



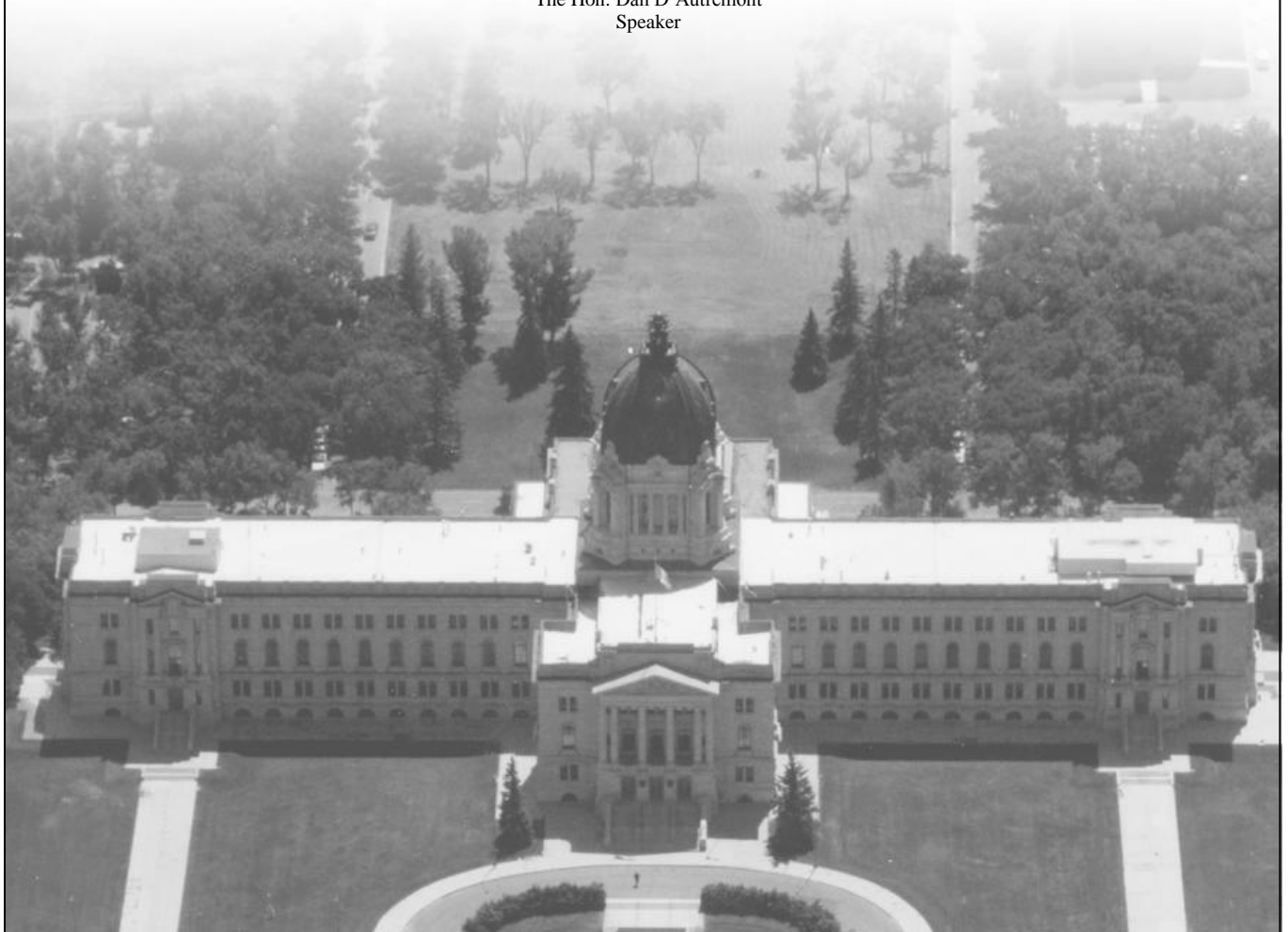
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

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Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
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 Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to introduce to you and to all members of the House . . . Actually I'm going to introduce six individuals because I haven't introduced one of the people up there even though she's been there a few times.

Today visiting us, Mr. Speaker, are three university students from Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas in Ukraine. They are here in Saskatchewan under the Canada-Ukraine science internship program.

Mr. Speaker, Mariia Zaberko — give us a wave, Mariia — Mariia is working at SaskPower in business management. Oleksandr Strateychuk is working at SaskPower as an electrical engineer, and Andrii Voroniak is working at the petroleum technical research centre at the University of Regina as a petroleum engineer.

I would also like to welcome Bob Ivanochko who is one of the hosts of the students and Ed Lysyk, who I introduced before. Ed of course is one of the organizers of this exchange and a past president of UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress]. Also up there, Mr. Speaker, is Natalie Pepper who is my ministerial assistant, and I haven't introduced her. And she has joined my staff most recently.

So I'd ask all members to welcome the three university students and our other guests here to the Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the Deputy Premier in welcoming the guests to the legislature today. We know that it's an important day for all Ukrainians, all Ukrainian Canadians, and we're very happy to have you here in the legislature. So welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm very pleased to introduce eight guests seated in your gallery. These are medical students from the University of Saskatchewan that represent all the medical students at the University of Saskatchewan at the College of Medicine. They're in the capital today to meet with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and to discuss some issues that they have, I think, in common with members of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Colin Ellis, David Plemel, Keith Johnstone, Kyle MacDonald, Kylie Riou, Margot Klemmer, Melissa Andersen, and Rochelle Jalbert.

Mr. Speaker, I know that they've had the opportunity to meet with members of the government earlier this morning. I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to talk to them after question period, and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them 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 these eight individuals to the Assembly today. I know there were supposed to be a few more people in attendance, but we're glad that everyone is safe and sound for those who decided not to brave the highways this morning.

I was also pleased in meeting with them, Mr. Speaker, this morning to learn that all eight of them are from Saskatchewan — I think from Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw — so some of Saskatchewan's finest, the future physicians for the province. We look forward to their service in the years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I have the honour of introducing some very important guests today who are working hard to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

Joining us today are Richard Hazel who is the executive director of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers and Glenda Francis from the Ministry of Social Services. These fine individuals are with us today to hear the first reading of the amendments to *The Social Workers Act*. The amendments to this Act will improve services to our most vulnerable citizens by allowing qualified clinical social workers to diagnose mental health disorders. I ask all members to help me in joining these outstanding citizens to their Assembly today.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure on behalf of the opposition to welcome Mr. Hazel and Ms. Francis to their legislature today. As a registered social worker myself, I'm especially pleased that you're here today, so welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave of the Assembly to make an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I noted just joining us now in

your gallery are some very special guests that I'd like to welcome to this Assembly this morning.

Mr. Speaker, joining us this morning is Mr. Yu Zheng Ping, the owner of Guangzhou South Ocean International Engineering & Technology Service or GSO. Mr. Yu's company is one of the world's largest manufacturers of oilseed crushing equipment. GSO has manufactured and installed equipment in processing plants in China, in Europe, in Russia, Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America. And now Mr. Yu is interested in setting up a company right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we want to welcome Mr. Yu's interest here. I had the opportunity to witness the signing of an MOU [memorandum of understanding] when we were in China, between Innovation Saskatchewan and GSO.

I'm also pleased to report that Mr. Yu's daughter, Kozi, has recently completed a degree at Simon Fraser University. She is also joining us here this morning. She has found an opportunity right here in Saskatchewan as well, working with Prairie Tide Chemicals in the great city of Saskatoon. They're accompanied today by Jerome Konecsni and Nicole Bletskey, both with Innovation Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to meeting with Mr. Yu and we welcome his continued interest in the province. We'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming him to this Legislative Assembly this morning.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Premier in welcoming Mr. Yu and his daughter here to the legislature but also to Saskatchewan. And we know that the sharing of information and technology between our countries, as well as the raw materials, has been an important factor in the trade between Saskatchewan and China. And we're very pleased that they're here. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present a petition on behalf of concerned residents 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 of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Housing Day

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're all familiar with walking briskly to our car in minus 30 degree weather, rushing to get inside, and waiting impatiently as it warms up. Now imagine if that was where you slept every night or if you weren't sure if you'd been evicted from your apartment or if the shelter you had stayed in would be too full. You are constantly worried if you're not going to be able to make your rent or mortgage payment this month.

But incredibly, this is a daily reality for 3.2 million individuals, and 1.5 million of them are families. This is why CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] declares this day, November 22nd, National Housing Day. And with the economy in rough shape in other parts of the country, it's easy to see the correlation. But what about our own province, Mr. Speaker? Despite our current economy, one in five have reported that they have either faced or are in danger of facing homelessness.

Shelter is a basic human right, Mr. Speaker. It enables people to do well in their lives. It's a place where people plan for their future, escape when they're leaving an abusive relationship, study when they're improving their education, raise their kids, or take care of their aging parents. And most importantly, home is the place where people can lay their head at night and feel safe, warm, and secure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing National Housing Day and committing ourselves to find the solutions necessary to make sure our province needs to make safe, affordable housing a reality for everyone in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

International Holodomor Remembrance Week

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, November 19th to the 25th is International Holodomor Remembrance Week.

Holodomor, roughly translated, is murder by starvation. This term is used to describe the man-made famine that decimated Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. An estimated 7 to 10 million Ukrainians became victims of Holodomor under Joseph Stalin's dictatorship. It is estimated that at one point people were dying at a rate of 24,000 a day — almost the entire combined population of the cities of Weyburn and North Battleford. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, during that time when Ukrainians suffered from unfathomable starvation, the region was actually experiencing agricultural prosperity.

I am proud to say that in 2008, this Legislative Assembly

became the first province in Canada to recognize this genocide with *The Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act*.

Mr. Speaker, in order to properly mark this occasion, a special candle lighting ceremony using a memorial candle brought from the Holodomor memorial site in Kiev, Ukraine, will take place in the rotunda later this afternoon. The candle lighting is a symbolic gesture that will take place at commemorations in Ukraine and around the world. The candle we will light, Mr. Speaker, will remain in the rotunda until November 24th.

So, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members here today to join me in the rotunda this afternoon as we honour and remember the many people of Ukrainian descent in our province and country who lost loved ones during the Holodomor. Thank you.

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

Shannen's Dream Walk and Rally

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Shannen's Dream Walk and Rally that concluded on the steps of the legislature was a powerful event. It brought together hundreds of elders, students, teachers, board members, and administration from Regina Catholic schools as well as Treaty 4 First Nations in a call for fairness and a fight for equitable funding for education on First Nations.

Along with the members from Regina Elphinstone and Saskatoon Riversdale and more than 400 supporters, I was proud to participate in the walk and to speak. The walk was initiated by students at St. Bernadette, led by their teacher, Ms. Karen Goodon, as a social justice project following studying the tragic injustice of residential schools and the resulting loss of pride, language, culture, and lives.

I am thankful that students included me in this project, a project that was supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Shannen Koostachin's dream was to have a safe and equally funded education for First Nations children. She worked tirelessly to try and convince the federal government to improve First Nations and children's education before tragically passing away at the age of 15 in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled by the bravery Shannen displayed, and I commend the students, staff, and community that organized this project and walk. I share their hope that we will remember her dream to make access to quality education a reality for everyone, no matter what their cultural background or where they live. We have the power to do so. We just have to act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Huskie Coach Recognized by Football Canada

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last night in Toronto, Football Canada handed out a very prestigious award known as the Gino Fracas Award. It recognizes

outstanding career service by a volunteer assistant football coach. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the Assembly that the recipient this year is the defensive coordinator for the University of Saskatchewan Huskies and a friend of mine, Ed Carleton.

Ed played football for the Huskies for five years up until 1989, and after he graduated and began teaching, he started coaching high school football. He was a high school football coach at Evan Hardy in '90 and '91. They won a championship in one of those years. In '92 he began his coaching career with the University of Saskatchewan. He's just finished his 19th year, consecutive year, as a coach for the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. Mr. Speaker, in that time his defence has helped that team win eight Canada West titles and make six appearances in the Vanier Cup, winning that cup twice. He's also served as a guest coach for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. During the season he puts in between 25 and 30 hours. Here's what his head coach said about him. He said:

A student of the game, Ed Carleton has been the architect of one of the top 10 defences in CIS football for the last 16 years. His players play aggressive, hard-nosed, disciplined football and they have a great time doing it. He's been a loyal, dedicated volunteer coach and has contributed a great deal to the success of Huskie football for 20 years.

We congratulate Ed on this prestigious award today.

[10:15]

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

Girl Guides Honours and Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Recently I had the opportunity to attend the 2012 Girl Guides Honours and Award Luncheon on behalf of the Premier. Mr. Speaker, for over 100 years Girl Guides of Canada have been empowering girls to meet life's challenges through skill development, dynamic discussions, and enriching cultural experiences. Mr. Speaker, life is not easy for many young women growing up in the world, but the Girl Guide program prepares leaders with the skill set they need to overcome challenges they may face.

Mr. Speaker, the annual Girl Guides Honours and Awards Luncheon recognizes guiders that have gone above and beyond their duty with Girl Guides. For those who were honoured, they showed exemplary service to the community and are a fantastic example of leadership and commitment. Mr. Speaker, the Girl Guides promise says, and I quote, "I promise to do my best, be true to myself, my beliefs and Canada. I will take action for a better world and respect the Guiding Law."

Mr. Speaker, the example set by the Girl Guides is one we all can learn from. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the 2012 Girl Guides Honours and Awards winners and to join me in thanking them for their outstanding commitment to our community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Youth Action for Prevention Program

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to tell you about the Youth Action for Prevention program that is making a real and positive difference for the youth in Saskatchewan.

Youth Action for Prevention is a youth-focused FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] prevention initiative that encourages young people to create resources and projects that raise awareness of FASD and other alcohol-related harms among their peers.

Mr. Speaker, we've received the opportunity to see the photovoice exhibit and speak with some of the young people who participated in the creation of *Hammered: A Sober Look at Youth and Alcohol*. The photovoice project was developed as a provincial project for participants to work on collaboratively. Photovoice helps youth gain new skills through social action and conversations and creates opportunities to become involved in something meaningful to them. Saskatchewan youth use photos and words to communicate the impact alcohol has in their lives.

The photovoice exhibit is travelling throughout the province to engage youth in meaningful conversations regarding the impact alcohol has in their lives. In this way we recognize and witness the voice youth have to an important issue that impacts them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking everyone involved with Youth Action for prevention for the outstanding work they are doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Kal Tire Distribution Centre

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and tell the House of an exciting announcement that is a natural fit for the Regina area, our province, and our economy. Mr. Speaker, Kal Tire's new distribution facility is moving forward in Saskatchewan. The province, the city of Regina, and the RM [rural municipality] of Sherwood came together to support this important project. The new facility will be located just west of the Regina airport and north of Highway 1 in the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

As a growing company, building a new distribution facility is critical to Kal Tire's continued growth and to its ability to service Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, Kal Tire estimates that over time, this new \$25-million facility will employ close to 100 people, including the 10 that will move from the existing Regina warehouse.

Our government is happy that Kal Tire has chosen to move forward in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. You know, we've heard a bit of pessimism and negativity regarding this project. To those who said it couldn't be done, that Saskatchewan is going to lose this investment, Mr. Speaker, well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we tend to be a little more optimistic. I ask

that all members would join me in congratulating Kal Tire on the decision to move forward with their new distribution plant here in Saskatchewan.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

College of Medicine Issues

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in the Assembly we have the honour of having the political action committee from the Student Medical Society of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. These men and women, all from Saskatchewan, are the future physicians for the province who will care for Saskatchewan's patients. They are committed to Saskatchewan. They want to know that the Sask Party government is committed to their success in the College of Medicine.

I know they met with ministry individuals earlier this morning and raised the issue, expressed the concern around having enough clinical learning time. They have specifically asked that medical residents be provided with an incentive to encourage residents to participate in the teaching of medical students.

My question to the minister: will the Sask Party government provide an incentive to residents so residents more fully participate in the teaching of medical students at the U of S?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for his question. I also want to, as I said earlier, thank the medical students for being here today and meeting with members of all sides of the House in discussing the proposal that they want to put forward. Mr. Speaker, I think that at this time we are going to take some time to study that proposal.

Obviously this is in relation as well to the contract negotiation that always takes place at the end of the PAIRS [Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Saskatchewan] contract, as this is a part of that negotiation. And, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to say too much further on that, as that needs to be negotiated in the proper manner and the proper place, certainly not on the floor of the Assembly. But we'll certainly take the position of the medical students into consideration as we move forward on this file.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clinical teaching time is central to having a strong and vibrant College of Medicine. And we've actually seen, under the Sask Party's watch, the amount of clinical learning that students receive decrease over the past years. In 2007 clinical learning was 8 hours per week in groups of two to four. In 2012 clinical learning was 5 hours per week in groups of four to eight.

Medical residents are an important part, Mr. Speaker, in

providing that clinical learning experience. Other provinces recognize this and provide incentives to residents so that they participate more fully in the teaching of medical students. At the U of A [University of Alberta], residents receive \$25 per hour for teaching, and at the U of O [University of Ottawa], residents receive \$75 per hour for teaching. At the U of S, residents must volunteer their time, Mr. Speaker.

So my question to the minister: what incentives is he willing to provide to residents so that they more fully participate in the teaching of medical students on campus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not willing to negotiate the contract for the upcoming PAIRS contract on the floor of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. That being said, we'll certainly take the policy proposal that is being put forward by the medical students under consideration as we look at this. Certainly there are other options that have been pursued by other medical colleges. But, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we're balancing, first of all, our training seats and our residency positions, Mr. Speaker, with that clinical time that is so important.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes in having a strong College of Medicine, and that's why we are going to continue to work with agencies like the College of Medicine, like the University of Saskatchewan, Advanced Education and other government ministries that have a stake in this matter, and including, Mr. Speaker, the medical students that are here today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students also raised with me their concern about the warning of probation that was given to the College of Medicine, completely under the Sask Party's watch. Mr. Speaker, these individuals know that it's important to have the College of Medicine on a sound footing in order to have a successful medical education and to ensure that the reputation of the U of S is as strong as it needs to be and as strong as we want it to be.

There will be a follow-up evaluation of the College of Medicine this spring I understand, Mr. Speaker, when a decision will be made whether or not the college will actually be put on probation. My question to the minister: can he assure the House that he is taking the steps necessary that the College of Medicine will not be put on probation under the Sask Party's watch?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in August of 2011 we learned that the College of Medicine was under what is described as warning of probation. At that time, then president MacKinnon said that the government had done its part and that the U of S was responsible for any outstanding issues. A dean's advisory council was created to present an alternative plan and to develop a method of dealing with the outstanding issues. In

fact, Mr. Speaker, there was 10 outstanding issues that needed to be dealt with. The university has informed us that nine of those issues have been dealt with, and they have a plan and a structure in place to deal with the 10th issue that's outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, we take this very seriously. We recognize and support the university's autonomy. But it's something that is important to all of the residents of Saskatchewan, and we want to ensure that this does get addressed. I have a great deal of confidence in both the dean of the college and also in the president of the university and expect them to follow through on this.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another concern the students raised with me was the completion of the A and B wings of the Health Sciences Building, Mr. Speaker. This project is vital in order to ensure that there is adequate teaching space for the College of Medicine and other health disciplines.

Before the election, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party promised to pay for this project. After the election, Mr. Speaker, they walked away from that promise and forced nearly \$100 million of debt onto the university's books. The debt capacity at the university now, Mr. Speaker, is maxed out, and the board of governors face the question whether or not they can continue, Mr. Speaker, with the completion of the project. The university, Mr. Speaker, is requesting a cash grant upfront in order to ensure the A and B wings can be completed.

To the minister: will the completion of the Health Sciences Building be provided through a cash grant upfront?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we fully expect to see the completion of the projects that are under way at the university right now. We have worked with the university.

I can advise the members opposite and I can advise the House that in 2003 the previous government announced its approval of the U of S health sciences project. At that time it was estimated it should cost \$120 million. In fact, Mr. Speaker, construction didn't start on that project until 2008. Mr. Speaker, with the amount of money that was spent by the delay, we could have built two health sciences buildings. It was because of the delay that was caused by the members opposite that the University of Saskatchewan chose to go out and finance this through private sources.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the issues with the completion of C and D wing and also with regard to A and B wings. That will be dealt with through the Treasury Board process. I can advise the members opposite and I can advise the citizens of Saskatoon that this is something of great importance to the government, and we will be watching it very carefully.

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

Support for Early Learning

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, a study released yesterday shows a disturbing trend in education readiness in our province. Far too many kindergarten-age children simply aren't ready to learn. The statistics are alarming. Saskatchewan exceeds the national average, and in the Saskatoon Health Region, the rate is an alarming 30 per cent of these children aren't in a position to learn. That's one in three children.

It's pretty simple, Mr. Speaker. If a child doesn't have a safe, stable home or food in their belly, learning itself is a non-starter. What will the Minister of Education do to address this alarming problem in our province and to ensure a bright start and a fair shot for all students?

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, the effects of poverty are well-known. And I did have a quick look at the report, and indeed there are some numbers there that are alarming. But they're alarming not just to the education sector, Mr. Speaker; they're alarming across the spectrum.

And I want to say that through the Saskatchewan children and youth agenda, we are finding new ways to work together across government to mitigate these situations, especially for our most vulnerable young children.

Just to mention a few, Mr. Speaker, through Social Services: First Nations case management payments of \$1.5 million; intensive family supports, \$2 million; increased child protection workers, 30 full-time equivalents; structured decision making and outcomes management to almost \$3 million, Mr. Speaker. Through the Attorney General, Justice: the Aboriginal child welfare court worker pilots; northern transportation and safety initiatives.

In Education alone, Mr. Speaker, we've expanded pre-kindergarten programs by 85 per cent; school capital for pre-kindergarten programs; First Nations and Métis Education Achievement Fund; Mr. Speaker; individual achievement accounts and literacy camps.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in order to mitigate the effects of poverty, we're working together with . . .

[10:30]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this statistic is something that none of us should be proud of, and reading off a bunch of programs like that masks the real challenge and the real trend that's going on in this province.

The reality for far too many in the province is something different. Too many families can't afford housing or access child care. Far too many families don't have access to adequate food. Too many families are losing ground and are simply

being pushed to the margins, and we're trending in the wrong direction on these fronts.

The Saskatoon Health Region has set a target of reducing that 30 per cent measure to 18 per cent by 2018. They call it their 18 by 18 approach. Will the minister commit today to work with community partners, including the health region, to coordinate a plan to make the improvements needed in educational readiness in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that access to high-quality learning opportunities ensuring children are ready to learn has a significant impact on student achievement, which is a priority of this government. Mr. Speaker, that's why we have targeted our vulnerable four-year-olds. And we've increased . . . 76 per cent of our vulnerable four-year-olds are attending pre-kindergarten programs, and 50 per cent of our vulnerable three-year-olds are attending kindergarten.

Mr. Speaker, we incorporate . . . With the new student achievement initiative, we are using two tools to help identify and provide supports to children: the early identification instrument targets the children, and then the early years evaluation instrument targets the areas where we will be able to provide supports and help our students become ready for school. Mr. Speaker, student engagement at the early levels will pay dividends in the long run. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that minister needs to become in tune with what's going on in those pre-kindergarten classrooms he's speaking about, the lack of access and the strain in those rooms, Mr. Speaker.

A reality of this government's education budget is that full-day kindergarten no longer exists in Saskatoon, a casualty of this government's budget. The School Boards Association passed a resolution last year calling for support of full-day kindergarten programs, but the Sask Party didn't listen. All the evidence shows better early learning improves the outcomes that we're speaking about here today, and full-day kindergarten is a real example of a program that makes a difference. It just takes leadership and support.

Mr. Speaker, why does the minister stand by a budget that forced the cut of full-day kindergarten in Saskatoon when all the evidence supports this program and we know the difference that it makes, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, I understand full well the importance of early learning opportunities. There is no question that full-day kindergarten has some benefits, but the earlier we can get to children is what's going to make the difference in the long term. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we are putting our efforts into pre-kindergarten, especially for our vulnerable

three-year-olds and vulnerable four-year-olds. Research is very clear on that, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue down that path. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, these children need a good start in life to improve the education outcomes and create a stronger future. The reality is that our graduation rate is going in the wrong direction, that the gap between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students' outcomes is unacceptable. It reflects inequality. The access to housing and food is inadequate for far too many children, yet this government has chosen to cut resources from the classroom, cutting educational assistants, cutting full-day kindergarten, and increasing class size — all important in supporting vulnerable students.

How can that government boast about moving forward as a province when so many students are falling behind?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, education is represented by a \$1.72 billion investment in our children, our most important resource. Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding to education by over 21 per cent since our term in government, and last year a 5 per cent increase in the budget alone.

We've invested \$500 million in capital. We inherited a \$1.2 billion infrastructure deficit as a result of inadequate funding from the previous government. Mr. Speaker, that's a 217 per cent increase over previous investments. Publicly funded education in our province, Mr. Speaker, is a cornerstone and we will stick to that. Our government takes its responsibility very seriously, and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we've implemented the largest education property tax reduction in the province's history, Mr. Speaker: \$165.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, we've done more. We've increased operating funding to school divisions by 21 per cent, and we've increased our child care spaces by 42 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to invest in our most important resource: the children of our province.

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

Support for Low-Income People

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the recent Saskatoon Health Region study, there are several Saskatoon neighbourhoods where child poverty rates are as high as almost 65 per cent — 65 per cent, Mr. Speaker — and there are many more that are in the 30 to 50 per cent range. This is simply unacceptable. I represent some of these areas and I know, like every child, these children deserve a good start to reach their full potential. Living in poverty does not give them that good start.

I don't imagine it's acceptable to the minister that so many young children in Saskatoon are living in poverty. What I'd like

to know is what her government is going to do to lower these numbers?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the issue that the member opposite is talking about is something that we talk about every day. That's why we made sure that for child welfare we have increased the funding by a significant amount. In fact it's 133 per cent higher than it was when the members opposite were in government.

We've done things like have the child and youth agenda where we have all ministries working together to determine if there are children falling through the cracks, whether it be education or social services. We've talked about . . . We put more money into housing. We've ensured that we have more workers for child protection. We've got historic agreements with the First Nations to ensure that we're working together for children that are on- and off-reserve. Mr. Speaker, we've got case management systems.

And we've got something that's even more unique in our province and that's the Hub, where we have people on the ground working with individuals where they have issues and make sure we see them and their particular issues. Mr. Speaker, we know there's work to be done in this area, but by working across government we know we're going to see results.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Up to 65 per cent, Mr. Speaker, living in poverty. We know poverty costs us all, and we know it's not just about money. It's also about being excluded from community life. It's linked to social and health problems and it's leading to poor long-term education outcomes for children. And I can't believe these people are heckling at this moment, Mr. Speaker.

But we also know that poverty can be eliminated. Other provinces and countries have developed anti-poverty strategies and have lowered poverty rates. I've talked to many people who wonder why we haven't done the same. Why is Saskatchewan the only province in Canada that does not have a comprehensive and coordinated anti-poverty strategy?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — The members opposite are always wanting to have a plan and a strategy, and what they really don't want to hear is action. Mr. Speaker, that's what we've been doing in the last number of years. We've been making sure that there is more money in the province. We've been making sure that there are fewer people that are living in low income.

Right now in Saskatchewan we have 34,000 more people working in Saskatchewan than when they were in government. The low-income people have declined by 17 per cent in the first three years of our government. Children that are living in low-income families have decreased by nearly 35 per cent. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's more work to be done. And

when we look at the work that we have done, we realize that Saskatchewan, we have the second lowest unemployment in all of Canada.

And do you know what's happened with the provinces that do have a strategy, a poverty strategy? Saskatchewan's outperformed every province except New Brunswick when it comes to reducing the number of low-income people. And the number of low-income people has increased in Alberta and British Columbia since 2007. It's gone down in Saskatchewan by 17 per cent.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, here's a quote from the report from the Saskatoon Health Region: "Children born into a life of poverty or low income are more likely to stay in such circumstances into adulthood as a result of a cycle that often perpetuates itself."

Poverty has long-term consequences. Ad hoc policies and programs may work in small measure but we can see from these numbers, as the minister likes to say, there is more work to be done. That is an understatement. This government must commit to a comprehensive and coordinated plan with hard targets and timelines to ensure we make real progress on eliminating poverty. Will this minister commit today to put this anti-poverty strategy into place as all community organizations are asking for?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, our anti-poverty strategy has been in place since we became government. It means helping people go to work. It means that we have the opportunity for good jobs and to make sure that the families are working.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has outperformed every province except New Brunswick when it comes to reducing the number of low-income people. And I think the member opposite should hear this: Saskatchewan has outperformed Quebec, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Ontario. They all have an anti-poverty strategy, and we've outperformed them because we're working on action. We're not writing reports.

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

Attendance at Conferences

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, today in Halifax, first ministers from across the country are gathering to address issues that matter to the provinces. On the agenda of the International Economic Forum are discussions about global, economic, and trade issues and the implications for Canadian provinces and territories. But there will be at least two vacant seats at the table: one for the Prime Minister who refuses to meet with premiers and one for the Premier of Saskatchewan. Why has the Premier chosen not to attend the first ministers' meeting?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be attending the meeting, be attending via technology.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan has been encouraging our counterparts and the Council of the Federation that we would continue to meet in person for important annual meetings, but that where possible we would also, in the interests of taxpayers' dollars and time, that we would perhaps use technology to a greater extent.

Looking forward to the meetings, Mr. Speaker. We have an economic story to tell from our perspective. We have some input we'd like to provide to that table with respect to foreign direct investment policy in this country, with respect to opening up still more trade opportunities. We'll be able to do all that by a conference call, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking forward to the meeting.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Well that's very interesting because while the Premier thinks it's acceptable to phone in to this important forum for premiers, this time last year he couldn't get to another conference fast enough. In Phoenix, Arizona in December 2011, the Premier flew off on the taxpayers' dime to bask in the company of right wing American legislators for a 20-minute speech at the American Legislative Exchange Council. ALEC is an ideological organization that promotes privatization instead of public services in all areas of government.

The Premier has lots of words on international trade when it comes to an audience of people who share the Premier's ideology. When it comes to representing Saskatchewan's interests with other first ministers from Canada, the Premier's literally going to phone it in.

Mr. Speaker, why did the ALEC conference deserve the Premier's attention when this important forum doesn't?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was honoured to get the invitation to speak at the ALEC conference on behalf of Canadian and western interests, specifically Saskatchewan energy interests as well. The invitation came as a result of my attendance and a speech that I gave to the National Speakers Conference in South Carolina. As a result of that, we received this invitation.

I have said pretty clearly that every opportunity we get to tell Saskatchewan's story to fight for the interests of Western Canada, especially as it relates to issues like Keystone and others that group over there has been remarkably quiet about, that we will take those opportunities, Mr. Speaker. Had I been able to conference call in the speech for this conference, we may have considered the option, but we felt it was an in-person engagement.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, every day people are asking themselves about the surprises that come from this Premier that

they just didn't vote for. Perhaps his visit to the ALEC conference might clear a few things up.

It would appear that our Premier received a gift bag of sorts of right wing policies from his friends. It certainly explains where the Premier got his renewed right wing agenda. It wasn't in the platform he ran on in the last election. Instead it's been policy after policy of gutting labour laws, attacking the arts, privatizing and selling public assets.

We know that the Premier has time for a tea party with right wing legislators in Arizona. But when it comes to the First Ministers Conference and his job of representing Saskatchewan in the federation, he's going to phone it in. Mr. Speaker the Premier prefers in his travels to do a little cross-border agenda shopping at a tea party outlet mall.

Mr. Speaker, at the time when the world economy is still so fragile, why is meeting with Canadian premiers and representing Saskatchewan such a low priority?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Actually, Mr. Speaker, we did do some shopping to get some policies with respect to Crown corporations in the last election. We shopped at their store, Mr. Speaker. Page 44 of the platform simply adopts the Crown protection Act that members opposite passed.

I will confess to the House though, that this side of the House may be guilty of a few surprises, or hopefully contributing to a few surprises. Mr. Speaker, there are 80,000 more people living in the province today, that's a surprise; 12,500 new jobs year-over-year, that's a surprise. Earlier this week, good news from manufacturing, sales are leading the nation — surprise. Conference Board of Canada earlier this week said we will exceed Alberta, we will lead all provinces in economic growth. Maybe that's a surprise for members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we are fixing roads with the dividends of growth. We're investing in health care, in education, and kids, and building a Saskatchewan advantage the likes of which this province has never seen. It's not the government that should get the credit but, Mr. Speaker, some of the surprise policies we've introduced, I think, have had a role to play. And we're going to continue to work very hard to keep those Saskatchewan surprises coming, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 77 — *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has

moved first reading of Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 78 — *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* now be introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Social Services that Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask for leave to make an introduction.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to do an introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not often that we have constituents all the way down from the great constituency of Meadow Lake, but we're very privileged today to have Dr. Merv Johnson and his wife, Blanche, visiting us in the west gallery all the way down from Meadow. Dr. Johnson

and Blanche have been pillars of our community for many, many decades. Dr. Johnson just recently retired after being a physician in Meadow Lake for many, many years, and it's great to see you here. And I'd ask the Assembly to welcome Dr. Merv Johnson and Blanche Johnson.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Effect on Saskatchewan of Federal Agreements With India and China

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my comments I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly commends the federal government for signing recent memoranda of understanding with the governments of India and China, which will have positive implications for the province of Saskatchewan and our uranium development sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by discussing a few facts before I speak about the uranium sector. Mr. Speaker, the populations of China and India are substantial, and combined they constitute about 37 per cent of the world's population. The world population currently is a little over 7 billion and China's population is a little over 1.3 billion and India has a little over 1.2 billion. And that is a lot of homes that need energy for their electricity and heating needs, not to mention their workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, it is forecasted by the year 2050 we will have 9.1 billion people on this Earth so it is forecasted that 1.6 billion will be in India and 1.5 billion will be in China. Now these are pretty generous forecasts but I've looked at a few different studies and forecasts and these numbers seem to be the average. India has a plan to build 12 new reactors by 2021 and China is predicted to have a sixfold increase in nuclear capacity by 2020.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm no Donald Trump but in my six years of business school I learned a couple of things. One, a target market as large as both India and China is one we can't afford to overlook. And with the global economy the way it is today, it is imperative that we seize the opportunity to benefit the people we serve — the people of Saskatchewan. The decision by the federal government to have nuclear co-operation agreements in place between Canada and India, and Canada and China, is a commendable one because this fosters our uranium industry here in Saskatchewan.

The production of uranium in Saskatchewan was 9.1 tonnes in 2011. And to do the quick math to pounds, I would like to thank the member from Regina Rosemont for some of his math lessons he gave last session. I'm sorry I hadn't met him sooner. He could have saved me six years of post-secondary education. Now back to the math. Multiply each tonne by 2,599.8 which equals 23,294.18 pounds. So to me, the layperson, that sounds a lot like a lot of uranium. And it would be safe to say Saskatchewan is the world leader in uranium production.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to go through a few quick stats about Cameco, who state that the vast majority of, 90 per cent of Canada's uranium goes to use in clean . . . [inaudible] . . . nuclear energy. And Cameco employs 734 Aboriginal people across Canada, and 707 Aboriginal people are employed in Saskatchewan. At the northern mine sites, 50 per cent, which is 749 people from their workforce, is northern while 41 per cent is Aboriginal, which is 622 people. This equated to approximately 64 million in salaries to northern residents. In addition another 800 Aboriginal people are employed by long-term contractors. So they have programs designed to increase Aboriginal and northern employment such as northern scholarships, northern summer student program, northern skills assessment program, and apprenticeship programs. And since 2005 Cameco has purchased over 2 billion in goods and services from northern-owned companies, another tax and wealth generator. In addition they have invested more than 12 million towards community programs and infrastructure.

On the environmental front, they have been, year after year their uranium mines have been Canada's top performers in meeting strict national and provincial regulatory requirements. And Canadian uranium is produced solely for purposes such as generating clean energy and developing nuclear medicine. Millions of people benefit from nuclear technology through cleaner air and better health.

Mr. Speaker, I know all too well about the benefits of the resource economy to First Nations and Métis people. I have family on both sides, and I have many people in my family who work in the mines, on the oil and gas pipelines, as well as working in the oil fields. Their employment has afforded them to take care of their families and have a pretty decent quality of life, far better than the conditions that I grew up in, that they have grown up in, and it has allowed their children to not know first-hand what poverty looks like. And many people such as myself and many, many others have been able to break this cycle, contrary to what the other, what the member from . . . what the opposition has said.

Mr. Speaker, this is an upward trend. There are many hard-working families who work in the uranium industry and who can look after their families because of these jobs. And shame on the NDP [New Democratic Party] and their followers for opposing the resource sector.

So I wanted to list the "Northern Employment Initiatives 2011" that I'm sure that the member from Athabasca and the member from Cumberland are familiar with, since it directly affects their communities they represent. So:

Companies respected the terms of their Human Resource Development Agreements by working co-operatively to maximize hiring, job advancement and training opportunities.

[They] gave preferential consideration for Northerners in employment, particularly Northerners from Priority Recruitment Communities.

Used best efforts to encourage contractors to provide recruitment preference to Northerners.

Targeted entry-level and trainee positions for applicants from Saskatchewan's North.

[They] maintained northern offices and staff to assist in

northern recruitment and communication.
 Partnered with northern training agencies in delivery of training.
 [And they also] maintained union agreements that gave preference to Northerners and Aboriginal people in apprenticeships.
 [And they] advertised jobs in northern media and websites.
 [And they] held pre-employment assessment training for potential applicants.

Mr. Speaker, they also have business initiatives, and these are from 2011 relating to capacity building. They've:

Updated preferred supplier databases.
 Referred small contractors for subcontracting opportunities.
 Delivered Contractor Workshops.
 Held information sharing meetings with contractors and the public.

And the economic impact is:

\$80 million in wages paid to northern employees.
 \$481.8 million in goods and services purchased from northern businesses.

And the goods are:

15% of total goods were supplied by northern businesses, such as: explosives, fuels, lubes, solvents, filters.

And the services were:

52% of total services were supplied by northern businesses/joint ventures such as: camp services, underground mining, flights, freighting, professional consulting, business travel.
 \$4.3 billion cumulative total on northern wages and goods and services purchased from northern businesses since 1991.

So they've had such a positive impact on northern peoples and the employment sector.

Their business forecast for 2012 and beyond is for an increase in total wages of 7 million. And forecast for 2012 was total expenditures on goods and services is 1.2 billion, an increase of 30 million from the previous year. And the forecast for 2013 for total expenditures on goods and services is 1.23 billion, an increase of 28 million from the previous year.

So, Mr. Speaker, this agreement that has been signed between Canada and China, and Canada, India in regards to uranium is going to positively impact the North and impact Saskatchewan and impact our economic outlook.

I just wanted to read a little bit more about the economic impact of 2011. So they spent, combined with Areva and Cameco, 331 million on salaries, wages, and benefits for its direct employees. And of this, 96 million was paid to residents of the Saskatchewan North. And the industry's contractors paid out an additional 269 million to their employees.

Mr. Speaker, of my family who work in the resource sector, a lot of them are looking to procurement opportunities and starting their own businesses. So that's also going to have a ripple effect in our economic community.

So income tax remitted on behalf of the mining industry direct employees was 111.1 million. Canada Pension Plan contributions were an additional 15.9 million, and Canada employment insurance payments were another 6.2 million. This is significant. And the value of goods and services purchased by the industry was 1.08 billion and over 75 per cent of this amount went to businesses based in Saskatchewan and 43 per cent went to businesses based in northern Saskatchewan.

Capital expenditures were approximately 2.63 billion while exploration expenditures were 33.5 million. Also the reclamation expenditures were 15 million. Total capital exploration and reclamation expenditures, excluding salaries, was approximately 2.68 billion. So taxes and royalties of 145.9 million were paid to the province of Saskatchewan and 5.9 million to local governments. Total taxes and royalties paid amounted to more than 151.8 million.

Approximately 6.3 million was spent on licensing fees and 12.1 million was paid in service lease fees; 4.5 million was donated to community and charitable organizations, and another 340,500 was given as scholarships and other forms of support to contribute to the education of Saskatchewan's youth.

[11:00]

So needless to say, the uranium industry and the impact of the uranium industry is quite significant in Saskatchewan, and I believe that it has a bright future with these agreements.

The employment statistics, including contractors, was 5,162 people. And the uranium industry directly employs approximately 2,595 people in Saskatchewan, and industry contractors employ an additional 2,567 people.

And the reason why I'm going through all of these numbers is just to give you a picture of how the uranium industry affects Saskatchewan and affects Aboriginal people and the population. The resource sector in the last generation has been very good to First Nations and Métis people.

So I wanted to talk a little bit about the environmental protection because that usually comes up when you speak about uranium and you speak about resource development. It's committed to responsible environmental stewardship, and the industry directly employs 82 people whose full-time responsibility is to ensure that all operations meet strict environmental standards set out by both the federal and the provincial governments. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, comprehensive sampling, monitoring, and assessment programs are in operation to ensure that the physical environment is protected. All sites are subject to compliance-based monitoring. Water and air emissions from the mine and mills are tested on a regular basis to ensure that the contaminants, if any, remain within regulatory limits. The industry also performs environmental monitoring to ensure that plants, animals, and fish in the surrounding area are not adversely affected.

And the industry's long-term goal is to return all operations as closely as possible to a natural state suitable for future uses. And all uranium mine site operators must issue a letter of credit with the province of Saskatchewan to ensure adequate funds are available for proper decommissioning of each site after their reserves have been mined out. The uranium mining companies are already working towards this long-term goal. In 2011 an approximately 15.3 million was spent on reclamation.

So the radiation protection and workers' safety is top priority, and the uranium industry directly employs 133 people working full time to ensure safe working environments exists for employees. All mine sites are monitored regularly to spot any potential hazards that may develop.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put forth this motion:

That this Assembly commends the federal government for signing recent memoranda of understanding with the governments of India and China, which will have positive implications for the province of Saskatchewan and our uranium development sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

That this Assembly commends the federal government for signing recent memoranda of understanding with the governments of India and China, which will have positive implications for the province of Saskatchewan and our uranium development sector.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion today allows us to talk about the uranium industry in Saskatchewan, and I think one thing that all people in Saskatchewan are proud of is the balance and the positive way that the uranium industry has developed in the province of Saskatchewan.

I think that many people recognize that during Premier Blakeney's years is when the great expansion took place, and that expansion took place in light of the advice from the Bayda Commission. I always enjoy talking about the uranium industry and how it's benefited especially the people of northern Saskatchewan but also the whole province because in my previous life, before I was in politics, I was a lawyer at MacPherson, Leslie & Tyerman. And I spent many, many years working with people within the uranium industry.

One of my most interesting stories that I'd like to put on the record relates to the fact that in September of 1978, I travelled to Germany with the government contract from the Blakeney government to the Uranerz uranium company in Bonn, Germany to have them sign the contract that would have the province of Saskatchewan build the, at that point, \$33 million Key Lake Road, which then opened up the Key Lake opportunity. And, Mr. Speaker, those types of activities that were done by the government in the '70s are the decisions that laid the groundwork for the uranium industry that we have

today.

And so we know that over the decades there have been changes. And I know from my previous life how many hours and days and weeks and months various people spent trying to figure out how to price uranium, for example. That was one of the big issues in the early '80s because the prices were so volatile that it was very difficult for uranium companies to borrow money from the bank to actually develop the mines. And we came up with a made-in-Saskatchewan solution which ultimately was also used to price oil in the Hibernia oil field.

And so it's not just on the innovation side as it relates to mechanical or engineering or other things that we have smart people. We have very smart people who work within the legal profession, the accounting profession, who worked out some of the instruments that allowed for the uranium mining in Saskatchewan.

The other point that I'd like to identify on an historical note is that my former colleague Keith Goulet was very much involved right from the start when he was elected with making sure that the appropriate agreements were in place with the development of uranium but also some of the other mining operations in the North to assure that there would be an appropriate percentage of northerners who would be hired in there. And I was very pleased to hear the previous member talk about the numbers of jobs that are part of the uranium industry and the mining industry and how it has changed the social situation of many people in Saskatchewan.

Keith Goulet worked very, very carefully looking at international examples. And ultimately when the whole policy was in place in the Romanow years, that policy was adopted in many other parts of the world because of the ability that we had as a government then to work together with the mining companies to make sure that these jobs were appropriately allocated within the community.

My understanding and my sense is that that continues and that the goals that are set out in those agreements are not always being met, but there's a great deal of effort by Cameco and Areva, as the main companies, in making sure that the workforce is located as close to their operations as possible and also that the net revenues out of this are shared in a way. Now are there some other things that can be done? I think that there's no question that everybody agrees about that.

Now when we look at the uranium industry today, we know that there are huge international challenges, especially in light of the disaster in Japan, and that the processes involved require even further care as they're developed. And part of our responsibility as Saskatchewan residents is also with the ultimate use of the product that is removed from our province. And I think that when federal agreements are entered into, like the ones that are listed here, we need to make sure that the Saskatchewan perspective on that long-term use of the uranium is respected. And we'll continue to ask the questions around this.

We know that this is a first stage in developing what's happened here as it relates to these agreements with India and China. But ultimately it's how this one-time resource can be

used appropriately for energy for the world that becomes the main question.

Now as it relates to this whole area, we think that examining also the environmental impact in Saskatchewan but also the long-term worldwide environmental impact of the use of uranium has to be part of our discussion. We know that there are very capable people at our universities — actually both universities but primarily at the University of Saskatchewan — who are looking at a number of these issues around the long-term use of uranium. And the ideas go everywhere from never selling uranium, just renting out its use and then making sure that we ultimately control the end waste product, to setting up appropriate spaces for use of this. Now what we do know and what we have said is quite clear in Saskatchewan that the waste from some of the particular facilities that we have already should not be coming back into Saskatchewan. We will work with the industry around that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at these types of international arrangements, we also are aware that the province has hired assistance in dealing with some of the Canada-US [United States] issues which also relate to the uranium industry and that they have on retainer a lawyer, a law firm in Washington, DC [District of Columbia], which is called Nelson Mullins. And our main contact for Saskatchewan is Mr. David Wilkins. And it's very surprising how often Mr. David Wilkins's name shows up in different things. The Premier alluded to him in question period today as the person who had invited him to go down to the ALEC conference in Arizona. We know that Mr. Wilkins has been involved in a whole number of areas with our Premier. My understanding is that the province is paying \$400,000 a year for this service — \$100,000 every three months.

And we know that, you know, often the province will look to hire a lobbyist, if we can put it that way, in Washington that has some positive relationship with the present administration. I think that maybe this is a situation where the Premier should review the use, given the recent election in the United States, because it would be appropriate for Saskatchewan to have someone who maybe presents a little more balanced view of what kinds of things we can do.

So, Mr. Speaker, uranium is important for Saskatchewan. These kinds of deals have to be looked at very carefully to make sure that they have long-term benefits, and it's important that Saskatchewan hires appropriate people to do the job of their lobbying as it relates to all of these issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the House to support and commend the federal government on the recent memoranda of understanding with China and India, in which our uranium resources . . . which of course is an important part of our entire resource picture and sector in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, after the last 10 minutes, it's unfortunate that I don't know where the opposition is on this. I listened. I did. I

really listened, and in the last 10 minutes I have no idea. The one thing I have found from the opposition is no matter how much things can be left unsaid, nothing is ever left unsaid, you know. So as long as proper protocols have been in place, which have been in place for 30 years or 20 years or 10 years because we keep updating them all the time . . . And they use the same old excuses, you know. And there are two parties represented in this House, and I would believe or I believed that both of them would be behind the people and the businesses and the province of Saskatchewan. You would think in these halls that would happen. Well, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't seem to be the case.

The NDP — the Saskatchewan NDP and federal for that matter — still have doubts, continue to have doubts that Saskatchewan companies and Saskatchewan people can compete with safe, viable products on the worldwide stage. But I guess I should have expected that, given the NDP leadership's silent support of Thomas Mulcair. Not one of these leadership candidates — two which would normally sit over there but aren't — stood up for Saskatchewan and our resources when Thomas Mulcair called our resource sector a disease, a disease on the rest of Canada. Our uranium resources are part of this disease, according to NDP leader Mulcair. Mr. Speaker, what bothers me more is the fact that Mr. Mulcair insults and attacks the people that he continues to suggest that he supports.

Now, Mr. Speaker, please allow me to explain the theory of Dutch disease to our many faithful viewers, probably thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of viewers out there. If a country has a resource-based economy — resources such as uranium, potash, and oil — this country will have a more stable economy and will have the tendency to stay strong and competitive in the most difficult situations.

Mr. Speaker, countries all over the world are in difficult situations. That's happening today. Our dollar value, because of that, because of our strength, has stayed strong. And the NDP leader has said it's because of the strength of the Western resources. Our resources, the same resources that allow us to balance the budget this year, the only provincial balanced budget this year, those resources . . . [inaudible] . . . disease. What Thomas Mulcair is forgetting — and I'm sure he's just misreading about it in the newspaper — what he's forgetting is that the USA [United States of America], our largest customer, the people who buy a lot of the products that we manufacture, are in a recession . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. No, he missed that somewhere along.

But let's just look at the results and forget about his misguided notions. The Canadian dollar has risen back up to historic levels. We're not a 67-cent dollar. We were down there for a while, but we've come back up to historic . . . And you know, it happened that the Ontario and Quebec manufacturers and even some of our own were hampered when the dollar rose. It's today . . . And the reason for that is because today it's one of the strongest currencies in the world. And that, you know, I don't know about you, but for me it's a source of pride. I like that strong Canadian dollar. I'd love to see the dollar, you know, right in there, absolutely.

But you know, the same old NDP values that told us, and I quote, "Saskatchewan is a wee province that will always be in and out of equalization." That's one of my favourites.

An Hon. Member: — Who was it that said that?

Mr. Phillips: — And he's long gone . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. And go ahead and let our children leave and, quote, "there will be more for the rest of us." That was leadership.

This resource-rich province with a skilled and hard-working labour force — ourselves, our kids, our children. Think about the people in the labour force. We'll always be in and out of equalization. That's what they told us. That's what they told us . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well not anymore. Not when we have a Premier that stands up for Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, imagine a world. No. No. Imagine, not a world, a universe. Imagine a universe, a parallel universe that is so topsy-turvy, nonsensical, that somehow even in that world, somehow Thomas Mulcair became prime minister. How scary is that? How scary is that? How dangerous would that be?

The official Leader of the Opposition says that our companies can't compete on the world stage. He says that our workers can't compete on the world stage — that's what he's saying — not if our dollar's on par with the neighbours to the South. Mulcair's answer is to drive down the Western economy, such as uranium and oil, so the dollar can drop again to 67 cents — two-thirds of the American dollar.

Mr. Speaker, here's a news flash for Mr. Mulcair: our workers and our companies can compete with anyone in the world, period — Saskatchewan companies like Brandt Industries who just broke \$1 billion in sales; companies like Bourgault Industries, Doepker Industries, Cameco, Potash Corporation, and yes, ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] in the future. To suggest otherwise is a direct insult to our workers, to our businesses, to our economy.

The NDP attitude is that goods produced in Canada can only be sold if they're cheap, and that is insulting. Imagine how a low dollar value . . . You know, and at times it did discourage some manufacturing because with the low dollar we were able to sell without bringing our technology forward. And that was unfortunate. It was a natural thing that happened. But I suppose . . . Now what do we do? Do we fold our tents and go home? Or do we have confidence that our people, our business, our workers will get there and we will pull back out of it?

I have tremendous confidence in our workers. Confidence. Wouldn't that be a great word to hear from the opposition at some point? It would be different, wouldn't it. Again I'll repeat that the quality of our workers, of our unions, of our people out there working, of our agriculture, of our manufacturing, of our mining, they're as good as anybody, no matter what we hear from the opposition.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I understand why Mr. Mulcair would pit the East against the West. I understand that because in Ontario and Quebec they have 181 seats in the House of Commons. Out of those 181 seats, in the West — between Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC [British Columbia] — we have 92 seats. You know, with the Quebec-centred NDP federally, I can understand that. What I can't understand is why the loyal opposition in Regina would not stand up for

Saskatchewan workers, would not stand up for Saskatchewan resources and our companies.

Mr. Speaker, in case there is any doubt, I will be standing up for Saskatchewan workers. I will be supporting Saskatchewan companies, and I will be supporting this motion. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the motion.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into this debate today. And I do want to review the motion because I think the speakers before us on the government side seemed to have glossed over a big part of it. The action word is commends. And they don't talk about what this government, when they do these trade deals, what really the problems are.

You know, our leader here, our leader here very eloquently stated our position, our record when it comes to uranium, when it comes to resource development. And we've been there for our province, standing up for our province over the past many decades, many decades. And so our record is straight.

But I think when these members get up . . . And I just have to say for the member of Melfort, his old lines got older and more tired. And I was thinking, this guy's only been here a few years, and he's, you know, your lines, his lines are getting more and more tired. And then they kind of moved into fiction, straight fiction. You know, I couldn't believe it. And I thought, is he borrowing speeches? His speech was roaming all over the place. I couldn't tell whether we were debating this week's motion or last week's motion or he grabbed some paper off somebody's desk or what he was really talking about.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know, they're talking about, and as I said, the action word here is ". . . this Assembly commends the federal government for signing recent memoranda of understanding with the governments of India and China . . ."

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to take back and take a look at the process of how these have come about. You know, we have no problem, no problem at all in terms of promoting our resources. This in fact is what we should be doing. We should be doing it as well as we can and as strong as we can across the world. And we have done that as a government, and we think this is what government should be doing.

But when you have trade deals that not many people know all the details, and when I look and I try to research what are the details about how these deals will come about, what are the details? They're just not there. And we have a federal government, we have a federal government that seems to take a lot of pride in how they push things through. They're known as the omnibus government. When we talk about the two bills, the one in the spring around the budget and now this one that's in front of us, and we particularly talk about environmental protection. And this, this is really important. Now the member from Melfort's not sure if he's heard about these bills but because this is not . . . This is because they're not paying attention to what's happening in Ottawa.

Today of all days, Mr. Speaker, and I think of today of all days,

today is National Housing Day. Today is National Housing Day. And this is a day that we should be looking to the federal government for leadership on this important, this important issue. But the federal government is silent when it comes to a strategy. Silent. There is no plan.

There is no plan around housing in Canada, and it shows. Because there's really no plan here in Saskatchewan. And you have cities and municipalities in this province who are saying, we need action from our senior levels of government. And yet this government here is silent when it comes to demanding that the federal government make a plan, make a plan, make a plan. But instead this government here is out to congratulate governments on things that are critically important.

But today of all days we should be talking about housing. And we know that there are certain segments of people who are at risk because housing is non-existent. And whether it's homeless or those who are at risk, you know . . . For example one of the key areas we should be talking about is Housing First for those who are at risk because of mental health or addictions — and again this week is National Addictions Week — we should be doing more of that. And yet this government is silent when it comes to urging the federal government to get their act together. And of course it shows about what happens here in Saskatchewan where you have segments of our population who are not getting their housing needs met because all the partners aren't coming to the table. Here's an issue that we should be talking about today, today of all days. But no, we're not talking about that.

In fact this government is focusing on commending the government on recent trade deals that we don't know an awful lot about. Clearly we're supporting any kind of work that we can see improvements in terms of our resource sector. But we also have some benchmarks in terms of what we expect fair and reasonable international trade deals to have. And first of all, they should be transparent and accountable.

Now it seems to me this is something that this government has strayed away from — transparent trade deals, accountable trade deals in which people are consulted so people know exactly what are the details on these agreements. And the federal government has a habit of being silent on that and not wanting to share. In fact they, as I say, they have a tradition of bundling things together so that they're so huge and rushed through that people don't get the time to have the consultation that they deserve. And of course this government on this side knows all about consultation or lack thereof and how when they want to get their items rushed through . . . And I just only have to think about the labour deal that we have in front of us, this 90-day window from May 2nd to July 31st, write in your concerns and we'll see what we can do about that.

[11:30]

There was no proper consultation. And again here's these trade deals, not any kind of consultation process involved. We read about them in the newspaper, details are sorely lacking, media's not really picking up on it, not asking questions, and we clearly want to know more about it. And particularly when we're dealing with countries that are really very significant players in the international market. We should make sure we understand

what the deals are that we're getting into.

So here's this, I think, not-well-thought-out motion commending the federal government, when I would ask, do they know all the details? And neither of the speakers before us have talked about the details. They've talked about promoting the uranium develop sector and the mineral sector, and what the impacts might be for Saskatchewan. But we don't know what those details are.

And so we have a lot of questions about this, and I think this is our role as legislators are to ask those questions, are to ask those questions and say, so is this reflecting the priorities of the people here in this province? Clearly, economic issues are critical and we need to have that happen. But what do these trade deals really mean in terms of other issues?

You know, I talked about housing today. I've talked a little bit about labour consultations, clearly a flawed consultation process. I hope this government hasn't learned from the federal government how to hold consultations because clearly this government is in no position to give lessons or to be students of the federal government.

Clearly in this country now we're seeing and we're hearing more and more that there aren't proper consultations when it comes to issues. And many of us will remember for example the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] trade deals that were in the '80s. In fact there was a federal election fought over it because these things really matter. They really matter; they're not just a one-off. And when you're dealing with countries the size of China and India, with the kind of economic influence they have, we better get it right. We better get it right.

And I'm not sure that this government has demonstrated or the government side of the House has really demonstrated or talked about in their speeches any of the details of the trade agreement. They've gone off . . . And particularly the last speaker just was a whole buffet of different lines from all sorts of past speeches but nothing about the trade deal, nothing about the specifics. and yet he's willing to endorse it right off the bat without really looking at the details.

So, Mr. Speaker, clearly we can't support this motion the way it's written. I mean it's up . . . You know, parts of it . . . Clearly our record speaks to what we believe about the resource sector and what our actions are. But when it comes to commending the federal government for signing these memos, memorandum of understanding, the details are not there.

There's not been enough public scrutiny about it. And if this government has more information, I'm looking forward to hearing it in the speeches that come forward on it. But clearly the two prior speeches have been sorely lacking on details. And clearly if this government thinks that the kind of consultation the federal government's done on this is just right, then I can understand that by the way they hold consultations, particularly when you look at consultations around the new employment code. So, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Next speaker. I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to enter into this debate on uranium, the focus which will show the importance of this motion to enhance the quality of life across the province and beyond. The motion discusses the positive implications for the province of Saskatchewan and our uranium development sector.

Uranium — the word evokes strong emotions, depending on what side of the House you sit on. However, Mr. Speaker, these are the facts: Saskatchewan produces 17 per cent of the world's uranium and was the second largest producer in 2011 behind Kazakhstan. Uranium mines employ over 3,000 people in Saskatchewan, 50 per cent of which are from the North.

Mr. Speaker, Cigar Lake is the newest uranium mine development. Several other projects continue to advance through the feasibility and environmental stages towards potential production. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers have a very good record on the environmental stewardship and protection plus worker health and safety. And our government's goal is to ensure a fair return on resources for Saskatchewan people while maintaining economic competitiveness with other producing jurisdictions.

Also Cameco is Canada's number one employer of Aboriginal people. And, Mr. Speaker, I think future generations will have employment by growing the exploration and supporting research opportunities for this product. Our Saskatchewan values are demonstrated in this motion, Mr. Speaker. Quality of life, saving life, are factors in my supporting this motion.

The member opposite said we are silent on social issues, but I believe our government's voice, our motion, shows action, not just lip service. And, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Light Source is an excellent example of our prairie resourcefulness. The Canadian Light Source is Canada's only synchrotron and has been recognized as a globally competitive academic, industrial, and government research facility.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition asked for specifics, and here are some of them. The successful operation of the Light Source will continue to advance our innovation agenda by supporting industry research and attracting top research talent. In total we will invest over 17 million for science and innovation initiatives this year.

Mr. Speaker, I heard last night at the Canadian Western Agribition sponsors' reception that our province is doing very well. There was a 20 per cent increase of exhibitors at the trade show, and one of the other sponsors told me 200 more head of cattle were in the barns. I believe agriculture issues and needs are to be met and balanced with a wide range of nuclear research opportunities in plant and animal science.

As some of you know, I'm also a cattle rancher by trade, so this is very near and dear to my heart. As a former 4-H beef leader, I take great interest in seeing the next generation take part in the leadership role in Canada in the nuclear sector.

Mr. Speaker, nuclear medicine is a very important aspect of uranium, with research centres focusing on nuclear health science. In the early 1950s, scientists at the University of Saskatchewan pioneered the use of cobalt for cancer treatments.

This research will focus on nuclear science and engineering, materials, and neutron science and nuclear health sciences. I think these are the specifics that the opposition was asking for.

I do hope our government continues to move forward with a commitment to build the investment in nuclear research. This is an investment in human life, Mr. Speaker. It's saving life and there is no price on that. Research and development in medicine and new technologies to save people is a very fair return, Mr. Speaker.

Achieving positive impacts in medicine and nuclear health sciences are very significant signposts on the road to helping our citizens of Saskatchewan and beyond. However, our most precious resource is our people, and I think the health implications in our research will be enormous. Our social conscience in meeting the needs of the people are very strong. And that's what our government cares about — how our actions affect people in a very positive impact. Our actions affect those around us, and this motion, this very good motion, is a move in the right direction. Our actions show that we want to succeed. It's not just lip service as the opposition has been doing. This motion is showing some action that we want to change.

Mr. Speaker, radiation therapy is a cancer treatment and isotopes help treat cancer. Dr. David Scheinberg, chairman of the therapeutic centre at the cancer centre in New York stated, "A single atom delivered to a cancer cell can kill that . . . [all]. Nothing else approaches that."

Mr. Speaker, a mammogram was discovered in my mother several years ago and, with further treatment, my sisters and I were able to have her a few more years. And I'm very grateful for the research in nuclear science. And, Mr. Speaker, my mother would say, if she was here, continue this valuable research on all the diseases as it will save many more lives. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this motion speaks volumes about humanity and our social conscience.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the U of S and uranium, everything is centred around the Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation. It's located at the University of Saskatchewan. It's very independent and it supports research, development, and training in nuclear medicine, innovation of advanced materials for aerospace and small-reactor designs, and will operate facilities such as a cyclotron for the production of radio scopes for medical imaging. Mr. Speaker, this cyclotron will also offer a wide range of research opportunities in medicine, plant and animal science, and materials science.

Mr. Speaker, our future will be determined by our attitude, and we need to encourage development to see the potential of the province realized on a national and global scale. We cannot revert back to the old patterns of thinking that kept Saskatchewan a not province for so long. With our incredible resource base and work ethic that can rival any place in Canada, we are only beginning to tap the potential that for years existed just below the surface, not geologically, but in the attitude here as well. And this motion, in essence, is the sharing of success. It's about building something bigger and better so that more Saskatchewan people can benefit. And that's happening around Saskatchewan today, and we have the potential to keep it going. There is no standing still.

As parliamentarians we continually face great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems, a fact that the opposition knows all too well. If we do not face them and move forward, these decisions are like rowing upstream. You advance or you lose all. There is no standing still.

Sir Winston Churchill said, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” And I reference Churchill because of his definition of socialism capturing the essence of how an ideology can stunt the growth of a province. And that is what happened to the opposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to reach our full potential, and I will be supporting the motion made by my colleague and friend from Saskatoon Fairview. I do believe in moving the province forward. And the NDP’s history has been rather interesting on that — flip flop back and forth. Flip flop — they can’t decide if they are for it or against the uranium industry.

Dwain Lingenfelter once quoted from November 8th 2005, I think . . .

[11:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member’s time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone.

Mr. McCall: — Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when debates arise in this House we hear from different people across the province where they say, you know, I was watching the debate but I had the sound down. And I actually enjoyed your performance better. And I’m not sure if I enjoyed the member’s speech better with the sound up on that one, Mr. Speaker, or with the sound down.

But I guess the problem we have in this House — and this will sound maybe a bit particular or perhaps naive in some regards, Mr. Speaker — but the way that, the way that you can’t, you know . . . I shouldn’t be surprised that everything in the legislature is political, you know — surprise, surprise. But even on a resolution that should be as straight-ahead as this, Mr. Speaker, you know, we have the opening speech from the member from Fairview, a fair enough speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I’ll be able to get into some of the particulars of that speech.

We had the speech from the member from Melfort . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He’s apparently got his own camp followers over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Should he ever falter, they’ll be there to prop him back up, and as it should be. But you know, it’s too bad that some of the camp followers couldn’t get up and speak in this debate as well. I don’t know if they weren’t able to write enough speeches out of the caucus research office for them, but it was an interesting speech, Mr. Speaker, because it by and large evaded the topic in front of the House here today.

And then of course we have the speech for the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, where again, Mr. Speaker, there are some things that you’d like to think would be beyond politics in this. And certainly the member was moved talking about the impact that nuclear science and medicine has made on her family.

And in Saskatchewan we have a very proud history of innovation and treatments being brought forward under nuclear medicine. And again you’d like to think that that could be beyond politics somehow. But of course it goes out to that, Mr. Speaker, and then it slides back into they’ve got to get some cheap shots off about different members of this legislature and on. And it’s sad, Mr. Speaker, because it cheapens what should be a fairly straight-forward topic.

You know, I don’t know if this is like breaking news or anything, but we on this side of the House support the innovations that have been made in nuclear medicine. And we’re proud of them. And I think we joined with the province in mourning the passage of Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Fedoruk, a pioneer in terms of the research that went on in terms of the treatments available under nuclear medicine.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we’ve talked about, you know, we can talk about family members that have been affected by this, and certainly I’m no stranger to this. I too have had family members that have been impacted by the advances made in terms of the treatment of cancer. And again, Mr. Speaker, you’d like to think that those kind of things, we’d somehow be able to find an agreement on them. But we don’t. We find that time and again the members opposite get jacked up by their research staffers or I don’t know how this necessarily comes along, but you can’t have a straight conversation about anything on the floor, Mr. Speaker, and I find that disappointing. And I guess I should get over my disappointment because it’s, you know, ever has it been thus, I guess. But as an optimist, as somebody that is a hopeful person, I think as a positive person by nature, I keep hoping. I keep waiting to be surprised by members opposite and the way that they approach debates like this. But they keep living down to my expectations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So Saskatchewan and the history of uranium mining in this province is one that is, you know, decades long and goes back to the first sort of discoveries that took place. And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of who was one of the main proponents of bringing the industry to Saskatchewan and exploring the potential around uranium mining, one of those individuals was Tommy Douglas, Mr. Speaker. And I think Tommy Douglas, as many have since then, approached uranium with the thought that this is a tremendous resource that brings with it tremendous responsibility and tremendous opportunity. And you’ve got a number of interests that you have to balance if you’re going to approach the question of uranium mining, the question of the uranium industry. You’ve got to keep those balances in mind if you’re going to do the opportunity justice, if you’re going to live up to the responsibilities that come with this tremendous resource that this province has been blessed with.

And you know, the kind of role that uranium has played both in power production . . . I’ll talk about the impact it’s had in northern communities and throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I think the positive economic impact. You know, it defies belief to say that that is a history that hasn’t been without conflict, hasn’t been without disagreement, often passionate disagreement, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of the way that we as the province or that the Government of Saskatchewan needs to discharge its responsibilities as the steward of that resource, it defies credulity to think that you can do that without paying attention to some of the hard questions that arise when you’re

talking about uranium.

When it comes to the economic development, Mr. Speaker, of course, this has been a boon for the province of Saskatchewan, and it's been a boon for communities like Pelican Narrows or Sandy Bay or Patuanak or pick your community throughout the North, Mr. Speaker, where there are people working good jobs, making that paycheque, and making a difference for their family. And very often, Mr. Speaker, those are First Nations and Métis families. And we know very well in Saskatchewan that, you know, there's a tremendous challenge and a tremendous opportunity in terms of realizing that human resource potential, not just the way that it translates into economic gains or labour force gains, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the way that we as citizens in this province owe it to each other — that responsibility that we have to each other to make sure that a segment of the society is not left by the side of the road and passed by.

And First Nations themselves, Mr. Speaker, I think about the role that then Chief Harry Cook played out of Lac La Ronge Indian Band. I think about the role that the Prince Albert Grand Council has played and continues to play in terms of the industry. I think about someone like Gary Merasty who's a vice-president with Cameco and who's offered his services to the province in many different ways in terms of public policy, and is currently the Chair of the task force on First Nations and Métis economic employment and education opportunities — closing the gap. I think about individuals like that. I think about, as my leader had referenced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Keith Goulet and the role that he played as a northerner coming from Cumberland House, and having come from education; and the supports and the demands that that individual placed on the industry to do better, not just for Cameco's bottom line or Areva's bottom line but for the northern people, for First Nations and for Métis, and to realize that opportunity.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, you'd like to see this approached in a non-partisan way. And again the action word, as was pointed out in the motion here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, is “commend” the federal government.

And I guess it leads me to one last question that I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is: how is it that when it comes to disagreements with the federal government, when the federal government which is, you know, stocked full of their cousins, how is it that when that government is doing wrong by the province of Saskatchewan and not addressing the issues of the people of Saskatchewan in . . . You know, just this day we had the Premier talking about the need to make up for the refugee health claims that the federal government very callously and inhumanely went ahead with cutting and then did a bunch of divisive direct mail on in the city of Saskatoon.

You know, from that to shortfalls in terms of education funding for First Nations on-reserve, to housing, as my colleague from Saskatoon Centre pointed out, to . . . Pick your front, Mr. Speaker, where that federal government is not serving the issue and the interest of the people of Saskatchewan. You know, you hear not a whole lot from members opposite in terms of calling that government to account. But of course you always get the bouquets being served up in a motion like we have here today.

So that the federal government is doing their job, you know: congratulations in terms of finding new markets. But they've got a responsibility to discharge. And that's a responsibility that the people of Saskatchewan know well. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has mused about a nuclear reactor for northern Saskatchewan. To the member from Saskatoon Fairview, does she agree?

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member from Saskatoon Centre for that question. But I would like to speak first about Mark Twain. I love quotes. Everybody who knows me knows that. “Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.” So the members opposite seem to have a short memory. They forget their paternalistic attitude and subjugation of First Nations and Métis people, and their opposition to their resource sector reflects this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is home to some of the largest and richest uranium deposits in the world. This blesses our province with ability to be a world leader in nuclear technology. Our government has committed to invest 30 million in the recently renamed Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation. This world-class research centre will play a vital role in advancing safe, responsible nuclear technology that focuses on nuclear medicine, materials science, safety, and small-reactor technology. Yet the NDP leadership front-runner, Erin Weir, stated in his campaign platform that “The \$30 million that the Sask Party has pledged to the nuclear industry at the U of S should be instead [be] invested in university research on renewable alternatives.”

To the member from Regina Elphinstone, do you agree with the NDP leadership front-runner, Erin Weir, that Saskatchewan should not invest in nuclear medicine and technology?

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

Mr. McCall: — The question I have, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the member from Saskatoon Eastview, in terms of the short funding that First Nations on-reserve receive in this province from the federal government, I guess my question in response to what the member has to say, you know, why don't they speak up about those things, Mr. Speaker?

Is the member wondering if we're in favour of nuclear medicine? Yes, we are. Are we in favour of research? Yes, we are. But when it comes to the other things that their cousins and that their federal leader engage in, Mr. Speaker, that

shortchange this province, you never hear anything about that.

[12:00]

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — To the member from Saskatoon Eastview: is he in favour of building one of these nuclear reactors in the constituency of Meadow Lake?

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A phrase comes to mind as soon as the opposition member says that: conquering fear is the beginning of wisdom. And I think we have to educate ourselves on nuclear energy. And I'll refer back to my speech, the advancement of research in medicine, health science, plant and animal science. We care about the health of Saskatchewan residents and the impact of new developments to focus on medical isotopes and saving lives. Our social conscience just doesn't talk the talk, Mr. Speaker, but we walk the walk by our actions. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Eastview did not participate in the debate, and the question, he cannot . . .

Mr. Nilson: — The question's asked to the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — I'll recognize the member from Moose Jaw South.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As the largest sector in northern Saskatchewan, mining has led job creation for more than a decade. Uranium mining alone accounts for over 3,000 jobs, nearly half of which are filled by people from the North. Almost 2 billion is currently being invested in northern mining, with another 6 billion projected to be invested over the next 10 years.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent Conference Board of Canada report, *Provincial Outlook*, autumn 2012, states that Saskatchewan's economy is on track to surpass Alberta's as the fastest growing economy in the country, and that Saskatchewan's "real economic growth will remain [at or] above 3 per cent through 2014." Capital expenditures on our province's potash industry as well as a strong performance from our natural resource sector will fuel this growth.

The NDP refuses to stand up to their federal counterparts who think that our natural resources are a "disease." To the member from Saskatoon Centre: why won't you defend an industry that creates jobs and employs hundreds of people from northern Saskatchewan?

Yet the NDP refuse to stand up for Saskatchewan's natural resource industry. The Leader of the Opposition calls this success a myth, and their federal cousins think it's a disease. To the member from Regina Lakeview: why won't you stand up for a sector that employs thousands of Saskatchewan people in our province and is fuelling Saskatchewan's economic growth?

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's interesting the members opposite of us seem to subscribe to that theory of abrupt appearance. Nothing happened in this province before November of 2007. Everything happened after that. Everything happened. All of a sudden, abruptly it was there.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my record in support of the resource industry and the development of resources in this province is very clear. I worked in that when I was in private business and as a lawyer, and I've worked in developing the policies that have been the very reason for the good economic activity in Saskatchewan.

Our record is clear. But my question is for all the members on the opposite side: why not today on National Housing Day stand up, stand up for people who are homeless and demand a national housing strategy?

But the major problem is that many of the people of Saskatchewan are not sharing in that economy. They're not sharing in the housing. They're not sharing in the jobs. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a major problem for this government. And we are waiting for some kind of policy that deals with poverty issues, housing issues, so that we can tell the people of the province that everybody is included.

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — This is a question for the member, this is a question for the member from Saskatchewan Rivers. Is she in favour of having one of these so-called small-nuclear power plants set up in her constituency to provide energy for her community?

Mr. Speaker, I ask that question of her and of all the members opposite because I think many times there's a sense of, we should do this but don't do it anywhere in our neighbourhood. So I ask the member of Saskatchewan Rivers: is she advocating for this in her constituency?

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're hearing a lot about real economic growth and how we can develop the North and how this is important for Saskatchewan — all of these things. But we've got to talk about the priorities that are important for the people in Saskatchewan, really important for people in Saskatchewan. And if they've truly

been out talking to people in their ridings, they would know that.

So my question is to the member for Saskatchewan Rivers. When is she going to introduce a motion or resolution calling for a second bridge in Prince Albert?

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I find it ironic the NDP can't decide if they're for it or against the uranium industry. And I'd like to quote Dwain Lingenfelter from November 8th, 2005, "I think we should be getting as much economic benefit from that as we possibly can get. We can do it by developing the Saskatchewan nuclear industry beyond just mining."

Now they go back to against. Peter Prebble, *Hansard*, 1979, the "... Saskatchewan sale of uranium overseas is ... an immoral act, an act over which the people of Saskatchewan may weep 20 years from now" And I would like to say another quote. This is also against. NDP policy on uranium mining in 1990 ...

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton.

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During today's debate, the member from Saskatoon Centre said "we should be promoting our resources ..."

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 604

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Broten that **Bill No. 604 — *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the opportunity to rise to talk on this issue. It's a very important one and one that's been in the news, and rightfully so, because it's one that affects families, workers, young people right around the world. But here in Saskatchewan we have an opportunity to do something that is outstanding and meets the needs of so many folks and shows true leadership in the field of public health.

So it is my honour to enter into this debate today around Bill No. 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. And much has happened, much has happened since

November 1st when this was introduced first in the House and the speech that my colleague from Saskatoon Massey Place gave on November 8th.

And so it is something special, and we really hope that we can see movement, more movement on this. Clearly I think that all members in the House see the value that something has to be done in this area. I know the government has done some things but we could be doing so much more. And so today I'll reflect on that and reflect on some of the things that have happened and some of the things where we should go and why we should be doing exactly that.

You know, interestingly, Mr. Speaker, when it was first read, Bill No. 604, the short title was *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*. But since that time it's become known as Howard's law because of what has happened tragically to Howard Willems since that time. Because as my colleague was giving his speech, just right around that time, Howard passed away. And that is a sad, sad thing and many folks felt the pain and expressed their condolences to the family, and I know that both sides of the House feel that way and the ministers have expressed that as well.

It's a tragic thing when we have something that — asbestos — that in so many ways was promoted unknowingly as something that would offer so much to the world of industry and to our modern world, but found out to be later such a deadly carcinogen. And that's just a tragic, tragic circumstance that we are left now with a legacy of that, that houses, homes, office buildings, schools, hospitals, all have asbestos in various degrees if they were constructed prior to the '70s.

And it's a sad tale of how things can go awry and we're left with what to do with it afterwards, and many folks who are left to pick up the pieces and unknowingly suffer as Howard had done. He was an inspector that would go into many buildings and unknowingly was exposed to asbestos, and then many years later the results of that exposure came home to roost. And then just in a few short years, it played out to his death just a few weeks ago.

So his family and many of his friends and many of his colleagues at work and many people in this province and around the country feel a deep, deep commitment to continue that work and making sure that we get it right. And there has been a lot of material, and I'll review some of that material over the next short while here that we have in the House to talk about that.

And we do want to just again pass our condolences on to Brenda, his wife, and the family. And of course on that day, on November 1st ... It was a tragic set of circumstances that have played out over the last couple of weeks, but we hope that from that something positive can happen. I know that Howard, and it was remarked at his funeral last week, about how he was a true social activist — that he was working more not just for his own sake, not out of a sense of anger, not a sense of, why did this happen to me? Because he knew about asbestos before it happened to him. And that's sort of the irony that many of us feel and we experience in this House when things happen to us that we've been working on, and then we get that personal connection and it strengthens our resolve to make sure we do

right.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say for Howard and his family that we will continue that battle. And I know that people like Bob Sass who has worked hard in this government, he was in the employ of the occupational health and safety section of the Ministry of Labour — Department of Labour as it was known then in the '70s — and worked under Allan Blakeney and worked hard to develop leading legislation and regulations around occupational health and safety.

And we think that's just a recent time for many of us who are in this Chamber because we think of the '70s as, that's not that long ago. But at that time many of the things just weren't dealt with, and asbestos was one of them. And of course Bob led the way in terms of having registries done and making sure people knew where they were, but they were internal. They were internal to government and how to handle it was internal. And so clearly there was more work to be done and he would be the first to say that, and that's why he still plays a leadership role in this area and he feels so very, very strongly about that.

Of course people were introduced in the House on November 2nd. Marianne Hladun, the vice-president of the Prairie section of Public Service Alliance of Canada, of which Howard was a member. And he was very active in his union, and that's how I believe Marianne got to know Howard and Brenda — but not only that, they were good friends. I know they've done so much work. Particularly, I know Marianne would be thinking a lot about this today in terms of Ukrainian issues, and Nashi is an area that, a cause she feels strongly about. But she feels equally strongly about that, and was here.

Howard's sister was introduced, Audrey Berlovan. And Audrey gave a powerful, moving speech to the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] that actually — I believe it was on the Wednesday morning — talking about Howard and his struggle. And then they had a fundraising drive to help the organization for asbestos, SADAQ [Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization]. And it was amazing to see how the people came forward to support that effort and making sure that the call for an asbestos registry does not fall silent but it has the necessary resources to move forward.

And so I just want to acknowledge those folks. And Jesse Todd, Howard's son, and his daughter-in-law was here as well to see my colleague and his first reading and the bill come forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to say about this. I want to take a moment to take a look at Bill No. 604. And it's interesting because, as I will reflect today, some of it's not current, the whereases, just because so much has happened. But I do think it's important to go through it. The preamble talks about:

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;

And that's a given. We know that it must be properly encapsulated.

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

I want to go back to the fact that now we know that the Ministry of Labour actually has created this. I believe it was on November 10th or 12th, created a public registry where they put the list and — that actually Howard and SADAQ had called for — had published them, put them up on the Internet. Now interestingly, I had seen those lists. And of course they were scanned and put up, and they're not very accessible. I don't know if you've had an opportunity to read them. They're not like a database where you could search for Saskatoon schools. You would have to read the whole list and see what's in Saskatoon. Now schools aren't on that list because they're not a provincial government building. They belong to the local school boards. But for example, that's not on that list. And I also believe, and we'll be asking about this further, but Sask Housing unit buildings are not on that list too. I'm not sure why that's the case. But some things are not on.

[12:15]

But they're not easily accessible. You know in this day and age, when we see websites and databases that are really engaging, easy to read, and helpful to the reader, so you get the information you get, this is kind of the opposite of that. It's the opposite of that. It's very hard to read. It's grainy. You have to know what you're looking for. It's not helpful.

And I know, and we've had questions and I'll maybe get to this further down the road, but we've asked the minister about asbestos several times. In fact I asked him last March about this. And it was asked again in early November. And of course his response, and it has been a consistent response — but we disagree with it fundamentally — is that he says it's best practices not to let people know. That everyone should just make an assumption that if it's an older building then you should assume that it's got asbestos and you should be aware of that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things that we have . . . Several parts of that argument we think is false or faulty, because not everyone can estimate the age of a building properly. When you're saying the cut-off is the late '70s, how can you tell a building that was built in '85 versus a building that built in '75? We're not all that up on architectural styles, and they may look all the same, you know. So there's some problems with this. An older building may look newer. It depends how they're kept up, if they've been modified, if they've done anything to the facade. So you really can't tell the age. So if he's implying that somebody should ask about the age of the building, then that's false.

As well, you know, Mr. Speaker, not many people really are aware of asbestos and are aware of where asbestos is. And there's many myths about asbestos. So if it's left up to the individual to become an asbestos expert, they may not. And I think that if we have a good registry, then with an engaging platform where people want to read or feel these are things we

should know about buildings, then we could go a long way in educating the public. We could go a long way to educate the public. And I think that's important. I think it's naive just to assume that we will let people really essentially fend for themselves. I think that that's laden with problems and it's just . . . I'm not sure, when the minister or the ministry talks about best practices, what they're referring to, and if this is an established best practice and whether it is actually hard research. Is there research that people behave better when they don't know hazards than they do know hazards? It doesn't make a lot of sense. It doesn't make a lot of sense that if people aren't aware of hazards, that they will engage in behaviours that will protect them from that hazard. So I don't know where that that kind of line of thinking is coming from.

And I think that really in many ways I know that too, that there seems to be some concern about liability, that if the government starts identifying all the buildings and the state of asbestos in the building, then that's a problem because of liability. I don't necessarily agree. Again it's the style and clarity on the website about this, is how this database should be read, that everybody should have some caution but that these are the buildings with asbestos; these buildings do not have asbestos. And if they do have asbestos, what is the current state of the asbestos? Is it encapsulated or not?

So I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not, it's not too much to assume that the public, if they're using a platform that is well engaged, a website that's well engaged and easily read, that people will appreciate that. And those who have come there for that knowledge will say, I can find out what I need to find out and I have a sense of comfort with that.

So I think this needs, I think it needs to be . . . The current website that the government has, while it's a step forward, I think that it could be done so much better. And I've taken a look at the health region from Regina, their contribution to it as well. And again it's more scanned documents, and I think that it needs to have much more attention.

I don't know whether somebody has been assigned to this, whether it's a full-time position or whether it's something that's done off the side of the desk, whether it's been looked at since it went up. Because clearly it may be that the government feels it's up and now it's done and it won't need to be updated until the next person asks for more information.

So I think that speaks to the whereas, and again I just want to say, "Whereas the availability of information about asbestos allows individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and safety." Clearly in this day and age we know people really do want the information. They really do want the information. And they don't want to have a government make those decisions for them and say, it's better you don't know. It's better you don't know. No, I think it's better that they do know and they can act accordingly.

So what this goes on to call for, and of course I said the short title is *The Public Health (Asbestos right-to-know) Amendment Act*. It's interestingly since Howard's passing that there has been a movement afoot that wants it to be known as Howard's law, and I think that's a fair thing. I think that's important because Howard in so many ways was the face of this

movement and I think will continue to be the face of this movement. Because when we tragically feel what Howard and his family have gone through, we all ask ourselves, do we want this to happen repeatedly again and again in Saskatchewan? And unfortunately it does. Unfortunately it does, you know.

On April 28th we will have the reading of the names of people who've died because of a workplace . . . because of the workplace. I won't say it's an accident because that kind of implies that something happened. But in Howard's case and many people's case, there was no accident. They just happened to come in contact with something that should have been encapsulated or should have been protected. So, Mr. Speaker, last year we knew there were 14. I don't know how many there were this year, but clearly each one of those families feels the pain of what this means. They're very aware of what asbestos can do to a family and what it can impact them in terms of whether it's a father or a brother, sister or mother. It's important that we do this type of thing.

Goes through this, and it's an amendment to *The Public Health Act*. And that's very interesting and I think rightfully done so. I know that there was some discussion. We had met with Bob and Brenda and Howard on this issue, and when Cam and I talked about this, we talked about the various ways, what would have the best impact for the people of Saskatchewan. And of course some people think it might be best with labour and be best with occupational health and safety. And that would not be a wrong place to go, but it would be limiting the number of people who would be impacted by this. And clearly occupational health and safety has limited resources as well. We know that in terms of the number of inspectors that they have, the impact could be much better felt if right across the province we had health inspectors look after this and public health people.

And you look at who's calling for this, and I know my colleague talked about the medical, CMA, the Canadian Medical Association, and the cancer, Canadian cancer association, are very aware of this issue and are calling for, calling for more work to be done in this area.

So that's why it is part of *The Public Health Act*. I think it's critical that we realize this has moved beyond just to workers, but it's about workers' families. It's about kids in schools. It's about people in hospitals. And of course we had the situation last year of potential problems in Humboldt with St. Mary's Villa. And so we just have to be aware of that and be cognizant of it. It's much bigger than just a workplace thing, even though the workplace is a critical place and we've seen so many people come into contact and pay a horrible price for that.

So we're glad to see it go into the public health amendment Act. And it's interesting because we really have two ministers involved now, because we've both the Health minister, who administers, who's responsible for *The Public Health Act*, and the Minister of Labour, who's involved through occupational health and safety, and the people who've led and been responsible for this file to date. But we are hoping to see more and more that it will become a public health issue and take on its bigger role in health because of its place in public buildings and that it becomes, people become aware of it in their own homes.

Now as you know, that . . . So what this talks about, it talks about asbestos and how it's defined in *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, talks about an:

“**electronic registry**” means a website or other electronic means where information regarding public buildings that contain asbestos and the details of its encapsulation is maintained.

So that's what that's about. It talks about public buildings because we're not talking about private buildings. We're talking about public buildings:

owned and operated by the Government of Saskatchewan, including Crown Corporations;

[and as well] owned or operated by a regional health authority as defined by *The Regional Health Services Act*;

that house a school or educational institution that comes within the ambit of *The Education Act, 1995*.

So we're really talking about those. The Government of Saskatchewan is a big player, obviously clearly that. And as well, the health buildings that are owned or operated by the regional health authorities because they have so many. We move beyond much more than hospitals. It could involve clinics. It could involve long-term care facilities, that type of thing, and that they clearly need to be part of that. And as well, schools because clearly our most vulnerable are youth. We sure hope they're not coming in contact with asbestos. But we hear that there are schools out there that still have issues with asbestos.

And it is a challenge because we actually . . . And I'm a big fan of old schools. And we had a class here yesterday from Caswell and, as I said yesterday that I taught in that school and my kids went to that school. And I can still see the water pipes underneath there, wrapped up in insulation. And I can still see the letters, asbestos, on there. And you walk by that and you know, but I love that old school and I sure would hate to see anything happen to it. But we've got to take care of that and make sure it's done well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is important. And then the minister, this is the action:

The minister, in accordance with this section, shall make information available through a website or other electronic means regarding public buildings that contain asbestos.

And:

Every registry or listing of public buildings that contain asbestos that are currently in the control of the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its agencies shall be made available on the electronic registry mentioned in subsection (1).

Now as I said, and I see the minister . . . We've got many ministers in the House but as again, I don't think Sask Housing units are on that list. When we looked over the list it was interesting, and you know I have an eye for Sask Housing. I

didn't see that Sask Housing buildings were on that list. Now I'm not sure why that was missing in the original freedom of information request from the government.

It was good that we . . . I know Howard and Bob and Brenda were very surprised at the speed in which they got that response, which is a good thing. But we then saw some holes in it and we don't know why that is. Sometimes when you ask a freedom of information request, if you don't word it just right, because Sask Housing we know is not what we think of a Crown in the sense of SaskTel or SaskPower — more of an agency. So I don't know why that is the case but we'll be asking more details about that.

So that's the review of the bill and we think that it's important that we get this right.

[12:30]

But you know, we've spent many times talking about this piece of legislation in the House. And as I said, you know, the minister has often talked about, and I just want to quote from November 1st when the Minister of Labour, and he said that in his answer, and I quote:

The concern that they have with maintaining a central registry is it may create a false sense of security. The assumption should be there that whenever dealing with a building that there is asbestos there and that appropriate steps be taken . . . [and] that people ought not rely on a registry that may be incomplete or may not have accurate information. We know that the vast majority of our schools that were built during the 1950s and 1960s contain asbestos.

And now he talks about working and maintaining good practices in that area. But again, that I just feel that we cannot rely solely on the idea of assuming that people who are coming in the buildings are aware of asbestos. They may just not even have . . . [inaudible] . . . Now he says '50s, '60s. And if you know Caswell School and other schools in my riding, they're not built in that generation. They were added on. There was a renovation that caused them to have the asbestos in there.

I want to take a minute. I want to talk a bit about the editorial that appeared in *The StarPhoenix* because I think that was a very thoughtful editorial, and it's really helpful when you have that third perspective. You know, we're in here, and as you know, we have the thrust of debate and we take sides and sometimes we get too wrapped up. And it's also very good to have a perspective, somebody else's perspective. And I appreciate editorials. I may not agree with them, and clearly they're there to spark more thought, more reflection on the issue.

So I think we're glad to see that the papers are thinking that this is an idea that we should take a look at. But of course they want it to go farther. So if I can quote a little bit from this, I think it would be helpful because again as I said, you know, since this month, the first of the month, this has been quite a month for asbestos and bringing it to the forefront, and the kind of things that have happened.

But this was an editorial that was from the 15th of November, and I'll just quote directly from it. This is *The StarPhoenix* on page 10: "Asbestos list no panacea." And it says, and I quote:

Rather than simply create a registry of buildings, it would be far more useful to require the listing to describe just where the asbestos-containing material is located, along with any measures taken to mitigate the risk of exposure. Also required should be regular inspection and testing of sites that contain asbestos, and to list on the public registry the date of such inspections.

So again this speaks to my point that it's more than just to say we've done it and walk away from it. You know, we've done that with too many things where really there needs to be . . . This is a serious, serious health hazard, public health hazard. And if we can turn this around and have more confidence in our public buildings because we know we've got the right thing, we're doing the right thing when it comes to asbestos, that would be great.

So what they're really doing is calling for a more rigorous, more full, more robust registry: one that is used, one that's maintained, and not one that's just put up one day and then said, you can do your search there. And I think that's actually a good idea.

Now obviously when we put private member bills out in front, it's a starting place. We think that we want to see that. But you know, and I believe the Deputy Speaker has put private member bills out there, so you're aware of the limitations of that. There's a money cost to it, so we can't be saying you should hire somebody to do this. That would be . . . We couldn't do that.

But I think we should pay attention to this idea. I think the registry should be, it should be a source of pride in this province. And people should say, take a look at our website and how we describe where asbestos is, what the state of the asbestos is in our public buildings. And it could be a source of, you know, this is what we feel. This is an indication of how we believe public health should be handled in Saskatchewan. And I think that we have a lot of the tools already in place. It just needs more work. So I think in many ways this editorial's right on. But I want to read the last paragraph:

The death of Mr. Willems and 14 others in Saskatchewan in the past year of asbestos-caused illnesses speaks to its deadly and long-lasting legacy, and the need for decisive action to mitigate its impact. However, creating a mandatory registry of buildings by itself isn't going to prove particularly useful.

And in many ways I agree with that because we need to do much more. We need to do much more. Our work of being vigilant is critical in this area. Who knew that we would be dealing with this kind of crisis, you know, 50 years ago? And I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you've ever been to one of the asbestos mines in Quebec, Thetford Mines. I've been able to drive by and to see the town in the Eastern Townships. It's quite amazing actually. My wife and I were driving through. Beautiful, it's absolutely a beautiful place, a part of Quebec, the Eastern Townships. And then as you're driving into Quebec

City, you'll go in past the mine sites.

And of course, you know, it sort of speaks to what we have to be careful with. If I may go off on a tangent here, we have to be careful with, in Saskatchewan, when we start talking about resource extraction. We have to make sure it's safe. And we have done that in many ways. We have to keep that vigilance up. But in Quebec they've paid a horrible price for going down that road of asbestos mining because on one hand they thought they were very fortunate in that they had really a monopoly on the world's market of asbestos, and only later were we able to determine that wasn't such a good thing. And you see towns that were based around it.

Thetford Mines is one where if you go in, I believe there's two or three mine sites there and they're open-pit mines. And if you've probably seen open-pit mines in the North with uranium where they're huge. They're so big. I mean it's hard to get a scale to them. But it's open-pit and they just go down and down. It's like drilling into the ground. And you wonder when you see these things, what were they mining here? What were they mining? And then you find out asbestos and the tragic legacy of that.

And of course, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do feel . . . We understand that, you know, in the race to support economies and the resource sectors are usually seen as such an important part, but we must remember public health. We must keep public health front and centre. And so this is why I think that at this part of our . . . You know, the world's experience with asbestos and how we've come to determine that it's such a deadly carcinogen that we must do the right things.

And so I think that as we, at this end of the tunnel, we can say we'd better start getting our registries together, and they'd better be rigorous and they'd better be full. And if we take cues from — whether it's the World Health Organization or whether it's the CMA or the Canadian Cancer Society or *The StarPhoenix* editorial board — they'd say, you know, we really have to wake up to this deadly legacy that we've got on our hands. And it's right around the world, but we could play a real leadership role here in Saskatchewan by doing the right thing, passing this private member's bill and even enhancing it.

I would call to say that we should go further than this, that in fact what *The StarPhoenix* is calling for would be only, you know, would be the best thing to do. But we have to get that platform. We have to get a website. We have to make it easily read. We have to make sure that people, when they go to it, there's an ease to read it so they don't get misinformation or they're not overwhelmed by it and say, you know, it's not being handled at all because I do believe that actually in the schools and in our health sector and our public buildings, that actually it is being looked after. And I think that, Mr. Speaker, it's an area, it's actually our moral responsibility to do this.

I don't know the other 14 people but when you look at the impacts it can have, and that's only just for the past year. You think of the number of years where this has happened. And you know, we just hear tragic stories about kids playing in open storage units where the insulation was asbestos, and they saw the white fibres flying. We need to clearly have to do more. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that as we go forward and as we're

in the final weeks of the session here before we end for Christmas, I think it would be absolutely the right thing to do.

So I think that we need to do more. I think that while the government has put together this voluntary registry as a signal that they're going to be engaged in this, and it's a good step forward, but clearly we can do so much more. And I really hope that we can get more resolution between who's really the leader here.

I'm hoping that the Ministry of Health will take the leadership because it is a public health issue. It's a public health issue. And while the good folks over at the Ministry of Labour have a lot of expertise to bring to the table, I think that we need to start thinking more on a broader perspective of this and really see that we can take this further down the road because I know this is what Howard and his family would want. But it's not out of, as I said, anger or a sense of vengeance, they are deeply committed to righting wrongs that have been done in our society, whether knowingly or unknowingly. We all know that this is out there. We all know this is a problem, and so we must act accordingly.

You know, Mr. Speaker, one of my quotes that I live by is Martin Luther King who once said, it's not the evil or the actions of the evil people that we have problems with because we know what they'll do. They will do the bad things. They will do the bad things. It's the appalling silence of the good people that we have to worry more about.

So in this House of 58 people, clearly it's our moral responsibility to do the right thing and to pass Bill No. 604 and then to take it even further, take the cues, the points that *The StarPhoenix* has raised and others have said. We need to make sure we get this right, and I think it's only appropriate that we do that.

So I'd encourage everyone in the next week or two to think more about this and, if we can get a chance to vote for this, I know we would be very happy to see this move forward as quickly as possible. I would urge us to do exactly that. We have acted in a co-operative manner before, and we've actually been recognized and commended for doing that. If there's areas of common ground where we can do the right thing, I think it's up to us to do the right thing. And we should be doing that.

I think that we've laid aside those arguments around what the best interests of people are to not to know. Nobody's defending that position anymore. Everyone is saying that we really should be doing as much as we can to resolve this deadly legacy that we have and that we can do. It's unfortunate because we know there'll be more deaths due to asbestos, but if we can curtail that and help that out a bit, then I think that's our moral responsibility to do that. And particularly if it comes to seniors who are in long-term care homes or if they're in hospitals or if they're in schools or if they're in the workplace, it's something that we should all strive to make sure we have that done.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we have this unfortunate, unfortunate other legacy that we have such a high injury rate and death-in-our-workplace rate in Canada. And this to me would be a clear signal that we are taking our responsibility to keep our workplaces and our public places as safe as we can.

So with that, I know that many of my other colleagues will want to speak to this bill, Bill 604, *An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 to provide for access to information relating to Asbestos in Public Buildings*. It's a very outstanding bill. It's one that I think we need to pass, we need to act on. Much has happened since the introduction of the bill but there's much more that we can do, and I think that we should do what we can to pass Howard's law. So, Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do is now adjourn debate on Bill No. 604. Thank you.

[12:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 604. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the participation of members in the Holodomor ceremony, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried. The Assembly is adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:45.]

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

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Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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Water Security Agency
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