



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

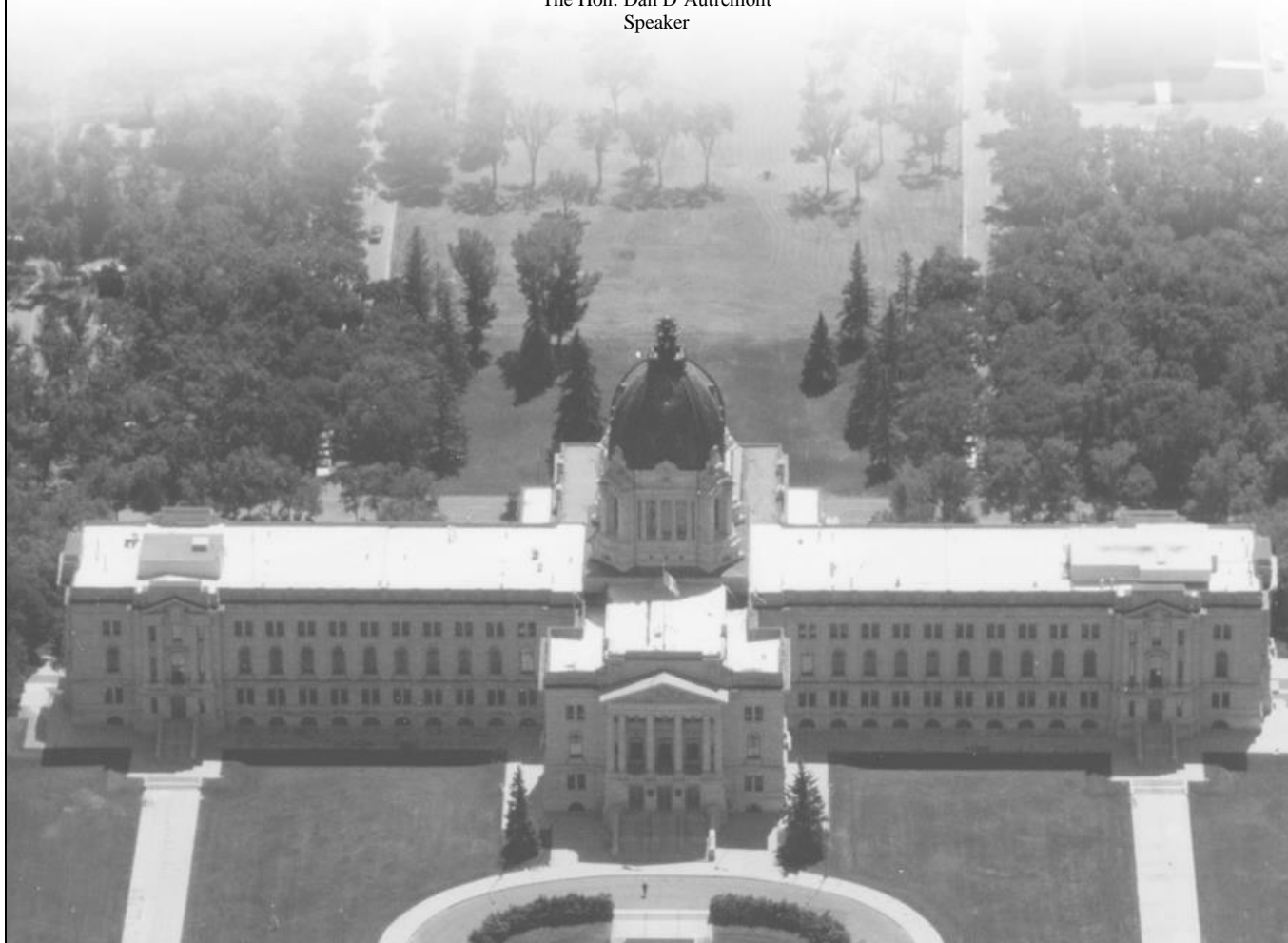
of the

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, Hon. 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, 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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

The Speaker: — I would like to introduce another Page. I wish to inform the Assembly that Kennedy McBain will be returning as a Page for this fall session.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you in your gallery, I'm pleased to introduce a number of individuals who have joined us today in support of the sexual assault awareness campaign which I spoke about in the legislature earlier in the week. And we had our public viewing of the video this morning downstairs in the gallery.

So I'm very proud to have them here today to spread awareness of the very important problem which we're trying to address. With us today, Mr. Speaker, Betty Ann Pottruff from the Ministry of Justice; Pat Faulconbridge from Social Services; Dianna Graves, who I don't think has quite made it up from the announcement yet — she's from the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan; Megan Boiteau, Status of Women, from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School, intern; Debbie House from the Regina Sexual Assault Centre; and Norm Jakubowski from the Red Cross. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask everyone in the legislature to welcome these individuals to their legislature.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister in welcoming our special guests here today, the partners in helping to change the culture around sexual assault here in Saskatchewan. It's a great campaign and government couldn't do things like this without their community partners, so thank you very much for all that you do in your community and for all those of us here in Saskatchewan. And particularly as a woman and a mother of two daughters, thank you for all that you do. So with that I'd like to ask my colleagues to join in welcoming these folks to their legislature as well.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to present a petition on cellphone coverage, and the prayer reads as follows:

To cause the provincial government to improve cell service

coverage for northern communities like St. George's Hill, Dillon, Michel Village, Dore Lake, Canoe Lake First Nation, Michel Point, and Sled Lake to provide similar quality of cell coverage as southern communities.

Mr. Speaker, this would provide support to our northern industries as well as mitigate safety concerns associated with living in the remote North. And the people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from all throughout Saskatchewan, and on this particular page they are from Saskatoon. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of GSAs [gender and sexuality alliance] in Saskatchewan schools. And we know that this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for sexually diverse students or students bullied because of their sexual identity or orientation, and that GSAs can play a pivotal role in providing inclusive anti-oppressive learning environments and offer reprieve from bullying and insult. And this government must act so that under no circumstance are gender- and sexually diverse students denied the right to form gender and sexual alliances in their schools. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to pass *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act* and enshrine in legislation the right of Saskatchewan students to form GSAs within their schools in order to foster caring, accepting, inclusive environments and deliver equal opportunities for all students to reach their full potential.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Moose Jaw, Melville, and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased once again to present a petition in support of a residents-in-care bill of rights. The petitioners point out that it is in fact the responsibility of the provincial government to ensure consistent standards of care in facilities throughout Saskatchewan. The petitioners are asking that the government pass the residents-in-care bill of rights to ensure that residents have individualized care plans and minimum quality of care standards. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan adopt Bill 609, *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act*, which would provide Saskatchewan seniors with the right to quality, high-level standards in seniors' care homes.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals in Prince

Albert. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition from individuals concerned about the cost of post-secondary education in the province of Saskatchewan, particularly as it relates to university tuition. The petitioners point out that the average Canadian student debt in 2014 was over \$27,000, not including credit card and other private debt. And in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately increase the funding for post-secondary education in this province with a legislated provision that this increase in funding be used to lower tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by students and citizens from Regina and Shaunavon. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring attention to the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which is observed on October 17th. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed every year since 1993. The UN [United Nations] Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, states that “On this day we recommit to think, decide and act together against extreme poverty — and plan for a world where no-one is left behind. Our aim must be prosperity for all, not just [for] a few.”

A Saskatoon report released last week outlined that the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen throughout the city, and October 17th community members are joining together for the Hands Across the Bridge event. Participants will form a human chain across the Broadway Bridge to demonstrate that Saskatoon is a city united against poverty and homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage others to partake in community events in the neighbourhoods and support local efforts to mitigate the impacts of poverty. I want to thank those groups such as the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, Upstream, Poverty Free Sask, and the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership for their tireless work on this front. As a community, we need to continue to work towards the elimination of poverty.

I ask all members to join me on October 17th in marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and urging the government to take real steps now to address income inequality and poverty in our province. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

Spiritwood Collaborative Emergency Centre

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With our population growing, it has become even more important for our government to plan for growth rather than decline. Last month Spiritwood’s collaborative emergency centre started their new daytime model on September 15th. This new model guarantees that the collaborative emergency centre will have a physician or nurse practitioner available six days a week. There will be a registered nurse available on Sundays and all statutory holidays to respond to urgent care needs. This ensures that the residents of Spiritwood, for the first time since October 30th of 2006, will have improved access to urgent care.

Mr. Speaker, the collaborative emergency centre is a great example of patient-centred care that also provides stable and timely access to health services in our communities. With this new model we can shorten wait times, we can reduce emergency room visits, and we can provide a better work-life balance for our incredible health care providers across the province. Yet more importantly, this model has the potential to improve the access to health care services for all of the residents of Spiritwood and the surrounding communities.

I’d like to thank the town of Spiritwood and the surrounding communities, the health care providers, and the health region for their efforts in improving access to health care services. It’s efforts like opening of this collaborative emergency centre that will ensure that communities such as Spiritwood will continue to make Saskatchewan the very best place to live, the very best place to work, and to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Regina Business Celebrates 50 Years

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, in the mid-1960s a young man who had recently arrived from Greece began operation of a 40-seat lunch counter on the 1900 block of Scarth Street in downtown Regina.

Over the course of the next five decades, with the help of his wife, Ann, and later his children, he expanded that modest enterprise into a Greek-themed restaurant, complete with lounge and an Irish pub next door. Today these two establishments, with their heated outdoor patios, can accommodate 800 patrons. That’s a long step up from the 40-seat lunch counter where it all began. I’m speaking, of course, of Robert Gardikiotis and his family, the owners and operators of the Copper Kettle restaurant and O’Hanlon’s Irish Pub, both of which are institutions in Regina’s downtown.

Mr. Speaker, Robert has been a downtown business icon for Regina as long as I can remember. Not only has he nurtured his own enterprises through the good times and bad, but he has also worked tirelessly to enliven Regina’s downtown and played a key role in transforming it to the vibrant cultural centre it has become.

It has been my privilege to get to know Robert and the family over the years, and I was very pleased to receive an invitation to the Copper Kettle’s 50th anniversary celebration. As one would expect, it was an excellent evening, replete with fine food, fare,

and refreshments. I was pleased to be among those who had the opportunity to celebrate the Copper Kettle's 50th anniversary and to say thank you very much to Robert and Ann Gardikiotis and family and the staff for all the good meals and the great times. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

New Athletic Field for Kipling School

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 29th, a ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of the Kipling School athletic field. Mr. Speaker, for a time the Kipling School had a shortage of space for outdoor sports and play. When the old school was demolished, school and community members took advantage of the opportunity to develop the newly available space into an outdoor sports and recreational area. The new athletic field is now complete and ready for use, with potential that the area could be improved in the future as room was left for additions which could include a score clock, bleachers, and a change facility.

Mr. Speaker, a bronze plaque commemorating the opening of the field was unveiled at the ceremony. This plaque also serves to recognize the many generous sponsors who helped make the new athletic field possible. These sponsors include Gee Bee Construction, the town of Kipling, Richardson Pioneer, Hometown Co-op, Seed Hawk, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, and G. Hahn Contracting.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the hard work and generosity of the school board, community members, and these sponsors, Kipling now has a beautiful new athletic field that will be enjoyed by the community now and for years to come. I ask all members to join me in celebrating the opening of the new athletic field. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Three Artists Inducted into Arts Hall of Fame

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, on September 26th the Prince Albert Arts Board held a fabulous event which I was privileged to attend. The 2015 Hall of Fame Induction Gala at the E.A. Rawlinson Centre inducted three deserving members of the local arts community into the hall of fame. Linda Erhardt was posthumously inducted in the visual arts category, Broadway North Theatre Company was inducted in the artistic organization category, and Malcolm Jenkins was inducted as a builder.

Mr. Speaker, Linda Erhardt was known for her mastery and ability to teach nearly every visual art medium. She was also a member of several local art groups including the 1010 Painting Group, the Prince Albert Spinners and Weavers Guild, and the P.A. [Prince Albert] Pottery Guild.

The Broadway North Theatre Company was started by Darren and Gillian McCaffery 20 years ago. The company has gone through four phases including a powerhouse summer show phase, a Christmas and Easter show phase, a phase of early summer shows, and the current phase of children's

programming. People of all ages have performed with the company.

Malcolm Jenkins was inducted as a builder in recognition of the key role he played in the creation of the Rawlinson Centre. He has also acted in a number of Broadway North shows.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all of this year's deserving nominees into the Prince Albert Arts Hall of Fame. Thank you.

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

[10:15]

Home Ownership in the North

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House to announce a new initiative that Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is undertaking in consultation with northern housing stakeholders. As part of the housing strategy for Saskatchewan, SHC [Saskatchewan Housing Corporation] works with northern communities to identify housing needs and supports the long-term sustainability of the housing portfolio.

As identified, priority is to create opportunities for home ownership in the North where there is a demand for home ownership but few private market options in the region. In response, SHC is offering up to 50 existing social housing clients in northern communities the opportunity to embrace home ownership by providing tenants the opportunity to purchase the homes they are currently renting.

Mr. Speaker, the sale of these homes will be reinvested in new rental housing units for the North on top of our investments of 27 million for 280 new units in the region. Further, Mr. Speaker, there will not be an impact for existing tenants. Units available for sale will only include those to be sold to existing tenants.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud that this move is supported by many municipal leaders including New North SANC [Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities] Services Inc. Our government will continue to work with northern leaders to address these issues and keep Saskatchewan strong. Thank you.

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

Reflections on the New Democratic Party

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, shortly after the 2007 election the member for Regina Lakeview was asked about the election results. His response was one of the most arrogant things I've ever heard. He said his government had done a great job and now they were just going to wait to clean up another mess. So the take-away from the 2007 election was that the NDP [New Democratic Party] didn't do anything wrong. The NDP was right but the voters got it wrong, and that's why the NDP lost.

But don't worry, Mr. Speaker. After eight years out of office, the NDP is just as arrogant as ever. They still believe they're always right and the voters are wrong. The headline in today's *Leader-Post* reads, "P3s have majority support, poll finds." So does the NDP listen to the views of a majority of Saskatchewan people? Of course not. The NDP leader says Saskatchewan people don't understand P3s. Once again the NDP are right and the voters are wrong. Nothing has changed. Mr. Speaker, they may have a different leader, but it's same old NDP.

Today Saskatchewan people are willing to try new ideas, new approaches. But the NDP continues to cling to the past like grim death because trying anything new would mean that maybe they were wrong, and the NDP are far too arrogant to ever admit they were wrong. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Wait Times for Specialists and Provision of Health Care

Mr. Broten: — Almost four years ago the Premier promised that no one would wait longer than a week to see a specialist. Does the Premier know how long people are waiting now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to the House today that throughout the life of the government ours has been a focus on human resources within the health sector in Saskatchewan. What we inherited in 2007 was a situation where there was a dramatic shortage of nurses in the province. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] at the time said we were short about 1,000 nurses. I'm pleased to report today, Mr. Speaker, to the House that since taking office in 2007 things have changed. There are now 3,000 more nurses of various designations practising in the province of Saskatchewan. This week we learned that there are 500 more doctors practising in the province of Saskatchewan. A number of them are specialists, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to set bold goals in the health sector for Saskatchewan people. We continue to put patients first, and we've backed it up with action in terms of hiring more nurses, more doctors, more specialists. There's going to be more work to be done, Mr. Speaker, but as long as we have the honour to serve in government in the province of Saskatchewan, we're going to continue to set goals and we'll move to meet them by backing those goals up with more resources, more people providing the care, more specialists, more general practitioners, more nurses, Mr. Speaker. That will be the priority of the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the numbers show a very different story from what the Premier is saying. I asked the Premier if he knew how long people are waiting to see a specialist, Mr. Speaker, how long, and he had no answer.

Four years ago the Premier promised, he committed, that everyone who needed to see a specialist would be able to do so

within seven days, one week. That was his commitment, Mr. Speaker. The average wait to see a specialist in the Saskatoon Health Region right now is 326 days, Mr. Speaker. That's 11 long, painful months from when people are referred by their family doctor to see a specialist for the first time.

So my question to the Premier: what has happened over the last four years? Why are people waiting 326 days instead of his promised seven days?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the time it takes to see a specialist in the province of Saskatchewan, I think a very important indicator in terms of health care for Saskatchewan people is perhaps that length of time but also the overall length of time to get care.

Specifically I would point to surgeries, Mr. Speaker. When we took over in 2007, the NDP left this province in a situation where we were the last in Canada. We had the longest wait times for surgery in the Dominion of Canada. Mr. Speaker, as a result of more specialists practising, as a result of private clinics in the public system, more nurses and more doctors, we've turned that dismal NDP record right around. We now have the shortest wait times in Canada for surgical procedures, Mr. Speaker.

And I would encourage all of us to check carefully the facts when the Leader of the Opposition wants to pronounce on statistics. On Tuesday, on the first day of the House, he stood up and said that emergency department wait times have doubled since 2010-11, and it wasn't correct, Mr. Speaker. Melfort was the only reporting hospital in 2010-2011, and the CIHI [Canadian Institute of Health Information] data he was referring to later compared Melfort, just Melfort, to include Regina and Saskatoon — much larger ER [emergency room] departments. He didn't mention that on his feet, Mr. Speaker. He's into apples and oranges, Mr. Speaker. He's into spin to try to make his case. He can have the spin. We'll take more nurses, more doctors, shorter wait times. We'll take our record; he can have his spin, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's awfully red for so early on a Thursday morning. If he thinks ER wait times are reasonable and acceptable in Saskatchewan, he is so out of touch with reality in what Saskatchewan patients are experiencing, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, he doesn't want to talk about the wait times for specialists because it is so far from his commitment of seven days, Mr. Speaker. The wait times in Saskatoon are absolutely horrible, but the recent figures for Regina here in our capital city are also very bad. The recent figures in Regina show an average wait to see a specialist of 294 days. Not seven days, Mr. Speaker, like the Premier's commitment — 294. That's 10 months filled with pain, uncertainty, and anxiety. Ten months in which a disease or an injury progresses, becoming increasingly challenging to treat and to fix, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: what is his explanation for these ridiculously long wait times to see a specialist?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we are working on this particular issue right across the health care system. The clearest evidence of our commitment to this particular issue are the facts in terms of the number of specialists that are now working in the province of Saskatchewan: 2007-08, there were 807 specialists working in Saskatchewan. Today 1,043 specialists of every designation working in the province of Saskatchewan.

But if the hon. member wants to compare health care records, we're happy to do that. Because I repeat, Mr. Speaker, when we took over from those members opposite in government, we took over a situation where Saskatchewan had the longest wait times for surgery in all of Canada. Here in the home of Tommy Douglas, in the home of the NDP-CCF [New Democratic Party-Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] who talk a lot about health care, we had the longest wait times for surgery in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We have hired more specialists. We have hired 3,000 more nurses of every designation. Five hundred more doctors practising. Private clinics delivering public surgeries in the province. And we've turned that around to the shortest wait times in Canada, the shortest wait times for surgery.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we recognize there's more work to be done, and the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. Our past behaviour over the last eight years is to hire more specialists, more health care workers, and provide more timely care. That's our record. Their record were shortages of nurses, shortages of doctors, the longest wait times for surgery, and we're going to be interested in placing those two records in a choice to the people of Saskatchewan in April of next year.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, you don't get your surgery unless you can see a specialist. And the Premier needs to explain why it is that he promises, he makes a commitment of seven days, and we're looking at waits of 290, 326, Mr. Speaker, completely out of whack with the commitment that the Premier made. He needs to explain why this huge discrepancy between what he committed and what the reality is for Saskatchewan patients.

Now there's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the one-week commitment was an ambitious one. And I don't think that Saskatchewan people would . . . Well I think they would be understanding, Mr. Speaker, if the government fell a bit short on that commitment if, if they were actually making progress. But that's not the reality, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that things have gotten worse. Progress is not being made. The Premier made a promise and then went in the completely opposite direction. My question to the Premier: how can he explain this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody knows that not all specialists visits result in a referral for a surgery. I think it's important to note that there is a wait for the specialist's time as well as a wait for, after being referred for surgery.

And here is the progress that we have made. The number of people waiting 18 months or more for surgery in this province is down 100 per cent. The number of people waiting more than a year is down 98 per cent. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in March of 2010 when this government started its surgical initiative, and we can go back even further to when the members opposite were the government because the number was even higher, but even under this government the number of cases, people waiting more than three months for surgery: 15,291. The number in July: 2,200, an 85 per cent reduction. So we've seen significant progress in removing that wait for surgery. And we are committed to seeing a reduction in the wait for specialist time, and that work does continue in the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we see the clock starting ticking for those surgeries once they see the specialist. And the problem here is, Mr. Speaker, is the huge wait for the specialist. And we note the Premier hands it off to the Health minister because he doesn't want to answer the question. He doesn't want to answer the question about why he promised seven days, Mr. Speaker, and we see a wait of 326 days in Saskatoon to see a specialist.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that last year, last year the average to see a specialist in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region jumped by 47 per cent. Last year the average was less than seven months; now it's 10. We can look in Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker. Last year it was a bit over 7 months; now it's 11. So we have the Premier almost four years ago committing to, that everyone who needs to see a specialist could do so within one week. But we know now they're waiting 10 months in Regina and 11 months in Saskatoon, which is way worse than last year.

So my question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, he needs to answer this: will the Premier at least acknowledge that waits for specialists are getting worse and that his commitment apparently meant nothing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I can indicate to the House and the people of Saskatchewan is this commitment, the government's commitment to ensure that we have the right providers in the province to provide the services. And all one has to do is look and compare the record of the members opposite to today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we have a growing province, which we never had under the NDP, over 100,000 new residents of the province of Saskatchewan, here's the difference. Back when the NDP were the government, anesthetists: 93, 125 today. Cardiologists: 24 under the NDP, 28 today. General surgery: 64 specialists, 87 under the Saskatchewan Party. Internal medicine: 146 under the NDP, 180 today. Neurosurgeons: 10 under the NDP, 14 under the Saskatchewan Party. Neurology: 14 under the NDP, 19 under the Saskatchewan Party. OB/GYNs [obstetrics and gynecology]: 47 under the NDP, 68 under the Saskatchewan Party. And I look forward to the next question because the list keeps going.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we see great agitation on the government benches this morning, but we see no answers. We see no explanation from the Premier about how he committed to a seven-day wait to see specialists, Mr. Speaker. And now, in Saskatoon, they're waiting 326 days, Mr. Speaker. We see a huge discrepancy, and we see no response by the Premier.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that it's not just in the last year that waits for specialists have become much worse. These waits have gotten worse since the Premier made that promise that anyone who needed to see a specialist could do so within one week. In 2013, the year after the Premier made that commitment, just 12 per cent of people had to wait longer than three months to see a specialist. So in 2013, 12 per cent were waiting longer than three months. Now the average, Mr. Speaker, the average wait is 10 or 11 months. That's absolutely atrocious.

[10:30]

This Premier, Mr. Speaker, has had years of record revenues. But instead of investing in better access to health care when people need it, they have plowed millions of dollars into the failed John Black lean experiment. Well, Mr. Speaker, John Black lean has clearly failed. It has failed despite the hundreds of millions that this Premier has dumped into it. My question for the Premier: what's his plan now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about better access to health care. Mr. Speaker, how do you explain the fact that over 16,000 people would have been waiting longer than three months for surgery under the NDP, probably actually was even higher than that at one time, Mr. Speaker? How do you explain, Mr. Speaker, the fact that headlines under the NDP were this. 1999: "Man decries government decision to refuse MRI scan in the province." 2001 headline: "Woman waits for MRI while dog gets scanned." 1998 headline: "Long wait for MRI test forces woman to Alberta." 2004 headline: "Saskatchewan's 22-month wait for an MRI is 'almost criminal' says radiologists' association."

Here's the list, and I'll continue on it. Orthopedics: under the NDP, 34; under the Saskatchewan Party, 46. Pediatricians: under the NDP, 67; 93 under the government, Saskatchewan Party. Psychiatry: 87 psychiatrists in the province under the NDP; 100 under this government. And, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, here's a 2015 headline: Little boy's coverage denied because of cutbacks. That's what we see from this government, Mr. Speaker. Simple question to the Premier, simple question to the Premier. He's here today. He can stand up and answer. What is his explanation, Mr. Speaker, as to why wait times for specialists are getting so much worse? What is his explanation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record and correct the record of the Leader of the Opposition, which I'm getting quite used to, and we're only a couple of days into the session, Mr. Speaker. The decision that was made with respect to yesterday's case was not done with respect to a cutback or a budget decision. That is absolutely not the case, 100 per cent.

But the list goes on. Radiologists: under the NDP, 78; under the Saskatchewan Party government, 134. Urologists: 14 under the NDP, 17 under the Saskatchewan Party. 807 specialists in the province under the NDP, 1,043 under this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's go back to the radiology number: 78 under the NDP, 131 under this government, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we saw headlines going back many years, Mr. Speaker, about "NDP gets heat over MRI ban," which in 2005 the then Health minister's own riding was going to propose that people that went out of province to pay for their own MRI were actually not going to be able to use that MRI scan in the province. That's how backwards they were, and that's why they're sitting on that side of the House.

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

Standards for Health Care Facilities

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region says there is "No process or oversight for quality of care in long-term care." Does the Health minister agree?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly we do have oversight when it comes to all areas of the health care system, Mr. Speaker. We have oversight as it relates to the regional health authorities and the boards that provide oversight to the management of each respective health region. We also have in place policies that we put in place at a provincial level that we expect that all of our organizations would follow, whether they be affiliates or whether they be region-run facilities or operations, Mr. Speaker.

So yes, there is oversight when it comes to the health system, but we're always looking for ways to improve that oversight, improve the accountability within the system. And we're working very hard with the system to address those issues.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the second largest health region in our province says there is no process or oversight for quality of care in seniors' care facilities, no process or oversight. For years now, we have heard horrendous stories about a quality of care in seniors' care facilities that is far from adequate. We have pushed for regulated minimum care standards and we have demanded that the government start to fulfill its oversight role, but the Premier and the Health minister have repeatedly shrugged this off.

Now we have the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region saying there is no process or oversight for quality of care in seniors' care facilities and the health region identifies this as a challenge, a gap, and a risk. Is this enough to finally get the attention of the Premier and the Health minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, one way that there was the ability to provide some oversight was the fact that the legislation, the regulations at one time did require the provincial government to inspect long-term care facilities. Mr. Speaker, that requirement was actually taken out by the members opposite when they were the government. So the role of the government, the provincial government to inspect special care homes was actually removed by the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we've obviously had the Ombudsman's report. We're working very closely with the Ombudsman and our regional health authorities to ensure that we are, that the standards that are in place today and have been in place for some time as set out in the program guidelines, that they are in fact operationalized and implemented.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House that working groups are reviewing, developing and recommending regional policies and procedures to ensure that those standards are operationalized. We are developing some training, an additional orientation for all of our regional health authorities and their staff when it comes to operationalizing the guidelines. As well, we're working to determine what is going to be the most effective way to track and publicly report the implementation, and that work does continue.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the same document from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region talks about immense financial pressures, short-staffing, and "Severe physical infrastructure needs in several long-term care facilities." Immense financial pressures, short-staffing, severe physical infrastructure needs and absolutely no process or oversight for quality of care . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . This is from Q1 [first quarter] of 2015 to those heckling on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Absolutely no process or oversight for quality of care. This, Mr. Speaker, is the state of seniors' care under that government. To the Health minister: what will it take for the Sask Party to set up regulated minimum quality of care standards and finally fulfill its oversight role?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to aging infrastructure, certainly that is something that this government does acknowledge, that we have over 250 health facilities in this province. Two-thirds of them were built before 1970 and little had been done, especially under the NDP, in terms of maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, I can give the example. And I know a couple of summers ago the Leader of the Opposition was touring facilities and tweeting pictures. And he was in Grenfell; Grenfell has a facility, a special care home, that is over 50 years old. And I can tell you in the last seven years this government, in terms of maintenance, we've put over a half a million dollars into maintenance into a 50-year-old building.

What the members opposite did in the seven years prior to this government, comparing our \$500,000 in maintenance on that 50-year-old building, they spent \$50,000 over seven years in maintenance including, in their last year, \$5,000 in maintaining a 50-year-old building, Mr. Speaker. That's why we've put over \$1 billion into health capital, and we will continue on that in the future.

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

Ms. Chartier: — The independent Ombudsman said the government's guidelines for seniors' care are "... generally non-specific and high-level, such that they are open to wide interpretation." She calls for a robust system of accountability and she says the government needs to fulfill this crucial oversight role.

It's critical that the government put in place specific standards, deliver the right resources to meet those standards, and fulfill the important oversight role. But the Sask Party government has not done that. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region says there is no process for or oversight for quality of care in seniors' care facilities. Why won't the Health minister just commit to fixing this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are following the recommendations that have been set out by the Ombudsman, Mr. Speaker. We are working closely with the Ombudsman and the RHAs [regional health authority] to do that, Mr. Speaker.

I will repeat one of my previous answers because I think if the member opposite would actually listen to the answer closely . . . The ministry and health regions are working to determine what is the most effective way to not only track but also publicly report the implementation and the compliance with the standards that are in place currently with the guidelines that is in keeping with the Ombudsman's recommendations. So I can tell the House and the public that we will be following the Ombudsman's recommendations, and we'll be publicly reporting on not only how we track compliance but also publicly report that compliance.

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

Essential Services Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 the Sask Party introduced the essential services Act and ignored warnings that the law was unconstitutional. Five years later the Court of Queen's Bench ruled that this law was indeed unconstitutional, and by that point this government had already wasted tons of time and money defending this poorly written

and unfair law. Yet they decided to use even more taxpayer money to fund an appeal.

To the minister: does the Sask Party now regret the time and money they spent defending this unconstitutional law?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, we had no legislation in place protecting and ensuring that essential services were made available for the citizens of this province.

The commitment that this government has made and the commitment that this government will keep is that we will ensure the safety and security of our citizens. We live in a province that's got inclement weather, difficult road times in January and February. We have emergency rooms that we want to keep open. We do not want those things to be held up or interrupted by a labour disruption. We want to have good alternate methods to resolve labour issues.

But, Mr. Speaker, our commitment is to the citizens of this province, and we will continue to fulfill that commitment. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something we'll make no apologies for.

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

Mr. Forbes: — You know, Mr. Speaker, this is the government that says it can't even fund little Kayden Kot's desperately needed treatment, which would cost just \$14,000. This is the government that says it can't afford one extra nickel for the thousands of new students in our province's schools. This is the government that hasn't found a way to fix ER wait times or specialist wait times or the senior care crisis. And yet this is the same government that has blown a massive amount of money defending a really bad law all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

To the minister: will he at least admit that the massive amount of money spent to defend the Sask Party's bad law was a total waste and should have been used to address the things that really matter to Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we received direction from the Supreme Court to make adjustments to our legislation. We are going to do that.

We consulted, Mr. Speaker, we consulted extensively with labour. We consulted extensively with the public sector. Mr. Speaker, we want to have something that satisfies the needs of labour, something that complies with the requirements of the court. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, and we'll make no apology for it whatsoever, we are going to protect the safety and security of this citizens of this province so that snow is removed, so that emergency rooms stay open, so that health care continues, Mr. Speaker.

Under the NDP, there was nothing. Under this government, there will always be protection, and it's something that no government ought to apologize for. It's something that no government ought to ever back down for, is the safety and

security of the citizens of their province.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 183 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 183, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved first reading of Bill No. 183, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[10:45]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's great, I'm very happy and pleased and proud to be bringing this motion forward on the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

For those that don't quite know what it is, the TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] agreement comprises 12 countries: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam. These represent a combined market of nearly 800 million people and a gross domestic product of 28.5 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important to the province of Saskatchewan. It's very important to Canada, but especially the province of Saskatchewan because we are such a resource-based economy here in Saskatchewan and some of these tariffs have really hurt us. You know, Saskatchewan exported more than \$25 billion in goods to the 11 other TPP countries in 2014. That represented about 71 per cent of the province's total international exports, valued at 35.3 million.

So consequently this is good news for Saskatchewan. And of course, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about how it's going to affect actually right up in my area, northeastern Saskatchewan, because northeastern Saskatchewan, as everybody knows or should know if they've been watching the news at all, that Tisdale for years, for years has had . . . Their motto has been The Land of Rape and Honey. Well consequently the rape word referred to rapeseed which was the forerunner of canola. So you know, the wording was a little bad, so the town of Tisdale is actually going to be taking that back off of there. And they're going to come up with a new slogan, Mr. Speaker. But the thing is, it still is basically a land of canola and honey. Northeastern Saskatchewan is well known for producers, huge producers of those products.

Now one of the things we've always been hamstrung on basically — and I'm going to talk about canola just a little bit — was on the export market. Now the export market for canola was always . . . Canola oil, excuse me. Not canola itself but canola oil. Canola oil always had a tariff on it going over into the Pacific Rim countries. So consequently it stifled our economy here because this is where we should be producing the canola oil, right where the canola is, rather than shipping the raw product, the canola itself, over to the Pacific Rim.

Now the way this is going to work . . . And I just did a little bit of figuring. I thought I would do some of the math because the opposition probably couldn't figure it out. But anyway in Japan they have tariffs of up to 13.2 yen per kilogram on canola oil, and that will be eliminated within five years of signing this agreement. So let's put this back into perspectives that us people here can understand. That's fifteen and a half cents for every pound of canola oil, which works out to \$1.47 per gallon.

Now on the average, a bushel of canola has 1.83 gallons in it of oil. So that basically adds the price onto what we can get for our canola produced right here in Saskatchewan an extra \$2.69. That's a lot of money for our farmers right here in Saskatchewan. And not only is that a lot of money for our farmers right here in Saskatchewan, but it's good for the farmers all across Western Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll just use an example. Let's say if you were a farmer and say you had \$10 canola per bushel and all of a sudden it went to 12.69. That's more money in our pocket. That's going to be more money in our community. That's going to mean more money to build schools, hospitals, roads — you name it.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is, as I said, Tisdale's old motto was The Land of Rape and Honey. On honey, which northeastern Saskatchewan is well known for, in Japan they have a tariff of 25.5 per cent on honey at the present time. Honey production, well even in my little community of Carrot River which is 1,200 people, we have three large honey producers. This is a big issue for them. This helps export the best honey . . . And it's well known. The best honey that is produced in the world is produced right in northeastern Saskatchewan. And I'm not bragging . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well yes, I am, but I'm also stating a fact.

Mr. Speaker, and when you take a look at all the different things that this would help out, this is tremendously good for

Saskatchewan. The other thing is dried peas. Now peas are a big money crop, a big cash crop in northeastern . . . well in all the province but especially northeastern Saskatchewan. In Japan, they have in-quota tariffs of 10 per cent, and they will be eliminated upon entry into force. So, Mr. Speaker, also they have an over-quota tariff, 357 yen per kilogram, which will be eliminated within 10 years. Vietnam is also going to be eliminating that. So, Mr. Speaker, this is very important for northeastern Saskatchewan and, like I said, all of Saskatchewan.

The other thing is that we have up in northeastern Saskatchewan is we have a logging industry. Now I know it was all shut down under the NDP, but now it's back up and running again. So consequently we want to see some of this product moved to help our hard-working logging industry up there, our lumber industry. In Japan, which has tariffs on lumber, that tariff of 6 per cent is going to be eliminated within 15 years. In Australia, it's 5 per cent. It's going to be eliminated on entry into force. And Brunei, 20 per cent. They have tariffs up to 20 per cent and they are going to be eliminated when this comes into force.

Oriented strand board, Japan had 6 per cent, which will be eliminated in 15 years. Malaysia had 20 per cent — and we have a strand board plant right in Hudson Bay — will be eliminated on entry into force. And Brunei, tariffs of 20 per cent will be eliminated on entry into force. So this is all good news: good news for Canada; good news for Saskatchewan. And I'm especially proud to say it's great news for northeastern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, now let's see what the NDP would do under this. Now the NDP are trying to talk out of both sides of their mouth here because what they're doing is the provincial NDP, the nimble nine over there are saying that, you know, while they actually . . . You know, they support trade. They want to have trade and everything else like that, but yet, but yet their federal cousins are sitting there saying, no way. They're going to tear up the deal if they were ever, if they were ever to form government here come Monday night.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't quite know how to take this. I happened to listen to the NDP leader's scrum on Tuesday and where he said, well yes, he supported trade and trade was good for Saskatchewan. Then he was asked how he voted. Well he said he was NDP, so consequently he's going to vote with his federal cousins. It doesn't make any difference whether his federal cousins want to rip up the trade agreement. But that's what he's going to do. So okay, which way is it? Which way do they really want? Do they want the trade? Don't they want the trade?

This is a federal issue and yet they, to my way of thinking, the way they're saying it, they're actually voting against trade. They're voting against trade. They do not, they do not want to see this province move forward. They do not want to see our agricultural manufacturing moving forward. They do not want to see our producers, our crop producers, our honey producers, our lumber producers, they don't want to see them moving forward because they are going to go with their federal cousins who would rip up the agreement.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker. It's a well-known fact they've

actually got three of their candidates, three of their candidates running in the provincial election who have put right on their social media that they are against this agreement. You know, it's hard to believe.

So how is it, how is it that the NDP can be so against a great agreement like this, other than they've got this ideology that they're just going to keep Saskatchewan just this little place? Of course, I guess in the years previous, they did that. You know, they had the small Saskatchewan and the great, I think it was a statement made by Lautermilch about, you know, well the more people that leave, there'll be more left for the rest of us. They really didn't care. They really didn't care, and they didn't care about shutting down all those hospitals. While we're sitting here building hospitals, well they shut down . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, 177. We keep on saying 176 but, on rechecking the records, 177 schools in the 16 years that they were in power.

We need these trade agreements so we can move Saskatchewan forward, so we can have the money to be able to move Saskatchewan forward. With that, we have the population.

They stand up every day and talk about, basically it seems to be a constant theme on the health situation. And yet they were the ones who shut down the hospitals. They were the ones that got rid of the nurses and physicians because, well they couldn't afford it. Why? Because they don't want to go into agreements.

Even back in the old days, you know, they were against NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]. They were against the European trade agreement. They were against every kind of agreement that we could have to actually try and move, not just Canada forward but the province of Saskatchewan in a big way because we are such an exporting province.

So I really am kind of curious as to what the NDP would do. They say, we want to see the province move. But yet, yet they are going to go along with their federal cousins and try and see Saskatchewan go backwards, try and see Canada go backwards as far as I'm concerned, and try and make this into a have-not province again like it used to be under the former government.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are supporting the TPP. And like I said before, I am very, very proud to be able to stand on my feet in this House today and protect the rights of our Saskatchewan producers, the rights of our Saskatchewan people, the rights of all of the people in Saskatchewan, and the rights of all of the people in Canada. To see this move forward is absolutely fantastic. Our machinery dealerships, or our machinery manufacturers need it, of which my good friend over from Melfort constituency has Bourgault Industries, which is a huge industry, a great economic driver for that constituency. Yet the NDP doesn't want to see this go forward.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'd better read my motion in, and my motion is:

That this Assembly supports the Trans-Pacific Partnership that was signed on October the 5th, 2015, as it will economically benefit the people of Saskatchewan.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Carrot River Valley has moved:

That this Assembly supports the Trans-Pacific Partnership that was signed on October the 5th, 2015, as it will economically benefit the people of Saskatchewan.

I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

[11:00]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into discussion here today as it relates to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. As I have noted in this Assembly, certainly this is a deal that holds out significant promise for Saskatchewan and potentially for Canada. There's also notable concerns that have been raised that need to be fully understood. And I think that's what Saskatchewan people expect of each and every one of us and certainly they expect that of their governments, to make sure that when you assess these complex agreements that you make sure that you're getting the net benefit you deserve for Saskatchewan people and certainly for Canadians.

Certainly we are a trading province and trade is important to this province. Our exports are incredibly important to the people of this province and to our economy, and those for whom we hold trade relationships are incredibly important. And it's important for a government to seek and work, to build and expand and diversify trading markets for the people and businesses of this province. This is something that's exceptionally important.

Now when it comes to an agreement like this, of course those at home are aware of course that the full text, the details of this agreement haven't been released. They know that we're in the middle of a . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yes, they have.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Oh, the Premier says that they have been released. They haven't been released, of course you know, unless they've been released to the Premier possibly and he may possibly . . . We know the Premier has a close relationship with Stephen Harper. And it's notable, it's notable, Mr. Speaker, that on a week where they showed back up to the Assembly and the legislature resumes, that the Premier forgot his Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. We're not sure where it is. He forgot his Throne Speech to respond to the priorities, challenges, and opportunities of Saskatchewan people. But the Premier is focused sort of in on maybe a bit of stumping for his buddy, Stephen Harper, Mr. Speaker.

Now as I've said, with the TPP what's initially been released seems as though there's some definite aspects that hold out promise for the people of this province, but there are some concerns. Certainly we're encouraged and would want to . . . Now the Premier's awfully worked up here, Mr. Speaker. But we're encouraged certainly and want to work towards ensuring that we expand good access to new markets for pulse crops, for our wheat, and for our barley, Mr. Speaker. This is certainly important for our agricultural producers here in Saskatchewan.

We certainly see that, you know, we're anticipating economic benefits from better access to Asian markets, as an example, for our beef and pork producers. Certainly these are important goals that we need to be working towards and markets that we need to be working to open up. And you know, it's important to recognize that we're a trading province and, you know, most of what we produce here is exported relatively with little processing. Hopefully that's something that can be improved upon. Maybe doesn't have the focus from the current government, Mr. Speaker, here. So improvements to trade is certainly welcome.

And what we also have to recognize as far as promises, that we have 12 countries that are certainly involved in 40 per cent of the world's GDP [gross domestic product]. So this is a large portion of gross domestic product, certainly providing an important access to markets for Saskatchewan.

But we do need to see the details of, you know, a deal like this to make sure that it's in the best interests of Saskatchewan people and of Canadians. Certainly there's been valid concerns that have been raised, Mr. Speaker, and details are important in these deals. And I think what gets, you know, funny around this place and which is strange with this government, Mr. Speaker, is they're always in such a reckless rush on some of these matters that they are all too often signing taxpayers on to deals for which they didn't understand the details. And details matter, Mr. Speaker.

It's sort of like those pesky little details a few years back when that government was signing taxpayers and ratepayers on to what they thought was some sort of great deal with an American manufacturer to put smart meters that were a major risk and fire hazard across the US [United States], Mr. Speaker. But there was no due diligence and no analysis of the details on that front, Mr. Speaker, before, you know, that government signed Saskatchewan people on to something that was certainly dangerous, something that put homes at risk, something that caused damage, and something that's wasted untold millions of dollars of hard-earned ratepayers' and taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker. An example of where details are important, Mr. Speaker.

And you know as well, of course, the noted concerns that were in place with those smart meters and with that American manufacturer and that fact that there were fires present in Philadelphia at the time. The fact that the minister and others had been briefed directly on those concerns, you would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that the government would have taken some due diligence to protect taxpayers and the public in this deal. But they didn't even do that in the contract, Mr. Speaker, being fully aware of the actual risks and challenges of these meters elsewhere, and of course put people at risk and have wasted millions and millions of dollars. So details matter, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's sort of like details matter as well when we're talking about things like the complex and costly P3s that are ballooning in cost of this government, Mr. Speaker. We see it with the bypass, Mr. Speaker, where the government isn't urgently working on the immediate safety concerns on Highway No. 1 East, Mr. Speaker. But what they are doing is signing taxpayers on without batting an eye, Mr. Speaker, on to a

massive overrun, Mr. Speaker. Now these things are complex and they're doing it with, you know, a Paris company who, Mr. Speaker . . . And you know, I don't know what the interest and sort of obsession of this government is to sort of work with these foreign corporations on any front, Mr. Speaker, instead of looking to Saskatchewan companies and workers, but just signing us on to a massive billion-dollar-plus overrun, Mr. Speaker, when it's on projects like this again, Mr. Speaker, that the details matter.

You know, the details again, Mr. Speaker, we've seen it on file after file where this government hasn't been diligent in the details, and then they've been had by other entities, Mr. Speaker. It's kind of like that John Black lean debacle, the American consultant who came in and left with bushels of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, and didn't make things better for the people of this province. Didn't really assess the details on that one.

I remember a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, where the government couldn't have been troubled enough to make sure they understood the royalty regime that they had in place or the economic conditions around them when they were looking at and projecting potash revenues. I remember the one year, Mr. Speaker, that they predicted I think it was \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker. I know the minister at that point actually shouted across and said, don't worry — to one of my concerns — saying, it'll be 3 billion, he said. Well, Mr. Speaker, we didn't get a single dollar that year. We ended up sending money back to those companies, so missed it by over \$2 billion. Missed it by 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

So when it comes to governing in the best interests of the public, details matter. When it comes to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, at this stage of the game certainly there's promise to aspects here for Saskatchewan producers, for aspects of metals and minerals and machinery, Mr. Speaker. We need to understand and make sure that there's not trade-offs that are unacceptable to Saskatchewan people. I know today *The Globe and Mail* is highlighting that a new detail that's emerged, that wasn't shared by government opposite, is that this may really open the door to temporary foreign workers, Mr. Speaker.

What we believe in over here is good immigration and good solid economic opportunities and job opportunities for Saskatchewan people and Canadians, Mr. Speaker. And these aspects, these aspects definitely do matter.

Certainly Saskatchewan New Democrats have always worked hard and been supportive of expanding and diversifying trade for the people of this province. It's important to this economy, but we need to make sure that Saskatchewan people and businesses and our economic interests are protected. And certainly it's important to have a full understanding of all the details.

It's sort of, you know, I know the government here, again, they forgot to come into the legislative session with a Throne Speech. They didn't have any vision and plan, but here they are in the first week stumping away for their pal, Stephen Harper. Mr. Speaker, you know, I guess I just don't have that same kind of blind faith in Stephen Harper. The same guy, Mr. Speaker, was out promising \$800 million a year for equalization just a

few years ago, only to entirely break that promise. And of course not a boo from the Premier opposite on that, Mr. Speaker.

So what we are for is expanding trade. What we're going to stand for is the best interests of Saskatchewan people. We definitely see promise in this deal, but we need to make sure we understand the concerns and consequences. The full details are important to make sure that Saskatchewan people's best interests are protected and that we get a net benefit.

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

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll wait for all the excitement to die down. I'm pleased to stand up in support of the motion today and to have the opportunity to say a few words on it.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is the most important trade agreement ever for the people of Saskatchewan. And I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the opportunity that this agreement brings to the people of our province.

But first I would like to point out that there is no status quo. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no status quo. Either we move ahead with this agreement, with this partnership, or we let the world pass us by. Let's talk about the opportunities that this brings to Saskatchewan. The Trans-Pacific Partnership will take off duties or other trade impediments from Saskatchewan's agricultural products — the rock star, as the Premier likes to call our agricultural industry — products such as canola and malt and dried peas and dried beans and wheat and barley. It will take off tariffs on beef and on pork. It's going to help our lumber and our wood industry. Just about everything that we produce will be helped by this agreement.

It takes away damaging tariffs on our agriculture equipment, which is very important not only across the province but to my constituency especially, which of course is home to companies like Bourgault Industries and Bourgault Tillage Tools, Free Form industries, Doepker Industries, Schulte Industries, FPS [Failure Prevention Services], M & K, and so many more.

But when you look around the province, what about companies like Brandt's and Degelman's and Flexi-Coil and Evraz that employs thousands and thousands of Saskatchewan people? They will all benefit from these opportunities.

The TPP opens canola oil opportunities in Japan that will increase manufacturing and employment in places like Yorkton, in Nipawin, and right across the province in Saskatchewan in places that there are no plants today.

It also increases opportunities for potash and for uranium and oil, and the list, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is almost as varied as our fine province. As the member from Carrot River Valley said that . . . I didn't know that Japan had tariffs on Canadian honey, on Saskatchewan honey of 25.5 per cent. That's a trade barrier. It will be gone and our honey industry will flourish.

An Hon. Member: — How sweet.

Mr. Phillips: — How sweet? This agreement opens market opportunity of 800 million people to Saskatchewan producers. It has a GDP of \$28.5 trillion. Canada will grow and Saskatchewan will be a leader in this growth. Right across the board, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this deal is huge for our province.

And who would be against this? I kind of sat here in amusement and I heard the Deputy Opposition Leader say, details matter. Did it matter to the federal leader of the NDP, Thomas Mulcair, when he was asked whether he would support this deal? And his quote to the Global news is that the NDP is opposed to it. Details matter. That's a pretty clear statement of what their federal cousins say to it.

And if the NDP were to form government on Monday, the federal NDP — I'm sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was just waiting for lightning to strike me down — but if they were, that would be the end of Canada's participation in TPP. All the opportunities, Canada's future, gone because they have no faith in Canadian people, no faith in our ability to compete with the world. Our dairy producers, egg producers, will be protected for up to 15 years to give up a market share of 3.25 per cent. They will do far better on this. I know they will. We have confidence in our people, in our industries.

[11:15]

And, Mr. Speaker, sometimes in today's environment and in today's society, we accept numbers like 1 billion. We only have 1 billion in the auto . . . [inaudible] . . . section to help them retool and to help them work towards competing in the world economy, \$1 billion. That is one thousand million dollars for the auto industry. That's a lot of money, but yet the NDP don't feel that our industry will be able to compete. It will be devastating to our auto industry, they say, because somehow in their mind, Canadians can't compete on the world stage.

And you know, I want to just pull out some figures that kind of show what Saskatchewan can do in the world stage. Today we have an uneven playing field. We have places that charges us 25.5 per cent for honey on the tariff. What has Saskatchewan done against this uneven playing field? In 2010 we exported to the 11 TPP nations. We exported \$16.4 billion to those. By 2014, in five short years, we had increased that to \$24.99 billion, a 51 per cent increase. Don't tell us that we can't compete on the world stage. We prove that each and every day, if only somebody would notice.

But across the House, and I realize that I have talked about the federal NDP, and across the House, we have the Saskatchewan NDP. They want details. The details have been given out, even the details to *The Globe and Mail* article were given out to them on Tuesday, and yet they haven't read them. So what good are the details if they don't read them? They want to study the legal documentation which will come out later. They want to study it. They probably want to hold an inquiry on it. It'll take two, three years, cost \$15 million, but we'll know that we don't have an answer.

And you know what really, really gets me, Mr. Speaker? What really gets me is that our provincial NDP, before they will sell pork, before they will sell beef, they want to check out the environmental laws in Vietnam to see if Vietnam is good

enough to meet the NDP's standards. Just how arrogant is that when a provincial party here wants to check out Japan for labour laws to make sure they can buy our canola oil? That burns me.

Mr. Speaker, there is no status quo. If this partnership is unsigned by Canada, our beef in Japan will be 35 per cent higher, 35.5 per cent higher than Australian beef and US beef, because they will have the tariffs lowered. Our canola oil, peas, agricultural equipment, petroleum products, minerals, lumber, and a host of other products will be punished by trade barriers that won't go away, that won't exist in the other 11 partners.

There is no status quo. That's why we either move forward with this partnership, with this opportunity, or we sit back, as that side as always done, and watch the world pass us by. Make no mistake. There is nothing new about this party across the aisle. They are the same old NDP, wanting to take Saskatchewan, our province, backwards. And for all these reasons and many more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion on the floor by the member from the Carrot River Valley. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak about this particular partnership agreement because I think that it is extremely important for Canada and for Saskatchewan because we are traders, we are people who sell products on a worldwide basis.

And I think, it's also important, after many years that we've been involved with the North American Free Trade Agreement, to understand that this agreement is effectively a replacement or an expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement. And there were many good things that came from that particular agreement, but there are also a number of problems that have arisen. And clearly one of the issues that comes up is that we're waiting for the details.

And it's quite surprising how dismissive the members of the government are in dealing with this particular matter. It's almost as if whatever Harper says goes, and especially comes from, you know, some of the ministers and from the Premier. But let's remember what the discussion is here.

Why over the last few weeks, we know that there's been incredible pressure on all of the countries who were signing up on this agreement because they were worried about the continued existence of the Harper government and that they wanted to get this deal done. And so in the last days or last weeks of the discussion, there were all kinds of threats around leaving the particular negotiations were there.

And basically New Zealand, which has had a wide-open dairy industry, didn't like the rules that Canada and the United States had about dairy products. Australia was not very happy with how the US and Mexico managed the trade in sugar. The US doesn't like the way that Japan manages trade in rice. And Canada had some of its own issues, especially around the automobile industry and around dairy and other things. But the key word to remember is that it's managing trade. It's not about

free trade.

And I think that's the point where the details are extremely important because what we have is, our job as members of this legislature is to protect our industries but also to protect our people and our consumers. And one area that's of a special concern to me, and I think should be a special concern to the Premier, is as it relates to pharmaceuticals and the rules around pharmaceuticals.

We know that the province is in tough financial shape. I know that the Premier needs to talk to the media about his issues on the wait-lists, and so we'll have that discussion later. But I think it's extremely important to recognize that the whole discussion is about managing trade and about balancing the work and the protection we have for consumers, for ordinary citizens, over and against the international corporate structures. And that's where the details matter.

Now we know, and we had a very interesting comment from one of the ministers yesterday when he passed over the Internet version of what we know about this whole partnership and said, oh you know, they'll probably want to know about the details. Well yes, we do want to know about the details. We know that on this whole smart meter thing the Minister of Economy and others that were involved in that didn't get the details. We know that on this bypass deal the Minister of Highways have basically signed into something which keeps escalating in price to the point where people around Regina are saying, what's going on? There's a total lack of, sort of, scrutiny on what's going on.

We know that in the health area, and also now spreading into other parts, that the John Black lean boondoggle has ended up causing all kinds of problems within the system itself, but it's also spent an incredible amount of money on something that's not helping what's going on. And when we hear that children that are in difficulty can't get some of the treatments they need because there's no money, and we see all the money, millions of dollars that have gone out on those kinds of expenses, we know there's something wrong. We know that over the last couple of years the government's run out of money, so they've tried to figure out ways to borrow money that disguises that they're borrowing money. And that's the P3s [public-private partnerships] all over the place.

Now one of the things that is a factor in the P3s is what kinds of clauses, what kinds of details are in these contracts as it relates to demand. And one of the difficulties in negotiating in a P3 contract in Saskatchewan is we often don't have sufficient numbers of people using a highway, using a facility, using a product that can allow for the traditional methods of funding these things. And so a good example and a warning to all Canadians is what happened in British Columbia when they built a P3 bridge between Langley and Port Coquitlam. The message right now seems to be that they had a demand clause, in other words, it was based on a certain number of predicted users of that bridge. And that demand clause means that the public is paying \$45 million a year because there aren't sufficient people using the bridge.

We don't know if that's the same kind of clause that the Minister of Corrections has in the food bills or food contracts

that they have in the correctional centres, that's based on certain numbers of average numbers, and if those numbers aren't met, they're going to have to put more money in. We know that there's some problems there.

Now it's a Thursday and I think quite a number of us were here on May 7th, 2009, a Thursday, when the Premier was very happy to welcome Governor Schweitzer from Montana to sign a memorandum of understanding to build a \$100 million pipeline to ship CO₂ from Saskatchewan down to Montana. And there was all kinds of hype. The Premier says, well we're putting in 50 million and we're going to ask the federal government for 100 million, all these kinds of things. Well we're still watching and we know on May 30th, 2011, just over two years later, the Premier confirmed that's dead. That pipeline is dead. There's nothing going to happen.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are a whole number of things that this Premier has announced that have just kind of disappeared. I often bring along my briefcase that says Enterprise Saskatchewan on it just to remind us all of the kinds of things that the Premier talked about as big, big projects that just go nowhere. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a difficult time. It's a difficult place when we end up here in this province having the ministers who are supposed to be checking the details, checking that the programs are done in an appropriate way, that they have basically said, we don't care about the details. The previous speaker to me from up in Melfort, you know, kind of laughed at that. The Premier laughed when the discussion of the details on smart meters were here. All of these things are very, very difficult for the people of Saskatchewan because what it means is that we are not getting the proper representation.

The most difficult thing for me this week was when the Premier ignored the question about the 2006 federal election when the Conservatives promised to deal with the equalization issue for Saskatchewan. And what was even more frustrating is we know, and the Premier confirmed in the spring of 2008, that the Prime Minister asked me to stop the lawsuit of the province of Saskatchewan against the federal government over equalization, and we did it. And so I think that what we need to recognize is details matter. It seems like the Premier and others don't care.

[11:30]

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

Mr. Tochor: — Well that was bizarre. We have the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, and the NDP would like to discuss traffic counts for a bridge in BC [British Columbia]. Mr. Speaker, isn't that a bizarre way to enter debate on one of the most, it could be, and is the most important trade deal for Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, it's somewhat arrogance we've seen from the other side, is that they know best.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to list off a few groups. And we've got the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Forest Products Association of Canada. What insight or what would they have to say about a deal like this? The Mining Association of Canada, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the North Saskatoon Business

Association, the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian agricultural food trade alliance, the Ag Producers Association of Canada, Cereals Canada, Canola Council of Canada, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Saskatchewan manufacturers council, Sask Pulse Growers, Grain Growers of Canada, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Beef Cattle Research Council, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, and the western wheat growers and SaskCanola. Mr. Speaker, that's a list of people that have read the details, that have seen the agreement as being a net benefit.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition talked about net benefit, Mr. Speaker. The net benefit for this province is this deal will mean lower tariffs. Tariffs, Mr. Speaker, are just another word for taxes. They're a foreign government taxing our products, Mr. Speaker, which is frustrating for our producers. It was in the past, Mr. Speaker, these taxes or tariffs accounted, for chilled beef in Japan, a 38.5 per cent premium for our producers they would have to pay to sell into the Japan market. Just consider that for a moment. The opposition would have us not enter into this agreement so that our producers would have to compete with people such as maybe the cattle in Australia.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association would be so supportive of this, is because if we went down the NDP path and opposed this trade deal that their federal masters have . . . The position that they've taken is that they will tear up this agreement. Well our producers, if that would ever happen . . . Scary as it is, we never know what the election results will be. If the NDP would win the next election and tear up this agreement, our cattle producers in this province will be at a disadvantage to other producers such as in Australia, Mr. Speaker.

Now the countries that have signed on — and we've heard the opposition wanting to question these countries, and question how they operate — well, Mr. Speaker, these countries, such as Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam, these are the people that we're going to be trading with. Actually, Mr. Speaker, we already trade with them; 71 per cent of our economy relies on these countries.

And you know what? The people that are buying our products, the NDP want to question. How does that help trade? Who would they want to trade with? Probably Greece, probably Venezuela, North Korea, Cuba maybe. And that is actually going to help? How is that going to help our economy when 71 per cent of our trade is with countries that the NDP would like to question? Mr. Speaker, I don't think that is the best way to run a province or a country, Mr. Speaker.

So this position that the NDP has taken is that this TPP, kind of, in the provincial realm, they're somewhat supportive but waiting for details, similar to their position on CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement], which I've never heard them clarify afterwards when they were asking for details. We have the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, never read the agreement that has been . . . the information passed over to him. We have their provincial candidates in the next provincial election being anti-TPP.

So I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition to phone

Ottawa and clarify with his federal master on his position, or better yet phone their candidates within Saskatchewan and share their insight because right now we don't know where they stand, Mr. Speaker. And this deal is so important for this province.

Let's just talk about the numbers briefly. So in 2014 we had around \$25 billion in goods to the other 11 TPP countries. That represents 71 per cent of total exports valued at \$35.3 billion. Mr. Speaker, this amount represents a lot of good-paying jobs. That's a lot of families that are fed off the income produced by these segments of the population or segments of the industry.

If you look at it, it affects every sector in our Saskatchewan economy. You look at beef. We look at pork. We look at wheat, barley, canola, malt, pulse crops, agriculture equipment, lumber, uranium mining. The list goes on. Every sector will benefit from this deal, and what do we hear from the opposition? We've got to see the details. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not how things work with international trade, Mr. Speaker.

There is another number I'd like to share with you that we talk about. These sectors, we talk about the different importance of this deal. Take a guess, Mr. Speaker, on how much, in 2014, guess how much canola oil we sold to Japan. We are a great producer of canola in this province, but guess how much canola oil we produced. Zero exports to Japan. That's pretty incredible, is that the market the size of Japan, and we sold zero canola oil to Japan in 2014. This opens up that market. What would the opposition say to those producers, those businesses that are reliant on canola, either the production of or the manufacturing of canola oil or all the spinoff activity of just that one crop, canola? And we know in 2014 that's such an important agricultural component, and we sold zero canola oil into Japan, which is quite incredible.

If we look at other parts of the economy such as . . . We all know that with commodities, prices go up, prices go down. But when we are possibly in the lower ebb of the price cycle, we don't put more barriers to trade. And I just can't wait until once we, you know . . . We'll make it through these different cycles. Once commodity prices return, could you imagine what our economy's going to be like with this deal in place?

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the different industries such as manufacturing, which has been so crucial for our Saskatchewan economy, as . . . We've had some challenges with oil. We can't control the price of oil, but we can control hopefully the climate of our economy so that we can diversify. Manufacturing is such an unsung hero really in our economy that has employed thousands of people. And that's another area that this TPP would affect. We're going to, with the agreement in place, we'll have restrictions or tariffs removed, so an example being Vietnam. You would have hopefully a purchaser of our equipment in Vietnam where if they looked at product from, say, Australia and compare it to Saskatchewan, that product would have a 5 per cent premium put on if it was built in this province. Mr. Speaker, it's the removal of such barriers that we would love to see on the world stage because the prosperity that we have in Saskatchewan is because we have a growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, government can do a lot of things to get in the way of trade and, Mr. Speaker, I think any time that we have an opportunity to get out of the way of job creators, to get out of the way of our producers and exporters, and get out of the way of a growing economy, the better off we are as a province, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion I just want to look back at the difference between the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party. We cherish growth because growth provides what this province supports. Mr. Speaker, as we wind down, I'd like to mention that I support the motion. Thank you.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Always good to take my place in this Assembly and join the debate, in this case on the motion put forward by the member from Carrot River Valley as regards the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. I have a great deal of affection for that individual as a person but when it comes to his political observations or prognostications, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm always sort of interested to see what the member from Carrot River Valley is weighing in on.

I, of course, remember when the member from Carrot River Valley talked about how a budget in this Assembly was not just the best in Saskatchewan's history or in Saskatchewan or in Canada, but in the world and in the universe. Of course, Mr. Speaker, that was the very budget where there was a shortfall of billions in terms of what had been projected off of resource revenue. And you know, it made a bit of, it really sort of hung that member's statement out there to dry.

Now I know that they get the different lines from, you know, the Premier's office and House business over there to, you know, roll on into the debate and get with the kumbaya singing. But in the case of what that member had to say about that budget, you know, it was a bit of a whopper. It was a bit of . . . [inaudible] . . . And again, it's unfortunate because as an individual he's a heck of a nice guy. But in terms of setting out the record around political prognostications, it really, you know . . . All we need to do to get the alarms going off is to see that member on his feet saying that something is good or super good or the best in the universe and then you know, you start to check your wallet, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So in terms of that member leading off in the debate, it's interesting to see him rolling in. But of course what he's counselling us as an Assembly to do is to buy, sight unseen, the line that is being trotted out by the federal Conservatives, by Stephen Harper, that the TPP is an unmitigated home run, grand slam for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess, you know, that's understandable because if you took a bit of a survey over there and asked them to, you know, a show of hands who's voting anything but Conservative, Mr. Speaker, I think that'd be a pretty small number on that side, if not in fact zero. Because of course the Premier has weighed in and said that Steve Harper and the federal Conservatives, that's

the best choice for the people of Saskatchewan. And you can bet that the caucus over there is taking notice, and they'll be voting accordingly.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something which is quite interesting because this is of course a party that once upon a time portrayed itself as a coalition of Liberals and Conservatives and Reformers, but you know, Mr. Speaker, it's . . . Possibly Green members, possibly former NDPers. But it's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think you'll be hard pressed to find someone that's not voting a straight Steve Harper line over there.

So in terms of, you know, what's . . . When Stephen Harper comes to the people of Saskatchewan and says, hey, we're going to do something that's really great for you, what does history show us we should be doing? Should we be checking our wallets, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Should we be swallowing it whole as apparently is the case over there on that side, Mr. Speaker? Or should we be a bit more circumspect?

Now one of the lines that the Premier likes to quote from time to time is, the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. And so in that regard, Mr. Speaker, you know, if the caucus over there is paying attention, if they are really into that kind of scrutiny of different records, then I'd ask them to look no further than promises that were made by the federal Conservatives as regards equalization fairness for the province of Saskatchewan, as regards the ability of the people of Saskatchewan to benefit in a better way from the natural resources that we've been so blessed with in this province. And I'd ask them to check the record where . . . That's the federal Conservatives of the day, many of whom are, you know, still in the government benches currently in Ottawa and that are again out asking our people for their support and indeed, Mr. Speaker, some individuals that are very closely tied with that government and indeed with that very promise, that occupy the government benches right now.

[11:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, what did the leading lights of the federal Conservative caucus here in Saskatchewan have to say about what their promise on equalization would mean for us? And I would also submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this was a promise that they had the decency to put down on paper. They provided the details for it. What happened to that promise that they estimated, that Tom Lukiwski who is running in Moose Jaw-Lake Centre, you know . . . what did that mean for the province of Saskatchewan?

Well according to Lukiwski back in 2006 . . . and again they know Lukiwski very well, former executive director of the Saskatchewan Party, former executive director of the Progressive Conservatives, so that's their pal. We get that. We get that they're close over there. What did that mean to the people of Saskatchewan? Well Lukiwski in 2006 said it would mean 800 million to \$2 billion for the people of Saskatchewan per year, per year. And they had the decency to put their promise in black and white. And what happened after that party formed government? Well they promptly broke their promise.

You know, political columnist Murray Mandryk was estimating

that, you know, the low number on that would have been \$4 billion to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of what that promise, if it had been kept by those individuals that took the trouble to write it down, Mr. Speaker, that it would have meant \$4 billion to date in terms of additional revenue for the people of Saskatchewan, you know, and what that would have meant for the things that we value here around health care, around education, around crumbling infrastructure, what that would have meant.

But they broke their promise on that, and they also broke it to the people of Newfoundland. And you know, it was interesting to see former premier of Newfoundland Danny Williams come out earlier in the campaign and say that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador had been poorly treated by the Stephen Harper government and that the good people of Newfoundland and Labrador should put paid to any political aspirations that that party might have in that province.

And you know, by comparison, what sort of action do you see? Because that's how it goes, Mr. Speaker, when you have a bunch of politicians like the pack led by Stephen Harper come to your province and say one thing and then break their promise and do something very different. You know, what should you do? Should you just say, you know, the whole adage of fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, you know, shame on me? You know, don't worry about that. Just keep accepting whatever they trot out there as the gospel again and again and again.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot made about the details. And earlier in the week we had the Minister of Trade for that government — again a person that I have high regard for personally but, you know, an individual who I've got a fair number of political disagreements with — say that, you know, printing off the Stephen Harper analysis of what the deal meant as opposed to the actual deal and the details of the deal, what he had to say to the House was, well I hope they don't want to have the details.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'd leave it off here. If it lives up to its billing, great. But if past is indeed prologue, we've seen Stephen Harper say some things that didn't quite add up to what was good for the province of Saskatchewan in the past. And again, you know, both my mom and dad come off the farm, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one of the things they used to caution us about that we took a while to understand was, you know, don't buy a pig in a poke. And you know, for those that don't know what that means, it means, you know, watch out because if you buy something sight unseen, don't know the details, then . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This partnership agreement will manage trade in pharmaceuticals through a variety of arcane rule changes that we need to see the details about, such as patent linkage, data exclusivity, and biologics. And the net effect of it is that pharmaceutical companies will effectively be allowed to extend, sometimes almost indefinitely, their monopolies on patent medicines, keep cheaper generics off the market, and block biosimilar competitors from introducing new medicines. All of these

things will cost individuals and people who run pharmaceutical buying programs more money.

To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: has the Government of Saskatchewan looked at how much more this is going to cost our health system, and do we have the money?

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the opposition for the question. We talk about if government has the money. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are in a province that is finally growing again, Mr. Speaker. The economy, we have some spots that are a little bit suffering from low prices in commodities, but guess what? With this partnership, it's going to help our trade with other countries. It is actually going to in return grow our economy.

And what we've seen time and time again is that when the economy grows, it's good for Saskatchewan. It's good for the people of Saskatchewan. And that's why we seek growth, is we can take those dollars and put it back into the important programs, such as health care that the member opposite just pointed out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, here is a list of a few of the organizations that have voiced their support for TPP. They include the Saskatchewan and Canadian Cattlemen's Association, western wheat growers, Sask Pulse Growers, the Saskatchewan Manufacturing Council, the Canola Council of Canada, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Forest Products Association of Canada, and SaskCanola, Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the list goes on.

To the member from Regina Lakeview: do the NDP think they know better than all the Saskatchewan and Canadian organizations that have come out in support of this historic agreement?

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a very strange question because those are exactly the kinds of groups that we talk to as well, and we look at how we support the international trade. And they too are all in their respective industries waiting for the details because they know that there are clauses that might affect pulse crops or might affect honey or might affect other things, but let's actually see what the details are. But what we all are supportive of is trade, and we want to make sure that that happens.

The previous member did not answer the question about how much money does the Premier and the Finance minister have in their coffers to deal with the increased pharmaceutical costs or do they even know or do they even care. That's important.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again we hear the Premier offering that we should read the agreement. Well aside from the Harper analysis that they sent over in a binder, I mean having thoughtfully printed off the website for us, Mr. Speaker, we of course have not seen the deal itself. And as the details come out, some of them, you know, in dribs and drabs, some are good, some not so good, Mr. Speaker.

But again what this has to do with is who's making the promise to the people of Saskatchewan? And Stephen Harper saying that something is good for the people of Saskatchewan, history would show that people should be checking their wallets. But such is the devotion of members opposite to the word of Stephen Harper.

So I guess my question is to the member from Saskatoon Eastview. If Stephen Harper told him to click his heels together three times and he could fly, would he?

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

Mr. Tochor: — This has been a bizarre debate for sure. We have them being opposed to the trade agreement because of traffic count in a bridge in BC. We have a fairy tale reference from the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, this is a trade deal that is good for almost every sector of the Saskatchewan economy and the NDP refuses to get behind it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP keep talking about how they are quick to stand up for the interests of Saskatchewan, yet their suggestions indicate otherwise. Current NDP candidates have joined the chorus of past anti-trade NDPers in voicing their opposition to the TPP. The members opposite are the same old NDP. The TPP is a trade deal that benefits Saskatchewan agriculture, forestry, the uranium sector, industry, resource development, and ultimately everyone in this province.

Mr. Speaker, can the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre clarify how his party supports the TPP when his candidates clearly do not?

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

Mr. McCall: — Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd urge that member . . . And it's interesting because of course back when Steve Harper and the Conservatives were making their promise to the people of Saskatchewan, it was the member from Prince Albert, then Brian Fitzpatrick, that was writing as Chair of the federal Conservative caucus to his caucus colleagues that "All members present believed that anything less than substantial compliance with our commitment will cause us no end of political difficulty."

Mr. Speaker, perhaps that member is familiar with Mr. Fitzpatrick and what happened in 2006, but I'd urge her to

check the record and see what happens when Stephen Harper makes a promise to the people of Saskatchewan and then does something entirely different, and then the Premier and the members over there say, you know, no problem, just keep coming.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we've noted that we see promise for Saskatchewan in Saskatchewan's interest in the TPP. We've noted that there is valid concerns and the important need to have proper oversight to ensure the details are in the interests of Saskatchewan people. We know this government's been reckless at times with details, costing taxpayers big dollars, when we look at the lack of details in a smart meter debacle that they signed taxpayers on to, a massive overrun with a Paris company, right now over a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. So details matter.

As it relates to the TPP, I'm interested in knowing what members opposite know about the details around opening up a broader utilization of TFWs [temporary foreign worker], foreign temporary workers, in Saskatchewan. Certainly we want to make sure that we have the interests of Saskatchewan people and Canadians supported as a primary focus, and of course good immigration. So to the member from Eastview, I'm interested in what he knows about that concern.

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, international trade agreements do not address temporary entry for low-skilled or general trade occupations, Mr. Speaker. This is the detail that is out there right now, Mr. Speaker, and if they would have read the binder of information that we sent over . . .

Mr. Speaker, they talk about details. In less than six months this province is going to be in the midst of another election, Mr. Speaker, the provincial election.

Mr. Speaker, I find it kind of bizarre that the opposition is worried about details when we have no details on their policy, their position, or a platform, Mr. Speaker. In less than six months, the people of Saskatchewan will take the opportunity to decide which way they would like the province to move forward, Mr. Speaker. I'm pretty confident they're not going to go with the no-detail NDP.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I found this debate very interesting over the past 75 minutes, and the member from Elphinstone specifically. He had a chance to talk about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is one of the most important trade deals in recent memory for Saskatchewan people, for Saskatchewan citizens, and all he does is make jokes about this side, make jokes on what we're going to stand for, what we don't stand for. And we have no idea where they stand on this.

Some of their candidates stand for it; some of them stand against it. Their spokesperson spoke in favour of it as soon as it came out. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the member from Elphinstone talked about 90 per cent of the time was receiving equalization payment. So when you want to have a conversation about economics, all they talk about is, we need to receive welfare from the federal government and not promote a growing economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think that's one of the biggest problems on that side of the House. So my question is, if this is not in your economic plan for the platform in April, what is your economic plan for the Saskatchewan population?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre. The 75-minute debate has expired.

[12:00]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 612 — *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act, 2015*

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into debate on this bill. And I was very pleased to present this in the spring, and we're glad to see that it's still alive for the fall session. And we sure hope that the government members will take some time and think about this and join in and really work to see this bill pass. It's one that really is an important bill.

And you know, I want to say right off the bat, this bill, *An Act to provide for the Respect for Diversity and the Rights of Students* known as the short title, *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act*. But this bill itself really is more than just us or parents or adults; it's about the kids in our schools.

And I think about two and a half years ago when Halla Scott came to the legislature. And what a brave young woman she was to come — it was April 16th, 2013 — and talk about her own experiences in her school when she wanted to establish a gay-straight alliance, also known as a GSA, and her own experience. And we raised those questions that day, and she sat in the gallery because she was so committed to ending homophobia and transphobia in her school that she really took a stand in a Catholic school to say, we got to do better. And it was affecting her and her friends in her school. And so these are kids that we're talking about, and this is really, really important things that we can do to make schools a safer space for our children and our youth.

Now I talk about Halla, but that was two and a half years ago. And I wish to say that I could say that's it all stopped and it's all been fixed and the government work has solved all of the problems. But the fact of the matter is, it hasn't. It hasn't. It's a bit of a band-aid solution. And we know when we look across Canada that other provinces have moved to make sure that if a

student requests a GSA, that they would get one. We see it in Ontario under a Liberal government. We see it in Manitoba under a New Democratic government, but we also saw it being implemented in Alberta under a Conservative government. So this idea is not a partisan idea. It's a common sense idea. There's no reason why we can't move ahead with it.

But you know when I was talking about Halla, and that was two and half years ago, I wish to say that that was not the case and that everything is fine now. But I was shocked when I was at an event, a private event in one of our cities in Saskatchewan, where a young person came up to me. And she was signing our petition because she really believes in the issue, and she was relating her experience when she asked about a GSA in her school. And in this city, she was told she would just have to snap out of it. This situation that she found herself in terms of her gender identity and expression was something that she would just snap out of.

And I couldn't believe my ears when I heard that, Mr. Speaker, because that is something that would've been said 40 or 50 years ago where a teacher would tell a student to snap out of it. Get straight. I can't believe that but that's happening in our schools and was happening in our schools last June, last June. So I hope that that person has found a way forward and has been able to talk to some more better educated teachers in that school and that she's in a safe place now. But I can't believe it. It sticks with me, that kind of language. And that's what we're really talking about, are young people. And we're talking about young people who demonstrated in Saskatoon just a few weeks ago and talked about their experiences and how their schools can be better, safer places.

Now we have a situation and we think . . . And I want to say that we're very glad to see the government supporting Camp fYrefly. It's a good initiative that's really important. But we need to make sure that this is legislated and that every school has a poster. And we'll talk about this because this is a big part of the bill, a student bill of rights. And so it's in every school that a student should feel safe to do that.

But I want to just . . . I say, you know, I reflected last night, preparation for this, about how Halla, and how she came, and what a brave young woman she was to be here in this legislature, her legislature, and talk about her experience. But it hasn't changed. It hasn't changed.

And we know there are more GSAs this year — and we're glad — because of the talk in the media. And that's a positive thing and we're glad to see that. But we worry about those schools in our province where that's not the case, where students are suffering. And they're thinking about . . . We know the facts are that students will have more suicidal thoughts. And we know that 64 per cent of LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] students feel unsafe at school. Eighty per cent feel that they've been bullied, and half of LGBTQ kids have suicidal thoughts. But we do know that GSAs in schools help kids feel better about themselves. In fact what's interesting is all kids in the school feel better about themselves and have a positive experience because it just reduces the bullying in the school, reduces homophobia, but other bullying situations. So we think this is important.

I want to just take a minute here just to reflect on the preamble of this bill because it's important when we talk about the bill. And you know, obviously . . . And the GSAs is one that we really talk a lot about because in many ways it's the most important part of the bill.

But I want to talk about the preamble, where we talk about where “. . . parents want the best quality of education for their children and Saskatchewan should aim to have the best schools in Canada.” That's our goal, and I think everybody in this room can agree to that.

And:

WHEREAS teachers, educational support workers, and school divisions strive to deliver the best quality of education to all students and need effective leadership and support from the provincial government; [and]

. . . students are entitled to welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments that embrace diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self; and

WHEREAS the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* set out the . . . rights of all Saskatchewan people.

So we set out what would happen. And we talk about what this bill really calls for. And the bill really calls for:

Every student . . . has the following rights:

The right to have any disability reasonably accommodated;

The right [for] . . . and safe school environment, free of bullying and intimidation;

The right to have any concerns about bullying and intimidation, including cyberbullying and other harmful actions dealt with by the school principal; [and]

The right to freedom of conscience, opinion and belief, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association; [and]

The right to establish and lead activities and groups that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, and acceptance of and respect for others, including activities and groups that promote:

gender equity;

anti-racism; [and]

respect for First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures and peoples; [and]

respect for people with disabilities; and

respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

And this would be communicated to all the students by the section no. 4 that:

School administrators shall ensure that the Student Bill of Rights is respected and promoted in each school and that the Student Bill of Rights is posted in standard Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) print [Arial 14 font] [located] in a location that is prominent and easily accessible by students.

And then there are regulations.

The key part here though is that they can establish and lead activities and groups that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, and in definitions that means:

student-led, teacher-supported events and organizations that do not infringe on time set aside for learning, including with the name “gay-straight alliance” or “gender sexuality alliance” or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

So that’s the heart of the bill. And I think in many ways it just makes common sense. It’s the thing that’s happening across Canada, and why this government refuses really to move on it is something that is worrisome.

Now we’ve asked for feedback from many different organizations across the province, and we’re glad that we’re getting some feedback. We’ve had oral feedback. People have told us that this is a really good idea; this is something that makes a lot of sense. We’ve got a couple of letters back, and of course we’re meeting with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association shortly to talk about their concerns. And we had a debate last spring that talks about the autonomy. We want to respect autonomy. We think there are ways of making sure that they feel that their autonomy is intact.

I do want to say we received a very interesting letter from the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation], and really it shows why we should really send this bill to second reading. Because in many ways they say the bill could be improved, but they want to see something like this. This is a good start, they say, and this is important for us to move forward on. So they say thank you again for the opportunity to meet and we had some good discussions and they wanted to provide some feedback. And they really gave some very good feedback, particularly around student rights and teacher rights and obligations and what that means, and how we need to make sure that it’s clear and that they have their protections as well. And I think this is important, you know, and I just want to quote from the letter:

For example, our members have indicated they are fearful of reprisals (either formally or informally) for volunteering to support groups and activities that support diversity in schools. Bill 612 as currently written provides no protection for teachers should they volunteer to support activities and groups that encourage diversity.

And I think that’s a fair point. That’s a fair point. We could improve this bill, and this is why it’s important to get it to committee so that that question is resolved. And we would have

an appropriate amendment so teachers do not feel that there will be reprisals for being involved with GSAs or encouraging GSAs or that type of thing. Hugely, hugely important. And I think this is the thing that we need to have, this kind of rational discussion, and we can have that in committee.

Now they also talked about Bill of Rights must be respected and promoted, and I quote:

Further to our comments regarding the responsibilities of school divisions being articulated in the bill, this section could be strengthened beyond the simply displaying a bill of rights within the school. Raising awareness regarding the rights of students, and more broadly children and youth, is only a first step. A legislated bill of rights should also inform and require school divisions to have policy and resourcing in place to support students, teachers, principals and officials in navigating and managing this important aspect of child and youth well-being.

So there you go. They think it’s a good idea but we can improve on it, and there are some really constructive criticisms, and I think that’s excellent. And they conclude by saying:

We applaud the attention being given to student rights and look forward to continuing conversations regarding the potential for a bill of rights that, along with *The Education Act, 1995* and other legislation in our province, builds a more inclusive and supportive environment for all in schools and beyond. To that end, we recommend further analysis and inclusion in the Bill of any consequential amendments that would be necessary in other provincial legislation.

Again, very, very worthwhile criticism. And I think that’s really important that we have that kind of conversation and we pass this legislation to the next step so we can address these kind of positive concerns.

But you know, we’ve had community involvement and different groups out there who are saying, this is the right thing, do the right thing, and how important that is. We’ve had OUTSaskatoon supporting the initiative; they think it’s the right thing. Breaking the Silence; UR Pride; PFLAG Canada, the parents’ group; and USSU Pride Centre and Moose Jaw Pride have all come aboard to say this is the right thing. Let’s do the right thing.

Now I want to talk just a minute about the government response. And that’s really something that is a bit concerning. We’ve had them talk about, last spring we had some issues around the policy statement. Now, we had the minister talk about a policy, but was actually a policy statement. And I don’t know what the bureaucratic definition is, but there is . . . people are starting to ask questions. Is it really a policy? Or is it a policy statement? And what does that mean in terms of the levels of regulation and legislation?

[12:15]

I know the Minister of Education once got on my case because I called the minimum wage legislation regulations and he thought, well, that’s a big difference. Now, here we have the

same difference. What is a policy? What's a policy statement? People are asking about that.

So we have some real concerns. Mr. Speaker, I want to just take a minute here and talk about, you know, last spring when we were really . . . this was really coming up in a big way, we had Rick Mercer in Saskatoon. And I remember his tweet: do the right thing. And that's the key thing. Here's a really simple, a really simple bill. It's straightforward. We should send it to committee. We should address some of the concerns that have been raised because many groups might say, hey, we need to add some more things. But we really need to move on this. We really need to move on this.

Now interestingly, and I know that many of us when we left the Chamber last May, that Thursday, we were really anxious to get on to other things in spring, but *The StarPhoenix* editorial board thought it was important to say their two cents around GSAs and the government response in the last week or two of the session.

And this is an interesting editorial because they're pretty straightforward about where they feel the government position is. Of course the headline on *The StarPhoenix*, May 19th, 2015, "Saskatchewan government weak on gay-straight alliances." And I quote:

The explanations offered by Education Minister Don Morgan for the provincial government preference for a policy stance instead of legislation to enshrine the right of students to establish gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in schools actually seem to make a better case for enacting a law.

Faced with an array of facts, including internal Ministry of Education reports that sexual minority and gender-variant children continue to experience discrimination, prejudice and abuse within Saskatchewan's schools, the minister and his colleagues insist that a policy that essentially leaves it up to school authorities to decide if GSAs can be formed is good enough.

It goes on to say:

This even though Mr. Morgan was on the radio this week admitting that he's heard of students who wanted to establish a GSA being afraid to ask, didn't know to whom they should make the request or even had their requests denied. The very fact that the minister is having trouble getting specifics about such incidents only underlines the reality of prevailing fears rather than discredits the notion that a problem exists.

With ministry reports that indicate a heart-wrenching 47 per cent of gay males, 73 per cent of lesbians and more than half of all homosexual, bisexual, queer and transgender students have contemplated suicide and studies that indicate GSAs provide gender-variant kids friendship and a refuge from the bullying and abuse that harms their well-being, it surely makes sense for Mr. Morgan to emulate Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta by legislating the right to form GSAs.

It goes on:

Responding to an Opposition question about whether the government is reluctant to offend certain groups by legislating the right for students to form GSAs, Mr. Morgan insisted, "This has nothing to do with social conservatives or a political spectrum. This has only to do with providing services that are necessary."

Yet the case he makes for sticking with the status quo that he acknowledges is failing a highly vulnerable segment of students is weak at best. It's abundantly clear that Mr. Morgan's threat to yank funds from schools that refuse to comply is a non-starter, given that the main victims will be the students.

And that's the case, Mr. Speaker. And it goes on, and I'll conclude:

Nothing about it removes the fears that make students reluctant to act, empowers them or sends a message that society, represented by the government, deems their right to a safe environment so important that it grants them a legal trump card that no adult in authority can ignore.

And I think that last part is really the case. These kids in our schools, who are feeling vulnerable and who only want a safe place, should have that card, should be able to ask an adult to say, I'd like to form a GSA. I'm feeling that we need that in our school. I'm feeling that there's bullying. I feel unsafe. And then the adult has to respond. The adult cannot pass it off to say, it's just not part of what we do.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that community groups are calling for this. Young people are calling for this. We see this by people like Halla two and a half years ago that came and really shone a light on something that is a weakness in our schools. And we know, and the stats are out there, in terms of the high rates of suicide. Our colleague from Riversdale in Saskatoon often raises the issue about mental health, and yet we see very little activity from this government around that. And yet the report that they commissioned even references how effective a GSA can be in making schools a safer place for all students. And the facts and the stats are there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we need to step forward and we need to do the right thing with this. And I'm glad for the opportunity to have some time today, but I think it's important that we review the facts that this is the right thing, and when a simple tweet, *DoTheRightThing*, can start such a movement. And we see the movement continue this fall.

We see by the rally that happened a couple of weekends ago in Saskatoon in the rain. I have to say it was an impressive group of young people who came together. In fact we had one group from North Battleford, a GSA from North Battleford. The Sakewew gay-straight alliance of a high school there in North Battleford came down for this because it's important to them. And it's important because it does save lives, and we know the stats are there. And even more important for Saskatchewan because . . . And we know that stats are that Saskatchewan experiences higher rates of suicide. This is something that we have a tool that will solve the problem. And so, Mr. Speaker, I

know with the suicide rates that we can talk and we can go at length on that and we can talk about the movement, I know.

I do want to make this one shout-out. This is a community group that's doing some things on Facebook. They've started a Facebook page. So the folks who are listening at home or in this House, they can just do a search on Facebook for DoTheRightThing Sask. Just check that out. And they're looking for people to like and share and join in the movement because this is the one, as I said, the community groups are really active this fall. They're aware that this is the last few weeks we have in this term before we go to election.

We would like to see this government move quickly. We know the Alberta government came in on March 10th last spring and just did it really quickly. And we have seen this government move quickly, I have to say. And we have recognized the good work that they did in the Human Rights Code last December — that was a real positive — and how quickly we can move. And so I would really encourage this government to do that.

And I want to shout out as well that if people are watching and they want to send a message to government, we know hundreds of people have signed the petition around the support for Bill 612. Community groups have got that up and going. And all you have to do is do a . . . I know if you go on Google and you do a search, DoTheRightThing, Bill 612, it'll take you to the website change.org, and you can sign the petition. I encourage people in this room to do that. They're going to be reaching out to members here over the next few weeks to encourage them to support Bill 612 and see if we can get this passed before we break for the election. I think this is one piece of legacy that we can all agree on would be the appropriate thing to do.

And so again whether you're talking about youth in Moose Jaw, youth in Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Melville, Melfort, out to North Battleford, this is a bill that can actually save lives and really work to really provide for safe spaces. And really, you know, I have been really touched by the strength of commitment for this, for young people who are working to make this happen because they see this as important. They see it as part . . . You know, when they're in high school — and I think, well Halla's not in high school anymore, obviously, but as a bit of a legacy — they want to see their school safer for that year and for future years, and if we can break this old-fashioned way that's out of date . . . And when I talk about the young person who was told to snap out of it — what a thing, to be told to be snapping out of it. Let's not snap out of it. Let's do the right thing and get GSAs happening in our schools, you know.

And I think that while the government has done some things, I was very disappointed last spring when we didn't have the free vote. This government's often talked about their commitment to democracy. We had an opportunity last spring to have a free vote on this bill, and the government decided to deny, deny that ability. And I think that was a real, real disappointment.

And I know, and we're waiting to hear, and I don't know if the government is planning to release this or what they're going to do, we understand the government undertook a survey this spring, or this summer. The minister took a survey about GSAs but the government has been silent about that, so we don't know if it actually happened or what the results were or what

the plan of the government is to release that survey. We're anxiously waiting to see what the outcome of that was. We thought by now, as we are now in the six weeks past summer, that he would have had it together and would be sharing the results. But we await to hear what the government survey was, what they found. So we have some real questions about that. We'll be looking forward to hearing that.

Now we know the minister talked about a letter that if people had, if children or youth had a difficult time finding a GSA, that all they had to do was call him. But I don't think that's appropriate. Really need to do is to make sure we have legislation that requires that if a student does go to any adult in this school, that they will be able to respond in a positive way and a GSA will happen. This is an important thing for kids and, as I said, this is an important thing that we can have to make sure our schools are safer.

And I just want to quote from Amanda Guthrie, one of the rally organizers. And she said, GSAs provide . . . and I quote:

Our MLAs need to know that GSAs make a difference. They even save lives. GSAs provide a safe place for young people during a vulnerable time in their lives and provide the space to talk and learn about diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility.

So we know that it's the right thing to do. Egale Canada found that 64 per cent of queer kids felt unsafe at school and 80 per cent reported being bullied. And, as I said, half contemplated suicide.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we know that this is the right thing to do and with that, for Halla and so many other youth, I am very pleased now to move second reading of Bill 612, *An Act to provide for the Respect for Diversity and the Rights of Students*, also known by its short title, *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act, 2015*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved second reading of Bill No. 612, *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act, 2015* be now read a second time. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join in debate, but briefly. I want to quickly say that this is a very important subject and I want to thank my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre, for his commitment and his work on advancing the cause of diversity, on advancing the cause of respect for diversity that's so important, and trying to get that guarantee on gay-straight alliances in our schools and the positive impact that they have on lives of young people right across this province.

We've reached a point in the calendar where, or in the agenda today where we're ready to move on to other things. So in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 612.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:31.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS	
INTRODUCTION OF PAGES	
The Speaker	7327
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
Wyant	7327
Chartier	7327
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Belanger	7327
Forbes	7327
Chartier	7327
McCall	7328
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	
Forbes	7328
Spiritwood Collaborative Emergency Centre	
Moe	7328
Regina Business Celebrates 50 Years	
McCall	7328
New Athletic Field for Kipling School	
Toth	7329
Three Artists Inducted into Arts Hall of Fame	
Jurgens	7329
Home Ownership in the North	
Wilson	7329
Reflections on the New Democratic Party	
Makowsky	7329
QUESTION PERIOD	
Wait Times for Specialists and Provision of Health Care	
Brotten	7330
Wall	7330
Duncan	7331
Standards for Health Care Facilities	
Chartier	7332
Duncan	7332
Essential Services Legislation	
Forbes	7333
Morgan	7334
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 183 — <i>The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015</i>	
Morgan	7334
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE	
Support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership	
Bradshaw	7334
Wotherspoon	7336, 7344
Phillips	7338
Nilson	7339, 7342
Tochor	7340, 7343
McCall	7341, 7343
Doke	7343
Jurgens	7343
Steinley	7344
PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 612 — <i>The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act, 2015</i>	
Forbes	7344
McCall	7348

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