



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

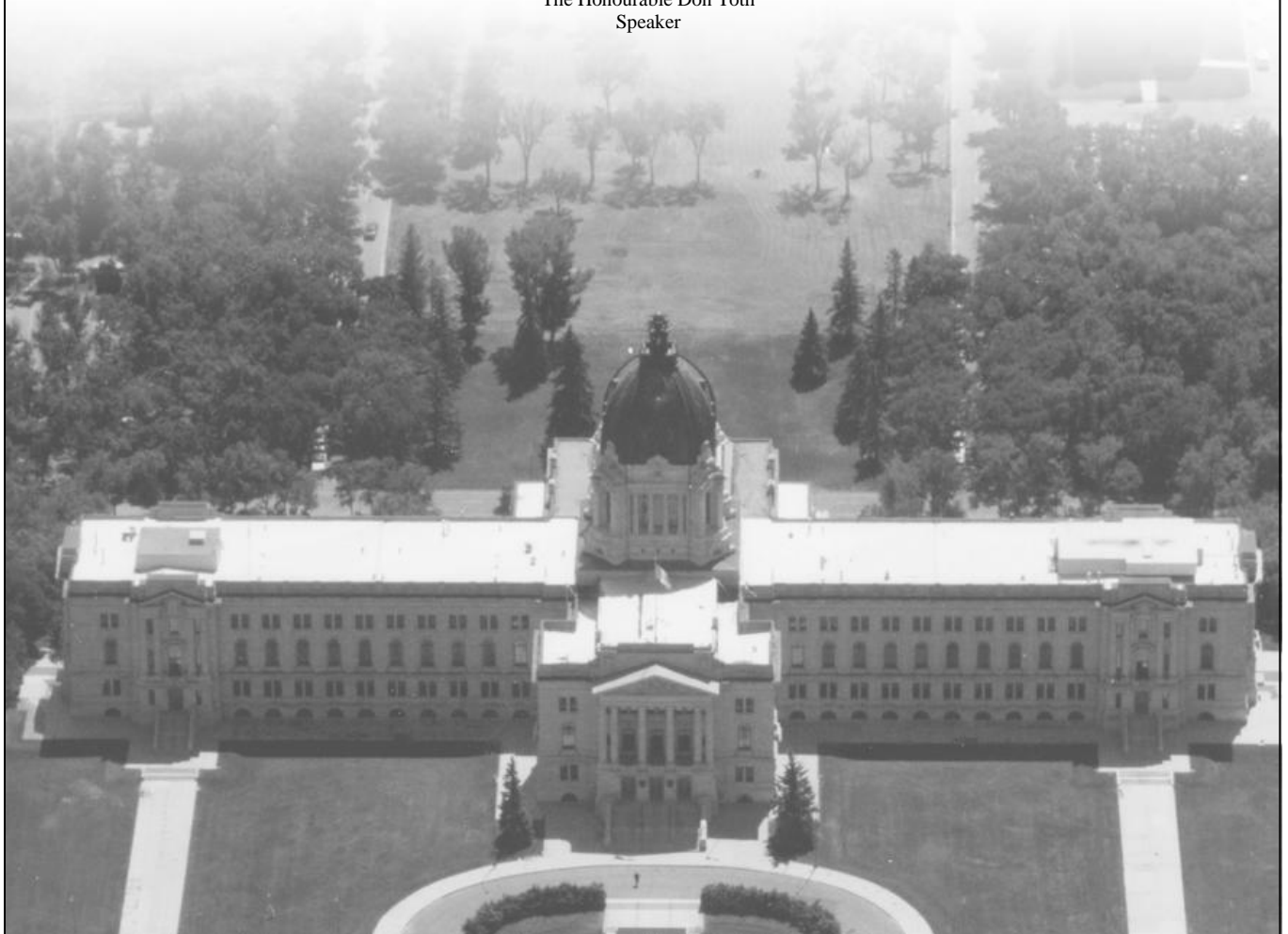
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	Ind.	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave of the Assembly for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Premier has asked for leave for an extended introduction.

Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to be able to introduce a very special group in your gallery here to the Assembly.

Just before I do that, I want to acknowledge the presence of Chief Guy Lonechild and many other First Nations leaders in the province of Saskatchewan as well as SaskPower officials who are here for a very important announcement today. And I think the Minister of SaskPower will be introducing them more fully, but we want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, almost 100 years ago to the day of the very first organized curling match in Swift Current, the world gathered for the Ford World Women's Curling Championship, March 20th to 28th in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, as you will know, it was broadcast across the country on TSN [The Sports Network], providing great exposure not just for my hometown, the great city of Swift Current, but also for the province and also for curling in Saskatchewan. We are, I think, the only jurisdiction on the continent that — or anywhere, frankly — that has as its official sport, curling. And it was on full display in Swift Current, March 20 to 28.

Mr. Speaker, we have members of the host committee who did an amazing job of putting those championships on in our province who have joined us today. They're going to present us — myself and the Minister of Tourism — with one of the three flags that were on prominent display during the championships. And with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the Assembly and to put into the record the members of the host committee that have joined us here today. We want to thank them for the amazing job they did.

We want to honour Barbara Walter who is a Co-Chair for the committee — maybe we'll ask everyone to just stand or give a wave, whatever they're comfortable with — and Bryan Tallon, her partner in this effort. Mr. Tallon was the Co-Chair. It's hard for me to call him anything but Mr. Tallon. He was my

automotives teacher long before he was organizing curling events in the province. Bryan's wife Carole has joined him as well.

Karen Biese is here. She was the Vice-Chair of hosting. Jeff Chambers was the Vice-Chair of the Keith's Patch. And we're told by curling officials, by the way, that our Keith's Patch for this event in Swift Current actually out-performed a number of Briar Patches. None of the Canadian Briar Patches or none of the Saskatchewan Briar Patches, I should say, but some of the ones from other provinces. So they did a great job there.

Connie Rittinger was the Vice-Chair of promotions; Jayson Sletten, Vice-Chair of facilities. And Jayson and his team did an amazing job of transforming the civic centre from the home of the Broncos to the home for this event. Lorna Spencer was the Vice-Chair of special events, and Andrea Stevenson was on the host committee as well.

Four hundred and fifty-plus volunteers made this happen. Fifty-two thousand fans in total, I think that's a Ford World Women's Curling Championship record. An average of 2,200 fans per draw, Mr. Speaker. Twelve teams competed for nine days and people will know that Germany was able to defeat Scotland 8-6 in extra ends in the final, Canada's Jennifer Jones placing third.

Mr. Speaker, we know in Saskatchewan we're famous for hosting best-ever events, but they only happen because of women and men the likes of which we welcome and honour today. We were happy to provide a bit of financial support for it, but the reason why there was a lot of laudatory comments about the Swift Current event was because of these folks that have joined us in the gallery.

Here's what the Canadian Curling Association Chair of the board of governors said in *The Southwest Booster* March 29, 2010. Graham said, "The host committee has been one of the best that we have ever had the opportunity to work with . . . the way the community has got behind this event and supported it is really amazing."

Mr. Speaker, again we honour those who made that possible, who welcomed the world to Swift Current and Saskatchewan and did us so proudly with that event. I'd ask all members to welcome this group to their Legislative Assembly this morning.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly, I too would like to pass along our congratulations and thank you to the organizing committee represented here from Swift Current.

Curling's often a pretty easy sell in the province of Saskatchewan, and we take for granted that world events and world-class events that are held in our province will be sellouts and supported by the population. But we don't often consider the work and the time and the effort that goes into those events and making them successful by the members of the community.

Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to see how smoothly the event in Swift Current was carried off, and of course to a very successful end. But I do want to join with the Premier and offer our congratulations and sincere thank you also for the wonderful work you did, not only for Swift Current, but for the province of Saskatchewan and also Canada in again showing that Saskatchewan can do the job when called upon. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — With leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for an opportunity to ask for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies hearings on SaskPower future generation plans in late 2009 and early 2010, we heard that our electrical utility would be pursuing emissions-free hydroelectric generation as part of its medium- and long-term plans.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome some very special guests to the legislature here this morning that are seated in your gallery. They are here today for an announcement that we are very pleased to be hosting in the Legislative Building at 11:30 this morning regarding a significant agreement on hydroelectric power between three First Nations in this province and additional folks as well.

Joining us today are Grand Chief Guy Lonechild; Ron Burns, executive assistant to Grand Chief Guy Lonechild; Elder James Burns from the James Smith Cree Nation; Elder Delbert Britain from the Peter Chapman Band; Elder Jacob Sanderson from the Chakastaypasin Band of Cree; Chief Wally Burns from the James Smith Cree Nation; Chief Robert Head from the Peter Chapman Band; Chief Calvin Sanderson from the Chakastaypasin Band of Cree as well; Justin Burns from the James Smith Cree Nation; Jerry Head from the Peter Chapman Band; Derek Sanderson from the Chakastaypasin Band of Cree; Dwayne Seib from Fort-à-la-Corne Development Corporation; Scott McLean from the James Smith Cree Nation; Oliver Constant from the James Smith Cree Nation; Winston McLean from the James Smith Cree Nation; Jerry McLeod from Project Training; David Easton from Kiewit; Ian Kerr from Brookfield Renewable Power; John Kim Bell from Brookfield Renewable Power; Jacques Lacombe from Peter Kiewit; Guy Bruce from SaskPower; Kevin Doherty from SaskPower; Wayne Rude from SaskPower; and Ray Desjarlais from SaskPower.

I invite all members to join us in the Qu'Appelle Gallery for this very special announcement at 11:30. And I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome our special guests here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming our guests here to witness the proceedings and to join for a very important announcement for the future power needs of the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to particularly welcome Chief Guy Lonechild, good to see you here in the Assembly, Chief, as well as the three chiefs from the partner bands in this very important initiative, Chief Calvin Sanderson from Chakastaypasin — I'm sorry about that, bit of a . . . [inaudible] . . . tongue on that, but that's the way it goes — as well as Chief Robert Head from Peter Chapman, and Chief Wally Burns from the James Smith.

As well it's really good to see the number of elders who are here today to support this very important endeavour. And I know that this is a project that has been going on for very long, Mr. Speaker. There's been a lot of work done into this, a lot of thought, and I dare say a lot of prayer put in on the part of the elders.

So the partners that are here from Brookfield, from Fort-à-la-Corne, and the different communities as well as SaskPower, we think this is a good announcement, Mr. Speaker. We await the details of course, but we think this is something that the province of Saskatchewan should see more of. There's a tremendous opportunity here in terms of the future power needs of the province of Saskatchewan, and we should be partnering more fully with local communities and First Nations. So we're glad to see this day going forward, and we're glad to see these very important guests here in their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly this morning, it's an honour and privilege to introduce my first school group from Prince Albert since being elected. In the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have 14 students from grade 6, 7, and 8 from John Diefenbaker School, the senior band members from Prince Albert. Accompanying them this morning is the teacher, Deb McPherson and the chaperone is Kathy Olthuis.

I had the honour this morning speaking with these students already, and I found out that some of these students were taught by my wife when they were in grade 1, so there's a bit of a connection there. So it's great to have them here this morning. And Kathy's husband, Ken, and I go back a bit. He's an RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] staff sergeant, an ident specialist as I was, so we've had some time to work together on some issues around Prince Albert, I should say. But I'd like to take the time now to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly and ask all members to do the same, please.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier and the member from Elphinstone in welcoming the members of the First Nations who are here today, especially Chief Lonechild.

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention an individual who I've worked with on a number of occasions, John Kim Bell, not for the work he's doing here today, but for the establishment of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards and the beautiful creations that he did in his career there. I just want to recognize all of you for the great work you're doing. Keep it up and it's well recognized within the province as being very, very productive.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is a school group from Moose Jaw, the A.E. Peacock grade 12 class, and it's certainly a pleasure to welcome them here. Their teacher, Carrie Kiefer is with them. Carrie is no stranger here. She brings her class here every year as they study the legislative proceedings in their classes. Along with them is Edith Newstead is the chaperone, and the bus driver, Elma Kaus.

Peacock is a very special school. It's one of the biggest high schools, it is the biggest high school in Moose Jaw, but they're more famous lately for the Junior Achievement Awards. They won the Company of the Year last year and they won it again this year. So I'd like all members to welcome this bright bunch of students from my hometown of Moose Jaw.

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the members in welcoming one guest here from the city of Prince Albert, Ron Burns, who is the executive assistant to Grand Chief Lonechild. He has done, over his career in Prince Albert, a great deal of work for First Nations people and for people in general in the city of Prince Albert. So I'd like to make special mention and welcome him here today.

Additionally I'd like to welcome, it's the first school group for either of us coming from Prince Albert, so I'd like to take some time and welcome folks from John Diefenbaker. My mom is the community school coordinator at the school right across the playground. And I'd like to thank the folks from Diefenbaker for allowing me to spend time on their playground because our touch football league, we play football on the field there right next to their school, and I'm sure my footprints are deeper and bigger than the ones left by the students there. So thanks so much for allowing me and thanks for being here today, and I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Fairview.

[10:15]

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, on the floor of the Assembly today, we have Robin East who is here for the first time. Robin was born in the Southwest of this province in Climax. He went to high school in Frontier and attended both the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan. He also attended the SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] Kelsey Campus.

Robin has a bachelor's degree in social work, certificate in rehabilitation work, and has completed the assistive technology application certificate program through the Center on Disabilities at California State University. He has worked as a teacher associate, a behavioural therapist, and finally an officer with the federal public service. Presently Robin works for Canada Revenue Agency, adaptive technology program, as senior IT [information technology] infrastructure support analyst. Robin has lived and worked in Saskatchewan and will remain in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I first met Robin when he was presented the Saskatoon and District Labour Council's, Labour Community Service Award. The Saskatoon and District Labour Council and the United Way of Saskatoon and area hold an annual event to recognize the achievements of a dedicated trade unionist who is active in both the community and the union. I was privileged to see Robin receive these prestigious awards and to learn about his vast achievements.

Mr. Speaker, the list is endless but I'll attempt to list a few. Currently Robin is the lead facilitator of the coalition of blind, deaf blind, and partially sighted Rights Holders of Canada; on the board of directors with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities; the national president of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians; member of the Canada Transportation Agency advisory committee; member of the city of Saskatoon accessible playground committee; member of the North Saskatchewan living centre; member of the Saskatoon blind skiers; member of the Guide Dog Users of Canada; and a roaming advocate for persons with disabilities.

Robin has been a member of the CLC [Canadian Labour Congress] National Disabilities Rights working group, national representative for access members for the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and sat on the national equal opportunities committee, member of the prairie regional council for Public Service Alliance of Canada. He's a member of the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] human rights committee. He's held various positions with the Dundonald Community Association in Saskatoon including president. He's an active member of the Saskatoon ad hoc committee for persons with disabilities. He's Chair of the Saskatchewan Office of Disabilities Issues advisory committee, and he is the first Chair of the Saskatoon accessibility committee for the city of Saskatoon and Chair of the Saskatoon human rights committee.

Mr. Speaker, a citizen of this province, Robin has been granted rights under provincial laws. He has been granted rights under federal laws and more importantly under our constitution, specifically under section 15 of the Charter of Rights and

Freedoms. And, Mr. Speaker, more recently the provinces and the federal government have joined together and have signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

But, Mr. Speaker, imagine all this great legislation and law, and it is all for nothing. Robin says that he, as a person who is blind, cannot perform the most important act a citizen can do, and that is to cast his vote in a provincial election. He cannot cast it independently and in secret. In all elections in this province since he has been able to vote, Robin has never known who gets his X. He literally marks his ballot with invisible ink. He picks a candidate by feeling holes in a template. He can pick hole no. 1, hole no. 2, etc., but he never knows for sure whose name is beside that hole. He makes his mark; he cannot tell if that mark actually shows up. As such, he's using invisible ink for all practical purposes.

Mr. Speaker, imagine all of our citizens trying to guess which number their candidate is and counting down the holes in the template and then placing their mark with invisible ink. Citizens of this province would not stand for it, and frankly we would not have a true democracy.

Mr. Speaker, Robin is here today asking for a simple thing. He's asking to be able to vote for the candidate of his choice, knowing who he or she is, and he's asking that he makes his mark, that he can verify that the mark to ensure he has chosen the best person to represent him in the Legislative Assembly. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 people that are blind cannot independently cast their vote in secret. It is not enough to have someone assist them. It is not enough to have someone see their mark and verify to them that it's correct. They should be able to have a secret vote like all of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

The ability to make this happen exists today. It has occurred in the municipality of Saskatoon in the last election. It can happen in this province if the will is there. Mr. Speaker, Robin is not begging this Legislative Assembly to do the right thing. He is simply asking that you consider him when you make your decision that you consider what it means to have human rights, what it means to have a constitution, what it means to sign on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The rights granted to him as a citizen of Canada and a citizen of Saskatchewan are there. However, the activation of those rights needs to occur here in the Legislative Assembly.

Each of us need to give Robin the ability to vote with dignity, independently, and in secret. Each of us need to cast a vote for all the citizens in this province that are blind. Today the citizens of Saskatchewan who are blind cannot do this. They are asking us, with grace and dignity, to grant them the ability to be a true citizen and to do what is appropriate and to do the most important thing a citizen can do in a democracy, and that is to exercise one's franchise to vote.

Mr. Speaker, Robin is here for all persons that are blind and that wish to do the most important act that they can do, and that is to vote for you and the members of the Legislative Assembly, a representative that will stand up and ensure our rights, the rights of citizens, are accessible to all. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome Robin East to our Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Robin East to the legislature today. I first met Mr. East a number of years ago when we were both doing volunteer work for the Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation. It was a motorcycle rally that raised money for people that were fighting vision disabilities.

Mr. Speaker. I can advise the Assembly that he was a tireless worker and came out and did a lot of volunteer work, spoke to our groups and was able to tell and convey the story with a great deal of passion and was able to get people to empathize and to understand with the issues that people with limited vision were facing. He's been a tireless advocate in other issues relating to vision issues, and he should be commended by all members for the hard work and the commitment that he has made to those issues, and I'd want to encourage all members to listen to the issues that are being put forward.

The issues that he raises today on the importance of democracy and the importance to cast a vote is certainly something that will warrant careful consideration. And I would certainly want to encourage all members to listen to what is being put forward. And on a personal basis, I would want to welcome Mr. East to the Assembly and ask all members to join me in welcoming him.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to join with the member from Moose Jaw North in welcoming Carrie Kiefer and the class from A.E. Peacock. Mr. Speaker, while technically Peacock may be in Moose Jaw North, it sits on the boundary of the constituencies, and Peacock has a reputation for drawing students from across the city — a number of recognizable faces, Mr. Speaker, in the crowd.

But it's important that students have an experience and an understanding of the democratic process. So it is a true pleasure to see them here today and have them be able to watch proceedings. And I want to say a thank you to Ms. Kiefer for being involved in this and dedicated to the process of expanding the opportunities for students and bringing them for a visit to the legislature. It's greatly appreciated and will pay off with better informed citizens in the future. So join with the member to welcome A.E. Peacock here today.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce Heather Malek in the west gallery. Heather is one of thousands of members of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] Matters, a group concerned with this government's handling of the privatization of the Saskatchewan Communications Network, including the fact the government has missed its deadline to respond to several CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] complaints regarding the makeup of the SCN board and the government's stewardship of the SCN licence. The CRTC, by

the way, has alerted the government and requested immediate response. With that, I ask us all to join in welcoming Heather to her Legislative Assembly today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the safety and the conditions of our highway system. This petition pertains to the Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of No. 1. And the petition goes on to say that this highway is the main traffic route to a year-round tourist destination, as well as this portion of the highway serves three major inland grain terminals. And the prayer, Mr. Speaker, reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of No. 1 in order to improve the safety for Saskatchewan's motoring public.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition is signed by the good folks from Fort Qu'Appelle, Weyburn and Regina, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of the protection of wildlife habitat lands. This petition is signed by citizens who are concerned that the government's proposal currently tabled in this House of repealing the schedule listing the designated lands will endanger protection and designation of these lands. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* protects 3.4 million acres of uplands and wetlands or one-third of all wildlife habitat lands in Saskatchewan in their natural state. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

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

To cause the provincial government to immediately and without delay recognize the importance of the protection of wildlife habitat lands and immediately withdraw proposed amendments that will negatively affect the protection of wildlife habitat lands;

And in so doing cause the provincial government to commit to meaningful and adequate consultation with all stakeholders that will be affected by future legislative changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of concerned citizens in my community of Moose Jaw.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the 180 seniors centres around the province, most of them in rural Saskatchewan, who are in danger of closing due to rising costs of utilities, insurance, etc. Many of these places provide recreation and social activities and health clinics and workshops that contribute to the enhanced quality of life for the seniors who use them. And the closure of these centres will lead to a deteriorating mental and physical health of seniors which will add to our strain on our long-term care facilities and hospitals:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the much needed funding to assist seniors recreation centres to remain open and active within their communities.

And the petition is signed by citizens from Laird.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing in Saskatoon. And we know that the costs of rents are going up, and yet the number of actual vacancies compared to a few years ago is actually much smaller. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to more people in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, and that the government also implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of Highway 915. This petition addresses concerns of Saskatchewan people about the quality of Stanley Mission road. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to upgrade and repair Highway 915 as soon as possible.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the people and leadership of the people of the community of Stanley Mission. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of students who have been negatively affected by recent cuts at SIAST. And the prayer reads:

To cause the Sask Party government to recognize the importance of the programs offered by SIAST campuses in ensuring that we develop a highly skilled and educated workforce in Saskatchewan, and in so doing to cause the Sask Party government to stop shortchanging SIAST which forces the institution to cut important programs, and instead to immediately increase funding to SIAST to allow for the reinstatement of programs affected by recent budget cuts.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are students from here in Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of financial assistance for the town of Duck Lake water project. The petition is circulated and signed by Saskatchewan residents. Due to the exorbitant amount that Duck Lake citizens are forced to pay for clean, safe water, it's causing the individuals hardship. And it's forcing — believe it or not, Mr. Speaker — some folks to actually move from the town of Duck Lake to other jurisdictions. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its obligation to rural Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition today is signed by good folks from Wakaw, Rosetown, Macdowall, and Rosthern. I so present.

[10:30]

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present yet another petition with respect to water issues that are affecting rural Saskatchewan. A government ministry has directed that these customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health and that these residents of Furdale, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment. The alternative water supply being referred to by a government ministry is a private operator

offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost with no guarantee of quality, quantity, or availability of water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off non-potable water to the residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives; to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*; and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Furdale. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise once again here today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive billion-dollar deficit budgets put forward by the Sask Party and the billions of dollars of debt growth projected under the Sask Party. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents of Sturgis, Canora, and Rhein. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition from citizens concerned or in support of midwifery here in Saskatchewan. This petition is signed by residents concerned that, despite the fact *The Midwifery Act* was proclaimed more than two years ago, there are only seven licensed midwives serving all of Saskatchewan currently. The petition, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to keep its promise to broaden the options for women and their families and recognize that presently this promise remains unfulfilled, as many communities in Saskatchewan still do not have midwives employed by their respective health regions;

And in doing so, your petitioners pray the honourable Legislative Assembly cause the government to support midwifery in Saskatchewan by making funding available for additional midwife positions in Saskatchewan's health regions as well as independent positions;

And furthermore, the honourable Legislative Assembly cause the government to encourage an increase in the number of licensed midwives in Saskatchewan by extending liability insurance, thereby making it possible for prospective midwives to achieve the number of births required to successfully apply for a licence with the newly formed College of Midwives.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Mining Week

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. National Mining Week is a great opportunity to take stock of the wonderful resources we have right here in Saskatchewan. National Mining Week is about celebrating all of the hard-working people in the mining industry and provides an occasion to acknowledge their tremendous contribution to our province.

While Saskatchewan may not provide 20 per cent of the world's natural resources as the Provincial Secretary might believe, Saskatchewan certainly does mine and export a very large amount of various resources such as limestone, shale, graphite, bentonite, magnesium sulphate, clay, coal, copper, zinc, gold, kaolin, potash, sodium sulphate, and uranium to name a few. Mining is a major contributor to Saskatchewan's economy, directly contributing to almost \$2 billion in revenue to the provincial government in 2008. These revenues support government programs and services such as health care, education, and infrastructure development.

With a large number of operating mines, Saskatchewan is a significant player in the global mining scene and is currently the world's largest producer and exporter of potash and second largest producer of uranium. The mining industry also contributes substantially to the province's economic growth by creating high paying jobs and providing business opportunities and investments in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in celebrating Mining Week and reflecting upon the hard work and dedication of the people who work daily in our province's mining industry and celebrating the rich and diverse mining industry that we have in the province of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Celebrating Sikh Culture in Saskatchewan

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I had the honour of taking part in this year's Vaisakhi fundraising event presented by the Sikh community of Regina. The day was highlighted by an array of cultural dances that were absolutely incredible. Mr. Speaker, I would personally like to thank Nick and Kelly Dhaliwal along with their families for the warmth and friendship they shared with me at the supper and throughout the year. They all went out of their way to ensure that I was welcomed to the community.

The Sikh culture has a long and proud history of contributing to Saskatchewan society and cultural mosaic. During the 1980s Sikhs travelled across the country in an effort to raise funds to purchase temples in both Regina and Saskatoon. With the opening of the Sikh temple in Regina in 1988, their goal was realized. Now they have their own place of worship in both Regina and Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there is a rapid rise in the number of Sikh families settling in Saskatchewan. This makes me proud to live in such an open and welcoming multicultural province. Mr. Speaker, it's crucial that we continue to encourage the atmosphere in which groups such as the Sikhs can proudly celebrate their culture and their faith. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supporting Gender and Sexual Diversity in Saskatchewan

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Avenue Community Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity in Saskatoon held its 17th annual gala on April 30th. And the best part of the evening, many believe, are the awards. The Avenue Community Centre recognizes those who've made significant contributions to a strong and vibrant, healthy LGBTTT [lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, two-spirit and transgender] community — a step forward, we can agree, for Saskatoon and in fact all of Saskatchewan.

Today as the government takes a dangerous step back in time by moving to the courts the question of allowing marriage commissioners to refuse to perform same sex marriages, the Avenue Community Centre presented the Community Service Award to Scott T. Bell who wrote the legal arguments for the Coalition for Human Equality that helped convince the Saskatchewan government in the early '90s to make sexual orientation a prohibited ground of discrimination in The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code — something that we all take for granted today, especially today. Thank you Scott for your work, truly ahead of your time.

Other winners included Roxy Diva, also known as Mitch Morgans, Rylan Ledene, and Thom Knutson, and Kent Macauley who were also recognized for their outstanding community work. Mr. Speaker, the Bridge City Chorus, a mixed non-profit choral ensemble made up of people from the GLBT [gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered] community and their friends and allies were also recognized. And they're celebrating their 19th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating these special people who go above and beyond in supporting diversity in Saskatoon and our province. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Asthma Awareness Month

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May is national Asthma Awareness Month. Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways that causes those afflicted to suffer from shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, coughing and wheezing. The strongest risk factors for developing asthma are a family history of asthma, exposure in infancy to high levels of house dust mites, and/or tobacco. Children are at the highest risk from air pollution due to the small size of their lungs.

According to the World Health Organization, asthma is now a serious public health problem with over 100 million sufferers worldwide. The prevalence of asthma in Canada has been increasing over the last 20 years, and it is estimated that currently over 3 million Canadians suffer from asthma. Unfortunately researchers are yet to pinpoint the cause of the increase in asthma.

Though there is no cure for asthma, there is something we can do. Regular exercise is a great way to control asthma. Exercise helps you strengthen your breathing muscles, boost your immune system, and keep a healthy body weight. All of those benefits can improve asthma in the long run. Though many Canadians are afflicted with asthma, the disease will be kept under control as long as we continue to take the proper measures. I am sure that there are people in this Assembly with or who know someone who suffers from it. I hope everyone in this Assembly will go the extra mile to help those in our province who battle asthma. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina City Boys' Basketball Championship

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to recognize a constituency high school, Luther High School, for their victory in the Regina senior boys' city championships. The Campbell Tartans squared off with the Luther Lions in the city finals. I was pleased to be in attendance, along with my colleagues from Regina Dewdney and P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote, for what was an excellent game well played by both teams with a wild and crazy finish.

Three-year senior and co-captain Andrew Henry sank a last-second buzzer-beater in overtime to secure the win. It was Luther that came out on top. This is the first senior boys' city championship for Luther since 1992. And of course, Luther is well known for its rich basketball history as hosts of the storied LIT [Luther Invitational Tournament].

The players of this fine squad include Ethan Kummerfield, Brendan Lee, Justin Lee, Andrew Henry, Mitchell Jones, Xavier Kosolofski, Paddy Foley, Eric Anderson, Kelsey Guenzel, Brock Mackenzie, Matt Harolson, Carter Carson. I'm

pleased to recognize the coaches, Mr. Drew Hunter, Mr. Bill Johnson, Mr. Adam Hunter, and Mr. Joel Hunter, and as well the managers, Mr. Landon Bigalky, Mr. John Schulte, and Mr. Tanner Goetz.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to recognize and congratulate players, coaches, and managers of the Luther Lions on winning the 2010 city championships and wish them well with their respective future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Surgical Wait Times

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring encouraging news on the issue of surgical wait times in Saskatchewan. *The StarPhoenix* reported today that the number of patients waiting longer than 18 months for surgeries in Saskatoon has been cut in half compared to two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, from 2007-2008 to 2009-10, the overall number of patients waiting more than 18 months decreased by 54 per cent. Those who waited more than 12 months decreased by some 37 per cent. These improvements can be credited to the hard work and dedication of the surgical services team in the Saskatoon Health Region. Mr. Speaker, Jenny Bartsch, the director of surgery services in the Saskatoon Health Region said, "Targeted funding from the provincial government also helped the region reduce wait times . . . allowing for more staff to be hired and more procedures to be performed." Examples of this targeted funding include our government's commitment to increasing training seats for doctors and nurses and construction of the multi-million dollar Academic Health Science Centre on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the wait times reported today stand in stark contrast to what the members opposite have been saying to the people of Saskatchewan. The NDP [New Democratic Party] members continue to go around the province and tell everyone that wait times are up. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is an incorrect statement and yet another example of the fear-mongering and bullying tactics that the NDP have resorted to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Definitions

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, it seems that the members opposite have problems with the actual definition of a few key words like accountability, Mr. Speaker, or consultation, but they can't seem to really figure out one of the simplest words, Mr. Speaker, a four-letter word, w-a-l-l.

A wall is usually a solid structure, Mr. Speaker, dependable, but other walls you can't count on. They look reliable at first, but when you look beneath the surface, there is just failure, disappointment, and broken promises underneath.

[10:45]

A wall usually supports infrastructure, but other walls they strip 100 per cent of the equity from our Crown corporations meaning our Crowns will scramble to build and maintain our province's infrastructure. A wall usually protects vulnerable people from the elements or perhaps even vulnerable land. But other walls cut programs and hurt vulnerable people and even dismantle legislation that protects vulnerable land.

Some walls are known as curtain walls, because they are not load-bearing but function as a decoration. They may even be reminiscent of another time, perhaps another Devine era of history, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes a wall may refer to a barrier you cannot get through. But, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, walls are built by people, and people can tear them right down. So in 2011 the people of Saskatchewan will be ready and waiting to tear this wall down.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday the Minister of Health told this House and I want to quote it, "The agreement hasn't been finalized. It's up to the Saskatoon Health Region to have a look at the agreement too to see whether it makes sense to them . . ."

Mr. Speaker, why did he say an agreement hadn't been finalized when construction began on April 1st of this year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — The member opposite seems to have a hard time differentiating between a Catholic Health Ministry that may go ahead and purchase some land and start building, Mr. Speaker, and the health region, Mr. Speaker. There is a complete delineation, Mr. Speaker. The health board held a meeting yesterday that looked at a proposal put forward by the Catholic Health Ministry, Mr. Speaker, decided that it was a great proposal because, Mr. Speaker, it is precedent setting in the province.

It allows seniors to age in place. It allows seniors to age with dignity. It allows seniors to age with their spouse, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are so many positive things about this new proposal, Mr. Speaker, I can't understand why the NDP are always so negative.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it was the Ministry of Health that signed the MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Amicus in March, and not the health . . . [inaudible] . . . Now, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister yesterday which company had been given the contract to build this new facility which will be paid for by the public. And it's passing strange this minister wasn't able to answer the question. Funny, since

construction began on April 1st, and there's a big hole in Stonebridge.

Well we now know that Miners Construction is building this facility. The president of Miners Construction, Michael Stensrud, was appointed to the Saskatoon Health Region board by the Sask Party government. And we know that Mr. Stensrud and his company have donated \$18,000 to the Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, the question: was the contract tendered, given that the public is paying for this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I find that very interesting. Is that member accusing the Stensruds of having a conflict of interest here, Mr. Speaker? Is she . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Is she accusing and implying that there was manipulation of a contract by the Stensruds, who have been in business for decades, Mr. Speaker, and a very, very reputable family in this province, Mr. Speaker? I'm quite shocked that she would go on that angle because Mr. Stensrud recused himself of every board meeting that discussed anything about this proposal.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the Stensruds are a nice family, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking questions on behalf of the public because we know, we know this deal originated in this building. We know that the Saskatoon Health Region was told about this in January. We know it was the government that signed the MOU with Amicus in March. We know that Mr. Stensrud, a significant contributor to the Sask Party, was appointed to the health board, and we know that this government has claimed for the past three days that no final decision has been made yet. But there was a hole dug out in Stonebridge on April 1st.

Is it the minister's view, is he sticking to his story that no agreement was signed, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we've heard that opposition, to use a line off of Lewis Draper, carp on, on and on about the lack of long-term care beds . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would just ask the members to, I would ask the members, the opposition members to allow the response to the question. If there's a witty comment, that's one thing, but just ongoing dialogue is certainly . . . impedes the work of the Assembly. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we've heard the

opposition complain about the lack of long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, especially in Saskatoon. The Ministry of Health entered . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — We've heard the members opposite carp on about the lack of long-term care beds in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have entered in . . . a memorandum of understanding is a long way from any sort of deal or agreement signed between the health region and Amicus, Mr. Speaker, a subsidiary of the Catholic health foundation. Mr. Speaker, this is innovative. This is new, Mr. Speaker. It is great for seniors. I don't know what they've got about senior health care in this province because it's a positive, forward-moving project, Mr. Speaker. They should be in favour of it instead of carping on.

The Speaker: — Members have been reminded time and time again not to infer anything negative against other members. I ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres to refrain from that comment. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's an odour wafting over this Assembly and it's not the flax burning outside the . . . [inaudible].

Mr. Speaker, let's review the situation. The situation is this: the Saskatoon Health Region knew nothing about this until it was brought to them by the government. That's point number one. Point number two, it was the government, the Sask Party government, that entered into an MOU in March with Amicus. And, Mr. Speaker, the construction started on April 1st of 2010, and they wouldn't be constructing unless they knew what the deal was.

So, Mr. Speaker, why did the minister insist all week there was no deal when that facility is being built while he was saying that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health signed an MOU, a memorandum of understanding. What was needed in this province is more long-term care. We entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Catholic Health Ministry to look at this. We brought the parties together. That's what we do as the Ministry of Health, unlike 16 years of NDP government that turned their back on seniors in this province, Mr. Speaker.

What the odour that that member is smelling is the decay and the lack of money that went into long-term care facilities across this province. That's the odour that that member's smelling, Mr. Speaker, 16 years of NDP government. This government has acted quickly in two and a half years, Mr. Speaker, and this is a very positive project for Saskatoon.

I think the members opposite would rather have seniors live in acute care centres in City Hospital than in an innovative, new approach like this long-term care facility.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — [Inaudible] . . . Ministry of Health, his deputy minister is meeting with affiliates today. And I ask this question: are those affiliates who are doing bake sales, who are out there doing walkathons, and golf tournaments, and everything under the sun, are they going to get the same terms as Amicus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I've met with many groups around the province and some in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, some that are religious based. And they all have different ideas of how the proposal could be funded.

This was new. This was innovative. This was the Catholic Health Ministry coming up with 100 per cent of the capital — never proposed by anybody else, Mr. Speaker. It is a pilot project. And believe me, when we know this is going to be as successful as it's going to be, we'll certainly look at spreading it around the province with other organizations.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Agreement Between Colleges

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Health minister isn't the only Sask Party minister that has problems with telling stories that don't add up. For the last two nights in committee, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education has been telling some stories that simply do not hold water, stories about the merger of Carlton Trail Regional College and St. Peter's College. Throughout the process, Mr. Speaker, he's been insisting that things are just getting started.

Well the facts tell a very different story. We know there's a joint CEO [chief executive officer]. We know that a new board is being established. We know that they are merging finances and programming. We know that they are merging IT services and centralizing staff and offices. We know, Mr. Speaker, that the intent is a complete and comprehensive merger, according to documents from the minutes.

My question to the minister: will he just come clean with Saskatchewan people and admit that this deal is not just getting started, but it is already signed and done?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. To report to the people of this province the investments that we're making in post-secondary education and especially relating to the significance and importance of our regional colleges, Mr. Speaker, I can speak directly to the two colleges in question. What we've seen over the course of the last year or so, we've seen that \$16 million has been invested from this government, from the federal government, from the private sector, and other fundraising initiatives, Mr. Speaker, to ensure we're enhancing the student experience in the central eastern region of the

province.

Mr. Speaker, the member makes a great statement about some new partnership. This partnership has evolved over the course of the last 10 years. And as I mentioned during committee, he may have missed this, this is so secret that we put out a press release, making sure that people knew there was an event last July 10th. And Professor Kobussen at that point said, there's a new partnership being formed, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the member opposite finally caught up with what's going on in Humboldt.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, my ears just stopped bleeding from last night's committee meeting. The answer the minister is giving, Mr. Speaker, suggesting throughout committee over the last two days that due diligence is just beginning, has just started, raises some serious questions for this Assembly and for the people of Saskatchewan. Given the documentation, Mr. Speaker, that has been received and the points that eventually were revealed through committee, it's clear that this process, Mr. Speaker, the plan for a complete merger is a done deal and it is fully going ahead.

My question to the minister: why does he claim that due diligence is only beginning right now when the ministry has had officials at the table for almost a year?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Again, thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to continue providing an update on this. Over the course of the last 10 years, this partnership has continued to evolve. In fact what we've seen previously is Carlton Trail was utilizing and drawing on St. Peter's to do some of the university-level courses. Obviously St. Peter's is affiliated directly with the University of Saskatchewan.

In fact there are two level of consultations, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, the level of consultation that has occurred through and by the respective institutions, we have been involved in that, certainly. We are attentive to grassroots ideas about including and improving student and enhancing student experience in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the process that the member opposite is now referring to as far as getting started, that's a process that will be undertaken by the ministry. And we're certainly pleased to say that they are going to be a range of consultative efforts that will include First Nations and Métis peoples. It will include labour organizations. It will include the Enterprise committee. Mr. Speaker, happy to state that we're working to ensure the student experience improves in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of the Environment slipped the Minister of Advanced Ed her speaking notes when it comes to consultation with First Nations people.

The minister suggests that the due process is just beginning.

Well, Mr. Speaker, some questions about the due process: where was the due process, Mr. Speaker, when a transition board was established almost a year ago? Where was the due process, Mr. Speaker, when a joint CEO of both colleges was appointed? Where was the due process, Mr. Speaker, when the minister appointed a new board of Carlton Trail with strong connected ties to St. Pete's College?

My question, Mr. Speaker: where was the due process when finances, programming, and classrooms were being put together, Mr. Speaker? For crying out loud, why is the minister's due process and due diligence occurring just now?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, as far as due process and due diligence, maybe the members opposite might want to look at the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] press release and highlighting the word privatization. A day later, and we see the NDP press release also highlights the notion of privatization.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, this is just flat out inaccurate, Mr. Speaker. What we've seen is \$16 million invested in these two institutions, Mr. Speaker. We've seen community groups come in and, through St. Peter's, raise \$3 million through extensive efforts. We were able to match those dollars and the federal government, through the knowledge infrastructure initiative, come in and top up over six.

Mr. Speaker, in working with the Ministry of Education we were able to go out to Humboldt with the Deputy Premier and make an announcement on the new education centre in Humboldt combining the synergies between the ministries, Mr. Speaker, all in the name of enhancing the student experience. Mr. Speaker, as far as due diligence, I'm glad the member opposite is finally catching up with the news release from last July.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the issue here is about public assets — assets that are owned by all Saskatchewan people. The public ought to have a say, Mr. Speaker, about the future of public assets instead of the approach we've seen from the Minister of Health, instead of the approach we've seen from the Minister of Environment, instead of the approach we've seen from every minister on that front bench, Mr. Speaker, where they make a decision and do the consultation after. That's not how a transparent democracy works. Will the Minister admit a decision has been made and now this whole sham of consultation with the public is nothing more than a sham?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that

what is not a sham is \$1.6 billion that's been invested in post-secondary education by this government, Mr. Speaker. We've seen record investments in infrastructure. We've seen new dollars in this budget, Mr. Speaker, one of the highest investments in post-secondary education across the country in a year that's seen very, very tight fiscal constraints, not just within this province, but across the country.

Mr. Speaker, what we see, this continued investment is ensuring that we have excellence and innovation, that we have greater inclusion on our campuses, that we're serving more First Nations and Métis students., that we're making sure affordability and accessibility and equity issues are being addressed, Mr. Speaker. What we're not going to take, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the member opposite just ran into a press release that was issued last summer.

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

Out-of-Province Camping Fees

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that the budget he delivered in March needs to be amended because it violates the New West Partnership the Premier signed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — I'm unaware . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm unaware that there is anything in the New West Partnership that would require an amendment of the budget.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, day after day, examples of this government's incompetence keep rolling in. It's no wonder that Saskatchewan people are losing trust in this Premier. Insiders tell us that the extra out-of-province camping fee introduced in this budget violates the New West Partnership Agreement and that the government will be . . . embarrassingly will need to remove this fee very soon.

To the minister: did he not know that this fee would violate the New West Partnership deal when he brought it in? Where was the due diligence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, thanks for the question. Certainly during the budget process, this was an initiative put in place to recoup more dollars that are going to be staying within the provincial park system, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously the people of Saskatchewan, by virtue of the subsidy that the provincial parks receive, pay over and above camping fees. And so we felt that it was appropriate to look at having outside of Saskatchewan residents that come to Saskatchewan to camp pay extra, Mr. Speaker. And so certainly we are looking at, not just the camping fees, but certainly other

initiatives within the context of the New West Partnership. But we're very comfortable with this new approach, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — One ministry, one minister not knowing what the other ministries and other ministers are doing, Mr. Speaker. Insiders tell us that this fee was rushed through to avoid having Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport provided much . . . to prevent them from providing much-needed revenue for their ministry. But the government didn't think through the implications of the New West Partnership as they threw together their budget. Now they're having to embarrassingly amend their budget.

To the minister: how will the government make up for the revenue shortfall that is a direct result of complete incompetence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, this was hardly done for additional revenue into the provincial parks when you take into account the fact that we believe that \$150,000 in additional revenue will be raised, in comparison to the \$9 million subsidy that the provincial parks receive. So it's clearly a small percentage of what the provincial park budget will be across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at other recreational activities across the western provinces, there are differential fees for out-of-province residents in other recreational activities, Mr. Speaker. I can think of one example in the Kananaskis Park, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta. So this is clearly something that we are looking at within the context of the New West Partnership. And clearly, Mr. Speaker, the budgeting process doesn't . . . We have to do our work during the budget process regardless of what work is being done elsewhere within government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to have no awareness of the implications of the New West Partnership deal. Further he dismisses the amount, hundreds of thousands of dollars, at the same time as that government's cutting mosquito programs and Dutch elm programs. Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't make sense.

Day after day examples of this government's incompetence just keep piling up. It's no wonder that Saskatchewan people are losing trust in that Premier. The government was working on this budget since last fall. The government was also working on the New West Partnership since last fall. But they didn't realize until last week that the two were on a collision course. That's utter incompetence, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: when will the Sask Party learn how to govern?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I will not take any counsel from the members opposite when it comes to the provincial parks system in the province, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the lack of investment in the provincial parks across Saskatchewan when those members were in government, Mr. Speaker, comparing to the record levels of capital investment into the provincial parks.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly looked at ways where . . . When you look at the fact that in many parts of the provincial parks system, especially on the west side of the province where nearly 50 per cent of campers come from outside of the province and those campers don't pay the subsidy that all the taxpayers of Saskatchewan pay, Mr. Speaker. So this was one of the reasons why we did look at this, Mr. Speaker, but we're not going to take any counsel when it comes to provincial parks.

When it comes to adding a tax for the people of Saskatchewan, when it comes to firewood, Mr. Speaker, within the provincial parks for the wiener roast tax, Mr. Speaker, or looking at options as the members opposite did in terms of closing down provincial parks, we're not looking at that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Access Issues for Voters

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, Robin East is in the legislature today. Robin is legally blind and because of this, Robin can't perform one of the most important acts a Saskatchewan citizen can do — cast his vote in a provincial election in complete confidence and privacy. In all elections he has voted in, Robin has had to vote by feeling holes in a template, hoping that he picks the right hole, never knowing for certain who gets his vote.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister assure Robin and other legally blind Saskatchewan citizens that in the next provincial election they'll be able to vote for the candidate of their choice, knowing with confidence that when they make their mark, they have placed it by the candidate of their choice?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we'd like to thank Mr. East for coming here today and raising this concern. It's an important concern, and in the issue of democracy, the ability of a person, a citizen to be able to cast a vote is one of the most fundamental rights that we have as citizens. So it's certainly something we want to look at very carefully.

I can advise the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, in late April of this year, the Chief Electoral Officer wrote a letter to stakeholders raising concerns about the issue of accessibility for a number of different issues that arise around accessibility. I want to advise the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that it is the intention of our government to look at those issues, not necessarily waiting for the reappointment of another Chief Electoral Officer.

But those are issues that we think are fundamental before going into the next election and would very much want to see those issues addressed because we think they are fundamental to

democracy. So the issues that Mr. East raises are ones that are things that we would very carefully want to look at.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about democracy, but I'm a little more concerned about waiting for the Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Speaker, under provincial law, under federal law, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and more recently, Mr. Speaker, the provinces and the federal government have joined together and have signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Robin and other legally blind people have the right to vote independently and privately.

In Saskatoon, in the 2009 civic election, approximately 75 people used Automark voter assist terminal, an optical scan ballot marking system that provides the visually impaired with the ability to vote in the usual way. The majority of people who used the system found it to be very helpful. Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to be implementing the use of Automark voter assist terminals in the next provincial election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it would be premature to commit to any particular kind of system. I can advise the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite had 16 years to do something with this. It is our intention to try and have something in place prior to the next election, Mr. Speaker.

We will look to them for some co-operation and some assistance as we put through whatever appropriate changes are made because, Mr. Speaker, and to all members and to all citizens, it is important we have a fair, democratic, open election. And we want to ensure that all voters have the right to cast their ballot in an effective manner, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 613 — *The Blind Voters Act*

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill 613, *The Blind Voters Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved first reading of Bill 613, *The Blind Voters Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Next sitting of the House.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**Standing Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs and Justice**

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 136, *The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and this Bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 136, *The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 136 — *The Technical Safety Authority of
Saskatchewan Act***

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing has moved that Bill No. 136, *The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act* to be now moved the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn to go to committees.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — If I could just ask the House Leader just to hold on for one second. Before orders of the day, I just wish to inform the Assembly that late . . . Order. I wish to inform the Assembly that late yesterday afternoon, I received a letter from the Children's Advocate who has indicated that he has no intention of continuing on as the child advocate in the province of Saskatchewan.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the House do now adjourn to go to committees.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This Assembly stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:15.]

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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