



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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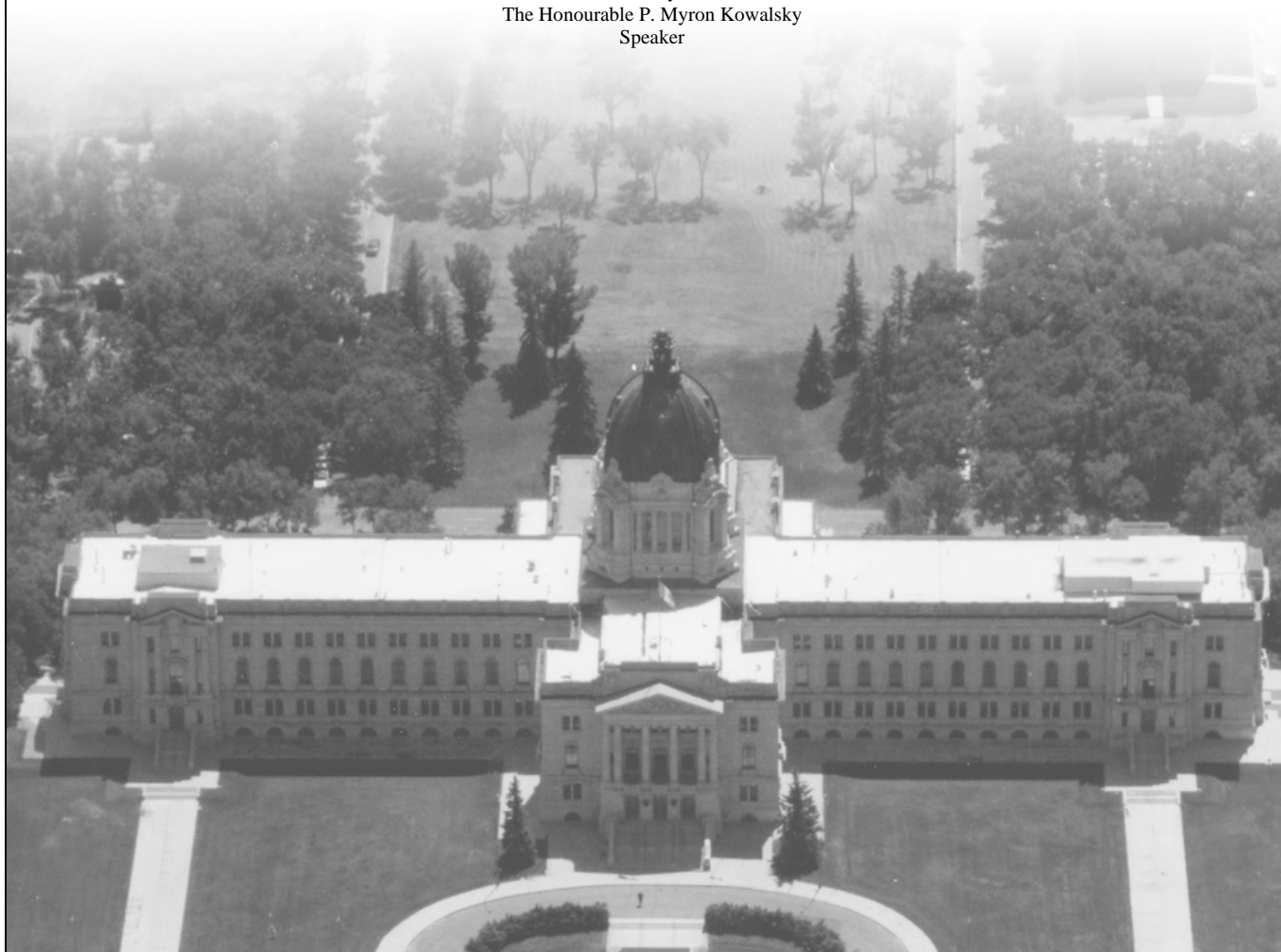
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky  
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert  
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Hon. Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise once again on behalf of my constituents to present a petition concerning the condition of Highway 32, the highway that runs from Cabri to the community of Leader. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these four pages of petitions are signed by constituents from the communities of Sceptre, Leader, Richmond, Fox Valley, Mendham, and Prelate. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of people in my area who are very concerned about Highway No. 310. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway No. 310 in order to address safety concerns and facilitate economic growth and tourism in the Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from Edmonton, Saskatoon, Wynyard, Wadena, and Calgary. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today with citizens concerned about the conditions of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from around the province — in Humboldt, St. Benedict, Archerwill, Drake, Bruno, Lake Lenore, Pilger, Fulda, St. Gregor, Watson, Spalding, Unity, and Annaheim. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another petition from constituents who are opposed to any possible reduction of services in their health care in Biggar. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance service is maintained at the very least their current level of services.

Signed by the good citizens of Landis, Biggar and district, and Shellbrook. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from parents in the constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today live on Kucey Crescent, Laura Avenue, and Cowley Road in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here calling on the government to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remains open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This one is signed by the good citizens from the town of Watrous. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding a petition for the widening of Highway 5. And I'll read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Humboldt, Lake Lenore, Quill Lake, and Fulda.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of citizens who are concerned with the condition and the lack of wideness of Highway No. 5 between Humboldt and Saskatoon. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

Signed by good citizens of Humboldt, Muenster, and Pilger, Mr. Speaker.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received:

New petition concerning the highway section shop in Watrous, sessional paper 67;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 5, 7, and 64.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to you and through you to introduce a good friend of mine, a dedicated committee man from Prince Albert. His name is Dennis Nowoselsky.

Dennis is a United and Anglican Church minister. He was a probation and parole officer for 24 years. He was a city councillor in Prince Albert for seven years. He put forward a motion to this city council in Prince Albert which went to SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and later to the legislature to ban smoking in Saskatchewan. And he also had sent a letter to the then prime minister, Jean Chrétien, to support farmers during their time of stress because of low commodity prices and high input costs. Dennis has 11 years education and he's one of the many people in Saskatchewan looking for a job. I would invite everyone to welcome Mr. Nowoselsky to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it is my honour to introduce three people in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And it's fitting, this being the week of the men's brier, to have our first actual curler participant of the brier there; a gentleman, Randy Nelson to be specific, my first cousin who is the second on BC's [British Columbia's] team.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, to all of my colleagues that Randy Nelson grew up on a farm near Hallonquist, Hodgeville — in that area but near Hallonquist — has moved to Kelowna where he works in the fisheries and wildlife department. Members may want to check with the *Leader-Post* yesterday. There's an interesting feature article about my first cousin Randy, but I'm not going to take up the time of the House with that. But it's well worth the read. It describes much of the more exciting things that he's done in his life.

What I do want to describe is the pride that I felt as I watched Randy curl. He is a very good shot maker, but he will always be known to me as just an excellent, excellent sweeper. I saw him in the ninth end take a rock that shouldn't have made it halfway down the ice — the skip's rock — put it right on the button. If ever I saw a rock forced, Mr. Speaker, that was a rock forced.

With Randy is his wife Lorraine and his son Darren, who is a curler in his own right, having been on a team that won the BC juniors and having two other times been at that level of curling. So I expect to see Darren coming back and representing BC in the men's seniors for the Brier at some point in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming my relatives, my first cousin Randy, his wife Lorraine, and their son Darren, to our legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you a few people sitting in your gallery, friends of mine from Saskatoon. First, Tracy MacLachlan, Dave MacLachlan, and young Leland MacLachlan. To single out Leland, he is distinguished by being an accomplished athlete, a fine musician, and a long-time close friend of my youngest daughter.

With the clan MacLachlan is Xavier Plamondon. Monsieur Plamondon is a exchange student in Quebec City, now staying with MacLachlans for a couple of months, visiting Saskatoon and our province, and today our legislature.

And I hope all members of the legislature will join me in welcoming the MacLachlans to the legislature and Monsieur Plamondon to our province.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if my eyes don't fail me, I believe in the east gallery there's a constituent of mine from Hafford. And I would like to welcome him here to his legislature and have all the members of the legislature welcome him here too.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a number of our Saskatchewan's nearly 300 volunteer crop reporters. These reporters are recognized today by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food for their commitment and long service to Saskatchewan's agriculture industry. For 25 years each of these crop reporters has volunteered his personal time during the crop season to collect information about crop development and precipitation in his rural municipality. And every Sunday afternoon or evening for at least 30 weeks of those 25 years, each reporter submitted his information to the department to meet the weekly crop reporting deadline.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this endeavour has been to provide a timely and accurate crop report about the development of Saskatchewan crops to all farmers and rural municipalities in the province and to the general public.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize these individuals for their dedication to the Saskatchewan crop reporting service. I would ask these crop reporters and their spouses and guests to stand as I mention their names: Ron Daviduk of Assiniboia and the RM of Excel No. 71 and his wife Nancy, David Bettschen of Broadview and the RM of Elcapo No. 154 and his wife Linda, David Stephen of Qu'Appelle and the RM of South Qu'Appelle No. 157 and his wife Marian, Lyle Ehrman of Leader and the RM of Happyland No. 231 and his wife Linda. One of the crop reporters, Mr. Julien Kowalchuk of North Battleford and the RM of Round Hill No. 467 was unable to attend today. His cows are calving and he thought it was better that he stay and supervise that operation.

Would the members of the Legislative Assembly please join with me in recognizing these crop reporters who have volunteered their time and effort for the good of the province during these past 25 years.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the official opposition in acknowledging and welcoming the crop reporters here today with their wives. They play a vital part in the agriculture industry of this province, and we very much appreciate the job that they do. So I ask all members to once again welcome them to their legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And not only are my eyes failing me but my memory is too for I forgot to mention that gentleman's name. I'd like to welcome him again to the legislature, and his name is Michael Janostin from Hafford. So welcome to your legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Elphinstone.

### Celebrating the Gifts of the Irish

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And top of the morning, happy St. Patrick's Day. Today is set aside for everyone, whether they have Irish blood flowing through their veins or not, to honour and celebrate the gifts of the Irish.

Mr. Speaker, it's true the world can use a little more Saskatchewan, but it's also true that the world has been benefiting for years from Ireland. Not long ago a book was published entitled *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. It tells the tale of how Irish scholars preserved the West's written treasury through the Dark Ages and put their unique stamp on Western culture when they gave that knowledge back to the Continent.

Mr. Speaker, Ireland has been rightfully described as an island of saints and scholars. It was the Irish who gave us Mary Harris "Mother" Jones — a beloved and early advocate for the rights of workers — musical genius running the gamut from the Irish Tenors to U2 to The Pogues to Johnny Cash, Mr. Speaker, and literary genius like that of Joyce and Beckett, Brendan Behan and George Bernard Shaw.

Mr. Speaker, in 1905 one in ten of Saskatchewan's population was Irish, and they've been a vital force in the evolution of our province and culture right to this very merry day.

On St. Patrick's Day we celebrate the rich Irish cultural tradition that is so plainly manifest in the Irish wit and gift for laughter. I'd just like to close with a wee bit of an Irish blessing, Mr. Speaker:

May the luck of the Irish enfold you.  
May the blessings of Saint Patrick behold you.

Erin go bragh, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

### Recognizing St. Patrick's Day

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we would like to join with the

members opposite and congratulate our Irish people and recognize St. Patrick's Day. I want to wish all members of the Assembly and people across the province of Irish descent a safe and happy St. Paddy's Day. It's a day we celebrate not only all things Irish but the great contribution that persons of Irish ancestry have made to our province and our country.

Last year we celebrated our province's centennial and the cultures that helped to shape our province in the early years. The Irish people were an important part of that history and that building. One in ten people in Saskatchewan were Irish or of Irish origin at the time our province was founded. And their mark can be seen across the province, not just in our towns and our cities but also in our culture.

It's ironic today that when we think of the vast numbers of Irish settlers who came to our province in the early years of the country to escape poverty and look for opportunity that today it is Ireland that is the global economic leader and Saskatchewan is the place losing jobs and people in the middle of an oil boom.

Now Ireland is a Celtic tiger that has demonstrated how successful you can be when you have an economic plan focused on competitive taxes, investment in people, and all sectors of the economy working together for economic growth. It is a lesson that this government should be paying attention to.

And now, Mr. Speaker, if I could digress for just a moment, the member from Arm River has pointed out that his father's birthday is today and to tie it in, I'd like to wish Joe O'Brkich of Bladworth a happy birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### **Prince Albert and Area Community Foundation Gives Grants**

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and top of the morning to you.

Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert and Area Community Foundation has presented seven charitable organizations a total of \$49,000 in grant money to help them continue their good work.

The awards ceremony was held at the Saskatchewan Forestry Centre and included a dance presentation by the St. Mary High School dance program.

The grants awarded ranged from the \$400 received by Wesley United Church and West Flat Community Centre for the West Flat Explorers, to the \$18,000 that went to the Prince Albert Safety Council for improvements to the multi-use recreational trail.

Other grants went to the Self Help and Recreational Education or SHARE program, the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan, the Prince Albert Gymnastics Club, the Prince Albert Group Home Society, and Prince Albert Children's Festival.

Following the grant presentations, community fund board member Bryan Rindal presented the foundation with a cheque for \$25,000 on behalf of his mother-in-law and father-in-law.

In keeping with the organization's practice of not spending donations but rather investing them and using the earned income to support local projects and initiatives, the money will go into the Knute and Muriel Hemstad Legacy Fund, and the interest collected each year will go toward worthwhile causes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the community groups and in particular the Prince Albert and Area Community Foundation for their ongoing contributions and good work. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

#### **Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce Awards**

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to tell the Assembly about an event I attended in Rosetown on March 1.

The Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce honoured the community's Citizen of the Year, Florine Klassen, at its annual general meeting. Florine Klassen has distinguished her life by serving others in Rosetown. She was employed for many years as a housekeeper at the hospital, but that was just the beginning of her efforts. The list of Florine Klassen's volunteering activities include the Red Cross committee, the senior citizens' choral group, the Rosetown Dance Club, the music festival, the high school band, the cemetery beautification committee, Meals on Wheels, and Sunday school. Yet she still had lots of time for people. And at 81, she's not finished. Her next challenge is to get the community hall rejuvenated. Congratulations to Florine Klassen for being Rosetown's Citizen of the Year.

At the same function, the chamber of commerce announced its Business of the Year. Nominated were West Central Air, Western Sales, and Red Rose Restaurant. Red Rose Restaurant was awarded the Business of the Year Award. The Employee of the Year was Elaine Domes of the Royal Bank, and Student Employee of the Year was Janea Dawson of the Rosetown Co-op.

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners, and well done Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

#### **The Friar's Briar**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you. Earlier this week I welcomed all participants to the Tim Horton's Briar. Today I'm sharing with you the Briar isn't the only curling action going on in the Queen City. Across town at the Caledonian Curling Club, 22 rinks from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario have gathered to play in the Friar's Briar.

Mr. Speaker, the Friar's Briar has been happening pretty much on an annual basis since 1978. Usually this tournament is held around the same time and in the same place as the Brier, but not necessarily. Sometimes only a few rinks show up to compete and sometimes as many as two dozen.

Even for curling, Mr. Speaker, it's all pretty relaxed. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it seems that the only real rules of the Friar's Briar over and above the basic rules of the game is that three of the four players on each rink has to be a member of the clergy from all denominations, and every player on every rink has to have a good time.

Mr. Speaker, this past Monday it was my great pleasure and honour to take part in the opening ceremonies of the 2006 Friar's Briar and to help throw the opening rock of the tournament. I can tell you it was a lot of fun, and I want to thank the organizers of this grassroots event, in particular my constituent, the Rev. Gerry Borkowsky, Co-Chair of the Regina host group, for allowing me the opportunity to be part of their wonderful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

#### **Olympic Gold Medallist Colleen Sostorics Honoured at Community Supper**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak about one more of Saskatchewan's most recent Olympian gold medallists. I speak of Colleen Sostorics, a member of Canada's gold medal women's hockey team.

This past week Colleen was honoured at a community supper in her hometown of Kennedy. While in the area, she took time to visit a couple of schools and show off her gold medal. It is said her love for the game is clearly evident in her face as Colleen Sostorics tells students of Kipling School about her team's successful defence of the women's hockey gold medal at last month's Olympic Games.

Her love for her country also becomes clear as she describes the pride she felt at the opening ceremonies as the Canadian athletes entered the stadium at Turin, Italy, led by her hockey teammate and Team Canada flag-bearer, Danielle Goyette. In fact there was a great sense of camaraderie among all Canadian athletes at the Games, whatever the sport, Colleen says.

Colleen encourages students to set goals, to focus on those goals, and prepare to complete their goals.

Mr. Speaker, Colleen keeps a rigorous regime which includes cardiovascular and strength training. She told a young questioner that lifting weights is her favourite form of exercise. She trains to be in the best condition she can be to best represent Canada, Saskatchewan, and her hometown of Kennedy.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations, Colleen Sostorics, Saskatchewan Olympian, gold medallist.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

#### **Congratulations to Winners of SaskEnergy's Adopt-A-Junior Program**

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, as a way to get Saskatchewan youth even more involved in the Tim Hortons Brier, SaskEnergy initiated Adopt-A-Junior program. This program provided Saskatchewan curlers aged 11 to 19 the opportunity to become honorary fifth members of the 12 national teams that competed in the Brier.

Mr. Speaker, the winners of the Adopt-A-Junior program are: Ashton Kallechy of Beechy Curling Club; Amy Adair, Melissa Huys, Trevor Donison, and David Carnegie of the Tartan Club here in Regina — David also plays out of the Creelman Curling Club; Gregory Shiplack of the Montmartre Curling Club, Chris Collins of the Lumsden Curling Club, Jillian Dukart of the Lampman Curling Club, Jessica Brost of Maple Creek Curling Club, J.D. Cole from the Gainsborough Curling Club, Aaron Lindgren of the Watrous Curling Club, Kelsey Dutton of the Gull Lake and District Curling Club.

Mr. Speaker, not only did these juniors practise with Canada's best, they received team jackets, tickets to the Brier, and photos with the team. Nearly 100 juniors entered the contest, and the winners were those who spoke of the role that they play in their own curling communities, their aspirations for becoming competitive curlers, and even some of their favourite players.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating these up-and-coming Saskatchewan curlers and in commending SaskEnergy for its innovative approach to community involvement and support of volunteers. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

#### **Highway Maintenance and Storage Depots**

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, the possible closure of section shops and satellites by the Department of Highways poses a serious threat to the safety of travellers and workers in Saskatchewan. If these closures proceed, staff using road clearing equipment will have much further distances to travel. That means roads will not be cleared as frequently.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government even considering a proposal that may jeopardize the safety of motorists and workers?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, let me say to the member opposite and to this House that this government has no intentions of closing the rural maintenance shops. I think it's an

obvious process that management would take to review on a regular basis the changes in demographics, the changes in road use, the size of the equipment that's used and the job that it can do. I think that's a prudent thing to do. I want to say that road safety and road maintenance is very much a priority of ours, and it's reflected in the Department of Highways budget on an annual basis.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately the people of Saskatchewan just do not believe the Minister of Highways. We have in our hands a copy of a map outlining the closures of section shops and satellites, Mr. Speaker.

A recent report from the Department of Highways outlines this government's plans for the equipment storage facilities and road clearing over the next decade. This report states some buildings must be closed because years of NDP [New Democratic Party] underfunding and neglect have left them in poor repair. In other cases like Churchbridge, the shop is described as being in good condition yet is being considered for closure. In Watrous the shop is in good condition yet still being considered for closure as well. Mr. Speaker, none of this makes any sense. It's contradictory.

Can the Minister of Highways assure this Assembly that he will halt any plans to close these facilities as outlined in this strategy document?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, let me say again the government, the department is not planning any shop closures. I can tell that member that I've met with members of SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] who represent the workers. I have communicated to them what our plans are. I can also tell the member that the process is and will remain that any closures that take place will have to be signed off by the Minister Responsible for the Department of Highways and Transportation, and I have no intention of signing any such documents.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter from the previous minister of Highways. It's dated December 22, 2004, and in that letter the minister assures me that there are no plans to close the Lucky Lake highways depot. Yet this same depot is listed in the department's central region equipment storage strategy as being slated for closure.

Mr. Speaker, it's confusing. Who is right? Now the Minister of Highways has been in his position long enough he should know. Who's telling the truth? My question is, is the former minister of Highways and the current minister telling the truth, or is the author of that equipment storage strategy telling the truth?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say to the member opposite what I have just previously said. There are no closures going to take place. Any of these would have to be signed by myself. I have no intention of doing that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can imagine how confusing this is for the people who are affected and need to depend on these highways. They have Highways department staff telling them that the depot is going to be closed in three to five years, and they are concerned that the safety of the roads are in jeopardy. On November 24 of this past year in supplementary estimates, Mr. John Law, the deputy minister of Highways, repeated the early assurances that the Lucky Lake highways depot would not be closed. And yet the department's own strategy document reaches the exact opposite conclusion.

I ask the Minister of Highways again: can he assure this House that he is correct in saying that the Lucky Lake highway depot will not be closed?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you'll have to forgive us for not taking that minister's word, definite word, because if we go back to the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] fiasco, if we remember what happened there, someone in this House misled the public for a number of years over what happened with SPUDCO.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Churchbridge and Stockholm in my area are also on that closure list, but we could go on and on and on. There's Glaslyn, Green Lake, Shellbrook, Watrous, Kelvington, Porcupine Plain. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on. And if my understanding is right, in my area if these satellite shops are closed, they'll be ran out of Yorkton and Melville, which is about 60 miles from the Manitoba border.

I guess my question to the minister is, Mr. Speaker: do we have to have a busload of school kids hit head-on with a semi before we realize that this is a safety issue, not just a monetary issue but a safety issue?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of



Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, that is a prime example of why the Saskatchewan Party has no credibility with the general public — because the inflated rhetoric, the misrepresentation on occasion of the facts, I would say, Mr. Speaker, is well documented and well known. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that public safety is a primacy for this department, the people who work in it, the men and women who prepare our highways as best that they can on a daily basis for traffic north, south, east, west. It's their responsibility to ensure that we do the best that we can within our budgets to have safe highways and safe roads.

With respect to the document that the members . . . [inaudible] . . . refer, obviously within a department there will be a review. There will be an analysis. There will be some drafts that will be prepared that will prepare information for senior management and for the minister's office to peruse. I think that's a normal course of action, and it's an appropriate thing to do.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, Churchbridge sits on the junction of Highway 16, 80, and 8. They service all those areas, and a few years ago there were seven men worked out of that department. Now there's two. And if this plan follows through, there will none left there. And that will leave about 60 miles for either Melville or Yorkton to service.

A load of salt in my understanding, Mr. Speaker, when the roads are icy, will do about 15 miles. So what that tells me is that's four truckloads of salt going back empty, coming out and doing . . . and it'll take much longer to salt these highways.

Right now we see at this time of year where our highways are in terrible condition. We're having accidents happen out there with the situation as it is now. If we close down more of these satellite depots out there in the Highway department, the problem is only going to get worse, Mr. Speaker.

Where is this going to save dollars? And when does the safety factor come in to it? Mr. Speaker, let's not close down rural Saskatchewan completely. And the minister says there's no such a report. Who initiated this report, and who do we listen to, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite, I truly do appreciate his analysis and his recommendations in terms of how to manage the operations of the Department of Highways. But I would have to say that I would prefer to rely on the professionals, the people who do this on a regular basis. Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. The Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt in my mind why the members opposite have chosen to make this day highways day. And I want to tell you why. Every day this week has been about the economy with the exception of today. But you know what, Mr. Speaker, they woke up, and they read the Regina *Leader-Post*, and it said, "Boom times ahead; economy to grow." Mr. Speaker, that's what this province is about.

This is an infrastructure this Department of Highways manages. It helps to build this economy in rural and in urban Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, let there be no mistake. This government will lead this province in economic development tomorrow and next week as it has in the past. The Department of Highways will be part of that infrastructure. And we will take advice from members on that side of the House, but we prefer to rely on our professionals, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

#### SaskTel International's Project in Trinidad and Tobago

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, as members on this side of the House are well aware, there's a lot of areas in Saskatchewan that are still waiting for cellphone coverage. But last July SaskTel announced that it had signed a \$125 million contract to bring cellphone coverage to the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

Could the minister please tell us the status of that contract.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. SaskTel International does do deals out and work on projects outside of Canada. But their first commitment, first and foremost commitment is to Saskatchewan and the people in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say, how are we doing? Well you know what, Mr. Speaker? We've got the best high-speed Internet coverage anywhere in North America. And we also . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — And we also have the highest percentage of population coverage for digital cellular service anywhere in North America.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — So, Mr. Speaker, the member can say, how are we doing? Well SaskTel is doing fine. Cellular service in the province of Saskatchewan is doing fine. And the people of Saskatchewan will continue to benefit.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, sadly it doesn't appear like the minister is aware of the status of that contract, so let us tell her what we've learnt. Last week SaskTel's Trinidad partner, LaqTel, abruptly cancelled the contract. When SaskTel signed the contract just last July, the government made a big announcement and issued a news release that that minister should have been aware of. However when the contract was cancelled just last week, the NDP had nothing to say about it. We had to find out about it by reading the *Trinidad Express*.

Mr. Speaker, why was the contract abruptly cancelled? Was SaskTel paid in full for the work that it has done so far? And how much money are Saskatchewan taxpayers out as a result of this botched deal in the Caribbean?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll take note of the question and respond later.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is a significant contract at \$125 million, and perhaps the minister should check into this fairly shortly.

It is also our understanding that SaskTel actually moved a number of employees to Trinidad to work on this project. They've moved there with their families as the contract was supposed to last four or five years. We were told that the Trinidad company simply ran out of money and it stopped paying its bills, so the contract was cancelled for those reasons.

And now all of these employees will have to be moved back to Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, does the minister know how many of her employees were moved to Trinidad? Who's on the hook for moving all of these employees back to Saskatchewan? Is it true that SaskTel's partner in Trinidad stopped paying its bills, and that's why the contract was cancelled? And the bottom line again, how much money have we lost on this deal?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I do know this was a consulting contract. There was some problems with bills being paid. The contract was cancelled. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a normal course of business. When SaskTel is doing a consulting contract . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. Order, order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a consulting contract

where companies will hire SaskTel because of their high regard for SaskTel's expertise and knowledge and some of the groundbreaking work that SaskTel has done around the world, not just here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has gone onside, offside. Get rid of the Crowns. That was their first song and dance. Then they stood up in this House and said they supported the Crowns. Mr. Speaker, all they have to do is look at SaskTel's record, and that speaks for itself.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, this contract deal went sideways in less than a year. In less than 12 months, it was already botched. I hardly think that that's normal business practice, or is it for SaskTel International? And if it is, that's concerning.

Mr. Speaker, there's another article in the *Trinidad Express* that indicates many of the cell towers being put up by SaskTel and LaqTel were actually illegal. Is that also normal business practices? The article states these towers were not authorized by the government, and as a result they'll have to be torn down.

Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before, there's many places in Saskatchewan that we don't have cell coverage. So maybe the minister can check it out and see if we can bring these towers back home and set them up here in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, instead of putting up illegal towers in Trinidad and Tobago, does the NDP plan on putting up a few legal towers here in Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, this leads back to a basic debate we have had with the Saskatchewan Party for many, many years. They have no credibility when it comes to speaking about the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, which have been in place for many years, which have provided top-notch value and service for all of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of the highest coverage — digital cellular coverage — anywhere in North America. We have the largest coverage for high-speed Internet anywhere in North America, Mr. Speaker. But we get the backhanded, sly comments that are supposed questions that are absolutely ridiculous, and they do discredit to the people who work for SaskTel and the people who operate the company.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, we have a minister that's just given an incredible rant on credibility when she didn't even know a thing about this contract. She couldn't answer the questions at all. She had no clue. So she's one to talk about credibility.

How on earth did SaskTel make this \$125 million contract and move a whole bunch of employees all the way to Trinidad only to have the deal fall apart a few months later? Mr. Speaker, was there any due diligence done before this contract was signed?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I will say again that it is the consulting contract. I do not micromanage SaskTel or SaskTel International but, Mr. Speaker, I have made the commitment that I will get the information that's necessary . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. I would ask members to allow the minister's response to be heard. The Minister for SaskTel.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this goes back to an age-old debate that we have had with the Saskatchewan Party and the New Democratic Government of Saskatchewan about the value of the Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, they have hopped all over the map on this. They support them; they don't support them. They disagree with civil servants. They like the Crown corporations; they support them. They support legislation being put in place to protect them, but they continue to talk about core operations. And, Mr. Speaker, when I look across, what does that mean? What's core operations to this group? Well it's dial-up and it's rotary dial phones. And, Mr. Speaker, the world has moved on and SaskTel will move with it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

[10:45]

### Job Vacancies in Nursing

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health stood in the House and wanted to talk about credibility. I watched the tape this morning, and it really looked quite funny when he jumped to his feet and talked about credibility and then just stood there silent.

Mr. Speaker, but there is definitely an issue of credibility when it comes to this minister because later on he had the audacity to question the credibility of SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] and the numbers that they have regarding nursing vacancies. He also went on to say yesterday that he had been working with SUN and he co-operated with all of SUN's requests when it came to talking about the vacancies. But, Mr. Speaker, that couldn't be further from the truth.

We have a number of letters that SUN cc'd us that went to the minister — letters that were sent in March '04, letters that were sent in September '05, a letter was sent in October '05, letter sent in January '06, and another letter sent recently in February '06 — none of which has this government answered. There's a real issue with credibility, Mr. Speaker.

When will the minister submit the information that SUN has requested regarding the vacancies in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I have indicated since the beginning of this debate, I intend to meet with representatives of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses before the end of this month. We will discuss the letters that they have sent. We will discuss the vacancies, and we will discuss how we go about ensuring that there are more nurses employed in this province next year and the year after than there are today.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — It's amazing, Mr. Speaker, what a bit of public embarrassment will make this minister do. For two years, five letters, absolutely no response from the minister. Now after a couple of days of questioning and in some pretty rough news scrums out in the rotunda, now he's going to meet with SUN and disclose the information, Mr. Speaker.

There's other issues with credibility this minister has. He's talked about meeting with SUN. We'd like to know when that meeting is going to be because quite frankly I'm not so sure that that has been planned.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that this minister has a real fear of setting a target because he knows he can't reach it. But SUN is talking about setting targets for recruitment and retention. Will that be part of the discussion when he does meet with SUN — targets set for recruitment and retention of nurses in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, the meeting was originally scheduled for March 31 at the request of SUN. We are trying to find an alternate date. Apparently that date does not fit their circumstances. We are in the process of setting that up.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to indicate my pleasure with the amount of time that the media did spend with me the other day to discuss the seriousness, the seriousness of this issue. While the members opposite may stay up all night trying to think of different ways to misquote me, Mr. Speaker, I applaud the media for being fair in their reporting on this subject.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — It's interesting that he enjoyed the time that he had with the media. It seemed like after that length of time he finally submitted to saying that he will supply numbers, that he will meet with SUN. Unfortunately it takes a tough news scrum to get the minister to that point.

But we'll be interested to find out what his numbers are. He's talking about releasing the number of vacancies in the province. We'd be very interested in knowing what that is because we're talking about the number of registered nurses — I know there's an issue with LPNs [licensed practical nurse] as well and vacancies there — but just the number of vacancies for registered nurses.

SUN's numbers are showing that there are 65 vacancies in the Regina Health Region alone, another 42 in Prairie North which is around Prince Albert, and 37 in Saskatoon. These are all spots that need to be filled with registered nurses.

Will the minister commit today to filling the positions that are vacant within the province, in other words, setting a goal that within the next budget cycle these vacancies will be filled within Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged that filling the vacancies is the first priority of this government. Mr. Speaker, we also acknowledge that there is additional work to do. That's why we developed the action plan that was issued in December of this year in consultation with representatives of Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.

But, Mr. Speaker, since 2002 we've had many successes in this regard and have made great progress in employing nurses. There's been an increase in the number of nurses working in Saskatchewan since 2002. There's a higher number of RNs [registered nurse] per 100,000 population working in Saskatchewan than in any other Western province. Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of RNs working full-time than in any of the other Western provinces. And 81 per cent of registered nurses employed in Saskatchewan were trained in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, these are incredible successes. We've got to build on our success and go forward.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the reality is we are losing nurses out of the province. We are training nurses for other jurisdictions. Only 66 per cent of the nurses that we train in this province end up staying here and working here. One out of three nurses leave the province for work outside. And the reason they're leaving is because of some of the working

conditions in our province. They are so short-staffed that there's issues of burnout. There's issues with WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims. There's issues with the whole work environment and morale because this government is forcing nurses out of the province.

Mr. Speaker, when will he take seriously and set some targets, some numbers on when you're going to accomplish filling the vacancies and what the number of vacancies are in the province? Until we know what the exact numbers are and when they are going to fill them, Mr. Speaker, this government can flounder on and on again. When will the minister stand up and do his job and set targets that can be measured?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, by the member's own numbers, the majority of nurses are remaining in Saskatchewan and working for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken this issue very seriously. We have targeted the issue of nursing shortages in this province. We've built an action plan around that. We are working with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and others in this province, Mr. Speaker. We are serious about employing nurses in this province. We increased the number of seats in the nursing education program. There's now 400 students in the nursing education program, Mr. Speaker, and we will offer employment to every single one of them when they graduate, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 33 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 33, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 33, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 34 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2006/  
Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 34, The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 39 — The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority  
Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 39, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 39, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The minister.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 42 — The Respiratory Therapists Act**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

move that Bill No. 42, The Respiratory Therapists Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 42, The Respiratory Therapists Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 43 — The Medical Radiation  
Technologists Act, 2006**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 43, The Medical Radiation Technologists Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 43, The Medical Radiation Technologists Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 44 — The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 44, The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 44, The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be read a second time?  
The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 45 — The Local Government Election  
Amendment Act, 2006**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time?  
The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 204 — The Recognition of Telemiracle Week Act**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With pleasure, I move that Bill No. 204, An Act to recognize Telemiracle in Saskatchewan be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose that Bill No. 204, The Recognition of Telemiracle Week Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be read a second time?  
The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

**Health Care System**

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put on the record today our government's opposition to the proposals that come from many parts of Canada and from members opposite for more privatization in the health care system. And at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly recognizes that parallel private health care would not alleviate pressure on Saskatchewan's current health care system, but would fundamentally undermine it, causing it to be less accessible, less efficient, and more expensive.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I am very concerned about what I see happening in other provinces in Canada with respect to growing support for privatization of health care. And I think one of the very important roles that our Premier has played on the national stage is that the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, have been the two leading voices in Canada standing up for a publicly funded, publicly administered health care system, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud of the role that our Premier has taken in federal-provincial conferences, Mr. Speaker, emphasizing our support for a not-for-profit system, Mr. Speaker.

Now what we see, Mr. Speaker, developing across the country in the last few months is growing support for privatization. We've had the ruling of the Supreme Court in Canada, Mr. Speaker, on the Chaoulli case. And in response to that the Government of Quebec has released a consultation document just a few weeks ago that proposes to allow patients to buy private insurance for elective procedures, Mr. Speaker, clearly opening the door more to privatization.

We have recently had a federal government elected, Mr. Speaker, that unlike the previous administration, we have a Prime Minister now who has clearly signalled that he is willing to look at options that would increase the role of the private sector in medicare.

In the province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, the headline in the March 2 *Globe and Mail* is Premier "Klein willing to defy Ottawa", is what it says, Mr. Speaker. And I want to quote from page 1 of *The Globe and Mail* on March 2 where it says very clearly that Premier Klein is prepared to "... violate the Canada Health Act." Mr. Speaker, quote, Mr. Klein tells reporters that his proposals, quote, "... may violate the Canada Health Act."

[11:00]

And Alberta is putting forward a proposal that will allow doctors to work in both the public and the private system simultaneously, and that will permit patients to have non-emergency services done more quickly if they're prepared to pay for them — in other words, jumping the queue, Mr. Speaker.

In Ontario we're now seeing the establishment of more private clinics. The Copeman Healthcare Inc., which is a private clinic in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, recently announced its intentions to develop three more clinics in that province whereby individuals would pay a fee to become registered with the clinic.

And, Mr. Speaker, I note that the response of the Health critic for the Saskatchewan Party is interesting in this regard, because the Health critic for the Saskatchewan Party in commenting about Mr. Copeman's plans in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, says, and I quote from the *Indian Head-Wolseley News* on January 24, 2006: "We should find out more and have an open public debate about the appropriate ratio of private clinics in the province," Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on our side of the House we're very clear about the fact that we don't want to see more privatization. We want to see a greater role for the public system. And we'll have that debate, Mr. Speaker, as the morning unfolds.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Health critic for the Saskatchewan Party isn't the only one commenting about private clinics. The member from Martensville, a member of the Saskatchewan Party in this House, said to his local paper, *The Village Press*, in 1999: "Private clinics may actually be far more efficient than the public system and that reduces costs," Mr. Speaker. Well that's not our view, Mr. Speaker, of what private clinics do. Our view is that they will increase costs in the health care system. And I'll have more to say about that in a minute.

The member for Wood River, Mr. Speaker, speaking to the *World Spectator* on March 23, 1998 said: "The whole health care system needs a review. I'm in favour of private clinics," Mr. Speaker.

And the former leader of the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Order please. I would just ask members to allow the member from Saskatoon Greystone to be heard, and any side debates should happen behind the bar. Member for Saskatoon Greystone.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member for Rosetown, Mr. Speaker, is on the record in an interview with CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] in his capacity at that time as leader of the Saskatchewan Party. When he was asked, Mr. Speaker, about the role of private clinics and whether doctors should be allowed to operate outside of the public system and charge a fee for services opposed to the medicare system, his response was, and this is the quote:

If it doesn't impact negatively on the principle of affordability, yes we would. We think this would improve the quality of health care and would remove a lot of pain

and suffering in the province.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosetown is clearly on the record that he would allow private health clinics where doctors would actually be allowed to operate outside of the system. That was the question asked of him, Mr. Speaker.

So those are just four examples, Mr. Speaker, of the position of Sask Party members opposite on this question of privatization of health care, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that there was a nominating convention which the member for Lloydminster made reference to on the first day of the sitting of the House earlier this week in which Mr. McMillan, Mr. Speaker, was elected as the candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in the Lloydminster constituency. And it's very clear, Mr. Speaker, from a debate that the Lloydminster newspapers reported on in Pierceland a few weeks ago that Mr. McMillan is squarely on the record in terms of supporting two-tier medicine in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Clearly on the record.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have increasing privatization developing in other provinces. We have a federal government that is now clearly more open to privatization of our health care system. We've got our neighbours in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, which are . . . The Government of Alberta is absolutely and unequivocally putting on the record their belief, Mr. Speaker, in a two-tier health care system. And we have several members opposite who are also, Mr. Speaker, on the record in terms of support for more privatization of health care, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to lay out in the minutes that remain for me in this debate, Mr. Speaker, my reasons for believing that increasing the amount of health care in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is . . . increasing the amount of private health care in Saskatchewan is not the way to go, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, increasing the amount of private health care will not reduce waiting lists. England and New Zealand both have parallel private hospital systems, Mr. Speaker, and they have longer waiting lists than the public system does in Canada. And I think this is important to note.

The fact that Canada and New Zealand introduced parallel private systems has done nothing to reduce the waiting lists in their public health system, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they've gotten worse. Studies in England and Australia have found that the more health care is provided in a region by the private sector, the longer the waiting lists for that region are in the public sector, Mr. Speaker.

And members opposite need only look at the *European Economic Review*, which has published many articles on this subject, Mr. Speaker. And it simply is good common sense that if you take your doctors and your specialists out of the public system and allow them to operate in the private system, Mr. Speaker, then there are less doctors that are available to patients who are being served in the public system, Mr. Speaker. And that is clearly not in the public interest.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that increasing the amount of private health care is just bad public policy because it

takes doctors and nurses — badly needed doctors and nurses — away from the public system. And we saw examples of this in Manitoba and Alberta when they allowed private cataract surgeries. Large numbers of doctors moved to the private system for delivering cataract surgery and there were fewer doctors available in the public system. And the results of this, Mr. Speaker, were that waiting lists for the private and the public doctors actually increased, Mr. Speaker.

The total waiting lists in both provinces increased. And one of the very simple reasons for this, Mr. Speaker, was that the doctors in the private health system who were delivering services around cataract operations actually saw fewer patients than the doctors in the public system, and the waiting list grew in both provinces.

And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that increasing the amount of private health care always increases administrative costs. And the best example of this is the United States, which has the highest administrative cost for delivering health care system, Mr. Speaker, in the industrialized world.

Free enterprise health care is always less efficient and one of the reasons for that, Mr. Speaker, is that it's for-profit health care. And there is always a profit built into the costs that have to be paid for, Mr. Speaker, and that inevitably leads to additional expense.

For-profit hospitals for instance in the United States bill \$8,115 per patient on average. And in contrast, Mr. Speaker, the small number of non-profit hospitals in the United States bill \$7,490 per patient for exactly the same treatments, Mr. Speaker. A differential, Mr. Speaker, of more than \$600 per patient.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the fact that for-profit medicine is never in the interest of the public when it comes to total expense and is always more administratively expensive to deliver. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, although the United States system leaves 40 million Americans unserved, the amount of money that is spent on health care through private delivery far exceeds on a per-patient basis what is spent in the public system in Canada, Mr. Speaker. It's a much, much more expensive system.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to leave no mistake about the position of our government with respect to allowing services that are currently delivered under the Canada Health Act to be delivered by private, for-profit medicine. We stand four-square against such proposals, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud that our Premier is taking that message to Ottawa and to federal-provincial conferences at a very critical time in our nation's history on this debate, Mr. Speaker — a very critical time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm firmly of the view that Canadians and the people of Saskatchewan are best served by a publicly funded, publicly administered system, Mr. Speaker, that provides accessibility to all on the basis of need and not on the basis of what they've got in their pocketbook, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the principle that we stand for under our government, Mr. Speaker. The public side of health care has gradually been expanded in our province and we are very proud of that history, Mr. Speaker — very proud of it. And we will

stand against any attempts by members opposite to introduce more privatization into this fundamental service for Canadians, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to move:

That this Assembly recognizes that parallel private health care would not alleviate pressure on Saskatchewan's current health care system but would fundamentally undermine it, causing it to become less accessible, less efficient, and more expensive.

And I move that, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Fairview. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Greystone, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Fairview:

That this Assembly recognizes that parallel private health care would not alleviate pressure in Saskatchewan's current health care system but would fundamentally undermine it, causing it to become less accessible, less efficient, and more expensive.

The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion of the member from Saskatoon Greystone, and I will be putting into the record some facts in three main areas. Number one, Saskatchewan has one of the most efficient per capita health care systems in Canada. Two, public health is a comparative advantage — that's why businesses choose to set up in Canada. And number three, private health care will result in forcing people to pay even when they can't afford it.

Mr. Speaker, it becomes necessary to defend our health care system even right here in the province where medicare was born. Even after the entire country adopted the medicare model, and even after the people of Canada voted Tommy Douglas as their greatest Canadian, that opposition Sask Party continues to want to tear the very fabric that unites this province and this country.

Mr. Speaker, when the Sask Party talks about taking Saskatchewan forward, they say they support all people in Saskatchewan. But what about some of their new candidates? What kind of political candidates are they attracting? Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the Lloydminster *Meridian Booster* on Wednesday, March 1, 2006. Mr. Speaker, they're discussing the public-private health care and the successful candidate, a Mr. McMillan, goes on to say, "he sees nothing wrong in working hard, making good money, and receiving quick care for his wife and daughter."

Mr. Speaker, this sounds innocent enough until you have some time to think about it. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for that opposition Sask Party and Mr. McMillan. I wonder what they would say to the senior widow living on a pension. I wonder what they would say to her. Would they say she didn't work hard enough? How would she get a quick health care? What



would they say?

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, I wonder what they would say to the young person starting out on minimum wage. Would they say, you should work harder? Would they say, perhaps you should get five jobs? And how quick will these young people get their health care?

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear what Mr. McMillan, the Sask Party, say when they are for everyone in Saskatchewan. It was on this basis that Tommy Douglas saw the suffering of those who could not afford health care, those who suffered financial hardship when they paid their medical bills. Mr. Speaker, some of those people lost their farms. And I wonder perhaps if the Sask Party is saying that they did not work hard enough.

Mr. Speaker, we can gauge ourselves and our society by the way we care for the less fortunate. And, Mr. Speaker, we on this side will not give up the right of access to health care for every citizen of this province or this country.

Mr. Speaker, contrast that to our plan. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker, to grow a green and prosperous Saskatchewan economy, to provide jobs and opportunities for our young people, to provide quality public health care — the best in Canada — and make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live, work, and raise a family.

We have a vision and a plan for Saskatchewan that ensures no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. We don't put politics before principle. Mr. Speaker, it is our principle to make sure no one is left behind on the path to opportunity, while disagreements to the Leader of the Opposition politics isolates you and the party.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to point out a very salient fact that is often overlooked in this debate. If you look at the research paper produced by the Canadian Institute of Health Information, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest per capita spending on health care of any province. Per capita we spend 160 per person compared to for example Ontario which only spends \$80 per person on health care.

Now the opposition will tell you that this is an example of how bad our system is, Mr. Speaker. They would claim that with all the money that we spend we should be getting better outcomes. But here is the part they gloss over. Here is the part they gloss over. According to the same report, Saskatchewan has the lowest administrative cost per capita in Canada. The only province that spends slightly less is Nova Scotia. Alberta, with their higher concentration of private health care, has slightly lower spending per capita, but five times the administrative costs per capita. In other words, Mr. Speaker, per capita our system is five times as efficient as the Alberta system.

That's right, Mr. Speaker. Our political system is five times more efficient than the less public system in Alberta. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan is tied with Alberta, Quebec, and BC with having the lowest median wait times in Canada to see a specialist.

For all the talk about unacceptable wait times that we have here,

we actually have a pretty good record. And again, all those provinces spend three to five times the amount per capita on administration expenses. So for every dollar that we spend here in Saskatchewan, we get a better value for that dollar than most other provinces.

Also Saskatchewan has the lowest percentage of people who report difficulties accessing immediate care for minor health problems. This is just another fact that points out that, although the opposition likes to point out all the problems and criticism of the public health care system, whereas in reality, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's actually doing pretty well on a number of key indicators.

The opposition likes to talk about how we need a brand change in this province. Mr. Speaker, they claim that we are unfriendly to business. But it is exactly the NDP and our history of supporting public health care that has made Canada good for business.

Public health care is what economists call a comparative advantage. That's why businesses choose to set up in Canada. Let me give you some examples. The president of General Motors said that it costs GM [General Motors] \$1,500 per vehicle to cover medical costs for employees and retirees in the United States. But in Canada it only costs \$500 per vehicle. That means that GM is better off setting up plants here in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, public health care creates jobs. John Finlayson of the Business Council of British Columbia, which represents a quarter of all jobs in BC, says, and I quote, "No one in the world wants the US system, it's unbelievably expensive." He feels that from a business perspective, public health care is worth defending. Public health care creates a positive business environment, Mr. Speaker.

And how about this one? One of the main reason that Toyota moved a major plant from Alabama to Ontario was public health care. To quote Paul Krugman, a top US [United States] economist, "In America, basic health care is a privilege, in Canada, it is a right. And in the Auto Industry, the good jobs are heading north." That's what he said, Mr. Speaker. Public health care is luring business jobs north across the 49th parallel, Mr. Speaker.

Let me reiterate these three points again, Mr. Speaker. Public health care creates jobs. Public health care creates a positive business environment. Public health care is luring business and jobs across the 49th parallel.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to the idea that no one is left behind. Our defence of the public health care stems from that commitment. Private health care will result in forcing people to pay even if they can't afford it. Even expansion of the private health care will force the situation of people in Saskatchewan. For example a 2005 report from the Commonwealth Fund reveals that almost 40 per cent of US adults had difficulty paying medical bills. More than 27 per cent of people with problems paying medical bills in the US reported that they were unable to pay for necessities like food, heat, or rent.

But we don't have to go all the way to the US to find this kind of tragedy, Mr. Speaker. Stan Marshall, who is a senior researcher with CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], has a number of examples of this type of profits before people. Allison Lavigne, a young woman who was rushed to hospital because she was having a miscarriage of her pregnancy, with . . . The doctor ordered a ultrasound. But the technician wouldn't perform the ultrasound because she didn't have money. Her husband had to go and use his credit card to get some funds so that she could have her ultrasound. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the public medicare system remains the most cost-effective means of delivering health care. In Saskatchewan we are moving in the right direction with respect to health care reform and we will continue our efforts to provide timely, quality health care that Saskatchewan residents require through the medicare system. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly glad to enter into this debate, the 75-minute debate on the subject of health care. And I applaud the government for bringing this issue forward so that a number of the inaccuracies, the misquotes that the members opposite are using, can be corrected if they choose to sit and listen to what we have to say on the medical . . . on the health file. Because certainly we hear it all the time, misquotes. And you know it's always the big scare tactic. The medicare tactic comes forward right off the bat. And that's certainly what they want to talk about.

Well we can certainly clear up a lot of that if they choose to listen to the words that our members speak when we talk on this issue. Because it is an issue that we know on a regular basis . . . When polling is done, one of the most important issues people find all the time is health care. It's usually number one because it's on people's minds. The economy may go up and down and agriculture may be up and down and there's a lot of other issues, but health always tends to be the number one issue.

And it's interesting that the NDP would come up with the issue and put the P-word, the privatization word, in their motion because quite frankly I don't think we would even be talking about privatization at all if the health care system that we had in our province served people better. The only reason people start looking at other options or talking about other options is because they don't have the care; they're unable to access the care they feel they need.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know for a fact that we have some of the longest waiting lists. We have people going out of province to get procedures. We have people waiting for government to approve or deny drugs coming onto the formulary. The reason people look for other options is because they are not getting the service they feel they need here in Saskatchewan. And I think this government should be ashamed of that.

They stand in the House on a regular basis and say they are the defenders of medicare. They are the only ones that have any

idea of how the whole system should run. But when they look at it, if they were to look at it . . . And I mean maybe it's just our offices that get the phone calls. But I can tell you, since I have become Health critic, between myself and mostly my constituency assistant, Vonni . . . have received phone call after phone call after phone call of people that aren't getting the care they need. And this government should be ashamed of that, that they've allowed the health care system to get into such a state that people look for options. People will not look for options if they get timely care, if they have access to the medications that they feel, that the medical professionals feel they need to save their patients.

I mean the classic example has been the Terry Rak case. And it's absolutely . . . it should be an embarrassment to this government to see what has gone on with that man and a number of others that have come to this Assembly on this very case of Avastin. The government talked that it would tell us one way or the other whether they would be accepting and paying for the drug Avastin — back in, I believe it was, November. And they waited and they waited.

And finally we held another news conference and pushed the government to make a decision because the cancer society . . . First of all, it's covered in other provinces. But the cancer society said this drug should be covered. In most jurisdictions, it is the standard of care — the standard of care, not exceptional care — the standard of care with colon cancer. It is the drug that is the standard of care. But instead of making a decision right off the bat, this government delayed and delayed and delayed and delayed, and finally about a week or two ago decided they would make the decision and said that they won't fund Avastin, even though now they've allowed people to pay for it on their own.

The hypocrisy of the members that spoke before me, talking about the fact that we don't have a two-tiered health care system, is absolutely appalling, absolutely appalling. So what do you call it when Mr. Rak can go and pay for Avastin at \$3,000 a week? \$3,000 a week, you're allowing him to pay for the drug for \$3,000 a week.

And so you're saying to somebody else who perhaps doesn't have the financial means like Mr. Rak does . . . he doesn't have the financial means like Mr. Rak does to pay for the drug. So in other words, that person who cannot pay for the drug — which is administered through the hospital — that person that cannot pay for the drug does not get the standard of care. Now what type of a system would you call that?

What type of a system would you call it when somebody has the money to pay for a drug that will be administered through the hospital . . . and he's worked hard and he's saved his money, and he has the money to pay for that drug and he can buy it and have it administered through the hospital like Mr. Rak is doing? But the next person, which the member that spoke just before me said, you know, the person maybe didn't make as much money — he was making minimum wage or whatever — and doesn't have the financial means to buy the drug but is in the same position as Mr. Rak is and they cannot access that drug. Now do you call that a two-tier system or not?

You know, when a person can pay for the drug and have it

administered through the hospital and extend his life but the next person who doesn't have the financial means cannot, is that not a two-tier system? To stand in the House and lecture us on the fact of whether it's a single tier or two tier and not admit to the fact that they're overseeing a two-tier system today, they've allowed the system to get to that point . . . is appalling, is hypocritical.

The former minister . . . But the member from Saskatoon was talking about private health care. Again the hypocrisy because, you know, if you look at the health care system today, compared to the way it was 15 or 20 years ago, this government has allowed privatization to come into the health care system. You've allowed it. And to stand here and . . .

**The Speaker:** — I just remind the member, making his remarks through the Chair please.

**Mr. McMorris:** — This government allowed that to happen. A number of services are delivered privately in the public system. If I am phoning an ambulance in Saskatoon and the ambulance comes and picks me up and takes me to the hospital, who owns the ambulance in Saskatoon? Is it the health authority or is it owned privately?

To stand in the House and say there is no private delivery of health care services in the public system is an out and out fabrication. I can't use the word I want to use.

[11:30]

Because if the member from Saskatoon phones an ambulance and he gets picked up and taken to the hospital, who owns the ambulance? Does the health authority? No, they don't. A private deliverer owns the ambulance. If I go and have a prescription, to have an X-ray or an ultrasound, something like that, if I go to a clinic here in Regina and have an ultrasound, who owns that clinic? It's owned privately in a public system. So for this government to say that there is no private delivery is absolutely wrong.

Should there be more private delivery? I don't think so. But it's this government that's got us to the point. It's this government that has allowed privatization of the health care system. And to stand here and lecture us on the fact that whether it should be a Copeman clinic or not is absolutely hypocritical.

Because the member from Saskatoon also went and said, you know, if I go see a doctor in a private clinic, well who owns the building the doctor is in right now? If I go and see my general practitioner, he runs a business; he's probably incorporated. He has his own facility. I would say that's a private deliverer within a public system. So to stand here and say that there is no private delivery is absolutely ludicrous.

And then the absolute hypocrisy, the absolute hypocrisy of this government to stand here and say they're the defenders of medicare when every one of them campaigned for a leader in the last federal election that accesses his health care in a private clinic . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McMorris:** — They like to run off and talk about Harper and the Conservatives or Ralph Klein and the Conservatives in Alberta. Neither one of them have accessed private health care in a private clinic but the Leader of the NDP Party certainly has. So to stand and say they are the defenders of the medicare system and then because they need care, they walk around the system and use a private clinic, I don't know what else you call that but pure hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that a publicly funded, publicly administered health care system is what we need in this province that operates under the Canada Health Act. We've said it before and we'll say it again.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to be able to get in on this debate of public health care versus private health care which is something that's so critical and crucial not just to the citizens of Saskatchewan but to all citizens of Canada as this debate wades on throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has done a masterful job of convincing the media and the general public that there's a crisis in health care. They have an extreme right wing ideology on this issue that they try to hide behind the platitudes and false pretences of actually caring about the public health care system.

They are completely ideological, Mr. Speaker, and although my hon. colleagues on this side of the House have given fact after fact, statistic after statistic, argument after argument, it is all in vain because the degradation of our health care system — in fact the degradation of our entire province — is all that the members opposite know how to do. They are in love with their reckless policy on privatization that favours the wealthy no matter how damaging it would be to the province.

Members across the way have called for private MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging], private clinics, the privatization of other health care services, the privatization of support services, the want to allow hospitals and doctors to do extra billing of patients. And above all, they want their friends to get their noses in the public troughs.

They offer nothing but platitudes. They say trust us, Mr. Speaker; we don't want two-tier health care. Never mind all the statements they've made in support of exactly that type of system. They say, we support the Canada Health Act. But when their right wing colleagues in Alberta passed legislation that even the Premier of Alberta acknowledges will contravene the Canada Health Act, the opposition does not condemn it. In fact they continue to sing the praises of Alberta.

When their right winged colleagues in Ottawa say nothing about the Alberta package but promise to study it, does the Sask Party stand up and say, we support the Canada Health Act so what you are doing is wrong? No of course not. They smile and wink and nod at their right wing friends in Alberta and Ottawa and go back to tearing down this province in every speech they

give and every question they ask.

As a former Conservative cabinet minister of this province said, Mr. Speaker, the opposition are too easily taken in by simplistic right wing dogma. Perhaps that is why they didn't let him run for them in the last election in Saltcoats. Someone who has actually ran this province and knows the challenges wouldn't fit in with their attack on the very institutions of this government.

This simplistic right wing dogma is nothing new, Mr. Speaker. In the 1980s Ronald Reagan pounded home one of the most potent slogans of all times, quote ". . . government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." And the Sask Party would be happy to agree, Mr. Speaker, but this is a problem for them.

If you think government is the problem, you'll have problems governing. People who think government can do no good will be no good at running government. This blame-government riff is running out of gas conceptually and ethically and is getting very tired for the people on this side of the House who are trying to move this people and its province forward.

So that is why they now hide their views on health care, Mr. Speaker. Their blame-government ideology is such that they want to and have attacked the public system. But they know that people don't want to hear that, that the citizens of Saskatchewan are proud of their health care system, and they want to promote it and make it better. So they cover up, Mr. Speaker.

They have twisted their positions and their beliefs into ugly, unrecognizable rationales, putting politics ahead of principles so that they can grasp at the reins of power like a dying man grasps at air. And let me tell you that there would be more people grasping at air under the Sask Party's health care system, Mr. Speaker. We have all heard the horror stories of people who die on the very steps of a hospital because they could not pay for a doctor's care. It happens, Mr. Speaker. It happens.

But let me go back to my point that their beliefs on health care stem from their beliefs on government. It stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, that if you don't like government at all, you won't like the government providing health care. As the member from Melfort-Tisdale said when he was running for leader of their party that the government could never do anything more efficiently than the private sector can do, he was pointing their ideology when he later said the government should be redefined because it cannot offer all the same services it does now. He was once again pointing out their ideology. When the former leader of the party talks about his core services review, he is pointing out the ideology of their party.

Yet the facts are indisputable, Mr. Speaker. In terms of administrative costs, the public system in Canada is just far more efficient than any private system in the world, and per capita the public system in Saskatchewan is the most efficient in Canada. But the members across the way simply cannot accept facts, Mr. Speaker. They have to deny the truth because the facts disagree with their ideological message.

And we are staring here to something very interesting in the media and from the right wing these days, Mr. Speaker. They

are starting to invoke the social democrat systems in Europe as their new model. I guess they got tired of us pointing out how inferior the US private system was, so they have retreated to the slightly higher ground of Europe.

Well let's make some comparisons with Europe, Mr. Speaker. Let's compare Canada with some of the most social democratic countries over there. Iceland, Norway, Switzerland — all spend per capita more on health care than we do. In terms of percentage of GDP [gross domestic product], France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands spend more than we do. They all have some mix of public and private systems, but their per capita growth rates are staggering, Mr. Speaker.

Canada has a per capita growth rate on health care of 3.6 per cent — which is very sustainable; it is basically the cost of inflation — whereas most of these countries have two or three times that growth rate. If there is a correlation between out-of-control spending costs and more private expenditure on health care, I think that's where it is.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, health care is a market failure. Private health care simply cannot by definition be as efficient as a single-payer system. Government or not, it is the single payer that makes the system work. If there was only one health care monopoly in the United States then they would have a far better system than they do now, but we all know that that's not going to happen. The only way for a monopoly to be fair is for that to be a government monopoly.

Again this flies in the face of the government-is-the-problem ideology of the right wing, Mr. Speaker. This flies in the face of the member from Melfort-Tisdale's assertion that the private sector can always do things better. This flies in the face of the simplistic right-wing dogma that passes for serious policy discussion on that side of the House.

And so as I said at the start of my speech, they try to claim that there's a crisis, Mr. Speaker. They try to claim that the current system is broken, that the only injection of private resources will fix it. It doesn't matter that all the evidence, all the reports, all the statistics show that the current model is the most efficient and the most sustainable. They have to deny the truth to promote their ideology. They have to ignore the facts to advance their agenda, and they have to dismiss the facts so they can continue on their campaign of gloom and doom. Well the people of this side of the House know better, and the people of Saskatchewan know better.

When it comes to the topic of approving Avastin, for instance, I have to tell you this is something that would be again very near and dear to my own heart. I lost my mother just slightly over a year ago to breast cancer, and had someone told me at that time that I would have had the opportunity to extend her life by anywhere from 1.8 to 5 months — which is the life extension prediction of what Avastin can do — I would have done somersaults. Had someone told me that it would have then cost the public coffers of this province approximately \$6.5 million annually, I would not have done such great somersaults, knowing full well that that \$6.5 million annually in not providing a curative solution, would then take away from potentially preventative care and finding curative solutions.

So I understand the notion of wanting to prolong life. I would have given any amount of my own personal resources to have extended her life by days, let alone months, but the fact of the matter is that there are a hundred other drugs out there right now, Mr. Speaker, that are looking for potential approval at some point in the future.

And there is only so many resources that this province can provide, and so therefore those resources have to be applied in their most beneficial manner. And so I have great sympathy for the families that are having to pay out of their own pocket for this particular drug. But the fact that they are able to purchase the drug at least and have it ministered in the province, I think is a humane thing to do, not to mention something that I feel that I'm very happy that they were able to do.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the government motion and clearly stand here to support public health care system in a publicly administered, publicly delivered fashion with absolutely no creeping privatization whatsoever. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a couple of reasons why I wanted to enter this particular debate, one of which most members in the House are well aware of. I used to be a health care worker. I worked in the publicly funded health care system and valued the opportunity to do so, to help patients.

I found it very interesting to listen to the previous speaker who obviously having never worked in the publicly funded health care system such as I have, is so happy to tell me how I think and what I believe in and making it up as she goes, which is pretty bizarre I must say. Her speech was rather bizarre. I enjoyed my years . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Once again I'd ask the members to allow the member for Humboldt to be heard. Member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enjoyed the work that I did in the public health care system. I was a medical laboratory technologist at the Royal University Hospital. And I believed in the system then and believe in it now.

What I don't believe in is the deterioration that I've seen. I'm still in touch with a number of the caregivers at the Royal University Hospital — colleagues that I used to work with. And I'll tell you back when I worked in that hospital we didn't have hallway wards. We didn't have emergency backups the way that we do now. So it has deteriorated. There still are problems, considerable problems, within the health care system. We're getting more and more stories of mismanagement.

[11:45]

And instead of addressing those problems, we have a government that's too busy trying to put medicare messages out there because they don't want the public to talk about

what's wrong within the system and how it can be fixed. They want to scare the public into believing that if someone else gets in power it's going to get even worse. They've got nothing to base that on. The member that just spoke from Regina Walsh Acres is making this up as she goes, or her speech writer makes it up. She has no clue. She has never listened to any one of us in what we have to say. She obviously isn't interested in anything that we've actually stated as a fact, but she's going to decide how we think, what we believe, and she's never even worked in the system. I find that absolutely amazing, absolutely amazing that she feels she has the right to do that.

You know who suffers when you have a government that is so wrapped up in ideology and they're so busy trying to message medicare more than fix the problems? The people who suffer are the patients. The patients within this province are suffering, many of them elderly, many of them with families. And what we're seeing, as much as they deny it and don't want to do anything about it or set targets or fix anything, is that more and more people are being forced out of the province for treatment. More and more people are left on longer and longer waiting lists, and more and more people are being expected to pay for their own drugs.

The member opposite again brought up her own personal story of her mother, and I'm very sad to hear that story. However, there are a number of cases and we are not funding Avastin. So how is that not two-tier health when some people can afford to fund it themselves and others cannot? And she feels that it should not be funded because it is not preventative. So fine. I have a constituent out my way who will have to use some medical equipment for the rest of his life. Yes it will not cure him, but he can live a long and productive life if this particular catheter was subsidized for him — except it's not, and he can't afford it. And it's costing him thousands of dollars a month to try and take care of his medical condition.

**An Hon. Member:** — He's being left behind.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — He's being left behind. But you know who else is being left behind, Mr. Speaker? His children. His two young girls are being left behind because they have to go without. There's no figure skating lessons or piano lessons or any extras for those girls because this man has got to pay for his own medical equipment. That's two-tier health care. That's two-tier health care and that is a sign that a government is not even beginning to address the problems that exist.

If there wasn't so many frustrations on those stories and many, many others — people on waiting lists, people losing loved ones on waiting lists, and I can give you names if you want of people that have experienced that — if there wasn't the frustrations that were building within the public, there would be no discussion on privatization. They can blame us for it all they want. The fact is the people out there are looking for alternatives. They're looking for going out of province. They're looking for going out of country in some cases because they cannot get the health care that they need here in this province.

The frustration in my own constituency is quite unbelievable, and that's the second reason why I wanted to enter this debate. The people in the Humboldt constituency and Humboldt and surrounding area do not believe that this government can be

trusted when it comes to handling health care issues, and they do not believe that their word is always on track of what they're going to do.

Humboldt has been promised a new hospital now for just about two decades. It's been a great photo op for the Premier and for the minister, and it's been . . . You know they've come out there time and time again. They basically told the Humboldt people that this was not going to be a problem; there's going to be a new hospital as long as they're in power — as long as they're in power. And that's what it's about. It's about keeping power. It's not about getting a health care facility in the city of Humboldt. It's got nothing to do with that.

It was interesting when I went back through some articles through the *Humboldt Journal*. On February 12, 2005, there was an ad in the *Humboldt Journal*. And after waiting 18 months for a new hospital, in December 2, '04 the Health minister indicated to the community and surrounding area that St. Elizabeth's Hospital project is slated to follow the timeline as outlined as follows: budget approval March 2005, functional program May/June 2005, architectural drawings February/March 2006, groundbreaking March 2006, grand opening July 2007.

I'm going to repeat one of those lines: groundbreaking March 2006. We're here. We've arrived — it's March 2006. There's absolutely no groundbreaking happening in Humboldt for this new hospital. March 10, 2005, the *Humboldt Journal* quotes the Premier saying that the new hospital's on track. It's on track. Well here we are, March 2006. And what happened in Humboldt as we approach March 2006?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than delighted to tell the members opposite. And this is why people are getting frustrated in Saskatchewan, because they do not trust this government. There was a meeting called in Humboldt. The mayors and the reeves and the representatives from 27 municipalities in the area were called together on February 24, and they were advised that the project has risen from \$19 million to \$33.5 million in just five years. That's the cost rise.

The communities, the municipalities, people of Humboldt and area had already raised their money. They had been lobbying the government year after year to please build this hospital, the costs are going to go up of constructing a hospital if we don't do it now, we're not going to have enough money. Well guess what? The people out in Humboldt were right. They were right. And you know how fair this government was? Do you know how fair they were to the people of Humboldt? On February 24 they informed the people of Humboldt that they have to have an additional \$5.217 million put together and committed by April. That's absolutely insane. Insane.

In rural Saskatchewan where we are struggling because of the agriculture economy in a slump right now; we're struggling to just make ends meet. The small towns and villages are struggling. The rural municipalities are struggling. And this government goes to them and says, you know, you got a few months, just come up with another \$5.2 million. And if they can't, if they can't, it'll be yet another excuse for this government not to bother, to delay the building of the Humboldt hospital, to announce it yet again, but to do absolutely nothing

about it.

And reasons like that is why people are getting so frustrated with our health care system. It's got nothing to do with publicly funded or privately funded. The only one who brings up privatization quite frankly are the NDP government who want to bring it up continuously, constantly, for absolutely no reason. It's because they want to distract from the fact that they're mismanaging the publicly funded system that we have right now today.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to enter into this debate about health care in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has been consistent and clear in its position that we support the Canada Health Act and that we have worked tirelessly, Mr. Speaker, to improve the current health system, the public health system which Canadians enjoy here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the record speaks for itself, that the Saskatchewan Party is a supporter and an ally of the health care system in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, we will do all we can and much more, Mr. Speaker, when we form government, to fix our health care system.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the public health care system under the NDP. Fact number one: people have died in Saskatchewan waiting to get the urgent health care that they've needed. We've raised these issues in the legislature, Mr. Speaker. Family members have come in to support this fact in order to get the NDP government to act, hoping that there would be some compassion on the other side, there would be some intelligence on the other side, and that the NDP would realize that it was imperative that the failures in our current system be corrected.

Mr. Speaker, it was under the NDP that hospitals, 50-some hospitals — 53 I believe hospitals — were closed here in Saskatchewan. What has resulted out of these hospital closures are obviously . . . One thing is more distance travel to get to acute care facilities. This travel occurs in ambulances at cost to the patient. It doesn't matter whether the patient has a heart attack and it's a struggle to get to that health care facility in time. The bill is applied to the patient, Mr. Speaker.

That certainly is a failure of our public health care system. It's something that the NDP needs to address. And so instead of getting sanctimonious about being the defenders of health care, they should show that practically they are the defenders of health care by fixing these kinds of problems.

Mr. Speaker, beds have been closed. And the reason the beds have been closed in our health care facilities is because of lack of health care professionals to make sure that proper care is provided to those who need the care.

Mr. Speaker, we've debated as recently as the day before yesterday the shortage of nurses in the province of

Saskatchewan, and the fact that the Health minister has absolutely no plans, no goals, no initiatives to correct the shortfall in nurses, to the point that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has become very public in its frustration and concern.

Mr. Speaker, as a result, people have had to seek health care outside of the borders of Saskatchewan simply because they couldn't access health care here in the province of Saskatchewan on a timely basis. One of the tenets of the Canada Health Act is that health care be accessible, that we have access to health care. And in Saskatchewan, that portion of the Canada Health Act is not being met in a satisfactory manner. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan often is trailing in the list of all provinces, even though the NDP are the government and they claim to be the champions of our public health care system.

Mr. Speaker . . . Madam Speaker, I apologize. Didn't see the change in the Chair.

Madam Speaker, I was at a Roughriders game and you can't imagine how disconcerting it is to hear the announcer on the PA [public address] system, when he's giving credits, announce that the official MRI service for the Saskatchewan Roughriders is a clinic in Edmonton.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what that tells me is that when health care really counts, when it really matters, our professional football team has to go to Edmonton to get timely and adequate MRI services. That speaks volumes about public health care under NDP-run Saskatchewan when our professional football team cannot access the MRI service it needs here in Regina, here in the province of Saskatchewan — has to fly its football players to Edmonton for timely access to MRIs.

Now, Madam Speaker, in the community of Rosetown, the community has been lobbying for a better long-term care health facility. And long-term health care is one of the most important facets of health care in the province of Saskatchewan. Those people are placed in a basement in the hospital, in the Rosetown hospital. And Rosetown has been crying for years, begging for years, that the Minister of Health, the NDP Minister of Health would correct this situation.

They're prepared to put up their share of the money. They have been for a long time, Madam Speaker, because they don't think it's right that senior citizens and those who need long-term care be sentenced to live out their remaining years in a basement. It's almost like being put in a dungeon, Madam Speaker — the citizens of Saskatchewan who've contributed so much. And I tell you, Madam Speaker, a lot of those people have voted for the NDP and their families are appalled at what the NDP has done to health care.

They've got a hundred reasons. You got to go through 19 steps to get this approved and the NDP won't even take the first step. They won't even take the first step to show respect to these senior citizens and people who need long-term health care in the community of Rosetown.

Madam Speaker, the biggest threat to public health care in Saskatchewan is the negligence of the NDP and the mismanagement of the NDP of our current public health care

system. That is the biggest threat, Madam Speaker, to our health care system here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Speaker, it was very insightful in the last federal election to find out that of the three major party leaders — we'll leave Mr. Duceppe out of it because he's isolated himself to Quebec — but Mr. Harper, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Layton, the three leaders of the major parties, only Mr. Harper had not used a private hospital. Mr. Martin, the Liberal leader, had used a private hospital and Mr. Layton, the NDP leader of Canada, has used private health care system. He thought that the public system wasn't good enough or wasn't fast enough or something and chose a private hospital over the public health care system.

[12:00]

Why do these people have the nerve? How do they have the gall to get up and point the finger at everybody else when they are the major threat to the public health care system in Saskatchewan? They need to look inwardly, Madam Speaker, they need to look at themselves. They are the problem. They will not fix the weaknesses in our health care system. They need to have a reality check, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Question period. I recognize the member of Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Regina Walsh Acres. She stood on her feet and talked about health care, of course. And at the end she was talking about Avastin and she used a personal story. It would be interesting to know what she thought when Herceptin wasn't covered, wasn't covered for a long time. Finally we had a news conference and it was covered. That was one drug that would extend the person's life. And it will extend it for quite a period of time.

But then she went on to say that Avastin, for example, was only five months. So what is her time frame for extending a person's life so that the drug would be covered? She stood there and said, well it was only five months, about a month to five months, and I really don't think it should be funded then.

Can she please tell me, what is the length of an extension of someone's life worth? Should it be more than five months? If it was eight months would it be okay to cover Avastin then? If it was a year, is that okay to cover Avastin then? Please tell me how long a drug has to extend someone's life before it would be covered in NDP country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I like how everything gets contorted and distorted from the side of the opposition. Clearly that was not entirely my intent in terms of what I was saying. What I was saying was that, when you look at the cost factor involved and the fact that the drug is not

completely passing all rigorous safety qualifications, not to mention that it is by our best evidence prolonging life for 1.8 to 5 months, that's where I get the information from.

But further to that, Madam Speaker, I'm wondering since Mr. McMorris has also said that . . . Oops, sorry.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I know the member in her emotion didn't understand that she was using the name of the member, but we refer to the constituency of the members present.

**Ms. Morin:** — My apologies, Madam Speaker. The member for Indian Head-Milestone was quoted in the *Fort Qu'Appelle Times* on January 24, 2006 as well as the *Indian Head-Wolseley News* as saying that there should be “. . . debate about the appropriate ratio of private clinics in the provinces.” That sounds a whole lot different than someone who's saying he doesn't want to have a two-tier system in the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member for Regina Walsh Acres. She gave a passionate speech against the use of private health care, Madam Deputy Chair. I wonder how she squares SGI and WCB utilizing private health care services in other jurisdictions such as Alberta for its clients. When we asked the minister of SGI about this last year in committee he said, whatever was in the best financial interest of the corporation.

So to the member for Regina Walsh Acres: how do you square supporting a government which uses its Crown corporations to subsidize and to support private health care services for people — clients of SGI and WCB — when it's in the best financial interest of the corporation and not for the best health care for those clients or for the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Once again, Madam Speaker, the opposition is displaying that it has no credibility in its line of questioning according to the information it already has on this particular issue.

And I want to point out something else where they show no credibility on, Madam Speaker, and that's on the issue of whether Jack Layton attended a private clinic during his lifetime. And just in case the members on the opposite side don't know, the Shouldice Hospital which Jack Layton attended is not an example of private health care as an alternative to public health care. The Canadian Health Coalition, a public health care advocacy group, has no problem with the Shouldice clinic due to its non-profit status, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — To the member from Rosetown-Elrose: Sask Party policy papers say your party will allow private surgical clinics to open in the province. My question is then, which surgeries would you be allowing to operate in private clinics and what kind of private hospitals will you be allowing?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. The member is I think reading some fiction because that's not the position of the Saskatchewan Party. The Saskatchewan Party has never talked about having private clinics that would do surgeries in the province of Saskatchewan, so I don't know where the member got that from. In fact just about everything I've heard on the other side has been fabricated, has been far from the truth. And, Madam Speaker, the members on the other side lose all credibility when they make statements that are unfounded and absolutely untrue.

Madam Speaker, it reminds me, their statements remind me of their national leader, Mr. Layton, who went around during an election campaign and criticized private hospitals and accused everybody else of being in favour of them. And then when the truth be known, here it was Mr. Layton that actually used the private hospital.

Now, Madam Speaker, I can't answer the question because it's based on a false premise. There's no truth to what the member says. So all I can suggest is that he do better research when he asks his next question.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Greystone. My question is around MRIs and the issue around MRIs. Right now currently in Saskatchewan we operate our MRIs on about a 16-hour shift, about two-thirds of the capacity of MRIs.

There's talk of an MRI opening on a First Nation. Does he agree with that since, as the member from Cannington had mentioned, we're sending people out of our province? SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], government agencies are sending people out of province to get timely MRIs. Does he believe that maybe another private MRI should operate in the province, or do you think you should use the MRIs to capacity because certainly there is extra room? Because if you don't operate to capacity, you're inviting private clinics. You're inviting that. So do you not think that they should be operating full-time? Or do you think that there should be more privatization like you've done with X-rays and ultrasounds?

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Well let me just say to the member opposite that the sensible way to



go about dealing with MRIs is through public investment. And that's exactly what our government has been doing over the last two years. We've added another MRI in Regina and another MRI in Saskatoon, so we now have four medical resonance imaging machines in the province of Saskatchewan.

In my home city of Saskatoon in the last two years, Madam Speaker, we've reduced the waiting list for MRIs by 34 per cent between 2004 and 2006, Mr. Speaker. And the way to go with MRIs is an ongoing public investment, just like our government has been doing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My question is to the member for Rosetown. On April 22, 1998 on CBC, the former leader of the Saskatchewan Party, the hon. member for Rosetown, was asked, and this was the question:

Would you still allow something like a private health clinic, where doctors would actually be allowed to operate outside of the system and charge fee for service as opposed to the medicare system?

And the hon. member for Rosetown answered, and this is the quote:

If it doesn't impact negatively on the principle of affordability, yes we would. We think that this would improve the quality of health care and would remove a lot of pain and suffering in the province.

My question to the hon. member is: does the member in fact still believe that more private health care clinics should be allowed?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've been very clear in every public statement that I've made that everything that is done within our public health care system — within our health care system — has to be done under the auspices of the Canada Health Act.

Now we already know that dentists, for instance, are private health care providers. We know that optometrists are private health care providers. And I see the hon. member, like myself, has glasses, and he should be aware of that. That is not, as I understand it, contravening the Canada Health Act.

But, Madam Speaker, in all of my utterances I have said that I wanted health care delivered in Canada within the Canada Health Act, within the auspices of the five pillars of the Canada Health Act. I've never changed or equivocated on that. And as the member noted in his own comments there, that my concern has always been that health care be accessible, affordable, available to all citizens regardless of where they live, regardless of their ability to pay. That is the Canadian system, and that is the system that I support.

But what we're seeing in Saskatchewan is the very opposite. We're seeing people who can't afford a drug like Avastin are not being able to access that drug while someone with money, with dollars, is able to. We're finding people get ambulance bills that they're not able to pay. What are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to stay at home and die under the NDP government's proposals?

Madam Speaker, let's look at what the facts tell us.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The time has now elapsed for the question and answer period, and as the debate ended sooner than the period of 60-minute debate prescribed by the rules, the question on the motion will now be put before the Assembly. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Opposed? A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:12 until 12:34.]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Greystone, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Fairview:

That this Assembly recognizes that parallel private health care would not alleviate pressure on Saskatchewan's current health care system but would fundamentally undermine it causing it to be less accessible, less efficient, and more expensive.

Those who favour the motion, please rise.

[Yeas — 50]

Calvert	Hamilton	Lautermilch
Van Mulligen	Hagel	Serby
Atkinson	Cline	Sonntag
Wartman	Forbes	Prebble
Crofford	Belanger	Higgins
Thomson	Nilson	Beatty
Taylor	Junor	Harper
Iwanchuk	McCall	Quennell
Trew	Yates	Addley
Morin	Borgerson	Toth
Elhard	McMorris	D'Autremont
Hermanson	Bjornerud	Wakefield
Chisholm	Hart	Harpauer
Gantfoer	Eagles	Weekes
Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert	Allchurch
Kirsch	Brkich	Dearborn
Morgan	Kerpan	

**The Speaker:** — Those opposed to the motion, please rise.

[Nays — nil]

**Deputy Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 50; those opposed, nil.

**The Speaker:** — I declare the motion carried with nobody dissenting.

Why is the member from Carrot River Valley on his feet?

**Mr. Kerpan:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Member for Carrot River Valley.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today proudly to introduce to you and through you to all members in the House two members in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, both from Saskatoon, and both I believe from the constituency of Greystone — Mr. Jeff Korte and Georgina Keen.

I'd just like to add, Mr. Speaker, that both have been very active in Saskatchewan Party politics and look forward to the day when we're on the other side of the Chamber. I'd like to welcome them to their Assembly here today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

#### Motion No. 1 — Government's Performance

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be introducing a motion of non-confidence later on in my speech.

One of the things I wanted to talk about right off the top is that it's kind of with mixed emotions that I raise this non-confidence. Mixed emotions because I'm very pleased to be able to talk about the inadequacies of the government and the road they've been taking or the distinct lack of road they've been taking, but it's sad that we have to do this because they have no plan or no vision and don't know where they're going and I believe have lost the capacity to govern.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read to you from *Hansard*, and I quote:

My central point is that we have a crisis of confidence in the province of Saskatchewan, [and] that we have a government that has been stripped of its credibility, a government that has no longer the confidence of the people, a government that no longer seems to have a

vision or a clear direction; in short, [and I'm quoting] Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe, a government that has lost the capacity to govern.

And in a democracy — I repeat — in any democracy or in any nation, in any nation when a government has lost the confidence of its people, when a government is stripped of its credibility, when a government has no vision, then it is time to defeat that government and give another group of men and women the opportunity to govern.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that was a quote from *Hansard*, March 27, 1990, by the current Premier. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the situation we are in today in this province. We have a government that has lost the capacity to govern. They have no vision. They know not where this province is headed.

All we have to do, Madam Deputy Speaker, is look at some of the specific issues. Let's look at the economy for an example. We see some numbers on the economy that are rising but why, why? And how under their direction can we lose people in an economic boom? How is it possible when we lose people in an economic boom? Stats Canada show that the province is down 2,356 people from October of last year to October of this year — 1,100 in the last quarter alone. An economic boom and losing that number of people, how can anyone on that side of the House say that this is good for the province of Saskatchewan?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP promised that net youth in-migration to Saskatchewan by 2005 in their partnership for poverty . . . or prosperity document four years ago. And this government can't even sustain our current population, never mind living up to its promises from before. That's sort of a trait with this government right now. They are unable and incapable of living up to their provinces.

And one of the sad realities, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the people that we're losing. I just want to give you a couple of numbers here. In 2004 Saskatchewan lost 3,000 residents with a post-secondary certificate and diploma and 2,100 people with master's and higher level degrees in 2004, with the majority of these skilled workers going — where, I may add? — to Alberta. Totally unbelievable.

And one of the reasons is the depth of our job market in Saskatchewan. Now we hear rhetoric from the other side that there's jobs available. But look at the upward mobility jobs. Look at the jobs and the people with degrees that are leaving this province.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's clearly obvious to me that the communistic policies of the NDP are really what's creating this. And right from the manifesto which is still on the NDP website and it says, "No C.C.F. government will rest content until it is eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning . . ."

Well is it any wonder, is it any wonder that people are leaving this province? How can we sustain a population when we have negative growth? And it's quite interesting to note that population growth is actually essential for economic growth. It's essential. Even Bill Clinton used to carry in his pocket a

note. And it said, it's the economy, stupid.

Without taxpayers or growing economy, a government cannot sustain the social services or infrastructure people have come to expect. Now that's something the other side should listen to — that taxpayers and growing population means that we have more taxpayers, and there's more money to supply our social services.

A growing economy, and I give you a quote of his: a growing economy is not about facts and figures or stats: it's about people. That's what's missing from that side of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's about people — jobs and careers to support families, building blocks of the community, building blocks of an economy. If you don't have one, you don't have the other.

Forty-four hundred jobs lost in the last year, 4,400, the sixth straight month of job loss. And we hear from the other side some adjectives. It's been a glitch. It's been an aberration. It's been something or other. With so many, so many months in a row, they've run out of adjectives. They don't even wish to comment on it as of now. It's extremely . . . it's disturbing that here we are with their figures that we're in an economic boom, and we're losing all of these jobs. How on earth can they subscribe to that?

I'd like to go on because we talk about some of the things that this government has done, and I'd like to give you a couple of figures. On social issues, 40,000 children live in poverty in Saskatchewan. How can anyone in this province have confidence in a government that allows this to happen, that we have 40,000 children in poverty?

[16:15]

And I'd like to read another quote, Madam Deputy Speaker:

We in this . . . [country] dream of a province where at the turn of the 21st century, like the soup kitchens of the 1930s, the food banks of the 1980s and '90s will be a thing of the past.

That was said by the current Premier in 1991. How has he lived up to that statement? By increasing it to 40,000 children living in poverty, 24,600 people rely on food banks, half of whom are children. Food bank usage increased by 6.5 percent from 2004 to 2005. But, but, our socialist friends say that we're in a booming economy and they think it's great.

I want to talk a little bit about the economy at a parliamentary session that I was at, and talked about civil society, and kind of relating the economy and growth to poverty. And here's some statements that came out of this convention. Growth is a necessary condition for broad and sustained poverty reduction. Sustained economic growth requires macroeconomic stability. That, Madam Deputy Speaker, is why we need growth in this province.

I also now want to talk a little bit about where this government has been heading. Let's look at some of their business deals. We know, we know, that there have been numerous business failures by this government. And how can anyone have

confidence in a government that loses so much taxpayers' money, so much taxpayers' money?

And I just want to put into the record some of these. SaskTel for an example, we heard earlier on today about SaskTel, another one of their money-losing ventures. But let's look at *tappedinto.com*, Persona, Navigata, Retx, Craig Wireless, NST, Clickabid, Soft Track, Ag Dealer, BWI [Business Watch International]. Madam Deputy Speaker, this totals up to \$126.7 million lost by SaskTel — \$126 million.

How about SPUDCO? We all know about SPUDCO, another great loss. SaskPower total loss, 17 million. SGI 16.1 million. Mega bingo — isn't that a good one? — mega bingo 8 million. Pangaea 3.5 million. And let's not forget about the Belle Plain ethanol deal. How can anyone have confidence in a government that goes through the antics that it did with the Belle Plain ethanol? That has set the ethanol industry back in this province substantially, and it was done — what we think is — on a similar deal to SPUDCO.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the numbers that I have just given you add up to a total of \$207 million, and that's not counting the 500 per cent over budget, Information Services Corporation lost. Now they had about a \$20 million budget, and it's well over \$100 million.

Now let's look at money lost by another great investment of the NDP government, the Meadow Lake pulp mill — \$800 million. Add those up, Madam Deputy Speaker, and you have over \$1 billion in lost taxpayers' money by this NDP government. How can anyone have confidence in this government when they lose that much money needlessly?

Madam Deputy Speaker, we look at crime and we look at where the NDP have failed to keep their election promises from 1999.

**An Hon. Member:** — Quorum.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — How can we have confidence in . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I have a quorum call in the House, and in that call I would instruct the Sergeant-at-Arms to tile the doors and a vote will be conducted. Attendance will be taken.

I would now request the members rise for a call of attendance.

Yates	Toth	McMorris
D'Autremont	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Chisholm	Hart	Eagles
Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert	Kirsch
Brkich	Kerpan	

**Clerk:** — And, Madam Speaker, the number of members present is 15 including the Chair.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The debate will continue.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to keep on with the debate on the non-confidence, but at this time, I would like to read my motion into the record and have the opportunity for my colleague from Moosomin to second the motion.

So, Madam Speaker, I present the following motion, seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Assembly because of its lack of vision and initiative and its failure to address the issues that are most important to Saskatchewan people, as demonstrated by ignoring the crisis in agriculture, the inability to set spending priorities consistent with the province's needs, the failure to grow the economy and create economic prosperity by not delivering much-needed services leaving many people behind, by forcing others to move out of the province for health care, and by forcing people to pursue their careers and dreams elsewhere because they cannot find jobs in Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The motion has been presented before the Assembly. Would the members take the motion as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Yes.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in this Assembly today and just to raise a few concerns that people across this province have brought to the attention of myself and my colleagues and to join with the member from Wood River in his views regarding this government and how well it represents the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to see that a number of government members are also taking the time to listen to my comments. And I trust, Madam Deputy Speaker, that as my colleague has already mentioned and as I relate a number of concerns that are continually brought to my attention, that the members opposite will actually take heed of the concerns that are being raised on an ongoing basis.

That while this province, as many government members would try to tell us is doing very well economically, the people of this province continue to struggle and to suffer as they work to build this province because they have so much confidence and because they believe in the province. And yet at the same time, Madam Deputy Speaker, they have to watch painfully as their young families — their sons and their daughters — continue to leave the province to go to other provinces.

And my colleague was talking about the economy of the province of Saskatchewan and how well it's working. And yet, Madam Deputy Speaker, we recently received a Stats Canada report regarding jobs and job opportunities. And of all the provinces in Canada — and most notably the four Western provinces — Saskatchewan, despite the economic boom that we have in the oil and gas sector in this province, continues to lose jobs.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we've been continually criticized for always pointing the finger to the west, to our neighbours to

the west, to Alberta and the 64,000 jobs that have been created in that province or the 70-some-thousand jobs created in the province of BC. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, even the province of Manitoba, the province of Manitoba which happens to have an NDP government at this time, grew in the last period where the province of Saskatchewan continues to lose jobs — and not only lose jobs, lose people.

And you ask yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'm sure the government has to be asking themselves exactly what's going on. They have almost \$1 billion more in additional revenue this year and yet we have people in the agricultural community continuing to struggle to survive this economy. And you have to ask yourself why. Why are agriculture producers continuing to struggle?

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I talk about agriculture producers I also want to reiterate the fact that agriculture, while it may not play the important economic forum in the province of Saskatchewan that it had at one time, it still impacts more people in the province of Saskatchewan than many of the economic sectors.

And you can go, whether it's our small rural communities, whether it's our larger rural communities, or whether it's even our cities, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are services, there are agencies that reach out and provide services to the agriculture community that are struggling to survive because of the plight of the agriculture producer.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me just bring to your attention, or to the attention of those who are paying attention at this time, that the leadership this government is showing is desperately lacking. And producers across this province are seeing that even as of this moment, as of this moment as they open the packages they've received from Crop Insurance and are invited again to take out insurance protection under the crop insurance program in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the province of Alberta just put an additional \$20 million into their crop insurance program to reduce the premiums to producers because of the difficulties we're seeing in the grains and oilseed sector. They also, Madam Deputy Speaker, increased the bottom line of insurance coverage that producers in Alberta can carry.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Ontario looked at the plight of their agriculture producers and they put more money into their program.

However what are we seeing from this NDP government in the province of Saskatchewan? We've seen that, as producers open the envelopes with the invitation to look at the crop insurance program and to apply for the program, that they're actually going to be paying a higher insurance premium this year. It's going to cost them more, Madam Deputy Speaker, while at the same time they are going to be getting less protection under this crop insurance program in Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it behooves this government to look at the plight in agriculture. And I believe the Minister of Agriculture just yesterday commented about how they are going to reach out to the agriculture community and they're going to

put more of an emphasis on dealing with agricultural issues. But as of today, with the deadline fast approaching, Madam Deputy Speaker, agriculture producers are still stuck with making a choice between a higher premium for less insurance in the crop insurance program.

So yes, if you were to ask agriculture producers today what they think of how well this province is managing the agricultural economy or managing the economy in this province, they would tell you they are giving this government a failing grade.

Madam Deputy Speaker, my colleague talked about health but I want to raise a concern regarding education. This government asked for local school boards to join together and amalgamate. And then shortly after they did that, they indeed forced their own amalgamation program on school divisions and school districts across the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, how well is that serving the people of Saskatchewan? How well is that serving communities like Grenfell and Moosomin and Kennedy and Kipling? And those are just a few in my constituency.

Madam Deputy Speaker, people across this province are becoming very annoyed and angered at the way this government continues to mismanage the province of Saskatchewan in light of the fact or especially at a time when we have an economy that is booming as a result of oil and gas revenues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I could go on in this debate. But I move at this time to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — All right. Being 1 o'clock, being the hour of 1 o'clock, I now would say that this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday. The House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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