



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

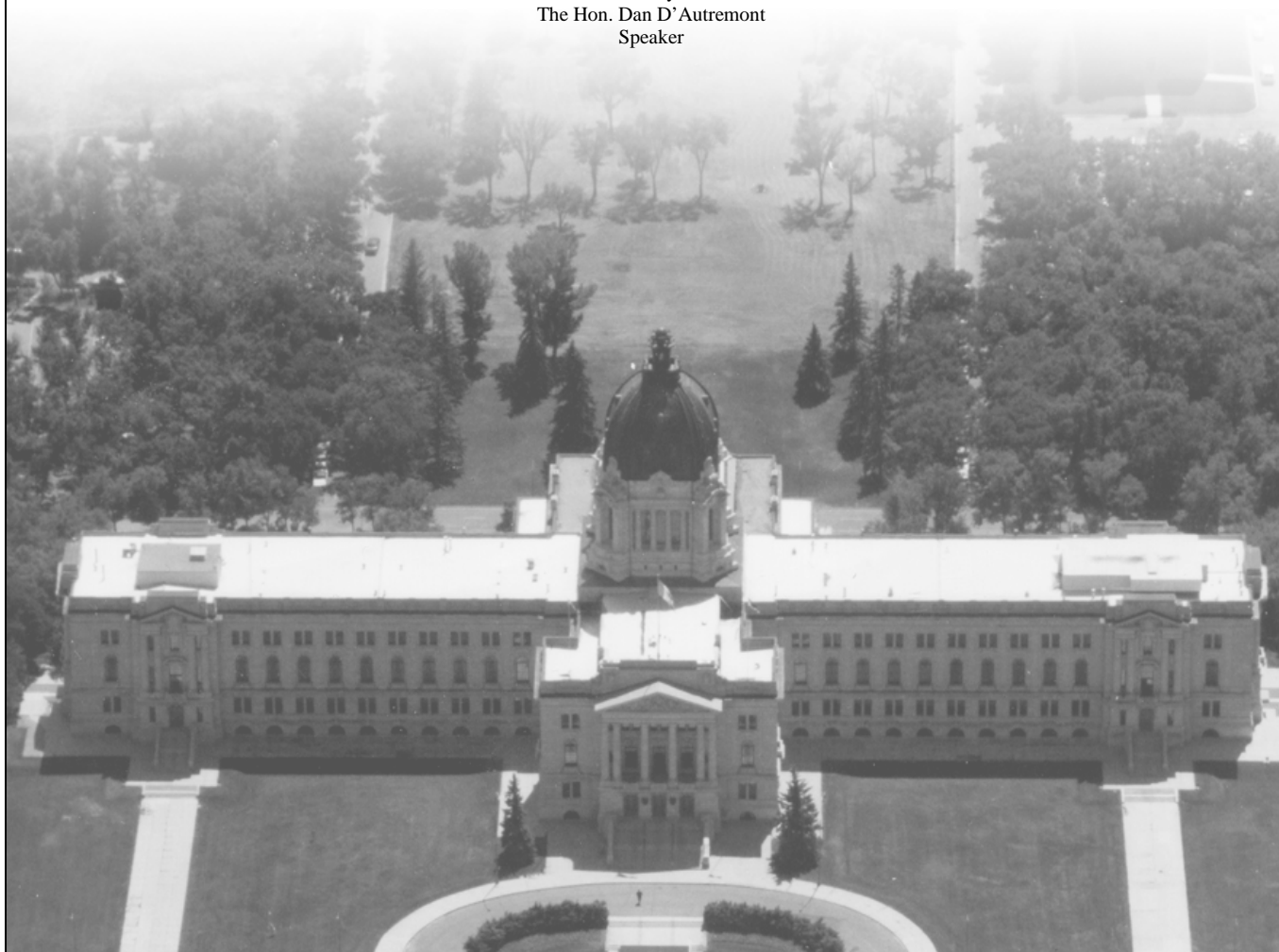
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, 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
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
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'm pleased to welcome a number of guests that have joined us in your gallery. First of all, Mr. Speaker, with my first set of introductions, seated in your gallery is Brianne Urzada and her spouse, Eric, as well as Kiriako Iatridis and his spouse, Shanda Buchanan. I hope I got the names right.

Mr. Speaker, over two years ago Brianne was diagnosed with stage III Hodgkin's lymphoma. Kiriako is a photographer here in Regina, and he lost his father to large cell carcinoma, Mr. Speaker. These two individuals have joined up to produce a private art opening entitled *Five Stages* that depicts the five stages of cancer grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Through this live auction and through the sale of smaller prints, the exhibit raised \$60,000, Mr. Speaker. All the proceeds are going to go to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation and the Allan Blair Centre. We'll hear more about what that work, what those dollars are going to be used specifically for in a member's statement. I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these four citizens of this province to their Legislative Assembly.

And briefly, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I also see in the Speaker's gallery the mayor of Fort Qu'Appelle, Ron Osika, as well as Sean McKenzie who works with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]. Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity, the Rural and Remote Health minister and myself, to meet with Ron in his capacity as a member of SUMA, in his role as shadow critic, Mr. Speaker, shadow cabinet role for health. We had, I think, a very good dialogue yesterday afternoon. And so I just want to also welcome these two individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming the four individuals involved in such a worthy project in raising awareness about the fight against cancer and, as importantly, raising dollars to help those who need support. So I want to extend words of thanks and appreciation for their fine work and as well join in welcoming former Speaker of the Assembly and current mayor, Mr. Ron Osika, as well as Mr. McKenzie from SUMA. It's always good to have both of you in the legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm pleased today

to rise and recognize students of the Johnson-Shoyama graduate school of business that are here with us today. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I can't see a lot of them from my vantage point here but, Mr. Speaker, this school produces some of the finest graduates in public policy in all of Canada. Students who are a good source of knowledge and inspiration are exactly what we need to continue to be a robust and dedicated public service here in the province of Saskatchewan. And later this evening, Mr. Speaker, these students will participate in a policy research poster competition where they will present research resulting from all of their course work.

I would ask these students to stand and be acknowledged as I mention their names. And if I mispronounce your name, I apologize ahead of time: Brenda Schurr, Caitlynn Beckett, Colton Goertz, Hana Blazkova, Luis Corredor Duarte, Lydia Okunlola, Marc D'Eon, Maritza Lozano, Matthew Peron, Miranda Gouchie, Nigel Nelson, Nolen Berg, Petr Baranovsky, Raymond Thomson, Samantha Benesh, Sandra Milena Betancur Vesga, Tyler Kobel, Yawen Luo, Yi Feng, Yvonne Benjoe, Lisa Jane de Gara, Iuliia Khimchak, Meaghen Boiteau, and Ivana Catturani. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to welcome these Johnson-Shoyama students to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming these fine students from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. I'd like to welcome all of these graduate students, and I'll forgo the listing them off one by one.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, as I've said on the floor of this Assembly before, I too am a student at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. And certainly the Tansley dinner is a big affair; good to see this group that is, I think, primarily from outside of Regina coming here to Regina for the dinner. But good to see them coming to town for the Tansley dinner, certainly named for Don Tansley, another outstanding public servant in the tradition of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Shoyama.

But good luck with the poster competition. I know that my team's got an entry in it. We'll see how that works out. I'm not sure about the member from Regina Walsh Acres, if he's got a horse in the race or not. But anyway, it's good to see these graduate students, these scholars, these hopefully future public servants, for not just Saskatchewan but indeed around the world, here at their Legislative Assembly.

And if I might, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to say a word of welcome to some public servants who are here for the public service outreach program. My colleague, the member from Saskatoon Nutana will be doing the honours for me as I'll be in estimates with the Minister of Advanced Education during that time. But it's good to see some public servants today at their Legislative Assembly taking a great interest in the process that they serve so well.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these important individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to talk a little bit more about those public servants that were just mentioned. There are 13 seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're here as part of the parliamentary program for public service. Participants are employed in different ministries, Mr. Speaker: Economy, Education, Environment, Government Relations, Health, Justice, Public Service Commission, and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, they're here and it's a very interesting day, I think, for them around the legislature. They participate in a tour of the Legislative Building and certainly learn about the history. They're also here for briefings presented by the Legislative Library, Legislative Assembly committee branch, and Executive Council. They're also, Mr. Speaker, sitting here in the Chamber of course and will witness question period. Then of course later on this afternoon, as was mentioned, they'll meet with the opposition and, I believe, myself from this side of the House. But I've heard, from other groups that have been here, the most important part of their whole day is they get to meet with you, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to welcome them here to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my great pleasure to welcome a guest seated in the Speaker's gallery. It's Mr. Joe Ralko, a citizen of Regina and a long-time resident of the Regina South constituency that I have the honour to represent. Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't quite see him; I think he's hidden by the post there. Perhaps you've got a better view than I, but I do know for a fact he's with us here today.

Joe has had a very impressive professional career in media and communications, and over the years, Mr. Speaker, he's also given back to the community through very extensive involvement in amateur sports. I'll be speaking a little bit more about his volunteer activities during members' statements. In the meantime, I invite all members to help me welcome Joe to his legislature today.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just join very briefly with the member from Regina South and welcome Mr. Joe Ralko to his legislature. Certainly somebody who has served his community in many capacities, and it's a pleasure to welcome Joe here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I'd like to join the members in welcoming our guests to the Assembly, especially former Speaker Ron Osika.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for support for better schools here in Saskatchewan. And we know that far too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under resourced and that the Sask Party government has eliminated hundreds of educational assistant positions, and students often don't get the one-on-one attention they need. And the condition of many of our schools are rundown, unsafe, or uninspected, and this government refuses to release information on the \$1.5 billion of known repairs that are needed in our school, and the government's plan to rent schools from private corporations is expensive and reckless. Now we know that this is unacceptable, given the record revenues that this government has had over the last eight years. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker.

Now I read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping class sizes, increasing supports for students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens, as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by this government on Dewdney Avenue, calling for actions to ensure safety. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and the 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 traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents once again of Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North and is getting worse. Shelter is a basic need for everyone, but under this government it's getting harder and harder for people to find adequate housing, especially families, seniors, women, and children who face abusive situations. The

problem is getting worse because of the rising level of poverty and skyrocketing home ownership costs. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present a petition on building a second bridge for Prince Albert.

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

And as in duty bound, [Mr. Speaker], your petitioners will ever pray.

And the people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Regina, but the many other petitions have been signed by people from all throughout the province of Saskatchewan. And I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of retaining Yarrow Youth Farm. Yarrow Youth Farm is a facility for low-risk teens who benefit from an open custody home with a caring, supportive environment with programs to help residents live more productive lives. Saskatoon also has Kilburn Hall, a secure custody unit for youth considered a greater risk to their communities. And the government is planning to close Yarrow Farm and create an open-custody wing in Kilburn Hall to accommodate Yarrow's residents.

The provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has declared he could not endorse such a rationalization, as low-risk teens could be influenced and pressured by close proximity to high-risk youth who may be involved in serious crimes or gangs. Kilburn Hall is a more institutional environment that can intimidate and alienate teens that have committed minor offences. The prayer reads as follows:

They request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to keep Yarrow Youth Farm open to ensure a caring home environment for youth who have committed minor offences and to provide support to help these young people redirect their lives by setting more positive goals.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals in Saskatoon, Regina, and Kindersley. I so submit.

[13:45]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Five Stages Contributes to Cancer Patient Care

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As was mentioned in introductions, we have a very special guest here today, Brianne Urzada. At the age of 23, Brianne was diagnosed with stage III Hodgkin's lymphoma. She was approached by friend and photographer, Kiriako Iatridis, about documenting her experience with cancer through photography. Both Brianne and Kiriako decided to use Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages model of grief to depict Brianne's experience.

After her fourth chemotherapy treatment, the pair did a very powerful photo shoot depicting the five stages of grief through her body and emotions. These photographs show a very unique look at the vulnerability exposed by someone going through cancer. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to say that Brianne is now in remission, and she and her husband will be expecting their first child.

Both she and Kiriako wanted to give back to the programs that made her experience with cancer easier, so on March 27th they held a private art opening called *Five Stages*, which auctioned off the five featured photographs and one painting. Mr. Speaker, they raised just over \$60,000. Money raised is going to the Hospitals of Regina Foundation to buy a new pathology device to be used during oncology surgeries, and the rest of the proceeds going to the patient comfort at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Brianne Urzada and Kiriako Iatridis for their very powerful pieces and for donating the money to improving cancer patient care. Thank you.

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

Parkinson's Awareness Month

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today in recognition of national Parkinson's disease month. Parkinson's disease affects the nervous system and causes people to have less control over their muscles. Today there is no known prevention or cure for Parkinson's disease and the treatments available only help to manage the symptoms.

Parkinson's disease takes a huge toll on families, and the treatment options that are available can be extremely expensive for patients. The average Parkinson's patient in Canada pays \$1,100 a month in out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs. That's a huge cost for any family, Mr. Speaker, but it's especially difficult in the later stages when Parkinson's takes patients out of the workforce.

But as always, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are stepping up all across our province to help raise funds and provide

support for patients and their families. The Parkinson's Society Saskatchewan has chapters in every corner of the province including Humboldt, Kindersley, Moose Jaw, Moosomin, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, two in Saskatoon, Spiritwood, Swift Current, Tisdale, Yorkton, and Watrous.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members of the Assembly join me in recognizing April as national Parkinson's disease month and also in thanking all of the volunteers who work hard to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease. Thank you.

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

Basketball Coach Honoured

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize the achievements of a constituent who we just introduced a moment ago, recently honoured with the Fred Frolick Award for the Spirit of Basketball.

Joe Ralko has served the sport of basketball at the local, provincial, and national levels for more than 30 years, most of that right here in Regina. However, Joe got his start as a community league coach in Prince George, British Columbia. Arriving in Regina, he initially coached in the Regina Community Basketball Association — that's the RCBA — and then at Robert Usher Collegiate where he resurrected the senior boys' program.

Joe is a fully certified level 3 NCCP [national coaching certification program] basketball coach and was in fact the first provincial team coach for the bantam boys' program. He was president of Basketball Saskatchewan for six years. He was also elected twice to the Canada Basketball board of directors where he served as vice-president. During the basketball season, Joe can still be found Saturday mornings in the gym mentoring first-year officials for the RCBA.

Joe is also a two-time cancer survivor who has had 13 operations and endured 12 hours of chemotherapy. Joe says he worked hard to return to the floor because he believed there was a new generation of coaches, parents, and players that deserved the right to yell at him.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I encourage my fellow members to join me in congratulating Mr. Joe Ralko, recipient of the 2015 Spirit of Basketball Award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

University Students Offer Healthy Food

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to recognize a new project at the University of Saskatchewan. A group of students at the university has set up a table selling healthy food to people in the Health Sciences Building. It's a place where lots of staff, students, and especially patients and their families are often hustling through and under a lot of stress, and they don't have much access to healthy food.

Tatiana Rac is a medical student with the group. And she told

CBC News that, and I quote:

There is limited availability within this building. We have a Tim Hortons, which is very delicious, and also a vending machine, which is also very delicious, but sometimes instead of that second or third doughnut of the day, it'd be nice to have an apple, a banana, or an avocado.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that proper nutrition plays an important role in helping stressed people deal with their anxieties and helping sick people to heal and get better. I know that there are many other places in our province where it's tough to find healthy food, particularly in places with poverty and inequality.

So I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing the important work of Erin Beresch, Tatiana Rac, Sarah Finch, Jennifer Peterson, and everyone else at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] who helped make this program a success and to remember that so much more needs to be done to make sure everyone across our province has access to healthy food. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ellen Manton Celebrates 100th Birthday

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not often that we get a chance to celebrate specific and important milestones, such as a birthday, with our constituents, but today is a special exception. Today a resident from Saskatoon Greystone is celebrating a very special birthday. Mrs. Ellen Manton turns 100 today, and she made a special request for a public mention from her Legislative Assembly.

Born on April 15th, 1915 on a farm near Donovan, Ellen is the oldest of six children. Being the oldest, Ellen recalls that she was more like a mother than a sister to her siblings, including seeing three brothers go off to war. She was fortunate, as all three returned home.

Ellen and her late husband raised their children, and along the way she moved into Saskatoon, making the City of Bridges her new home. Like many seniors in our province, she now enjoys the company of her kids and her seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Ellen has made Saskatchewan home for all these years and the province is all the better for that. In fact she still enjoys lawn bowling. She's a formidable bridge player and, of course, an avid curler at Saskatoon's Nutana Curling Club.

Mr. Speaker, today we not only wish Ellen a happy birthday, but recognize her many contributions to her family, to her friends, to many Saskatchewan communities, indeed to her province. We offer our sincere thanks for her many efforts.

I would ask all members to join me in wishing Ellen a very happy 100th birthday, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Surgical Wait Times

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute of Health Information, or CIHI, report was released yesterday regarding wait times for priority procedures in Canada 2015. The report shows that Saskatchewan patients are benefiting from improved access to surgery with surgical wait times being among the shortest in the country. In Saskatchewan, 90 per cent of all patients had an offer of surgery within three months of booking between December 2014 and February 2015.

The Saskatchewan surgical initiative has made tremendous improvements in patients' access to surgery, Mr. Speaker. We have seen almost 10,000 more surgeries performed last year compared to five years ago. As well the number of patients waiting more than three months for surgery has dropped by 87 per cent over that same time period. Sometimes it's easy to forget, but these 10,000 more surgeries represent 10,000 more people who are getting the care they need faster. The CIHI report shows Saskatchewan is doing especially well in comparison to other provinces. This includes the best wait times for bypass surgery in Canada, the best wait times for bladder cancer surgery and lung cancer surgery.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is always more work to be done but these statistics show that the initiatives advanced by our government are working and people across Saskatchewan are getting more timely access to the surgeries they need to improve their quality of life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Company to Supply Uranium for Electricity Generation in India

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand in the House today and congratulate one of Saskatchewan's largest companies, Cameco, for signing a historic supply deal with India earlier today. This contract sets the stage for shipments of Canadian uranium to India for electricity generation.

The Premier was in Ottawa this morning for the signing of the contract, along with Prime Minister Harper and Indian Prime Minister Modi. As the members of this House will know, the Premier has been a tireless advocate through missions to India and work here at home.

Saskatchewan's economy continues to show strength through its diversity, and today's historic uranium energy deal signing marks yet another milestone in our province's success. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is home to 100 per cent of Canada's uranium mining industry, and we are the world's second-leading producer of uranium. With India's nuclear energy program being second only to China's in scale, this partnership signals long-term sustainability for Cameco. Mr. Speaker, India has a dynamic and growing nuclear energy program, and Cameco's record as a great corporate citizen in Saskatchewan speaks for itself.

We will continue to work with the federal government to

encourage commercial partnerships like this one which help bolster our strong economy. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Cameco for this historic contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Ambulance Service Fees

Mr. Broten: — In February, Calvin Vollet had surgery at the Regina General. The surgeon nicked his artery and he suffered from profuse bleeding. His nephrologist ordered that he be urgently transferred to St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. He was charged a massive amount for this medically necessary ambulance transfer, an ambulance transfer between two hospitals on doctor's orders, out of urgent medical necessity. Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the only province that charges patients for medically necessary transfers between health centres, and that needs to stop. How can the Premier possibly keep justifying this practice?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to take the question on behalf of the government in the absence of the Premier. Certainly I think members will know that ambulance fees are not an insured service under the *Canada Health Act*, but we do choose to heavily subsidize ambulance fees in Saskatchewan, as do most other provinces do, Mr. Speaker. Approximately 71 per cent of the cost of an ambulance, the cost of taking an ambulance is borne by the taxpayers through the general revenue of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, certainly this government has provided increased support to add ambulance capacity in a number of areas, Mr. Speaker, as well as to ensure that we have a highly competent staff all across this province, a 50 per cent increase in our ambulance funding for regional health authorities. Mr. Speaker, we also as well continue to have supports in place, whether that be for low-income individuals as well as our seniors' program, Mr. Speaker.

We're always looking to how we can enhance the programs that we do operate, Mr. Speaker. But this is a program that's been in place, the basis of the program hasn't changed over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to fund ambulance fees on a heavily subsidized basis going forward.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the only province that charges for medically necessary transfers between centres, and that needs to change. The bill that Calvin received for his medically necessary transfer between the two hospitals was \$1,235, a bill for \$1,235 because a specialist ordered, his physician ordered that he be transferred from one hospital to another. That's outrageous enough. This government should stop charging people for transfers between health facilities.

But Calvin was also charged for part of the ambulance's round trip from Saskatoon to Regina, even though he was left in

Saskatoon and the ambulance picked up another patient at Royal University Hospital and transferred that other patient back to Regina. Mr. Speaker, that amounts to double billing patients, and it needs to stop. How can the Premier justify this? When will the Premier end this? Will he end this unfair practice today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly the members opposite will know that the program that we have in place for ambulance fees, while there are some adjustments along the way, on the ground ambulance side hasn't substantially changed in terms of what was operated under the previous government, under the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker, going back a number of years to the point where it is heavily subsidized by the people of this province.

The residents of this province have the option to look at some additional assistance programs, whether they are low-income individuals, whether or not they are seniors, Mr. Speaker, that they are eligible for the seniors' CAP [Canada assistance plan] program, Mr. Speaker, as well as private insurance. Many citizens choose to purchase private insurance, Mr. Speaker, to augment the publicly funded system here in this province, whether it be for ambulances or other types of non-*Canada Health Act* insurance services.

[14:00]

It's interesting though to hear from the NDP that this is apparently their new policy, to not have a patient pay for transfer fees, when this was in fact their policy in the 1999 election, starting by eliminating all fees for transfers between health institutions, Mr. Speaker. That was what they promised in 1999. They didn't get it done. Interesting that apparently this is now their new policy again.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it is this government that has increased fees for ambulances in this province. We're the only province in the country that is charging for medically necessary transfers between facilities. Calvin thinks it's wrong that that exists and he thinks it should end. But he's especially frustrated, especially frustrated that this government allows for double billing for the same trip. It defies common sense.

Calvin contacted the minister's office. He spoke with a number of individuals on the minister's staff, and finally they said to him, well those are the rules. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is time to change those rules. Will the Premier finally do this today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the Leader of the Opposition wants that rule changed today, when in fact as a party they wanted it changed in 1999, Mr. Speaker. They had eight years to make that change, Mr. Speaker. In fact the policy says, and Roy Romanow's on the

front cover here, 1999 NDP *Platform: Building A Bright Future Together The Saskatchewan Way*, Mr. Speaker.

We know how that went for the people of this province. But it says:

Publicly funded ambulance services. We'll introduce a single reasonable fee for ambulance services, and we'll begin to reduce ambulance charges throughout the province, starting by eliminating all fees for transfers between health institutions.

They had eight years to do it, Mr. Speaker, and they didn't get it done. But the Leader of the Opposition yet wants it done today by this government.

Mr. Speaker, we'll always look to see, make improvements to the system that we have in place, Mr. Speaker. We will work, we'll have our regions work with their patients to ensure that the charges are reasonable, Mr. Speaker. This is a policy that's been in place for many years under the NDP, as it is today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this minister seems to forget that their party's been in power for close to eight years, Mr. Speaker, during times of record revenues. And he wants to talk about things that happened, Mr. Speaker, when the two of us were barely out of high school. Talk about backwards-looking and a failure, Mr. Speaker, to be actually recognizing the huge burden that is being placed on patients here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government, this government was alerted to this issue because Calvin spoke with several political staffers. Has the Premier looked into the practice of double billing for the same ambulance trips? Has the Premier looked into the practice of double billing for the same ambulance trips, and how often is this happening?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, while we're on the topic of NDP platforms, it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, and I understand the member opposite at one point claimed that at that time he was still in high school, but now he was just recently out of high school, Mr. Speaker. It's good that he clarified that for the House.

But even at the same time, Mr. Speaker, when they were promising the people to eliminate all inter-hospital transfers for the people of this province, they're also promising to reduce wait times for surgery by at least 30 per cent over the next four years. Well, Mr. Speaker, how did that go for the people of this province? They just missed it by this much, Mr. Speaker, reducing wait times for surgeries by 30 per cent. What happened, Mr. Speaker? Wait times for surgeries went up 61 per cent, Mr. Speaker. They missed it on that. They missed it on ambulance fees. They promised to hire 500 more health care providers, Mr. Speaker. They missed it on that mark. That's what we got from the NDP government. That's why the Saskatchewan Party is on this side of the House.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Calvin is here at the Assembly today. He came to this Assembly because he was concerned about this aspect of double billing. He's concerned about how this is placing a burden on Saskatchewan patients, Mr. Speaker, for necessary medical treatment based on the recommendations of their physicians. And to have this dismissive approach from the government, Mr. Speaker, is astonishing. How they can just say this isn't an issue and not affecting patients is beyond belief.

We can think of other people who have come to the Legislature. Dave Carr, who came to share his experience. We think of Sara Bucsis-Gunn, who spoke about the unfairness of the system as it related to the proper medical care of her daughter, Mr. Speaker. They're frustrated that this government has refused, despite times of massive revenue increases, to fix our ambulance system, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact, the government has chosen to raise the amount that patients are charged for ambulances. We know that 30 per cent of all ambulance bills sent to patients are because of transfers from one facility to another. So that's about \$4.5 million that patients are paying for medically necessary transfers — patients, Mr. Speaker, who are here today in the Assembly.

Meanwhile this government happily gives a \$5 million gift to the American manufacturer of the failed smart meters. Meanwhile this government happily spends \$3 million on the Premier's American lobbyist, but they are unwilling to fix our ambulance system. How on earth can the government continue to defend this practice, which is the worst in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, and allows for double billing for the same ambulance trip?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, ambulance subsidies are provided by the taxpayers on behalf of patients, Mr. Speaker. What we put in in terms of the ambulance fees, Mr. Speaker, is up 50 per cent over the last seven years under this government. What the Leader of the Opposition also fails to note is the over \$10 million a year that this government puts in to ensure that we have STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance in the province, Mr. Speaker, which we never had before under the NDP government, Mr. Speaker. They don't recognize that fact.

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be looking into the specifics of this case again, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the Leader of the Opposition's specific questions. But what I'll do first, Mr. Speaker, is I will check the facts, Mr. Speaker. I will check with the ministry. I will check with the regional health authority. I will consult, Mr. Speaker, with the facility or with the organization in any case that comes forward to me. I will consult if possible, Mr. Speaker, with the family that comes forward.

Mr. Speaker, I'll also consult with Google, which members opposite apparently didn't consult with Google yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this side we want to ensure that we're dealing with facts, Mr. Speaker, that we ensure that we're dealing with the facts, unlike the members opposite. And we

saw that many times this week alone, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Calvin is here in the Chamber today. He has come to Regina because of his concerns about this issue. He has brought his bill, Mr. Speaker, that he received for a medically necessary transfer.

Mr. Speaker, we have the worst ambulance fees in the entire country. The government refuses to take action and fix the ridiculous interest fees that we see being charged to patients. It refuses to stop charging patients for ambulance transfers between health care facilities, Mr. Speaker, and it refuses to put a cap on ambulance fees, stop adding the per-kilometre rate that patients have to pay for. It refuses to do any of that, Mr. Speaker.

But Calvin has . . . out of all of these concerns, there is one that is most frustrating to him. And he is here today, Mr. Speaker, and he deserves a better answer than what we have heard so far. Will the Premier at least listen to Calvin and promise to stop double billing for the same trips?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Certainly, I think members will know that ambulance fees, ambulance services are not insured under the *Canada Health Act*, Mr. Speaker. But provinces, all provinces, choose different coverage levels when it comes to non-insured benefits under the *Canada Health Act*, Mr. Speaker.

So for instance, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Saskatchewan, our coverage of cancer drugs, in particular those secondary cancer drugs like anti-nausea medication, are covered 100 per cent by the province of Saskatchewan where other provinces choose not to cover those services and those particular drugs, Mr. Speaker. We have to make those types of choices, Mr. Speaker.

We also have to make the choices like investing over \$10 million a year to ensure that we have STARS operating in this province for those people, particularly in rural and remote areas, Mr. Speaker, that need that life-saving support, something that wasn't available under the NDP, especially at a time when health centres and hospitals were being closed and access to emergency services in rural and remote areas were being drastically cut back, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that our citizens all across this province have that benefit, Mr. Speaker, and those are the choices that we've had to make.

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

Physician Services in Craik and District

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the second Health minister made a promise to the people of Craik and area. Why have they failed to keep their promise?

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

Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — I'm sorry for the delay, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't sure who the second Health critic was talking to. When it comes to the people of Craik, Mr. Speaker, this government has made the commitment to stabilize services there by committing to putting a permanent four-day-a-week doctor in place, a permanent nurse practitioner in place five days a week, unchanged services, Mr. Speaker. That commitment continues and we will carry forward with that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I would ask members to direct their questions to the appropriate person by their titles, not by some other designation. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on the first day of the spring sitting we had about 70 people come from Craik and area to the legislature to rally to save the health care services in their community. And they heard the promises that this government made, Mr. Speaker, and they're not pleased with the carry through that is certainly not happening.

The Premier promised that the government would ensure that Craik had a doctor four days a week, and the minister promised the people of Craik and area that there would be a doctor in place by the end of March. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Craik health care task force wrote to the Premier on April 1st, and this is what they said, "Unfortunately these commitments made by you and your minister are not being acted out on the ground."

So again, why did the Premier not follow through on his commitment to the people of Craik and area?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I think that was directed to the Premier this time, so I'll take that question on his behalf and on behalf of the government in his absence.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before and I'll say again, the commitment of this government is to put a permanent physician in place in Craik. We tried time and time again to negotiate, have the ministry, have the region, have the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] aid in negotiating a contract with the previous physician who refused to sit down. In fact at the posting of this position, now over the past number of weeks, he still hasn't chosen to exercise his interest in that position.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the position has been posted. There has been two applicants that have so far toured the facility, two others that are interested that we know of as of today. That position will be filled, Mr. Speaker. Up to this point, there has been locum coverage. The new doctor in Davidson has been doing coverage in Craik to get herself familiarized with the facility to take part in that team system that's going to be in place, Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks and months. And it's all rolling out very well, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite would be patient.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I think this minister needs to get his facts straight and speak to the people in Craik about what the reality is on the ground, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they're not coming, Mr. Speaker, to the Assembly, they're not raising these concerns, they're not writing to the Premier or to the ministers, Mr. Speaker, because they're satisfied with the actions. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, since February 1st there has only been, there has only been limited and sporadic service in Craik by physicians.

The people of Craik and area have brought . . . have had enough of this government failing to follow through on their promise. So the Craik health care task force wrote to the Premier yesterday and this is what they said just yesterday, Mr. Speaker: "The community has decided, in the interests of maintaining the health and well-being of local residents, to immediately begin actively recruiting a doctor to open a private practice in Craik."

Mr. Speaker, the community should not have to do this. And, Mr. Speaker, they are having to do it because the Premier and the Health ministers have failed to deliver for them, have failed to listen to them, Mr. Speaker, and have failed to find a solution and to be flexible. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier at least listen? Will he at least listen and promise the people of Craik that the fee-for-service doctor that they recruit will be able to access all the support services at the health care centre, including the lab, the X-ray services, and the treatment room? Will he commit to that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talks about wanting to get the facts straight, Mr. Speaker. These are the facts. In the last week alone, just in the last seven days, the Leader of the Opposition approved a news release going out from his office which claimed that a resident had dementia, Mr. Speaker, which that resident read about in the newspaper the next day. Mr. Speaker, that resident didn't have dementia, doesn't have dementia, doesn't have a diagnosis. That's the facts, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, we know what happened with him, Mr. Speaker, and the facts of what happened there, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just yesterday the Leader of the Opposition got up in his place, and speaking on behalf of a resident, Mr. Speaker, in care, in long-term care said that the resident was on anti-psychotic medication without a diagnosis.

All he had to do was google, Mr. Speaker, and come up with a court case from 2010 that involved that same family member, that same resident, Mr. Speaker, where on page 2 it says, with respect ". . . these dependant adults continue to suffer the underlying conditions of Alzheimers and, in respect of Bernal, that she is psychotic."

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, we found this information out by the time the Highways minister was answering questions. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Leader of the Opposition, either he doesn't fact check, Mr. Speaker, or he just doesn't care.

The Speaker: — I would like to caution members to choose

their words carefully in these matters. This goes for both sides of the House that sometimes the language pushes the boundaries, and I expect both sides to be careful in this matter.

I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Funding for Education and the Lean Initiative

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, anyone close to education knows that this government's put a lot of pressure on kids' classrooms. The ratio of EAs [educational assistants] to students has not caught up since this government slashed the number of educational assistants. Classrooms are overcrowded and under-resourced and we have at least \$1.5 billion in much needed repairs to schools that this government is ignoring.

And defying common sense, this government has cut \$15 million this year by scrapping the mid-year funding for enrolment growth that's so desperately needed. So with all that, how can this Education minister justify spending time and resources and school divisions' time and already inadequate resources on this government's lean pet project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before we can take questions from the members opposite, we need to put things in perspective just a little bit. The legacy that they left was in 2007, they had an education budget of \$943 million, a capital budget in that year of \$19 million. Mr. Speaker, 2014-2015, an education budget of \$2 billion. That's the legacy that they left us. That's what we're working our way through.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about cuts. There was no cuts. Each and every school division received more money than they did the previous year. Mr. Speaker, I can give you some other statistics as well. Mr. Speaker, there are more teachers in our classroom than ever before: 614 more teachers; student support teachers, 200 more. And there are more professionals working for our students: psychologists, up 45 per cent; speech language pathologists, up 24 per cent; occupational therapists, up 53 per cent; social workers, up 14 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we'll take no lessons from the people opposite. We'll work to fix the deficit that they left.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the numbers in education haven't kept pace with student realities and student numbers, Mr. Speaker. And everyone knows that classrooms across Saskatchewan are under-resourced and overcrowded, Mr. Speaker. And if you want to talk about misplaced priorities of this government again, this government actually found it somehow that they should be spending all the needed dollars that are needed within education to train 90 per cent of the Education ministry staff, Mr. Speaker.

And in the next year, this government expects school divisions to deliver 58 lean events, taking away from divisions' already insufficient resources. Teachers, administrators, and students will be pulled out of the classroom to attend these events in support of this government's pet project. Doesn't the Education

minister think that students and teachers should be in the classroom instead of its costly lean events?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk about whether we adequately fund education enrolment. Mr. Speaker, it's something that the members opposite never had to deal with because they were dealing with decline. Mr. Speaker, I want to go back and look at what happened in the past. In the year 2007, the last year the members were in government, they closed 23 schools. Mr. Speaker, in 2006 the members opposite closed nine schools; 2005, five schools; 2004, eight schools.

And, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on and on — 176 schools. Schools that don't exist. Schools that we're not worried about classroom sizes. Schools that we're not worried about where the students are. We're not worried about leaking roofs in those schools because they're closed. They're empty buildings. The students that were there are now living in Calgary and Edmonton because those people drove them away, Mr. Speaker. We're not taking lessons from those people.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister, that government, is clearly out of touch with the realities in everyday classrooms across Saskatchewan. Here's what that minister said about the school year ahead when I asked in committee. He said the target he has for school divisions for 2015-2016 is for every division to complete two lean events, 58 in total, including the "... development and implementation of a lean communications plan to describe how lean is adding value and eliminating inefficiencies."

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, a lean communications plan. We don't need a lean go-team in health care, and we sure as heck don't need a lean go-team in education, Mr. Speaker. How can the minister justify using resources meant for students and for schools to create pro-lean talking points for this government's pet project? Why won't he come to his senses and scrap this foolish plan and put the dollars to work where they make a difference in the life of students?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we've used lean in education. We've used lean to reduce the amount of time it took to get a contract approved, so the wait time for contract completions went from 20 to 40 days to 8 days — cost savings, \$200,000. Mr. Speaker, we've used lean to review the teachers' certification process to streamline the process — cost savings, \$100,000. We've used it for the capital approval process — cost savings, \$80,000. Results have been fewer consultants working on more projects, reduced process errors, duplication efforts, and ... [inaudible].

This is done on a voluntary basis with divisions, Mr. Speaker. It's producing positive results, and we're going to continue to do that type of thing. We have a \$2 billion budget. We want to keep our resources where they belong, in the classroom rather than on other things, Mr. Speaker. That's where the resources should be in our province, helping our kids learn.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:22.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

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