



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

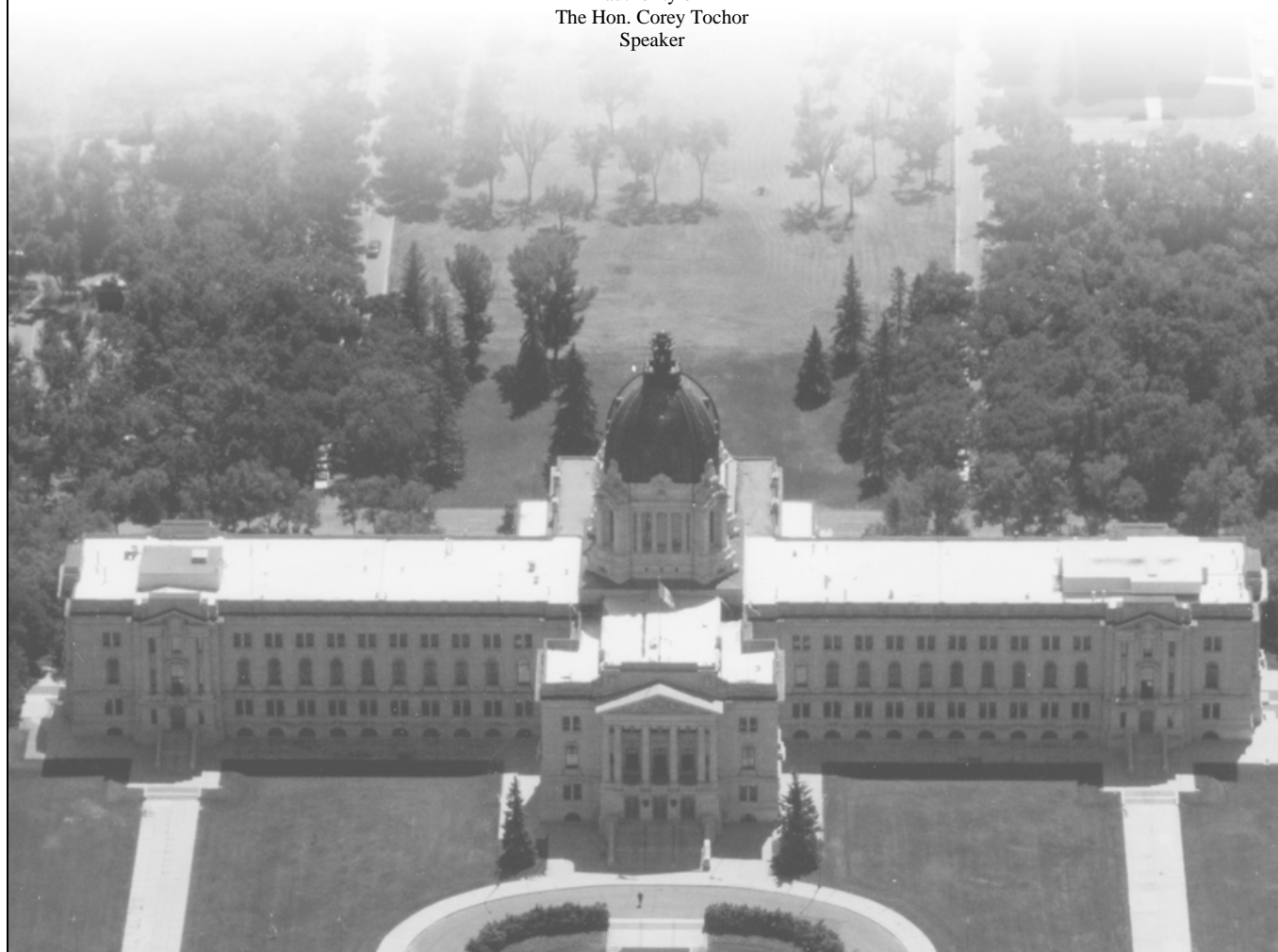
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

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Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

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Rancourt, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

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Wall, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

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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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery, it's my privilege to welcome a friend of mine — unlike the Minister of Health who doesn't have that many friends apparently, and too bad — is the mayor of Prince Albert, His Worship Greg Dionne. Mayor Dionne was first elected as councillor in Prince Albert in 2003. In 2012 he was elected as mayor and in October, this past October, he was re-elected to that position with a substantial majority.

The people of Prince Albert are fortunate to have a committed individual in Mayor Dionne who has worked tirelessly to put his city first. And he's committed years of service to the community of Prince Albert. I look forward to working with him and his council in the next coming years to make Prince Albert the best that it can be.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I did not mention the strong leadership that Mayor Dionne demonstrated this past summer overseeing the water crisis in Prince Albert. He and his team were outstanding. And I should mention that after all of that, the city of Prince Albert recently placed second in a Western Canada water taste challenge. So they're back on track, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Mayor Dionne to his legislature.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — I ask for extended leave for an introduction.

The Speaker: — Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's two special guests I want to introduce in your gallery. That's Mayor Greg Dionne and Mayor Marcel Roy. Mayor Dionne recently won a second term as mayor of Prince Albert, having first been elected mayor in 2012. He is Prince Albert's 29th mayor. Before being elected mayor, he served as a councillor in ward 2 for nine years. As well, Greg spent 27 years in property management, most notably at the Gateway Mall in downtown Prince Albert.

Mayor Dionne has served on many boards and committees. He is currently the vice-chair of the Board of Police Commissioners for the city of Prince Albert. Mayor Dionne has also been involved with numerous local organizations in many

capacities such as Prince Albert Raiders hockey club, Victoria Hospital Foundation, and fundraising for the Marion Aquatics Pool. Nationally, Mayor Dionne has held several positions on the Canadian police board, including as treasurer, Vice-Chair, and chairman of the Canadian police board.

And I agree with the member across that Mayor Dionne showed great leadership this summer when dealing with the water crisis in our situation. And I am sure that we will continue to see that type of decision and compassionate leadership over the next four years. And I look forward to working with you, also with Mayor Marcel Roy.

Mr. Speaker, Mayor Roy is new to civic politics and was recently elected as mayor of Weyburn, and I believe he was just sworn in earlier this week. Mayor Roy is a resourceful and knowledgeable businessman and has operated an industrial safety training business since 1992. Mayor Roy has served the citizens of Weyburn as one of the first emergency medical technicians in the province for two years, and a police officer with the Weyburn Police Service for over 30 years and retired as sergeant.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that Mayor Roy will be a great leader for Weyburn, and I look forward to working with him also in the future. And I ask that all members welcome both of these leaders in our province to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too want to join in, in welcoming the new mayor of Weyburn, Marcel Roy, to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would note for people that followed the campaign in Weyburn, and if members didn't, I would certainly encourage them to try to find a couple of introductory videos to our new mayor. One was voiced by Morgan Freeman and the other was voiced by Christopher Walken, and so I'm afraid that my introduction of the new mayor is going to be quite underwhelming compared to those.

But I would just add, as the member opposite has said, Marcel Roy has been a long-standing member of the community of Weyburn and has been very active and involved in community issues, particularly as has been pointed out, one of the first EMTs [emergency medical technician] in Saskatchewan. A 30-year veteran of the police service as well. For over 20 years now, has provided safety services, particularly in the oil patch where he does safety training for a number of individuals and a number of companies.

Mr. Speaker, he was sworn in earlier this week, and I would just like to say that I am looking forward to working with Mayor Roy as he assumes his role as the mayor of Weyburn. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Marcel to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce a group of students here from the University of Regina, in the west gallery. They hail from countries all over the world and have chosen Saskatchewan and specifically the University of Regina for their post-secondary education.

And I'd like to welcome the following students, if you could give a wave: Daniel Soto-Lopez from Mexico, in Master of Science, industrial systems engineering; Sua Park from South Korea, doing a Bachelor of Education; Tingting Liu from China, in Bachelor of Business Administration; Umar Ahsan from Pakistan, in Master of Science, electronics systems engineering; Tolulade Otayemi — I hope I have that correct — from Nigeria, doing a Bachelor of Social Work; Dayo Stephen Ogunyale from Nigeria, in Master of Science, industrial systems engineering; Gurmeet Kaur from India, in Bachelor of Business Admin; Dr. Abdul Kader Siddique Meer from Bangladesh, doing his Bachelor of Science; Khansa Irfan from Pakistan, doing a Bachelor of Health Studies; and Meiling Hao from China.

I would also like to welcome the associate director of international student services at the University of Regina, Haroon Chaudhry, as well as Cassandra Loustel, life skills advisor from U of R [University of Regina] International.

Mr. Speaker, this week is International Education Week when we celebrate students who've chosen to study here from abroad and encourage our own students to take advantage of international study opportunities. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these U of R students in the legislature today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming these impressive international students to their Legislative Assembly and certainly Mr. Chaudhry and the others from the services that are provided at the University of Regina in making sure that we're working alongside international students to ensure that their experience and their educational gains are maximized, Mr. Speaker.

But certainly having graduated as an undergrad from the University of Regina and then later on as a grad from the master's in public administration program, there's always been a vital component on the University of Regina campus that has been from around the world. But that international component certainly grows stronger and more vibrant and diverse all the time. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, in terms of ensuring that we benefit as a province from that contribution from people coming here, I'm hoping of course that they will be considering Saskatchewan and Canada in their future as they complete their

education and look to put that knowledge and that skill to use.

So again I join with the minister in welcoming these individuals to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, may it be their Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan that they come to again and again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery — and I'll ask her to stand up briefly — is Chris Guérette who is the new Chair of the francophone school division in our province. I want to, on behalf of all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], wish her congratulations on becoming the Chair. We look forward to working with her in the future. I'm pleased that she came down for a short meeting earlier today and want to wish her and her board members all the best. And we look forward to working with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the minister in welcoming Christiane Guérette to her Legislative Assembly. Christiane is a good friend of mine, and very welcome, as all people are, in our legislature. Not only is she the new president of the francophone school board, Mr. Speaker, but she is also the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders Association. Many of us would know her from her work with the realtors association. And my time when I got to know Christiane was when she was very involved with Equal Voice, and bringing a chapter of Equal Voice here in Saskatchewan. She is a huge proponent of increasing the number of women in politics, and I know she appreciates that our caucus is half women, Mr. Speaker.

Christiane also has two amazing little boys, Jan-Sébastien and Louis-Pascal, who are wonderful friends of Ophelia. Ophelia actually thinks they're two of the most marvellous little boys who've ever lived, Mr. Speaker.

And with Christiane, I know Mr. Norris, Rob Norris, who everybody knows in this House, he is here as well today. And he's also a constituent of mine; it was quite a surprise, door knocking in this last election, to find Mr. Norris living in Montgomery. So I would like to welcome these two fine guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the other members of the Legislative Assembly, 24 grade 7 and 8 students from MacNeill School.

This is my fourth school group that have come this fall. So that's kind of . . . I think we've got the record this session of the number of school groups that have attended.

And accompanying these 24 grade 7 and 8 students is their teacher, Ms. Joella Klein, and also their educational assistant,

Ms. Kari Deics. So please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. And I will be meeting with them later on this morning. So welcome, and give us all a wave. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join with the member opposite to welcome Rob Norris to his legislature today. Rob's no stranger to this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. He's been a good friend for many years and an ongoing confidant of mine and a number of people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. So I wanted to welcome Rob back in his legislature, and if everybody could help me and join in welcoming him here.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a friend of mine sitting in the east gallery. No stranger to rural Saskatchewan, Sean Wilson from G.W. Construction is here. I just wanted to introduce him. He's also the president of the Canora-Pelly constituency, and during the election campaign the Premier had the privilege of taking one of Sean's vehicles for a little spin in Buchanan. And recently Sean just became elected the mayor of Buchanan. So I ask all members to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again to present a petition to reverse the cuts to the Lighthouse program. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that in April 2014, the minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would "... take pressure off existing detox facilities, hospitals, and police cells while keeping people safe, especially in our brutally cold winters." The petitioners also point out that very same day, Mr. Speaker, that the minister of Health said, "We want to ensure that individuals with mental health and addictions issues have a safe place to stay."

[10:15]

The petitioners also point out that since that time, Mr. Speaker, in supporting the stabilization unit, that they've repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. And again, Mr. Speaker, we only need to look to the Saskatoon Health Region that has experienced record over capacity in recent weeks, Mr. Speaker. Clearly the Lighthouse isn't the whole problem, Mr. Speaker, but making cuts to the Lighthouse certainly doesn't help. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately reverse their recent cuts to funding that allows extremely vulnerable people to access the services of the Lighthouse stabilization unit in Saskatoon, and revisit their imposition

of a strict and narrow definition of homelessness in November of 2015 which forced the Lighthouse to cut back its hours of essential services in February of 2016, and take immediate steps to ensure that homeless people in Saskatchewan have emergency shelter, clothing, and food available to them before more lives are lost.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from North Battleford, Regina, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. And 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, the signatories of this petition are from Muenster, Humboldt, Pilger, and Burr. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today 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, the Wakamow Valley Authority lost its statutory funding of \$127,000 from the Saskatchewan government in addition to \$30,000 in supplemental funding. This loss of annual funding negatively affected the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands, repair its facilities, and provide services to Moose Jaw and the surrounding community. And we know that on June 21st, 2016 the provincial government voted in favour of this bill, resulting in those cuts to Wakamow and subsequent job losses. 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:

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 Wakamow Valley Authority.

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

And, 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 for a second bridge for Prince Albert:

That the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North. With no other crossing, heavy truck traffic must be rerouted, adding a significant amount of cost for the businesses in and around Prince Albert in terms of losses or added expenses;

That current residences, businesses, and tourists in Prince Albert and northern communities require safe and efficient transportation infrastructure that includes adequate bridges;

That the Sask Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and this critical infrastructure issue;

That local municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial government and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model;

That the support of the people and municipal governments of Prince Albert and neighbouring communities for a second bridge is overwhelming and has been joined by support from industry groups, the Saskatchewan association of regional municipalities, and many others across the province.

And that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. I will read the prayer:

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 begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing these petitions, they live in Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of sexual abuse prevention curriculum in Saskatchewan. Those signing this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: Saskatchewan has the second highest rate of sexual child abuse in Canada. Stats Canada data shows that 55 per cent of all sexual abuse offences, victims of sexual abuse offences, were children under the age of 18.

Child abuse has lasting impacts, Mr. Speaker. These include mental health impacts, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], depression, anxiety, panic attacks, low self-esteem, as well as decreased school attendance, and decreased productivity throughout the lifespan.

Victims of childhood sexual abuse are four times more likely to commit suicide, and currently there is no comprehensive

elementary or secondary curriculum regarding the prevention and reporting of sexual child abuse in Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take immediate and concrete action to develop and implement Erin's Law. Such legislation would ensure that a comprehensive health education program be developed and implemented which would require age-appropriate sexual abuse, assault awareness, and prevention education in grades pre-K through grade 12, along with school training of staff on the prevention of sexual child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, those citizens signing this petition today reside in Wood Mountain, Lloydminster, Warman, Qu'Appelle, and Regina. I do so submit.

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 sell-off of SaskTel. The petitioners point out that in the recent election campaign, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party promised that they would not privatize SaskTel. But the petitioners also point out that instead of looking at their own waste and scandal, the Sask Party is now talking about breaking their promise and looking to sell off SaskTel to make a quick dollar, in addition to up to 49 per cent of other of the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And the petitioners point out that SaskTel is owned by all of us, and it was built with Saskatchewan hard work, innovation, and pride. 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 to keep our valued Crown corporation in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this particular batch of petitions is signed by citizens from Regina and Swift Current. I so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise yet again 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 budget. Those on this side of the House know that 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.

Mr. Speaker, those signing the petition today come from Glenavon, Grenfell, Lumsden, Laird, Swift Current, Regina, and Martensville. I do so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

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 the North. NORTEP has a positive economic impact in northern Saskatchewan. NORTEP provides a highly quality, face-to-face instruction and services to students. The province's financial deficit will not be fixed by cutting indigenous education in the North and a program that has served the North 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 hundreds and hundreds of people in northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Pense Rancher Inducted Into Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to acknowledge a local rancher who was recently inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame. John Willmott moved to Pense from southern Ontario in the 1970s. This is where he and his wife, Marg, farmed and were respected Angus breeders.

Mr. Speaker, because of John's hard work, the agriculture industry has benefited tremendously. John was a respected beef judge and Angus breeder and travelled all over the world promoting the show and our agricultural industry. John went on and continued his vision with Canada's Farm Progress Show, making it a premier event.

Mr. Speaker, a few more accomplishments I want to include. John served as president, director, and member of 19 different agricultural organizations throughout his career. He was also involved with the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan, the Farm Stress Line, and humane societies. He received the Chris Sutter builder award for contributions made to the development of the Canadian Western Agribition. John and his wife, Marg, were honoured with the Saskatchewan honour roll of the Saskatchewan Livestock Association, and John is already an inductee of both the Canadian western agriculture hall of fame and the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, John is a leader in the agricultural industry, and I can't think of a more fitting inductee into Canada's agriculture

hall of fame. I ask members to join me in congratulating John Willmott on this accomplishment. Thank you.

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

Ukrainian Harvest Festival Held in Prince Albert

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday November 12th, I had the pleasure of attending the Ukrainian harvest festival where more than 50 dancers ages 4 to 18, performed dances from various regions of the Ukraine. The building was at full capacity as 500 attendees came out to enjoy the dancing and the wonderful food. Mr. Speaker, this event sells out every year, and it is truly an enjoyable evening for everyone.

The children of the Barveenok dance troupe have been practising and getting ready for this event since September. They performed dances and wore traditional Ukrainian apparel which corresponded with their region. As well, two professional dance troupes from Saskatoon came to the harvest festival to join in the festivities and to take part in the dancing.

Mr. Speaker, it was a treat to see my former legislative intern Marnie Howlett perform with one of the Saskatoon groups. Having professional dancers in attendance inspires the younger dancers who are just starting out. They see that they can continue to dance even as adults and can do so professionally.

It was an especially joyful event as this year Saskatchewan's Ukrainian community is celebrating 125 years in our province. Prince Albert has a large number of people of Ukrainian descent who enjoy celebrating their heritage, and the harvest festival is a great example of this.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join with me in congratulating the organizers and dancers of the Ukrainian harvest festival on a successful and enjoyable event.

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

Inaugural Ceremony for Science, Technology, Innovation and Collaboration Awards

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had the real privilege of attending the first annual Science, Technology, Innovation and Collaboration Awards which was initiated and hosted by the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority. The STIC [Science, Technology, Innovation and Collaboration] Awards were created to celebrate the greatest minds in the Saskatoon region and honour the people, projects, and products that contribute to the Saskatoon region's world-class science and technology sector.

The STIC awards are comprised of four award categories. VIDO-InterVac was awarded the project award, which recognizes a project that has the potential to contribute significantly to its sector. Solido Design Automation took home the product award, which recognizes an innovative product or service that has significantly impacted its sector. Sask Polytechnic was awarded the team award, which recognizes a passionate, knowledgeable, and collaborative team that has

made unique contributions to their sector. And Mr. Dale Lemke was awarded the ambassador award which recognizes an aspiring individual that has made extensive contributions to the Saskatoon region by promoting science, technology, and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, there was lots of talented and bright minds at the event last night, and I am so proud to know that they all came from Saskatoon and surrounding regions.

I ask that all members join me in thanking SREDA [Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority] for hosting such a wonderful event and in congratulating all the award winners who work so hard to make Saskatchewan an innovative province. Thank you.

[10:30]

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

Girl Guides of Canada Youth Recognition Ceremony

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, on October 30th I was honoured to be invited to say a few words at the Girl Guides of Canada youth recognition ceremony at the Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon. Amazing young women from around the province were honoured in recognition of their achievements in the Girl Guide program as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Award program.

Fourteen of these young women were awarded the Canada Cord Award, the highest achievement that a Girl Guide can receive in Canada. I know how much work this was as I was able to get my Canada Cord in 1976, and in fact I received it right here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. There were also 10 awards given for community service and seven of these young women were also recognized with the Chief Commissioner Awards. Finally three women were awarded the bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Duke of Edinburgh International Award recognizes participants' milestones at the bronze, silver, and gold levels during which they challenge themselves in the following areas: service, skill development, physical recreation, adventurous journey, and residential project.

Throughout the ceremony there were selections of music played — very well, I might add — by Katie Turnbull, Simratia Hamre Wyka, and Sydney Morrison.

The Girl Guides of Saskatchewan enables girls to be confident, resourceful, and courageous, and to make a difference in the world. We all know how important that is in these days, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these young women are on a mission to better themselves and their communities. The Girl Guides of Saskatchewan are the organization of choice for girls and women looking to make a positive difference in their community. I was honoured to be part of this ceremony acknowledging their incredible achievements, and I ask all members to join with me in congratulating them.

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

Outstanding Youth Philanthropist Awards Presented in Regina

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to bring your attention to a special event that I had the opportunity to attend. Every year in our community, thousands of people work to make a difference in the lives of everyone. No matter the cause they support or whether they make financial, volunteer, or in-kind donations, these self-sacrificing actions are worthy of recognition.

Regina's 2016 National Philanthropy Day Awards took place Tuesday at Conexus Arts Centre. On behalf of SaskEnergy I presented Outstanding Youth Philanthropist Awards. The Outstanding Youth Awards are presented to nominated children and youth who have shown exceptional volunteerism, leadership in their communities, and are meant to foster future generation of philanthropists.

In 2016, Outstanding Youth Award recipients were Payton Sernick, Maggie DeCoste, Maia Smith, Michaela Markwart, Jared — better known as JD — Muir, the RAK Pack, which is Random Acts of Kindness Group from the Haig School in Weyburn.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join me in congratulating the winning recipients of the Outstanding Youth Awards for their volunteerism and their leadership in our community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Fysh's Pharmasave Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to recognize a small business in Moose Jaw that recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Fysh Pharmasave held a celebration on October 22nd at their store location on Main Street. The festivities included a number of special in-store pricings, a huge anniversary cake, and of course that friendly service that has always been a part of Fysh's Pharmasave.

Mr. Speaker, Fysh's Pharmasave opened as Leonard Fysh Drugs in 1916, and for the last century has been a staple for Moose Jaw regular shopping and pharmaceutical services. Although its location has been at a number of different addresses throughout Moose Jaw's downtown and has had several different owners, it is a small business that has been a huge part of building our community through both good times and times that have been a little bit tougher.

Fysh's Pharmasave is not only celebrating its century in business but has also been awarded the MJBEX [Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards] Business of the Year Award, and throughout its history has had a number of Moose Jaw awards for its customer service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Fysh's Pharmasave, their owners, their staff, and their loyal customer base for 100 years of servicing the community of Moose Jaw. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Education Week

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to announce that November 14th to 18th is International Education Week. This week is celebrated in more than 100 countries.

Since 2012 the number of international students studying here has grown by 32.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we welcome international students. There are over 6,800 international students studying in Saskatchewan today. We also encourage our students to study abroad, and have more than 1,000 students from Saskatchewan studying abroad.

Mr. Speaker, international education connects Saskatchewan and Canada to other parts of the world. It gives students the opportunity to develop new skills and learn new languages, cultures, and traditions. It brings diverse perspectives into our classrooms and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, our government is developing a number of strategic initiatives to support the international education strategy. These include a familiarization tour of Saskatchewan for overseas education agents, a quality assurance framework for out-of-country programs delivered by Saskatchewan institutions, and engagement strategies for each of Saskatchewan's priority international education markets.

Mr. Speaker, international education is important to our province and to our country. We are pleased to celebrate it through this very special week. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Let's hope for a very respectful question period today with well-thought-of questions and answers.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, day after day, the Sask Party fails to answer anything about the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land scandal. Answer nothing. They put up that minister to bring forward tired and weak talking lines and attack, Mr. Speaker. But day after day, we'll come back here; we'll keep fighting to get to the bottom of this scandal, rest assured.

So let's keep it simple here today for the Premier, and hopefully we'll finally get some basic answers. The first time we know that this was discussed in cabinet, the Attorney General recommended rejecting it because they didn't know who owned the numbered company that owned the land. Now the concealed identity has now been revealed. We know that the Sask Party-supporting land baron from Alberta, who also rents land to the former minister of the GTH, was the person that owned that land.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question is: when did the Premier find this out? When did he find out that the person that owned the numbered company rented land to his minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what hasn't changed apparently in the House over the last number of days is the willingness of the Leader of the Opposition to engage in his personal smear campaign of the member for Kindersley.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the questions raised around the issue, we took very seriously. The opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, said this is a very serious matter and it should be investigated by the Provincial Auditor. That's what the NDP [New Democratic Party] said. We agreed. I asked that that investigation happen.

Subsequent to the request for the investigation and the beginning of that investigation by the independent officer of this Legislative Assembly, the Provincial Auditor, we received a request that there be access to all cabinet documents and all cabinet minutes, including the scenario that is being referenced now by the Leader of the Opposition. And we agreed to the auditor having access to all of those internal cabinet documents.

She did her report. She has since commented on her report to members opposite and members on this side of the House in the Public Accounts Committee of this legislature. And she has said clearly that there was full co-operation from government. And moreover, she has systematically debunked a lot of the conspiracies that have been raised by members, whether it's a phone call or a leaked cabinet document that wasn't a leaked cabinet document.

And she also concluded in her press release, Mr. Speaker, and this is important — it goes right to the member's question; this is the direct answer — she concluded in her press release that there was no conflict of interest, that there was no fraud, that there was no wrongdoing by the board of directors of GTH, and that includes the minister. That is the direct and clear answer. Will the member, will the Leader of the Opposition accept the work of the Provincial Auditor?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's getting more strange by the day in here. And the Premier can shout all he wants, or he could answer the very basic, the very basic question that was put to him, Mr. Speaker. So I'll try again. We know that this deal went to cabinet in 2012, and one of the reasons that it wasn't approved is that there was a concealed identity. This was noted by the Justice minister as a concern.

Now others may have known that it was the Sask Party-supporting land baron from Alberta, who also rented land or rents land to the former minister of the GTH. This question is simple. To the Premier: we'll demand an answer. Saskatchewan people deserve nothing less. Did he know? And if not, when did he find this out?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the most important part of the debate with respect to this particular item in 2012 would be whether or not an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, upon reviewing this particular minute, this particular part of the decision and all of the land transaction in question, if that independent officer of the Legislative Assembly concluded that there was no conflict of interest. That's the most important part of all of this.

Moreover, members opposite have said, yes well the Provincial Auditor's report's not good enough — others, I think some pundits, have said the same thing — because it wasn't a forensic audit. When the provincial . . . Well and they just said, that's true; that's what they agreed with. They wanted it to be a forensic audit. What they have ignored completely, Mr. Speaker, is this: that the Provincial Auditor has testified to a committee that they chair, of this Legislative Assembly, that there was an accountant with forensic auditing capacity that was a part of the investigation precisely so the auditor's team could determine if indeed a forensic audit was necessary. She indicated it wasn't. She indicated her work was broader than a forensic audit.

And again I conclude, because this is the most important part of the question for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, she concluded in her press release that there was no fraud, that there was no conflict of interest, that there was no wrongdoing on the part of the board which includes the minister, Mr. Speaker, which includes . . . involves the entire land transaction. Again I ask the members opposite: when will they stop ignoring the work of the Provincial Auditor?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The Premier knows full well it wasn't a forensic audit. He also knows the statement that he references does not include the Sask Party cabinet, that it exonerates no one, and that people deserve some basic answers. Now if the Premier has nothing to hide, why can't he answer this very basic but important question that Saskatchewan people deserve an answer to?

And the auditor did her job. It's past time that this Premier did his, Mr. Speaker. And so very direct, very simple, very straightforward: when did the Premier learn who owned the numbered company that owned the land at the heart of this scandal? When did the Premier learn that the concealed identity, that the numbered company, that the land was owned by the landlord of the minister responsible?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — The Leader of the Opposition just said that he supported the work of the Provincial Auditor. Well why won't he accept her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? She went through a very thorough audit. She had access to all of the documents to which she requested access, including cabinet documents. She did, by her own testimony just last week, a very thorough job.

The Leader of the Opposition also raised the issue of a forensic audit versus the audit that she conducted. Here's what she said in committee, Mr. Speaker:

. . . frankly, if we did a forensic audit, there would . . . [have been] a lot of matters that we included within our report that would . . . have been [not] provided to this committee.

She did, by her own testimony, provided more information to the committee because of the path that she chose to go down, Mr. Speaker. These are the words of the auditor. Every day the Leader of the Opposition claims, he claims that he supports the work that the auditor did. But he dismissively, arrogantly and dismissively does not recognize the work that she did on this matter. And her conclusion, Mr. Speaker, after all of the work that she did on the matter, at the direction of this Assembly, through the Public Accounts Committee, was that there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

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

State of Provincial Finances

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this GTH scandal cost us \$25 million, and their excuse is that it's just a terrible case of Sask Party mismanagement. Mr. Speaker, two well-connected Sask Party supporting businessmen were handed \$11 million of Saskatchewan people's money in profit. That's more than mismanagement.

But if you want to see Sask Party mismanagement, let's look at their budget. They've added \$7 billion of debt in seven years, and now another billion. And the Premier likes to say, deficits are a lot like potato chips; they're not very good for your long-term health, but I'll bet you can't stop at just one. But, Mr. Speaker, it's not a minute on the lips and a lifetime on the Sask Party's hips. No. They're making the people of Saskatchewan pay for Sask Party mismanagement. Instead of another week of leaking out which promises they'll break, which taxes they'll hike, or programs they'll cut, will the minister release the full fiscal update in this House today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will be bringing out a full midyear update before the end of November, as we are legislatively required to do, Mr. Speaker, and as we promised to do for the people of this province. I think we can agree in this House — I hope that the honourable critic, the Finance critic can agree — that we've had a precipitous drop in commodity prices and commodity revenues for the province over the last 18 months. As a matter of fact, I think the Finance critic was quoted here recently as saying, "It's inevitable . . ." I quote, Mr. Speaker: "It's inevitable that they're going to have shortfalls when commodity prices are what they are."

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province, the people in particular in southeastern Saskatchewan, the west side of the province, understand when oil drops from over \$100 a barrel down to below \$40 a barrel, it's going to have an impact on your revenues, Mr. Speaker, to the tune of about \$1.2 billion

over the course of the last 18 months — \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker. At the same time, this government has committed to increase funding, increase funding more than what they campaigned on in their platform document on April, Mr. Speaker, on April 4th election, Mr. Speaker.

We've spent more in health care. We've spent more in education. We've spent more in highways and infrastructure in building this province, Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of neglect in our highways and infrastructure, in our schools, in our health care facilities in this province, Mr. Speaker. We've turned that around.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this minister needs to acknowledge that they've been in government for almost a decade. If he wants to look to history, he should think back to the last government that pushed this province to the brink of financial ruin, and it shouldn't be too hard, because he worked for that one, too, Mr. Speaker. But here in present day, the comedy prices are no surprise to anyone paying attention. We created the rainy day fund, the rainy day fund, for times like these, but the Sask Party drained it during the good times.

Over the last few days the Finance minister has been softening the ground and leaking details, but he can't keep his story straight. Yesterday in the House he touted population numbers and the success of the graduate retention program, but prior to question period he told reporters that they may cut the program.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell students, and every other Sask person who uses government programs and services every day, exactly which programs and services they'll be cutting and how many promises they'll be breaking?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that on June 1st we announced a forecasted deficit of about \$434 million in this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. We see that our revenues are going to be down about \$400 million overall in the various taxes — corporate income tax, personal income tax, fuel tax, consumption tax — to bring us into a forecasted deficit in the \$800 million range for this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to provide some context and perspective here. I mean, the hon. member gets up every day and says, they borrowed billions of dollars here, billions of dollars here. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this fiscal year, this province, the province of Saskatchewan will have a debt to GDP [gross domestic product] ratio of about 19 per cent. It's the second best in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I've cautioned the member from Athabasca to come to order. Next question. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, we'll give the minister a chance to catch his breath. He seems awfully excited to jump up and

shake his finger and recite his attack lines. So since the broken promises, the tax hikes, the deep cuts the people of Saskatchewan will have to suffer through are the result of Sask Party mismanagement, waste, and scandal, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance tell this House, tell the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Regina Northeast what he thought of the GTH land scandal when it was brought to cabinet the first time? And why it was approved the second time?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, on this is that the Provincial Auditor and her team of experts looked into this matter and did a very thorough investigation. Just last week she was in front of the Public Accounts Committee and answered questions from that member, that particular member, on all of these matters. They were put to her directly by the member opposite, and her conspiracy theories were debunked one by one by the Provincial Auditor. All of them systematically were debunked by the Provincial Auditor. She underlined and reiterated her conclusion after having gone through all of these matters, having done a very thorough audit. And her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? There was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I've got a question for the Minister of Education, and hopefully we'll get an answer on this one. He keeps saying that nothing, absolutely nothing is off the table with regard to the review and cuts to our kids' schools. In fact the only thing that is clearly off the table is sufficient funding for education. While addressing school boards, the minister actually chastised them for not cutting.

Mr. Speaker, school boards are dipping into their reserves. Reserves are sort of like a rainy day fund, and since the Sask Party didn't fully fund the teachers' contract, it's fair to say it's raining. But the minister says that reserves can't be used to fund supports in our kids' classrooms. He actually opposes this responsible management. It's foreign to the Sask Party, so the minister wants school boards to cut.

Mr. Speaker, since school boards were responsible enough to create a rainy day fund and smart enough not to blow it in times of record revenue, why is the minister punishing them and our kids for not mismanaging things as badly as the Sask Party?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we think it's appropriate to have open and candid conversations with our school divisions. The members opposite asked for and supported summary financial accounting. We didn't tell the school divisions they couldn't use reserves. What we did tell them was that using reserves was the same as the government operating on a deficit, that their books are in fact our books, and they need to understand their revenues show on the one consolidated set of books for the entire province.

The members opposite asked for and they supported summary financial accounting. We agreed with it on this side of the House. We now have summary financial accounting. Mr. Speaker, whether it be SaskPower, Workers' Compensation, or the Auto Fund, it's all one set of books. The school divisions need to understand that their use of the reserves amounts to the same thing as an expenditure by government. We will work with them. We will give them as much support as they need, Mr. Speaker.

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, all of this cutting is a direct result of the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste. And since the Minister of Education didn't get a chance to answer the Leader of the Official Opposition's questions all week but has since found his feet and voice to answer mine, I'll give him an opportunity to answer the question that the Premier failed to answer now.

When did the Deputy Premier learn who owns the numbered company who owned the land? Did a colleague tell him? Did he look into it himself? Maybe he read about it in an online news article. When did the deputy minister learn the truth?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — More throwing of mud, Mr. Speaker. Invective insinuation. The smearing of the reputation of hon. members of this Assembly. This is the new modus operandi of the members opposite.

The Provincial Auditor was asked by members of this Assembly through the Public Accounts Committee to look into the matters being raised by the members opposite. She did so, Mr. Speaker. She did so again as recently as last week, directly responding to questions put to her by the members opposite.

That work that she did is being arrogantly dismissed by the members opposite. Every day they stand up and arrogantly dismiss the work of the Provincial Auditor. They don't recognize the great work that she did on this file. And what was her conclusion after looking into this matter on behalf of members of the Assembly? That there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and that there was no conflict of interest.

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

Funding for Health Care

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have heard a little bit more from the Minister of Education, particularly on his opinion on the Health minister's consultations not being broad enough.

But the Education minister may be heartened to know that the Health minister is following in his underfunding and bad-faith bargaining footsteps. That's right. The Health minister is also

refusing to cover the salaries his ministry bargained, specifically the joint job evaluations which ensure health care workers are paid for the skills they bring to the job. Mr. Speaker, hasn't the Health minister been paying attention? This move will make health regions' deficits worse. Already RQHR's [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] second quarter report shows the missing targets in surgery and emergency rooms, and they are projecting a \$13 million shortfall.

Just like in Education, this minister wants more cuts. The regions have already cut staff, and they aren't meeting ER [emergency room] and surgery targets. At what point does this minister acknowledge that this impacts patient care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We take the report from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region very seriously, Mr. Speaker, to the issues that came out in that report the member opposite raised, to wait times for surgery, and to ER wait times, Mr. Speaker.

On the ER front, it's important to remember that the CEO specifically mentioned — and again, we're concerned about the wait times, Mr. Speaker — but he specifically mentioned that people needing immediate care are getting immediate care, Mr. Speaker. This issue is not new to Saskatchewan. It's also not new across the country, Mr. Speaker. All provinces are struggling with that situation.

The surgery times, Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of surprised frankly that the member opposite would raise this, Mr. Speaker. We've made surgical wait initiatives a very important part of our government's platform going forward. Over \$300 million were spent on the surgical initiatives, Mr. Speaker, to lower wait times.

I see I'm running out of time, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up with that on the next question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How about this government and this minister not following through on collective agreements bargained in good faith, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's cuts and broken promises are the result of their mismanagement, scandal, and waste. So since the minister is refusing to offer real answers to questions about cuts in the Ministry of Health, in our hospitals, and to the care our families need, will the minister answer a question on one of the causes of the cuts — Sask Party mismanagement, Mr. Speaker?

He was around the cabinet table when the GTH was discussed . . . And they think this is quite funny, Mr. Speaker. They shouldn't be laughing, Mr. Speaker. This is a serious matter for the people of Saskatchewan. No one else is laughing, Mr. Speaker. When did he learn who owned the numbered company who owned the land? Or, Mr. Speaker, does he have any thoughts on this scandal that he'd like to share with us or with his constituents, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — The members opposite talk about getting to the bottom of the matter. Do you know who got to the bottom of the matter, Mr. Speaker? The Provincial Auditor got to the bottom of the matter.

And they can joke, they can joke opposite and heckle and guffaw and all of the things that they're doing about the Provincial Auditor's work, but the fact of the matter is the Provincial Auditor fully looked into all of these matters. The Provincial Auditor had full access to all of the documents that she requested access to. All of the individuals to whom she wished to interview, she was granted access. She frankly commented about how co-operative the government was.

And they can arrogantly dismiss all of that work opposite, and they're doing so again right now from their seat. The Health critic is doing that right now from her seat, the member from Riversdale dismissing the work of the Provincial Auditor.

But on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we support the work of the auditor. We accept her recommendations . . . Which I find ironic, her being the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, dismissing the work of the auditor.

The auditor though made a number of recommendations. We have accepted those recommendations. We're working on implementing them. And her conclusion doesn't change. There was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

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

Donations to Political Parties

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our election laws don't have any restrictions on payments from political parties to politicians. And as I'm sure the members opposite know, in politics, perception is reality. Serious and genuine questions can be raised, and the perception of the administrative competency and the neutrality of a government can be called into question when the companies that lobby government are able, within the campaign finance laws, to donate unlimited amounts of money to a party. And that party can then, again within the laws and regulations, pay a party or a leader or a Premier a bonus.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. I'm not accusing anyone of breaking election finance laws. It's the laws themselves that are broken, and it's unacceptable. The legislation needs to be changed. So will the Attorney General work with us and help change our broken and horribly out-of-date election finance laws so we can get big money out of Saskatchewan politics?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member knows that all such political donations need to be publicly accounted for and publicly reported, Mr.

Speaker. But the premise of his question clearly underlines the fact, or clearly underlined they needed to have a lobbying legislation in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we worked with the opposition to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan knew who was lobbying their elected officials.

So, Mr. Speaker, he makes some allegations of a nexus between the two of them but, Mr. Speaker, the lobbying legislation is there precisely so that people in Saskatchewan know who are lobbying their elected officials. Now I'm happy of the fact that he says he's not making any allegations in this House. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, lobbying laws are there. They are fully reported so that people that make donations, or people that don't make donations that lobby the government, have obligations to report and the public has a right to look at those reports, Mr. Speaker.

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'm a little disappointed in that answer. We all know the lobbying legislation doesn't go far enough to get big money out of politics. But I'm glad at least that he got to his feet.

Now the Attorney General was apparently the first member of the cabinet to raise a red flag about the GTH land scandal. He thought it was unwise to buy land from a company whose owner's identity was hidden. He said, without knowing the seller, you couldn't judge a possible conflict, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

When did the Attorney General learn who the true owner of the numbered company which owned the land was? Did a colleague tell him? Did he look into it himself? When did he learn the truth, Mr. Speaker? And why, a year later, was he okay with buying land from a known Sask Party supporter?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — More invective, more insinuation, more smearing of hon. members, more smearing of private citizens. That's what the NDP are doing here, Mr. Speaker, from a party that was found in contempt of parliament just four months ago — perhaps not surprising from a Leader of the Opposition on the verge of being found in contempt of parliament only a couple of short years ago, dismissing the work of the Provincial Auditor, heckling from their seats in question after question.

The Provincial Auditor did a very thorough job looking into this matter. By her own testimony, her own words, in fact taking longer than that to which the Public Accounts Committee asked her to report back, her conclusion at the end of all of that work — at the end of taking more time, at the end of doing a more thorough job than the members are asking for right now — that there was no fraud, there was no conflict of interest, and there was no wrongdoing.

The Speaker: — Why is the Minister of Central Services on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Request leave to introduce guests and a slightly extended introduction please.

The Speaker: — Is leave and the slightly longer introduction agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce some very special guests in the Legislative Assembly here today, sitting in the west gallery. Joining us are 26 students from Consul School and seven students from Val Marie School with the Chinook School Division in southwest Saskatchewan. Accompanying the students today are their teachers Tami Reynolds from Consul and principal Angela Clement from Val Marie, chaperones, and ministry officials from the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the students are here today to participate in a very worthwhile program known as A Day in the Legislative Assembly. This program provides students with an opportunity to learn about how laws are made, the role of members in the House, and the overall democratic process in their province. They will be given a tour of our historic Legislative Building and a chance to observe their MLAs at work. That should be good.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for agreeing to lead off a panel discussion with the students, followed by a question-and-answer session to be held right here in the Chamber this afternoon. I invite all members to join me in welcoming our guests to their Legislative Assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 186 and 187.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to questions 186 and 187.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Financial State of SaskPower

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as always, it is my honour to be able to rise in this Assembly and

enter into debate. And this is one, I think, that we're raising today is a very important debate, Mr. Speaker, and one that needs careful review by this House. Certainly the concern is the deep financial situation that SaskPower is finding itself in, and we're concerned about this government's intentions with respect to SaskPower.

So we wanted to highlight some of that in the House today and encourage some of the backbenchers to acknowledge that indeed the position SaskPower is being put in is a critical financial situation that is largely due to mismanagement and scandal and waste that this government has engaged in in the almost decade that they've been in power, Mr. Speaker.

So I think one of the things we talked about in terms of the impact on this mismanagement, in terms of SaskPower's ability to do its job, is of course the boondoggle of the one and a half billion dollars that they wasted on the CCS [carbon capture and storage] project, Mr. Speaker. And I say waste because Saskatchewan taxpayers do not own the technology. That technology is owned by a private company, and they are using it around the world to advance CCS in other formats, Mr. Speaker. But somehow this government saw that that was the most important thing that they could put the hard-earned dollars of taxpayers into, to the tune of one and a half billion dollars.

And what it's done is put Sask Party in a very precarious situation now because they've had only a certain amount of time to deal with the coal-fired emissions regulations that were imposed on the government and the people of Saskatchewan a few years ago. But we see that SaskPower hasn't been given the nimbleness and the ability to address that because of the fixation on carbon capture, Mr. Speaker.

And so I believe that this company is in some fairly serious financial difficulties. And certainly I want to just highlight for the House a good reflection of that is the way the debt ratio has been going for SaskPower. And we took a look at that a few days ago, but I'll raise it again here today. In 2007 . . . Now we've been told by economists and managers of large corporations that a good debt ratio for any corporation is between 65 per cent to 75 per cent. That's considered to be an acceptable range to have your debt invested in your company.

So where has the debt ratio been for SaskPower in the last few years? Well in 2007, the debt ratio was 59.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So we know that that was well below the sort of comfort range for debt ratios. SaskPower was in really good shape 10 years ago, Mr. Speaker, when their debt ratio was 59.7 per cent.

Now it started going up. In 2008 the debt ratio was 60.7 per cent. In 2009 the debt ratio went up to 61.4 per cent. Now in 2010 it did go down a little bit, back to 59.7 per cent. But in 2011, a huge jump to 63 per cent. So we're now well into that safety range for the debt ratio for SaskPower.

In 2012 what happened, Mr. Speaker? The debt ratio jumped up again to 4.4 per cent. A big jump, and one in the likes that we haven't seen for quite some time now — 4.4 per cent. Now we're looking at 67 per cent in 2016, and it's because of the immense cost of the carbon capture and sequestration project.

And, Mr. Speaker, as you know, SaskPower ratepayers, which are pretty much the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they have faced increases in the rates of SaskPower to the likes of, well 18 per cent in real numbers. But if you do it cumulatively, it's a much higher number, Mr. Speaker. And that's just in the last few years.

So we know that SaskPower is having to turn this back on the taxpayers. And the expensive things like carbon capture, which really is a form of taxation in terms of rate payments, Mr. Speaker, we know that that cost is being foisted on the taxpayers over and above the one and a half billion dollars that were spent just on that one project, Mr. Speaker.

We know also that in the rate review panel that it's not just residential customers that are suffering, Mr. Speaker. It's the industrial customers of SaskPower that are also suffering. We had concerns from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce at the rate review panel. We've had concerns from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers at the rate review panel. We had concerns of the Meadow Lake pulp mill raising concerns about the increasing rates of power at the rate review panel, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that is hurting a lot of people. It's not just hurting consumers in their residences, Mr. Speaker, but it's affecting the bottom line of these important industrial consumers of power as well, Mr. Speaker. So that's part of the problem for sure.

I think the other part of the problem is the inability that SaskPower has found itself in to actually deal with the new regulatory climate that we found ourselves in. As you know, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 this government actually introduced the technology fund bill to manage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That was in 2009. And the plan at the time was to include high emitters, which would include SaskPower, that would be . . . They would set a cap on the amount of emissions that were deemed acceptable, and then anything over that, they would be required to pay into the technology fund. So it would be a levy or a carbon capture price or whatever you want to call it, Mr. Speaker. But that money, according to The Conference Board of Canada, according to The Conference Board of Canada if they had indeed gone through with that plan, there would be over 1 billion additional dollars in our economy, and as well it would have created 8,600 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Now when you look at being able to be nimble and move into a green economy, that's exactly the opposite of what this government has done. So when oil prices drop, when there's a glut of oil being produced in the world and we lose 10,000 jobs in Saskatchewan, can we turn to this government for new green jobs that should have been produced if the technology fund had been introduced? Eighty-five hundred jobs would have been produced to date. And we see, Mr. Speaker, nothing. We see nothing. We see people losing their jobs, and nothing in this government is making them . . . turning the ability to have good, green, mortgage-paying, post-combustion type of jobs, Mr. Speaker, or post-carbon jobs, Mr. Speaker. And so that's a real problem when we see the way this government has simply stuck their head in the sand.

And I know they've put a lot of people within the public service in considerable disarray because of their inability at the cabinet level to make the right decisions and the proper directions so

that the Ministry of the Environment knows how they're going to be able to deal with these coal emission regulations, so that SaskPower knows exactly what their plan will be when it comes to implementation of these coal-fired regs.

Now the Minister of Environment, you know, I know he's been involved in a convention going on with world leaders about that. And I'm hoping that some of the things learned there will be shared with individuals in his ministry, Mr. Speaker. But I know there are good people in the ministry and in SaskPower who have some very good ideas about how we can move forward with this new world we're in when it comes to reducing emissions, Mr. Speaker. And we know that emissions reduction is important and that it's an important thing for our power entities to be able to deal with. So that's some of the big problems I think that SaskPower has been put into, Mr. Speaker.

The other question, I guess in terms of financial mismanagement — and this is a very serious, important question, and I certainly want to be able to pursue this in committee with the Minister for SaskPower when it comes to the new bill — we see that SaskPower has to again increase its borrowing capacity. Its borrowing capacity sat at \$5 billion for many, many, many years, Mr. Speaker. But unfortunately, and I think largely because of the carbon capture expenses, we see that they raised their borrowing authority to \$8 billion back in 2013.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know what happens with this government. They don't get it right the first time. They have to come back with another bill. This is another example of it. Here we are in 2016, increasing yet again the borrowing capacity of SaskPower. And we know that it's now going to be \$10 billion, so basically doubled from what it was for decades, Mr. Speaker. And the question is, why are they being put in that situation? I don't think we have to look very far, Mr. Speaker.

If you go down Dewdney Avenue and you go all the way out past the new Westerra development, past the bright lights for the GTH development site, past the turnoff to the Loblaws and CN [Canadian National] intermodal facility, past the brand new SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] warehouse, you will find yourself in what you would think is just open prairie, Mr. Speaker. But if you look at a map of the GTH, you will see that this is actually 140 acres that are purchased by SaskPower. Now you have to ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, why did SaskPower suddenly need to move its logistics centre out to the GTH in 2013? Very interesting question.

This was, if you recall, Mr. Speaker, around the same time that the GTH minister was trying really hard to assemble a package that would encourage cabinet to purchase the other 204 acres which is now basically an interchange for Sask Highways. So what happened, Mr. Speaker, that all of a sudden in 2013 . . . You don't see mention of it as a burning need prior in SaskPower annual reports, but all of a sudden in 2013 there was this burning need to acquire 140 acres of land that just had to be at a global transportation logistics centre, Global Transportation Hub. SaskPower's logistics centre is one where . . . In fact, they haven't said very much so we don't exactly know. And we're going to have a lot of questions for the minister about what

exactly the plan is.

[11:15]

But if you look in the 2016 annual report, the most recent annual report from SaskPower, you will note that, oh my goodness, they're not actually doing anything with that centre right now. They're actually shelving it. And if you go out there, Mr. Speaker, and take a drive, you will see there is nothing but prairie right now where that 140 acres were. And what did SaskPower pay for that land back in 2013, Mr. Speaker: \$170,000 an acre. They must have really done their business plan to pay that kind of price for prairie land.

Now it's been developed. There is power there, Mr. Speaker. You can see the power boxes as you drive by, so they actually have power. Sask Highways paid \$11,000 an acre back in 2011, so somehow the GTH is given the responsibility for this land. But it was always in the name of Sask Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. So it's interesting how a lot of the blank pieces of land out at the GTH are still in the name of the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and yet there wasn't enough communication between that ministry and the GTH to make the deal on the land adjacent — for which we know we've seen an enormous waste of money, up to \$25 million of taxpayers' money — when Highways certainly could have purchased it at a much lower price.

So why was SaskPower dragged into this, Mr. Speaker? And I think it's clearly another example of the mismanagement, of the waste, and the mispending that this government is so intent on doing in things like the GTH scandal, Mr. Speaker. We have to really ask the hard questions, and you know it's really hard to get answers sometimes, Mr. Speaker. We've put questions to pretty much all the cabinet ministers who were involved when the GTH land scandal assembly package was presented. Not one of them will share with this Assembly or the people of Saskatchewan what their thoughts were on that particular deal, Mr. Speaker.

We know something changed. We know something changed, and they all kind of look embarrassed when the current Minister of the Economy gets up and gives his tired old speaking lines, Mr. Speaker. So why was SaskPower dragged into this? And why did it happen to be the same minister? The minister responsible for SaskPower was also the minister responsible for GTH. What sort of management decisions were imposed upon SaskPower at that time? And these are really important questions, Mr. Speaker, that have not been fully answered; in fact they haven't been answered in the least by this government.

So when we see SaskPower's borrowing capacity being increased yet again after three years to another \$2 billion, that's a lot of zeroes, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of money for a Crown corporation who is now over its spending debt ratio, the recommended safe zone for its debt ratio, over 75 per cent. And we're increasing its spending another 2 billion, and they keep coming back to the rate review panel for rate hikes.

What kind of decisions are being foisted on this important Crown corporation by this government? When we look at the CCS imposition, we know that this was something that SaskPower wasn't going forward with until this government

came into being. What happened with the purchase price of . . . I think it was around \$23 million for land at the GTH for SaskPower back in 2013, when there was no indication from the management at the time that this was a necessary and desirable acquisition. And now we have confirmation in their most recent annual report that they have no intentions of using that land, Mr. Speaker.

So again, what was the Minister Responsible for SaskPower telling the Minister Responsible for GTH? Well it was a private conversation, Mr. Speaker, because it's one and the same person. And until that minister starts telling the people of Saskatchewan what was going on and sharing what information he had, then we will always have these perpetual questions and we will have a very important Crown in trouble. So I'd like to move the following motion, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its record of mismanagement at SaskPower for which Saskatchewan people are being forced to pay the price.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has put forward the following motion:

That this Assembly condones the government for its record of mismanagement at SaskPower for which Saskatchewan people are being forced to pay the price.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that and make it very clear that I will not be supporting the motion forwarded by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Mr. Speaker, I also want to take some time to respond to the motion that the NDP have made in regards to their opinion that Saskatchewan people are paying a price for the mismanagement of SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, like every day in this House, we have to correct those members, those members' statements that they make which contains little factual information and even less research. SaskPower is a very well-run company which Saskatchewan residents take great pride in, that provides very reliable service at very competitive rates.

Maybe a more accurate motion than the one proposed by the member from Saskatoon Nutana would be a motion condemning members opposite for their record of mismanagement while they were in government. And look at the unsustainable dividends when they should have been investing in infrastructure and planning, with a plan for the growth of the province.

Mr. Speaker, during the NDP's time in government, they took dividends from every year from 1992 to 2007 when people had finally had enough of them. During some of those years they took over 100 per cent in dividends. Really? Is that even possible, Mr. Speaker? People are paying a price today for infrastructure, the work that could not be done because of that government's drain on SaskPower's financial resources.

Over 40 per cent of your bill, of a customer's power bill today goes towards renewing SaskPower's aging infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine the frustration at SaskPower when that government was in power, knowing that there would be no money for current infrastructure or future infrastructure or their ability to invest in new technology.

Mr. Speaker, this government, these hon. members on this side of the House have seen SaskPower invest 6 billion on capital investments and power purchase agreements in the last five years. SaskPower plans to spend about 1 billion per year for the long term to ensure customers have the power they need for today and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, that NDP government, when they were in power, left no room for growth or for repairing aging infrastructure by taking unsustainable dividends and by starving the Crowns while trying to fulfill their campaign promise of the lowest utilities in Canada. Today, Mr. Speaker, people are paying a price for that NDP government's mismanagement while they were in power.

Mr. Speaker, this government had the vision, the confidence, to invest in important new technology in power generation by investing 1.5 billion in the BD3 [Boundary dam 3] project in Estevan, technology that could be exported around the world to truly make an impact on climate change. This carbon capture technology is the largest capital investment in Canada to date and has the ability to take the equivalent of 250,000 cars off the road. You know, the NDP talk about protecting the environment, but talk is just more hot air that we now need to capture. Our world needs real solutions and real investments.

When that government over there was in power, we seen greenhouse gas emissions rise by 70 per cent. The NDP hired a climate change secretariat but never hired staff, and they purchased an air monitoring vehicle but never drove it anywhere. Mr. Speaker, our government has made Canada's largest single investment towards addressing the global challenge of climate in the BD3 carbon capture project.

Members opposite like to come into this House and complain that we are not willing to simply fall in line and heap a job-killing, made-in-Ottawa carbon tax on the people of this province that will damage the competitiveness of our economy while doing nothing to reduce global emissions. On this side of the House, we're committed to working with the hard-working people at SaskPower to develop world-leading technologies that actually reduce emissions while keeping our economy competitive.

Mr. Speaker, here is a list of future growth and compliance projects that this government is planning: the Pasqua to Swift Current transmission line, an investment of 260 million, to be complete in 2019; the Kennedy to Tantalion transmission line, an investment of 113 million, to be complete in 2017; the Regina to Pasqua transmission line, an investment of 100 million; distribution customer connects, a \$509 million investment over the next five years; the proposed Tazi Twé hydroelectric station to be complete by 2020. Future sustainment projects include the transmission wood pole remediation, an investment of \$372 million over the next five years; the distribution wood pole remediation, \$126 million

investment over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, while we're on the topic of wood pole remediation, I would like to share what that government over there did while they were in power — or worse yet, what they didn't do while they were in power. Mr. Speaker, while that government was in power, they hired a consultant from Alberta — that's right, Alberta — to drive across this province marking the power poles that needed replacing. Today, almost all of those markings are gone, either because this government replaced them or they faded away, just like that NDP government of the day.

Mr. Speaker, other future sustainment projects include a circuit breaker and relay replacements of 60 million over five years; rural rebuild and improvement program of 96 million over five years; the E.B. Campbell hydroelectric station life extension, 245 million, complete in 2025.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to investing in Saskatchewan now and in the future, as this province continues to grow. Mr. Speaker, I realize it's easy to make promises. So let's look at the track record while this government on this side of the House has had the privilege of being in government. In 2007, an investment of 280 million in capital expenditures; 2008, 422 million; 2009, 640 million; 2010, 538 million; 2011, 625 million; 2012, 981 million; 2013, 1.318 billion; 2014, 1.279 billion; 2015, 990 million. Forecasted spending in 2016 of 899 million, and 952 million in 2017-2018.

Mr. Speaker, what is plain for all to see is that the NDP had no plan to see Saskatchewan grow and become a have province. That NDP government, when they were in power, made no plans to renew existing infrastructure or invest in the future. They had no plans for growth for our province at all. When our government talked about growing this province by 100,000, their former NDP MLA Harry Van Mulligen said on March 24, 2003, and I quote, "Well it is so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality." Well, Speaker, it is not that surprising that they had the worst growth rate in Canada when you have people in your government thinking like that.

Former Premier Lorne Calvert said, looking back . . . He said, from the *Leader-Post* on May 1st, 2013, and I quote, "I wish more could have been done to encourage more business . . ." Mr. Speaker, they could have done more. They could have invested in infrastructure. They could have not raised taxes 22 times. They could have not closed 176 schools. They could have not closed 52 hospitals. And they could have not taken the unsustainable dividends from the Crowns of 181 per cent in 2001 and 114 per cent in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, we know more work needs to be done, and this government continues to plan for growth in the future. SaskPower's preliminary 2017-18 business plan has taken into consideration the new target of up to 50 per cent renewable capacity by 2030. An annual rate increase of 5 per cent or less is required to fund that investment.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, this government plans for growth help to fund the

future, the future investments that will be necessary in social programs, education, health care, highways, and many other programs Saskatchewan residents have come to expect. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to join in today with regards to this debate and support the motion brought forward by the member of Nutana.

Mr. Speaker, I was a previous SaskPower employee. When I was a young single mom, I was working three part-time jobs, and I got the opportunity to apply for a meter reader position there. And I didn't even own a winter coat. I'm not much of an outdoorsy person. But it was a good, reliable job, and I was able to quit all three of my part-time jobs and just work one full-time position and support my family and have benefits.

And I have a lot of respect for the people who work at SaskPower and for the organization itself. They treated me very well while I was there. You were like a family member there, and I still keep in touch with a lot of the employees that work there, or previous employees because quite a few have retired at this point. But when I started work at SaskPower, it was hard to get a position there because it was a really solid employer that people were proud to work there. You were proud to say you were a SaskPower employee. And so the turnover wasn't very often.

And so the reason why I went in there was because I have a business background and I was hoping to get into the office. And I love working with numbers and I like doing mathematical equations, which is kind of rare for a social worker. But I was hoping to get into the line where you can work with bills or work with the linemen. And with being a meter reader, I did work closely with linemen.

And actually my father-in-law was a lineman for SaskPower, and he was very proud of the work that he did also. And he would oftentimes talk to us about the power lines that he helped construct, and usually it's the crew, which is a bunch of men who go out and do that. And then so he had to, due to disabilities, he had to resign from his job. But he stayed in touch with his co-workers there. Like I said, it's like a family.

But I left because I heard that meter reading was going to be, now — it wasn't going to be in the future — that there was going to be these new meters that were going to be read like through the Internet and that they would no longer need meter readers. So I decided to go to university and to pursue a different career, and that's why I left SaskPower. But to this day they still have meter readers working because of the issues that we now know that happened with the smart meters.

And so, Mr. Speaker, part of this debate is talking about the mismanagement of SaskPower. And when I talk to a lot of my previous co-workers that either still work there or retired, they say that it sure definitely changed the atmosphere in the agency after so many years. A lot of the work has been contracted out. So linemen, when they have to go and repair those lines, it can be kind of difficult if their own crews weren't the ones that put

up those lines. And they felt that the type of work that they did was kind of minimized.

But going back to the smart meters, Mr. Speaker, the smart meters came about and it seems like there really was not much research done prior to implementation. The research that you read about, the timeline of how the smart meters came about, it indicates that there were a lot of red flags but that they were ignored by the government and that . . . which doesn't come to surprise because as we know, like with the Ministry of Social Services, they're implementing programs without doing lit reviews. Usually people will do a review and find out if that program is going to be effective before they implement it. But no, instead they're going to go ahead with it and then they'll review it after a while to see if it worked or not. Most agencies or good, well-run businesses don't really work that way. Usually they do their research prior to implementing a program so that they know that it will work.

And so with the smart meters, that was kind of the case. There wasn't much discussion about what could be some possible issues with regards to them. And then we know that a lot of people, they had some . . . that there were fires from the smart meters to their houses and they had damage to their houses. And we lost millions of dollars due to the fact that the research wasn't done. Millions of dollars are going now towards the taxpayers who are having to pay that. And so this government didn't make safety a priority when they talked about this.

And our Premier even defended the minister at the time, saying that blaming him for not doing that research would send the wrong message. No, I think it proves accountability. And if you were working in any other government agency and you made a big mistake like this without doing your research, you would've faced those consequences. And I think members in this House too should face the same consequences that they expect their workers in the workplaces face.

So smart meters are just one of the reasons why, some of the issues with regards to SaskPower and what happened with the people, the taxpayers having to pay millions and millions of dollars because of the mismanagement.

But the other one is the carbon capture. Carbon capture, the Boundary dam carbon capture costs \$1.5 billion. And when you look at this financial analysis that was completed by the federal parliamentary budget office, it confirmed that the carbon capture at Boundary dam doubles the price of electricity. It doubles it, Mr. Speaker. And so why would SaskPower proceed with a project when it knew, or should have known, that it would needlessly add 1 billion of cost to the bills of electricity consumers province wide?

And so despite all of the evidence and perhaps because the sole beneficiary of the project is an Alberta-based oil company which has the largest donor to the Sask Party in 2013 and 2014, SaskPower has refused to provide any form of financial accounting to justify that program. So, Mr. Speaker, it seems a little fishy, like if the money is going towards someone who is giving big money to the Sask Party. And another reason why we need to get money out of politics.

And so this was information from James Glennie, the president

of SaskWind, when they were talking about the poorly managed program with regards to carbon capture and making the taxpayers pay millions and millions of dollars. And the other issue with regards to the carbon capture project is that . . . I don't know if it's the fact of how the project was built or what the issues were, but the Sask Party's Boundary dam carbon capture sequestration project has been repaired at least 6,862 times since May of 2013. That averages out to about six work orders being created each day for the support and maintenance of the facility, according to the documents obtained through the freedom of information request. Why are there so many work orders being presented? Why wasn't it . . . Maybe possibly it was a building error or construction issues. And so again, millions and millions of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money being misspent.

Rates for SaskPower have been going up continuously since 2007. For urban residential users, it's 32 per cent. This government is so proud that they haven't raised taxes but when you raise these utility rates, that's taxation, Mr. Speaker. And so 32 per cent increase for urban residential for SaskPower, 42 per cent for the energy rate. Like so we've got to look at, how much are the taxpayers paying for this mismanagement?

And like I said before, Mr. Speaker, this is no way an effect of the workers at SaskPower. They work hard and they try to do their best to provide good services, and I've seen that first hand. But it's the mismanagement of this government that has taken a lot of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money and misused it. And we could have invested that money, that millions of dollars that were spent on the GTH land deal. It's just an open, empty field sitting there, millions of taxpayers' dollars sitting right there. And we could be investing that in renewable power because we're really one of the . . . We are one of the last renewable power resource province in this country. We need to invest in that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start off by saying I will not be supporting the motion that has been brought forward by the official opposition. The motion reads, and I quote:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its record of mismanagement at SaskPower for which Saskatchewan people are being forced to pay the price.

Such strong wording — they condemn. When I looked this word up just to see what the official definition is, it says, “to express an unfavourable or adverse judgment on; [or] indicate strong disapproval of.” Well I guess in the context of the motion, this may be an accurate assessment. But it would seem that we have very different opinions when it comes to the topic of SaskPower and how it is being managed.

They also say our “. . . record of mismanagement at SaskPower for which . . . [the] people are being forced to pay the price.” I guess this would lead me to ask what price they are paying for. The price of great, skilled employees? The price of good service? The price of renewable energy? The price of leading-edge innovation and technology? I guess all of these things do cost money, and I'm not sure who else is going to pay

for these things other than the people of Saskatchewan. After all, all of the things I've listed are things that are being consumed by us, the people of Saskatchewan.

SaskPower employs 3,310 permanent, full-time employees. A good portion of these jobs are unionized positions and are good-paying jobs. Of these jobs, SaskPower employs a very diverse group of people: 7 per cent are Aboriginal, just about 3 per cent have disabilities, and there are 7 per cent visible minorities. These people who live, work, and raise their families in Saskatchewan, these are people who pay taxes in the province of Saskatchewan. Because of good employees like SaskPower, people are staying in the province and we have people who have come back to Saskatchewan and people who are moving to Saskatchewan for the first time, unlike the years when the NDP was governing and people were flocking from the province in the thousands.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues across the way may believe that our government is mismanaging SaskPower by employing these 3,100 people and that we are forcing the province of Saskatchewan to pay for it, but do you truly believe that power generation is going to just happen all on its own? It takes a workforce that is skilled and talented to make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower has 520,315 customers. This breaks down into 380,000 residential customers, 61,000 commercial, 121 industrial, just about 60,000 farms, and 19,000 oil field customers. Of all of the things that I listed above, 8,300 of those were new customers to SaskPower in 2015. This can be attributed to the growth that Saskatchewan has been feeling over the past few years, in part because we are open for business.

As you can imagine, running a company comes with a service side. In 2015 SaskPower received 742,000 calls from customers. These range from simple billing inquiries and questions to actual service calls. Now that sounds like a rather large number, and I guess it is, but that number also represents an 11 per cent decrease in service customer calls from the previous year, so we're doing good work. This reduction in calls is represented by the good work that is being done by those employees who work hard every day to ensure we all have power, employees who are skilled and working hard to also do preventative maintenance which helps reduce the number of service calls.

To these employees I say thank you, and want you to know that I don't feel like this government is wasting their money by employing you, and I really don't know how anyone can criticize the government of mismanagement when we are investing in our people.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud that this government is investing in renewables. We have committed to a target of 50 per cent renewables by 2030. Currently we are close to 30 per cent of our energy production actually comes from renewables. So this government will be investing in infrastructure projects like wind, solar, and other interesting options to help us reach our goal of 50 per cent renewables by 2030. I'm not sure about any of you, but I'm really excited about this.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the service calls that are made, and it is interesting to note that over the past five years 34 per cent of all unplanned outages were caused by aging infrastructure. So when our opposition criticizes this government of mismanagement and spending money on SaskPower, it amazes me that they cannot understand that that is a part of what a business needs to do to continue to be successful. That is what a business needs to do to ensure your customers have a reliable power supply. And one of the reasons this government has needed to spend so much money on infrastructure is because of the neglect of the previous government.

We have also been investing in many different types of infrastructure projects to help ensure that Saskatchewan has the necessary baseload power that is needed for a growing province, and I think it is important to note that these projects cost a lot of money. In fact this year, 42 per cent of your monthly power bill will be going towards infrastructure expense, investing in the future of Saskatchewan. So while our opposition is busy asking the question, where did all the money go, I can tell them that we have spent record amounts of money on capital investment to not only fix failing infrastructure but to ensure we have new infrastructure for the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, what would a speech about SaskPower be without talking about Boundary dam 3 and carbon capture and sequestration technology? Yes, Mr. Speaker, more money spent on infrastructure. But this is not just infrastructure spent; it's leading-edge technology that has been developed right here in our province. Technology that is being looked at by people from all over the world. Technology that can help with emissions in other parts of the world. A solution, a technology that's actually needed.

The NDP like to criticize and belittle the fantastic progress that has been made with this technology. Well I have a fact that should help change their attitude. As of the end of October, this project has taken 1 226 300 tonnes of carbon out of the air. This is an absolutely amazing feat. Now some of you may be asking, what does that actually mean? And I know our opposition is asking because they don't seem to understand the project. Well what it means is we have taken 300,000 cars off of the road.

So Boundary dam 3 is a passion of mine. Obviously it's in my constituency. We not only are meeting expectations and guidelines with this; we are exceeding them. On a daily basis, an average coal-fired power plant section will put 1100 tonnes of carbon into the air. With this technology, we are actually sequestering over 90 per cent of what would've gone into the air, and we are only allowing 140 tonnes of carbon to go out.

And just to put that in perspective, the federal regulations actually tells us that we can let 440 tonnes of carbon out of that unit. So we are exceeding expectations of the federal government and meeting the needs of this province by helping to ensure that there will be jobs going forward not only for SaskPower and electricity but also for the coal industry that is a very important industry in this province.

[Applause]

Ms. Carr: — Thank you. So, Mr. Speaker, let me make it quite

clear. I am very proud of the services that are provided by SaskPower to the people of Saskatchewan at reasonable rates. I'm very proud of the wages that are provided to 3,310 employees of SaskPower and to the 520,315 fantastic customers. I'm also very proud of the innovation that is being created in partnership with many different companies that are making Saskatchewan and SaskPower stand out as a leader all around the world.

And last but not least, I'm proud of the initiative that is being taken to bring our province to 50 per cent renewable by 2030, a goal which I believe we will achieve. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that I will most definitely not be supporting the motion that has been brought forward by the NDP. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and enter into debate on the motion as put forward by my colleague from Nutana:

That this Assembly condemns the government for its record of mismanagement at SaskPower for which Saskatchewan people are forced to pay the price [Mr. Speaker].

And I've been listening intently to both the comments by my colleagues and also the members opposite, and I have some comments on that. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we've recently debated Bill 17 in this Assembly. And Bill 17, for those who may not know, was a bill proposed by this government that would see an increase of the borrowing capacity of SaskPower increase again by about \$2 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2 billion up, up to 10 billion from 8 billion. And this is the second time that we've seen that in a mere three years. So we've seen a doubling of that borrowing limit from 5 billion back in 2013 up to \$10 billion which is what is currently being debated, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's important that we question the manageability, how that is going to impact future operations and viability of our treasured, one of our treasured Crown corporations in SaskPower.

We also see not only that threat to SaskPower, but we see threat by way of Bill 40 which has also been proposed by this government. Bill 40, many will know, is the bill that would propose to allow up to ... changing the definition in *The Interpretation Act* of "privatization" which is sort of backdoor privatization, Mr. Speaker, that would allow up to 40 per cent of the Crown corporations to be privatized without triggering the definition of "privatization."

It's interesting that one of the concerns that my colleague from Nutana brought up regarding that was about whether or not that would trigger section 149 of the federal taxation Act. And I think we wondered if maybe the government hadn't done their homework on that and didn't realize that if you privatize more than 10 per cent of a Crown corporation, it triggers federal taxation stipulations, a 15 per cent tax rate.

But it's funny. I was just looking at an article. And this is a question that I have going back to 2014 when the Premier stated that, Wall says that Ottawa might not be able to impose a

carbon tax on SaskPower . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's in a quote. "Wall says he might be able to make the case that Ottawa can't impose a carbon tax on SaskPower because it's a Crown corporation." So apparently they knew about some of that legislation then but perhaps had forgotten or conveniently forgotten that, Mr. Speaker. But I think that remains another threat that we have with regard to our Crown corporation, SaskPower.

But it's certainly not the only threat that we see. And the matter that we're debating today is the threat by way of mismanagement, increasing debt, and really some concerning situations, particularly with SaskPower, in this province. There's a fairly lengthy list of concerns. One of them would be \$47 million spent on the power smart meter fiasco, I think is the only way to describe that, Mr. Speaker, where we saw the smart meters brought in perhaps without due diligence on the part of the then minister and then some really shocking rate increases for a number of people in the province. And then that was fazed out. And the net result of that, besides all of the concern and the burden that it put on homeowners, it was a \$47 million loss, Mr. Speaker. And that's not insignificant.

Certainly the questions around why the \$25 million purchase by SaskPower of GTH lands. I know the member from Nutana has been out and has confirmed that there is nothing on the build. I don't know if there was an update on that from the member from Nutana but last we heard there is absolutely nothing being built on that land. But yet SaskPower has paid \$25 million for that land, Mr. Speaker.

There's also the issue of the Boundary dam 3 has been brought up a number of times here. Certainly you know if there's technology that pulls carbon out of the air and it works and we can meaningfully reduce emissions, that's something to look at. But we all know that that project was plagued by a number of cost overruns. There were lawsuits.

There were also some serious concerns about the ability to deliver on their contracts, to deliver that CO₂ to Cenovus. And I think the total came out to 20 million that was paid in penalties, Mr. Speaker. But the potential there was actually much higher. In fact I believe it was around \$90 million that potentially SaskPower could have had to have paid by way of contractual penalties because of a failure to deliver on the CO₂ that they had promised to Cenovus, Mr. Speaker. So that is another piece of the list and the mismanagement that we have seen on the part of the government and the former minister with regard to SaskPower.

And SaskPower is very important. Like all of our Crowns, it has not only a mandate to provide the service, but there's a social context in it, in that service that it provides. It's a way to provide high quality power at a reasonable price to people across the province.

I know SaskPower has one of the largest grids in the country, yet we have one of the most dispersed populations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And having a Crown corporation that's being well-managed allows us to take investments and ensure that we're getting power lines to the North, to rural areas. And certainly that was the reason for being of SaskPower to bring electrification to rural and remote areas in the province.

You know, larger companies were willing to come in and set up in larger urban centres where there are economies of scale, but it's more difficult to get people to come in and bring that power out to rural areas. And certainly that was something . . . They had the support of farmers who allowed lines on their land and was encouraged and embraced by the people of Saskatchewan. And I still think that we do value and embrace the role that SaskPower plays in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Just noting how quickly time flies.

So the price that's being made to pay, Mr. Speaker, by the mismanagement here is not insignificant, and it's quite varied. There have been a number of rate increases in Saskatchewan over the last . . . Since 2007, urban residential rates have increased 32 per cent in the basic charge and 42 per cent in the energy rate; for rural residents 36 per cent increase in basic charge, 37 in the energy rate; for farmers, 34 per cent increase to the basic charge, 40 per cent increase to the energy rate. And then there's another 12 per cent for those who use over 1600 kilowatts per month. So, Mr. Speaker, those are really significant impacts. Oilfield, 26 per cent increase on the basic charges and 37 per cent.

So the members opposite would have us believe that this is something that we cooked up over on this side, but this is having impacts for people across the province.

From friends like the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, their submission to the most recent SaskPower rate review indicated that they had some significant concerns. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has some serious concerns about the rate increases. And I'll speak on the impact on, for example, schools. This government is not forwarding enough money to make the basic . . . well not to fund the teacher salary increase, the contracted increase. And when we have rate increases after rate increases without any ability of school boards to cover those, those rate increases come right out of our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. And we're not seeing any innovation as we're seeing elsewhere where perhaps we invest in putting solar panels on roofs of schools. No, we're not doing that.

We have a plan to get to 50 per cent renewables by 2030, but we have no real plan, Mr. Speaker. So those are my comments around some of the concerns and the impacts that what is going on with SaskPower is having. And I'll conclude my remarks.

[12:00]

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to read the motion from the member opposite. I'm actually kind of surprised. They talked about the . . . She used the word "mismanagement." I'm interested because that's usually a term that's provided based on somebody that's managing so maybe it's a criticism of the existing managers of SaskPower as opposed to government. But I'm not exactly sure, Mr. Speaker. But it is fascinating in terms of this word as opposed to supervisors, leaders, or those responsible. Maybe this is in regard to carbon capture.

I used to work at a coal mine, Mr. Speaker. I used to work at the coal mine, at the Poplar River mine, Mr. Speaker, and enjoyed my work there. It was great, gratifying work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also had a chance to look at Bruce Johnstone's article. And, Mr. Speaker, in a perfect world we could leave coal — the dirtiest, most carbon-intensive, most abundant fossil fuel on earth — in the ground. Instead, we would rely on renewables, like wind, solar, hydro to power our cities, Mr. Speaker, our factories, our homes, and our businesses.

But we don't live in a perfect world, Mr. Speaker. We live in a world where roughly 40 per cent of our electricity comes from coal-fired generation. That percentage is unlikely to decline significantly in the next 30 or 40 years. So we have a choice, Mr. Speaker. Leave it in the ground and hope for some silver bullet solution like cold fusion to save us, or we can clean it up best we can until something better, more reliable, and cleaner comes along, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the Saskatchewan NDP, they took a stance on SaskPower's CCS, the carbon capture sequestration project, a costly boondoggle, Mr. Speaker, which could be shelved ASAP [as soon as possible]. They've used terms like botched, bogus, fiasco. The NDP has relentlessly attacked the CCS project.

Mr. Speaker, the *Washington Post* article pointed out — and this is actually what was referenced by the Leader of the Opposition who took a swipe at the project, pointing out that the suspended funding, setting cost overruns, and etc. — but, Mr. Speaker, the *Washington Post* article points out some experts like MIT's [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] Howard Herzog believe that renewables alone can't help us achieve our climate change goals, and that as long as we continue to use fossil fuels, carbon capture is a necessary step.

Herzog said, expansion of CCS in the US is being held back by a lack of policy support, namely greenhouse gas emission regulations, Mr. Speaker. This is not to say that BD3, the CCS project, is without its challenges and may face many more months and years ahead, Mr. Speaker. But it is working and doing what it is designed to do at a cost not significantly higher than conventional combined-cycle natural gas generation. So it would be a huge mistake, Mr. Speaker, not to mention a huge waste of taxpayers' money, to give up carbon capture now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite like to talk about best practice. They like to talk about evidence based. In terms of BD3, Mr. Speaker, what if you're the first to do something? What if we were to sit and wait for everybody else to actually do something, Mr. Speaker? Actually they would sit there: "Invent something." We'd sit there idly by and not do anything.

Mr. Speaker, we're actually doing something in regards to carbon capture, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have the Boundary dam 3, Mr. Speaker. I mean it's important that we capture the carbon and develop renewables, Mr. Speaker. It seems a rather, you know, a rather potent transition here, Mr. Speaker. It's important that we do this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, apparently the members opposite don't want us to try anything new. No they just sit and stumble along, like with

the ploughshares and the oxen. Wow, can you imagine? Here is wanting to look forward here and trying to do the best we possibly can, Mr. Speaker, utilize things like growth. And now there's a dirty word, Mr. Speaker. Again, growth and the economy — two dirty words that the members opposite like to say.

Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of an *SNL* [Saturday Night Live] skit in relation to "Lothar of the Hill People." Mr. Speaker, Lothar was sitting there with his son, and they were discussing the fact that his son had found a disc, a stone disc, Mr. Speaker, and it had a hole in the middle. Mr. Speaker, Lothar's son put a stick through it and said, "Look, Father, look. I've got a stone and it rolls. It's like a disc, and we can take our basket and attach our basket to the top, [Mr. Speaker]. We can attach our basket to the top of this disc, and it'll help with our work. And we can push it. It'll make things easier for us."

Now Lothar looks at his son and says, "Son, that's a good idea. It might even be a great idea. But it's a new idea and because it's a new idea, we must fear and reject it." . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure the members opposite are going to start to chirp away as they normally do. And they point out members here by name, and they say, oh the member from so-and-so. They're making stuff up all the time, Mr. Speaker. It goes on and on.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all the members opposite in elementary school, I believe they were all hall monitors. Every single one of them were hall monitors, and they ran around and go, "Teacher, teacher, look at Johnny and Mary. Johnny and Mary, they don't have hall passes," Mr. Speaker. "They don't have hall passes, teacher. Teacher, please kick them out. Oh my God! They're wearing their outside shoes inside, teacher. Teacher, help them."

Yes, that's exactly, Mr. Speaker, over and over have absolutely nothing to bring forward in terms of the debate, Mr. Speaker, really. I mean here we go, really. Hello from Seth and Amy from *Saturday Night Live*, Mr. Speaker.

So our Premier writes a letter to the feds. It's about . . . [inaudible] . . . the damaging offsets of carbon tax, and also looks to the Leader of the Opposition to help co-sign the letter to the Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, did the Leader of the Opposition sign the letter with the Premier of this province? No, they didn't. Really? Really, Mr. Speaker? Really? They won't sign the letter with him? Well that's rather surprising.

Maybe, maybe, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition penned his own letter, wrote his own letter to the feds, but I pretty strongly doubt that that actually happened. Really? You couldn't even pen your own letter? You can't even pen your own letter, Mr. Speaker? No, they didn't. No, they didn't write and apparently the NDP have no position on the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. They have absolutely no position on the carbon tax. I mean that's, that's absolutely amazing, Mr. Speaker.

I've got a letter here from the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers], Neil Collins who is the business manager, financial secretary IBEW Local 2067. He says:

I am very concerned about recent comments you made

regarding the Boundary Dam Carbon Capture and Sequestration project. Our union members work very hard on this project and fully support this important initiative.

While I recognize it is the role of the opposition to ask questions about government actions, your comments and that of your critic . . . [the member from Nutana] calls into question your position on this matter.

Do you support the CCS project as a means to reduce carbon emissions at our coal-fired plants or do you intend to eliminate coal-fired electrical facilities in Saskatchewan, thereby eliminating hundreds of union jobs?

The CCS project is . . .

So, Mr. Speaker, I absolutely don't believe that they . . . They have absolutely no interest in actually ensuring that members are working.

Mr. Speaker, they thought quickly about Crown ownership, Mr. Speaker, 51/49. They have a problem with the number 49 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That 49 per cent, I wonder if we changed it to 75/25, would they agree? Well I see some placid little nods here. Maybe they'd agree if it was 99 and 1 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I've no idea. They actually agree with the premise; they just don't agree with the numbers. I guess that's it: they don't want to have that 49 per cent. That's exactly where they're running into.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be supporting this motion. And, Mr. Speaker, in the immortal words of Ricky Bobby in *Talladega Nights*, if you're not first, you're last. You know what I'm talking about.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, it's always difficult to follow the member from Regina Coronation Park with his succinct remarks. SaskPower is focused on a reinvestment program, building Saskatchewan's capacity for growth under our government. In fact to quote from the 2014 annual report: "As the world focuses on climate change, our company is in the midst of a critical transformation to cleaner sources of . . . [energy]."

In every single year between 1992 and 2007 the NDP took dividends totalling more than \$1 billion away from SaskPower. In fact in some years the NDP took more than 100 per cent of SaskPower's annual net income.

My question is for the member from Prince Albert Northcote: how can you say that our government has mismanaged SaskPower when your party was happy to play politics with the company by gutting its coffers on a yearly basis to bail out your cash-strapped governments, all while, year after year, increasing power rates?

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

Ms. Rancourt: — I find it very ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

that they talk about being cash-strapped when it was their government, the Devine government, that made us do that. But if you guys are really concerned about the environment, you had record revenues, why didn't you invest more in renewable energy? The province has less than most of the provinces in this country. If you had that as a priority, you would've invested it.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the rate review, the recent rate review, the messages from businesses was clear: stop dumping money in carbon capture and stop hiking the rates. To the member from Saskatoon Westview: when will the Saskatchewan Party commit to stopping any plans to expand their job-killing carbon capture tax?

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. And you know, maybe if the member opposite would have listened to my speech, she would have heard some of the answers already. But you know, it's really important that we make investments into the future. This government is committed.

That government over there didn't spend any time investing while they were in power. They had no plan for growth for this province. They had no thought for our children and our futures. And so now we're left to raise rates so that we can pay for the mismanagement that that government over there had.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP ran on an election platform that promised, and I quote, to deliver the most affordable utility bundle in Canada. Well, Mr. Speaker, what they didn't campaign on was the fact that that promise was not costed in their budget, an additional cost of \$595 million.

So my question will be to the financial guru from Nutana: how would your party have paid for this utility bundle? Would you have sunk the province into more debt, or would you have done what you really wanted to do, and hold true to your firm Leap Manifesto beliefs and raise taxes on the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, what we have to talk about here is the mismanagement. This motion is about the mismanagement of this government. There's \$6 billion in debt after six years. Every year they rack up another \$1 billion of debt. They're imposing it on SaskPower. SaskPower's now borrowing an unprecedented . . . Their limit is \$10 billion. For these guys, Mr. Speaker, all you do is add on another zero and everything's fine. That's not the way it's going to work, and the ratepayers and the taxpayers are the ones who are suffering. If they would stop imposing things like their \$1.5 billion,

job-killing carbon capture tax, then we wouldn't be in this situation.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — SaskPower's debt ratio is over 76 per cent. Can the member from Regina Coronation Park let us know if the Sask Party has any plans to deal with this? Or are they happy to continue with more mismanagement?

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, infrastructure continues to be upgraded. It requires upgrading, Mr. Speaker. That's why we are continuing to invest, and the Sask Party is going to continue to invest, Mr. Speaker.

Why do we require rate increases, Mr. Speaker? Rate increases are important, right? Demand has grown 16 per cent over the last five years, Mr. Speaker. By 2030 we need to increase our power capacity by 63 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The last two annual reports show an increase of 11,000 new customers, Mr. Speaker. That's a five-year average of 9,500 customers per year, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

Our infrastructure, again, it needs to be upgraded. It's nearing the end of its life cycle; 42 per cent of your bill in 2016 went toward infrastructure upgrades and repairs, Mr. Speaker. SaskPower's 10-year capital plan includes approximately 1.1 billion of annual capital spending, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this because the members opposite invested absolutely nothing into SaskPower. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are more than 2,400 new coal-fired power plants planned or under construction around the world, according to a report released last December at the Paris climate change summit. Those plants alone will emit 6.5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, nearly nine times Canada's annual greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon capture and storage could dramatically reduce the emissions from those new plants.

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. To the member of Prince Albert Northcote: does the NDP support the federal government's imposed carbon tax that would cost ratepayers and our Crown utilities billions of dollars? Or do they support carbon capture and storage that would actually make a significant reduction in GHGs [greenhouse gas]?

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Well what this government needs to do is come up with a good plan on how we're going to deal with the environmental crisis. We need to invest again, like what I said, in renewable power, renewable energy. What about investing in

those kind of options so that we can have the best services in Saskatchewan, the best across Canada? I want this government to be focused on that.

They say they have a target for 50 per cent in 15 years. I don't know why it's going to take that long. But what's the plan? What's the goal? I haven't seen anything.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp mill employs 716 people, and their electrical bill represents 20 per cent of their input costs. They told the rate review panel, Meadow Lake is not driving the need for increased costs due to expansion or infrastructure upgrades. But it is paying for it. Can the member from Coronation Park find out how the SaskPower minister justified to the member from Meadow Lake that his \$1.5 billion job-killing carbon capture tax could cost his jobs in his riding?

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is actually pointing to the fact that the infrastructure requires investment, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to invest.

Mr. Speaker, why do we need rate increases? Mr. Speaker, the demand has increased 16 per cent, Mr. Speaker, over the last five years. In 2030 . . . Mr. Speaker, this is a combination of renewables and non-renewables. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make those investments. Non-renewable resources require renewable options, Mr. Speaker.

We have other options, Mr. Speaker. There's going to be solar. There's going to be wind. There's going to be some hydro. There's going to be geothermal energy, Mr. Speaker. We are going to invest in renewable energy possibilities, Mr. Speaker, and options, and that's 50 per cent as we promised by 2030. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly puzzling to me why the NDP would even debate the subject, especially when their campaign platform earlier this year called for cutting of hundreds of millions of dollars out of the budget of our Crown utilities, SaskPower, through its misnamed lowest cost utility bundle without accounting for a single dollar of the half billion dollar cost. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member of Saskatoon Nutana and the opposition Finance critic: do they still stand by the party's election plan to burden our Crowns with the ill-conceived, underbudgeted programs?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Waste. Mismanagement. Scandal. That is the record of this government.

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

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. Olason.]

The Deputy Speaker: — It is my duty pursuant to rule 27 . . . No. Oh, I will recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has increased spending and capacity when it comes to diagnostic imaging, but there's still people on the waiting list waiting far too long. Estimated regional health authority expenditures on medical imaging in 2015-16 were approximately \$143 million. That represents a 70 per cent increase in expenditures from 2007-08, whose expenditures were 84 million. Our innovative legislation is a way to add additional capacity to the public system at no extra cost.

The MRI facility licence Act was brought into force on February 29th, 2016. A unique feature of the Act requires licensed facilities to provide a free scan from someone from the public wait-list for every paid scan. Since the launch of the private-pay MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] service in February, over 1,800 patients are benefiting from a private MRI scan at no cost to the public health system. Mr. Speaker, this is equivalent to adding another MRI machine to the system, operating five hours a day, seven days a week, once again at no cost to the public system.

On June 6th, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, following through on our election commitment.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the system that we are now using was implemented by the NDP. It was set up in secret. The public didn't know about it. It was used by the workmen's compensation board and our Saskatchewan Roughriders. It was set up in the same manner as the Saskatchewan Party has now set it up, only now it is also for the general public. And now all of a sudden it's wrong. Mr. Speaker, the NDP set up this system. They designed it. They built it. They enacted it, and they operated it. Now they say it's wrong.

The system worked for, and still works for workmen's compensation board and our beloved Riders, but why can't it work for the general public? Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that it has nothing to do with MRI or CT [computerized tomography] scans and has everything to do with the political agenda.

The NDP are opposing this system, not because it is wrong. They are opposing it because the Sask Party is doing it. They are not looking at what is good for the people of Saskatchewan. They are just looking at their political agenda.

Mr. Speaker, how else do we ever shorten wait-lists? How else do we serve the ever-growing population of Saskatchewan? "Ever growing" is a word the opposition wasn't used to. The NDP have offered no, no alternative solution. All they offer is criticism of a program they started.

The NDP oppose anything that has the word "private" in the name. Mr. Speaker, do we not have private X-ray units, private ultrasound, private dentists, private chiropractors? They all work and work well, so what's the problem with private MRI or CTs?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP are like the fairy tales I read to my grandchildren. Like Chicken Little, they keep on yelling, "the sky is falling, the sky is falling." And, Mr. Speaker, just like the fairy tale, it's getting to the point where nobody believes.

The time has come to take these bold steps. We have to find ways to make health care more efficient and more affordable. This plan has no cost to the people of Saskatchewan. I think it is a step worth taking, and it is obvious that the people of Saskatchewan agree.

We're not the only province taking this step. With us are the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Quebec. Mr. Speaker, the main concern of all of us should be patient care. We desperately need more MRIs and CT scans. How do we get these is the question. The Sask Party is going the route started by the NDP. The NDP have offered no alternatives, no options. All they offer is a negative political stance.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to take a look at where Canada stands among the rest of the world. MRI units per 1 million people, Canada comes in 21st at 9.48 units per million people. We are beaten by countries Estonia, Latvia, Spain, Iceland, Greece, Italy, and Korea. First place is Japan at 51.67 units per million people.

CT units, we come in 25th at 15.1 units per million people. Ahead of us, Luxembourg, Estonia, Italy, Greece, Korea, Iceland. Once again the leader is Japan at 107 units per million people.

As you can see, we have a long way to go. The only reasonable route is the one the Saskatchewan Party is taking. I would like now to quote Murray Mandryk of the *Leader-Post*. And I quote, "In other words, the government's case for private MRIs, and now CT scans, is more compelling and it is better than anything we are hearing in the form of rebuttal."

Mr. Speaker, too often ideology and politics get in the way of good policy that benefit Saskatchewan people. I want to amend this motion so there is absolutely no reason that every member of this Assembly cannot support it.

We know private MRIs have already benefited hundreds of people in our province in the short term they have been available and have reduced public wait-lists. It is now the equivalent of another entire MRI machine added to the system operating 5 hours a day, 7 days a week at no cost to the general public.

The Leader of the Opposition said in this Assembly following the last election that they would not just oppose but also propose and support — support — good ideas in this Chamber. This chance can benefit people across the province, Mr. Speaker, and we want the ND [New Democrat] to support . . . We want their support for this initiative. Mr. Speaker, we do want their support for this initiative. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move the following motion:

That the motion be amended by omitting the following words after “Assembly”:

“condemns the NDP for their ideologically based attacks against”;

and inserting in its place the word “supports.”

I so submit.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Batoche has moved the following motion:

That the motion be amended by omitting the following words after “Assembly”:

“condemns the NDP for their ideologically based attacks against”;

and by inserting in its place “supports.”

Before I call the question, I must advise the Assembly that pursuant to rule 27, that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and cannot be further adjourned. At the conclusion of the debate or normal time of adjournment, whichever is reached first, every question necessary to dispose of this motion shall be put.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please . . . Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the amendment say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:30 until 12:33.]

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the amendment please rise.

[Yeas — 43]

Wall

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the members to come to order while the vote is being taken.

Stewart	Reiter	Morgan
Harpauer	Doherty	Duncan
Beaudry-Mellor	Hargrave	D’Autremont
Heppner	Boyd	Cheveldayoff
Marit	Tell	Eyre
Merriman	Harrison	Ottobreit
Ross	Weekes	Brkich
Kirsch	Bradshaw	Steinley
Makowsky	Phillips	Lawrence
Wilson	Campeau	Docherty
Michelson	Cox	Olauson
Steele	Young	Fiaz
Dennis	Carr	Nerlien
Lambert	Buckingham	Kaeding

The Deputy Speaker: — All members who are opposed to the motion please rise.

[Nays — 9]

Wotherspoon	Chartier	Belanger
Sproule	Forbes	Rancourt
Beck	McCall	Saraue

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 43; those opposed, 9.

The Deputy Speaker: — The motion is carried. Is the Assembly ready for the question on the main motion as amended?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — Those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:37 until 12:38.]

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 44]

Wall	Stewart	Wyant
Reiter	Morgan	Harpauer
Doherty	Duncan	Beaudry-Mellor
Hargrave	D'Autremont	Heppner
Boyd	Cheveldayoff	Marit
Tell	Eyre	Merriman
Harrison	Ottenbreit	Ross
Weekes	Brkich	Kirsch
Bradshaw	Steinley	Makowsky
Phillips	Lawrence	Wilson
Campeau	Docherty	Michelson
Cox	Olauson	Steele
Young	Fiaz	Dennis
Carr	Nerlien	Lambert
Buckingham	Kaeding	

The Deputy Speaker: — Those members opposed to the motion please rise.

[Nays — 9]

Wotherspoon	Chartier	Belanger
Sproule	Forbes	Rancourt
Beck	McCall	Sarauer

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 44; those opposed, 9.

The Deputy Speaker: — The motion as amended is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House be now adjourned.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:42.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Kevin Doherty
Minister of Finance

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

Hon. Scott Moe
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Don Morgan
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Greg Ottenbreit
Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Health

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation