



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

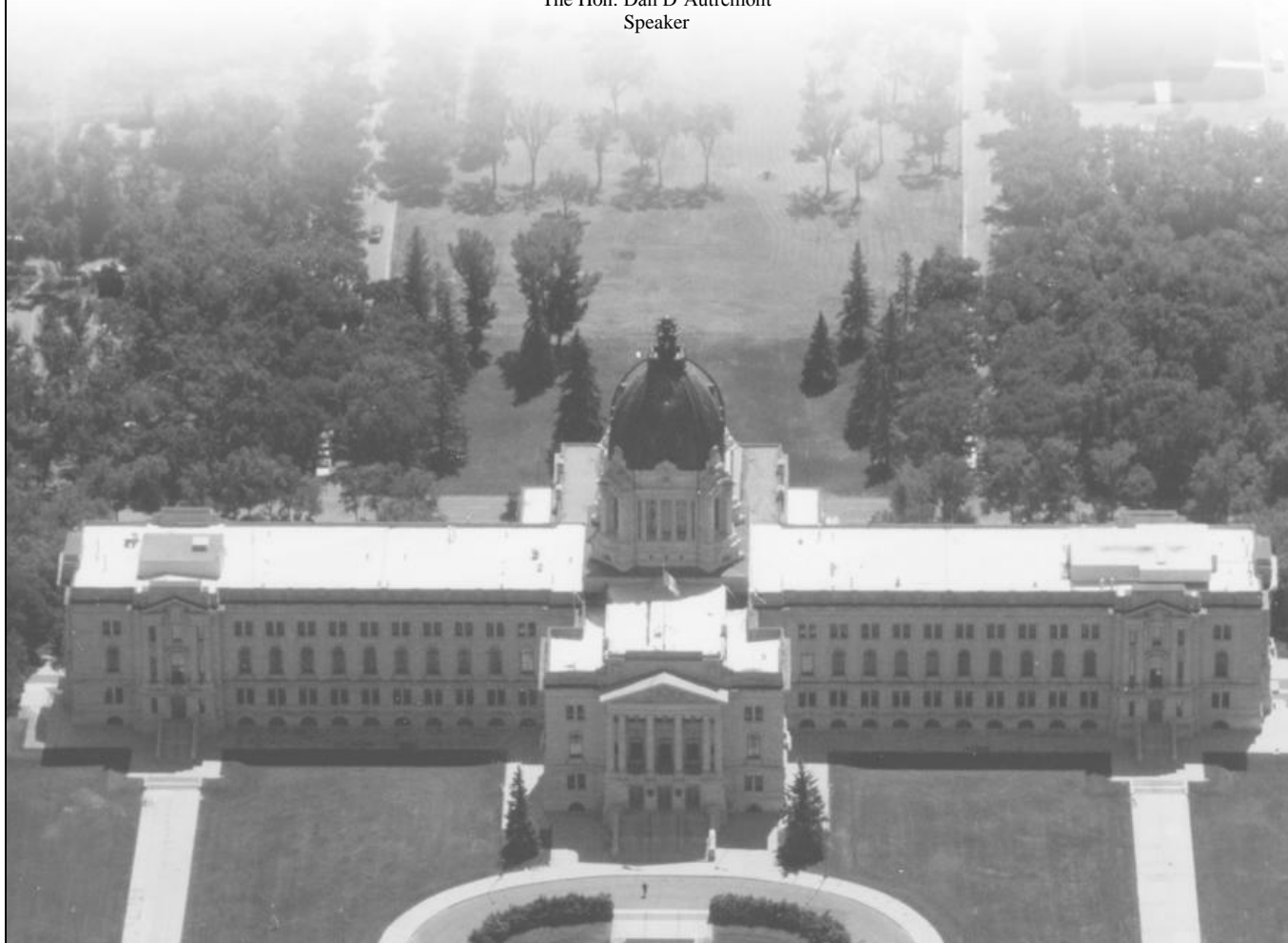
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



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Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce 14 young students from the University of Regina's Johnson-Shoyama school of business. These are first-year students in the Master of Public Administration program, and they are accompanied by Adrienne Billings, the social events coordinator for the Johnson-Shoyama student association. She has organized the students' visit to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure, a very special pleasure when we can welcome Saskatchewan students to the Saskatchewan legislature, and I look forward to having a short discussion with them later. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the students from Johnson-Shoyama. That's a great program, a great example of co-operation between the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and the U of R [University of Regina]. And I know it's attracting students from near and far, students who will make a great contribution to life here in Saskatchewan and a life within Canada and around the world. So I'd join with the minister in welcoming these bright individuals to the Assembly. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

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

Undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of those areas.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have primarily signed the petition are from Canoe Lake, from Dillon, from Patuanak. And I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in our province. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to make education a top priority by establishing a long-term vision and plan, with resources, that is responsive to the opportunities and challenges in providing the best quality education and that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that recognizes the importance of educational excellence to the social and economic well-being of our province and students for today and for our future.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Pennant and Swift Current. I so submit.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am presenting the petition today concerning the need for a publicly accessible asbestos registry:

Whereas the Government of Saskatchewan has lists respecting public buildings that contain asbestos; whereas these lists must be accessed individually through the freedom of information requests pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; whereas asbestos that is not properly encapsulated poses a public health risk; whereas the availability of information about asbestos allows individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and safety.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take immediate action to increase protection of workers, patients, students, and the public by passing Bill 604, the asbestos right-to-know Act, which will make a list of public buildings containing asbestos available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Melfort Comets in Provincial Final

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the Melfort Comets high school football team. The Comet record is 9 and 0 this season

so far, with the potent offence racking up some 427 points and a stingy defence that has only allowed 91 points. For fast figuring, that's an average score of 47 to 10.

After going six and oh in the regular season, the Comets started their march towards the provincial championship with the Nipawin Bears. Next game was a very tough one with the Lumsden Devil team. Melfort won that quarter-final game 35-13.

Just last weekend, the Comets travelled to Delisle to play the defending provincial champions. This Delisle Rebel team was the same team that knocked them out of provincial play last year, so the Comets were looking to extract a certain amount of revenge. The game was billed as a battle of the undefeated, and the Comets did prevail with a 42-12 victory.

By the figures I've just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the Comets should be favoured team in this week's provincial championship in Melfort against the Warman Wolverines, and maybe they are, but the Comets set their goal this year based on their last loss last year. They've reached the game by focusing on one play at a time, game in and game out. And I expect them to play with a great deal of talent and a great deal of heart.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, we hope for decent weather, an injury-free game, good sportsmanship. And from this member, go Comets.

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

Saskatoon Organization Develops HIV/AIDS Website

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the Saskatchewan community youth art program, better known as SCYAP [Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Inc.], for the excellent work that they do in Saskatoon. Recently they've created a website to educate youth on AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] awareness and prevention. SCYAP is an organization that works with youth at risk in Saskatoon through art and creates working relationships with government, organizations, and businesses throughout Saskatoon. Most recently they've partnered with the Saskatoon Health Region and Saskatchewan HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] provincial leadership team. Together they've developed a website where artists have created online graphic art and comic books that share real life experiences of people directly affected by HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome]. After scrolling through each portion of the story, the reader is confronted with a choice: continue down the current path or pick another route. The reader then makes the choice.

Organizers are hoping the website will be an effective tool in raising awareness and prevention. Dr. John Mark Opondo, deputy medical health officer for the Saskatoon Health Region, is one of the partners involved with the project and he confirms that "The website gives us some real powerful insights into youth in Saskatoon."

As it currently stands, Saskatchewan has the highest HIV/AIDS

rate in Canada. In 2002, rates were at approximately 10 new cases per year and as of 2010, they were at 174.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is so very fortunate to have this wonderful partnership that provides a very necessary and hopefully life-saving service to Saskatoon youth. I thank them for all their hard work and dedication.

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

Survey Shows Support for Open Market

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a new poll of wheat farmers in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan conducted by Ipsos Reid revealed that 85 per cent of Western wheat farmers believe that the new marketing system will be beneficial to their business, and less than 2 in 10, Mr. Speaker, believe that the new wheat marketing system will be harmful.

Mr. Speaker, after nearly 75 years of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly, producers now have the freedom to sell their crops in an open market without fear of repercussion or breaking the law. The new grain marketing system removes the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly to set grain prices for other markets, thereby allowing producers to set their own prices. Mr. Speaker, according to the poll, 9 in 10 Western producers believe that determining commodity prices levels is an opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, for decades Western producers have been vocal in their desire to do away with the single-desk marketing system and to be allowed to sell their grain when, how, and whomever they choose to sell it to. Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers can now celebrate an open market with optimism and opportunity. Another great day in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

Constituent's Shop Selected as Best Vintage Store

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure to ask the House to join me today in recognizing the accomplishments of Nicola Tabb, a long-time Massey Place resident who was recently recognized for her commitment to our community as an entrepreneur.

Not much more than a year ago, Nikki was one of the large number of people who were downsized when her former employer restructured its operations across the country. Like the community in which she lives though, Nikki is resilient and determined, and so she did the research and work necessary to become Massey Place's newest entrepreneur.

Mr. Speaker, they say that when one door closes, another opens. And in this case, the doors that Nikki opened were the doors to Better Off Duds, a second-source style shop at 510 33rd Street West in the heart of my constituency. The store bills itself as size and gender inclusive and carries high-quality classic and retro clothing. Earlier this month, Mr. Speaker, Nikki's efforts were recognized by the readers of *Planet S*

magazine who selected Better Off Duds as the best vintage store in Saskatoon less than six months after its doors opened. That's quite an accomplishment.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nicola Tabb on this impressive achievement and to thank her for sharing her energy and her vision with the people of Saskatoon Massey Place. We look forward to your continued success in our community and to many more awards in your future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Nursing Campus Opens

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, nursing students hoping to attend the University of Saskatchewan can now do so in Regina. Yesterday the University of Saskatchewan's stand-alone Regina campus officially opened. Located on the 4400 block of 4th Avenue, the school will feature a lecture theatre, two classrooms, break rooms, learning commons, offices, a boardroom, and a clinical simulation lab.

Mr. Speaker, the campus will be equipped with forward-thinking technology that will allow students attending nursing classes in La Ronge, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon to be connected to those attending classes here in Regina. Lynn Jansen, acting dean, associate dean of the college, Regina campus, called it a new era for the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing, and that it offers students a chance to learn where you live.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to training and retaining a full complement of nurses for our health care system. There are over 900 more nurses practising in Saskatchewan than there were in 2007, and a recent survey of nursing students showed that 90 per cent intended to stay on in Saskatchewan for their first job.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the hard work of all those who made Regina campus a possibility and to join me in wishing all the undergrads admitted through this program this year good luck in their studies. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

New Arena Opens in Spiritwood

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 2nd I had the opportunity to attend, along with many community members and schoolchildren, the grand opening of the new arena in Spiritwood. Funding from the regional infrastructure Canada program or the RInC [Recreational Infrastructure Canada] program was provided to construct a new skating arena, and it is connected to the existing curling facility. This project had an estimated \$3 million cost with \$750,000 being provided by the Government of Saskatchewan. As with many local infrastructure projects, people of the community showed up in traditional fashion, providing time, finances, and

resources, including a major sponsorship from HJR Asphalt.

Investing in recreation infrastructure is about more than just a new building. It's about giving residents a place to learn and play; it's about facilitating healthy and active lifestyles; and it's about building and strengthening our communities. And that is certainly something that is worth investing in.

To the many people that call Spiritwood home, they can be proud of their new arena. Recreational infrastructure is a vital part of any community, and I am proud of the investments made province-wide by this government. Recreation centres are often the hub of local activity and they provide a place for people to come together. Projects like this improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan people and allow our communities to continue to be a great place to live, to work, and to play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

[10:15]

Lest We Forget

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the early days of the second Battle of Ypres in World War I, a young Canadian artillery officer, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed. The young officer was serving in the same Canadian artillery unit as a friend of his, Canadian military doctor and artillery commander Major John McCrae.

It is believed that the death of his friend Alexis inspired Major John McCrae to write the iconic poem "In Flanders Fields." We are touched and inspired by the women and men who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. As a community and a country, we show that we remember each year by wearing the symbolic red poppy close to our hearts.

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

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Lest we forget.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Massey Place.

Registry of Asbestos in Public Buildings

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A week ago I introduced an amendment to *The Public Health Act* which would require the provincial government to create an online registry of all public buildings that contain asbestos. The government already has this information but chooses to keep it from the public. Making the registry available to Saskatchewan families, workers, patients is a common sense approach.

Last week the Sask Party government said it would have its officials review this piece of legislation. It's now been a week. My question to the Health minister: will the Sask Party government support this important piece of health and safety legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the member for his question. And I also want to thank the member for providing members opposite, myself, on the day that he introduced his bill, notice of that bill.

Certainly we are considering the contents of the bill which I believe, Mr. Speaker, would provide a public registry of public buildings that contain asbestos, Mr. Speaker. But we are certainly looking forward, I believe the member is going to do second reading of the bill later this day, and we look forward to hearing what he has to say. And we will be providing him an answer sometime following that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the day that the bill was introduced, the comments that a different minister made about the piece of legislation is that he worried that it would create fear. Well, Mr. Speaker, it really isn't about fearmongering. It is about sharing information. In this day and age, it's appropriate for government to share information with its citizens so that families, patients, students can make informed decisions.

My question to the minister: does he agree that in this day and age it's appropriate to be open, transparent and provide all information available to citizens so that they can make informed decisions about their health and safety?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe if I could just maybe correct the member opposite, I don't believe that the Minister of Labour indicated that our worry, the government's worry is that the bill would create fear. I believe what he was stating is that it would create the potential to create a false sense of security if a public building wasn't listed, knowing that asbestos has been used for a number of decades in Canada in building material, Mr. Speaker.

But as I said in my previous answer, we are certainly considering the content of the member from Massey Place's

bill, Mr. Speaker. And we will be very interested in hearing his arguments during his second reading, and be making a decision on the government's position following that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A champion of this type of legislation that is proposed is Howard Willems. And Howard lives in Saskatoon. He was a federal civil servant who was exposed to asbestos while working on the job, and he is now battling cancer. As Howard powerfully said last week to the media, Mr. Speaker, he said:

If you were enrolling your child in a school that was built in 1960, or if you were introducing your parents or grandparents to a seniors' care home built in the same era, wouldn't you like to know what is the potential for asbestos? Knowing that it's there and contained would make you rest a lot easier than not knowing at all.

Howard is asking for the Sask Party government to take a common sense approach and make this information available to Saskatchewan residents. My question to the minister: will he heed Howard's warning? Will he do the right thing today, and will the Sask Party government support this important piece of legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we certainly thank Mr. Willems for his work on this very important issue. Certainly government has a great deal of sympathy for Mr. Willems and the health battle that he faces now and all people that face this very serious form of cancer.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Mr. Willems for his dedicated work, not just in lobbying this government but also lobbying the previous government to put a registry in place. As I said, Mr. Speaker, we will take under consideration the bill that the member opposite has put forward. We look forward to hearing his remarks on this. And we will of course look at this bill, look at what other provinces are doing, look at what is best practices, and make a decision going forward.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the latest list of education capital projects is out. Parents, educators, communities, school divisions are confused by this plan and are left questioning whether or not the Sask Party government really understands the realities of today's classrooms in today's communities.

The ministry said, in a letter to school divisions, the whole process is being revamped. But in the meantime, classrooms and schools are overcrowded, and parents are worried and wondering what it will take for the Sask Party to take this problem seriously.

On November 6th, *The StarPhoenix* editorial titled, "School

policy badly outdated,” highlights the disarray, the frustration, the confusion as it relates to these cramped schools and inconsistent policies of that government. To the minister: why has there been such a lack of clarity, so much confusion, and so little action in building the schools this province needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I acknowledge the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, as I’ve said before, education in our province is a high priority, is clearly articulated in the Throne Speech, clearly articulated in the growth plan. Mr. Speaker, experiencing unprecedented growth in this province is an understatement. We’ve not seen this kind of growth for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, we’re working with our partners, all of our sector partners to mitigate a situation that is emergent. Having said that, we realize that the current process does not meet today’s reality, and we’ll continue to work with our sector partners to alleviate the pressures. We’re working on that process. We’re consulting with our partners to address these enrolment pressures, and we will continue in that regard. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Hampton Village in Saskatoon is but one example of a lost priority. Students from the neighbourhood in both school systems need access to new schools. Mr. Speaker, a 10-year-old request — and in fact, Saskatoon Public School Division’s top priority, number one priority — is still down on the Sask Party government’s lowest priority list. One of the strongest critics, Mr. Speaker, served as the business manager and constituency assistant for the member for Fairview. She was quoted in *The StarPhoenix*, “The people want a school out here so bad, it’s pathetic.”

To the minister: how has the Sask Party government misplaced their educational priorities so badly that even their own party organizers and constituency staff are calling their plans pathetic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I acknowledge the question from the member opposite. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 we have allocated over \$116 million in school capital in the Saskatoon area. We have contributed to and committed funding to 10 major school capital projects in the area. They include \$14.1 million for the new Willowgrove School, \$12.6 million to the new Holy Family School, \$4.2 million to the E.D. Feehan School renovations, \$7.5 million to the Georges Vanier School addition, \$13.2 million to the Holy Cross renovation, \$8.6 million to St. Matthew’s addition, \$8 million to Nutana school addition, \$12 million to the new St. Mary School addition — Mr. Speaker, \$500 million in total that we’ve invested in education in our province over the course of our governance.

Again, priorities, Mr. Speaker — liquor stores, schools; liquor stores, hospitals. We’re going to move forward.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that’s reckless rhetoric from that minister, Mr. Speaker. And the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is that the number one goal of government should be meeting the needs of people in this growing province. And clearly, that’s not happening. There are kindergarten classrooms that are bursting at the seams. Staff rooms are doubling as teaching spaces. Parents are worried as their kids cross busy highways to access schools that are far away. Clearly action is needed.

As the November 6th *StarPhoenix* editorial stated, “There needs to be a great deal more leadership from the government for actual policies to cope with growth [rather] than merely setting lofty goals or bragging about the latest statistics.”

Mr. Speaker, what is needed is clarity from that government, a plan that makes sense, and an investment in our schools. When will the Sask Party put forward a real plan to address these challenges and properly support students in our growing province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I recognize the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. It’s called a growth plan. And we’re going to continue with that growth plan as we move forward. Again, Mr. Speaker, I’ll acknowledge the fact that the process for allocating capital funding is a process that’s lacking. We’ve committed to address those shortfalls with our sector partners. We’re going to continue in that vein. And as we speak, we’re going to move forward with that direction.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we’ve been raising specific concerns for months and proposing action. As raised in the November 6th *StarPhoenix* editorial, there’s a host of issues: funding lags, population growth, creating a funding shortfall. English as an additional language supports are grossly inadequate, impacting all students. Divisions were forced to cut full-day kindergarten and that simply doesn’t lay a foundation for learning. And then there’s the capital needs, the bricks and mortar, the classrooms, the schools themselves that are missing from their agenda.

This is a government that is clearly not supporting education to meet the demands of growth, the growth it touts. Its policies defy common sense and deny us our full potential. When will that government’s actions meet up with its rhetoric and make education a real priority in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. You know, it wasn’t so long ago that I sat around a board table deliberating with my colleagues about how much we were going to charge the citizens of Regina in terms of raised taxes to mitigate the shortfalls that were coming our way in education

as a result of underfunding and declining enrolments year upon year upon year.

Mr. Speaker, let me just mention a hard reality. And I'd like to quote from Prince Albert, Wayne Steen:

We desperately needed this gymnasium for Carlton's programming. This is just wonderful news for the school division to get approval on this and be able to move ahead on the project.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. It's called growth. From Warman, and I quote:

On behalf of the Prairie Spirit School board of education, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Education for the announcement of a new facility in Warman. As a division we were thrilled to see Warman middle years school project move to the approval in principle stage.

Mr. Speaker, a growth plan. Thank you.

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

Affordable Housing Plans

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party announced this week that they are selling off land in Regina in order to potentially start affordable housing construction. The announcement was light on details, Mr. Speaker, about exactly how the government will ensure more affordable housing will actually get built. There was no price tag for the sale and no indication if the money would be used for the construction of affordable housing under Sask Housing or any other public housing body.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party says that they want affordable housing built on this land but there's no information about what tools they will use to ensure these are affordable housing homes. To the minister: how many affordable housing units will be created by this week's sale of provincial land in Regina?

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

[10:30]

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm real delighted that the member opposite is recognizing that land availability is one of the issues we have with housing in the province. It may be one of the biggest challenges. And I know the member opposite doesn't acknowledge that 80,000 more people in the province of Saskatchewan creates a housing challenge. That's why we worked with the city of Regina to ensure that this piece of land, 336 acres within the boundaries of Regina, will be available for land, for sale at this time.

We haven't put a price value on it because it's an RFO [request for offers]. We're getting a request for offers to determine how much money we'll use. We're going to sell this land to allow the city of Regina to move it forward for development, and we have said that the money will go for affordable housing in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. And I think the plan that we've been talking about all morning is the growth plan for this province, and housing's an important part of it.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister said in her news release, and I quote: "By selling this land, we can work with the city of Regina to significantly impact housing availability while also generating funds for safe, quality affordable housing." But the Sask Party hasn't previously told the people the accounts are so empty they need to sell provincial assets to generate funds for their projects. And they haven't told the public what these funds are going to when they say they're going to build affordable housing.

To the minister: is the Sask Party using this land sale to build social housing and if so, where are these social housing units going to be located?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do acknowledge the question from the member opposite. And we do have 336 acres of land, and there will be houses built on it. The type of places that we will, the money will be used is on affordable houses across the province, across the city. It doesn't mean they'll all be right on that piece of land. But across the city of Regina, that money will be spent on affordable housing, just as we've been doing for the last five years, Mr. Speaker.

I'm really pleased that we have an opportunity to build 2,000 units so far. With our growth plan, we have another \$344 million going to be spent on housing, Mr. Speaker. We're going to have 12,600 new, more units across the province, and there'll be a whole lot of them in Regina.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's plan is to sell off the assets of this province rather than build affordable housing that our province so desperately needs. Their plan is selling the housing the province already has rather than improving and upgrading this housing. Perhaps they haven't seen the cost increases in constructing new homes, Mr. Speaker. But it's common sense that it's cheaper to repair a house than tear it down and build a new one.

The Sask Party has sat for five years — five years — as the stock of affordable housing for Saskatchewan people has dwindled, and now their only action is to sell their assets. To the minister: will the proceeds of the social housing sell-offs go directly to build new affordable homes? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — The proceeds from the sale of this land will go to build affordable housing, Mr. Speaker. We would rather have houses than a piece of land. We have 336 acres of land that's got nothing on it. We want affordable housing right across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have built 2,000 affordable units since we

became government five years ago. In the last year, those people across the floor have built 58 units of housing, Mr. Speaker. We have a goal to build 12,400 units in the next five years. Mr. Speaker, a piece of land is worth nothing if there isn't a house on it. We need some homes. We don't need land with nothing on it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party government has completely ignored Saskatchewan's people's real concerns about climate change. This week the minister introduced a short bill about greenhouse gas that has no teeth.

The minister restated the Sask Party target and said, "Under provincial regulation, greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan will be reduced by 20 per cent by 2020 from 2006 levels . . ." Now Environment Canada looked at the Sask Party's plans, and in August they say that the Sask Party will miss its target completely because their reduction plans are so weak. Why has the Sask Party planning to miss its own greenhouse gas emission targets?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question from the member opposite. Happy to talk about the environmental record of this government. Very recently, yesterday, we passed *The Environmental Assessment Act*, something that was long overdue in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What we're doing is looking at what's happening across the country and indeed leading the way, Mr. Speaker. We're leading the way in many respects, and other provinces are coming to us to ask how we're going forward with results-based regulatory options and things like that, Mr. Speaker. We have a very proud record of ensuring that we have growth and environmental responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party are happy to talk about their environmental record, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Saskatchewan want action.

From our position, Mr. Speaker, on every possible occasion they have cut programs that help the environment. They have slashed the Go Green program. They've cancelled the Climate Change Secretariat, and green energy is simply not on their agenda. What's worse, Mr. Speaker, is that in the Sask Party's own internal document, they can't identify a single program they have introduced to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, their document highlights actions taken by the NDP [New Democratic Party].

Mr. Speaker, why has the Sask Party failed so miserably to introduce a smart growth, green agenda for the province, and why are they completely incapable of showcasing a single program that they've implemented to reduce emissions, Mr.

Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, it's hard to take that question seriously. We are leading the province, we are leading the country, we are leading in worldwide technology with carbon capture and sequestration, Mr. Speaker.

What we are doing? We are using a good relationship that we have with the federal government, with Minister Peter Kent. He came and made coal-fire regulations. He announced them here in Saskatoon in our province, Mr. Speaker. He congratulated us for leading the way, for being innovative, for offering suggestions that were adopted by the federal government, Mr. Speaker. We are operating in a very responsible way, ensuring that SaskPower gets credit for the leading-edge work that they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite a couple of days ago asked me to introduce a program or commit to a program that was committed to two years ago by this government, Mr. Speaker. He better get his facts straight.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That kind of rhetoric is exactly what *The StarPhoenix* says is poisonous language that doesn't help our province develop good ideas for improving the environment, Mr. Speaker. Our province needs real action and real solutions to address climate change and to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, which are the highest per capita in the country.

The Sask Party ran on a platform in 2007 to reduce these emissions by 32 per cent. They've failed miserably to meet that target, so they reduced it to 20 per cent. Now, in Environment Canada's view of the Sask Party's plans, which includes carbon capture, show that they will completely miss their targets by half.

Why does the Sask Party want more pollution and less solution for the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, we do indeed have a plan — provincial target of 20 per cent reduction by 2020 for the levels from the 2006 level.

Mr. Speaker, we're not afraid on this side of the House to establish targets, whether it's education capital where we just heard about the \$500 million that has been put forward, whether it's health care when we heard about the 900 new nurses that are here in Saskatchewan now, or if it's to do with climate change or environmental responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

This government takes it very serious that we ensure that we have a growth agenda as well as environmental stewardship. That's what we're doing. That's what we'll continue to do. That's what the people of Saskatchewan have put us here to do, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts. The Saskatchewan Party slashed the province's targets for greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent when they took office — 33 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Their own internal studies show that their plan solely relies on carbon capture technology, and even then they won't meet those targets. And that is verified by the same federal government who set the 20 per cent targets that the Sask Party says it's following, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the emissions are still increasing under the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, when it comes to the protection of our environment, Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party so full of hot air and short on action?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — You want to hear something that's full of hot air. Let's talk about the members opposite and their record in government, Mr. Speaker. Greenhouse gas emissions under the NDP government rose by 70 per cent under their watch, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what's this government doing? We're putting forward a new environmental code. It's got great flexibility. It's results-based regulation, and it's a model that's serving for Manitoba and for Nova Scotia and other provinces in the country, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we're leading the way.

What are we doing with water, Mr. Speaker? We have a 25-year water plan to ensure that we treasure that resource, but we have a growth plan that will ensure that we have growth and environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker. We continue to take a leading position in this, Mr. Speaker. And as I talk to my colleagues in the country, they're somewhat surprised that Saskatchewan is taking a leadership position because for 16 years we had records like this 70 per cent increase in greenhouse gas. Shame, Mr. Speaker, shame on the members opposite.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Saskatchewan Plan for Growth

Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to initiate this 75-minute debate. The focus, which I will offer formally through a motion at the end of my remarks, will focus on our government's plan for growth and, most importantly, the purpose of this growth to help enhance the quality of life for people right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I thought what I'd do is begin with some initial remarks from a document that we've recently announced and released, and that is *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*.

Mr. Speaker, within this document there are some important guideposts. These guideposts help to ensure that the people of

this province understand the direction that we plan not simply to sustain but also to gain momentum towards. I quote:

The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth sets out the Government of Saskatchewan's vision for a province of 1.2 million people by 2020.

The Plan identifies principles, goals and actions to ensure Saskatchewan is capturing the opportunities and meeting the challenges of a growing province.

The Purpose and Principles of Growth
[Mr. Speaker, we know that] Too often, enterprise-oriented governments appear to see growth for the sake of growth. This . . . [can be] a mistake — one that can cause governments to lose focus and discipline.

What is clear in this document? That is the question: what is the purpose of our prosperity? The purpose of growth is to secure a better quality of life for people right across our province.

The six core growth activities the Government of Saskatchewan can undertake to foster economic growth and address the challenges of growth have been and always will be:

[First] Investing in the infrastructure required for growth. Educating, training and developing a skilled workforce. Ensuring the ongoing competitiveness of Saskatchewan's economy.

Supporting increased trade, investment and exports through international engagement.

Advancing Saskatchewan's natural resource strengths, particularly through innovation, to build the next economy [which I'll return to in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker; and]

Ensuring the fiscal responsibility [continues] through balanced budgets, lower debt and smaller, more effective government.

Just as importantly, the Government of Saskatchewan will not directly intervene in the economy or undertake direct investment in businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this document then goes on to highlight some key specific goals.

Key Goals and Actions

Some of the key targets and actions in the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth include: [And I'm going to spend a little bit of time on the first bullet.]

1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, this is vitally important for us to set out this clear indicator of what success is going to look like in the years to come.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, I'll turn as a reference point to Tony Blair, to his recent memoirs on page 16. And I want to start with this former British prime minister's memoirs because I'd assume that the

members opposite as well as others across the province would see that his framework provides an empirical reference point, not an ideological one, to facilitate the debate and deliberation that we're going to have today. Because, Mr. Speaker, we know that we're dealing with someone on the other side, Mr. Speaker, that is the person who is the interim leader of the NDP who has recently indicated that he thinks the growth that's under way is mythical. In fact, the term "myth" he used in a quote in *The Globe and Mail* on October 16, 2012. Mr. Speaker, this is vitally important for us to ensure that we address this head-on.

So what do we have? Mr. Speaker, from July 2007 to July 2012, Saskatchewan's population has increased by almost 80,000 people, Mr. Speaker, 80,000 people. In the last year alone, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan grew by more than 22,000 people, the most growth in any given year since 1921. Mr. Speaker, we have people that are arriving in this province from more than 130 different countries and settling in more than 300 communities. In fact every Saskatchewan city and nearly 80 per cent of Saskatchewan towns saw their population increase during the most recent census period.

This stands in stark contrast . . . And we can do a little bit of compare and contrast here. In the previous census period which the NDP oversaw, over half of Saskatchewan cities and more than 85 per cent of our towns decreased in population. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we see that there is a close connection between some of their regional economic development activities or plans and the out-migration of people.

They put forward about a dozen plans for growth. For example, the NDP presented one in 2000. Subsequently the population dropped by more than 7,600 people. They weren't satisfied, Mr. Speaker, so they came back in 2001 with another plan, and the population dropped another 2,800. Mr. Speaker, in 2002, try again and Saskatchewan's population went down by 2,400. And they announced yet another booklet in 2005, and the population went down by more than 3,700 people. Mr. Speaker, these aren't abstract numbers.

At the time I was working at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And what was heartbreaking is that a lot of the graduates, when you would ask them what is it that they were looking to do with their education and with their dreams and aspirations, many, Mr. Speaker, would simply say, the car's already packed. And they were on their way. Mr. Speaker. These are important reference points for us to think about.

When we think about the correction that's occurred since 2007, more than 80,000 people now call Saskatchewan home — an increase of more than 80,000 people, Mr. Speaker. These are important benchmarks for us to recognize, not ideologically, Mr. Speaker, but empirically. And we go back to the quote from the British prime minister, and that is, "There is always one, more prosaic, test of a nation's [or in this case a jurisdiction's] position: Are more people trying to get into it, or [trying] to get out of it?" Mr. Speaker, that's a simple test that the British, the former British prime minister has put forward.

Mr. Speaker, the significance of this is that we see more people are coming to Saskatchewan from across the country and around the world. The importance of this, Mr. Speaker, is it provides us with an important benchmark. We know that there

are challenges associated with growth but these challenges are welcome. These challenges offer us the opportunity, all of us, to look to the future and see growing communities, growing schools, and growing neighbourhoods.

Over the weekend I had an opportunity to speak with a developer in Saskatoon. I ran into him informally, and I asked how business was. He said, business is just great, Rob, but you know what's really important? He said, and I quote, "My kids have moved back and they brought our grandkids." That, Mr. Speaker, is one of the key indicators of the significance of growth that's under way. And so when we look at that benchmark, are more people trying to get in or get out of Saskatchewan, we understand, Mr. Speaker, that the answer is clear. More people are coming to Saskatchewan, the new Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan focused on growth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite, one of the aspirants from Regina, is offering some annoying alliteration, and that's okay. We've heard from him in question period today. But what we want to do is make sure that, Mr. Speaker — and I've tried to do this very purposefully — we're actually speaking about empirical progress that can be measured on each side of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of our key areas that we've been able to put forward — and that is six core growth activities — is advancing Saskatchewan's natural resource strengths, particularly through innovation, to build the next economy. This stands in very stark contrast to a notion that we still have not had clarification over from the leader of the federal NDP, that is the federal Leader of the Official Opposition. He has put some specific focus on notions that Canadians are paying a price for the prosperity enjoyed by natural resources sectors in Western Canada.

And members opposite, especially those seeking leadership positions, have yet to clarify what their position is. Do they endorse that view, that is from the federal NDP, that natural resources are hampering Canada's growth? Or do they see that actually they're fuelling Canada's growth, especially growth under way in this province?

What we're working to do, Mr. Speaker, and this is again identified in the vision 2020, is to see that we not only maximize opportunities for natural resource production and prosperity today, but we actually move forward on these in sustainable patterns. What's important is written down here, some context of how we see natural resources and innovation coming together. And I quote on page 25:

In a roundtable hosted by the Canada West Foundation on the subject of western Canadian diversification, it was noted that the general consensus about what diversification meant in the early 1980s and its purpose, "namely, the creation of provincial economies resembling that of Ontario," has changed in recent years. As participants commented: "Western Canada's reliance on resource based production has gone from a perceived weakness to an acknowledged strength."

The report contains two observations on diversification. First, while some viewed growth as a more important

objective than diversification: “There was widespread consensus that the focus in either case must be on expanding and developing industries that are grounded in the region’s resource base, or on cultivating new streams of products and services that have their origins in resource-based economic activity.”

Mr. Speaker, we go on within this document to speak about making sure that we are connecting our innovation agenda to our natural resource strengths.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member from Saskatoon Nutana asked some questions, some very curious questions, that it was news to her that we were moving forward as a province on key areas of innovation, especially as it related to value-added uranium. Mr. Speaker, what’s curious is that she may have missed some of the early indicators that we were making some progress and taking actual real steps.

For example she may have overlooked page 20 of the SaskPower annual report on long-term — that is 2025 and beyond — supply requirements. Mr. Speaker, here, maybe it’s a subtle bullet:

Evaluating numerous supply options, including: biomass, carbon capture and storage, cogeneration, compliant coal, hydro, imports, natural gas, nuclear, small nuclear, solar, heat recovery, polygeneration, wind and the repowering of existing units.

Perhaps overlooked that. Perhaps overlooked a news release from the Canadian Light Source synchrotron on January 24th, 2011, Mr. Speaker, where Mark deJong, the CLS [Canadian Light Source] director of accelerators and the project’s principal investigator for a team that’s looking to produce medical isotopes says, “We are grateful to the Government of Canada and the province of Saskatchewan for their leadership and support on our project.”

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, overlooking the \$17 million announcement on March 4th, 2011, on the PET [positron emission tomography] CT [computerized tomography] scan made by the then minister of Health regarding the significance of nuclear investment.

The list goes on. The participation at the Canadian Nuclear Society annual conference, which was offering an invitation, an invitation, Mr. Speaker, not only to participate there, but the next conference was held in Saskatoon.

August 25th, 2011: “Saskatchewan and Hitachi sign nuclear R & D agreements.” Mr. Speaker, in fact her former leader was asked — and perhaps she was even present at the University of Saskatchewan — that is, in a copy of *The Sheaf* on September 16th, 2011, the former leader was asked specifically about his position on the nuclear agenda. And of course the Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation was recently renamed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to at this time move a motion:

That this Assembly commend the government for delivering the Saskatchewan plan for growth which sets out a road map for population growth and an improved

quality of life in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has moved by the member for Saskatoon Greystone:

That this Assembly commend the government for delivering the Saskatchewan plan for growth which sets out a road map for population growth and improved quality of life in this province.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to weigh in in debate here today and in discussion in 75-minute debate. The motion that’s been put forward speaks to the growth that’s going on in the province. Now it then goes to great lengths and the speaker opposite went to great lengths to sort of back-pat themselves on the back to sort of suggest somehow that they’re the agents of creating that growth.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to remind the members opposite that it’s by way of our blessed circumstance of resources, by way of the ingenuity and hard work of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, the hard work and rolled-up-the-sleeves attitude of our workers across this province that have generated the kind of growth that we see in the province, not the members opposite. And I’d urge them not to take credit for something that’s not theirs, Mr. Speaker.

But if we’re going to get down to the actual growth itself, I think that growth is something and development is something that’s important to Saskatchewan people. And when we look at population growth, for one . . . This is something for which we all share some rightful pride in, but as we see that population grow, for one, Mr. Speaker, we then need to make sure we’re properly supporting our people, our communities all across Saskatchewan to make sure that that growth itself is equating what has to be our end goal, and that’s to make gains in the quality of life of Saskatchewan people.

And quite simply, that’s where the very narrow-minded focus of this government misses the mark. This is very much a government that takes growth for the sake of growth alone approach, Mr. Speaker. And it’s a wrong-headed approach, Mr. Speaker. It’s one that denies the interdisciplinary approach we must take in making sure that growth itself must equal progress and improvements in well-being.

And you know, I’m being heckled across in a silly way by the Minister of Culture, Mr. Speaker, which I find interesting. Because in a growing Saskatchewan, in the growing Saskatchewan that I believe in, Mr. Speaker, we should also have a thriving film industry, Mr. Speaker, a thriving film industry with entrepreneurs making investments here in Saskatchewan, building their lives here in Saskatchewan and not being shown the door as they are by that minister, by that Premier, and that government, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

So I would urge the member who shouts from his seat, the minister, Mr. Speaker, to sit. Either engage in a meaningful debate and do some important work for the film industry and those workers in this province, or certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'd urge him to remain quiet here in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

What I see before us is a special opportunity here in this province by way of our resources, by way of our people, by way of our population, by way of the entrepreneurs. And we have a precious opportunity to fully capture a generational opportunity for the people of this province. And it's something that's slipping through the fingers of this government with their wrong-headed approach. We need to make sure that growth is equating into better lives for Saskatchewan people. And we need to do so by making sure that we're . . .

The Speaker: — I would remind the member not to question the decisions of the Speaker. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And just to record, it was the member opposite that was making that question.

So what we need to do at this time, to make sure we fully capture this opportunity, is not take the narrow-minded approach and back-patting that we see of government opposite touting their statistics on this front. What we need to do is make sure we're putting forward policies that are actually bettering people's lives, making the investments, as we said, back into where it counts — into housing, into health, into education — because quite simply when we're growing as a province, these are areas that there's strain placed upon and where we need to be able to step up to the plate and support.

We spoke specifically about education here today and the failure to support education properly in this province. The policies of this government have been highlighted by *The StarPhoenix* editorial, and I quote the title, "Schools policy badly outdated." That's the title. And then the editorial goes on to highlight in all the different ways how this government is so out of step with what's going on with Saskatchewan people, communities, and in fact, missing the opportunity that our economy is providing us, Mr. Speaker.

It talks about the fact that the actual funding formula, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, at a time where we're promoting immigration and supporting the many new people to build and better their lives here in Saskatchewan — which is a wonderful thing — but the funding formula does not support that, and in fact it lags population growth and leaves funding shortfalls for so many school divisions and classrooms across this province. And of course the impacts are felt directly by students, by teachers, by families, Mr. Speaker.

It also goes on to talk about how misguided this government's approach is, where it's certainly welcoming many new people to this province, as it should be, but then it's failing to provide the supports in the classroom by way of English as an additional language supports to make sure that we're providing that enriched education for those newcomers and new Canadians that are building their lives here, but also for all, Mr. Speaker. And it's jeopardizing the education for all of those students.

And then we get to the important issues of school capital, and this government's failure to . . . As I say, they like to spend time touting the population growth that's going on but then are really dismissive or absent in putting it forward, any sort of real, concrete plan that steps up to the plate to meet the needs of communities to provide the schools that are required for those students. And we can look all across this province, whether we're in the Southeast, whether we're in Regina, whether up through Saskatoon, whether it's in Warman, whether it's in Martensville. The pressures are there, and we have to do a better job.

I'll quote the article, *The StarPhoenix* editorial:

A government that's eager to take credit each time Statistics Canada reports an increase to Saskatchewan's population has to address the reality that with such rapid growth comes a responsibility to provide in a timely manner the services required by newcomers, particularly young families.

It moves on:

At a time when Premier Brad Wall's government is lobbying Ottawa to increase Saskatchewan's immigrant nominee program by 2,000 to meet the province's labour market needs, what's frustrating to families who've already flocked here from around the globe is the seeming unpreparedness of the province to provide the support services they need to get established.

And it goes on further:

There needs to be a great deal more leadership from the government for actual policies to cope with growth [rather] than merely setting lofty goals or bragging about the latest statistics.

This motion put forward before us, Mr. Speaker, is nothing more than bragging about statistics and patting themselves on the back for work that's been achieved by Saskatchewan people and entrepreneurs. And what we expect from this government is something better.

We have a special opportunity in this province to work across communities in a co-operative, community-minded, common sense approach, Mr. Speaker, and truly make sure we're advancing the well-being and quality of life of Saskatchewan people. Quite simply, Saskatchewan people deserve nothing less. If we're looking at the inadequate investments and support for housing, if we could look at the pressures in health care that are going unsupported by this government, if we look at the strain that's in the classroom, these are just some examples.

We also see the deliberate actions of selling off some of the control and assets and certainty that we have of our future by way of some of our assets in ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] or some of our land, letting assets such as our pastures, Mr. Speaker, our community pastures and our tree nursery be sold, privatized, Mr. Speaker, without any leadership from government. These are important institutions that play a role in Saskatchewan, not just in Saskatchewan's history but well into Saskatchewan's future.

We see, as I say, a film industry that's been killed by this government, that has a direct impact in driving out entrepreneurs and workers. It has a direct impact on the cultural well-being of who we are as a province, Mr. Speaker. That also has a direct connect back to us economically.

Mr. Speaker, we can be more than we are right now. Our goal should be to capture the generational opportunity provided to us by our resource prosperity, and this government's failing to do that with its single-minded growth for the sake of growth approach.

We saw a notion, finally, of maybe supporting a Heritage Fund — something we've been calling for — making sure our resource revenues leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Well we see their plan, and it won't start until after 2060, Mr. Speaker. It's more of a joke than anything to the government opposite than leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, there's a better way forward, and Saskatchewan people deserve better. We need to work with all across this province. Saskatchewan people deserve a government that will work together to ensure and build a better, fair, more prosperous Saskatchewan for all, and clearly that's not the goal of this government. We see a government that continues to pursue, as I say, a very single-minded approach to its goals, both for the sake of growth alone, and spends relentless energy on patting itself on the back, Mr. Speaker, instead of working with Saskatchewan people who know best, Mr. Speaker, and serving their best interests.

When I look at this motion, which is all about back-patting itself, Mr. Speaker, about not recognizing the realities and pressures and putting forward a real plan, Mr. Speaker, certainly I won't be supporting the motion put forward by government here today and certainly will be continuing to work and to speak, to be calling for a better way forward, one that makes sure that as we advance development, as we grow, we're bettering the lives of Saskatchewan people in every community all across Saskatchewan. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords. That's the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from The Battlefords is much shorter and no hair. So we'll carry on.

I'm proud to stand today and give facts on the Saskatchewan plan for growth. Mr. Speaker, on October 16th, our government released *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth — Vision 2020 and Beyond*. *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* outlines a plan for responsible and sustainable growth that will continue to move our province forward and ensure and improve quality of life for Saskatchewan residents. Our plan for growth outlines some ambitious goals and targets that our government has to ensure that Saskatchewan continues to be one of Canada's best performing provinces economically. Our government has set a target of 1.2 million people living in the province by 2020.

There are six core activities in the Saskatchewan plan for growth that our government will undertake to foster continued growth in Saskatchewan. They are: invest in infrastructure, developing a skilled workforce, ensuring competitiveness,

increase export trade, advance the province's natural resource strengths through innovation, and maintaining sound physical management.

Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that Saskatchewan's growth is sustainable and responsible, significant investments in infrastructure are needed. Saskatchewan is experiencing three infrastructure challenges that must be addressed. The first challenge involves addressing the infrastructure deficit from the past. The second challenge is to address the infrastructure that is needed for our growing population and economy, and the third infrastructure challenge is to prepare for future growth in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is why our government has committed to investing \$2.5 billion over the next three provincial budgets for improved highways, overpasses, and bridges as well as water treatment facilities and water supply systems. Our government will also invest in the social infrastructure that is needed to support our growing population, such as schools and hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, when our government meets its goal of 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020, we will need 60,000 more people working in Saskatchewan. This will require aggressive development of Saskatchewan's skilled workforce. Mr. Speaker, the levels of First Nations unemployment in Saskatchewan is an issue that needs immediate attention. It has been proven that the first step in increasing employment of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan is improving their education outcomes. In the Saskatchewan plan for growth, our government has set a target of reducing the difference in graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 50 per cent by 2020, and we will continue to build on the report and recommendations of the joint task force on Aboriginal education and employment.

Mr. Speaker, educational attainment is paramount in the growing economy. If Saskatchewan is to continue to be one of the nation's leaders, our province will also need to lead the country in education. In the Saskatchewan plan for growth, our government has set a goal of leading the country in high school graduation rates by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, if Saskatchewan is to continue leading the nation economically, we will have to ensure that our province's business climate is competitive since Saskatchewan continues to rate as one of the most competitive places to do business in Canada. KPMG's 2012 edition of the *Competitive Alternatives*, a guide to international business locations, ranked the cost of doing business in 133 cities in 14 countries. Four Saskatchewan cities were included in the survey, with Moose Jaw, Regina, and Prince Albert placing in the top third and Saskatoon placing in the top half of competitive locations.

Our government will continue to ensure that Saskatchewan's business environment is competitive with other provinces. Saskatchewan's incorporated business tax at 12 per cent is two points higher than the rate in Alberta and British Columbia. We will reduce this rate to 10 per cent by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is on pace to surpass British Columbia as Canada's fourth largest exporting province. In order to ensure that Saskatchewan's economy continues to

grow, we will need to increase the province's export capacity. In the plan for growth, our government has set a target of doubling the value of Saskatchewan exports by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to hard work of our farm and ranch families, Saskatchewan is now Canada's top agri-food exporting province with more than \$10 billion worth of exports in 2011, up 60 per cent since 2007. Our government will continue to build on the great work of our agricultural sector, and in our plan for growth we have set a target of increasing Saskatchewan's agricultural exports from \$10 billion to \$15 billion by 2020 and increasing our province's crop production by 10 million tonnes by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, our province's natural resources are one of our greatest assets. Saskatchewan is a safe and stable supplier of food, potash, and energy to emerging economies around the globe. Our government will continue to engage these countries through partnerships and international trade missions.

Mr. Speaker, our province cannot rely solely on the value of natural resources to grow Saskatchewan's economy. We must be able to mitigate the repressions of fluctuating commodity prices. Mitigating the effects of commodity swings is not a matter of diversifying away from resource-based industries, rather it is the development of emerging industries that support our agricultural and natural resource sectors through expanded value-chain development and value-added processes. This will continue to be the increased diversification of Saskatchewan's economy and continued future growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan plan for growth is a statement that outlines targets and goals our government has set forth for our province, goals that would help our province continue to lead the nation economically. Mr. Speaker, our government is not afraid to set goals or put numbers on targets, unlike the members opposite who stated while in government, even if we put a number on it, there's no guarantee that we'd be able to meet the number in any case. That was said by the former Health minister, Len Taylor, 2006. Sad, sad, statement. Sad.

[11:15]

The members on this side of the House set targets. We outline our goals. And, Mr. Speaker, we keep our promises.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan plan for growth has received praise from across the province. *The StarPhoenix* editorial board stated, "The document he [the Premier] presented is stuffed with pragmatic, if not visionary, ideas."

Esteemed columnist Murray Mandryk wrote:

... it's actually the document's pragmatism that's most inspirational ... He did not deliver inspiration through pie-in-the-sky pronouncements, but there may be inspiration in gathering a whole bunch of [good] ideas that have been ignored for years and putting [them] together ... [to plan them].

That was an article in October 17, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, there is no myth and there is no disease in this

growth plan. It is reality. Mr. Speaker, our government is going to move forward with the Saskatchewan plan for growth with thoughtful, visionary, and pragmatic planning. Our government will continue to move Saskatchewan forward. I support the motion made by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to enter the debate on the government's self-congratulatory motion that reads as follows:

That this Assembly commend the government for delivering the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth, which sets out a road map for population growth and an improved quality of life in this province.

Unfortunately there are some serious potholes on the Sask Party road to growth that I cannot speak in favour of this motion.

Let's talk about population growth, Mr. Speaker. This is a government who continues to boast about population growth which, contrary to popular belief on that side of the House, did not start to increase on November 7th, 2007. No, there actually weren't hordes of people waiting at the border for a Sask Party victory, Mr. Speaker. For the record, for all those on the government benches who have not taken the time to actually look at the numbers and instead are content to listen to the rhetoric and spin, we began to see net population increases in October of 2006, a year before the Sask Party came to power. And we crossed the magic million mark on July 1st, 2007, again before this party was elected. The strong foundation for population growth had been laid out and was starting to reap benefits before the Sask Party sat on that side of the House. I am willing to concede that yes, the population has continued to increase under this government.

That is a fact, but yesterday in this House I had 90 seconds to deliver a very sad member's statement that only mentioned a small sampling of the folks in the film and television industry who have had to leave this province in the last six to eight months to earn a living. Why? Because this government, without consultation, cut the film employment tax credit, a key program for an entire industry. This decision to cut the tax credit has sent talented people and their families packing. Instead of attracting investment opportunity and new people in the film industry to Saskatchewan, this government is chasing all this away with short-sighted decision to kill this important program.

I honestly don't know what's worse, thinking the government did not understand the industry and how the tax credit actually worked to leverage new dollars, new dollars into our province, Mr. Speaker, or that the government knew what the ramifications of the cut would be to the industry and did it anyway. Neither of these scenarios are very pleasant and don't fit with the government whose mantra is all about attracting and retaining young people.

What worries me though, Mr. Speaker, is I had a chance this morning to listen to the Premier's scrum yesterday, months

after the tax credit was cut. After all the public outrage, you'd think that this Premier would be well briefed on the ins and outs of the tax credit. But you know what he said yesterday, Mr. Speaker? He said, "It's a cheque you get whether you spend the money or not." This could not be more false. I'm worried that a Premier and a government are embarking upon creative consultations and still have no idea what they're talking about.

The Sask Party booklet, which it chose to first release at a \$100-a-plate luncheon rather than directly to the people of Saskatchewan through the legislature, had this to say: "My government is committed to ensuring this growth continues because growth has been good for our province. It means a strong economy and more opportunities for our young people." Well some of the people in the film industry who have managed to hang on in the hopes that the government will recognize its error and do something to correct it happened to be here for that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. They found it hard not to laugh out loud at this line, more opportunities for young people — not in their industry.

We have a wonderful media production and studies program at the University of Regina. The U of R is the only university between Vancouver and Toronto to offer a B.F.A. [Bachelor of Fine Arts] in film and video production and a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] and a B.A. Honours in film study, as well as a M.F.A. [Master of Fine Arts] and M.A. [Master of Arts] degree programs. It is awful that instead of keeping these graduates here, they will have to leave Saskatchewan to earn a living in their chosen profession. How has this government created opportunities for these young people? Not at all. The recent chamber of commerce-SaskFilm study on the net cost of the tax credit discusses return on investment. One of the benefits of the tax credit, according to the study, was youth engagement and retention. Derek Murray Consulting and Associates had this to say:

On average, employees in the media sector are younger than other sectors such as mining and agriculture. As well, having a film industry boosts the attraction to youth outside of the film industry as it adds to the cosmopolitan image of the city directly through film industry activity as well as indirectly through support to the broader cultural sector.

So, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the words in this booklet do not match the recent actions of this government. This is not a government working to create opportunities for young people who want to work in the creative industries. I know the minister has spoken about the supposed injustice of film and television receiving a benefit that none of the other creative industries do. But I can tell you, I've heard from people across these industries who feel that the film tax credit worked for them. I spoke to a musician two weeks ago who told me obviously she didn't derive benefit directly from the film tax credit but she certainly benefited from a thriving film industry.

I have a letter signed by a ceramic artist who has this to say: "We in the other creative industries are not asking for a subsidy which would be comparable to the film tax credit. We support the film tax credits."

She goes on to write:

Because film is the most interdisciplinary of the arts, many artists are needed to make a film — filmmakers, actors, writers, musicians, artists, graphic designers, costume makers, makeup artists, and more. Many artists work in the film industry to subsidize their own art practice, thus reducing the need for grants, but the added benefit is that we create a distinctive Saskatchewan film.

The chamber of commerce study agrees with the musician and the ceramic artist I mentioned. Again, speaking of return on investment, the study has this to say:

Film and video is a significant economic force within the cultural economy. The employment created in the cross-pollination of creative content within sectors makes the film and video sector critical to the cultural economy. As well, film and video demands a significant amount of goods and services from other cultural sectors injecting capital into sectors such as sound recording. Without the film and video sector government grants to the remaining cultural sectors would have to be higher in order to maintain the same level of cultural activity.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, a film industry is good for our economy and a good way to create opportunities for our young people. I am hopeful that with a new minister who says he is committed to a plan that works for the creative industries that this government will come to its senses sooner than later and fix the mess that it has created in the film industry for all our sakes, but especially for our young people.

I also want to talk about this motion arguing that this government has a road map to an improved quality of life in the province. The ability to put food on your table and a roof over your head are so obviously important, Mr. Speaker. But we believe on this side of the House that arts and culture enhance our quality of life too. But don't take my word for it. There is research that illustrates that employment is not all that we want out of life, and it is certainly not all that attracts people to a town, a city, or a province.

Richard Florida, in his book *Cities and the Creative Class*, points out that economic and lifestyle considerations both matter, and so do the mix of the two factors. Florida argues the highly skilled and educated people we want to attract to a province focused on innovation are looking for communities with "abundant high-quality experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds and above all else, the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people."

The CEO [chief executive officer] of the chamber of commerce puts the quality of life argument best, especially when quality of life and the opportunity serve to attract and retain educated and skilled people who help build our economy here, when he said:

I'm arguing that for us to be successful in the corporate world, we need to have a strong creative economy. We need to have people who are artists and musicians. We need to have actors here. We need to have a vibrancy in our communities. Otherwise, the accountants, the lawyers, and the engineers don't want to move here. They don't want to stay here. It makes for a better

Saskatchewan.

I would contend this decision to cut the film employment tax credit has ripple effects throughout the creative industries and will lessen our opportunities for an improved quality of life.

But aside from the film tax credit, this government's no-plan plan for growth also happens to mention funding for the arts in general — again, something that impacts our quality of life. I need to point out the blatantly misleading information in this plan when it comes to culture. I would like to quote one particular line where the truth has been stretched far beyond recognition:

My government will continue to support arts and culture. From 2007 to 2011, funding for arts and culture increased 35 per cent, compared to the previous four years.

This would leave the reader with the impression that this government has increased arts and culture funding tremendously. This is not the case. Between '04-05 budget and '07-08 budget, all NDP budgets, the government increased funding to the Arts Board by 26.1 per cent. But over the Sask Party's first four budgets, the increase to the Arts Board was 5.6 per cent.

The reality is though, the Saskatchewan Arts Board is not the only place where the ministry spends money on arts and culture. Actual spending taken from public accounts in '04-05 budget, the provincial NDP government spent on arts and culture \$18.76 million, which happens to be more than the \$16.183 million that the Sask Party spent in this last budget. So there is this government's record on arts and culture, Mr. Speaker.

There are many things I could have discussed today, Mr. Speaker, but I've chosen to focus on arts and culture because this government hasn't. I will not be supporting the motion.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I start this talk on the growth plan for Saskatchewan, I want to quote a line from the Speech from the Throne that says, "The challenges of growth are preferable to the challenges of decline . . . faced just a few short years ago."

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more true than that. The challenges of growth are much more preferred than the challenges of decline that we saw through the 16 years of NDP government. And I challenge the member from Saskatoon Riversdale who was just talking, talking about going into the '07 election. And I think the real question is, we went into the election and we could see the growth was starting, but the question to the people of Saskatchewan was, who was best able to manage the growth? And I think the people of Saskatchewan said it very plainly that it was the Premier, the current Premier now, and the Saskatchewan Party government who would be best in a position to manage the growth, as we've seen.

And she also talked about the film tax credit and how people were leaving the province. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there

was a lot more people left the province than what we see from the film tax industry over the 16 years of NDP government. Myself, I come from a family of eight. Half of my siblings found it necessary to leave the province. And that's not uncommon in the time that the NDP were in power, that the population decline in this province was worse than anywhere in North America. That was their record, and yet they're trying to justify it.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about growth, growth is good. We like growth. Growth gives a better standard of living to all of the people in the province of Saskatchewan. It assists the less fortunate and those with disabilities. Growth is good for workers and employers and labourers. Growth is good because we have lower taxes and higher wages. It's good for businesses, both the small businesses and larger businesses. Mr. Speaker, growth is good and we're pleasantly pleased to have that kind of growth in this great province.

Yes, Saskatchewan has experienced significant growth over the last five years. Well, where does it start? Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, it starts with an understanding of the value of this province that was never seen by the opposition when they were in power, the value of this province, when you think of the natural resources: the coal, the oil and the gas, uranium.

[11:30]

When you think of the agricultural aspects of this province, we've got almost half of the agricultural land in Canada is in our province, and it's some of the best agricultural land in the world, Mr. Speaker. That, coupled with the vast amount of potash we have, gives us two aces in our hand just because we are blessed with those kind of amenities in Saskatchewan.

When you think of a world population that's ever-expanding and the need for eating, Mr. Speaker, our agricultural aspect in this province is so great that we can expand the agriculture sector and market it for the good of the benefit of the people throughout the world as well as building growth in our province. That, with potash which is the fertilizer aspect that can be marketed throughout the world to grow the grains for other markets, again gives us an opportunity in this world.

We have to understand that those amenities belong to us, understand all the amenities of our great province. With that understanding, we can form a vision, a vision of what we could be and what we could achieve in this province. The vision was never there before. This is the vision that we have for this province now and a belief, a belief that growth is good — growth is positive and growth is good for the people of our province — and then bring it into action, Mr. Speaker.

The action started with a proposal. And probably one of the first plans for growth in this province was the Saskatchewan Party policy before the '07 election. It was filled with opportunities, and through that first mandate there was over 140 promises that this government fulfilled, lived up to, as all part of the growth.

And then in the 2011 election, just a year ago yesterday, that was substantiated by the people of the province that said, yes, we understand what this province has. We see the vision. We

have the belief, and we believe in the action of the Saskatchewan Party government to keep on improving the life and the quality of life for Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, growth is good.

The Saskatchewan plan for growth is an ambitious plan — 1.2 million people by the year 2020 for this province. At one time it was said that wouldn't be possible. They said we wouldn't keep up to the national average and population growth. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's been far surpassed. Between July 2007 and in July 2012, this past July, our province grew by over 80,000 people. In fact last year alone, the Saskatchewan population grew by 22,000 people, the biggest population growth since 1921.

It was mentioned by my colleague that every, every Saskatchewan city and most towns in the last census that came out last year saw an increase in their population in the last census period. Now if you compare that with the census period prior, when the NDP were in power, half of the Saskatchewan cities saw a decline, as well as most of the towns in our province saw a decline.

Mr. Speaker, growth is good. People are working. There's more people in the province and people are working. In August, the number of people employed in Saskatchewan hit an all-time high; over a half a million people were working in the province. And in September, we had an increase of 10,600 jobs over the same period compared to last year. So we've got more people and we've got them working.

Mr. Speaker, over and above that, the take-home pay continues to rise. For five years prior to the Saskatchewan Party government . . . Five years ago, the average weekly wage in Saskatchewan was \$744, well below the national average. Well I'm happy to report that today the average weekly wage is \$938. That's a 26 per cent increase and well above the national average.

Mr. Speaker, growth is good. However, growth will require more workers. At least 60,000 more workers will be required by 2020 to meet the objectives set in our growth plan, and this will be achieved. The emphasis . . . Of course, Mr. Speaker, one of the emphases will be on infrastructure, another one will be on education.

Our growth plan includes a provision that will lead the country in high school graduation rates by 2020. Also a fair amount of investment will be required into post-secondary education. But since 2007, Mr. Speaker, \$3.5 billion has been invested in post-secondary education.

The growth plan includes the right workers, the right price, and the right time. Mr. Speaker, growth is good.

An additional 300 more apprenticeship spaces will be developed with additional apprentice training opportunities in high schools. We will work with the federal government on immigration nomination program, hopefully to increase it by 50 per cent, from 4,000 to 6,000. And, Mr. Speaker, a big issue will be to work, a big opportunity will be to work with the First Nations and Métis organization on ways to improve the educational outcomes and increase the employment.

Mr. Speaker, the plan for growth is a good plan. It's a positive plan for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan plan for growth includes investment in infrastructure. In the past five years, over \$5 billion has been invested in improving and expanding highways and schools and health care facilities and municipal infrastructure. That total doubles the amount spent in the previous five years with the NDP. The plan for growth includes a commitment of funding a minimum of \$2.5 million of infrastructure growth over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, growth is very good. The growth plan includes our government's initiative, will help add 12,600 new homes between 2011 and 2016. It's a positive plan for growth, Mr. Speaker. It's something this province needs. It's something this government has worked on for the past five years and will continue to work on. It's a growth plan going forward into the year 2020 and beyond because growth is good in this province. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into this debate today to talk about the Premier's booklet that he released in Saskatoon to a \$1,000-a-table dinner, and then he gave us the plain version a little while later here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things about the Sask Party documents, whether it's the platforms or some of their government documents, is that it's not what's in these pamphlets or in these booklets that makes a difference to the people of Saskatchewan. What the real issue for everybody is, is what are the surprises that we're going to find out about that aren't in their platform or that aren't in some of these growth plan documents or others that are there.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's only been a year since last election, and I think it's important that we put on the record all of the surprises that we've had in the last year. Now I think it's because people in Saskatchewan are getting fed up with that. Mr. Speaker, in their platform in the election, there was never a mention of adding three more politicians to this legislature at a cost of millions of dollars. But guess what? That came within weeks after the election.

There was also no discussion, no information about the fact that they were going to eliminate the counting of people under 18 years of age when they were going to draw up the boundaries for the province. These are changes to our democratic institution — no consultation, no public discussion.

Mr. Speaker, in the platform they had, it very clearly stated out that they were going to support the film industry and the film employment tax credit. But within months, they had cut the film tax credit. They've wrecked an industry. And we know that they didn't do their homework on that one. The Chamber of Commerce has quite clearly shown that with the information that's there.

Mr. Speaker, there was no mention in the platform that they were going to be reviewing and rewriting all the workplace and employment laws without holding public meetings in Saskatchewan.

There's been no information in these kind of documents that they are going to sell our personal information Crown, Information Services Corporation. There was no forewarning.

It was a surprise that they turned Tourism Saskatchewan into a Crown corporation and fired its CEO, Lynda Haverstock. That was a surprise. A lot of people are having a great deal of difficulty with that one. Mr. Speaker, there was no notice, no warning.

It was a surprise when they changed the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, preventing people who had come to Saskatchewan as our new neighbours and friends, preventing them from bringing their families to Saskatchewan like our ancestors did. You talk to anybody in this room whose ancestors transferred or moved to Saskatchewan. They came in big groups with their families and that was encouraged. For them to change this is a fundamental betrayal to those people who have come in the last 10 years.

They had no premonition that they were going to be charging more money for seniors for their drug prescriptions, or for \$25 extra for ambulance rides, or an extra 240 for their hygiene supplies for people living in care facilities.

They had no indication that they were going to be scrapping the successful green vehicle rebate program.

The municipalities had no notice that they were going to be passing on the costs of RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] policing by increasing the cost to them.

The big piece of their 2007 platform was to create Enterprise Saskatchewan and enterprise regions. There was no indication that that whole process which had been stumbling along for four years was going to be eliminated. And it was eliminated, leaving municipalities once again to pick up costs and forcing a number of enterprise regions to have to totally redo what they've been working on for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, they have decided to resurrect their P3 [public-private partnership] secretariat which was failed the first time, and now they've rebranded it as SaskBuilds.

They were abandoning rural Internet users by taking away the rural wireless Internet service system. No notice of that, another surprise. Industry Canada stepped in and said, you can't do that. And you end up having to work on that particular issue, but we continue to get some letters from people who have been betrayed on that particular issue.

There's been a whole change in attitude about who can come to this building and present their views. And that's in the process of being dealt with, and we hope that there's some changes there.

Mr. Speaker, there's also they cancelled the innovations fund for literacy. They've broken the promise to the University of Saskatchewan to pay for the College of Medicine buildings, the Academic Health Sciences Building. And they've also forced the university to borrow more money, so they've maxed out their credit amounts. And, Mr. Speaker, they have diverted money from public schools to private, independent schools.

Mr. Speaker, they cancelled the rent purchase option in the North which allowed some of the northern renters to become homeowners, and this has caused a lot of difficulty for housing in the North.

All of these things are surprises. They didn't have them in their plans. That's why we look at these plans with much skepticism.

They've ended up negotiating massive cuts to AgriStability and AgriInvest programs. That wasn't part of what we were expecting this year. They forced the Saskatchewan Archives, the Western Development Museum, and other cultural institutions to cut hours and staff. And they're spending more money on some office space, despite the fact that they're cutting, making cuts to the public service.

We heard from the realtors yesterday that they're very frustrated with the amount of staff that's available in the planning area to help municipalities across the province to do the work that's necessary. They've deregulated lifeguards and eliminated the minimum swimmer to lifeguard ratios at public pools. There was no sort of indication, are we going to do that. They secretly negotiated selling LeRoy Leisureland Regional Park, and now it's obvious they didn't have the power to do what they were doing, so they're going to change the legislation. We'll have some further discussion on that one.

[11:45]

They're introducing a new weak and deregulated Environmental Code. So some of these . . . All these things are surprises. Now, Mr. Speaker, there was no indication anywhere that they were going to be slashing the northern economic development budget by 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, in 2008 the amount of money that was in the rainy day fund was \$1.6 billion, and we all remember there was a very good year, that 2007-2008 year, where there was substantial revenues. But what's happened is, Mr. Speaker, and this is where the Premier has a responsibility to the province of Saskatchewan, \$1.1 billion of the rainy day fund has been spent at a time when the economy is doing very well. What's the explanation for that, Mr. Speaker? I think that this Premier has a lot of explaining to do around the . . . [inaudible] . . . what's going on in this particular province. Mr. Speaker, when you set up a rainy day fund or you set aside money, let's make sure that we're using it appropriately.

We know over the last three years that the government starts off with high hopes of balanced budgets, but by the end of the year, the last three years have been negative numbers. That's not the way that this province should be managed. There's a trust responsibility that's on the Premier and the executive of this government and, Mr. Speaker, the people are asking many, many questions about the role that they are taking. We want to have smart growth in this province that allows for all people to participate and, Mr. Speaker, we're not getting that in the information from the Premier and the government.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know my time is short, but I am pleased to enter the debate on this

motion brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. The Saskatchewan plan for growth, 2020 and beyond . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a rare opportunity to hear the member from Moose Jaw North speak here today in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and what he said when he got to his feet, he touted the government's message and back-patted himself and themselves, Mr. Speaker. He didn't say much about Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. He didn't talk about the housing pressures that he's failing to respond to nor did he put forward a plan or speak to the hundreds of jobs that are being lost in his community by direct actions of his government. And I speak specifically to Valley View. I speak to SaskPower. I speak to SaskWater. Hundreds of jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the member from Moose Jaw North: why won't you stand up for your community?

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question, and I thank the member for offering it.

Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things I would like to say, and I've only got a very short time to say it. But a speaker on the weekend at our convention made mention of the vast exodus out of Saskatchewan. He mentioned Moose Jaw as one of the places that really hurt because, he said, Moose Jaw could have been the Calgary of today.

If the member wants to talk about what's going on in Moose Jaw, I'd be happy to because K+S is moving back after they were kicked out by that government. And they're moving back into this province to invest. The other thing is the hospital is growing, and planning is in place for the Moose Jaw Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, there's lots of opportunities in Moose Jaw. It's a growing community. I'm very proud of it. I'll stand up here until you tell me to sit down because there's lots to say about Moose Jaw and I'm happy to do it. Things are very . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government put forward a growth plan formed by the ideas and priorities assembled from the people of the province. Our MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] consulted with constituents across the province, and one thing we heard over and over was our natural resources belong to all people of our province.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: where do you stand on the NDP policy of First Nations receiving a portion of our province's resources? I'm sure you won't answer this question because you couldn't in your first leadership scrum, but I'd like to hear an answer now.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question to the member opposite.

The booklet that was put forward, for growth, that was achieved through, I think, some polling by the government opposite. It certainly wasn't built out of true consultation with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. Because I think what they might have recognized, Mr. Speaker, had they gone out and truly consulted, was that there's a lack of fairness in many areas across this province . . . [inaudible] . . . First Nations Saskatchewan as it relates to underfunding of education and the housing pressures that exist and in fact pressures that need to be supported better in communities all across Saskatchewan, whether it's in Estevan, whether it's in First Nations Saskatchewan, or urban Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We need to do a better job of fully capturing the generational opportunity provided to us by our resources and investing in bettering the lives of Saskatchewan people on grounds of equality and on grounds of fairness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — To the member from Moose Jaw North, Mr. Speaker, how can that member say with a straight face and talk about creating opportunities for young people while forcing so many who work in the once-thriving film and television sector away?

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, you know, if the member had been listening when I was talking, I addressed a lot of that in there, that it was the NDP government that kept the decline of this province going for 16 years. Mr. Speaker, this province has moved forward more in the last five years than it has in the 16 years prior to them . . . [inaudible].

I'll reiterate that there's lots of opportunities for people in Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan because of the growing economy, the growth plan, Mr. Speaker. When I look at K+S, and they've got a big one-page advertising in the local paper saying that they're open for business. They want applications because they need people, lots of people, to grow a mine that was closed down 30 years ago by that government, Mr. Speaker. When they were in power, they kicked out the potash industry, took it over and kicked these people out of there. They're back here. They're going to stay in Saskatchewan. They believe in Saskatchewan like the people on this side of the House. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This year capital investments in Saskatchewan will surpass \$20 billion, a record amount, and nearly double the 2007 total. The potash industry is in the midst of a \$13 billion expansion that will

create thousands of jobs and generate millions of dollars in economic activity and provincial revenues. Yet the leader of the federal NDP believes that the growth in Saskatchewan's economy is "a disease."

To the member from Regina Rosemont: do you still agree with your leader and the front-runner in your leadership race provincially that the Saskatchewan growing economy is "a disease?"

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take that question about our resource economy. And I'm proud to point to our record of strong support of development for our resource sector in Saskatchewan, doing so balancing off the environmental obligations we have to future generations and making sure that we're bettering the lives of Saskatchewan people, which gets me to my point: at a time of pressure and growth and opportunity in this province, we're failing to make the investments that we must to improve the lives and quality of life of Saskatchewan people. Schools are just one example that were highlighted here today, Mr. Speaker. We need to do a better job of taking the growth of today and translating that into meaningful improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people for tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford. In the growth plan and in the Throne Speech, there appears to be money available in this government to give tax cuts to very large corporations. Why are there no arrangements for small business which I know are a very important part of his constituency?

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member, I thank you for the question. Just for a little bit of clarity, I'm a survivor. I'm a survivor of the 16-year reign of terror by that government. I was a businessman during that period, and believe me it made me a better man for it. To carry on with that, small-business tax has been cut almost in half since we took over.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this past summer, going to communities like Edam and Cut Knife with their 100th anniversary, 800, 600 people, there was no talk of a disease or a myth of any kind. Thank you.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the month of October there were 541,600 people working in Saskatchewan, an increase of 12,500 from October of 2011. Full-time employment reached a record high of 452,800 for the month of

October for more than 12 months of consecutive monthly highs, and Saskatchewan maintains one of the best unemployment rates in the country. Yet the Leader of the Opposition believes that Saskatchewan's economy is simply a myth. To the member from Regina Lakeview: given these economic facts, exactly what part of Saskatchewan's successful economy is a "myth?"

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, that question goes right to the heart of the problem with this government and with this Premier and the leadership that's being shown in this province because there are so many people in the province who aren't sharing in the benefits of what's happening in the economy. You talk to people who can't afford to live in the community they have lived in their whole life. They live in Regina or Saskatoon and the housing, the rental housing has gone to the point where they can't live there anymore. You talk to people in other places; they can't live there.

So, Mr. Speaker, the issue is, how are all the people in this province benefiting? And I think there's a major failure on behalf of this government.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the federal NDP believes that our natural resources are a disease in Canada. Now I know the member from Rosemont stickhandled around it. I'd like to hear his real answer this time. What part of Saskatchewan's resource economy is a disease?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, our resource economy is something pretty special. It's something that's important to this entire province. It's something that should equate to improvements in the lives of communities and the lives of Saskatchewan people.

We have a proud record and a proud history of developing that resource economy here in Saskatchewan. And it's something that we're going to continue to work towards in the future, making sure that we're translating that resource economy into improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people — something the current government is failing to do, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford: in his remarks he . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 604 — *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. After that 75-minute debate, I am happy to have the opportunity to enter in on the discussion of Bill No. 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be making some remarks for the remainder of our session here this morning and then into the early afternoon as we're almost at the noon hour. And at the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving the second reading of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, of course everything that we do in this Assembly is important. And I think sometimes when we get caught up in the daily routine, when we get caught up in one particular issue, at times I think all of us can fall victim to the error of not recognizing the significance of a piece of work or a piece of legislation that we can be working on.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are times I believe when both sides of the Assembly can come together and agree that there is something that is in the best interest of Saskatchewan people, something that can truly improve the lives of Saskatchewan people, whether that be in an economic or a health sense, something that can be a positive change that actually does not require that much work, something that does not require that much money, if any at all, but can make an important change in the lives and the situations of many Saskatchewan people.

[12:00]

I think back just to yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when both sides came together on an important piece of legislation that was spearheaded by the member from Saskatoon Centre originally, it was a piece of legislation, and how there was some back and forth with government and that some of the changes that the member for Saskatoon Centre was promoting and calling for were able to come into being through co-operation with members on the government side. And in that situation, Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking of Jimmy's law, a piece of legislation to do with safety for nighttime shift workers in places like convenience stores or gas stations, a piece of legislation that increased the safety.

And it was through, sadly through a tragic incident, the passing of a worker and a resident in the city of Yorkton, how this issue really came to top of mind for many people. And through the work of Jimmy's family, through the work of advocates for workplace safety, and through the work of legislators and the general public, Mr. Speaker, we were able to see some positive and constructive changes where both sides could agree that yes, in fact, this type of change makes sense. This type of change is a positive change for Saskatchewan workers. And the minister took a good amount of the work that had been done by a good number of people, especially the member from Saskatoon Centre, and was able to incorporate those ideas into some improved regulations for safety for nighttime workers.

So I start off my remarks, Mr. Speaker, talking about that situation because it's a good reminder to us I think as MLAs, whether we're on the government side or the opposition side, that there are issues, thankfully, where we can come together. And even though we may disagree on many other pieces of policy, many other pieces of legislation, though we may have our differences across the floor through question period, there are issues, Mr. Speaker, where we can find agreement and where we can improve the lot of life for many Saskatchewan people. And in my opinion, the work that was done around Jimmy's law is one example of that.

I think it's an important lesson for us to think of and to reflect upon, having just happened recently, because in my view there's another piece of legislation that's before the House, Bill No. 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that this too is a piece of legislation where we can agree on both sides that we could take some positive steps here that would improve safety, would improve the public health for many Saskatchewan people.

And we've had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I introduced this piece of legislation a week ago on private members' day and it's had some time for the minister to, and the ministry — ministries perhaps — to review the piece of the legislation and see how in fact this could be a constructive piece of legislation that would improve the public's health. And I was encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the minister's remarks today in question period that they are looking at this closely and that they are examining ways that it may play a constructive role in making some changes. And I look forward to the ongoing discussion that we'll have in the coming weeks on this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to take the coming weeks. It could be done sooner. I know certainly on the opposition side there's a willingness to have this piece of legislation moved forward, and we'd be prepared to do that in short order if members were agreeable to that. But I do understand that due process needs to occur within the ministry by the ministers, and I respect that process that is taking place. And I thank the minister, the Health minister for stating that they will be reviewing this and taking it seriously.

I'm also encouraged, Mr. Speaker, before I get into the details of the bill, I'm encouraged by some remarks that the Minister of Labour said earlier on, well a few days ago. It was actually, I believe it was in a scrum coming out of the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention. The article that the comment is provided in has to do with a number of comments that the Labour minister made with respect to labour legislation here in the province.

But the article talked about how the piece of legislation that we brought forward a week ago requiring a registry for buildings containing asbestos, how that was discussed by individuals. And the minister had this to say following, according to the *Leader-Post* article that's posted online . . . And the name of the article, for the *Hansard* record, is "New Sask. labour legislation is not 'an attack on unions.'" But as I said, the content of the interview and the content of the article was beyond the specific labour legislation. But quoting from the article, which can be found online through theleaderpost.com, the line states:

Morgan replied that the issue would be revisited and there would be discussions with school boards [quote by Morgan] “because they do a good . . .

Excuse me, a quote by the Minister of Labour:

. . . “because they do a good job of monitoring where asbestos is in their buildings.”

And that’s a true statement. The article goes on to read:

Afterwards, Morgan told reporters that he has asked officials to “find out whether there is information that we can provide because it’s certainly not information that should be hidden or concealed.”

So I was encouraged when I read those remarks, Mr. Speaker, that the minister recognizes that this type of information isn’t something that should be concealed. I think that is an important recognition. I think it’s consistent with remarks that the Minister of Health has made with respect to how the legislation could be reviewed and, hopefully, eventually accepted by this legislature. But it’s an important statement to say that it’s not appropriate to conceal legislation. And I think in this modern day that is, as a general rule, the approach the government should take in sharing information with our constituents throughout the province so that they can make informed decisions.

Now as I’ll get into my comments, Mr. Speaker, shortly, there is a difference, however, from providing information through a freedom of information request and then also having that information accessible in a very easy manner that any Saskatchewan person or non-Saskatchewan resident would be able to access. And that’s the further step here that we are requiring and requesting that the government be prepared to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. For listeners at home who are just tuning in to this issue and haven’t had the chance to review this specific piece of legislation, I would like to highlight some of the components of this bill and explain it in my own words so that individuals would have an understanding of what exactly we are talking about here and asking the government to accept. The preamble to the bill states:

WHEREAS the Government of Saskatchewan has lists respecting public buildings that contain asbestos;

WHEREAS these lists must be accessed individually through freedom of information requests pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;

WHEREAS asbestos that is not properly encapsulated poses a public health risk;

WHEREAS the availability of information about asbestos allows individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and safety:

THEREFORE . . .

I’ll pause for a second there, make some remarks. So those are the whereases to the piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I think they are statements that most people would agree to and see as the, well, as the reality but also as the proper foundation for why we may want to take action, why we need to take action, as I would argue. I would highlight, Mr. Speaker, that these whereases are actually part of a petition that I’ve been presenting in the legislature over the course of the last few days underscoring the need for this type of registry. We know, Mr. Speaker, that there are many buildings that the government has, that it owns, and we can expand that not only to direct ministries, but we know of course through Crown corporations and then also through different agencies whether that be a regional health authority, or whether that be through a school division, another order of government with a degree of autonomy.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that many buildings have been built over the decades that we’ve been a province. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that our knowledge, our awareness of safe practices and safe materials has changed over the years as well.

So the first statement of reality here, Mr. Speaker, is that we know that there are many buildings that the government has and that many of them contain asbestos. That is the history of using the substance. And we can argue about when government should have known better perhaps, when the general public and the scientific community should have known better. But the reality is we have these buildings now with asbestos, and there are many of them.

The second whereas, these lists must be accessed individually through a freedom of information request pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Mr. Speaker, this makes reference to the fact that thankfully we do have legislation in the province, as do other jurisdictions, where members of the public who are concerned about an issue are able to put in what we call an FOI [freedom of information] request, are able to put in this information and receive information back. There are conditions to what information can be shared, and at times we’ve seen members opposite become a little too eager with the Sharpie marker and redact or black out too much information, and that does occur from time to time. But thankfully we do have this type of legislation which allows individuals to access information when it is appropriate.

So as I will also get into my remarks further on in this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and talk a bit about the FOI process and the information that was obtained by a number of advocates who are calling for this type of legislation, we know that at least some of the information that we’re requesting can be accessed through FOI requests. And that’s good. That’s appropriate, and I’m glad that that process is there. But as I will remark in my comments coming up, Mr. Speaker, I think we can do a better job and require people to jump through fewer hoops and have that information openly available and transparent to Saskatchewan people, and expand the information that is available as well.

Whereas asbestos that is not properly encapsulated poses a public health risk, Mr. Speaker, that speaks for itself. There is general awareness and acceptance now by all levels of government and international organizations as well that

asbestos is not a healthy substance, that when not handled properly it poses a significant health risk. And, Mr. Speaker, the illnesses that it can cause, we would not wish upon anyone under any circumstances, Mr. Speaker. They're absolutely horrible. So we know this is an important subject. It's a meaningful subject, and it's a subject that deserves our attention, our respect, and I would argue it deserves our action as well.

"Whereas the availability of information about asbestos allows individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and safety." This is an interesting whereas statement in my view, Mr. Speaker, because it highlights two things. I think one, it highlights the collective responsibility we have as a province, as a legislature in providing information to our citizens, the collective work we can do as a group, through the power that the government has, to allow individuals to make good decisions. And this applies, Mr. Speaker, to a number of aspects.

I mean in this instance we're talking about asbestos. But as a general rule, whatever the ministry, whatever the issue, we want to be able to provide the appropriate information, the appropriate background to citizens so that they can act as individuals, and it's that balance between the collective as well as the individual. There's most certainly a huge role that we have as a provincial government to ensure that our citizens can make the right decisions they need to. And this applies to things like personal finances, but it most certainly also applies to things like personal health.

And in this issue, Mr. Speaker, when we want individuals to be safe, there is most certainly a collective responsibility that our workplaces, our care facilities, our schools are safe. But we also want to allow an individual person as well as individual families to be able to make wise decisions. And the more information that families and individuals have at their disposal to make decisions, whatever the topic may be, for those of us that believe you arrive at the best decision by looking at the facts, knowing the parameters of a program or knowing the reality of a particular situation, knowing the specifics as best as they can, it's that kind of knowledge that allows an individual to make the best decision given the information that they have. And it allows individuals to act in a way that they can act in the best interest in what they see as the immediate, the short term, and the long term. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that that hasn't always been the case.

And I think this issue of asbestos is one such example, where the shortage or the limited information that people had about the harm of a substance and then about its presence in certain locations has caused a lot of pain and suffering for a lot of people. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say today we have an opportunity to improve that. We have an opportunity to get it right.

[12:15]

Looking at the legislation that is proposed, Mr. Speaker, what I suggested here is that . . . why I proposed an amendment to *The Public Health Act*, calling it the name in parentheses, "the Asbestos right-to-know," based on that view that families have a right to know what is in their environment and then they can

act accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, *The Public Health Act, 1994* would be amended in the manner set forth in the Act that I am presenting. It talks, Mr. Speaker . . . Some definitions are provided, which is appropriate so that individuals know the scope of the proposed legislation. And when we're dealing with the talk of asbestos in this piece of legislation as it said in section 19.1 it would be . . . well in this section and section 19.2:

(a) "**asbestos**" means 'asbestos' as defined in *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*.

So in this situation here, the amendment that I'm proposing, it makes reference to *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* so there's a clear definition, a clear understanding of what we mean when we're talking about asbestos. And so if individuals want to know the fine detail of that point, they can refer to that other piece of legislation and receive the content.

What I'm proposing in this amendment also, Mr. Speaker, to *The Public Health Act* is an electronic registry, and as defined in this piece of legislation, "means a website or other electronic means where information regarding public buildings that contain asbestos and the detail of its encapsulation is maintained." So I believe, Mr. Speaker, most people in the province are now familiar with what a website is, and so I believe that section speaks for itself. But I'm calling for one centralized spot — that's an important point though — one centralized spot where someone who is concerned, someone who wants to know the status of a building or whether or not asbestos is present and whether or not it is encapsulated, that they are able to receive, have a reliable location, a reliable website where they know that they can have this information.

Public buildings, Mr. Speaker, as I'm talking about in this piece of legislation, it's important to identify what the scope here is. So under this section, section (i) states that a public building may be "owned or operated by the Government of Saskatchewan including Crown Corporations," so a building directly owned by the ministry, Mr. Speaker, or some of its Crowns. And we know, we've had many discussions in the House about what the Crowns are, and most people would . . . Many names would spring to mind when they think of the locations.

It also includes though, Mr. Speaker, point (ii) which is, "owned or operated by a regional health authority as defined by *The Regional Health Services Act*." So the legislation, the amendment that I am proposing, Mr. Speaker, would also incorporate whether or not . . . it would also incorporate buildings located through regional health authorities. And we think of hospitals, care homes, anything that would be under a regional health authority.

And a third component, Mr. Speaker, when we think of public buildings, section (iii) "that house a school or educational institution that comes within the ambit of *The Education Act, 1995*." So we're also talking school divisions here.

So to sum up, Mr. Speaker, in a less wordy manner, public buildings would include ministry buildings, Crown buildings.

And it would include regional health authorities, and it would include school divisions also. So, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Rosemont has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery, it's with great honour that I introduce Corporal Rick Shanks with the Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Edmonton, who's home for a visit with mom and with dad and with family here.

Corporal, it's a pleasure to have you here today. We've gotten to know each other through some time, and I know your family's very proud to see you here today. Corporal Shanks has served one tour in Afghanistan. He's trained in New Brunswick, Wainwright, and did his basic training out in Quebec. I know mom and dad, who have joined him here today, certainly have had a lot of care and concern your way, and we thank you for your service.

I'd like to also introduce mom and dad that are here today, Richard Shanks and Jannet Shanks. Jannet works in our caucus office, and it's a pleasure to have both these two join us here today. I know they're looking forward to a weekend, a special weekend together as a family here for Remembrance Day.

So I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in recognizing this special family and this young corporal who serves his nation so proudly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Ottenbreit: — I would like to ask leave to welcome the guests as well, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Yorkton has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members of the House. On behalf of the government side of the House, I'd also like to welcome the parents, but of course the corporal to your Assembly. And thank you so much for your dedicated service to our country. God bless.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 604 — *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act* (continued)

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would join in welcoming and thanking the important guests to our Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Carrying on in my remarks, I was just providing a bit of an overview of Bill 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. And so, Mr. Speaker, we know this is an important piece of legislation, at least I believe it is. And my introductory comments so far have been talking about the basis for this bill, the past practices that we've had in the Assembly in coming together and agreeing on pieces of legislation where it is about the common good, and it's not about partisanship. And, Mr. Speaker, I was spelling out in some detail the aspects of the bill so that individuals know what we're debating and discussing, and hopefully we'll be continuing to talk about in the days ahead.

So, Mr. Speaker, the public buildings include Government of Saskatchewan, Crown corporations, regional health authorities, as well as school divisions. It's important also, Mr. Speaker, this amendment to *The Public Health Act* was introduced by myself as a private member's bill. And as the Speaker would know very well and members of the House, private member's bills can't spend money. They have to be revenue neutral or can't have any cost on the ministry. I'm not able to present a bill of that nature. So I would also like to just clearly state and highlight for everyone, that included in this amendment to *The Public Health Act* is, on the second page of it, no. 3, "The minister may charge a fee on a cost recovery basis for access to the electronic registry."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's actually, actually would be appropriate to provide or require a charge for accessing this information. I think the best thing to do and the proper thing to do would be to have no cost for this information. But if cost became a barrier for having this type of legislation present, Mr. Speaker, it is proposed in the amendment to *The Public Health Act* that the minister may charge a fee on a cost recovery basis. I hope that this decision would be made that there wouldn't have to be a charge because I don't actually think it would be a tremendous amount of work to assemble this registry, based on the information that is already gathered and the information that is already available and the means by which it can be communicated to the broader public.

And also, Mr. Speaker, this Act comes into force on proclamation, not assent. So there is some time, Mr. Speaker, that was built into it intentionally so that if it does require a bit of time for the online registry to be put together, there's a bit of flexibility there for the ministry and for the minister to ensure that it happens in a timely manner. Now I would hope that it could happen very quickly, but there is the provision within the amendment that it could wait until proclamation in order that there would be enough time to make sure that it is done correctly and done right.

The issue of asbestos, Mr. Speaker, and the issue of reducing people's risk and exposure to cancer is an important one, and it's one we talk about actually quite often in the Assembly. And I think that is a positive step that we talk about illnesses, we talk about things that perhaps in the past individuals weren't as comfortable discussing because we've seen through awareness, through a variety of initiatives and activities, that as we increase awareness, as we make information available to Saskatchewan residents, people can make informed decisions.

Movember, Mr. Speaker, is one example. Through a fun means, through something that some people wouldn't normally do perhaps — I know some people choose to have a moustache and that's again a personal decision and a fine one — but through a time when individuals are able to, through Movember, raise awareness about cancer. And it encourages more individuals, more men, to get the checkups that they need to be safe.

So by providing a registry, Mr. Speaker, that would be available, would be public, would be online through the ability that advocacy groups, the ability of individuals would have to promote, to advertise the online registry, that too, Mr. Speaker, is raising awareness. That too is improving the knowledge that individuals have, and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, would cause them to make smart decisions about their own personal health and their own personal safety or that of their family.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, to also note that the amendment that I'm proposing is within *The Public Health Act*, and that was a deliberate decision as well. Because while there is most certainly a very large occupational health and safety component to this legislation, and the work that many advocates for improved occupational health and safety have been doing, very much complements and drives this piece of legislation, I think it's important to have that broader view.

It's important to recognize that, while workers most certainly need to be safe and need to have the information, all of the information at their fingertips when they're entering a building or doing work on a building or living through renovations or doing the renovations, Mr. Speaker, to a building. It's not only about workers, but the buildings that we provide and that we have public ownership of are there to serve the public. So we know that many people have contact with these buildings. We can think of hospitals. We can think of care homes. We can think of schools, many instances where there are individuals coming in contact with public buildings. And I think it's appropriate for that reason that the amendment is made to *The Public Health Act* and not within different legislation that would be more directly tied to occupational health and safety.

I know we want to divorce those two topics because I think that they do go hand in glove, but in my view, and the reason that I proposed this legislation as an amendment to *The Public Health Act* and why my questions have been directed to the Health minister, is because I think this is not simply about workplace safety. It's about having a safer environment for all of the public, whether they be a worker, a student, or a patient for that matter. That's an important point to make.

Mr. Speaker, there has also been . . . Well I had the opportunity to present this last week and we've had some discussion. We've

addressed it through two question periods, and also we've addressed it through an ongoing petition that I've been presenting. And the minister has had the opportunity through scrums to make comment on this piece of legislation. I'm happy about the discussion and the dialogue that we've been having so far.

The initial remarks to date though, Mr. Speaker, have indicated a real reluctance by the ministry and the minister to provide the information, based on a rationale that he provided. And as the Health minister pointed out in question period today, with respect to remarks that were made by the Labour minister, one of the areas of concern — not the only one, but one of the areas of concern that the Labour minister made — was that there would hate to be an error in the public registry providing people with a false sense of security. A point not without some merit, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think it's enough of a . . . I don't think the point has enough merit to cancel out the good work that this bill would do and the good information that this bill would provide.

As I have said through scrums and in question period and in different opportunities, we know that we should always conduct ourselves and conduct our business with the assumption that asbestos is present in public buildings. We know that is the underlying orientation that individuals should have when they are coming in contact with buildings. So if they're going through a construction zone, if they are doing renovations themselves on a building, if they are a patient in a wing of a hospital where something's going on, we know, Mr. Speaker, that the assumption should be that asbestos is present. I agree with that, and that should be the general orientation.

[12:30]

But we know, Mr. Speaker, that if individuals have more information, more detail, if they know the specifics, if they know that the issue, the presence of asbestos is known by the authorities, is being monitored, is determined to be encapsulated in a safe state, then individuals can have the information available to them to make even better decisions.

It might mean that if a child was in a school where some work is being done, it allows the parent just to ask that extra question to the principal. Hey, I know that there's asbestos in this building, the parent could say. Could you just please, just for my own assurance, my own peace of mind, could you let me know what steps are being taken to ensure that the dust from this portable is not going into the main wing of the school — or those types of questions, Mr. Speaker. I think that's appropriate.

I know that individuals should operate on that assumption, but if individuals have specific information about a particular school, a particular place, then they can even ask better questions. They can say, I know on the registry that there's asbestos in this building. I know it's encapsulated and I'm happy about that. But you know, as I was walking down the hallway I saw that there was a change in the building, and I'm wondering if that's affecting how well it is encapsulated.

So it allows individuals to make better decisions. It allows individuals to ask better questions. And that's what we want as a society. We want more individuals taking ownership of their

own health. Most certainly there's a collective job that we have to do as a ministry, but also when push comes to shove, a lot of the decisions that we make are done on an individual basis. And we need to ensure, as individuals, that we have the information available at our fingertips to make good and smart decisions. I think that is appropriate. I think that is wise.

The other argument, Mr. Speaker, or perhaps the same argument, just a different aspect to it, the issue raised by the minister that, well what if there was a mistake in the registry? Mr. Speaker, I'm not a lawyer and I do not draft legislation on a regular basis, and there are people that do that well. However, I would think that there could be a way, Mr. Speaker, on the website, perhaps through the regulations, perhaps even in the bill itself, I don't know, but there ought to be some sort of way where there could be some type of disclaimer made.

And I don't know what the exact wording would be or the exact nature of it. Perhaps this is something that both sides could have a discussion about. But it could say that we are the Government of Saskatchewan; we know that there's asbestos in our buildings; we are doing our best to have it encapsulated and to have safe environments for everyone. This list, this information is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate and complete. It states where asbestos is encapsulated and it states where asbestos is not present. The disclaimer could go on to say, we believe this is to be correct but if there is an error, individuals should always, always, always operate and conduct their business with the understanding that asbestos is present in the buildings.

Of course, that is not the exact wording that should be there. It should be, it should be fine-tuned much better than what I just stated. But I think there is a way, Mr. Speaker, that the information could still be provided to the public so they had a full understanding of what information, what the state of buildings are and could also state that, to the best of our knowledge, this list is accurate. There could be a mistake. After all, it is affecting many, many buildings and, for that reason, individuals should always operate on the assumption that asbestos is present. In a sense, Mr. Speaker, that's the status quo position that the government currently has, that individuals should just operate on the assumption that asbestos is present.

So I don't really see, Mr. Speaker, this risk of fear as so great that, this fear of making a mistake on the list . . . I don't think that one issue, Mr. Speaker, cancels out all the good work that the availability of the registry could provide to Saskatchewan families.

So I'm most certainly open to having discussions with the minister about how we could incorporate that type of language or how we could have some sort of disclaimer on a website or have it through regulations. I don't know exactly what that would look like. But certainly by coming together, by agreeing that this is an important step that we need to take, I think we could find a solution there that would balance those things out, would balance the liability that the government is concerned about perhaps, but at the same time provide the information available to Saskatchewan people that they most certainly want.

The aim and the goal of this registry is not about creating fear and it's not about a desire to give a false sense of security.

What it is about, Mr. Speaker, is providing all the information available to people that they need. I've used the example of a parent sending their child to a school and how they may in fact, Mr. Speaker, want to know whether or not construction is occurring in their building and whether or not there is asbestos there. I think that's a fair request. I can think, Mr. Speaker, to other situations of actual workers in the building and, like any worker . . . I mean this is the whole point of the safety initiatives that have been done through the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] and through the Ministry of Labour over many years. It's to have that culture and that philosophy of safety at all times among workers and among employers most, very importantly.

Having this information available, Mr. Speaker, allows for a proper reminder to individuals that asbestos is present and that on this particular insulation around a pipe in this classroom with the ceiling tiles, in this room with insulation in the attic, Mr. Speaker, that they need to take proper steps, and that if there is a change in the state of encapsulation, if there is deterioration, if there is damage through some other type of accident and the fibres become airborne, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary and it is appropriate that the workers who are working in there clearly know that there is asbestos there. They shouldn't just operate on the assumption that it could be there. I think it increases the weightiness and the importance of the issue if individuals can know most certainly, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there is asbestos in a building and they should be taking the necessary safety precautions.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of people calling for this type of registry, a public registry that is accessible online and available to many people. And the work, Mr. Speaker, has been happening at a number of levels. It's been happening at the international stage, the national stage, the provincial stage which is occurring now and has been going on over the past little while. And also, Mr. Speaker, at the municipal level there's also important steps being taken. There's an increase in awareness that asbestos is present and that we need to take the precautionary steps that need to be there in order to ensure that our families are safe, that the public health is the most important thing that we're working towards.

I'll start, Mr. Speaker, with some comments made at the international level. And the World Health Organization has done a fair amount of work in providing information and working to have a safer environment as it relates to asbestos. And there is a real north-south divide, Mr. Speaker — and I'm speaking globally, not provincially here — between the safety levels in some jurisdictions to others. And the World Health Organization has done a lot of very important work in increasing awareness and trying to get national governments to work towards safer standards as it relates to asbestos.

While we are one country where there might be higher levels of safety compared to other nations around the world, Mr. Speaker, it's still important to take note of the work that the WHO [World Health Organization] is doing because it directly relates to the private member's bill, the amendment to *The Public Health Act* that is before the Assembly today.

In looking at the work and the position that the WHO has on asbestos-related diseases, reading from information that they

have available, Mr. Speaker, through their website, the quote from the information on the website says:

WHO, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and with other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, works with countries towards elimination of asbestos-related diseases in the following strategic directions.

First bullet:

by recognizing that the most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of all types of asbestos;

So, Mr. Speaker, we in Canada, we've made positive steps towards that objective. Next bullet:

by providing information about solutions for replacing asbestos with safer substitutes and developing economic and technological mechanisms to stimulate its replacement;

So again about eliminating the unsafe use and finding proper replacements. The next bullet:

by taking measures to prevent exposure to asbestos in place and during asbestos removal . . .

I'll read that again. I paused in an awkward spot.

by taking measures to prevent exposure to asbestos in place and during asbestos removal (abatement); and

The last point, Mr. Speaker:

by improving early diagnosis, treatment, social and medical rehabilitation of asbestos-related diseases and to establish registries of people with past and/or current exposure to asbestos.

So it's that second last point, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to highlight, that the WHO is encouraging national governments to do in co-operation with the work of the International Labour Organization. And it's by taking measures to prevent exposure to asbestos in place and during asbestos removal.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation that is proposed here would work towards that goal that the WHO and the ILO [International Labour Organization] says that we should be working towards and improving upon. And it's by taking measures to prevent exposure to asbestos in place and during asbestos removal or abatement.

Mr. Speaker, the provision and the availability of this public registry would in fact, I believe, be taking a measure to prevent exposure to asbestos. And as I've already made the argument, Mr. Speaker, I believe that by having the information public, by having the information easily accessible, that it does allow individuals to take measures to prevent exposure.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, as we first look at the international work being done, that's an important point to make. It's

important to identify that there's a great amount of work that needs to happen.

On the national stage within Canada, Mr. Speaker, before I get into the work that community-based organizations or advocacy groups are doing, there is a fair amount of talk when it comes to asbestos safety that is conducted by the federal government. It does not directly encourage or go down the path right now of a registry, but it most certainly highlights the importance of having this type of information, and the importance of having individuals making smart and informed decisions.

From a Health Canada website, Mr. Speaker, entitled It's Your Health, specifically talking about asbestos, it says, "Minimizing Your Risk." It says:

Construction and maintenance workers should avoid creating asbestos dust from scraping, brushing, rubbing or cutting damaged insulation. Insulation damage should be reported to the appropriate authority, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Manager. If you work in this area, determine whether asbestos is present before beginning work and take appropriate precautionary measures.

Public and commercial building owners should keep an inventory of asbestos-containing materials to inform users, authorities and contractors.

So here we are from Health Canada, Mr. Speaker, prescribing action that workers should take. And it's to clearly identify, before any work begins, whether or not asbestos is present. Well, Mr. Speaker, what better way to have that information available and accessible to workers, whether they be an employee of a health region or whether they be a contractor that has been hired to do specific work on a building, what better way than to have an online registry that anyone can pull up on a smart phone or on a computer, check whether or not there's asbestos present in the building, Mr. Speaker, and then take the actions that they need to take.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see from the federal government a recognition that it's important to take these kinds of steps. It's important to be as safe as possible when we're talking about asbestos issues and when we're talking about exposure to asbestos. Also through CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation], Mr. Speaker, recognition that this is important with fact sheets provided through the CMHC. What has asbestos been used for? How has the use of asbestos changed? What health problems are associated with exposure to asbestos? And then it talks about how it may be in a home. I know that, Mr. Speaker, it's talking about particular private residences, but it underscores the importance and the need that we need to take when talking about hazardous substances.

Mr. Speaker, also of particular interest I believe when we're talking about the national perspective, on October 18th, 2012, the Canadian Cancer Society put out a press release about a joint initiative that it did with the Canadian Medical Association. And of course the CMA [Canadian Medical Association] represents physicians throughout Canada and then has provincial divisions in every province and territory. So in conjunction, the CMA and then the Canadian Cancer Society

put out a news release on October 18th, 2012, and it said, “The majority of Canadians — 82% — are sending a clear message that a public registry of buildings containing asbestos, including private homes, is important and 78% say it’s the responsibility of the federal government to create one, according to poll results released today by the Canadian Cancer Society.” The news release goes on to say that “The registry should be free, easily accessible and include privately owned buildings, buildings on aboriginal lands and government-owned structures.”

[12:45]

Well, Mr. Speaker, this position that the Canadian Cancer Society and the CMA is putting forward is actually more extensive than what we’re proposing in this provincial legislation. It’s not including private buildings. It’s simply including the public buildings that are within the control, within the overview, I would suggest, of the provincial government. So there’s a recognition here again that information is power for people. Information allows individuals, allows families to make smart decisions and the best decisions for the safety of their families.

There’s a quote from the CMA president, Dr. Anna Reid:

“Asbestos, when inhaled, can cause lung cancer and other painful, fatal diseases that may not appear until years after exposure,” says Dr. Anna Reid. [Goes on to say that] “This is why the CMA fully supports the creation of a public registry of asbestos-containing buildings and further measures to increase awareness of the impact of this dangerous substance. We owe Canadians at least this much.”

I want to read that again because I think it’s a good point that the CMA president makes:

This is why the CMA fully supports the creation of a public registry of asbestos-containing buildings and further measures to increase awareness of the impact of this dangerous substance. We owe Canadians at least this much.

Mr. Speaker, the news release here that was released by the Canadian Cancer Society along with the CMA was directed to the national government, but the message is just as applicable to the provincial realm. It’s about doing the best for our citizens, doing the best for the residents of Saskatchewan. It’s about allowing individuals to make smart, informed decisions, decisions to protect their families as they need to.

We know that there is work going on at the provincial front, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of that good work . . . I do want to praise the good work that Howard Willems has been doing, and he’s been doing it through the Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, S-A-D-A-O. It was founded, Mr. Speaker, this organization, by Bob Sass as well as Howard Willems. And they have a very informative website with a lot of good information, Mr. Speaker, on the website that is provided to people. But they are working for advocacy on how we can in fact have a public registry and improve the knowledge that citizens have.

A number of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Centre and I sat down with Mr. Willems and heard first-hand about his desire to have this registry and how, in his view, this could help many people, how in his view this is a positive step for improving the safety of not only workers but also students; of patients in our health facilities, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization in 2012 is doing a number of initiatives to do with awareness, to do with the promotion of better safety standards. But they are one of the main groups, Mr. Speaker, that has been calling for this public registry. Nationally we see that the Canadian Cancer Society, along with the CMA, is supportive. But from the website of the awareness organization, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan, it says that according to SADA, this registry should also be made available to firefighters, police officers, paramedics, as well as those engaged in renovations and demolition of buildings. Before that it said, Mr. Speaker, that they support the work done by the WHO with the recommendation to establish a public registry reporting the condition of asbestos in schools, public and commercial buildings, especially where there are children’s programs.

So it’s about our children, Mr. Speaker. It’s about patients. And it’s also about the first responders, Mr. Speaker, that go to many spots where there is an emergency, where they put their own health and safety on the line. And we know this is closely tied to OHS [occupational health and safety] issues. I recognize that, but it is all about public health. It’s about something much greater.

And I know first responders have high levels of training. That’s good and appropriate, and we need to ensure that they have the best training. We also need to ensure they have the best information, and knowing whether or not asbestos is present, in what form, is very important.

The city of Saskatoon has taken some steps. So I’ve talked about the international situation, some of the national advocacy work that’s being done, some of the provincial work that’s being done. Municipally in Saskatoon there is also some good work being done. And on May 1st, 2012, there was a motion put before city council by Pat Lorje, a city councillor, and the motion read this:

Will the Administration please report on measures the city currently has in place to provide a publicly accessible registry of all civic owned and leased buildings that contain asbestos, and further, report on what controls are in place to prevent contamination by asbestos to individuals. Further, can Administration report on the possibility of establishing a public registry of all buildings in Saskatoon that contain asbestos? Finally, will the administration provide comments on the training and safety equipment the civic workers, in particular firefighters and police officers, have available to them when dealing with situations where asbestos exposure may pose a hazard?

This inquiry will be formally documented in the Minutes, which will be printed in the May 14th Council agenda and available online.

So this issue obviously comes out of some of the good advocacy work that I think Howard and his organization have been doing. There was a reply, Mr. Speaker, given in September 2012 to Mr. Howard, and this information is available on the advocacy organization's website as well. And the response says:

Hi Howard,

Our efforts to date is that we have gathered historical information on the past management of the asbestos containing materials (ACM) in our buildings, developed a budget for 2013 for hiring an asbestos management consultant, and have engaged with Project Services to assemble an RFP to solicit for asbestos management services that will include:

Thorough inventory and registry of ACM in our civic facilities

Assessment of condition of existing ACM

Priority management and removal roster

Identification and recognition system.

Our safety team has developed an information and awareness program for our staff, and going forward we will introduce the results of the Asbestos Management program in our Tool Box talks with our staff.

Timelines are that we hope to have the assessment, inventory and registry completed in early 2014.

So an important step here, Mr. Speaker, that the city of Saskatoon is doing to improve safety for workers and all city residents.

So we know there's good advocacy being done on the national stage, on the international stage. We know that there's advocacy and good steps being taken at the municipal level, one example being in Saskatoon. I think we have an opportunity here, Mr. Speaker, to take some important steps at the provincial level as well, some steps to make things safer.

Mr. Speaker, in my possession I have the FOI request that Howard Willems gave to the ministry, calling on the information to be made available. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a lengthy document. It has a number of pages and the document states the ministry properties and whether or not they have asbestos and if it's encapsulated.

This shows, Mr. Speaker, that the information is there. The information is already gathered for many of the buildings that we're requesting it to be public for and go online. And it's good information, Mr. Speaker. It lists the building. For example, Regina, Regina Court House at 2425 Victoria Avenue, built in 1961. The main tenant is Justice. And there's asbestos, but it is encapsulated. That's good information for the workers and the staff to know, Mr. Speaker. I think the people work in that building deserve to know that asbestos is there, but it's encapsulated, and allows them to ask questions about whether or not it's being monitored properly.

Another example here, Mr. Speaker. Regina sound stage, 1831 College Avenue, built in 1913, main tenant Tourism for now, and, Mr. Speaker, it says that there is no asbestos present. There's one building where individuals . . . It says there's no asbestos. That's good information for individuals to know. That doesn't mean that they don't conduct their business with the awareness that asbestos may be present. They still meet the highest levels of safety. But I think that is good information for people to know. Let's provide information to Saskatchewan residents so they can make informed decisions.

I'm nearing the top of the hour, Mr. Speaker, and I do have to move second reading of the bill, but I think it's appropriate to listen to a couple of remarks made by Howard. He said:

"After all the treatments and surgeries, the chemo has failed to keep things in control. We're off chemo now and just working with homeopathic medicines and prayers, but my strength, especially in the last three months, has deteriorated quite drastically," he said.

And this was in a Canadian Press article, Mr. Speaker, that he provided. He went on to say:

"Everyone has the right to know if a building they're going into has the potential for short- or long-term harm," Willems said in a phone interview Thursday, his shortness of breath obvious. "I have seen the pain and suffering my family has gone through and it's been very hard on them this last two years and I don't want anyone to go through what I've gone through."

And the quote I read earlier:

"If you were enrolling your child in a school that was built in 1960, or if you were introducing your parents or grandparents to a seniors' care home built in the same era, wouldn't you like to know what is the potential for asbestos?" Willem said. "Knowing that it's there and contained would make you rest a lot easier than not knowing at all."

Mr. Speaker, I think this piece of legislation is the right thing for us to do. I think we can take some positive steps. The opposition is very willing to work with the government to make this a reality.

Having made my comments on the bill, why I think it's a good idea and ways that it could be effective, I would now at this time move second reading of Bill No. 604, *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Massey Place that Bill No. 604, *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act* be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Oh, sorry. We have a member to speak. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand up today and take part in this debate. The member from Massey Place has done a very good job, a great job actually, talking about some necessity to the bill and why it would be, in his opinion, necessary to bring forward.

So just to add to the comments that the member has said, Mr. Speaker, is that in general the focus of the ministry is in fact on education and enforcement as it pertains to asbestos to prevent workplace exposure. The thing that the ministry, after having time to look at the bill in its preliminary stages put forth by the member from Massey Place, is that it lacks specificity as to what's required in the registry that he's asking for. Specificity. That's a tough one. I tried. I tried. It's not easy to do sometimes.

So we need to look at what other jurisdictions are doing. In fact the ministry has said Australia has a particular registry that . . . And other places internationally have looked at this issue as well, Mr. Speaker. And it's one of those things where the government has a responsibility for good due diligence to move forward. And on that note, the ministry is more than willing to and will be doing that to ensure that they get the best practices, as we see internationally.

There's also some interesting information available when it comes to the protection of workers, Mr. Speaker. You know, an asbestos inventory inspection form is kept on site in government buildings and is updated at least annually when it comes to the actual level of asbestos-containing material that we see. It's also inspected at least annually by a competent person. We see in this province, we know right now with the amount of work being done to renovate old buildings, to repurpose them, retool them for the needs of other industries, that there is a particular group of industry workers that are now doing asbestos cleanup work. They're available to do that kind of work. So that's a positive if it should be needed, Mr. Speaker.

This practice though of having a competent person inspecting buildings and being available on this list of asbestos-containing material and buildings that have, especially government buildings to be more specific, Mr. Speaker, that have asbestos in them, is actually it's a long-standing practice that really has already been in place and used by the previous administration, the NDP, for all their years in government.

So although the member does bring forth this Act to maybe enhance that particular regime that's already in place within the Government of Saskatchewan and the very fine men and women that work in the Ministry of Central Services along with the actual Ministry of Labour, that we see there's still more work to be done. And we definitely will be taking that step forward.

We also note that, you know, there are some agencies in the province, provincial agencies. I see that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region publishes on its website annually buildings that will actually . . . They're prepared to share that publicly as to what buildings there are under their purview to actually have the . . . would probably have asbestos in them still. There's one major point when you look at asbestos in buildings really, you know, Mr. Speaker. And this isn't to minimize the purpose at

all by the member's Act or the bill coming forward, but if one is entering a building — and the Minister of Labour has said clearly that the premise should be that every building has asbestos — so when you enter a building and work in a building, you should have that already in mind, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday the 13th, by order of the Assembly.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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