1.2 million people in Saskatchewan by 2020 which was laid out, laid out in our Saskatchewan plan for growth. We have repeatedly asked the NDP, what is your plan, with no answer. Let's try again. To the member from Saskatoon Centre: what is your party's plan to continue the momentum of the Saskatchewan economy — your plan?

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

Mr. Forbes: — I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 607

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Broten that **Bill No. 607** — *The Buy Local Day Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm really proud to be able to stand and speak to this bill today. I'm very proud that our leader has brought this bill forward because it's one that supports people right here in Saskatchewan.

That bill that he brought forward is Bill No. 607 and this is an Act to encourage the patronage of local businesses, suppliers, and services. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it gets any better than this. Actually, this is a great bill that should be supported wholeheartedly by all of the members. And I mean, I'm assuming they're all in favour of this because how could you possibly be against something like this? It's a great bill and I'm very proud of our leader for bringing it forward.

For some reason I guess maybe the members opposite have difficulty with the idea of supporting local businesses. I mean certainly with the noise that's coming from that way it would indicate to me that they don't support buying local in Saskatchewan, that they seem — with their procurement policies — seem to want to avoid doing that which is really shameful. And I know my colleague has spoken about the other bill that has been introduced, and we get some feeling from them that they don't support local businesses at all.

Some of the information that you'll find out there about buying local is found on . . . There's a group called Sasklandia, and they're doing some really good work on the buy-local movement here in Saskatchewan. And in fact on one of the pamphlets that they've produced, they talk about a store in Saskatoon that just happens to be in my riding, Mr. Speaker, and this is a store called The Better Good. It's right on Broadway Avenue. It's a very active store and a lot of people walking by shop there. In fact, even in the summertime — it's kind of interesting — they put a piano out front and people are invited to sit down and play. And quite often when I'm walking down the street, you'll hear somebody playing the piano right in front of The Better Good.

It's owned by Laura and Corey Neufeld, and they're a couple from Saskatoon. And they're a great example of local businesses promoting positive values, including buying local. So one of the things they talk about . . . There's sort of three categories when they talk about what they stock in their store. They look for products that fit into the category, if it's organic, fair trade, and local. And they admit, they admit that local is better for our community, and I think that's exactly what this bill is proclaiming, Mr. Speaker.

It's a very straightforward bill. I think it's one that all members will be proud to support. And we're hopeful that this government will get off its high horse for a couple of minutes and actually support a reasonable, practical, supportive bill for local businesses.

And I mean, it's pretty basic. All we're asking is that we proclaim one day of the month as buy-local day. There's all sorts of good things that could come out of this. And we know that although . . . I think back to the days when I grew up in a small town, Mr. Speaker, and I know it's very important in my family that we buy, we bought our groceries at home in our local community. Certainly the local co-op was sort of the hub of the community. We had the local credit union and we had

some local dry goods stores and service stations and people, mechanics that would fix cars. And I remember the discussion at the supper table about how important it was to buy local, and that when people started being able to travel all the way to the big city of Moose Jaw, we saw a decline in the buying of local products and that hurt our local businesses. I mean, it's just really clear; the economics are clear.

So to encourage people to buy local, to encourage a bill like this which is once . . . Although I know we buy local as much as we can, but to sort of celebrate that and promote the cause of Sasklandia, I think it's really important that we support this bill. And we know that our leader introduced it a few weeks ago here in the House, but he actually met this summer with a team from Sasklandia, which is the group leading the buy-local movement. And that's why he's calling on this, he's calling on this government to create a buy-local day.

Ninety-eight per cent of Saskatchewan businesses are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. A third of all workers in the province are employed by small business, contributing about a third to Saskatchewan's gross domestic product. And we know there's some really important statistics that are available as well in terms of what happens when you spend \$100 locally. If you spend \$100 at a Saskatchewan business, only \$27 leaves Saskatchewan. Seventy-three dollars will stay in Saskatchewan. If you spend \$100 at a non-Saskatchewan business, we know that 57 of those dollars will leave Saskatchewan and only \$43 will stay in Saskatchewan.

Those dollars that stay in Saskatchewan go to local suppliers, local business services, community donations in Saskatchewan, wages spent in Saskatchewan, and local taxes. If the dollars leave Saskatchewan, they go to non-local suppliers, non-local supplies, and non-local business services. So we know that it's very important to celebrate the amazing accomplishments of our small business community here in Saskatchewan. It's incredibly important in small towns, and we know that it's incredibly important in larger cities as well.

Mr. Speaker, I know there's an important event that's coming up here in a couple of minutes in the rotunda, so at this point I would just like to support this bill and encourage the members opposite to support it as well. Thank you very much. I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 607, *The Buy Local Day Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:57.]

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