



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

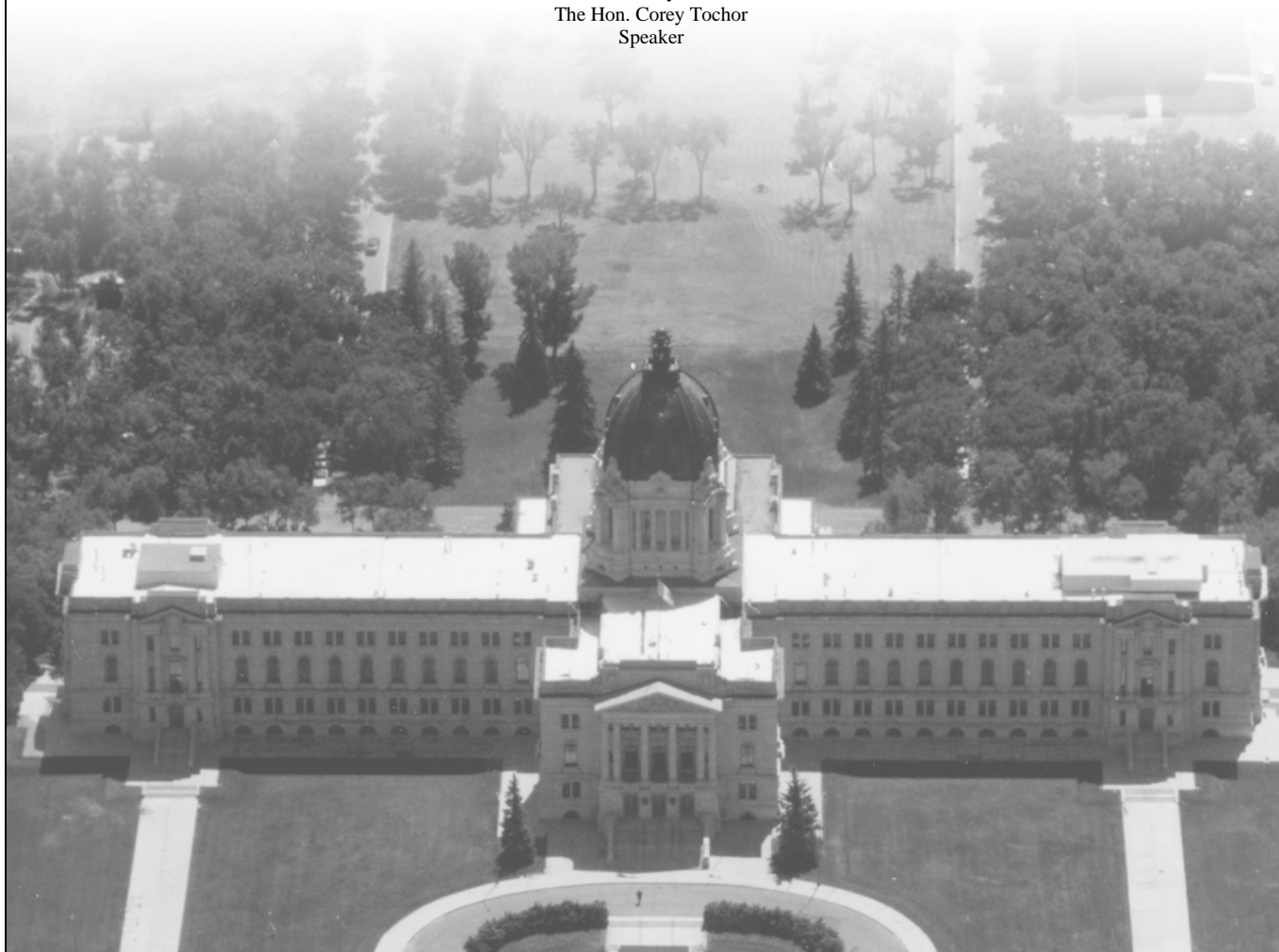
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
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The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 10; Independent (Ind.) — 1

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery is someone that doesn't need an introduction, but we'll do one anyhow. We have Mr. Bob Pringle, the Advocate for Children and Youth in Saskatchewan. Give us a wave here, Bob. I invite you to join me today as we honour Mr. Pringle and his years of service to youth and to the citizens of this province at a farewell tea being held in room 218 starting at 12:30 with a program starting at 1. Members, please join me in welcoming Mr. Pringle to his Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, an important advocate for Western Canada. Joining us today in your gallery is Martha Hall Findlay, the new president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Canada West Foundation. She has joined the foundation on September 1st and succeeded Dylan Jones as president and CEO.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Hall Findlay is in Regina today to meet with government officials and business leaders. She has a distinguished career as a lawyer, an entrepreneur, an academic, a consultant, and in public life as Member of Parliament for the riding of Willowdale in Toronto. She's been outspoken about the importance of free trade, foreign investment, and marketing freedom in agriculture. She has made timely and articulate interventions in support of pipelines and the need for Canada to get our resources to international markets, and she has been steadfast in her advocacy for building stronger relations with Aboriginal people in this country. Mr. Speaker, with that I would ask all members to welcome her into her new position and welcome her to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Official Opposition we too would like to welcome Ms. Findlay to our Legislative Assembly and congratulations on your new appointment. As you know, Saskatchewan is an exporting province and all the advocacy we get, we certainly appreciate. So thank you for that, and we look forward to your work in your new position. So welcome to this Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome the following Master of Nursing grads to their legislature today: Nicole Aschenbrenner, from Martensville, Saskatchewan; Kim Veronneau, from Gatineau, Quebec; and her mother, Lena Roger, also from Quebec. Accompanying the

graduates are Joyce Bruce, program head of CNPP [Collaborative Nurse Practitioner Program] at Saskatchewan Polytechnic; and Dr. Glenn Donnelly, associate dean at the University of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, we're so proud of our nurses and I'm excited to meet with these students over brunch tomorrow and to attend their convocation. This is a big day for all students at the university and I'm honoured that these Master of Nursing students are letting me take part. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these important individuals to their Legislative Assembly to say, je voudrais dire bienvenue à l'Assemblée législative et aussi félicitations en vérité, monsieur le Président.

[Translation: I would like to say welcome to the Legislative Assembly and also congratulate them in person, Mr. Speaker.]

I want to say congratulations to them at this exciting time in their nursing career, and may this be one milestone on a road with many more great moments to come for them as they serve, hopefully here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So again I'd like to join with the minister opposite and welcome these individuals to their Legislative Assembly and say congratulations.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Mr. Speaker, it is Foster Families Week here in Saskatchewan, and I know we'll hear more about that in a member's statement shortly. But I want to stand today and welcome a few very special guests in your gallery. We have Deb Davies, who's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association — if you could just give us a wave, Deb; Kevin Harris, he is the board Chair of the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association; and also Owen Manz, the director of the out-of-home care at the Ministry of Social Services.

Thank you all so much for the great work you do in providing a safe and caring home for our children to go to. And I would like all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave for extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want

to thank Mr. Bob Pringle for attending today and for all the work that he's done. And I see there's some staff from the Children's Advocate office there as well. And previous to being elected, I worked as a social worker as well and I had clients who used the children's advocacy office, and they always said that they were treated with much respect and they felt that their issues and needs were met. And so I would like to thank you. And also as a front-line practitioner, we found that the issues that Mr. Pringle would address were issues that we saw right on the front line, and we appreciate the hard work that you've done for all of our youth in our province and thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome the foster parent association for attending today. I had the pleasure of going to an event this week which addressed the foster parents week. And so I appreciate all the work that you do to support foster parents in Saskatchewan, and I look forward to working with you in the next few years. So thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce two people sitting in the west gallery that are very important to me, and they are two of my three sisters. And I'm trying to be very nice to them of course, as I'm the youngest of five and they're the oldest. I don't know if I was . . . Apparently that's not politically correct to say that but I got it in anyway.

Anyway my one sister, Ellen Clarke, she lives here in Regina and she faithfully watches us on TV on the legislative channel every day. And my oldest sister, Elaine, she flew in from Prince George, BC [British Columbia] because she is a political junkie and she just couldn't wait to attend a session in the House especially with her brother sitting down here. So anyway I'd like everyone in the House, all the members, to join me in welcoming them to the legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again in this House to present a petition to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. The petitioners point out, Mr. Speaker, that post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD can severely impact the lives of Saskatchewan workers and a delay in diagnosis and treatment for PTSD can be detrimental to recovery. They also point out that PTSD is not on the list of workers' compensation illnesses presumed to be work related in Saskatchewan, that as a result many workers suffering from work-related PTSD are burdened by lengthy investigations and approval processes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to make the necessary changes to ensure that if Saskatchewan workers are exposed to traumatic events on the job and are then diagnosed with PTSD, it is

presumed to be caused by the worker's employment and the worker will subsequently be covered under workers' compensation and receive the same benefits as others with work-related injuries.

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

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition for citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Carrot River, Meadow Lake, and Nipawin. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I am proud to stand in my place to present a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. And, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask that the Sask Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and to begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people pray for this to occur, Mr. Speaker.

And the people that have signed this petition and many other pages of petition are primarily from Prince Albert and Wakaw. And I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition from individuals concerned about wetlands and the function they serve within our ecosystem. The petitioners point out that as wetlands . . . In worst cases, as in some places on the prairies, as much as 90 per cent of our wetlands have disappeared. And as they continue to disappear, so too do the many benefits they provide. So the petition reads . . . I'll read the petition:

We, in the petition that reads as follows, respectfully request the Government of Saskatchewan to:

Increase funding to do proper inventory work, putting

Saskatchewan in a better position to manage the water resource.

Speed up the evaluation of high-risk watersheds where there's significant damage annually from flooding. This evaluation must include a recognition of drainage works that could be closed and restored that will alleviate some of the issues downstream with respect to flooding and nutrient loading.

[Also the last one is to] create a sound and transparent mitigation process that adequately addresses sustainable development.

The sequence should first focus on avoiding the environmental harm whenever possible before a secondary focus on minimizing the harm, with compensation being sought only when the development is deemed essential and the first two stages cannot be met.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition in support of Wakamow Valley Authority. And we know that as a result of the passage of *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* on June 30th this year, the Wakamow Valley Authority lost statutory funding of \$127,000 from the Saskatchewan government, in addition to \$30,000 in supplementary funding. And this lost of annual funding negatively affects the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands and repair its facilities and provide services to the community and throughout for people in this province. It's a well-known fact this would negatively impact the Moose Jaw economy through job loss and negatively impacts Moose Jaw tourism and businesses. And also on June 21st, 2016 the provincial government voted in favour of this bill, resulting in cuts to Wakamow.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately repeal *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* and reinstate statutory funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to

present to you a petition condemning the Sask Party's cuts to the SAID program [Saskatchewan assured income for disability program]. The Sask Party's latest cold-hearted cut will take money away from people who are unable to work due to disability.

Many people who are being hurt by the Sask Party cut live with serious illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, autism, and other illnesses. And that contrary to the Minister of Social Services' claims, the government underfunds clients in regards to shelter allowance, and that shelter allowance should be reflective of the current rental cost, not availability.

[10:15]

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to stop their plan to cut the SAID funding and immediately restore funding for those living with a disability; that shelter allowance is reflective of the current rental costs; and that the Saskatchewan Party government implement the recommendations of the advisory group on poverty reduction.

Mr. Speaker, the residents who signed this petition are from Saskatoon. And I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a stop to the Sask Party's sell-off of SaskTel. And the petitioners point out that this is against what was promised in the last campaign, Mr. Speaker, and indeed campaigns before that by the Sask Party. And certainly that there's a great return from the corporation and it provides invaluable service to the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that once SaskTel is gone, there's no getting it back. And then there's no telling what else the Sask Party will sell off, Mr. Speaker.

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to keep their promise, stop their plan to sell off SaskTel, and keep our valued Crown corporation in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan.

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

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to reverse the cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. The Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-2017 provincial budget, and the signatories to this petition would like to bring attention to the following. The Aboriginal court workers play an important role, helping

Aboriginal people in criminal and child apprehension cases. Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres, and Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our communities safer through reduced recidivism rates.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

The signatories to this are from the Regina area. And I do so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. A recent report shows that 94 per cent of NORTEP [northern teacher education program] grads found employment in the North. NORTEP has improved teacher retention rates in northern Saskatchewan. NORTEP has a positive economic impact in northern Saskatchewan. NORTEP provides a high-quality, face-to-face instruction and services to students. The province's financial deficit cannot be fixed by cutting indigenous education in northern Saskatchewan, and a program that has served northern Saskatchewan for over 40 years. And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore the five-year agreement to fund the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. and to continue funding NORTEP-NORPAC programs in La Ronge.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Exporter of the Year Award

Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege, along with some of my colleagues, to attend the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership conference and 20th anniversary celebration this week. Known as STEP, this arm's-length organization is unique in the way that it involves both private and public partners, actively facilitating international relations and trade to the benefit of our province. For the last 20 years, STEP has worked hard to see global markets open to Saskatchewan exports around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have a wealth of natural resources and some of the most innovative people and businesses in the world, and last night we saw that those businesses were showcased. We learned last night that the 2016 STEP Export of the Year was Crestline Coach Ltd. Crestline, established in 1975 in Saskatoon, has

grown to be one of North America's leading ambulance and specialty vehicle manufacturers. And I believe they export to 34 countries around the world now. They are a deserving recipient.

The finalists this year also included Carrier Forest Product out of Big River, Ceres Global Ag Corp. out of Northgate, O & T Farms Ltd. out of Regina, and Vendasta Tech Inc. out of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in the House to join me in congratulating the winners and finalists of the 2016 STEP Exporter of the Year and acknowledge the hard work that STEP does every day to grow Saskatchewan's economy — a true Saskatchewan success story. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2016 Queen City Marathon

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Queen City Marathon, or QCM for short, was held on September 11th of this year. The QCM is a massive community undertaking with hundreds of volunteers and thousands of participants. Queen City Marathon is a qualifying race for the Boston Marathon. The majority of participants do not run the full 42.2 kilometres though, Mr. Speaker.

The QCM features sponsored half-marathons, 10-kilometre and 5-kilometre races along with corresponding relays and walks. This year I, along with the Leader of the Opposition, ran the half-marathon. Now I won't tell you his time, Mr. Speaker, because he's begged me not to, but I will say that he barely beat me by a few minutes. Neither of us can imagine, however, running the full 42 kilometres, never mind coming out on top.

However Regina Douglas Park has connections to a couple of the marathon winners. Kaytlyn Criddle, former candidate for the New Democrats in Regina Wascana Plains and former resident of Regina Douglas Park, won the women's marathon in a time of three hours and 18 minutes.

The winner of the QCM men's marathon was none other than Douglas Park resident Iain Fyfe. Iain, a volunteer on my election campaign and a whiz with numbers, completed the race in just over two hours and 35 minutes.

I'd ask members to join me in congratulating Iain and Kaytlyn, as well as congratulating the Queen City Marathon on yet another successful event.

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

Remembering Terry Hincks

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate the life of a long-time Regina city councillor, Terry Hincks.

Terry was a councillor for Ward 9 for 13 years, from 2003 until his passing last Friday after a five-year battle with cancer. He will be greatly missed by all citizens of Regina, but none more

so than his son, Andrew, and his grandchildren, Payton and Aairc and Philip.

He will be remembered not only for his tireless dedication to serving the people of Regina on city council, but also for his many achievements in the Saskatchewan sports scene, whether it was as a player for the Regina Rams or the countless teams and kids he influenced as a coach. Mayor Fougere, who worked with Terry the most, remarked Terry "... had a passion and commitment to our city that really is second to none ... His heart was as big as Regina."

The people of Regina will say goodbye to Terry in a memorial service this afternoon at the Brandt Centre. I ask all members to join me in celebrating the life and accomplishments of a man who served his community, his city, and his province so well. Rest in peace, Honker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Foster Parent Appreciation Week

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is Foster Parent Appreciation Week. On Monday I was pleased to attend the annual foster parent appreciation banquet for the northeast region in Prince Albert.

As a social worker I have seen first-hand the trials and tribulations as well as the joy and fulfillment which foster parents experience as they welcome vulnerable and at-risk children into their homes. The work they do and love they give the children in their care is admirable. The love, guidance, and mentorship given to the children by their foster parents see them through difficult times in their lives, and every foster parent needs to be acknowledged for this. They give unselfishly of themselves day after day, and the children in their care benefit greatly.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that this banquet was held to acknowledge the work, dedication, and love of foster parents in the northeast region. They are all so deserving of this recognition. Congratulations also to the workers at the Ministry of Social Services in Prince Albert, Melfort, and Nipawin for organizing this banquet.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in acknowledging the great contributions made by our foster parents and families, and thanking them for their dedication to our most vulnerable children.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Gardiner Park.

Saskatchewan Businessman Wins Entrepreneurial Award

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to congratulate someone who exemplifies the prairie spirit in their business and community endeavours, who has been awarded with Ernst & Young's entrepreneurial award for the prairie region. The winner was Murad Al-Katib and, as many know, he grew up in Davidson where he learned the

values of hard work and how business can be a force for good in his community.

Mr. Speaker, the entrepreneur award recognizes exceptional business leaders. The judges look for financial performance, vision, leadership, personal integrity, and entrepreneurial spirit. Murad's business, Alliance Grain Traders, based out of Regina, started 15 years ago when he purchased a seed processing plant just outside of the city. There were three employees at that time. AGT has now grown to an annual revenue of \$1.7 billion, adding at the rate of about 300 million per year the last few years. There's 2,000 employees that work in 41 plants on five continents.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of the most innovative business leaders in the world right here in Saskatchewan. It's my pleasure to invite this Assembly to join me in congratulating Murad Al-Katib and the other Saskatchewan finalists in a job well done. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

National Foster Family Week

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to join with the minister in welcoming guests and remind all members that this is Foster Family Week in Saskatchewan. Our government is proud to work closely with Saskatchewan Foster Families Association to recruit new foster families and to improve services and supports for the more than 500 foster families we currently have across the province.

Mr. Speaker, as a former foster parent, we open our hearts, our homes to children and teens with often complex needs. In doing so we provide them so much more than food and shelter. We provide them a home and a loving, secure, family environment. We also provide hope, hope for a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, being a foster parent isn't a job. It's a calling to care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Caring for children whose lives have been disrupted oftentimes by abuse, neglect, or abandonment is not easy. Yet foster families take these children into their homes, make them part of their families, and provide them with unconditional love.

Mr. Speaker, it takes very special people with very big hearts to do what they do. I want all foster families to know how much their efforts are appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

New Democratic Party Convention

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP [New Democratic Party] convention is this weekend. It's their first chance to regroup and try and develop some new policies to show they're not completely out of touch with Saskatchewan people. So let's see what they came up with.

There's a resolution to boycott and sanction Israel. That's a real top of the mind issue for Saskatchewan voters, cutting off trade to Israel, one of our growing export markets for chickpeas and

lentils. There's another one from Nutana to shut down all coal-fired power plants, which of course kills hundreds of jobs, good-paying unionized jobs, in southeast Saskatchewan. There's a resolution to decriminalize all illicit drugs. You heard that right, not just marijuana, all illicit drugs — heroine, cocaine, meth.

And then there's this: be it resolved that Saskatchewan NDP will adopt the Leap Manifesto on a provincial level. The NDP is going to consider a resolution that would completely shut down the energy industry and put tens of thousands of people out of work.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the NDP is going to consider a resolution to change the name of the party to the Saskatchewan Democratic Party. They say this is to distance themselves from the federal party. Now only if they could distance themselves from the provincial party, they might be on to something.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Role of Global Transportation Hub in Land Acquisitions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Let's try this again, Mr. Speaker. Why was the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] used by the Sask Party to acquire lands instead of Highways, as is normal practice, as they were planning to do, and as would have saved millions of dollars?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this answer has been provided before. The process that the department, the Ministry of Highways, has used for a long time in terms of acquiring land requires the long-term usage plan for the purchase before it's made. And that particular timeline wouldn't have worked in the case of assembling land for what is now the Global Transportation Hub. That was the reason.

[10:30]

Now the government's looking at that practice. That is a long-standing practice that was also undertaken by members opposite when they were in government. Highways would be precluded from actually acquiring land until all of the long-term questions are resolved. And of course in a market where you have rapidly escalating prices, that might not be the best policy. And that's one of the things that's being looked at, along with a number of other recommendations the auditor made in her report on the GTH — the same report, by the way, that indicated that there was no conflict of interest, there was no fraud or wrongdoing by the board of directors, including the minister of the day.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, another non-answer from the Premier. And the fact of the matter, if the Premier would look at it as revealed through investigation, is that Highways was actively working towards acquiring those lands and would

have saved millions of dollars. Why did that Premier, that cabinet instead use the GTH instead of Highways and saving taxpayers millions of dollars?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I just answered that question.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, this is ridiculous. We have a scandal that's ever growing and a Premier that won't provide answers to the people of Saskatchewan.

We'll try another one here. How does that Premier think that he can use SaskPower as his sort of personal piggy bank for his government, and thus the bills of Saskatchewan people, to bankroll this scandalous deal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, here's what's ridiculous. What's ridiculous, I would say, is members on that side of the House calling on the Provincial Auditor to look at the GTH land acquisition deal. And then the Provincial Auditor completes the report per the request by members on that side and by a directive by the cabinet, wherein we enabled the auditor, asked the auditor to do her work. We also indicated to the auditor that every single cabinet document she needed, and notwithstanding cabinet confidentiality, would be available to her for the report. And here is a quote from the press release that accompanied the release of her report, June 30th: "The audit did not find [any] evidence of conflicts of interest, or indications of fraud or wrongdoing by the GTH management or Board of Directors."

She went on to say to the media on the 4th of July of this year:

We were also looking for red flags. And because this is a land transaction, we did look for conflicts of interest. We didn't find evidence of conflict of interest or indications of fraud or wrongdoing in the course of our work so there were no red flags there.

It's not the answer that members opposite want, but it's the truth. It's on the public record. These are the words of the Provincial Auditor.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Another question, no answer. We know the Premier likes to hear the sound of his own voice but Saskatchewan people would like to hear some answers on this scandalous deal that wasted millions of their hard-earned dollars.

Question again to the Premier: why does he and his cabinet think they can use SaskPower as their personal piggy bank, thus passing along rate hikes to Saskatchewan people to bankroll this scandalous deal?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr.

Speaker. Answers are being provided. I'm not sure if the Leader of the Opposition didn't listen to the Premier's answer. He gave a very direct answer to the Leader of the Opposition.

The fact remains: the cabinet asked the Provincial Auditor to conduct a special audit, given full authority to conduct that audit, access to any of the individuals, access to any of the documents including cabinet documents, to which she asked or requested to conduct that audit. She conducted that audit, and the fact is that she said there was no evidence of any wrongdoing. There was no evidence of conflict of interest or fraud. She said there were no red flags in the conduct of that investigation that would require any sort of further investigation.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And members clap. Another question to the Premier not answered. Another minister answering and talking about an auditor's report that was clearly process-oriented, and that minister knows it.

The question to the Premier: why did he think it was appropriate to use SaskPower as the personal piggy bank of that government to bankroll this scandalous deal?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The auditor had full authority to look into every element of the transaction that she wished to look into, and she made a very thorough audit with access to all of the individuals, with access to all of the documents that she requested, that she needed in order to conduct as thorough an audit as she did and which she felt necessary in this . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the conduct of that audit and that report, the auditor made a number of recommendations — two for the GTH, eight for the Ministry of Highways. The government's accepted those recommendations. We're moving forward with implementing those recommendations. As late as a couple of days ago, the board of the Global Transportation Hub was working on how best to implement the recommendations that were made. We're going to continue to move forward. That's our focus. That's my focus in making the GTH a success.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Another question to the Premier not answered. So I guess as far as this fishy deal with SaskPower, using it as a personal piggy bank, if these lands . . . They're not even being planned to be used now. So I guess the Premier, if he wants to answer this question, can he explain to Saskatchewan people about what the plans for those lands are, which we now understand there's no plans for those lands at all. Can he explain why that deal happened — \$25 million just within weeks to be able to bankroll this scandalous deal? What's the plans with those lands?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, plans have been going on at SaskPower since 2009. And I'm sure that you don't appreciate the answer to this, and the opposition certainly doesn't, but SaskPower operates out of 27 locations, 27 facilities in the city of Regina. And it only makes sense, Mr. Speaker, to move forward from an efficiency perspective to consolidate some of those. And that's precisely the reason why these lands were purchased, Mr. Speaker.

Those plans continue to be . . . to unfold at some point in time, Mr. Speaker. Some of these facilities are reaching the end of their useful life, Mr. Speaker, and there'll be an opportunity to construct a multi-purpose facility out there to consolidate those operations, Mr. Speaker. The lands at the GTH provide the best opportunity for SaskPower to consolidate those operations, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue working on those plans.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The lands are sitting there not being used. The dollars bankrolled this scandalous deal. Will the Premier finally admit? You know, he's made claims that the GTH was directing the traffic on this deal. We recognize now through investigation that that's not the case, that that claim was completely wrong, that it was his cabinet and the scandal-plagued minister that were directing the traffic. Will he clarify that here today?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how many times we have to answer the same question over and over from the opposition. We have been looking at trying to consolidate operations at SaskPower. A number of these facilities, as I have already mentioned, are reaching the end of their useful life in Regina. There's lots of efficiency problems with that, Mr. Speaker. And SaskPower believes that by coordinating, by integrating a lot of these facilities into one place, we can provide a much more efficient corporate operation and capacity to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We've started working on these plans since 2009 and we're going to continue to work on the plans so that we can provide better and efficient operation of the corporation.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Questions to the Premier, nothing answered here today. I thought we'd get some straightforward answers to some pretty simple but important questions. But I guess we shouldn't be surprised, Mr. Speaker, because we've seen pretty much that this Sask Party will say anything to get elected. And then what they do after is really something else, like hiding the truth in this land scandal with the GTH lands, or hiding the true state of the finances and the size of the deficit in advance of the election and beyond.

And we should be able to trust, we should be able to trust what that Premier is saying about the finances. But again in just June of last year and just a few months ago, this Premier was making

claims about the size of the deficit that were proven wrong to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars just weeks later. Now we see them scrapping a report, something I've written to the Premier to call on him and to demand a financial report. This is a new low for the Sask Party. Saskatchewan people deserve the truth. They deserve to know the true state of our finances.

Saskatchewan workers are losing their jobs. This Premier is slashing supports for the most vulnerable in our province and so much more. So why is the Sask Party obfuscating, not providing the true state of our finances? Why won't that Premier come clean with Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had a bit of an unusual year this year obviously with the federal election last fall, and then that bumped our provincial election up until April . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well is the Leader of the Opposition interested in an answer, Mr. Speaker, or interested in heckling from his seat? Because we have an answer for this, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is we had an April election which pushed the budget back to June 1st. That was almost the entire first quarter of the fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. We had a full month in this legislature to debate that budget, to ask questions in estimates of that budget of all the different ministers. And on June 30th, the last day of the first quarter, we passed *The Appropriation Act* in this legislature. That was the end of the first quarter, Mr. Speaker. So all of the forecasts that were built into that budget were passed in this legislature on June 30th.

We will be bringing out a Q2 [second quarter], a mid-year report, by the end of November as is legislatively required, Mr. Speaker, and reporting all of the information to the people of Saskatchewan in due time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Release of Pipeline Inspection Reports

Ms. Sproule: — Hope springs eternal, Mr. Speaker. So let's try another topic and see if we can get an actual answer. When it comes to pipeline safety, the Sask Party has been as transparent as the thick, black oil that flowed into the North Saskatchewan River this summer. When we asked to see the inspection records from Husky's pipeline, the Sask Party refused. They blocked every inspection record going back to 2011 because they said it could affect their investigation. Mr. Speaker, they blocked the release of inspection records from years ago and from hundreds of kilometres away from that particular leak.

Now, we know that pipelines are the safest way to move oil and gas and we of course need to get our products to market. But the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know how this government is protecting the water they drink and the land that they live on. Will the Minister for the Economy do the right thing and table these reports in the Assembly today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and

Resources.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the member will know, we are working closely with Husky. We are also working with the National Energy Board. We're working as well with the Water Security Agency on this investigation.

The investigation is still ongoing. We are looking at not only the operation of this pipeline, but as well what we wanted to ensure was that people could be assured that their drinking water supplies in this province are safe. And that's why we are conducting additional inspections, visual inspections, as well as looking at the compliance of operators of pipelines that run under the water beds of any potable drinking water source in this province, Mr. Speaker. That work is ongoing, Mr. Speaker. We are working hard on that investigation and we will be making all of those reports public when the investigations are complete.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, if this Premier is looking for someone in this Assembly who supports the federal government's plan to force their carbon price in Saskatchewan, he should look beside him to the Minister of Justice who is a card-carrying supporter of the Prime Minister's party. So when the Premier stomps his feet and angrily threatens to sue the federal Liberals, has he thought this through? His hand-picked Attorney General will have to fight his own federal party leader in the courts.

But back to pipelines, Mr. Speaker. We also asked for the inspection records of five other pipeline companies, and the Sask Party is delaying that request for another 30 days. Mr. Speaker, the world is watching, and if the Sask Party makes Saskatchewan look less than responsible, it will hurt our ability to get these important projects built and sell our resources. While this government just digs in and fights, the Government of Alberta is showing leadership. They are constructively working with other jurisdictions and working to get pipelines built. When will the Sask Party release these inspection records and finally work to restore people's faith in the pipeline inspection system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear that my office is not involved in the work that is done to put together and respond to an FOI [freedom of information] request. Mr. Speaker, that is done by the ministry as it is done by all ministries.

With respect to the request for Husky information, we are looking at and wanting to ensure that they are in compliance with the regulations and with the directives that are set out — not only for this pipeline, but we want to look at it as a company, their manner in which they've operated in the past. When it is appropriate, after the investigation is complete, that information will be released along with all of the reports related to the investigation.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Status of SaskTel

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, mere months ago during the election campaign, the Premier stood, hand over heart, and swore that he would not sell SaskTel. Then after the election, the Premier softens the ground so he can break his promise to the people of Saskatchewan. He's already asked for and received a corporate assessment of SaskTel and even appointed a minister in this latest cabinet shuffle with special orders to be responsible for the sale.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, the Premier asked the Sask Party-appointed board of directors to report back on the Goldberg assessment of SaskTel. So when can the people of Saskatchewan expect to hear more about that response and more about the Sask Party's latest plans for SaskTel?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister in charge of SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the more things change, the more they stay the same. I'm pleased to be on my feet to provide a response on this one. Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear that we are not actively seeking offers for SaskTel, nor has an offer been made with respect to SaskTel. We certainly did not campaign on the sale of SaskTel. But as a government, we have said that if an offer was ever delivered to the province of Saskatchewan that certainly met some notional conditions, that we would want to take that to the shareholders to get their perspective on it.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the assessment, the member is correct. We are preparing a response to the risk analysis that was done by the Goldberg group and that will be released later this fall.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Again, Mr. Speaker, just last year the Premier was saying, and I quote, "The public is comfortable with the status quo in those major Crowns." And then, you know, Mr. Speaker, before that they took the pledge on the Crowns in 2007, in 2011, and then 2016 to protect the Crowns. Now they say they are open to offers and will hold a referendum to consult the people, you know, which was the old position of the Sask Party back when they said, you know, we'd be crazy not to entertain offers in 2003 and earlier.

Can the minister tell the House if the government plans to hold a referendum? Is the government ready and able to do so? And what will be the price tag of such a referendum?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, no we are not ready and able to do so, because there is no offer. We are not actively seeking the sale of SaskTel, nor has an offer been received for SaskTel.

What we have gone through, though, is the fact that the landscape is changing in telecommunications, where the second-to-last regional carrier, MTS [Manitoba Telecom Services], is going through the process of being sold to one of the national firms. And that did raise questions about what does this mean for the future of SaskTel operating as the sole regional carrier left in this country.

Mr. Speaker, so as we have said before, we did not campaign on the sale of SaskTel. But in the event, as the second-last regional carrier is in the process of being sold, if there ever was an offer that notionally reached some ideas in terms of benchmarks, in terms of what it would deliver potentially to the shareholders, the people of Saskatchewan, we would have an obligation to inform the public that in fact there is an offer and this is what it could mean for the people of Saskatchewan, and get their response.

Probably, in my view, the best way to do that would be through a referendum. But again there is no offer, so all of this is hypothetical.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to believe, but over the summer this government found ways to make even more cuts to our children's classrooms. The Minister Responsible for WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] decided to use the surplus in the workers' fund to give employers a kickback.

School divisions were supposed to receive over \$4 million in rebates, money that our already cash-strapped schools certainly could have used. But instead the Education minister, who just happens to be the minister for WCB, clawed back the rebates out of the school division operating grants.

Mr. Speaker, he authorized the WC [Workers' Compensation] bonus to school boards with one hand and he took them back with the other. This is the same minister who walked away from his commitment to fully fund teachers' pay. How can this minister think that making such deep cuts to our children's education is acceptable? And the question that everyone in education wants to know: what's next?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we're a government that is committed to education and committed to the students in our province. Mr. Speaker, we've increased operating grants to the divisions by some 33 per cent. In 2007-2008, the budget for education was \$1.41 billion which included \$714 million of EPT [education property tax]. 2016-2017, it was increased to \$1.88 billion, at the same time lowering education property tax for the citizens of our province to \$680 million.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made a strong commitment to education. We value the citizens of our province. We value the students in our province. We value the teachers, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to do that.

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

Funding for Health Care

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, health care got hit with the same clawback, and there is no question the health care system needed those funds.

Earlier this week, a fire inspector visited St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. After walking through, the inspector issued an ultimatum: they need to deal with the fire hazards or face fines. But these fire hazards are human beings. There are so many people lining the halls of the hospital that the fire inspector is concerned for everyone's safety.

These last few weeks, the Saskatoon Health Region has seen record over-capacity numbers and close to 120 patients in hallways, makeshift forts, and in the ER [emergency room]. When will the Sask Party stop the cuts to health care and start caring about the health and safety of Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to start with I want to address the preface of that question — cuts to health care. Since this government was given the privilege of forming government in 2007, we've increased funding to health care over 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, now to address the direct question, which is very serious. Mr. Speaker, our officials have contacted the St. Paul's Hospital. They've taken measures to attempt to deal with the pressures. They're immediately moving patients to appropriately designated locations. They're ensuring that their discharge processes are in place so that that doesn't cause a problem. Mr. Speaker, they're doing some other measures to ensure that they can deal with the situation.

But what we should remember, Mr. Speaker, is that first of all this isn't a new issue. These issues were prevalent under the members opposite when they were in government, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, these issues are a national issue. I just returned from the meetings of the provincial Health ministers, Mr. Speaker, and I would be happy to elaborate on issues across the country on the next question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, under this government they have had record revenue, but they have also had record over-capacity levels in our hospitals in Saskatoon. So let me give the Health minister another try on an important issue.

Yesterday, after the results of a national study showed significant rates of HPV-related [human papilloma virus] cancers among men, the Minister of Health was asked about changing the policy of HPV vaccination in our province. Saskatchewan is one of the few remaining provinces that does not offer this vaccination to boys. The minister had very little to say on this policy beyond, and I quote, "I'm a boy so I'm concerned about everyone."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not quite the thoughtful and productive answer we were looking for. I do hope the minister knows that girls can be concerned for everyone too. But for now let's put the Sask Party's record on gender equality aside, and I will ask the minister simply if he will move to save lives and provide HPV vaccination to Saskatchewan boys.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's flippant question about what I said during scrum yesterday was, there was an insinuation from one of the reporters in the scrum. The question was something like, you do the vaccinations for girls; why don't you for boys? Aren't they as important? I was just simply commenting. Obviously there was no concerns with that on my part, Mr. Speaker. We treat everyone equally. And to answer the question, the vaccinations are under consideration at this time.

Mr. Speaker, to the member's overall tone about this though, let's put in place . . . The members opposite still hold themselves out somehow as the champions of health care. Mr. Speaker, since we formed government, 50 per cent increase in funding. Over 3,000 more nurses than when those members were in government, Mr. Speaker. Over 650 more doctors. We built long-term care facilities. We're building hospitals. Mr. Speaker, those members just can't get over the fact that they don't own the whole health care system anymore, Mr. Speaker. The citizens of this province have more faith in the members on this side, clearly, than they do the members that side. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — I'd like to raise a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the House Leader to make his point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period the Leader of the Opposition said, I quote, people shouldn't be able to trust him, referring to our Premier. Rule 51 of the standing orders, it's deemed inappropriate language. This term, cannot be trusted, has been ruled out of order on March 29th by Speaker Toth. I'd ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd encourage Mr. Speaker to review the record in terms of what was said. The recollection of the Leader of the Opposition is that what he had said was that people should be able to trust in the Premier. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, that is well within the accepted rules and usage of terms in this House and, you know, if the record shows otherwise, we're open to review that. But that is our understanding of what occurred, and I await the Speaker's ruling on this matter.

The Speaker: — Certainly I too listened very closely. I will have to review and I'll defer a ruling on this point of order to a later time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Education Funding

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly . . .

[Inaudible interjection] . . . At the conclusion of my remarks I will move the following motion:

That this Assembly condemns the government for failing Saskatchewan students by neglecting to provide mid-year funding adjustments, failing to provide much-needed infrastructure money, underfunding necessary student supports such as educational assistants, occupational therapists, and English as a second language programs, and for bargaining in bad faith by not funding the very contract that they negotiated.

Mr. Speaker, it is during Education Week that I rise today in this Assembly to put forth this motion on education. The theme of this year's week to honour education in the province is, Celebrating Today, Preparing for Tomorrow. Those are nice words and I wholeheartedly agree.

There's much to celebrate in our schools. Some of the most important work done in this province happens in our schools. Education is key to our future. As I've heard many First Nation leaders proclaim, education is the new buffalo, the most important tool that we have to right the years of wrong experienced by indigenous people in this country and this province.

Education is the key to reconciliation. It is the key to a well-informed public, the key to meeting the challenges of this century and beyond. Education is the key to our economy. It plays a pivotal role in the lives of children and families every day in this province. And it is education that is . . . and decisions by this government. Education is under threat by this government.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn this government in the strongest terms possible for their failure to provide the leadership and support needed to ensure that all students in our province receive the education that they deserve, the education that they require to meet the needs today and into the future to ensure that they reach their full potential and, Mr. Speaker, the education that is needed to ensure that we, everyone in this province, thrives into the future.

[11:00]

In 2009, the same year that I was elected as a public school board trustee, this government decided to unilaterally withdraw boards' abilities to set their own mill rates. And the education sector has been marked with uncertainty, insufficiency, a lack of transparency, and frankly a lack of respect for the role of publicly elected school boards ever since.

Schools across our province vary greatly in terms of the makeup of their student body and their needs. Some of the schools are geographically isolated and provide service to a large area. Schools differ in terms of the number and density of students with special needs, medically fragile students, students living in poverty, and students for whom English, rather, is an additional language. And all of these factors have implications for the cost and the method of delivering an equitable education for students regardless of the location of their school or where their classroom is located. Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because of these differences in the makeup of our classroom in this local context that the role of local school boards is important.

School divisions also vary greatly with regard to the pace of growth within their school divisions and the number of schools that they are responsible for, as well as the physical condition that they find their schools in.

Mr. Speaker, what does not vary across this province is that schools are struggling to provide the education needed to students, given the lack of transparency, the lack of predictable and adequate funding. Mr. Speaker, when these concerns have been repeatedly brought to this minister, as we saw today, he has deflected the question. We've been accused of fearmongering. We've been accused of exaggerating and not understanding. He's provided us with lists of numbers and denied the problem within the classroom.

The minister has tried to deflect by bringing up issues with the previous governments, some over 20 years ago. Mr. Speaker, we are not fooled or dissuaded by the minister's strident attempts at deflection and rhetoric, and neither are parents, community members, school board members, teachers, and other school-based staff.

Mr. Speaker, our schools are in crisis, and it's not fearmongering. And the minister has added fuel to this fire by raising the spectre of transformational change after an election, suggesting that everything — including amalgamations, the future of trustees, and further cuts — are on the table.

Mr. Speaker, this province is experiencing difficult times. And some of that is not the fault of this or any other government; they don't control world oil prices. But Mr. Speaker, they are responsible for their choices. And I'm here to tell all members of this Assembly that the choice to cut funding for our children's classroom is simply a failure of leadership. It's a failure of vision. It's a failure to recognize that education is simply the most effective means we have to ensure that all children have what they need in order to realize their full potential. And when children are not able to realize their full potential, they suffer and, as a province, we suffer. Our future suffers.

Now I want to be clear, Mr. Speaker. There's very good work going on in our schools across the province. What has always

struck me with educators is their ability to go in and get the job done, to put their students first. But, Mr. Speaker, the needs in our classrooms are higher now than ever. And those working in our classrooms simply don't have the supports that are needed from this government.

The minister is quoted as saying:

There is a lot of really good and really competent people within the divisions, so our expectation and our hope is that they roll up their sleeves and try and find efficiencies and economies and start sharing things.

Well I agree with the minister. We do have good and competent people within our divisions. We agree on that point. But when he suggests that this is simply a matter of rolling up one's sleeves and starting to share things, I'm afraid that he reveals just how out of touch he is. Mr. Speaker, the sleeves are already rolled up. There are no sleeves left. There is no . . . The low-hanging fruit is gone. The reserves are being depleted and cuts, this government's cuts to education are impacting our classrooms today. And to suggest that school boards should start now to find efficiencies and to share services shows a profound and wilful ignorance of the work that school divisions have been doing to find efficiencies and share services.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first year that school boards across this province have experienced cuts. For the last three years that I was on the public school board, we had to come up with funds for shortfalls in funding. And every year, in our particular instance, we saw growth of about 400 students a year, the number of students that you would find in a large or two small elementary schools. And not once did our school board or other school boards experiencing growth get full compensation that they needed in order to provide timely service to those students.

Mr. Speaker, they continue to make decisions that make the work in classrooms even more difficult. The sharing of services that the minister suggests that they should undertake got a lot more difficult when this government this year decided to cut the funding to the RIC [regional intersectoral committee] programs. These 10 programs across the province, together the saving is about \$1 million, or one-third of what they gave to SkipTheDishes.

The RICs brought a broad-based group of different social service agencies together to work on a variety of issues, including work on poverty reduction, affordable housing, and early childhood development. Mr. Speaker, the work of the RIC was valuable to those communities that had the RIC program, and the impact, the positive impact was felt in the schools of that body to be able to share information and ideas and resources. And the cuts to that program will be felt across communities, but particularly in schools. When asked after the budget, a provincial government spokesperson said that the RICS weren't totally funded by the province, and they hoped that a lot of the work that they did would be continued by another agencies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how often this government gets out and actually listens to what's going on out there, but there are not a lot of agencies with the resources to pick up the important work done at these RIC tables. And that leads me to

another point. This summer and fall, my colleagues and I have been around this province talking with people. And unlike the minister who's been stopping in for photo ops, we've been listening, listening to the impacts that this government's cuts are having on our children and in our schools and in our community.

I spoke with parents of children who no longer receive the supports they need in the classroom. Their EAs [educational assistant] have been cut, something that they want and desperately deserve in order to get the most out of their education. I've heard about inner-city kindergarten classrooms where one teacher — one teacher — is responsible for almost 50 students and no EA. This is one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister tells me he has a list. Well I have a list. School cuts: Prairie Spirit, 14 teachers cut and 60 educational assistants; Prairie South, 25 assistants.

An Hon. Member: — Their choice.

Ms. Beck: — The heckling is saying, it's their choice. Mr. Speaker, the choice is this — where are you going to cut? It's not a matter of gold-plated toilet paper in the executive washroom. We are making cuts that affect children on the front line, and suggest that this is simply a choice shows a profound ignorance of the situation.

I will continue, Mr. Speaker: Prairie South, 25 school assistants, cuts to band programs and school counsellors. And if you think this is funny, you're not paying attention. Mr. Speaker, Northern Lights School Division trimmed curriculum and extracurricular programs. Northwest School Division cutting five teaching positions. Saskatoon's two major school divisions will have to dip into their operating budgets to find the money to pay for the teachers' contract. Mr. Speaker, that is completely unprecedented in this province and frankly has sent a chill throughout the province, wondering can they trust this government to keep their word?

Mr. Speaker, more cuts. Regions across the province will not hire new teachers to accommodate increases in enrolments. Saskatoon Public and Catholic board alone this year will see over 900 new students, and there will not be the adequate supports in place for those students.

Mr. Speaker, schools exist in every corner of this province, and they serve children from every community. And while dealing with cuts to their own budgets, schools are not immune from the cuts elsewhere. When the economy is slow and unemployment is rising, those impacts show up in our schools. When we make cuts to social programs, to health care, the impacts of those cuts show up in our classrooms. If the family cannot adequately assess timely mental health care for themselves or for their child, that shows up in the school system.

We've heard from families being repeatedly drawn away from work because their children are acting out in desperation as they await mental health care and supports. And schools are struggling to deal with the increased needs and numbers of students in so many classrooms. If parents can't find enough

funds after paying stubbornly high rents to feed their children, that child shows up to school hungry. Yet we're seeing these choices that are so easy for the members opposite. The choices are being cuts to lunch programs. And so teachers are paying out of pocket, and other professionals in schools, to ensure that kids have enough in their bellies so that they can actually learn. These are the choices that are so flippantly spoken about from members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, this country has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country, and we have one of the highest rates of food bank use. And, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely shameful that the highest growth in that food bank use, even in the middle of the boom, was amongst seniors and students.

Mr. Speaker, this is the situation that members on this side of the House want to condemn. So all of this is going on in education, Mr. Speaker, and after an election which . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Someone opposite wants me to shut up, so I will with that read the motion and table it:

That this Assembly condemns the government for failing students by neglecting to provide mid-year adjustments; failing to provide infrastructure . . .

The Speaker: — Before the member completes her member's statement, I believe it is unparliamentary language that was used. I would ask her to apologize and withdraw the comment. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — My apologies, Mr. Speaker. And I withdraw.

If I may make the following motion:

That this Assembly condemns the government for failing Saskatchewan students by neglecting to provide mid-year adjustments; failing to provide much needed infrastructure money; underfunding necessary student supports such as educational assistants, occupational therapists, and English as a second language programs; and for bargaining in bad faith by not funding the very contract that they negotiated.

With that, I do so move.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Economy.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Economy with a point of order. What is the nature of your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your intervention on the matter. I just want to make very clear that nobody on this side of the House said what the member opposite had said that we did, so I just want to make that very clear for the record.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, this is highly unusual in terms of the member opposite, after the member from Lakeview has already apologized in accordance with your direction, to come in and debate the Speaker's ruling. It's highly unusual, and I'd

ask you to take that into consideration as you weigh these matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Appreciate both House leaders' comments on this. I asked for the word that the member used; she apologized and withdrew. But the nature of her use of that word was that it was coming from across the aisle, and that was clearly not the case. The case was that she referred that she somehow had to be quiet because of comments coming from the other side. And during the time, it was quiet in the Chamber, and it was the conversation between her and her colleague that prompted her to end her comments early.

So with that, we'll carry on the 75-minute debate. Next member up will be someone from the government. I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

[11:15]

Ms. Young: — I'm going to begin by stating that I definitely will not and cannot support the motion just put forward by the member from Regina Lakeview. I think the member and her colleagues needed to do some more in-depth homework and facts checking before they decided to put forth such an erroneous motion.

When the new funding model for school divisions was presented, discussed, and introduced to school boards in about 2011, there was some concern about what impact it may have mid-year on their budgets and particularly in school divisions who were seeing student enrolment increases and students presenting with learning challenges.

School boards at the time were told that supports for learning transition dollars would be provided mid-year if needed but that it was not a permanent solution going forward. Fact: mid-year funding was not only given in the 2012-13 school year but again in 2013-14 and again in 2014-15.

Then in 2014-15, the ministry implemented a revised supports for learning funding calculation with a transition strategy that ensured no school division experienced a decrease in funding compared to the prior year. Well guess what? We have continued the transition strategy for 2016-17 but with some components that balance out the needs and challenges faced in some school divisions, particularly those with increased enrolment, vulnerability, and immigration data.

Our supports for learning funding for 2016-17 has been increased from \$286.5 million to \$288 million. And we are also providing an additional 5.4 million to support Syrian refugees who require EAL [English as an additional language] instruction. And just a reminder to the Assembly, years in which the NDP gave mid-year funding adjustments? How about none.

So over the past nine years we have responded to school divisions' needs by increasing overall school division operating funding by 33 per cent. And I would surmise that the NDP didn't have to worry too much about increasing education funding prior to 2007. As we all know, the economic environment they created in this province had people leaving and taking their children with them. And without students

enrolled in our classrooms, they started closing schools — 176 schools — and had us ranked eighth amongst our provinces in per-student funding.

And since the Sask Party government took office we have consistently climbed the ladder, spending more each year per student in our schools to now be ranked by the Fraser Institute as number 1 amongst the provinces. Through this government's renewed economic climate we have grown our population and welcomed back students into our schools. Along with this we have consistently increased school divisions' operating grants and supports for learning.

Mr. Speaker, but don't just take my word for it. I would highly recommend that the member from Regina Lakeview read the September 2016 edition of the Fraser Institute Barbara Mitchell Centre for Improvement in Education bulletin highlighting Saskatchewan's education spending. The centre provides well-researched information to Canadians regarding the state of K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education, and focusing particularly on the change in per-student education spending in public schools across this country. And it repeatedly reports that Saskatchewan now has the highest, the highest per-student spending level in our schools.

It states that Saskatchewan saw the largest increase from 2005 to 2014, and that being an increase of 67.3 per cent. Saskatchewan recorded the largest difference among the province as well between the actual spending on public schools and what would have been required to account for price per student and enrolment changes. As a matter of fact, we spent 712 million more on education than need be to account for inflation and enrolment changes over the same time period.

You'd want to, you know, negate what the Fraser Institute is saying but here's another interesting fact. The Fraser Institute also studied and provided on what public education would look like had the 2005 — under the NDP — per-student spending levels been maintained. If per-student funding in public schools had remained constant over this period, education funding today in Saskatchewan would be twenty-eight two per cent lower, lower than it would have been in 2005.

So I am so glad this government is in charge of education. And it also validates the value, importance, and priority we have and continue to have and place on education in this province.

Let me just talk for a minute about infrastructure funding in our school divisions. We didn't lose students and close 176 schools. No way. Instead we chose to invest 1.4 billion — and that's a billion with a capital "B" — dollars into our schools' infrastructure needs since 2007.

We've built 40 new schools and done 25 major renovations. And I have the list right here if the member opposite wants to look at the projects we've done. We also created the preventative maintenance and renewal program which allows for us to respond to maintenance issues more quickly. Our budget allocation for infrastructure has gone from 16.447 million in 2014 to 33.385 million for this 2016-17 year.

As compared to what, you may ask? Well in the NDP's last year in government, they only provided 18 million in capital

funding. And this year we are providing an additional 391 million.

So the member from Regina Lakeview also seems to believe that we are underfunding other necessary student support such as EAs, occupational therapists, and EAL teachers. Well, fact: our government, since taking office, has increased to 754 more regular teachers in our classrooms; 164 more EAs; psychologists are up 44 per cent; speech language pathologists are up 39 per cent; occupational therapists are up 64 per cent; and social workers are up 6 per cent.

And in 2014 we heard loud and clear from teachers that the money previously earmarked for standardized testing software would be better spent in classrooms. So we reallocated that 4.6 million directly back to support classrooms. Again that is why we are validated by the Fraser Institute and ranked as number one across provinces.

I also want to remind the member from Regina Lakeview that school divisions have the legislative authority to determine staffing complements and classroom supports. Funding is provided and they determine where it goes. So based on the increased numbers I just gave for supports to the classrooms and increases to per-student funding year-over-year by this government, if students in this province are not receiving the supports they need, it can only be laid back on school boards not making appropriate decisions which are in the best interest of students.

And insofar as the member's comment about bargaining in bad faith and not funding the negotiated contract, as the Minister of Education has repeatedly stated again and again in this House, the teachers' collective bargaining agreement will be fully honoured and teachers will be paid the amount that was negotiated.

I will finish by saying the overall budget for education has increased from 944 million in 2007 to nearly 2.2 billion this year, an increase of 130 per cent, strongly validating our position that education funding continues to be a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I will not and cannot support the motion put forward by the member from Regina Lakeview. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter the debate, the 75-minute debate on this motion. And I will fully and completely support this motion. I think it's one that we have . . . very timely as we come back.

And it is our priority. Education is a priority. It is the priority for our side here because of some of the concerning actions of this government. And I just want to just make a few comments on the earlier speech from the member from Lloydminster, who probably feels that oil was invented on November 8th, 2007. Potash was discovered for the first time on November 9th of 2007. There was no economic activity in Saskatchewan at all.

I would suggest to the minister of Lloydminster she do her homework, she do her homework about the realities of what happened in Saskatchewan in the '80s, the '90s, and how we turned it around. I would tell her to do some history, take some history lessons in what happened in this province from the Conservatives who drove this province to a wreck — to a wreck. And they have the courage to stand up and pretend to quote from the Fraser Institute of 2014. I think she should withdraw all her comments, take a history lesson of what really happened in Saskatchewan.

So this motion is most important, most important because of some of the things that she said. It's very, very alarming. And I will include in my comments about what happened in Vancouver on Monday to the school boards in Vancouver. And I hope she's paying attention to that. Because if she's saying it's the fault of the school boards that they can't deliver and they shouldn't advocate . . . Or is she implying that they should get fired like the Liberal government did in BC? Is that what she's saying? Do your job or you're going to get fired? I have a real problem with that.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I go too much further, I want to say that this is critical because this government is going to go through some transformational discussions with the school boards, and I think the school boards have a right to be a little alarmed, to be a little alarmed about the actions of this Minister of Education. She can talk about all the big numbers she wants to, but I've got to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about some of the concerns that have been raised by parents. They've come to the legislature right here. They came here last May and they raised concerns about a program — a program that costs only \$127,000, had been implemented since the '90s, had seen and lived through some very tough times on both sides of the House but survived because we value our multiculturalism here in this province.

But that government saw that as one of the first cuts it should make: to the kids who are taking lessons in their cultural language. But this government couldn't find \$127,000 but instead chose to fund SkipTheDishes. Three million for SkipTheDishes at 3 million, but 127,000 for heritage languages — no way. No way. That's too much because this government is all of a sudden under pressure, couldn't do its work, like release its first quarter report. That's too much to do. When you talk about homework, that's a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. A basic report like that, couldn't do it, couldn't meet the obligations of that.

But here, here we are talking about . . . It's like that member and those members over there are from a different planet. And I wish they would come into the modern day. And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I'm speaking, the member did offer to table some documents. I hope she does table all the documents that she was referring to, the list of schools that they've built and the repairs that she's done. So I would ask her to table that.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to say that there are some huge signals that cause alarm from the other side, so we think this is important. You know, neglecting to provide mid-year funding adjustments, failing to provide much needed infrastructure money, underfunding necessary student supports — educational assistants, occupational therapists, and English

as a second language — and bargaining in bad faith by not funding their very contract they negotiated.

[11:30]

And I want to say on that point, that is really, really a critical issue, a critical issue because as we go forward . . . And we do understand that we are in challenging times, and all the people in this province understand that. It's not just the government that's living in challenging times. We all realize that we have to make some difficult choices. So when you do bargain and you bargain in good faith, it's really critical that all parties to that contract live up to their part of the deal. And the part of the deal to the government was they would pay for the teachers' salaries increase. And that's really, really critical.

And I ran into somebody, I just want to relate this story about running into somebody, a substitute teacher yesterday in the parking lot of a grocery store and talking about how bargaining is going for substitute teachers. And we saw what had happened in La Loche with the supply teacher that had been injured in the shooting in La Loche and what that meant because we're all over the map when it comes to substitute teachers, when it comes to what they're being paid in this province.

So what is the signal here from this government in terms of how they're going to look after all the segments of the people who are working in our education system such as substitute teachers, supply teachers, and in those schools where it's hard to find teachers on a regular basis? So when you have a minister like that sending signals, yes, we'll come to the table. We'll bargain, but don't count on us to live up to our end of the deal. That's a dangerous, dangerous signal.

So I know this is going to leave school boards in a really tough situation because they're saying, what does it mean? What does it really mean to have the government there leading the discussions, but they're not going to live up to their end of the deal? And does this mean, as I said earlier, that we could have a situation like we have in Vancouver, where they have members from the opposite side standing up and telling school boards to do their work, almost in a way that's threatening. Do your work or you're going to pay a penalty, and don't advocate, don't challenge this government because we see what's happening across Canada.

And I just want to quote a few articles on this because I think this is a dangerous signal that we have where we saw this government take away the right for school boards to raise taxes. And that was a pretty major development right after this government took power. And really . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, you know, you bought it, you own it. This is the issue that we have with this government. They want the control, but they don't want to have the responsibility in our communities and our cities, our towns, our villages, where school boards are the face of the decision makers.

And here we have a minister who cut heritage languages just like that, not a problem, \$127,000. Others in that budget were winners. Others were losers, such as heritage language. Now that's a problem if you're a parent and you can have . . . You know, the thing with heritage language, if I can just say how important it is for school performance, and how it's been shown

a second language is a great indicator of further success.

But you have a situation, as I said, and I just want to highlight this in terms of BC. But this is a cold, cold wind coming from the West, and a message that this government in the winter months uses as a way to start the discussion: hey, did you hear what happened in BC? This is just not on.

I just want to quote the article here:

“The people of Vancouver elected trustees to stand up for public education, not to do the provincial government’s dirty work of closing schools, cutting programs and selling off public assets to address a budget shortfall of their own making. The Vancouver school board is now being run out of Premier Christy Clark’s office,” Lombardi said at a news conference.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that’s what’s happening here in Saskatchewan, that the school boards are now being run out of the Premier’s office and Fraser Institute as a research document, I have some big, big concerns.

There’s lots of issues. And I didn’t get a chance to talk about the WCB kickback that my colleague talked about. And then the clawback, the very clawback where these folks are looking for extra resources, this government takes it back. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to start by saying that I don’t think I could get as excited as the member from Saskatoon Centre started. I want to apologize for that, but I don’t think it would be good for me. I’m not sure it was good for him.

When I read this motion . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, your blood pressure went just . . . [inaudible] . . . When I read this motion, the first thing I thought of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is I thought of my young daughter. I thought of a moment when she was about six or seven years old, and I was down explaining things as I know it to her. And maybe there was some rambling and possibly some imagination going on in my story. And she looks at me and really, really serious — and she has the big blue eyes — and she looks at me and she says, Dad, what colour is the sky in your world? And for some reason that’s the first thought I had when I read this motion, is what colour is a sky in their world?

And then I was talking to the member from Melville-Saltcoats, and he was telling me about a tour he had taken this summer. And he had gone to Ottawa, and he had toured a Cold War-era bunker. It was called the Diefenbunker, named after our illustrious prime minister from Saskatchewan, John George Diefenbaker.

This bunker is four storeys high, 42 feet into the ground, took 100 000 tonnes of concrete in this bunker. It was four storeys high. It was built in 1959. Surprisingly it was all built in 18 months. Pretty impressive. It was able to withstand a 5-megaton nuclear blast from within a mile, 1.8 kilometres or miles — miles, I believe at that time. And it was built to be the house of

government back during a nuclear war — a 100,000 square-foot building, 18 months, 100 000 tonnes of cement. This could house 535 people and had provisions for 30 days. This was finally taken out of useful activity sometime in the ’70s, and all communications were cut off to this in 1994.

And I should have asked the member from Melville-Saltcoats if he happened to see the NDP caucus in that building when he was there. Because I’ve got this visual in my mind of this hatch being opened up and this little plate helmet kind of poking up and this little sheet of paper being handed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when you opened this sheet of paper, this resolution was on it. Five hundred and thirty-five people could last there for 30 days. The NDP caucus could last there for 52 months.

Maybe they didn’t notice that the oil prices had taken a hit. Maybe they didn’t notice potash prices were down a little bit. Our ag industry, we’ve got a little too much snow in it. And then they wonder when people say that maybe their party is a little out of touch, like maybe they could be in that bunker for the last 52 months.

You know, when I read this resolution what I look at is, I look at . . . You know, we neglected to add funding. We neglected to add infrastructure funding. We’ve added money, added money, added money. That’s what they want. These people have never seen a tax that they haven’t fallen in love with.

That it’s just an incredible thing to at this time read . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, are you against that maybe? You’re against the government tax, and yet yesterday, yesterday the member from Nutana says we’ve got to tax our electrical. We’ve got to tax our oil. We’ve got to . . . Yesterday said that, and now they’re talking about that they’re not against taxes? You know, that no, let’s . . . If we can’t remember the last few years, at least let’s remember yesterday.

You know, and what’s the answer to this? Because there are some needs in the system. Is the answer more money? So if we as a government — and I think the member from Lloydminster pointed this out — but if we as a government had raised it to cover the enrolment, if we had raised it to cover the cost of living going up, the dollars that would be missing out of this year’s budget is \$718 million. That’s how much extra we increased it.

So is an answer really more money, more money, more money? No, I think the answer is, let’s do things better. Let’s look at it. Let’s see if we can make some transformational changes where we can stop and we can look at doing the right thing for our students, equip our students with the ability to move on into post-secondary or the workforce.

But yes, the answer isn’t just back up the truck and dump more money. You know, that may be what consultants in Ontario will tell you when you spend your money down there. That’s who was putting all the food in for that 52 months, was the consultants. That’s why it came to 72 per cent.

But you know, you go through it and you go through what they said, mid-year adjustments. We added mid-year adjustments, and we did it for three years. This time, we took the funding at

the beginning of the year and built it in there. How many times? How many times? May I remind you, 718 million additional dollars in education?

And you laugh because on your colour of sky, it just doesn't matter. It must be green with all the money . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What has this got to do with education? Yes, that's a good point. What has this got to do with education? Because I was sitting there, and I was listening to the member from Lakeview, and you talk about infrastructure. And yet we've added money to infrastructure. We've added so much money. We've built 25 new schools. We have 40 major projects. You know, we have. I don't know. You know, we've done, added more money to these things. As we continue along, we will continue to add more money to it.

There's false flags all over the place, a false flag about the union contract. When I sign a contract, it says to me that I get paid this much for this much that I'm doing. If I'm working next year and I have a contract, it says to me that's what I get paid. And I think we have not heard any teachers saying that they're not getting paid that amount. Like it is just a false flag up there. You know, the difference between . . . And I'm going to be against this resolution. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in on the 75-minute debate here today, and at the end of my remarks that I have an opportunity to share a little bit. And I think it's important, you know, the comments that my colleagues have shared about, I guess, the frustration, some of the challenges.

But before I get into some of those challenges, I think it's important to share with the members here the positive things in education. Being a past board member within Northern Lights for eight years, the NORTEP board of governors for eight years, Gabriel Dumont Institute . . . And just some of the challenges and successes because there's so many successes out there, and, you know, to watch a school division do the great work for the most precious, our children. There's nothing more precious than our grandchildren and our children. And the school divisions and the one that I had an opportunity to be elected in by the people to represent them and, you know, to share and to work to make sure that we had a better quality education for our kids.

[11:45]

And I have to say that with the school division that I sat on, there was a lot of great work. Did we have our challenges and struggles? Yes, we did. There always is challenges and struggles, but there was lots of success. We had a team effort. We had staff. Whether you're teaching, non-teaching, everyone came together, and they worked for the betterment of those students.

But, you know, saying that and being a part of that and watching that whole process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the challenges that we're facing, yes sometimes you have the tough financial challenges. And school divisions did that. And I say

this with the most respect, that those elected officials or elected people that represent the school divisions — being like I said, I was on Northern Lights — and elected by the people.

It is an elected board. It's not appointed. Government can't control it. It's elected by the people. And you know, when you think about that . . . And I see sometimes how important that is to have the opportunity to elect your representative to represent your community, your school district. And you know, I was lucky, along with a number other of my colleagues, to get elected and get elected three times to share and to work on behalf of the students.

But having said that, I want to shift a little bit about the actual school programs and some of the great programs in northern Saskatchewan that went on. We talk about the culture, and we had unique situations. We had opportunities to share our culture, but not only with the First Nations, the Métis, our northern people. We had teachers who came from southern part of the province. They came from different places in Canada, and they came to the North to help teach, to get a . . . But they also received an education in that. And I heard many of them tell the stories, how beautiful they see the culture, the lifestyle. It's a different lifestyle. It's a different way.

Those isolated communities have challenges. They do. There are challenges there. You have small schools, you know, one-room school with a teacher and trying to give all the resources. And I think about that because I think we have to give credit to those teachers that do the great work out there — our administrators, our support staff, you know, right through everyone that takes part whether it's a parent council. There's so many individuals and people that are committed to educating our children. Very challenging for, you know . . . And we see that. We see the challenges sometimes that students have.

And I know my colleagues talked about making sure there's lunch programs. There's a breakfast program. There's just the ways that you want to make sure that you help the students achieve that, that they get the best education they can. And you want to make sure that the graduation rates . . . And you know, I think about the graduation rates when it comes to Aboriginal people. And we have to do a better job.

You know, my uncle was a principal, and he worked hard in the community that he was a principal, worked hard. And they got a lot of credit for the great job they did in the Duck Lake area, making sure that their students were achieving a graduation rate. It's unreal to watch. But that was his commitment as an individual. And my aunts, my mom's side of the family, there's three of them were teachers. And I watched that how they did that and their dedication and commitment.

But at the end of the day, I also watched the frustrations sometimes. And there has been some cuts that this government has imposed on many of the school divisions, many of the families that are struggling, a government that's supposed to make sure that you get the best quality of education, that we have the best retention rates, we have the best graduation rates. Yes, we want to achieve that, and they need to achieve that, the government. But at the end of the day, you know, you talk about that.

And the government likes to take photo ops. I'll be honest, I watch where . . . They like to take photo ops and say it's all going good out there. But there's many challenges that school boards are being faced. And one of them was a huge one. And I know when this government took away the opportunities of the school divisions to generate some dollars with the mill rate to increase special projects that meant something, that were working well in communities, isolated communities. They had that ability to take a little bit of dollars from raising taxes and actually helping out some of the most vulnerable and some of those programs that needed to be taken care of. They had that ability. And as a school division, when I was there, we had that ability, and we had many discussions. You have to have a budget. You have to make sure you're doing your best. But you have to make sure you're honouring the children that were supposed to be getting this education.

I think about one group and that group that was here yesterday. The NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College] students' association were here along with one of their staff. And again the frustration that I see and the success of the NORTEP program — 94 per cent of the NORTEP grads that graduate stay in the North, and they go back. And it's about the culture. And they go back into these communities. And the retention rate, the retention rate of keeping a teacher who knows the students in the community, who knows the culture, who has a better understanding. Not that someone can't come from the South and learn the culture and work. There's amazing . . . I've seen amazing work done by individuals.

But this government has areas where they have wasted so much money. When I think of SkipTheDishes, when I think of the GTH land deal, those type of situations that our Saskatchewan people are starting to see, and it's going to unfold. And then we see the waste of this government. They've had years of record revenue. They saved nothing to help times when times get rough. They could have saved a little bit but no, they spent it all.

Now they want us to believe that you had your priorities; you had your opportunities. And the good people of our province gave you that. You had three terms. And they said, please take care of the finance. Take care of our province, not just parts of the province, all of the province. You govern all. When we do that and we have to do that . . .

So when I see all the cuts that are going on, and I see what this government wasted, so much of our taxpayers' dollars and our good income that came into the province. And it's the people of this province that have earned those dollars. It's the people of this province that do the good work. You have inherited so much. You inherited, as a government, so much, but you have wasted so much. And I hope . . .

And I've talked to teachers who've approached me. And they're teachers who supported your government, voted for you, said never again will I vote for them. And I don't go up and talk. They're approaching me, and they're very frustrated. They can't believe what you have walked away from. Negotiated an agreement with them, and then you walked away. When you have the majority of those committee members that work on the bargaining committee . . . You appoint five of them, I believe it

is, and there's four from Saskatchewan school boards.

But you have such an opportunity to make better education. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? They had such an opportunity, but you know what we see now is a waste of the money, the good dollars that are there. And now they're asking the school divisions, and they're asking the most vulnerable, the most vulnerable — the students, the teachers — to pay a price for their mismanagement. It is wrong; it's unacceptable. And you know they just kind of think like, you know, well it's . . .

And you know, I think about one of my colleagues talking about the workmen compensation and the money that came back to employers. You pay a certain fee and they're getting those dollars back, and they get them back. And to go after the school divisions, and I think it's also Health is getting . . . And they pull those dollars. The minister and you individuals, those dollars could have been used. The members opposite . . . Those dollars could have been used for some great things to enhance some of the programs that our students . . . We see the most vulnerable and I say this, the most vulnerable, whether it's NORTEP, whether it's teacher aides, you know, those that work in the classroom, work with kids with disabilities and the challenges that those teachers are facing, the class size. Everything. Listen to the teachers. You guys have to be hearing what's going on. You can't tell me you sit here, and you are not hearing what's going on, or they're not.

But I will be, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. And again I just want to say this is a good motion, and it puts light on what's going on.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise and participate in this debate. I will also apologize because I'm going to be a little calmer than the members opposite.

It is debates such as this that gives the members opposite and the members on this side of the House an opportunity to compare records.

I would like to add a title to my remarks this morning and name it 176 schools. Mr. Speaker, I am calling these remarks 176 schools because I think the members opposite need to be reminded of the exact number of schools that were closed under their watch. The member from Lakeview calls this rhetoric, but this information is relevant.

Now there's been a trend in the last few years with the current members opposite who like to distance themselves from the decisions of the NDP government of the past even though there are members who are still sitting across who have been part of the past government and with a few who even sat in cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly who have been part of the previous government when decisions were made such as closing 176 schools. Others have said, oh wait, that wasn't me, I wasn't around when this happened or decisions were made or I was in high school and actively distancing themselves while sitting next to members who were around in the previous government. Or that isn't relevant; it happened so many years

ago. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is relevant. It's part of their record and they must own it.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about capital and how important it is to invest in capital when it comes to investing in the educations of our children. Our government has invested nearly 1.4 billion in capital since 2007 and '08, built 40 new schools, 25 major renovations, created the preventative maintenance renewal, and created emergent funding.

The NDP record is they provided only \$18 million in capital in their last year, 2007, and closed 176 schools. They also did not have preventative maintenance renewal or emergent funding. Let me say that again. They closed 176 schools.

I would like to read into the record the 40 new schools and included in that number is the 18 joint-use schools. The member from Saskatoon Centre asked for this information and I'm going to read it off.

Forty new schools: Humboldt Collegiate Institute, which was 16.9 million; Oxbow prairie heights school, 17.8 million; Scott Collegiate, Regina, 31 million; École St. Anne, which is in Prince Albert, 14.7 million; Porcupine Plain Composite High School, 15.6 million; St. Mary community school in Saskatoon, 15.8 million; Douglas Park School which is in Regina, 19.9 million; Arcola School in Regina, 17.8 million; birch ridge school which is 4.2 million; Seven Stones . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Wait, just wait, wait. Let me finish.

Seven Stones school, Regina . . . David, you . . . Sorry . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You had a chance to talk.

Seven Stones school, Regina, 20.5 million; Holy Family School which is in Saskatoon, 17.9 million; Willowgrove School which is in Saskatoon, 20.4 million; Warman Middle Years School, 29.2 million; École St. Thomas which is in Lloydminster, 8.8 million; All Saints Catholic School which is in Swift Current, 25.2 million; École Centennial School in Swift Current, 26.1 million; Emerald Ridge Elementary School in White City, 22 million; College Park elementary which is in Lloydminster, 11.5 million; Hudson Bay Community School, 27 million; Langenburg school, 23.5 million; École Connaught Community School in Regina, 21 million; Sacred Heart Community School in Regina, which is estimated 27 million.

So there's also 18 joint-use schools which are opening in the fall 2017 which add up to 635 million. Holy Mary which is in Martensville, public school in Martensville; Holy Trinity which is in Warman, public school, Warman; St. Nicholas, Evergreen, Saskatoon; St. Lorenzo Ruiz, Hampton Village, Saskatoon; St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Rosewood, Saskatoon; St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Saskatoon Stonebridge school; St. Elizabeth's, Greens on Gardiner, Regina; St. Kateri Tekakwitha which is in Regina, Harbour Landing which is in Regina; St. Nicholas, Coopertown, Regina . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I listened to you when you spoke, so you give me a chance.

So the arrogance of members opposite who gleefully state in their motion that "failing Saskatchewan students by neglecting to provide mid-year funding."

Mr. Speaker, the mid-year funding adjustment was never

designed to be a permanent solution. We gave enrolment increases in years where we could and this year we projected what enrolment numbers for each school division will be in September and have funded accordingly.

[12:00]

Years in which we gave a mid-year adjustment is 2012 to '13; 2013 to '14; and 2014 to '15. And years in which the NDP gave a mid-year adjustment, none. Let me say that again because I'm not sure the members heard the first few times. You closed 176 schools.

"Failing to provide much-needed infrastructure." We have built 40 new schools and 25 major renovations at a cost of approximately 1.4 billion. And I'm repeating that again because they don't seem to listen.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know sometimes . . . I'm a little older now and I'm at an age where I forget things, little things, not remembering where I put my keys. And some of my friends who are around the same age and the gender experience the same thing, especially if we have several things on the go. Sometimes walking into the kitchen and then forgetting what I went in there for. I did some reading, and it's quite common. It affects more short-term memory than long-term and it's temporary. Comes in little short bursts and noticeable when looking for my keys and already late or already in my truck and can't remember if I turned off the straightening iron.

But I find it hard to believe that all the members opposite would experience the same phenomenon — collective amnesia. I know it's happened somewhere in the world but I find it hard to believe that it's happened in here. It's gotten so that sometimes I'll write myself a little note where I put my keys and would be happy to do that for the members opposite and so that they would remember it was that NDP government who closed 176 schools. So back to the motion, I do not support the motion.

The Speaker: — Questions? I recognize . . . Oh, may I ask why the member from North Battleford is on his feet?

Mr. Cox: — Question.

The Speaker: — Okay. I recognize the member.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time the NDP was in power in Saskatchewan — and perhaps it will be the last time, Mr. Speaker — their idea of making improvements in education infrastructure was boarding up windows and locking the doors on 176 schools.

Our government has taken a different approach. We've invested nearly \$1.4 billion in education infrastructure, funding major renovations for 25 existing schools, and the construction of 40 new.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Regina Lakeview. Will you agree that our approach of building and renovating schools is far better than the NDP's approach of closing 176 schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his question. No, I will not agree, is the short answer to that question. And there you go, an actual direct answer to a question.

Mr. Speaker, there is definitely a deficit in infrastructure spending within the school sector in this province. I think we're now up to about a tune of \$1.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I happened to sit at the table of the Regina Public School Board at a time when the P3 [public-private partnership] schools were being negotiated. Now there's very little that anyone can say about that process but let me tell you, it did not in any way give me any confidence in that process. And I think it's an inefficient, short-sighted way to build schools.

Yes, we needed those schools; that is for sure. But it is solving a problem to which . . . it doesn't exist. The stated goal was to have them on time and on budget. Guess what? We already build our schools the traditional way on time and on budget. Look at École Connaught. It is a short-term way to build schools that costs long term more money. And no, I do not agree with the member opposite.

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

Ms. Sproule: — We keep hearing about the Sask Party's choices when it comes to helping out their friends who own land surrounding the GTH, but they're not making choices that benefit our kids in the classroom. This government helped negotiate a deal, a deal with the teachers. This government approved a 1.9 per cent increase. The minister himself admitted that the point five per cent the boards received is "less than what that upward pressure should be." Mr. Speaker, he outright admitted to shortchanging school boards, teachers, our kids with this budget. To the member from Melfort: since it was clearly known that education was getting shortchanged, how did this government still manage to claim that they were setting up our kids for success?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. I want to note that the teachers' collective bargaining agreement will be fully honoured and teachers will be paid the amount that was negotiated. Plain and simple, that's the answer. Now something we don't talk about in 176 schools being closed — I wonder, Mr. Speaker, how many teachers were in those schools that were under contract, that thought they had employment for the next five, three, ten years, that were just fired, let go? And that's the forgotten people. So thank you for the question.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As was noted in the recent Fraser Institute report titled *Education Spending and Public Student Enrolment in Canada*, Saskatchewan had the largest increase of per-student spending in all of Canada. In public schools, per-student spending went from 8,702 in

2004-05 to 14,562 in 2013-14. That's an increase, an increase of 67.3 per cent, yet the members opposite stand in this House and accuse our government of failing students.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Regina Lakeview: how can you say that our government is failing students when Saskatchewan spends the most per student in all of Canada?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is very clear. I will believe every day in this province what I hear from parents and teachers and school boards over the Fraser Institute.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this government has a habit of breaking promises when it comes to education. To the member from Saskatoon Fairview: why did this government make a five-year commitment to NORTEP, only to go back on their promise and cancel the funding?

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you for the question. This gives me the opportunity to highlight that according to the Fraser Institute 2016 edition, *Education Spending and Public Student Enrolment*, Saskatchewan saw the largest increase in per-student spending in public schools after adjusting for inflation. That province experienced a 39 per cent increase from 10,476 in 2004 and '05 to 14,562 in 2013-14. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that the members opposite would be so critical of our government's consistent, consistent increases in education funding. When members opposite were in power, education funding in the province for two consecutive years was cut in education, and the third year they didn't increase the budget at all.

Our government has made record investments in teachers and education infrastructure, while the NDP record closed 176 schools and took teachers for granted. And yet the member from Regina Lakeview says education is under threat under this government. Totally wrong. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Regina Lakeview: how can you stand in this Assembly and be critical of our government's increases in funding when the NDP record is one of education cuts and school closures, 176 school closures?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asks me how I can stand in this Assembly, and you know what? I stand on firm ground. You know why? Because I get out into the community and I talk to people in those communities. And I bring their voice here, and that is what they are telling me.

Mr. Speaker, I have three children at home. When they tell me that they did something but someone else did it before or someone else might have done something worse, you know what I tell them? Take responsibility for what you're responsible for. And I wish the members opposite would do that.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a timely debate in terms of what's happening in education in this province because just yesterday, though the minister said otherwise, we saw a delegation come down from La Ronge talking about their concern for the future of NORTEP and NORPAC. And this is an institution that is very valuable in terms of the education that is provided in the province but certainly for the North where it is desperately needed, Mr. Speaker, and moreover where that program has been very successful.

NORTEP-NORPAC came in for mention from the government when they tabled their response to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] as something that was meeting the efforts that they should be undertaking. But of course they'd signed the contract, Mr. Speaker, for five years and then reneged on their signature for the remaining four. So I want to ask the member from Saskatoon Fairview: how is that in any way defensible?

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. This gives me an opportunity once again to highlight that according to the Fraser Institute 2016 edition, *Education Spending and Public Student Enrolment*, Saskatchewan saw the largest increase in per-student spending in public schools after adjusting for inflation. That province experienced a 39 per cent increase from 10,476 to 2004-05 to 14,562 in 2013-14.

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

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has made significant investments in building and upgrading our province's schools. We have built or are in the process of building 40 new or replacement schools — for example, a major addition in Cumberland of 34 million.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Cumberland: how could you, how could you vote against a budget that provided funding to Churchill Community High School in your constituency and then say that our government isn't providing infrastructure money to this wonderful province?

The Speaker: — Time is expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Provision of Medical Imaging Services

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Olauson.]

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to be back here to continue our debate on MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging]. I'll just read into the record the motion that was put forward right before we broke last session:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP for their ideologically based attacks against privately provided MRI and CT scans for Saskatchewan residents, an initiative that provides better choice for patients and expands the capacity of the public system at no extra cost to taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to join in this debate again, and there's a few comments I'd like to get on the record. And we have some new numbers about what the private MRIs have done over the past couple of months since we had taken a break. And since private-pay magnetic resonance imaging MRI services began in February 2016, more than 1,800 patients are benefiting from a private MRI scan at no cost to the public health system. This volume equals an additional MRI machine operating five hours per day, 7 days a week at a total cost that would be close to \$1 million if the scans had been billed to the public system.

Mr. Speaker, I think some of these numbers actually speak for themselves. And I know that the NDP has problems with private clinics, but it's helped 1,800 people since February 29th 2016, Mr. Speaker. And I think when it comes to some of the decisions that we make as a government, some of the most important decisions we have to make is what will best serve the people of our province. And I believe moving forward on some of these private MRIs, private CT scans that we committed to in the election . . . And I'll just bring up that we committed to CT scans in the election, and you know on April 4th what the results were.

So our commitment on the election campaign was, a Saskatchewan Party government will amend the province's health facilities licensing Act to allow individuals to pay for CT scans using the two-for-one mode now in place for MRI scans. Under this model, for every scan paid for privately, the clinic must provide one scan at no charge to a patient on the public list, thereby reducing the public wait list. This is the same model charged to the Saskatchewan Roughriders, and they pay up for a private MRI as well as WCB, Mr. Speaker. For the period September 1st to November 30th 2015, the average wait time for patients to receive a non-emergency CT scan in Saskatchewan was 26.5 days.

[12:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, this motion is about trying to provide the best care for the people of the province, for patients that need to get access to timely health care. And I think when we joined this

debate, I believe that the members opposite didn't have the newest numbers that we now have as of . . . well this release actually is as of Oct 20th, 2016, so it's today, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm thinking that they might want to change their position on this policy, Mr. Speaker. I think the members opposite, they're good people; I think they want to provide some service to the people of the province. And I believe that they will see that this decision that was made by our government last term, in the promise that we made, the commitment we made when we campaigned to provide better health care, I think they might agree that this is working.

I know it's something that is much different from their ideology, but I think for once they're going to put ideology in the back seat and care more about patients first, care more about people that are waiting to get a CT scan to know what their health situation is. And I was going to talk about a few friends of mine that have used some of these scans, but I actually came across a letter to the editors on November the 4th, "MRI reality must trump ideology." And this is from the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker, and it says:

My wife recently had an MRI done at Mayfair Diagnostics in Regina. She was referred there by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. The service was outstanding, especially by technician Kevin. When informed that my wife has shotgun pellets in her body, he researched her records to be sure that the MRI would be safe. The next time we need an MRI we won't be waiting 11 months.

Mr. Speaker, there's a couple more, and these are from people that have used the new MRI's and CT scans in the province. And from another letter was:

I was diagnosed with blood cancer, which spread to my spine, causing paralysis from the chest down.

My doctor asked if I would pay for an MRI in Calgary. It was done in three days and showed five tumours on my back.

If I had not gone to Calgary, I would not be here today.

I am not one of those rich friends of the government who has lots of money to jump to the top of the line using a credit card — as CUPE's ads imply.

What is wrong with private clinics if . . . [it saves lives]?

Private MRIs will create jobs here and put money into our economy. This would provide more opportunities to keep our children in our province.

Why not make Saskatchewan a leader in health care instead of a follower?

Incidentally, I spent three months in the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon for cancer treatment and a week in Swift Current Hospital for a bladder infection.

The food in RUH was gourmet compared with that in Swift Current [sorry] — which I'm told is trucked in from

Regina. It was horrible.

I must say the staff of both hospitals are amazing.

To Premier Wall, I say this: Your government needs to use some common sense on simple things like hospital food.

To the brains at CUPE, stop playing politics with the lives of me and my fellow citizens.

And these are from people across the province that have used the system to their advantage, Mr. Speaker. And I think when people come out and say how much they've benefited from our policies, our change in policies from what used to be done by the former government, and being able to talk with people and see the benefits they and their friends and their family has had, I think it really goes to the heart of what we think about health care on this side of the House, is we need to put patients first. We need to try new and innovative ideas so that people can get better health care, safer, faster.

And I believe that goes to the heart of this motion brought forward by the member from Saskatoon University last session. In last session we didn't have some of the number that we do now, and I'm going to say that I think these are numbers that show that our direction in health care is showing that we are on the right track. We know that there's a lot more work to do, a lot more work to do in the health care sector, and I think we have . . . The minister is going to take a big bite out of that. I know he's enjoying his time.

And I think the former minister of Health is enjoying his time with Energy and Resources now. And he did a fantastic job for four years, and some of these were piloted under his leadership. And the numbers work out, Mr. Speaker. The numbers show that being able to make some different choices in health care and being innovative leaders, like the statement said in the letter to the editor in the *Leader-Post*, why can't we be leaders in health care? We have for many, many years chosen some different routes in health care and been able to lead. And I think we can do that once again. Saskatchewan can be a leader once again in Canada.

And a couple more letters to the editor I would like to read before wrapping up my statements. "MRI reality must trump ideology." And this is an article:

Dr. Sally Mahood stated that Saskatchewan has a system in which health regions prioritize the need for MRIs. This sounds great in a quote.

What Dr. Mahood did not mention is that all physicians in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR) were recently sent a memorandum from the radiologist head of the MRI section indicating that the RQHR MRI department is unable to meet target deadlines established by the Ministry of Health by . . . [urgent] classification.

The wait time for arthrogram investigations is currently up to one year. Elective MRI scans currently take up to five months for most examinations.

It's all very well for Dr. Mahood to speak from an

ideological point of view supporting the current system. Full disclosure of the current facts show that the system is not working. The Workers Compensation Board of Saskatchewan certainly knows this. The WCB pays for private scans to get ahead of the usual wait times.

So I think:

As a family physician, I have seen an increase over the past few years in the number of patients heading out of country to get the treatment they need.

We need to move beyond ideology and deal with the facts.

And that was a letter submitted by Dr. John Morris. And I think that's the most important comment that we can make, is we need to move away from ideology to a fact-based discussion and talk about how people are getting health care sooner, faster, safer, with some of the new improvements that have gone on over the past couple of years in the health care sector.

I, for one, am always going to be a voice for the people. I have friends in the Walsh Acres area and a couple older gentlemen I play hockey with that have had to get MRIs because they have hurt knees because they are getting older so . . . And they said they've had fantastic . . .

An Hon. Member: — What are you saying about getting older, bad knees?

Mr. Steinley: — Sorry, sorry, Deputy, sorry, Whip. But I just want to . . . I'll end with saying I think we're going to need to bring forward some more innovative ideas in the health sector to ensure that people are getting the care they need. And I'll support our current Health minister in any endeavour to do that, because getting people the timely care they need is the most important, and it's what's most important to this side of the government. And we'll put patient care over ideology every time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank the Regina Walsh Acres minister — or MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], sorry — for all his wisdom and thoughts. And I just . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, well some wisdom. Anyway, MRIs and CT scans are very important, and I think if we can get people to support this and get health care quicker, I would be very much in favour of it.

There's a lot more I'd like to say about the motion, and in the coming weeks when the motion comes back I'd like to be able to speak on it. But right now I'd like to move to adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Canora-Pelly has moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry. The member from Canora-Pelly — I got a little anxious here, being the first week — has moved adjournment on debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:24.]

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