



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

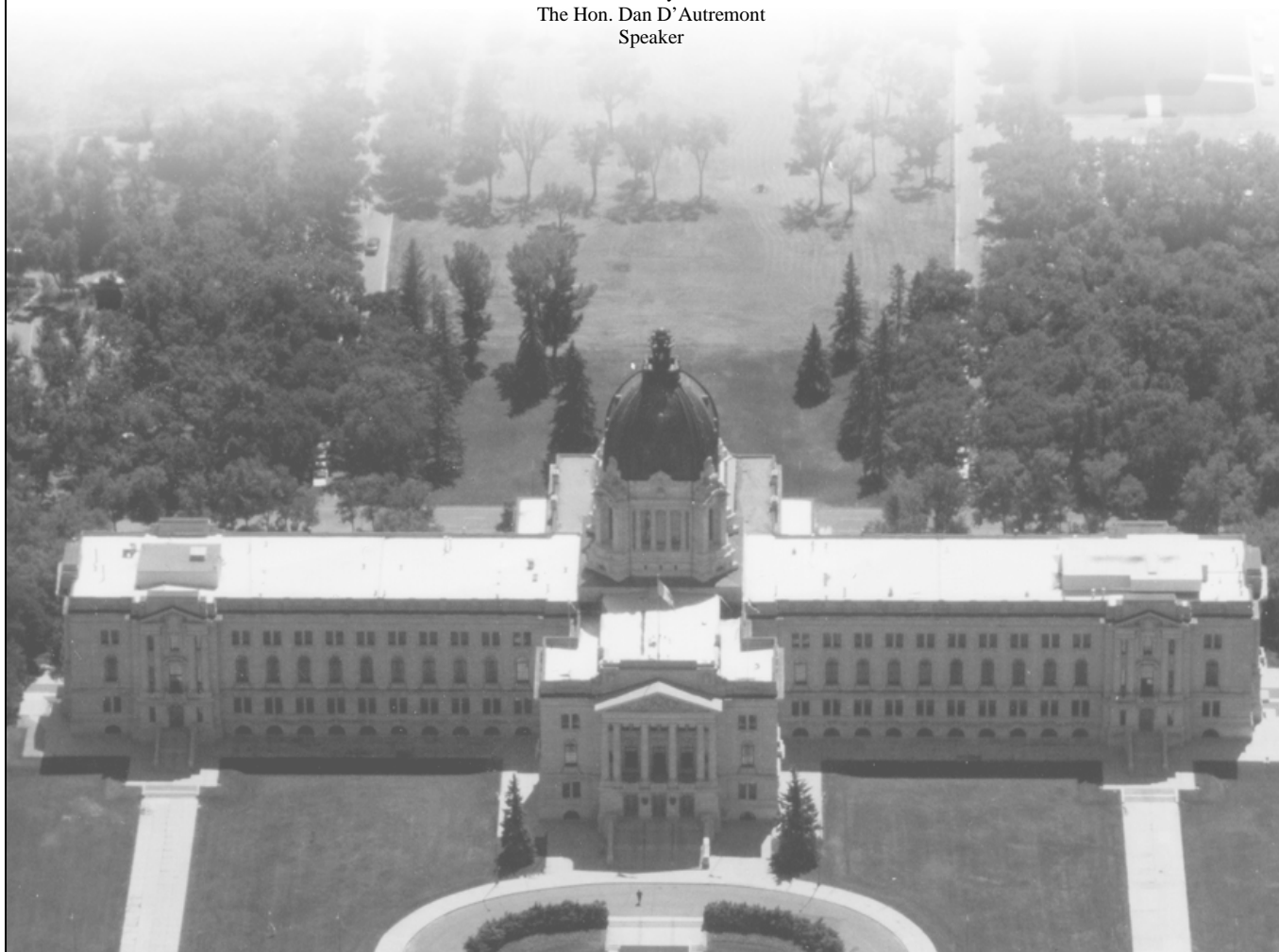
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
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
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, 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 Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to introduce a number of guests seated in your gallery. Last month, 10 teenagers took their oath and enrolled in the basic military training course, becoming the first students to earn a high school credit under this dual-credit program initiative.

Nine of those students are here today, and I'm going to ask them to stand. They are from Archbishop M.C. O'Neill High School. They are grade 11 student, Private Madison Holowachuk; grade 12 student, Private Alyse Ludwar; grade 12 student, Private Christopher Busch; grade 11 student, Private Connor Wilder; grade 11 student, Private Brandon Quong. From Winston Knoll Collegiate: grade 11 student, Private Joshua Baker; grade 12 student, Private Slade Mascotto. From Thom Collegiate: grade 11 student, Damian Claveau-Haasen; and from Campbell Collegiate, grade 12 student, Private Jason Klink.

I would also like to welcome program staff here with us today, without whom this program would not be possible. From Cochrane High School, Mr. Paul Marcotte; course director, Lieutenant Tanner Schroh; course warrant, warrant officer, Pat Cote; 2 section commander, Sergeant Terrence Elford.

Through this program, Mr. Speaker, these students will learn valuable life and leadership skills. I can attest to that, Mr. Speaker, because I was a sea cadet a couple of lives ago. Our government has deep respect, Mr. Speaker, for the armed forces, and I would ask that all members join me in welcoming these guests to their legislature today and also to thank them for their service.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the Education minister here today and welcome these students that have enrolled in this new program and to recognize their service, to thank them for coming here today, and to thank them for continuing to provide service back to our community.

This is a new program, one that presents new opportunities for these students. And it's one that expands some of the opportunities through experiential learning and through direct involvement with the Canadian Forces, giving them a window as to what service with the Canadian Forces may look like, gives them a window as to what a career with the Canadian Forces may look like. This is a program that's voluntary, one that they've chosen to enter into, and certainly I want to thank them for choosing that service and choosing to join us here

today.

I also want to thank all those instructors, all those that are assisting them every step of the way with the Canadian Forces that are here today. And I want to recognize Mr. Paul Marcotte, a good friend who's here today, a very fine carpenter who's made one of the nicest birch bark canoes I've ever seen, Mr. Speaker, and who's an exceptional runner and just an all round good guy as well who's involved with this program.

So it's a pleasure to welcome these students, these members of the Canadian Forces to their Assembly along with Paul Marcotte of Regina Public Schools. Thank you so much. I ask all members to join with me in providing a warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in the Assembly to introduce some very special people to this Assembly. It's my pleasure this morning to announce that the renewal of the Saskatchewan-Ukraine Relations Advisory Committee, also known as SURAC, has been renewed for another three-year term. And I'll have more to say about that in a member's statement later on this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce four members of the SURAC committee: Alicia Klopoushak is a superannuated teacher from Saskatoon and serves as the Vice-Chair; also joining Alicia are Dave Dutchak, a business owner in Saskatoon; Holly Paluck, a teacher from Regina; Kari Harvey is the secretary to the committee and the government representative.

Mr. Speaker, also joining these four committee members, I would also like to welcome Orest Gawdyda. Orest is the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress here in Regina, the Regina branch, and many of you know is a very strong leader and advocate for the Ukrainian community. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me this morning in welcoming Alicia, Kari, David, Holly, and Orest to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming the members of the advisory committee to the Assembly today, to thank them for the input and the advice that they have provided, and to say that it is appreciated by all people in the province.

You know, as everyone in Saskatchewan watches events unfolding in Ukraine, we're deeply concerned, and we want the absolute best for the country and the region over the long term. And as we watch, it's almost reminiscent of many decades ago. It's important that we in the province stand in solidarity with those who support democracy and support freedom and the values that we hold near and dear to us here in province. So I ask all members to join me and to thank these members for their service.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Minister of Education in welcoming the students who have taken that basic military training and their instructors from Thom and Winston Knoll.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a quick introduction to make to you and through you to all members. Seated in your gallery, a couple of gentlemen I'd like to introduce, two members who've joined us this morning. The president of our party, of the Saskatchewan Party, James Thorsteinson from the Lloydminster area where he ranches, has joined us today. I just want to thank him on behalf of all of the members on this side of the House, if not all members in the Assembly, for his volunteer service and involvement in politics and his leadership for our organization.

He's joined by the executive director of the party, Patrick Bundrock, who's no stranger to this building, Mr. Speaker. We had the chance, James and Patrick and I, to see a little history unfold, some bittersweet history unfold last night in Sturgis, Saskatchewan, Canada where we nominated a brand-new candidate in front of about 600 people in that community to replace someone who's pretty hard to replace frankly, as our candidate in that particular constituency. That of course is the Deputy Premier's riding.

I want to thank James and Patrick for being here this morning, and I ask members of this Assembly to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in with the folks introducing some of folks of the Ukrainian community. I'd like to give a special shout-out to Alicia Klopoushak who I had the pleasure of teaching with at Caswell School for many years. It was great working with her, and I know her husband quite well, Larry, and their family. I think the last time we saw each other was just a couple weeks ago at the King of Kovbasa event in Saskatoon. Good to see you here, Alicia, and I'd ask all members to give her a warm welcome to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition yet again calling for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts.

And we know that in September of 2014 this government walked away from a new 48-unit affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and then rent the units at full market price. This government allowed the private developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, setting a dangerous precedent for this type of default. And further, when asked to explain the government's decision, the Minister of Social Services, and I quote, "You're assuming that there's these desperate homeless people," showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our communities.

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

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 and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships with 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 citizens as it relates to the unsafe conditions created on Dewdney Avenue, created by that government, their failure to properly plan heavy-haul truck traffic, and the fact that because of their failure to plan and because of their decisions, they've inundated Dewdney Avenue, which is an important residential artery, Mr. Speaker, and puts people and families directly at risk. Certainly this is important to anyone who lives along Dewdney Avenue, near Dewdney Avenue. It's important to anyone who uses Dewdney Avenue, Mr. Speaker. And it's past time that this government gets those heavy-haul trucks off of Dewdney Avenue. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the 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 of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to stop the practice of evicting working families in northern Saskatchewan from their homes. And, Mr. Speaker:

We, 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 restore the rent-to-own option for responsible renters of the social housing program and to reinstate the remote housing program for northern Saskatchewan and throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from all throughout Saskatchewan. And on this particular page, Mr.

Speaker, or the many pages, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of better seniors' care.

The undersigned residents point out that many seniors are unable to find spaces in care facilities in their communities with their partners or near their family.

The petitioners point out that many seniors are waiting in hospital beds due to the lack of spaces in care facilities, that the Provincial Auditor found that many seniors' care facilities do not have high enough standards of care, that the nutrition provided in some seniors' care homes is not sufficient for a healthy diet, and that families have spoken out about the lack of staff to help their loved ones with basic needs, and that this government has removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, resulting in neglect.

And they finally point out that chronic understaffing in seniors' care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered call bells for help, seniors being left unattended on toilets, and infrequent bathing for residents. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public facilities, private facilities, and for home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in seniors' care facilities; restoring regulations that provide minimum standards of care; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent and in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by several hundred people to the Legislative Assembly, and this petition says:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: northern Saskatchewan is being targeted by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to become a storage site.

Now that has changed this week, but they're still calling for legislation to permanently ban nuclear waste storage and transportation of nuclear waste into, out of, and through Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from over 50 communities including Air Ronge, Archerwill, Battleford, Big River, Biggar, Bruno, Buchanan, Canora, Carrot River, Christopher Lake, Cowessess First Nation, Creighton, Delisle, Denare Beach, Deschambault Lake, Endeavour, Estevan, Flin Flon, Fond-du-Lac, Fort Qu'Appelle, Hafford, Handel, Hazel Dell, Hudson Bay, Invermay, La Ronge, Lac Vert, Landis, Lintlaw, Loon Lake, Martensville, Meadow Lake, Melfort, Muenster, Nipawin, Norquay, North Battleford, Pelican Narrows, Prairie River, Preeceville, Prince Albert, Rama, Regina, Saltcoats, Sandy Bay, Saskatoon, Sturgis, Swift Current, Tisdale, Victoire, Wapella, Watson, Weekes, White Fox, Wilkie, and Yorkton. Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to submit these.

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to remind members not to precipitate or enter into debate in their remarks to briefly describe their petitions.

[10:15]

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Social Justice Week at the University of Saskatchewan

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in this House to recognize an important initiative happening this week at the University of Saskatchewan. This week is the first ever University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, USSU's Social Justice Week.

Throughout the course of the week, each day has focused around a central social justice theme. Tuesday centred on queer and LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] issues. Yesterday was devoted to indigenous international matters. Today's focus is on issues facing women, and tomorrow will be committed to concerns surrounding food security and children in care.

The organizers have brought in a number of groups and experts from the community to discuss these important problems that are relevant to Saskatchewan citizens today. With important inputs from the Human Rights Commission, CHEP [child hunger and education program], the Avenue Community Centre, and a number of local activists, I'm certain there will be many important conversations about the interrelationships between the different social justice issues people in our society are facing.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join in with me in thanking USSU vice-president of student affairs, Jack Saddleback, and all of the organizers who helped make this event a success, and also for helping to raise awareness about the issues that prevent everyone in our province from fully living with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

### Renewed Commitment to Relationship with Ukraine

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier today I had the honour of announcing that our government has renewed its commitment to our relationship with Ukraine. The Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations advisory committee, SURAC, will be extended until 2018.

SURAC works to strengthen relations between Saskatchewan and Ukraine and has provided leadership to our government on many issues. With the escalation of political violence in Ukraine, SURAC has also played a key role in raising awareness of humanitarian concerns by being a voice for the Ukrainian community. Mr. Speaker, our government responded to concerns by donating \$60,000 in aid to Ukraine that was used to buy medical supplies and provide support for families and health care professionals.

Currently Ukraine is fourth in the number of immigrants coming to our province. In 2013-2014, more than 900 Ukrainian newcomers chose Saskatchewan as their home, and now more than 13 per cent of Saskatchewan residents are of Ukrainian origin.

SURAC committee members include Gerald Luciuk, Chair; Alicia Klopoushak, Vice-Chair; Kari Harvey, secretary; Dave Dutchak; Dr. Natalia Khanenko-Friesen; Laurent Mougeot; Holly Paluck; Nadia Prokopchuk; Danylo Puderak; James Shevchuk; and Mary-Anne Trischuk.

I would like to thank all the committee members and other leaders in the Ukrainian community for their dedication to cultivating strong connections between Saskatchewan and Ukraine. Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to enhancing these special, long-standing relationships.

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

### Opposition to Nuclear Waste Storage in Saskatchewan

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this morning I had the honour to present petitions signed by hundreds of people from all over our province who are opposed to the creation of a nuclear waste repository here in Saskatchewan. Earlier this week the Nuclear Waste Management Organization announced that there won't be any nuclear waste repositories coming to Saskatchewan at any time soon. This was welcome news to many northern residents who have been actively campaigning to keep nuclear waste out of Saskatchewan, including the committee for future generations.

The committee for future generations was formed in May 2011 after Max Morin from Beauval was invited to an elders' gathering near Pinehouse, where he discovered NWMO [Nuclear Waste Management Organization] representatives promoting nuclear waste storage as the solution to youth suicide. The 10 elders immediately rose and walked out. It was the first time Morin had ever seen a sacred circle broken.

People need to keep educating themselves on the hazards of the nuclear fuel chain and on the way the industry deceives the public for its own gain. Grassroots is

powerful. We need to push our leaders to invest in energies and economies that are sustainable, like solar, wind, and geothermal. We have the knowledge and the means to do it.

Mr. Speaker, the hard work of community leaders like Max Morin, Marius Paul, and Debbie Mihalicz from English River First Nation and Fred Pederson from Pinehouse, along with the dozens of other individuals who rallied for this cause, deserve to be recognized. And they're not done yet. They are vowing to continue their cause to push for legislation that will prohibit nuclear waste storage in Saskatchewan. I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me today to congratulate them on their success.

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

### Lymphedema Awareness Day

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce that March 6th is recognized as Lymphedema Awareness Day in Saskatchewan. Lymphedema is a chronic condition caused by a compromised lymphatic system. People with this condition experience discomfort on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, since 2011 a focused effort has been undertaken to better serve people living with lymphedema. Our government has funded combined decongestive therapy, a best practice standard for the treatment of lymphedema. There are now 13 clinicians trained in this therapy across Saskatchewan. By enhancing the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living policies, we have continued to improve access to compression garments needed to best support therapy and personal comfort. By purchasing multi-chamber compression pumps for regional health authorities, patients have access to these machines closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, the ministry has supported a patient-developed resource called *Your Journey*. This resource was developed by the lymphedema working group and includes a resource binder and a video to guide women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. It has been distributed to health regions and is available on [saskatchewan.ca](http://saskatchewan.ca).

While there is currently no cure for lymphedema, the condition may be managed through proper treatment and patient care. We will continue to work closely with health regions, partners, and stakeholders to deliver high-quality care and to strengthen awareness, education, and outreach. And we do this to help make living with lymphedema a little bit easier.

So please join me in observing March 6th as Lymphedema Awareness Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Successful Initiatives at Pinehouse

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to profile some of the great work that the northern community of Pinehouse has done. A few decades ago the situation in Pinehouse was hard. Substance abuse, dysfunction, and

unemployment were far too often the norm. The community decided to change their future. Pinehouse took the initiative to work with government to make sure that their most vulnerable citizens do not slip through the cracks of the larger system.

One of the programs implemented is Recovery Lake. It offers opportunities for people struggling with substance abuse. Their road to recovery includes working with Pinehouse Business North to build skills relevant to today's economy and to better their own lives.

The community also created an exciting program called Reclaiming Our Community or ROC. Community members and service providers, supported by elders and elected leadership, gather to discuss potential problem cases and then intervene. The results speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. In 2013, Pinehouse had the lowest crime severity out of any community in the northern administration district, less than half of that of the closest community.

I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the hard work of the citizens of Pinehouse, as well as their community partners, for their outstanding, proactive work, and encourage them to keep this trend going.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Wood River.

#### **Basic Military Qualification Co-op Training Program**

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge the 10 students who have entered into the basic military qualification co-op training program. Our government has a deep respect for our Canadian Armed Forces and their commitment and dedication to serving our country. Not only do they protect, defend, and support the freedoms and democracy that we enjoy, but they're also helping to grow tomorrow's leaders.

This training and these experiences go far beyond military training. It's a unique way to learn and develop valuable life and leadership skills. This program wouldn't be possible without the partnership between the Regina Public and Catholic school divisions and 38 Canadian Brigade.

Mr. Speaker, this government supports alternative pathways to graduation. We believe that opportunities like this provide students with the option to explore other interests while nurturing and encouraging their unique attitudes, skills, and abilities. This also addresses one of our goals in our government's plan for growth of expanding alternate credit programs for high school completion.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in recognizing these students, their families, and program staff for their commitment to this program, and to the Canadian Armed Forces for serving our country and growing our next generation. Thank you.

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

#### **New Health Centre to Open in Radville**

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from

time to time we get an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of a strong economy. At the same time, it's important to remember the costs of decline that Saskatchewan experienced under the NDP [New Democratic Party]. Tomorrow we are celebrating the benefits of a strong economy through the grand opening of the new Radville Marian long-term care centre.

The Radville Marian LTC [long-term care] centre is an example of the new Saskatchewan. It is the replacement of a 66-year-old building and incorporates design functions that will help implement the Eden philosophy, which focuses on building comfort, companionship, and privacy for each senior. It is a 30-bed, two-unit centre with a connected physicians' clinic.

Thanks to a strong economy, the provincial government was able to contribute \$17 million or 80 per cent of the \$22 million cost. And we've replicated those actions across a total of 13 communities. To date we've invested over \$200 million in an effort to build new long-term care facilities.

Compare that to the costs of decline under the NDP's weak economy. Instead of opening new long-term care beds, the NDP closed 1,200. Instead of opening new long-term care facilities, the NDP closed 19. Instead of hiring over 400 new doctors and 2,600 nurses, the NDP drove out 173 doctors and 455 nurses. Mr. Speaker, let's never go back. Let's keep Saskatchewan moving forward. Thank you.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Cancellation of Urgent Surgery**

**Mr. Broten:** — Tony Kot is 34 years old. He badly injured his back in June. He's in debilitating pain and his health has deteriorated significantly. Last week his neurosurgeon told him he needs emergency surgery. The emergency surgery was scheduled for Tuesday but was then cancelled because there was no bed available in Regina General. On Tuesday morning, the bedline unit told him he'd get a bed that afternoon, but 35 minutes later they called back to reverse that.

Tony's mom has called the minister's office and she's called the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, but she's received no help — just government rhetoric, which she is sick of hearing.

So will the Premier spare us the self-congratulatory spin? Will he simply agree to meet with Tony's mom to hear the details of this nightmare?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of the details of this case, but I would be very happy to meet with Tony's mother right after question period to find out more information on this.

Mr. Speaker, our health regions are working very hard to ensure that we have the lowest waits for surgery in this country, Mr. Speaker. We've seen some tremendous progress, Mr. Speaker. In this case, again I don't know all the details but I would be

more than happy to meet with Tony's mother and to find out what we can do to help see that Tony get his surgery as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, Tony's mother contacted the minister's office. Tony's mother contacted his MLA, and that's why Tony's mom would like to have a meeting with the Premier to discuss this.

Because Tony's neurosurgeon has bent over backwards to make special arrangements, it looks like Tony's emergency surgery may take place next Wednesday. Next Wednesday, for surgery that is desperately needed, all because the hospital does not have a bed for him.

Does the Premier think it's acceptable for someone who needs emergency surgery to have to wait almost two weeks because the hospital cannot find a bed?

[10:30]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we are working very hard with our regional health authorities, providing over \$200 million in the last five years on our surgical initiative to drive what were the longest waits in Canada for surgery, Mr. Speaker, to the point where even the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] *National* report I believe of Monday night recognized Saskatchewan as the only province to make significant headway when it came to certain orthopedic surgeries, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're working hard to ensure that not only elective surgeries, but yes, emergency surgeries happen when they need to happen, Mr. Speaker. In this case, Mr. Speaker, again I don't have the details of this case. I'm not aware of the contact that has been made with my office, but I will be more than happy to meet with Tony's mother afterwards and to work with the health region to see that this surgery is done as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, those self-congratulatory lines are the same lines that were given to Tony's mom when she called the minister's office looking for help, and that's why she wants to meet with the Premier.

Tony's condition has deteriorated so badly that he's at significant risk of losing some bodily functions. That's why his neurosurgeon has deemed this an emergency situation. But the Regina General said it's not enough of an emergency. The bureaucrats said Tony's organs would have to be compromised before it would be enough of an emergency. His neurosurgeon says that the surgery is desperately needed, but the hospital says it can wait until Tony's organs are compromised.

To the Premier: how can he possibly justify that?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I don't have all the details in terms of Tony's case, Mr. Speaker. Obviously it is the specialists that make the decision in terms of how a surgical patient would be prioritized and scheduled, Mr. Speaker. If this is deemed to be an emergency surgery, then obviously priority is put in place to ensure that these emergency surgeries are done as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be not only happy to meet with Tony's mother, but we will be following up with the health region, Mr. Speaker, to determine what is in fact taking place with Tony's surgery and to see that this surgery does happen as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to Tony's mom. She desperately wants help for her son, but she also wants the system fixed for others. She has huge respect for Tony's neurosurgeon and is incredibly grateful for all his efforts to get Tony into the hospital for the emergency surgery that he desperately needs, and she's worried that this kind of situation will drive good specialists away. When specialists say that surgeries are desperately needed, bureaucrats should not be allowed to overrule that and say that they can wait until the patient's organs are compromised.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Is it a written policy that organs need to be compromised before a doctor's orders for emergency surgery are followed?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly the advice and the recommendations of the specialist is what is taken into account when it comes to scheduling surgery, Mr. Speaker. That's the way it should be.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Regina Qu'Appelle, this government has increased the number of acute care beds by over 12 per cent in the last seven years, knowing that we have a growing population now in this province after many years of decline, and knowing, Mr. Speaker, that this government invested significant dollars in the last five years on a surgical initiative to see the longest waits in Canada for surgery, which was driving specialists and surgeons out of this province to be sure, Mr. Speaker, to the point where we have the lowest waits in this country for surgery, Mr. Speaker.

In this particular case though, we take this very seriously. And I will be following up both with Tony's mother as well as the health region to find out when this surgery will be scheduled, Mr. Speaker, and my hope is that it will be as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister says he takes this seriously, but the actions of this government show a very different story. The minister's office was contacted by Tony's mom. The MLA was contacted, but assistance wasn't provided, Mr. Speaker. How is it that emergency surgery takes two weeks to be done? My question to the Premier: is it a written policy that organs need to be compromised before a doctor's orders for



emergency surgery are followed?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Again thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is the policy of the health regions in this province to take advice, Mr. Speaker, from the specialists. I don't know, in terms of what the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, where an administrator within the health region will overrule a specialist, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there needs to be the availability of surgery time, the availability for the proper . . . a bed to be available, Mr. Speaker, and the recommendation of the surgeon, Mr. Speaker, for the surgery.

So again not knowing all the details of this, I understand that the family has contacted my office in the last day or so, Mr. Speaker. We will be following up. I would be happy to meet with Tony's mother afterwards and with the health region to find out how soon the surgery will be scheduled.

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

#### Patient Care and the Lean Initiative

**Ms. Chartier:** — This government's approach to our health care system is so frustrating — so many misplaced priorities, so little focus on what really matters. Earlier this week we learned that John Black has this government tracking everything nurses do right down to the second. But it gets worse, because this government's \$40 million American consultant also has this government tracking surgical patients right down to the second. According to John Black's standard work process, patients getting ready for orthopedic surgery are given 30 seconds to change and go to the bathroom. To the Health minister: does this government actually expect orthopedic surgical patients to change and go to the bathroom in just 30 seconds?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly the Government of Saskatchewan doesn't put a time limit on how long it will take a patient to change and use a washroom, Mr. Speaker. But through quality improvement what we want to do, find out, is what our patients and our providers, where they're spending their time, Mr. Speaker, determine which of that process is of value, which of that is, Mr. Speaker, inefficient or a waste, and we want to improve that process, Mr. Speaker.

And I can point out, Mr. Speaker, as an example, and you know we had a discussion, Mr. Speaker, on ambulances in the last day. In Regina Qu'Appelle they found when a technician was . . . an ambulance was at the emergency room, in order to change over for using that for another patient, Mr. Speaker, it took 21 minutes to check an ambulance to make sure it was supplied, had the appropriate stock, Mr. Speaker. Through a process, they got rid of more than 1,000 duplicate items, in unused items. They spend today 90 per cent less time, from 21 minutes down to 2 minutes, to get that ambulance back on the road, Mr. Speaker, so that it can serve patients in this province.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Oh it gets worse, Mr. Speaker. The John Black standard work form says if patients need to go to the bathroom a second time before their orthopedic surgery, they are given just 15 seconds. Just 15 seconds for a patient, getting ready for orthopedic surgery to go to the bathroom.

To the minister: does this government actually expect orthopedic surgical patients to go to the bathroom in just 15 seconds? Is this government actually timing orthopedic surgery patients when they go to the bathroom before surgery?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's . . . Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Again what we're looking to do is ensure that we're providing efficient service for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in the past . . . And I can give another example, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to some of the improvements that have been made, Mr. Speaker, in terms of reducing wait times — which I think the members opposite are aware that this government is focusing on reducing wait times. In Five Hills Health Region, the time for a mental health appointment was made for clients that receive service, it was reduced by more than 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker, so that that client can get an appointment more quickly, have the services that they need more quickly, Mr. Speaker. That's the quality improvement work that we're working on, Mr. Speaker. And I can go over countless examples of whether it's babies getting the shots that they need, ensuring that ambulances are better equipped, more equipped sooner, Mr. Speaker, or the surgical wait times reductions that have been unheard of, Mr. Speaker, across this country that are happening in this province.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — With a \$40 million American consultant on retainer with 18 kaizen promotion offices throughout the province, and with a lean go-team, you'd think the minister would have some better answers to these questions.

So to the minister: what exactly is the purpose of this John Black standard work process that outlines a 15-second trip to the bathroom? Why did this government and its \$40 million American lean consultant go to all the trouble to specifying the amount of time allotted for patients to go to the bathroom? Why is this needed?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will work on improving my answers for the member opposite. In fact maybe I'll . . . Well I'll try this one again, Mr. Speaker, if she missed this.

In southern Saskatchewan, 24 per cent of babies at risk of complications to a highly contagious respiratory virus were not getting their full shots, Mr. Speaker, after discharge from hospital. I find that unacceptable and I hope the member opposite does too. Through lean improvements, Mr. Speaker, we are . . . not only save over \$200,000 in doses of that

medication that were thrown away, Mr. Speaker, we're going to save over \$1 million dollars in hospitalization and complications as a result of 24 per cent of babies not getting their shots. And I can say in this year, in '15-16, every single baby in southern Saskatchewan, as happens in northern Saskatchewan, will get their full set of shots to avoid this respiratory virus, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're doing this work.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, instead of standing outside of patient bathrooms with stopwatches and instead of writing up standard work process documents that allot how much time each patient has to go to the bathroom, instead of wasting time and money on that, this government should be focused on situations like Tony's, in which his neurosurgeon says he desperately needs emergency surgery, but he can't get it because there's no bed available.

To the minister: when can we expect the wasteful and silly pet projects to end? And when can we expect this government to finally get serious about fixing the basics in our hospitals like making sure people like Tony get the emergency surgery he needs?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the basics in health care that we have been fixing was the fact that people in this province waited 18 to 24 months for surgery, Mr. Speaker, for a hip or a knee or other orthopedic surgery. Surgery in this province, Mr. Speaker, at a time in 1999 when they promised to reduce surgeries by 30 per cent. And what happened over the next four years? Surgical waits went up in this province 61 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's the work that we've been doing in this province — \$230 million in five years on top of what regions were already spending in surgeries, Mr. Speaker, to go from the longest wait for surgical care in this country to the lowest waits, Mr. Speaker. That's the work that we're doing. That's the work that we're doing in improving our access to services, in improving access all across this province, whether it be to doctors, nurses, health facilities, Mr. Speaker, and surgeries. That's the commitment of this government.

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

### Occupational Health and Safety Inspections

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the former OHS [occupational health and safety] inspector who spoke out publicly yesterday said, and I quote, "We no longer do . . . proactive inspections. We wait for something to happen and then we go."

After being embarrassed by this public criticism, the minister said he is going to reverse his policy and have some unannounced inspections, but he provided no details.

We know that the overall number of inspections have been cut from 380 per month to just 120 per month, and the former safety officer says none of those inspections are unannounced.

So to the minister: how many unannounced inspections will be reinstated? What exactly is the plan to reverse this government's cuts to occupational health and safety?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. There have been no cuts to OHS, nor will there be. This is something that's very important. We have an unacceptably high injury rate in our province. In fact, we are getting better on it, but we still have a long way to go.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue the focus on employers with the highest injury rate. The initial results show a decrease in the injury rate of about 22 per cent. In my view that's not good enough, but it is a step in the right direction. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this as well — random inspections are important and effective. They raise public awareness and public safety in a general sense while ensuring compliance.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do both random inspections and targeted inspections. We're going to leave it to the deputy minister and his officials to try and determine best how they are going to do that. We have faith and confidence in those people. They are driving the injury rate down. We still have more work to do. We will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Talk about continuing. Mr. Speaker, we've obtained inspection records . . . It's a laughing matter to the folks over there. We've obtained inspection records for the Vanscoy mine and they clearly show a disturbing pattern. Not one, not one unannounced inspection since April of 2012. Not one scheduled inspection since August 2013. Just five visits to the Vanscoy mine since then and always in response to a specific complaint.

To the minister: how can he possibly justify this kind of broken system, and how exactly will it change going forward? Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what's the specific plan to reverse the changes this government has made to occupational health and safety in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of this government to put resources where they're most needed, to target the employers that have a high injury rate, to work with those employers to get a plan, have them sign that plan, and accept that there's an issue that they're there.

Mr. Speaker, we have through workers' compensation, we have Mission: Zero, a plan to try and reduce injury rate to zero. Mr. Speaker, the opposition critic and member for Saskatoon Centre said in the *Leader-Post*, October 22, 2014, "I think it may be time to review Mission: Zero and ask if it's really getting . . . at the offenders." And that's what we're trying to do with this, Mr. Speaker, is try and focus on what the offenders are doing and try and deal with things like that.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP as far back as 2006 said the OHS division targets inspections to those employers with the highest percentage of time loss injuries in the province. It was started under the NDP. It's continued. It's producing results, and we're going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Creative Saskatchewan Expenditures

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Culture minister claimed that the province of Alberta doesn't have a film tax credit. Mr. Speaker, that kind of silly obfuscation does not befit this House and Saskatchewan people. The Alberta Production Grant was \$25 million last year and is an all-spend credit. Currently 24 feature films and TV series are being produced in Alberta as a result of that grant. Calgary is now building a new sound stage while ours sits unused.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister wake up, smell the coffee, and actually start fixing the colossal mistake this government made when they killed our film industry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta does have a grant system. We also have a grant system. Alberta has more money invested into their grant system and we've got almost exactly the same system.

Mr. Speaker, we ended the film tax credit and then we did consultations with the creative industries. All of the creative industries told us they wanted something like a Creative Saskatchewan model. SMPIA [Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association] supports the need to market outside of the province.

Does the member from Nutana support film and Creative Saskatchewan and their mandate or not? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — The Culture minister has really struggled to answer the most basic questions about his portfolio and about this government's misplaced priorities and wasteful spending. And yesterday the minister was repeatedly asked what benefits Saskatchewan received as a result of the big after-party at a Toronto film event. Yet again the Culture minister had no answer.

To the minister: does he have an answer yet? What benefit did Saskatchewan get from a taxpayer-funded after-party at a Toronto film event?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Creative Saskatchewan co-sponsored one of the Canadian

Screen Awards events to build more opportunities for the Saskatchewan creative industries. In this particular case, the Jack Semple Band was the entertainment there, and because of their performance they were able to book a couple of festival events on the spot. Those are immediate results for Saskatchewan.

Creative Saskatchewan, since its inception, has provided \$7 million in direct grant support to the creative industries sector and \$2.1 million to designated creative industry associations. That includes sectors such as music, film, books, fine art, and crafts. One of those associations, the Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association, never received funding before the inception of Creative Saskatchewan. Now they do.

We will continue to tell the Saskatchewan story, and I will remind the members opposite of what their former leader said: "It's our job to be out promoting the province every time you can and not to miss an opportunity which is national and international." Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — We've heard of other disturbing expenditures by Creative Saskatchewan, expenditures that have nothing to do with supporting artists. We've heard that Creative Saskatchewan spent \$10,000 to print up fake gold records for Jess Moskaluke. No jury, no competition, just the CEO [chief executive officer] writing a cheque. Now I love Jess Moskaluke, but there's nothing creative about printing up fake gold records. This is not how Creative Saskatchewan should be spending taxpayers' money.

So to the minister: how can he justify this? Will he commit to a full review of Creative Saskatchewan spending to ensure that it starts going to the right places?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're in the process. It's coming up to a year, Mr. Speaker. It's coming up to a year of Creative Saskatchewan being in operation, so we are in discussions about having a review.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reason Creative Saskatchewan goes on these trips is to promote Saskatchewan, telling Saskatchewan's story to the world. We do that when we promote our agricultural products outside of Saskatchewan. We do that with our resource industries and our manufacturers. We do that with our creative industries, our artists and our musicians, because we have some very talented people with a great story to tell.

That's why we sponsor events. That's why we make connections with people around the world. Because of those events and connections, that's why Saskatchewan musical act Zachary Lucky signed with UK [United Kingdom] booking agent The Local. That's why the Canadian embassy purchased a piece, a large piece of Saskatchewan sculptor Joe Fafard for the Saskatchewan Room at Canada House in London. Mr. Speaker, we make no apologies for telling Saskatchewan's story to the world.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

**Increasing the Number of Members of the Legislative Assembly**

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place. The emergency debate that we wish to speak about today, Mr. Speaker, is the great plan of the Saskatchewan Party government to add three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say at the outset that when we first heard in 2007, which is a long eight years ago, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier got up at the time, he told the people of Saskatchewan when he became Premier that the cupboard was bare. That was his exact words, Mr. Speaker, when he said the cupboard was bare, Mr. Speaker. Six months later, the same Premier announced with great fanfare, and there was all kinds of billboards all throughout Saskatchewan, that he reduced the debt of the province of Saskatchewan by 40 per cent. That's what exactly was the advertisement, Mr. Speaker. So how is it that you're able to say on one hand that the cupboard is bare, and then a mere six months later you're able to pay 40 per cent down on your debt, Mr. Speaker?

And the reason why I make that point, Mr. Speaker, is because the cupboard was not bare. The cupboard was in fact full, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan knew it. The people that knew what is going on within government knew it. And yet the Premier, and yet the Premier came along and said that the cupboard was bare.

So from that day forward, we in the New Democratic Party understood that the Premier really was simply trying to hoodwink the people of Saskatchewan by his very first statement, and that kind of activity has occurred on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. It says a lot about the character of his government, Mr. Speaker, by saying things to the people of Saskatchewan that were simply not the facts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we see also from this particular government is the fact that they also are working on kicking out working families from their homes. We've seen that evidence in particular of northern Saskatchewan. And they're forcing many of these working families that have worked over the years to get training, to get educated, to finally get some jobs, they're now telling these working families, you're going to pay more rent. You're not going to own these homes, and you're going to pay these elevated rents for the rest of your lives, Mr. Speaker.

You look at some of the examples in the health care system. Look at the wasteful spending project with John Black, \$40 million, the consultant from the States to tell us how to run health care when he continued to ignore many of the front-line health care personnel and the staff that are able to give good, sage advice to this government on how we can . . . and able to afford to present a good, solid, top-notch health care system for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So you look at all these examples of misplaced priorities. Look at all the examples of how the past has been trying to be rewritten by the current Saskatchewan Party government. And, Mr. Speaker, what we also see evidence of now when we talk about wasteful spending, Mr. Speaker, again is the fact that they now want to add three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. In this day and age when people are losing their jobs, when services are being cut, when tuition, Mr. Speaker, is going up, when we see the health care costs like prescription drugs are going up for many of our families and our senior citizens, when government again is simply not doing anything to really stimulate a lot of people's imagination — the people of Saskatchewan — and you look at the cost of education and health care, Mr. Speaker, and what did they do?

What did they do in front of all those particular challenges, Mr. Speaker? They want to add three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. Who in the world gave them that advice? Nobody in Saskatchewan. Nobody in Saskatchewan asked the Saskatchewan Party government. In the long list of things that they needed, they asked for better health care. They asked that you manage the resources and the opportunity given to you, what you inherited, to manage it well. That's what our constant message on this side of the Assembly is: manage the opportunity that you inherited well so that future generations could be served well. That's been our advice from day one, Mr. Speaker.

And what does this government do, Mr. Speaker? They come along and they fire a whole bunch of workers. They reduce a whole bunch of services, Mr. Speaker, and now we're hearing that there may be further cuts and further austerity measures in place so that this government can finally be able to once again say that they balanced the books. And we on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we smile whenever they say that because we know the fact of the matter is that many of these lost revenues won't show up within the government coffers for another maybe six months to 18 months, Mr. Speaker — well past the next election, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what we're advising people today.

So what the whole message is today, is why on earth did the Saskatchewan Party, despite all these challenges, despite all these issues in front of them, their single most important thing of the day was to hire three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker? They want to put three more MLAs in this Assembly, and we think that is an absolutely silly notion, Mr. Speaker. It is something that should not simply have been done.

The people of Saskatchewan never asked for more politicians. They asked for better care in health care, Mr. Speaker. They asked for less crowded classrooms. They certainly didn't ask for wasteful projects like the John Black lean contract, an American-based consultant telling us how to run our health care system and billing us a tremendous amount. The people of Saskatchewan have had enough of that, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Saskatchewan Party government is slowly but surely getting that particular message.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the issues that we raised, and I talk about the Saskatchewan Party government in general. We see and we know. Like today's a good example, that the member from Prince Albert Carlton, his last day today. He's

done today, Mr. Speaker. So when I look at this particular bill, and I ask myself, why would the Saskatchewan Party want to include more MLAs in this Assembly when they have difficulty keeping their current MLAs? That's the biggest argument that we have, Mr. Speaker. And as you look at them laughing from their seats, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, the people of Saskatchewan didn't want more MLAs. If you guys need a handwritten memo to send to you, I can do that.

Now look at some of the seats across the way, Mr. Speaker. I look at a couple of them that are gone because they got traded to Ottawa. They know which ones are leaving, Mr. Speaker. A couple of them got pushed out of their nominations because they're no longer wanted, Mr. Speaker. Now we're seeing evidence that more of them are going to quit. You look at the Deputy Premier is done. You look at the member from Kelvington is also done, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saltcoats is done. And as I look down the list and I see all these people are leaving and some of them are being replaced; some of them are going to lose their seats, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, I'm saying, how could they justify asking for more MLAs when they can't even keep the current MLAs they have, Mr. Speaker?

[11:00]

And all the spending that is required in the province of Saskatchewan, how does the cost of covering three more MLAs really add up against making sure that you keep the ambulance fees low, making sure that the health care system is running as efficiently and as effectively as it possibly can with the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Why don't they invest in the homelessness effort, Mr. Speaker, to really begin to address the fact that there is poverty in the province of Saskatchewan, that we have to do what we can, what we can, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that everyone in Saskatchewan benefits from this great economy?

And that's one of the clear messages that we get as MLAs, and I think they also get it. But their answer, Mr. Speaker? They're going to add three more politicians. The Saskatchewan Party is going to add three more politicians. And not one person that I've spoken to ever in the whole process since this Sask Party has been in power, Mr. Speaker, have ever asked me, we need more politicians. I've never, ever heard that, Mr. Speaker.

We need more nurses. We need more doctors. We need more teachers. We need more space in our classrooms. The list is huge, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing about the cost of replacing and ensuring that our schools are safe, are structurally safe. We've heard that in the Assembly today, and the minister doesn't even want to talk about that. But what he wants to talk about is three more MLAs, three more MLAs. I'd like to see the amount of calls that this particular government got, asking them to add more politicians. Not one of them can stand in their seat today saying that we need more MLAs. Not one of them, because not one of them ever got a call to do that and neither did any member on our side of the Assembly ever get a phone call saying, yes, we need more politicians. Because, Mr. Speaker, the clear message I'll be giving to the Saskatchewan Party government is, you could have spent that money wisely and much more effectively for the people of Saskatchewan instead of adding three more politicians.

Shame on them, Mr. Speaker. That was not asked for in any discussion that I've ever had as an MLA, and today now we're seeing evidence of that, that this is what they want to do. And why do they want to do that, Mr. Speaker? Why do they want to add three more politicians? It's all about gerrymandering the election, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what it is and that's the reason why they're including more politicians. It's to try and gerrymander the electoral process to their benefit, Mr. Speaker.

We see evidence of that not only in their tactics to suppress the vote by asking for a photo ID [identification] from people going to vote. We see that process as clear as day. And I can remember the discussions we had around the three more MLAs argument, Mr. Speaker, and we told them we don't need more politicians and we don't need to have more stringent, restrictive rules around voting. We want to encourage people to vote, Mr. Speaker. That's the whole argument behind democracy.

As I mentioned numerous times in this Assembly, my father was a World War II vet. He fought for democracy. And when I see efforts of this nature, whether it's to pad more MLAs for their purposes, Mr. Speaker, in their safe ridings, or to try and gerrymander electoral process or to try and thwart people from voting that don't have photo ID, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes sit here and shake my head. And I say, shame on the Saskatchewan Party because this is not what democracy was meant to be. And this is not what democracy should look like because many people sacrificed a great deal to ensure we have the freedom and the democracy we have here in Saskatchewan and in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

So it's really important, the message I think that many, many people would say that have served their country: democracy and freedom is something that we should cherish, something that we should respect, and something that we should be very thankful for. That's what the whole notion of sacrifice is all about is to ensure that we do respect democracy.

And when we sit in the Assembly today and we see the voter suppression tactics that is being taught to the Saskatchewan Party by the Republicans of the US [United States] on how to suppress people's votes by putting unnecessary rules in place, unnecessary rules in place, Mr. Speaker, once again we're seeing that that democracy is being thwarted for pure political gain.

And now we go back to the other point of adding more MLAs, Mr. Speaker, adding more MLAs when they can't even keep the current MLAs that they have. Many of them are retiring. Some of them are leaving. Many of them are just simply quitting politics, Mr. Speaker. So why is it that you want to leave a certain place and add more politicians when nobody in Saskatchewan has asked that to be a priority of the Saskatchewan Party nor the New Democratic Party? That's why on this side of the Assembly we think, we think it's very, very important that we continue working hard to build a strong economy to make sure that we have health care and education for our children and that we don't thwart democracy in any way, shape, or form. And this is exactly what I see by the Saskatchewan Party adding three more politicians when people in Saskatchewan say we don't need any more. We don't need any more.

And you look at the comparisons from the different jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. We have enough representation here. We have enough opportunity here to do the politics that is necessary, Mr. Speaker. And now the Saskatchewan Party want to add three more MLAs. And I say to those MLAs that are standing up today trying to rebut what we're saying here, and I would say to them, you have the opportunity and you have the mandate to change your mind and to not proceed with adding more politicians to this place. That is totally unnecessary. It is a cost that we do not have to have as a province.

And perhaps they need to get a memo as to where that money would be better spent, Mr. Speaker. It would be better spent on highways, health care, education, reducing the debt, whatever the case may be. We don't need more politicians. We need more people out in Saskatchewan to continue to work and to build this economy. That's what we're asking for and this is the reason why we continually on this side of the House ask them to not add more politicians.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government want to do it. And this is the opportunity, this is the opportunity and you will watch as they get up to speak, Mr. Speaker, they will not answer the question.

The question I would ask them on their opportunity to speak: will you change your mind and not proceed with adding more politicians to this Assembly? Instead use that money to improve health care. Use that money to reduce debt. Use that money to reduce crowded classrooms, Mr. Speaker. And the simple . . . There's two simple reasons why they should do that is, number one, nobody asked you to add more politicians. Not one single constituent ever called anybody. And I challenge them: if there's even one, one of their constituents that said, we need more politicians, I want to see that letter, Mr. Speaker. They will not provide that letter.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly call on the Saskatchewan Party government to scrap its plans to add three more MLAs to the Legislative Assembly, which is yet another example of this government's misplaced priorities and wasteful spending.

I so move.

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

That this Assembly call on the Sask Party government to scrap its plan to add three more MLAs to the Legislative Assembly, which is yet another example of this government's misplaced priorities and wasteful spending.

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

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take the question from the member from Athabasca seriously. Our plan is not to add three more Sask Party MLAs. We're going to add 12 more Sask Party MLAs in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca talks about, where are the people that have been asking or commenting on adding more MLAs? Mr. Speaker, I do have a letter. Actually it's a quote from a member from Athabasca, Mr. Speaker, when this was announced. This is a resident, a resident of Athabasca, ". . . that there's a growing population and we need more seats. We agree with that, that there is a growing population and more seats are necessary. We . . . applaud that." Mr. Speaker, this is a quote from the member from Athabasca when he was for it, Mr. Speaker.

And why was he for it, Mr. Speaker? Well we're lucky in this province, Mr. Speaker. The province is growing again, which is a great thing. Mr. Speaker, we're at an all-time high of 1,129,899 people, Mr. Speaker. That's the fastest growing province in Canada, with 20,000 people added in the past year. Saskatchewan's maintained the lowest unemployment rate. So it's not just that more people are voting with their feet that Saskatchewan's a great place to live, they're coming here for the opportunity to work. Mr. Speaker, we didn't have that under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, with Saskatchewan hitting the highest population ever on October 1st of 2014, that per cent increase was 1.63 per cent, the second-highest growth rate in all of Canada. Mr. Speaker, there's new stats are going to be coming out shortly, and I have to reflect, just on a personal note, that there's going to be an additional person reflected in that. And it's Danielle and myself actually welcomed our second son into the world on February 23rd. James Michael Tochor was born on the 23rd, and we're very proud of him. I'm very lucky that Danielle is at home right now watching, and I love her dearly. And I thank her for having to deal with me being away for this week, and I thank her nana for helping out as much as she has done.

So that's fabulous that we get to celebrate the birth of our second child, but I'd like to compare that to what it was like under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. Under the NDP in the last 10 years of their government, they lost 22,000 people on population out-migration, dismal growth. This goes back to the province of Saskatchewan from 1930s to 2007, so 77 years the province grew by 100,000. Since the '07 election, the province has grown by over 100,000 in six years, Mr. Speaker. Something's working, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca in his speech on this debate referenced that it was the government's job to stimulate the imagination of the province. Mr. Speaker, this is a problem with the NDP. They think that it's the job of the government to do everything. I'm not sure if it's the job of the government to stimulate the people of Saskatchewan. The member from Athabasca believes so.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about . . . He referenced that we've added seats in safe ridings. Well, Mr. Speaker, actually what was created was seats in Saskatoon and in Regina. This is the only two communities that the NDP hold any seats at all. So, Mr. Speaker, it's not like this is gerrymandering to benefit us in some fashion. These seats are added in the growing communities of Saskatoon and Regina which need the representation that this will provide, Mr. Speaker.

It goes back to the idea that growth is a good thing in the

province. And that's what's changed, which is very positive for, I think, everyone in the province except the NDP. Mr. Speaker, we're seeing more and more people moving back to Saskatchewan, starting businesses, growing businesses. This is a good thing. And what it's allowed to do is with a growing tax base we're able to put money back into the important programs and affect the well-being of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, it's ludicrous that he would put forward this debate when . . . in the timing. First off, this is something that has been settled a couple years ago, so the NDP are running out of ideas if this is the best material that they can debate in this Assembly. And this is also kind of ridiculous that the member that put this forward is the one that I quote. This is what his thoughts on it was: "I think the overall thrust of this Bill in terms of more MLAs, and . . . [I] think it's a great idea . . ." That's the member that moved this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Here's another one from him. "The obvious answer is yes, as the population grows. And you should have more MLAs as the population should reflect that the number of seats that we have in the Assembly." That's the quote from the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Speaker, we're so lucky in this province that we are growing again. And really this is probably the smartest member in the Saskatchewan NDP caucus, is the member from Athabasca, and this is his quotes on how it's a smart idea. In his words, obviously the answer is, ". . . yes, as the population grows. And you should have more MLAs . . ." That was the member from Athabasca. Why has that changed? Mr. Speaker, I think this is reflective of the NDP mindset.

And, Mr. Speaker, we should cut them a little bit of slack, maybe a little bit. They've had to release some of their staff members, key members in their management. And they're now kind of looking for new ideas and they're going back to what I would say is the smartest member in the Saskatchewan NDP caucus, being the member from Athabasca. Which, you know what? I can see him probably putting, I would hope, his name forward for the leadership of the NDP that's somewhat scheduled a leadership contest probably in 2016, 2017. I would encourage him to seriously consider it because I think the leadership on that side of the House is questionable, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, we've talked about decisions that are made by this government. We have to talk a little bit about decisions made by the former NDP government. We talk about dollars invested or lost. And that's what we did lots in the bad, old NDP reign of terror, is we lost a lot of money. It would add up to \$329 million the NDP decided to spend on things such as Big Sky Farms, \$26 million lost; SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], \$35 million lost. They invested in anything and everything to hope for a chance that there would be growth in population and a growing economy. Everything from bingo to pawnshops — that is the record of the NDP, and lost population.

Mr. Speaker, the current NDP are proposing the question, where did the money go? This is in their ads that are running

right now, and it's kind of a ludicrous question when you look at it. Our response is, if you look at the \$3 billion that has been repaid in debt . . . You know, every month we pay off our credit card in our house. And you know what? My wife never asks me the following day, you know what? Where'd the money go? Oh, yes, it was in the account, and I paid off the Visa. That's what we've done, Mr. Speaker.

If you look at where the priorities of this government has been, is a record investment in health care. Mr. Speaker, it's something that is important, a service that we provide to the province of Saskatchewan. And you've seen some of the results of this record investment, which has lowered wait times for surgical care in the province. We have more work to be done in this area but, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to the good people of Saskatoon Eastview, they've seen the difference. They've seen what record nurses working in the province has done. They've seen the benefits of having a record number of doctors in the province.

So as we go through this debate on the following year and a bit, we're leading up into the election. And we're going to put out actual concrete plans of what we're going to do if we get the honour to represent the province again in government. But I'd like to ask the NDP, where is their plan? Where's the plan, concrete numbers on what they would do, concrete plan on actual proposals that a NDP government would do if they get the honour — heaven forbid — the honour to form government again, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude that it is questionable that they decided to put up that member with this debate, knowing that his position has flip-flopped back and forth, once for it, now against it, and maybe after next election, for it again. Mr. Speaker, that is a questionable decision, but that is what we see from the . . .

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a sad day in the Assembly when the quality of the heckling is better than the quality of the speeches. But anyways, I'm not sure what we're coming to. The 75-minute debate is supposed to be a debate about a topic, and when we hear someone ragging on about how, you know, looking at the past instead of looking forward to the future, I think that's really unfortunate.

And I do think that in the next election with those kinds of speeches, we're going to see a lot of different faces, and we're going to see a lot more faces on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and maybe even a turnover. And so I think they'd better be careful about their speech writing. I'm not sure what all the staff are doing over there, but that's pretty questionable.

Anyways, one of the things we want to talk about today is, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's almost four years since I entered the Assembly as an elected representative for the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana, and we've been talking about these misplaced priorities now since . . . It's kind of like déjà vu all over again.

And we talk about that in terms of the number of bills that this

government brings forward to correct mistakes. So that's a huge waste and expense of the taxpayers' time and the whole idea of austerity that we're living in now. If this Premier was really, truly, honest about austerity, he would take a second look at this grandiose scheme to add three more MLAs because we know it will cost millions of dollars for the taxpayers. But he's not even looking at that. All we see instead is a bunch of misplaced priorities and wild spending on some very, very strange kind of projects.

So what is it? Is it austerity or not? Is there essential travel or not? Is there any reason, has anyone asked for the addition of three more MLAs? No. As far as we know this is just an idea that the Premier cooked up because he wanted to enlarge the government. And really one has to question what his motives are to do that.

We know that all sectors of government are supposed to be facing austerity. And yet the growth in MLAs has not been scrapped. It is a very interesting definition of austerity. The government, they've increased the number of MLAs but they've decreased the size of the civil service. Where are the priorities here? More politicians and less public servants? I'm not sure if that's serving the people of Saskatchewan very well, Mr. Speaker.

And then we know that, you know, we're willing to cut and make all these cuts to services that the public deserves and is entitled to, especially in times of record revenues. We have a government that has received the benefit of the resource sector in spades, Mr. Speaker. You know, when oil drops to \$50 a barrel, all of a sudden they're panicking. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is really interesting when we see that when they're spending like drunken sailors, and yet they can't even rein in their own spending when it comes to politicians. It just doesn't make any sense.

We know that at least it's going to cost the taxpayers more than \$775,000. Now that is not chump change, Mr. Speaker, and we're just wondering what it is in the Premier's head that he has decided that this is something that's absolutely necessary. Even the pundits in the press have noted that there's nobody complaining about there not being enough MLAs. I mean it's kind of like, I was going to say, you know, it's like putting on your tombstone, I didn't work hard enough or something like that. I mean it's just ridiculous to think that this is something that the public wanted.

We never saw it in the platform four years ago of this government. We never saw it in any Throne Speech. It just was like, oh the Premier had an idea and he made it happen one day. And that's really not the process I think that people want to see from a government. They want to see these ideas put out there as part of their platform so that we know what exactly we're going to get when we form a government.

I think the minister, or the Premier, again didn't do his homework. If he would have looked at the ratio, the population ratios for MLAs to constituents, we already had one of the highest in Canada, or the highest ratio of MLAs to residents in all of Canada. So again we have no sort of rationale, no sort of logical reason for this extravagant expense.

And then we get, you know some things the Premier has done make sense when we're looking at these tough times that he says we're in, despite the fact that there's still record revenues. But his tough times are that he doesn't know how to budget. And I think that's the real part and problem of what we see with the current budget coming up is that this government simply does not know how to manage its resources. And record expenditures, record revenues, 80 per cent increase in revenues, and that they're crying that they don't have enough money, Mr. Speaker.

It's not very prudent spending. It's not wise spending. And this kind of example, where they're announcing three more MLAs which were not needed, not asked for, and are expensive, that's just another example of why this Premier is crying tough budget at a time when there still is record revenues. And they just haven't been able to manage their own money, when people are losing their jobs, services are being cut, tuitions going up, health care costs like prescription drugs are going up, and we don't see any priority on those items, Mr. Speaker.

We heard today about a failure to provide essential emergency surgery to a young man who's in incredible pain and terrified what's going to happen to him if he doesn't get in to see a surgeon soon. These kinds of stories don't make any sense and they certainly fly in the face of this kind of grandiose spending by this government to add three more MLAs. We know that this government is cutting where it hurts people, and yet they have all these vanity projects. The Premier's library project? Really? At a time like this? When the former Usher of the Black Rod needed something to do, that's what he came up with? Like really, Mr. Speaker, you have to wonder what's going on over there.

We also have wasteful entitlement behaviour like unnecessary trips to Ghana, London, chauffeured limousines. We see Oscar parties in Hollywood. I mean where is the end of the wasteful spending? And again today we see more wasteful spending. So I'm not sure why this government isn't paying attention to what really matters to Saskatchewan people.

We see right now . . . Here's another story that the Provincial Auditor brought out last December. And this is one that really concerns me: there's a 228 per cent increase in the number of paid consultants that this government has hired. I know there's one consulting firm from Regina here that has received up to \$35 million in contracts — \$35 million in contracts in the last five years. And when we did a freedom of information request, we couldn't even get a description of the work that they're providing.

So you've got to really wonder why we're not building those resources within our own public service, having experienced professional public servants sharing their knowledge and wealth rather than paying exorbitant fees to outside consultants who then take the money and go to Mexico, Mr. Speaker. I mean it doesn't make any sense. We need to build a strong, vibrant public service to have those resources within our government so that we can carry on and do the work for the Saskatchewan people.

We see more than \$100 million for the toxic John Black version of lean, including a \$40 million payday for an American



consultant. Mr. Speaker, these kinds of expenses and extravagances, this wasteful spending, and these misplaced priorities are something that this government should be ashamed of.

And again we bring up, revisit this idea of adding three MLAs as just again another example of the performance this government has proved over the last four years or since the last election. None of this was promised in their platform, and you've got to really wonder what it is that's driving them. Is it just a sense of entitlement? Is it a sense that they don't need to listen to people anymore, that they know best or that their consultants know best? You know, at least they finally saw reason with John Black, but now we see that they're scared to stand up to him and they're still doing one and a quarter million dollars of travel in this quarter alone just to meet the requirements of the contract. Like come on, Mr. Speaker, there's got to be an end to this wasteful spending.

And I think, like I said, we're raising the issue of three more MLAs. It's just another example of where this government has gone awry. It's gone amok. It's spending way too much money. And when we see, you know, an 80 per cent increase in the amount of revenues and not one penny being put away for a rainy day . . . In fact they raid the rainy day fund every time there's a flood. And that's a whole different discussion, when we talk about the mismanagement of the way they're funding the disaster assistance program, the crop insurance program. I mean farmers are very upset out there, Mr. Speaker, and this is something I hear about regularly, is the concerns farmers have about the way this government is managing the flooding program.

So you know, I really wish that this government would take another look. I mean take a pause; it's not too late. We're not in the writ session at all yet, and so we know that there is time. There's still time to go back and say, oops. And I mean this government says oops all the time. They say oops in terms of the school year. They say oops in terms of some of the bills, like *The Traffic Safety Act*. They missed something so they're saying oops. There's no problem with saying oops. They're good at it.

But there are some where they're really stubbornly not admitting their mistakes. The removal of the film employment tax credit is one, and here right before us we have another example of this government refusing to accept the fact that this is an oops. They should just get rid of it. We don't need it, and that it's time for them to wake up and start spending money wisely. So, Mr. Speaker, I do support this motion.

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to participate in this debate. It's easy for the members opposite to talk. And the member from Athabasca does truly have the gift of gab. Since 1995, when he was first elected, he's been talking.

In fact the NDP and their leader do a whole lot of talking, but what we see is zero action. What we see is a whole lot of doom and gloom and a scenario that is always looking into the past. It's time for the NDP to stop just talking doom and gloom. Give

the people of the province a scenario, a plan, a project for what they're going to do for the future of their province, instead of always looking backwards.

The NDP continue to pretend that they do not know where the money of the government has went. Well maybe they should start listening in the Legislative Assembly here. Maybe they should listen to the last six budgets that were presented, and if they would have been listening, Mr. Speaker, they would have realized that we have balanced budgets. We have \$3.3 billion of reduced . . . in tax reductions. We have a provincial debt that was reduced by \$3 billion dollars, and we have \$6.6 billion of infrastructure investment since '07.

[11:30]

But, Mr. Speaker, we did more than that. We presented six balanced budgets. The people of our province asked our government to be fiscally prudent. We listened, then we took action. We invested in our people and in our infrastructure. Think about it. Six balanced budgets in a row. For those of us living in the new Saskatchewan, we know where that money went. It went right into our pockets. With tax season fast approaching for the deadlines, we are very happy to see that we have \$3.3 billion in our pockets. This year alone we will save over \$490 million due to tax cuts. But we didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We put a plan in place to grow the population of this province. What did the NDP do? Mr. Speaker, they dismissed that plan.

In fact, on October 31st, 2003, the CBC Saskatchewan Votes features "Economic policy: . . . the hot button issue," pointed out the views of U of S [University of Saskatchewan] economist, Eric Howe. And I quote:

Howe didn't believe the Sask Party's plan would provide the promised population growth of 100,000 people in 10 years. From his perspective, the province has hovered around a million people for 70 years and that may well be the natural population level.

No wonder the NDP do not want to talk more MLAs. Inherent in their belief is the idea that Sask will always be a wee province. Our province will always be wee? Wrong, Mr. Speaker. As of February of this year, 2015, our population has reached an all-time high of 1,129,899 people. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, 1,129,899 people — 100,000 people in less than seven years, compared to the 77 years from 1930 to 2007 that it took to grow the population by 100,000 people.

That's what setting goals does, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to set goals and then take action to achieve those goals into the future. I'm proud to be on a team that is working towards a bright future to help Saskatchewan reach its full potential. It is clear the NDP and their leader have not changed. In fact in 2005, the former NDP Economic Development minister, Eldon Lautermilch, who was the MLA for P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote weighed in on the topic of population out-migration. What did he do? He dismissed any concerns saying, and I quote, that we ought not to worry because when people leave there is "more left for the rest of us," as quoted in the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, April 27th edition.

Now let's review what the NDP did and their dismissive backwards thinking. In 2003 when the Diefenbaker bridge needed repairs, the members opposite refused to even pay for 50 per cent of those costs. In fact former minister Mark Wartman had this to say about it: "The bridge isn't an integral part of Highway 2, but merely an urban connector road exclusively within the municipal jurisdiction." Who's ignoring Prince Albert? Wartman also claimed that it isn't the government's responsibility, then went on to say no, I don't think it's something we are comfortable for at this point.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's fast-forward to 2011 when our Diefenbaker bridge needed repairs. We stepped in on the spot, and we put \$4.2 million into that infrastructure of that bridge because we know the importance of Prince Albert.

Let's also look at that 2011 election, since we're talking about it. What did the NDP promise? They promised that they would build a second bridge. Now, Mr. Speaker, the interesting point about that is they didn't do any homework. They didn't even have the \$50 million from the federal government. They didn't secure any of that. They just made empty promises — all talk, no action.

As I pointed out earlier, the MLA from Athabasca has been an MLA since 1995. Let's see what they've done since that time. He served as Northern Affairs, Environment, Community Resources, and Highways and Transportation ministers. But I guess talk is cheap. Here's the record: no second bridge, no twinned highway between Saskatoon and Prince Albert, and no St. Louis bridge. It is clear the NDP are all talk and no action.

I want to thank the people of Prince Albert Northcote for electing me in 2011. Let's look at what the Saskatchewan Party record is for Prince Albert and area since that time. We have a twinned highway between Saskatoon and Prince Albert. We have a brand new St. Louis bridge and our government, the Saskatchewan Party government has agreed to partner with the federal government, with the city of Prince Albert to fund a second bridge. To date, Mr. Speaker, the city has not put in a proposal for the second bridge.

What have we done since 2007 when the people of Saskatchewan asked our government to govern this province? Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert alone we've put money into Corrections and Policing, Highways, Education, Health. And we didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We put money into the people of this province. We invest in our people. We invest in our seniors.

For example, the NDP for 16 long years left that seniors' income plan at the same rate. I guess in 16 years, if you're chasing everybody out of the province there's no need to worry about increasing income plans. Well, Mr. Speaker, in this year alone that income plan for the seniors will have increased by nearly three times. That is what we do with our money.

Another thing that we do with the money is we invest in health. For example, Prince Albert Parkland Health Region has increased their operating funding. Since '07-08 we've put in 59.7 per cent more dollars. We've built the family addiction treatment centre. We built . . . helped to build the Valley Hill Youth Treatment Centre and we've replaced the Pineview

Terrace Lodge with an increase in beds.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear. If the members opposite would stop and listen for even two minutes, they would know in this legislature what we've been doing with our money. We invest in people, in seniors, in families. We've increased the funds for policing and corrections. We've increased the funds for safe communities. We've put in more beds into the Pineview, Pine Grove Correctional Centre. We've put in a 144-bed expansion at the P.A. Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, there's 12 more police officers in Prince Albert alone. We've invested in innovative projects like the Hub and COR [centre of responsibility]. We have supported that project by \$1.8 million, Mr. Speaker.

Our city of Prince Albert took action and we are now a leader in a community mobilization project that has went across more than a dozen communities across the province. We've implemented the COR, which is an analytical tool for backing up all the work that we've been doing, and it is going across the world, Mr. Speaker. That's how interesting that project has been.

Mr. Speaker, we invested in education. We've invested in terms of St. Anne elementary school, new gymnasium at Carlton Comprehensive High School, 28 reno projects since November of 2007 in P.A.

Mr. Speaker, 10 minutes is hardly enough time to talk about all the projects that we've invested in Prince Albert alone, much less the whole province. Mr. Speaker, the NDP talk a big game and strike out every inning.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the 75-minute debate here this afternoon. I think anyone who'd be observing this discussion here today would be awfully disappointed in what they've heard here today. I think that anyone who's sent any one of us to this Assembly would expect us to come forward with an approach of common sense, an approach that has some regard for the current conditions that we're facing, and certainly some regard to the current conditions that so many Saskatchewan people are facing.

And to hear two speeches from the governing Sask Party again here today, get up and to grandstand and to brag and to sort of shout down common sense voices from across Saskatchewan, is disappointing.

The issue at hand is a really common sense matter. I mean it's astounding that this government thinks that a priority for Saskatchewan people is to increase the number of MLAs at a significant cost, almost \$1 million a year, every year moving forward, with additional costs as you build inflation into that. How is that a priority, Mr. Speaker? This is something that we stood opposed to as government rammed forward this addition, Mr. Speaker, that was really more about their own political self-interests and certainly nothing to do with the interests of Saskatchewan people. And we stand opposed here today.

And if you look at the current context, we have a more constrained financial environment, a tighter fiscal environment, an oil price that's causing some fiscal pressures, and

Saskatchewan people are bearing the brunt for that. Yet that Premier and this government thinks they should just ram forward with this wrong-headed priority, this misplaced priority of jacking up the number of MLAs and the cost to go with it.

The reality is in Saskatchewan the ratio of a number of constituents to us as an MLA is a much lower number than really the rest of Canada. So it's not as though that there's best practice or examples out in the rest of Canada that suggest that somehow we need to have more MLAs. In fact we are on the very low side of the number of constituents that we represent.

So this is really an example of a government that has sort of lost their way through a period of decade-long prosperity, where it's been sort of an opportunity for a Premier and a government to surf an economic tide but do very little to deliver for Saskatchewan people. And through that process, we note that so many are frustrated that we've come through a 10 . . . a decade-long run of prosperity, yet this government struggled through that period to even balance the books, Mr. Speaker. They've actually added debt through a decade-long run of record prosperity and revenues and have actually added to the debt, Mr. Speaker, because they couldn't manage their fiscal house, Mr. Speaker.

Or you know, this whole concept that the Premier said a couple of years ago that he was then going to support this whole common sense notion that maybe we should put a few dollars away for the long term, whether you call it a bright futures fund or a heritage fund, whether you model it after something like Norway or something like Alaska, Mr. Speaker, or some variation that's a built-in-Saskatchewan fund. The reality is the Premier's now scrapped that promise, because he couldn't get his finances in order or couldn't make decisions during periods of windfall revenues to make sure that there's some dollars put to work for a lasting benefit for future generations, Mr. Speaker.

We see a decade-long run of prosperity, yet a government that couldn't get the job done when it came to public infrastructure in this province, which is in disarray, Mr. Speaker. And we see a decade-long run where it was just far too simple for this Premier and this government to surf an economic tide and, sure, give good speeches but not get the job done and deliver for Saskatchewan people in areas like diversifying our economy, Mr. Speaker.

In fact we've seen this government do the opposite thing, where they went and canned the film industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and are now out with a whole host of misplaced priorities, wining and dining around the world, in Hollywood and other places, Mr. Speaker, but don't have a structure for which they can sell to rebuild the film industry here in Saskatchewan, something that New Democrats will certainly make a focus and a priority in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We see a weak procurement policy of this government, who are continuing to sell out the interests of Saskatchewan businesses and not allow us to be as strong as we can be, Mr. Speaker. And instead of focusing in on all these areas — the crisis in seniors' care, the emergency rooms that are rammed up with long waits, Mr. Speaker, the inadequate access to primary health care, the cuts in education and the inadequate access to the needed supports and the one-on-one time that students deserve — we

see a government focusing in on something that's really all about them, Mr. Speaker, and their own political interests.

And I think it speaks to a government maybe that's been in power for some time, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they got caught up in their own press releases, Mr. Speaker. But they've certainly lost track, Mr. Speaker, when you see a government that's unwilling to consider the wasteful spending we see in so many areas of this government and the waste of adding the number of three more MLAs to this very Assembly, at a cost, Mr. Speaker, of almost \$1 million a year. And if you can imagine, this is a priority of course that's motivated out of political self-interest of the Premier and this governing party, but not of the interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And it should be the public interest and the interest of Saskatchewan people for which should be motivating our actions.

And in some ways this is a symbolic measure, but it's important as well. This is a time where civil servants have been asked to pay a heavy price, where in fact, Mr. Speaker, some of the increases they've received have been yanked back by this Premier, Mr. Speaker. Yet this guy is unwilling to reduce the number of MLAs, Mr. Speaker, in the fact that he's jacking up the cost and jacking up the number of MLAs. And you know, the reality is, we have real people and Saskatchewan families that are being impacted right now on so many fronts: not getting the services they deserve in health care, not getting the dignity they deserve in seniors' care, young people not getting the opportunities they deserve, where we see affordability and the cost of living that's been through the roof, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

So it might be, you know, a pretty good news story through that decade run period, decade-long run of prosperity for, you know, the governing party if you will, Mr. Speaker, but there's a disconnect with the reality of most households across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is why, when people are losing jobs, when services are being cut, when tuition is being put through the roof, Mr. Speaker, when we see costs of health care and prescription costs that are going up, Mr. Speaker. When we see the government failing to get the job done with the next generation in classrooms across Saskatchewan. It's why it's so easy to recognize the increase to the number of MLAs as a misplaced priority.

We've seen this government misplace dollars on many other projects. We've seen them waste millions and millions and millions of dollars through its smart metre debacle, Mr. Speaker — something that should've never occurred, something that's now being added directly to the power bills of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, who are being asked to pay more once again, Mr. Speaker, for the mistakes and misplaced priorities of this government, Mr. Speaker.

You can look at the questionable economics and the huge cost to the costly carbon experiment, Mr. Speaker, almost \$1.4 billion that's being added directly to the power bills of Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan businesses, Mr. Speaker, at a time where the economics just don't support it, Mr. Speaker. It's really disappointing to see a government lose its way on these kind of fronts.

Or you know, there's the example where this government was pretending that they were going to cut the number of civil servants, sort of playing political games with it, but then all they did was jack up the spending on private consultants, Mr. Speaker. Over 220 per cent, Mr. Speaker, well over \$100 million a year to private consultants. And then the auditor came in and took a look at the processes and recognized that in more than 70 per cent of those circumstances, there wasn't actual documentation about what was supposed to be achieved, what the purpose of the contract was, what was supposed to be accomplished through that process, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of waste and misplaced priorities that we've seen under this government.

And of course we see it now through the creative accounting of this government with its costly lean project where they're forking over tens and tens of millions of dollars to American contractors — or one American contractor — to come to Saskatchewan and really make a whole host of problems in health care here in Saskatchewan, spending tens and tens of millions of dollars for John Black and these American contractors and these Japanese senseis instead of focusing on where it matters for Saskatchewan people.

So we see misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker. We're going to focus on what matters to Saskatchewan people. On matters like this, Mr. Speaker, it's becoming clear to Saskatchewan people that government has changed and they're focused more on their own self-interest, their partisan interest, Mr. Speaker, and less so and not focused on the public interest, Mr. Speaker, or what really matters to Saskatchewan people. So we should be doing the right thing and not increasing the number of MLAs by three, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — My pleasure to join the debate today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's a few things I heard from over there. Two years ago, but also just recently, the member from Athabasca during his speech, the first thing he said, I think he called this an emergency debate, emergency debate about something that happened, a thing that was proposed or passed two years ago. The debate was two years ago.

Now in the political world, I would say that is ancient history. I mean there's constant press releases about all the good things that governments are doing. And I thought maybe in their first debate of the spring session, the first one before a potential election maybe, depending on when the next election is, they might go on one of their best issues. But they decided to go on an issue a couple of years old that's been debated. Didn't really stir any interest, but fair enough. We'll look at it again.

He also mentioned something about gerrymandering. Gerrymandering, now that's the process I think happens in the United States where congressional districts are sort of made based on who's voted for you in the past, so it's very difficult to knock out an incumbent. So you know, that process is controlled by an independent body that it happens every 10 years. This is part of legislation. So it happens every 10 years but we're not . . . It's not the government that chooses the boundaries. It's an independent commission. I believe there's a

member from a three-person commission: one from the government side, one from the opposition side, and a judge.

So the member from Athabasca is really saying that there is some . . . They're impugning the reputation of, I believe, a member that sat on that side. Mr. Van Mulligen was part of that process, so he's really saying that that member had something nefarious going on, or the judge. Now if he believes that, he can maybe step out these doors and mention that in the rotunda there if he really does believe that. So I'd suggest maybe he calm down the gerrymandering talk. Again it's not done by the government. It's done by an independent commission, Mr. Speaker.

So this idea is really nothing new. This happens, as I mentioned, every 10 years. It's part of legislation after a census. There's a census based on the population. And of course my colleagues mentioned eloquently that there is more people in Saskatchewan, around 150,000 more people. So as population increases, even the member has been well said . . . the member from Athabasca said four times on his feet, four times in his speech something to the effect that, and I quote, "There is no question that as our population growth continues that the question has to be asked when . . . [are we] getting more seats." He said that on March 5th in 2012. So again a long time ago, but he agrees with it. He wanted that. Now he's flip-flopping after talking to his leader and the whip probably. So I guess this is a best two out of three, today, another attempt at that.

But in our province, we've had a high of 66, 66 MLAs before. We've had as low as in the mid-50's, I believe. So this brings up time in the middle of where we've been, with record population, record population. Again it's based on population.

Federally this year, in the next election there will be 30 more MPs [Member of Parliament], 30 more MPs federally. And what's that based on again? Population. Based on population. So as the population goes up, the number of MPs will go up.

Now I'm not a religious follower of federal politics, but I do watch the afternoon programs, *Power Play*, you know, *Power & Politics*, those sorts of shows. And the increased number of MPs, I haven't heard that once. That's probably not even in the top 50 issues that MPs are talking about. I would suggest it's probably not in our province, but again, here we are. It's interesting that they brought this up. So again based on higher population.

Now I know in the northern seats, the northern seats in Saskatchewan, those boundaries are fixed. They're frozen. And the reason for that I believe is it's a sparsely populated area, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So as recognition of that, there's huge land masses that those MLAs would have to cover, and so that's written in it. Those are frozen because there's large swaths of land for constituents to come meet their MLA or vice versa. If it went perfectly based on population there might be only one, one northern constituency, but there's two. Now they don't want that.

Now when we talk about rural MLAs here, the ancillary part of this, of course based on population, there's a few more MLAs. That makes some sense. But the part of it, the good part of it is . . . Now there's the member from Cypress Hills, the member

from Arm River, their constituencies are over 5,000 square miles. Now if this didn't happen, those constituencies would be even larger. Those constituencies, a lot of those rural . . . the member from Wood River as well. They'd be much larger constituencies.

So it's fine for the members of Cumberland and Athabasca, but for the member from Cypress Hills, well who cares? That's what they think. So rural MLAs . . . Of course we know a lot about rural politics on this side. I understand. I give them a break for not knowing anything about rural Saskatchewan on that side. That makes some sense. And I notice federally now either . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What would have happened, Mr. Speaker? Either the constituencies, rural constituencies would have grown had this not happened, they would have grown massively, or there would have been split rural and urban seats. There would have been split . . . There would have been pie-shaped constituencies carved out of cities.

So what party railed against that federally? What party thought that was patently unfair, that there's split rural and urban constituencies federally? The NDP, the federal NDP. They have a big problem with it federally. But if that were to happen, if this legislation didn't happen, if that would have happened provincially, well it's great.

So it's really, it's really just about politics all the time, what's best for them in this moment in time, Mr. Speaker. So that's certainly too bad. So again this motion, it really speaks to me about it's a yesterday motion from a yesterday party. That's what it is. There's nothing new, nothing better to talk about than a two-year-old motion that didn't really interest anybody at the time. So it's really no surprise since they're out of ideas for motions already at the beginning part of the session. They're really out of ideas in total, Mr. Speaker. They seem to be simply reactionary to whatever the Saskatchewan Party does. Sask Party government side does this; NDP reacts. Again it seems there's no plan. There's no plan going forward.

I was going get into some of the good old NDP ideas, the classics: SPUDCO, talking about misplaced priorities and wasteful spending; Channel Lake; tappedinto. I'm not sure if that's a beer company or what it is. Clickabid. The good old classics.

But again, Mr. Speaker, I realize that if someone was paying attention there might be some irony about me talking about this being an old motion and talking about the old NDP's ideas. But that's just the point, Mr. Speaker. There are no new ideas from over there. They're just the same old NDP. All they worry about is what happened. So that's the point, Mr. Speaker. We're moving this province forward. I wish I had more time to talk about the tree booklet and Dwain Lingenfelter and the \$5 billion hole in the last election and those sorts of things. Again I realize I'm talking about the past, but there really is no now with the NDP. Let's hear some positive ideas, what they would do better, and more importantly, how they would pay for it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford. I recognize the member.

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In typical NDP

fashion, the member from Athabasca is flip-flopping on his position again. The member previously stood in this House and said, "The obvious answer is yes, as the population grows. [Then there should be] . . . more MLAs as the population should reflect that in the number of seats that we have in this Assembly." Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear that the members over there have no idea what their own policies are. To the member from Athabasca: we know your leader is too afraid to actually propose any policy. Will the new policy of the NDP be to stand firmly on both sides of every issue?

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once we began, once we saw the evidence of how the Saskatchewan Party was not only suppressing the vote but gerrymandering the electoral cycle, Mr. Speaker, we obviously saw the true nature of the bill. However, my challenge back to that member, to the Premier, and to the Saskatchewan Party: we can do away with the bill that's talking about adding more politicians, adding more politicians that'll cost \$800,000 a year. And if the members opposite and the Saskatchewan Party Government, including the Premier, want to do this today, let's do it.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, in the month of January I had the opportunity to visit some schools in Prince Albert. And what I heard there was how devastated they were at the loss of their community school funding. There are now children that are going without lunch because of these cuts, and the teachers there and the programmers are incredibly disappointed at these short-sighted cuts. So I want to ask the member from P.A. Northcote how she can justify adding three MLAs for \$775,000, but yet her government cuts food to children in schools in Prince Albert.

[12:00]

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you for the question. In Prince Albert alone we increased the funding to the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division by 18.9 per cent. We increased the P.A. Catholic school funding by 31.6 per cent. Prince Albert constituencies have received \$37,280,259 that went towards the new St. Anne elementary school, a new gymnasium at Carlton Comprehensive High School, and 28 reno projects since November 2007. In Prince Albert alone we have 338 new child care spaces. We have 14 new pre-K [pre-kindergarten] kindergarten programs.

That is in education alone, Mr. Speaker. We also can go on to Health where we increased funding for family addiction treatment centre, Valley Hill Youth Treatment Centre, the Pineview Terrace Lodge, and we can go on and on, Mr. Speaker. I hope they ask me more questions.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Mr. Speaker, it is no shock to anyone in Saskatchewan that our population has grown significantly since the NDP were kicked out of government. In fact, our population has grown by over 120,000 people since the NDP left. Yet when the member from Athabasca spoke to this issue in 2011, he stated: “. . . there’s a growing population and we need more seats. We agree with that, that there’s a growing population and more seats are necessary. We would applaud that . . .”

To the member from Athabasca: we know that you seem to be the only one on your side with the courage to speak your mind. Will you stand by your words today that our province is indeed growing, or have you now been gagged by your leader?

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of flip-flops, Mr. Speaker, the member from Lloydminster very well knows that her predecessor actually left the Saskatchewan Party government, left the province of Saskatchewan, and went on to greener pastures. So again that goes back to my argument that the commitment towards public service, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that we have enough representation that’ll stay the course, that’ll stay the course and keep the commitments that they made for their constituents, Mr. Speaker.

And I challenge any member across the way to present to me an email, a phone call, or any kind of text message that asks any Saskatchewan Party MLA that they needed more politicians. Any one of them can send me any form of communication from any one of their constituents. And I say today that not one single constituent wrote them about adding more politicians at a cost of \$800,000, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We’ve heard a lot of gnashing of teeth and hand-wringing from this government about how tough this budget is going to be. And you’d think that if this is going to be indeed a tough budget, that they’d be examining every option to save money for the people of Saskatchewan. And when they look to straiten the finances for health care, for education, for seniors’ care, for programs, cuts to services that people rely on, where they’re not looking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to their misguided plan to introduce three more MLAs.

Now it was a bad choice at the time, Mr. Speaker, but you’d think that the bad nature of it would be particularly underlined at this time.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: three more MLAs. Why now?

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

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP know a lot about bad times. Mr. Speaker, when they formed government, when they were faced with a tough budget, what would they do, Mr. Speaker? Jack taxes up. That’s the

record of the NDP. Whenever they experienced any downturn in their economy, and there was a lot of downturn under those 16 years of NDP rule, that’s the first thing they would go to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the budget is coming out on March 18th, and I encourage the opposition to stay tuned to see what gets communicated on that day. But we’re pretty proud on this side of the House with the record of repayment of debt, record investment in infrastructure, the record decreases in taxes that alone since 2007 have saved the Saskatchewan taxpayer \$5 billion.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this House the member from Athabasca said, and I quote from *Hansard*, “There is no question that as our population growth continues that the question has to be asked when we’re getting more seats.” Now, Mr. Speaker, he’s saying the government shouldn’t be adding MLAs to appropriately represent Saskatchewan citizens. Not only do they have no plan for Saskatchewan, they can’t even agree on a single policy.

To the member from Athabasca . . . The only member opposite who has a vision is the member from Athabasca. When is the next leadership race?

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca is saying today that it is obviously not what the people of Saskatchewan want. I challenge the Premier sitting in his chair today, I challenge him today, let’s take care of the bill that is requiring or that’s asking . . . The Sask Party government is asking to add three more politicians in this time of austerity. I say, let’s get rid of that notion. The people of Saskatchewan don’t want it. I’m challenging the Premier today, let’s get rid of this notion of adding more politicians to the public cost, Mr. Speaker. Let’s do it today. Let’s get ’er done, Mr. Speaker. Let’s give ’er snoose, Bruce. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We see a lot of waste under this government, and certainly we’ve seen misplaced priorities. We see that with the three more MLAs that this government’s bringing forward when no one needs three more MLAs at a cost of \$1 million. We see all sorts of waste in a whole bunch of other areas.

My question to the member from P.A. Northcote: we know that there’s unmet needs in the school divisions up in Prince Albert. We’ve talked about the cuts to community school coordinators. There’s a whole bunch of other needs and supports for learning funding. Why does that MLA think it should be a priority to jack up the number of MLAs and the cost of such instead of supporting students in Prince Albert?

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, the

member from Athabasca indicated that there was a full cupboard when they left office, and the people of the province kicked them out. So why did they not spend anything in Prince Albert alone, much less across the province? Why were they chasing people out of the province?

Mr. Speaker, we have spent \$15.7 million in provincial funding for northern spruce west housing, Prince Albert Community Housing. We have over 227 housing units with 70 under construction. We have 550 K that we spent on 11 homes through Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased with the record of our government. I could go on and on, but I'm afraid my time is going to run out. So if the members opposite would just tune in March 18th to the budget, they will see our priorities for the government, for the province of Saskatchewan, and moving forward into the future.

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

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

#### Motion No. 1 — Boundary Dam Integrated Carbon Capture and Sequestration Project

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Eagles.]

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a honour for me to join into the discussion on the private members' motion today. So a little bit of recap on what the private member motion is, and it's:

That this Assembly supports this government's commitment to the Boundary dam integrated carbon capture and sequestration project. This innovative facility is the first of its kind and is a tangible step in addressing the production of greenhouse gases worldwide. Further its innovative technology supports Saskatchewan's resource industry which is vital to the prosperity of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that this is a world-leading project that Saskatchewan should be very proud of. And I think that we should go over and rehash a little bit about exactly what carbon capture and sequestration is, what it's going to do for our province, how it's going to help the environment in our province, and what the benefits are going to be for our government supporting this initiative.

I'm not sure what the opposition feels like about this initiative, but I think when it comes to vote on this particular motion a couple weeks from now, it's going to be interesting how a few of them vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what is carbon capture and storage? Carbon capture and

storage is a process where carbon dioxide is captured from large industrial plants. This prevents the carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The gas is then compressed and either stored deep underground at a carefully selected site or used elsewhere, most notably injected into oil fields to enhance oil recovery.

The Boundary dam carbon capture and sequestration project also captures other gases that can have an impact on our environment such as sulphur dioxide. This gas is then transformed into sulphuric acid, a tradable commodity that is then sold on the market to offset some of the costs of the carbon capture facility.

Another question that comes to mind is, why do we need carbon capture and storage, and why is SaskPower committed to this technology?

As the world's population increases and developing countries continue to industrialize and increase their standard of living, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will continue to grow. Reducing emissions is an important way to develop a vibrantly sustainable industry in power generation. The Government of Canada is among the first in the world to actually legislate an emission reduction for coal-fired plants. While others like the United States and Europe are discussing targets, SaskPower continues to develop renewable power options and encourages conservation as a way to reduce emissions at the source.

The Boundary dam CCS [carbon capture and storage] project will capture 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the equivalent of taking 250,000 vehicles off our roads, and that's a fantastic thing to help combat climate issues in our communities, and I think that shows our commitment to the environment.

Mr. Speaker, how does carbon capture and storage fit into SaskPower's future supply options? Because some of the opposition members will say, well, you shouldn't have spent the money on carbon capture and sequestration. You should have spent it on renewable energy and a few other options which, Mr. Speaker, they should know better because we are already looking into renewable energy options as well.

It's essential for SaskPower to develop environmentally sustainable power generation options for Saskatchewan's future. We are researching the best balance of options to produce affordable, reliable, and sustainable power that includes carbon capture and storage, cogeneration, geothermal, nuclear power from small modular reactors, natural gas, hydro, wind, solar, and biomass. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a large range of options that we're looking at to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan have reliable, safe, environmentally sustainable options for power into the future and to support our growing economy and our growing province. SaskPower is also developing energy efficiency and conservation programs. Mr. Speaker, we know that conservation and energy efficiency will be big things going into the future for us.

Another question is, what if we don't bother storing our man-made carbon dioxide? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the world will continue to rely on fossil fuels in decades to come, whether we like it or not. With the growing population and industry of developing countries, several scientific studies

forecast climate change as a result of increasing greenhouse gas into our atmosphere. Changing temperatures, sea levels, and agriculture patterns are all possible. Carbon capture and storage is one of many initiatives taking place around the world to reduce emissions and the scale of climate change.

The Government of Canada now legislates how much carbon dioxide can come from coal-fired power plants. If carbon capture is not applied to Saskatchewan's co-production, we'll have to eventually shut down a third of the province's power generation. The result would be more expensive generation and much higher power bills.

Another question that the opposition posing in the future . . . I don't think they have that option now. Is carbon capture and storage an experimental, unproven technology? Well the answer is no. The first carbon storage project dates back to 1979, and many more since then have successfully stored carbon dioxide underground for more than 30 years. This includes Saskatchewan's own Weyburn-Midale project in the early 2000s under the former government.

SaskPower's Boundary dam 3 project is the first of its kind due to the scale and the many parts involved. It is not the first or the last project that will successfully use carbon capture, transportation, and storage technology. Research continues to make it more efficient with new breakthroughs leading to lower cost and small scales in the future. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a little bit of an outline of what carbon capture and sequestration is, some of the reasons why we've chosen to pursue this world-first initiative.

And I want to talk a little bit about, first and foremost, on October 2nd, 2004 it was announced that we had the grand opening of the carbon capture and sequestration storage initiative as part of Boundary dam 3. "Over the past six years Saskatchewan has become a global hub of innovation, especially in agriculture, mining, oil and gas, and now carbon capture . . ." is one of the quotes that comes from the grand opening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. "This is the world's first commercial-scale carbon capture and storage . . . in Estevan, Saskatchewan." Today it was officially opened by Premier Brad Wall . . . quoting: Premier Wall, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources Greg Rickford, Saskatchewan Economy Minister, and SaskPower CEO.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at first there was a little bit of doubt I would say from the members across. I know that the member from Nutana asked a lot of questions about the costs involved with carbon capture and sequestration, asked about, was it going to be successful? As usual, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when anything new comes forward in our province on the innovation scale, be it some new targets hit that we put in place for health care, the members opposite are always doubtful that it can be done. They are always scared of something new coming to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I really think that in February, this February, we're able to answer some of the questions that the member opposite's had.

So for Boundary dam unit 3, there's performance metrics. And for power generation output, the expected pre-launch of the grand opening is 110 megawatts. The actual power generated at Boundary dam 3 right now is 120 megawatts. Expected at

launch, before launch, the purity of CO<sub>2</sub> was 95.5 per cent. The actual post-launch in February 2015, 99.99 per cent pure, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

CO<sub>2</sub> capture is expected pre-launch of 1 million tons, and then we're on target to hit that 1 million tonnes, taking 250,000 vehicles off the roads in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, 1.1 million tonnes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think there's 100 tonnes approximate after CCS. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're reaching all the targets that were put in place for Boundary dam 3 and the project that we think was well worth the investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that it was a big investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think a government that was scared of making targets, scared of trying something new, probably would not have followed through with this.

And January 12th, "Boundary dam CCS project wins international award." Mr. Deputy Speaker, this isn't a project that's just going to affect Saskatchewan. This project's going to be basically, to take a word from the opposition, a game-changer for coal-fired power plants all across North America and the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We know that there's 100 coal power plants coming on line in China every year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that for us to continue . . . Coal is one of the most available resources to produce power, and to think that we're not going to be using coal to produce power in the next decades to come I think would be foolhardy. I think what we need to do is find ways and invest in ways that we can produce electricity with coal more environmentally friendly. And I think this project shows that that can be done.

And I think the fact that Saskatchewan was a leader on this front and was able to put this project together, follow it through to completion, and not meet but exceed the targets that were put forward for the carbon capture and sequestration, shows that Saskatchewan is a leader in innovation and is able to be first in line in many, many innovative projects.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, SaskPower's Boundary dam carbon capture and storage project was named project of the year in the coal category by *Power Engineering* and *Renewable Energy World* magazine. Mr. Speaker, this shows that they're . . . I'm going to go through a couple of accolades, not only from our province, but throughout North America. And it says carbon capture is one of the best technologies that people are going to see for a reliable source of power, for a baseload source of power.

And I think that's important to remember in this whole conversation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that coal is our base power. It is supplemented by wind, biomass, geothermal, hydro, but those options are not available for base power, to make sure that our businesses, our large mining projects, our households, have a reliable power source. And going into the future, the people of Saskatchewan want to know, when they turn on the light, they have that reliable source of baseload power so the lights come on.

And if, as a government you don't look into the future to ensure the basics that people are expecting from you, you're not doing



your job properly. In a time where Saskatchewan is doing well and they're looking forward to growth and we're having more people come to our province and more business and industry come to our province, having that reliable power is one of the things that's going to make sure that it draws people to Saskatchewan. But not only draws them to Saskatchewan, it makes sure they stay in Saskatchewan and continue to do business here.

And I, along with the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, had the opportunity to travel to a conference — it's called LEHI, the Legislative Energy Horizon Institute — to look at power options into the future. And everyone that came up to myself, and I believe the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, wanted to talk about carbon capture and sequestration because they're going to look at putting regulations on coal-fired power plants in the States. And to meet these regulations, they all want to know if what we're doing here in southeastern Saskatchewan is a viable option to ensure that we can continue to use coal-fired power plants. The representatives of Virginia were particularly interested because obviously coal is a very big industry in Virginia. And if you're going to move away from coal-fired power plants — and Pennsylvania — that's going to be a very big hit to their economy, so they want to make sure that they have the availability to continue to use coal-fired power plants.

It's very interesting when you talk about the opposition, and I got this off one of their press releases, and I'll quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's the member from Nutana, and she says about:

This government needs to stop cutting funding for climate change, environmental assessment and environmental protection. It needs to increase our use of clean, renewable power and have a much better energy conservation target. It needs to implement the Technology Fund it promised. It needs to protect . . . prairie . . . pastures. And it needs to ensure that resource development is done responsibly, with stringent triple-bottom line . . .

Mr. Speaker, those are very, very interesting quotes from the member from Nutana.

And I was reading actually an article from Bruce Johnstone about the "CCS best bet to stop climate change" is the title of this project.

And coming from the director, Sierra Club director, John Bennett:

"It's a waste of vital capital that should be invested in conservation efficiency and renewable (energy)," Bennett said of the \$1.4 billion invested in CCS. "[If we don't] . . . get us off fossil fuels."

While that's true . . .

And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the member from Nutana would rather quote the director of the Sierra Club instead of actually putting the ideas and concerns of the people of Saskatchewan first before parroting the quotes from the member of the Sierra Club, an international company. And I think it really speaks to the fact that the NDP have lost their

way. They seem to be parroting comments from people that really don't have a lot to do with Saskatchewan right now. And for the member from Nutana to be concerned about the director of the Sierra Club and what he's saying, instead of her constituents, it's a little concerning, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think another take in our step, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that when the members opposite come in this House day after day after day, they're not bringing forward any new ideas. They'll talk about how the new initiatives we're doing, and the member from Rosemont did it this afternoon saying, well was the \$1.4 billion investment worth it in carbon capture and sequestration? Well the question would be if you're not going to invest money in that, what would they invest it in?

And I believe that actually the carbon capture and sequestration started before, before we formed government. I think they started it. And interesting just to note is that prior to 2007, and I think the member from Martensville has a very good quote, and I'm probably going to quote her, Mr. Speaker, again from their 2002 discussion paper on page 3, and I quote, invest in ". . . clean coal technology will reduce emissions, generate real environmental gains and provide Canada with significant economic development and employment . . ."

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say and by it she means the NDP policy, which is nice if they'd have that again, and I quote:

Enhanced investment in the research related to clean coal technology, carbon dioxide separation techniques and geological sequestration of carbon dioxide would enable Saskatchewan to reduce the environmental impact of utilizing its coal and oil resources and would develop valuable technologies for use throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, and I'll go on to quote the member from Martensville again:

That was from 2002, and apparently they held that position until 2007 when [and I like it when she says this] in their glossy brochure it says, and I quote their [glossy brochure she used all the time] Saskatchewan's opportunity to advance technologies for using coal in an environmentally advanced way can make a difference on a global scale. This world-leading technology could prove clean energy for future generations in Saskatchewan and has the potential to be applied throughout the world.

In 2007, which wasn't that long ago, the NDP were praising clean coal technology saying it could be a game changer on the environmental front. It could ensure that we could use our utilize coal and oil resources. And now the member from Nutana, apparently I'm pretty sure, I'm not sure how she'll vote in this motion, but I'm thinking she's going to vote against it because she thinks that money could have been invested some place else. And now they're against it. So they flip-flop on a few issues weekly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Like there's just a wonderful debate on, brought forward by the member of Athabasca who probably is the best flip-flopper on that side, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He stands firmly on both sides of most things. And I think that their not being able to take a position on almost anything, has really resulted in their election

outcomes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm very much looking forward to the day when we can stand in this Assembly and have debates on policies because both of us will have policies and both of us will have positions and both of us will have a platform to be able to debate issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Yes, right now, right now when we kind of have these conversations in the House, it's a little unfair for the members on this side of the House because we do have a record and we do have policies. And we have a growth plan and we have ideas put in place on what our priorities are right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Right now they have no priorities. Their priority is to try and get re-elected in their nine seats. I think that's their priority, and right now they have no positions put forward. And I'm hoping that soon they'll be able to have some positions put forward so we can debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a couple of media articles that I want to talk about with the carbon capture and sequestration project that we had. It's come to completion, and I would be remiss, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I didn't thank the hard work put forth by the men and women at SaskPower that worked on the Boundary dam project. They worked hard. And I know my neighbour was one of the guys that, he spent months and months and months down in Estevan away from their families. And I know it's hard on them when there's deadlines set. And they worked very hard and put in a lot of extra hours to make sure that the carbon capture and sequestration project, the Boundary dam 3, came in on time, and they made sure that everything was working properly. And it's fantastic when they switched the switch at Boundary dam 3, that that project worked out fantastically and not only met but exceeded the expectations and the performance measures that were put forth, I believe.

The members on this side think that the investment put forward in the carbon capture and sequestration project was well worth it. It's the first of its kind. It's a game changer for coal-powered fire generation plants everywhere. And I really think that it's something that the people of Saskatchewan can be proud of because it's an innovative project that was done right here and done by the hard-working people, men and women of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And with that, I'll adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House is adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:28.]

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