



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

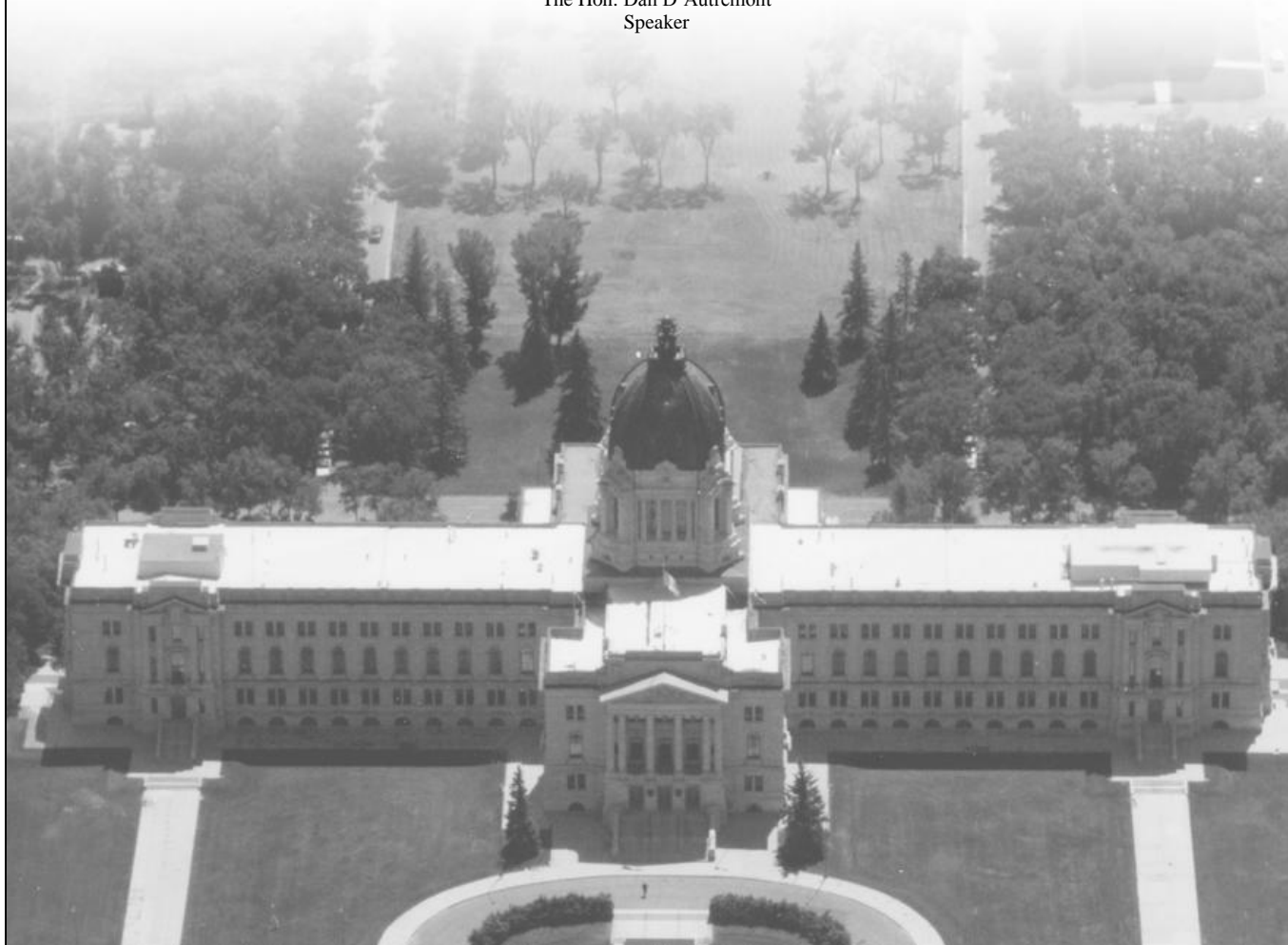
of the

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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|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
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| Boyd, Hon. Bill | SP | Kindersley |
| Bradshaw, Fred | SP | Carrot River Valley |
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| Ottenbreit, Greg | SP | Yorkton |
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| Phillips, Kevin | SP | Melfort |
| Reiter, Hon. Jim | SP | Rosetown-Elrose |
| Ross, Laura | SP | Regina Qu'Appelle Valley |
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| Stewart, Hon. Lyle | SP | Thunder Creek |
| Tell, Hon. Christine | SP | Regina Wascana Plains |
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| Wall, Hon. Brad | SP | Swift Current |
| 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

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before introductions I will be tabling the library's annual report for the period of April 1, 2011 to March 31st, 2012, the 2011-2012 caucus audited financial statements, and the 2011-2012 members' accountability disclosure statements.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce and offer congratulations and a big thank you to the members of the Saskatchewan Internet child exploitation unit. Recently this unit, also known as ICE [Internet child exploitation], took part in Operation Snapshot. This was a major child pornography bust which also helped rescue a boy in Saskatchewan from years of child abuse.

The ICE unit was established by our government in 2009. We provide 1.2 million each year to fund this very important initiative. This money funds eight investigators and four forensic analysts across the province. I am confident that their work will result in protecting more children and bringing more Internet predators to justice.

Sitting in the Speaker's gallery today are, from the Regina office, representing the chief of police, Troy Hagen: Inspector Tom Mansfield, Staff Sergeant Ron Weir, Corporal Candace Benko, Constable Lisa Davey, Corporal Drew Wagner, Constable Chuck Cooke, Corporal Ken Kuan, Constable Paul Fischer. From the Saskatoon office is Sergeant Deb Altrogge, Sergeant Paul Pitzel, Constable Joel Bautista, Constable Mitch Barber, Sergeant Darren Parisien. And from the Prince Albert office, Corporal Jared Clarke. And from my ministry, of course, Ken Sabo.

Mr. Speaker, through you and to you and on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, I ask all members to join me in expressing a heartfelt thank you to these members.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, to join with the minister opposite and welcome the leaders that we have here in our gallery here today. It's a distinct pleasure of mine to speak to the work that the policing leaders from all across Saskatchewan represent to our province and to thank them for that work in protecting our most vulnerable children in this ever-changing world, when we're looking at cyberexploitation and the disgusting and damaging damage that's being caused by too many, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to thank these members of the Saskatchewan ICE unit, the Internet child exploitation unit. And I know that these members represent leaders in policing from across our province, both in municipal forces and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to them for their leadership and just that we continue to support their work, making sure they have the resources they need to make our community safer and to protect the most vulnerable in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please join with me in thanking these members.

While still on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome some students that have joined us here in the east gallery. These students come from Sheldon-Williams Collegiate. Their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], John Nilson, our leader, isn't here today, but I'm going to be joining them here today after proceedings. I look forward to their questions. We met briefly before the Assembly, had a bit of a discussion. I'd also like to welcome the teachers that have joined these grade 11 and 12 law students. Those teachers would be Ms. Lindsay Vindevoghel and Ms. Jeanie Dunbar.

I'd like to welcome these teachers, these students, and I look forward to meeting with them afterwards following question period, look forward to the questions they'll be bringing forward. I ask all members to welcome these students and these teachers to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I have the great honour today of introducing a group of people in the Speaker's gallery. Some of them are wearing their pink women's builder Habitat shirts, and some of them are board members. Some of them are actually the owners of some of the homes that have been built here in Saskatchewan through Habitat.

We had a wonderful announcement this morning, talking about next year's work where we will be building two more homes with women who are interested not only in providing the funds for the homes but the energy it takes to build a home and the love it takes to help the members know that they're part of a safe community.

Mr. Speaker, we've had the chance to build 90 such homes right across the province right now with the wonderful partnership we have with dedicated volunteers who we can't thank enough. It's what we are as Saskatchewan people, building and helping each other. So on behalf of a very grateful government, I thank all of you for being here today and for all

of your work. And welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition as critic of Housing, I want to join the minister in welcoming the folks from Habitat for Humanity. You've been a leader in our communities for many years about supporting people in the search for affordable housing. And the work you do is admirable, and we sure appreciate your leadership in our community. So on behalf of all of us in the House, we welcome you and we thank you for your good work. Thank you.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through I have two fine gentlemen in your gallery that I'd like to introduce. The first is my sweetheart, the man with the large white, fluffy beard. Lately he's been called Santa, Grizzly Adams — why he's even been called a saint. After 38 years of marriage, I can guarantee you there's a few other words that he's been called — none finer, none finer than husband. I would ask everyone to welcome Allan Jurgens to his Legislative Assembly.

And the gentleman to his right is a dear friend of the family. His name is Doug Currie. He's worked with Treasury Board, Finance. He's worked internationally and is now enjoying his own consulting business. I ask everyone to welcome Doug to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to introduce a gentleman in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who's well known in this Assembly. Dave Marit, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, is here for a regional planning conference to promote joint planning and co-operation between urban and rural municipalities. And SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] have been instrumental in moving this conference forward, and I understand that it's been a big success today. So I would ask all members to please give Dave a warm welcome to his Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the critic for Municipal Affairs, I too would like to echo the minister in welcoming Mr. Marit to his legislature. SARM has played a leadership role in our province for well over 100 years now, and we look to them in terms of helping our communities, both rural and now that co-operation with urban is so critically important when they struggle with issues like infrastructure. That's a huge issue.

So I would ask all members to join us again in welcoming David to his legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand today to present a petition on behalf of a number of northwestern Saskatchewan residents that are calling for improved and expanded cellphone service. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by hundreds of folks. And this particular petition is signed by people from Dillon, Saskatchewan. And I so present.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting, reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Saskatoon and Prince Albert. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Constituent Recognized for Service to Community

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pride today that I take this opportunity to thank Yvette Daigneault of Ile-a-la-Crosse for her many years of service to her community. Yvette has since retired from her years of work at the northern health and medical services branch where she dedicated a combined 40 years of service,

Mr. Speaker.

She has been an active volunteer for her entire life, Mr. Speaker, as she generously gives her time and dedication to her community and its many causes. She has donated her time to minor sports, working with the youth, and her church. Yvette also plans fundraisers, raising money for trips for sports teams, the women's wellness group, and the countless excursions that have been fulfilling her fellow parish members as they take trips to honour Jesus and his followers.

She is a leader and shows this to many boards that she's been involved with. She was a board member for the Rossignol School Board for over 12 years, a member of the health district for seven years, and is currently on the board of the Ile-a-la-Crosse Friendship Centre. She is also currently the Métis Nation Local No. 21 president.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Yvette for her dedication to improving the lives of people in her community. I also want to thank her family for sharing their wife, mother, grandmother, and friend.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating Yvette on her, finally, her years of rest that she can enjoy and wish her many, many more years of happiness to come. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Movember

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a special growing season that lasts only 30 days. All across our province and around the world, brave and/or foolish men are putting their dignity at risk for the Movember campaign.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has shown leadership in many areas of health care and health promotion. In addition to raising funds and raising awareness about prostate cancer, this year Movember is also focusing on mental health, an area where men can be particularly reluctant to seek help. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to providing improved mental health services for Saskatchewan citizens. Each year more than 45,000 of our people use publicly funded mental health services. We are moving forward with the replacement of the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford to better serve the long-term rehabilitation needs of mental health patients.

Mr. Speaker, prostate cancer is the most common cancer to affect Canadian men: one in seven men will be diagnosed with this disease in their lifetime. The Ministry of Health is working with health regions to establish prostate assessment centres in Regina and Saskatoon to help with detection and treatment. Mr. Speaker, over 90 per cent of prostate cancer cases are curable if detected in the earliest stages.

I would like this Assembly to join with me in recognizing all the individuals who sacrificed their upper lip, and their wives, in order to raise money and awareness for men's health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Multicultural Council Honours Volunteer

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan presented the 2012 Betty Szuchewycz Award and honoured volunteers throughout the multicultural community. This took place at a special tea hosted by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.

Betty Szuchewycz served on the board of directors for the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan. She was killed in a tragic car accident in 1990, and this award was created to help keep her volunteer spirit alive by honouring others who contribute to the community as she did.

This year's winner was Muna De Ciman. Muna is a tireless community leader that lends her skills and time to promoting multiculturalism in so many organizations throughout our province. She was nominated by the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum where she served as a board member since 2006. In addition to this role, among many others, she also serves as the director of the Regina Multicultural Council. I know Muna personally and have a tremendous respect for her and the work she does in enriching the lives of people and our community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Muna for receiving this prestigious award and to provide a sincere thank you to Muna and the Multicultural Council for their leadership in our city and our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Partners With Habitat for Humanity

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize this government's partnership with Habitat for Humanity as they launch the 100 K Women Build project in Regina. The goal of this initiative is to enable two hard-working Habitat Regina partner families to experience home ownership for the first time. This will be achieved with the help of 200 exceptional women in the province who will raise 200,000 for the project.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative was born out of two Regina projects: 100 K in 100 Days and Regina Women Build. The aim of the 100 K in 100 Days was to engage 100 women to help raise funds for a Habitat partner family in Regina. Women Build is a program that promotes and encourages women's leadership and participation in construction and skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that this government is supporting the 100 K Women Build campaign by contributing an additional 100,000 towards the construction of these two homes. Mr. Speaker, we are proud to partner with Habitat for Humanity to create more home ownership opportunities for hard-working Saskatchewan citizens. We encourage everyone to support this

exciting initiative. Women who are interested in being part of this history-making build can contact Habitat for Humanity Regina. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

AIDS Awareness and Support

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. December 1st marks World AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day. Saskatchewan has proclaimed AIDS Awareness Week November 24th to December 1st. World AIDS Day is December 1st, and Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week is December 1 to 5th.

Events and activities during this period are dedicated to raising awareness and supporting people with HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and AIDS. Stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with HIV which prevents them from seeking treatment and support.

Our province continues to have a high rate of new HIV cases, primarily associated with injection drug use. We recognize HIV as a serious issue, and we are committed to addressing it. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's four-year provincial HIV strategy is aimed at reducing the number of new HIV infections, improving the quality of life for people affected with HIV, and reducing the risk factors for acquiring HIV.

We have made significant progress. We're recruiting front-line service providers, increasing social supports and access to public education, testing, prevention, care, and treatment for people affected by HIV. This year a new HIV awareness campaign in partnership with First Nation and Inuit health branch of Health Canada is encouraging testing and challenging HIV-related stigma. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there is more work to be done. We will continue our efforts in collaboration with provincial partners to address this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

All Nations Job Fair

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce, under the inspired leadership of CEO [chief executive officer] John Hopkins, hosted the All Nations Job Fair at Evraz Place here in Regina. The sold-out fair featured more than 80 booths and employers who reached out to close to 1,000 attendees. Fifty employers offered about 1,000 jobs in various fields including construction, transportation, financial services, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, and information technology, among others.

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], the Regina Skills and Trade Centre, the apprenticeship commission, and the University of Regina were also on hand to provide information regarding education and training opportunities in the province.

Mr. Speaker, a key objective of this event was to help better connect Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis peoples to job opportunities and skills right here in Regina and well beyond. Increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy is a priority outlined in our government's Saskatchewan plan for growth. In order to meet this objective, our government will continue working with partners like the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce on a number of initiatives, including investing in post-secondary and skills training for Aboriginal peoples and increasing support for adult basic education and literacy programs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud and commend the work of the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provincial Budget

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan remains on track to have the only balanced provincial budget in Canada this year.

This week's mid-year report clearly demonstrates the benefits of growth. Despite a significant downturn in resource revenues this year, the budget remains balanced thanks to the growth in other parts of our economy. For example, personal income tax is up significantly thanks to more people working and higher wages. Mr. Speaker, even though our government has delivered record income tax reductions in the past few years and tax rates are down, tax revenues are up.

Mr. Speaker, today's *Leader-Post* editorial states, and I quote: "It means Saskatchewan is still the only province in the black . . . Contrast that with gloomy news out of British Columbia Wednesday." The deficit forecast had ballooned to 1.47 billion. It's much the same sorry story elsewhere. Alberta's deficit could hit 3 billion this year. Manitoba is 440 million in the hole. Ontario is 13 billion in the red, and the federal government has a \$26 billion deficit. They go on to say, ". . . collectively, Saskatchewan's situation is as close to 'sitting pretty' as it gets."

Mr. Speaker, the strength of our growing economy means that even though resource revenues are down, other revenue sources are up and our budget remains balanced. Mr. Speaker, a diverse and growing economy, sound fiscal management, and balanced budgets — these are the fundamental principles of our growth released by our Premier last month, and they are a key part of the Saskatchewan advantage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

HIV Awareness Issues

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here in Saskatchewan we're facing the worst HIV epidemic in Canada. Sadly this reality is not recognized by most Saskatchewan

people. The recent comprehensive Taking the Pulse survey commissioned by the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], *Leader-Post*, and *The StarPhoenix* show that 60 per cent of the population disagree that HIV is a problem in their community.

Public awareness and education is essential, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to reduce HIV rates in Saskatchewan. My question to the minister: what efforts are under way to ensure Saskatchewan people are properly informed about the HIV epidemic here in the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have embarked on a four-year plan, HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome] strategy in this province through the Ministry of Health. Mr. Speaker, the first two years of that plan focused on ensuring that we have a number of recruitment initiatives when it comes to HIV strategy coordinators, including 25 front-line service providers as well as implementing point-of-care testing in seven health regions across this province as well as a number of First Nations communities.

Mr. Speaker, the member is correct that public awareness needs to be a focal point of this strategy, and that's why I am very pleased to say to this House that on October 15th of this year we launched a social marketing campaign that addresses HIV-related stigma, discrimination, and awareness, Mr. Speaker. And we know that more work needs to be done, but certainly we are ensuring that there is a public awareness campaign as a part of our four-year commitment.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the minister, of course, recognizes that the HIV rate in Saskatchewan is a major problem. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I feel the government's actions on this issue have not demonstrated a full appreciation of the seriousness.

In particular the Throne Speech is an opportunity for the government to state its key objectives and priorities. On this item, Mr. Speaker, there was no mention of HIV in the Throne Speech and especially in the section on health. My question to the Health minister: why was there no mention of the HIV epidemic in the province in the Throne Speech?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this has been a priority of this government since we formed government. That's why in 2010 we announced not just a one-year strategy, Mr. Speaker, but a four-year strategy. We've communicated with our health region partners, providers, and I think at large what those different parts of that strategy will entail to work to reduce the number of new infections that we have in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as well as try to address a growing concern of the number of people who may be infected with HIV/AIDS in Saskatchewan but may not know that.

Mr. Speaker, but I can tell the member that the public aspect to this is important. That's why, as I said, on October 15th we announced what was phase 2 of the social marketing campaign. That includes five YouTube videos depicting an individual living with HIV; a video with an elder speaking about this, Mr. Speaker, this illness in the Aboriginal community; a youth member; a member of the gay community; as well as an HIV strategy coordinator, as well as there will be radio advertising and posters to better communicate . . .

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I attended the All Nations Hope AIDS Network's conference in Regina. I know the minister is headed there tomorrow morning. Mr. Speaker, it's a time when individuals from the province, but especially in Regina, can come together and talk about strategies to reduce HIV infections here in the province.

We know that HIV disproportionately affects members from First Nations and Métis communities largely linked to the social determinants of health. I know at the health region level, Mr. Speaker, new infection rates are monitored and tracked. I recently actually heard of a sad case where a 17-year-old individual became infected with HIV.

My question to the Health Minister: could he please inform this House about the number of HIV infections in Saskatchewan over the past year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, while I won't be able to give the individual numbers for this year as well as last year — Mr. Speaker, those numbers are still being compiled — our most recent information indicates that we have had 173 new cases that were identified in 2010, Mr. Speaker. And while that is still a far too high number for this province, it is a reduction from the year prior to that, Mr. Speaker. And that is knowing that more people are being tested each year in this province.

We need to though do more ensuring that testing is available for individuals, Mr. Speaker, particularly those that may be at risk, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that is why that we are working with our health region partners, as well as other partners across the piece, to ensure that we have proper front-line support and services, as well as support and services for those people that it is confirmed that they've been diagnosed with HIV and AIDS.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the statistics from 2010. But I know this is monitored on a monthly basis, and there is certainly more current information available that could be shared.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the cost of HIV to the province is huge. The hugest cost is the human cost, but it's also a financial cost. The government's own documents suggest that the direct cost to manage HIV in the province is \$40 million per year. In

the government's own documents it says, when the indirect costs are added, that number goes to \$136 million per year. The government's response has been \$2.5 million.

My question to the Health Minister: given the reality this is such a huge cost, human and financial, to the province, does he feel a \$2.5 million response is appropriate?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We certainly take this issue very seriously in this government. That's why we put in place a four-year plan. We have spent to date \$6 million on the first two, in roughly two and a half years of that plan, Mr. Speaker. And there is more work to be done in the out years of that plan, Mr. Speaker.

We have a provincial leadership team that oversees the implementation and the evaluation of the strategy, working alongside with our HIV coordinators across the province, Mr. Speaker. As well we are looking to continue to expand outreach clinics for HIV, hepatitis C, TB [tuberculosis], STIs [sexually transmitted infections], Mr. Speaker, across the entire piece. And, Mr. Speaker, as well, I think a large part of it, which the member identified in his first question, is raising public awareness. And that's why we've put together a multi-approach to that awareness campaign, be it over the airwaves or online, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to do that work.

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

Anti-Bullying Strategies

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the consequences of bullying are devastating including depression, self-harm, addictions, and suicide. I've witnessed these first-hand as a teacher, as I know I'm sure the minister has as well. We support the work that the province has done to raise awareness about bullying, but unfortunately it still occurs.

The Minister of Education said in mid-October the province could benefit from further coordinated national work. I certainly agree, and we also believe that there's important work to be done here in the province. This is an issue that matters to all of us, that causes damage that's simply unacceptable.

What actions has the minister and his ministry taken since mid-October to protect students against bullying?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. You know, Mr. Speaker, all of our children — no matter whether they're in our urban, rural schools, on-reserve — have a right to learn in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Our government takes this issue very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we believe that we will continue to create that environment that is so conducive to learning.

I know that school divisions take the matter very seriously, Mr. Speaker. Every school division, all 28, have critical incident procedures that are strictly adhered to. And we believe that those measures are consistent throughout the province and that they will continue to protect our children going forward.

Having said all of that, Mr. Speaker, our ministry, as we speak, is conducting an interjurisdictional review of processes that will ensure that that safety takes places.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot to be gained by the experiences of other provinces and other jurisdictions, and it's important work that the minister has identified in the interjurisdictional work that he speaks of. Each province is going at this in different ways. The challenges are real; the consequences harsh.

In BC there's of course the tragic youth suicide that we witnessed just a few months ago. And within a month of that, the provincial government stepped up and put together a website, erasebullying.ca. And this is a website for students to report bullying both in the classroom but in the community and as well by way of cyberbullying and providing then urgent resources and response, both by way of the classroom and in through the community. It's anonymous and free to use. Other provinces have brought forward legislation and various tools and programs. And we have that opportunity to learn from our jurisdictional partners, but it's something that we need to make as a priority.

So I guess I look to the minister. He referenced that he's doing work with other provincial partners. That's important, as is working from a national perspective. Does the minister have a timeline for reporting back to the public and taking some actions on this front?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Again thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member opposite for the question. Again we know that bullying is widespread, and of course that includes cyberbullying. We have been working with other sector partners as well as our school divisions. We've been working very closely with the Red Cross.

And as we go forward, Mr. Speaker, and as we get into the student achievement initiative, one of the tools that we'll be using, the Tell Them from Me survey, is an engagement tool that will allow us to gain first-hand information from our students, from our staff, from our communities as to what the situation is exactly in our communities. We will continue to monitor the interjurisdictional reports, and as soon as they're ready, we will make those public, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, it is important to learn from our interjurisdictional relationships, from our provincial partners. And it's also important for us to have

provincial leadership and work in a co-operative fashion with community partners, educational partners, and students here in Saskatchewan.

As I say, other jurisdictions have stepped up with legislation. They've supported and encouraged GSAs [gay-straight alliance], peer support networks, websites to report bullying, and other supports and counselling and professional development, all of which we could and can learn from.

I believe there's a great opportunity for us as a province to work together to learn and improve supports for students. A good start would be for us to be working with our community partners, with our educational partners, and with students, as simply our goal must be to make sure that every student has a safe place to learn and to thrive.

So I look to the minister and ask him whether he could support working towards a clear goal of supporting students and eliminating bullying by way of developing a provincially led and resourced work group with our community partners, educational partners, and with students.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite for the question. I think we're speaking the same language, Mr. Speaker. We have been working continuously with all of our sector partners to deal with the issue of bullying. We realize that it's a serious issue. We realize that it's widespread, Mr. Speaker. We realize that more action needs to be taken in the area. We need to protect and we need to guarantee and ensure that all of our children have a safe and caring environment that's conducive to learning. We're committed to that. We are going to continue to look at all options to make sure that those safety measures are in place, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do that as we go forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Support for the Commercial Fishing Industry

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party continues to ignore the people of Saskatchewan. And they did try to balance the books on the backs of many people. They did sell social housing units to the highest bidder. They're selling the Crowns like ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], and they have been gutting Aboriginal employment development programs, Mr. Speaker.

And now the commercial fishing industry is under attack. This past spring the Sask Party eliminated the entire fish freight subsidy for the northern commercial fishing industry. Mr. Speaker, my question: why is the Sask Party trying to kill off this industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan deals with the needs of the people of Saskatchewan in a very serious manner, both in southern

Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan.

With respect to First Nations folks and Métis people in this province, this government is putting more and more resources into programs for First Nations and Métis people than ever before in Saskatchewan. It's a role that we take very seriously. We'll continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we'll work along with our partners in the North in that effort.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, that answer is ludicrous. This government is trying to grab some cash off of this industry because they can't balance their books. They want to balance their books on the back of the commercial fishing industry. So what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They take away the fish freight subsidy. The commercial fishing industry is a multi-million dollar industry that employs hundreds, maybe even thousands of northern and Aboriginal people, Mr. Speaker. This government still lists the subsidy on Enterprise Saskatchewan's own website, but they gutted it anyway.

So my question to the minister of Industry: why are you going to war with the commercial fishing industry, an industry that is rooted in history and rooted in northern Saskatchewan? Can you answer me that question?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to work with the people in the commercial fishing industry. They've made representations around the marketing of fish and a number of other initiatives that we are working along in partnership with the folks in northern Saskatchewan. This is an issue that simply is not really on the radar for the people of Saskatchewan. I would say to the member opposite, we have worked very, very closely, Mr. Member, with respect to this industry along with our northern partners.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishermen will be happy to hear that the minister says that their industry is not on their radar, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishermen and the industry are going to fight back. This government has taken all the supports it offered them and is trying to kill off this industry, Mr. Speaker. And what the commercial fishing industry want, they don't want fancy words or babble, Mr. Speaker. If you throw a walleye onto the ice when you're fishing, Mr. Speaker, that walleye will continue to struggle and he'll gasp for air in the same manner which this minister is gasping for answers, Mr. Speaker.

But commercial fishermen want to know today, Mr. Speaker, they want to know clearly from this minister what specific measures are you going to undertake, sir, to ensure that the commercial fishing industry is going to survive for many, many years to come? Which concrete measures are you going to take?

The Speaker: — I would ask that both the minister and the member asking the questions direct their comments through the

Chair. I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the northern fishing industry is very important to the people of Saskatchewan, and we certainly recognize that. They have asked the Government of Saskatchewan to take some steps with regard to the marketing of fish, and we have done that. We have done exactly what they've asked for. We've done exactly what they've asked for and removed the commercial industry from the marketing boards that they were a part of in the past, exactly as they have asked for. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that.

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

Changes to Labour Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Court of Appeal may not return a ruling on the challenge to Justice Ball's decision on the essential services Act before next week. But the Sask Party's version of that law was ruled unconstitutional. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government let their ideology trump common sense in writing that law because their idea of essential services is a violation of human rights, according to the courts.

Now my question to the Minister of Labour is, if the court does not rule before next week, how will the Sask Party's omnibus labour bill amend *The Public Service Essential Services Act*?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is aware that the matter is being argued in the courts actually as we speak. It would be inappropriate for either he or I to make any comment on what is taking place in the courts.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated in the House that we will be introducing a bill before the end of the session. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I gave notice of introduction earlier today so I think that sets the timeline where we're going on it.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add as well that on Saturday, which is December 1st, we are raising minimum wage from 9.75 to \$10 an hour, which will offer significant benefit for low-income people in our province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people were surprised two weeks ago to hear a leak from the minister's paid luncheon about the content of the bill that we're about to see next week. And he appears to be tabling it next week and we look forward to it. But what was tabled this week shows yet another surprise for the people of Saskatchewan. In the government's mid-term report the minister says he needs another \$500,000 for the cost of developing this bill, but, Mr. Speaker, in committee on May 7th the minister said there wouldn't be any extra costs.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister say the labour bill's development wouldn't cost the taxpayer and now we see

exactly the opposite?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the member that we try to do things in the most cost-effective method possible. We chose, following the month of May, to have a fairly extensive consultation. It required a significant amount of advertising, and in fact the advertising was very successful. It generated some 3,800 responses.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we held a number of minister's advisory committee meetings. I think there was six or seven of those meetings. Mr. Speaker, the people that attended those meetings had their costs, their travel and hotel . . . [inaudible] . . . They were all-day meetings. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have participated in that process.

The information that was gleaned at that was valuable and was productive. And a lot of things that were there will, when the members see the bill next week, were things that found their way into the bill. So I would like to thank them for it. And the money that was spent was very good value, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, let's review *Hansard*. This minister earlier this week loved to quote me and I found that interesting, but let's go back to *Hansard* again. On May 7th I asked the minister very clearly — and I quote, I quote myself — I say, "I'm wondering, what are the costs? What are the staffing implications for this?" To which the minister replied, the minister opposite, and I quote, "We will add, during the process, four temporary persons that will be, the cost of which will be absorbed within the existing budget."

Mr. Speaker, that doesn't sound like good planning, doesn't sound like spending \$500,000 more taxpayer dollars to me. Why did the minister say the costs would be absorbed, and now he needs over a half a million dollars, taxpayer dollars, to be spent on his most extreme and now expensive labour legislation?

[10:45]

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the member opposite for his ability to quote himself in the House. I think if he looks about and casts about, there may be other members he wishes to quote, but I leave it to him to pick who he wishes to make his quotes from. And I'm pleased that he's looking through *Hansard* and looking at the different things that were said, the representations that were made.

I would like to advise the House and the member opposite that the bill will be introduced next week. We've gone through a very extensive consultation. We've received some 3,800 responses to that. People made written responses. People contacted us. I've met with a number of people, and, Mr. Speaker, there is some costs incurred in that, but the money is

money well-spent. And we believe when the bill is presented next week that the member opposite, I'm sure, will look at it and he may want to quote himself again, but he'll be very pleased with the result.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister opposite would talk about the consultation meetings with his advisory group, but not one single public consultation meeting was held. And a single public consultation meeting might have cost the province money, but the minister refused time and time again to hold these meetings. And the minister might have spent money paying overtime for his staff to write the bill, but we know from his own leaks that he's doing away with overtime regulations. So surely he wouldn't have required that.

Now the only reason he's spending \$500,000 and more is because when it comes to labour laws, the Sask Party can't be straight with the public. They didn't talk about the law in the election and people didn't vote for it. And they didn't vote for the Sask Party to waste half a million dollars to develop the most extreme labour laws in the country.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party dragging this process to literally the last days, the last days of session? Why are they afraid of public scrutiny on this bill?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. In the hon. member's question, he's referencing what the people of Saskatchewan voted for in the last election. Mr. Speaker, I think the people of this province voted for a plan to keep Saskatchewan growing, and I think they voted for a government that was going to insist on balanced budgets for the people of this province, underpinning that growth agenda.

And today in the editorial of the *Leader-Post*, we see some response to that because they've looked, this paper's looked at BC and Alberta and some other provinces and have some things to offer. They say, contrast Saskatchewan with the gloomy news out of British Columbia Wednesday. The BC government said its current-year deficit will increase to \$1.47 billion. Alberta's swelling deficit will hit \$3 billion this year, Manitoba is \$440 million in the hole, Ontario is \$13 billion deficit, and the federal government has a \$26 billion deficit. Here in the province of Saskatchewan, including consultation investment, a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. And more importantly, the editorial goes on to say, "Compared with what's going on around the nation — and globally, for that matter — Saskatchewan is on another fiscal planet . . ."

Members opposite seem to be on another planet as well. It's a negative place. We invite them to come back down to earth. Come back to Saskatchewan — the only balanced budget in the Dominion of Canada.

The Speaker: — Before ministerial statements, I would ask for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Thank you. Seated in the Speaker's gallery, I would like to introduce a couple of staff members from the Legislative Assembly Services from member services: Diane Giesinger and Portia Borja, sitting up in the gallery. And I would ask members to welcome them to their Assembly.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Support for Low-Income Workers

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is doing more to support low-income workers. Effective December 1st of this year, the minimum wage will be increasing to \$10 an hour, with a corresponding minimum call-out pay of \$30. This will be the fifth increase to the minimum wage under this government for a total increase of nearly 26 per cent since 2007. This increase will bring Saskatchewan in line with the average minimum wage among all Canadian provinces.

However the minimum wage is only one part of our commitment to supporting low-income workers. Since 2007, increases to the basic personal tax exemption, the child tax credit, and the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit have removed more than 114,000 people from the tax rolls. As a result, full-time minimum wage earners of Saskatchewan will have the third highest after-tax income of any province in Canada. Mr. Speaker, as we've laid out in Saskatchewan's plan for growth, our goal is to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

In 2011, Saskatchewan's real GDP [gross domestic product] growth was the second best in the country at 4.8 per cent. Our workforce grew by over 20,000 to an all-time high of nearly 550,000, and Saskatchewan is once again expected to be among the national leaders in economic growth in 2013 and 2014.

Saskatchewan's economy is performing very well right now, and we believe everyone should benefit from the economic prosperity our province is enjoying. Workers deserve a competitive wage that reflects the increases in the cost of living. We appreciate the working women and men of Saskatchewan and the contributions that they make to our province. That is why we believe that this is an appropriate increase that will help minimum wage earners keep up with the cost of living and reflect a balanced, fair, and reasonable approach in support of low-income earners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the minister for sending over a copy in time for . . . Yes, I did get the copy for the minimum wage increase that will happen December 1st. And many folks will be clearly looking forward to that. And I know that there is some 10,000 folks, I understand, that that wage is affected by, and of course there are those that will be driven up because of that as well.

I do want to say though, I do want to make sure there's some clarity on the piece here. The government often says, talks about the fifth increase under the government. I suppose in some ways that's correct, but our government caused many of those wage increases to happen and were set in place when they took over the reins.

But I think this is an important piece of work. We were clearly embarrassed as a province when we sunk to the bottom of the ranking in terms of minimum wage, and so it was important that we'd get it up. The next challenge and the most important challenge will be that we wait to see whether or not minimum wage is indexed. That is the piece that's really critical, and it'll be interesting what we consider a benchmark. But that'll be for another day to debate. But we're very happy to see that this is in place right now.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to have the opportunity to respond to this. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82 — *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance, first reading of Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan 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. Mr. Krawetz: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Second Bridge for Prince Albert

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and move the following motion:

That this Assembly calls on the government to build a second bridge for Prince Albert.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly we have a number of debates. A number of things are said. And certainly I think there's been a fair amount said on this side of the House in terms of responding to Prince Albert and region and the Build a Second Bridge campaign. What we haven't heard a lot about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a clear plan on the part of the members opposite when it comes to meeting this need that is being very clearly stated on the part of Prince Albert and region.

We have a government that campaigned in 2007 for being ready for growth. They talk about the Saskatchewan advantage. They talk about the importance of the way the government can help out around infrastructure in terms of making sure that you've got the vital tools in the tool kit for people across this province to realize the abundant opportunity that exists in economy and society in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And certainly when it comes to what's happening with the bridge situation in Prince Albert, the vital aspect of the bridge to moving people back and forth through this gateway of the North, Prince Albert, you'd think that this would be a natural for the attention of members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

But we don't hear that clear response. We don't hear a clear plan coming forward. What we do see instead is continued trouble on the Diefenbaker bridge and the way that . . . this summer in terms of the way that that backed traffic up coming and going, Mr. Speaker, and the hardship that that posed not just for residents in Prince Albert and region and the way that, you know, such a beautiful part of the creation of Saskatchewan, the way it as a city and a region, relies on that vital connector, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In terms of the trouble and the hardship and the delays that were caused in terms of moving people and goods across that bridge in and out of the gateway of the North, you'd think that again, Mr. Speaker, there'd be a clear response, not just on the part of the government opposite, Mr. Speaker, but on the part of members from Prince Albert and Prince Albert region. And of course I'm thinking of members like Prince Albert Carlton, Prince Albert Northcote, Saskatchewan Rivers; but also adjacent members, Mr. Speaker, right through that forest fringe. And they know the importance of this vital piece of infrastructure for, you know, just living a good life in the city of Prince Albert and surrounding region, but again in terms of the rhetoric that we've heard around being ready for growth and making sure that we're realizing the abundant economic opportunities that exist here in the province and — I would remind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the House — the North.

Last week we had a debate that related to some opportunities that exist in the mining sector, and certainly in terms of what's happening in the resource sector as it relates to northern Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of getting those goods to market, in terms of people moving back and forth to work in the industry and to make sure that they've got the people on the mine site, people doing the valuable work around surveying, people that are servicing those valuable sectors in terms of transportation — especially, Mr. Speaker, as relates to trucking — all of those things are poorly served if you haven't got that vital piece of infrastructure, missing in action or hobbled by the actions of this government by not responding clearly to the situation as relates to making sure the Diefenbaker bridge is well functioning.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Prince Albert, certainly there's a council in the city of Prince Albert. They are very clear in terms of the need in that community for a second bridge, not just to make sure the Diefenbaker bridge is up and running but also to ensure that there's a second bridge so that again it takes some of the pressure off that bottleneck but also is, you know, not just a vital piece of infrastructure for P.A. [Prince Albert] and region but for the North indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's one thing to talk about being ready for growth. It's another thing to talk about the Saskatchewan advantage. But if you're not putting the pieces in place to make that happen, then you're not going to be realizing that potential, and economy suffers and communities suffer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In terms of the committee to build a second bridge, in terms of the great work that is being done in terms of making that case across not just P.A. and region but across the province, Mr. Speaker, there's a pretty interesting website, buildasecondbridge.com. And this website is replete with stories about the urgency of this situation and the need for this, again this vital piece of infrastructure. And again, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. And when it comes to walking the walk, making sure that that bridge is up and running, making sure that you've got adequate transportation to and fro across the river, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . And again it's not just a matter of people commuting in from Spruce Home or pick your community on the other side, Mr. Speaker. It's a matter of how P.A. can live up to its title as Gateway of the North.

[11:00]

And again, Mr. Speaker, there's a tremendous opportunity in terms of economy. There's a tremendous opportunity in terms of people realizing their labour potential, people realizing income potential. And a lot of that has to do with the resource sector and a lot of that has to do with making sure that you're not just incenting or working with the industry to make sure that those kind of investments go forward, but there's a part that government has to play around infrastructure as well. And in the case of the bridge, Mr. Speaker, we see that in very bold relief.

In terms of other infrastructure needs throughout the North, we think about the promises made by members opposite in terms of the road to Wollaston, and again a community that is very significantly dependent on whether or not goods can flow in and out of that community and the way that road connects the communities of Wollaston and Black Lake to those opportunities that exist throughout the North, Mr. Speaker. It's another example of, again, members opposite talking the talk but not walking the walk or in this case, Mr. Speaker, putting out the press release and then sort of nodding off at the wheel or forgetting about their promise altogether.

But the people in those communities don't forget, Mr. Speaker. They realize the urgency and they bring those issues forward. And if they're not going to be given voice in the government caucus, if they're not going to be given voice in the government cabinet — which I would note, Mr. Speaker; the city of Prince Albert and region are absent from that cabinet table — in terms of, and again which is in itself a peculiar arrangement, Mr.

Speaker, in the way that such a vital community and region is absent from the discussions at the cabinet table and the decisions that are made. It begs the commitment of the government opposite in terms of living up to the rhetoric around being ready for growth.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of being ready for growth, it's not a highly theoretical concept. It's about real, tangible tools that you can put in the hands of Saskatchewan people to realize advantage in the economy. And the bridge, it's not just us saying that, Mr. Speaker. It's not just SARM passing a resolution in support of a second bridge unanimously, Mr. Speaker. It's not just different groups saying it. It's the community itself that is saying that, this is a priority for us.

We want to work with the federal government certainly, Mr. Speaker. We've got 13 Conservative members of parliament in this province and the way that they're able to do all kinds of different things. But when it comes to something that's vital and real and important to a community like Prince Albert and to the whole of the North, Mr. Speaker, and the way it connects this province and realizes economic opportunity, again we don't hear anything from the 13 Conservative members of parliament. But nor do we hear from members opposite that pressure being applied to their federal cousins, to their oftentimes fellow party members, Mr. Speaker.

So again there's a leadership role that needs to be undertaken here. There's some listening that needs to take place in terms of responding to Prince Albert and region very clearly demonstrating that this is a priority for the community and for the region, and there's a job to be done in terms of bringing together the different partners that need to be brought to bear in a circumstance like this, particularly the federal government, Mr. Speaker. But that leadership role traditionally has gone to the provincial government. And certainly we've seen the government talk about leadership on the other side, Mr. Speaker, in terms of various other files. When that happens, we like to, we like to . . . We welcome that, Mr. Speaker. We are thankful for it.

But you know, before I get too far down the road of praise there, Mr. Speaker, it's also their job and it's their work. It's their responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan to provide that leadership, to come together to listen to a community like Prince Albert, to listen to the adjacent communities, Mr. Speaker, to listen to the way that the bridge situation in the city of Prince Albert affects not just P.A. and region but the whole of the North, Mr. Speaker. And if that, if that falls on ears that will not hear on the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, we'll keep bringing this forward. We'll keep bringing this issue to the attention of the House, and we'll keep working with the community, with the people in Prince Albert, with other groups like SARM that have endorsed this project, Mr. Speaker. We're going to keep working with them. And I guess if the members opposite, you know, if they'll come along, so much the better.

If they'll move beyond . . . The member from P.A. Carlton referred to a second bridge as inevitable, Mr. Speaker, in earlier debates on the subject, and I guess we'd like to see a little more urgency in the inevitability. We'd like to see those members stand up and say are they in support of a second bridge in the city of Prince Albert. We'd like to see that, Mr. Speaker. We'd like to see

them. If that's not the case, we'd like to see them explain how that's not a priority for the people of Saskatchewan, again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of not just the P.A. and community, though that's certainly important in and of itself, but again there's a broader provincial consideration in terms of this key piece of infrastructure that is not going served, that is being poorly served by this government's lack of response and its management when it comes to making sure that the Diefenbaker bridge is working in and of itself, but also to heed the calls from around the province, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the importance of a second bridge.

Again, Mr. Speaker, to get goods to market, you need a reliable transportation system. To get people to opportunities, you need that same reliable transportation system. To have Prince Albert and region living their full potential in terms of that being that Gateway to the North, you need that being backed up by not just words, but by deeds on the part of the government.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we stand here today to say, how long will it take the people of Prince Albert and the people of Saskatchewan in this case, Mr. Speaker, to get a fair hearing, to get a positive response from the members opposite? And if they're not getting that positive response, Mr. Speaker, you know, I wish them luck in explaining that. Because certainly I think the case has been quite well made in terms of the community, the region, and again in terms of other bodies coming on board in support of this program. But I think as well, Mr. Speaker, there's some reckoning the members opposite would have to undertake with themselves in terms of, you know, how straightforward is it being with the people of Saskatchewan to say we're going to come forward on a growth plan; we're going to be ready for growth.

But again, Mr. Speaker, that takes more than a few good speeches. That takes more than a few good ad campaigns. That takes giving the tools to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan have the tools to get the job done. And one of the primary tools that they're calling out for in the tool kit of Prince Albert and region, Mr. Speaker, is a second bridge in Prince Albert, you know, leaving aside the sort of botching that has gone on with the Diefenbaker bridge situation and the way that that has impacted on not just lives and that daily commute for many people in Prince Albert and region, but the way that that affects the overall economy of certainly the North, but of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm going to be joined in this debate, Mr. Speaker, by my colleagues from the North, my colleague from Cumberland, my colleague from Athabasca, who again on a weekly basis have a pretty acute appreciation of the importance of this piece of infrastructure, what it means to lives, to businesses, to economy, to society in again not just Prince Albert and region, Mr. Speaker, but for the North as well. And again if we're going to talk about realizing the tremendous opportunities in this province, it's not just talking the talk; you've got to walk the walk. So I so move:

That this Assembly calls on the government to build a second bridge for Prince Albert.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

That this Assembly calls on the government to build a second bridge for Prince Albert.

Is it the pleasure of the . . . I recognize the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand up today and take part in this debate, a debate which of course our party recognizes as part of a bigger, encompassing infrastructure package, a picture that we inherited a massive deficit. We've said it before. We'll continue saying that, Mr. Speaker. Because in 2007 when we formed government, we became acutely aware that there were many needs across this province, not just in our highways infrastructure and bridges. We talk about things like education facilities, hospitals and, as such, revenue sharing for the municipalities, Mr. Speaker. So this is a great opportunity for myself to take part in this debate, to highlight some of the things that we've done as a government but focusing on where we listen to municipalities and how we act and our relationship with them in a case such as this.

Now we do know that there is a partnership. And as the minister has clearly articulated in his questions, answers, and in the media, this isn't just a situation where the government has a look at a possible need for a second bridge. We go to the partnership model where we've worked with and will continue working with the city of Prince Albert and the two local RMs [rural municipality] around Prince Albert as well and have a steering committee to look at the functionality of the current bridge and looking at the possibility for a need for a second bridge.

Now within that context, Mr. Speaker, we have a certain expertise, to be sure, within the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. But we took that opportunity and we will continue to take the opportunity to go to experts that have more in-depth knowledge of how and when a bridge should be constructed to service a geographical and economical trading area, Mr. Speaker.

So one of those things that we definitely want to look at, along with other things such as timing and the need, is the actual concept of where would the bridge go if a bridge was to be constructed in or around Prince Albert. How would it service the economy of the area in the North, as the member opposite's talked about as well, which we are acutely aware that there are resource sector opportunities that will become more available as the years go on? That's why we talk about the need and the timing of a second bridge if one is to be built, Mr. Speaker.

Again we saw, during the campaign of 2011, a very heated campaign where at times we saw the missing link from the leadership debate video that I talked about — was in Prince Albert I think on three or four occasions — always talking about the need for how they would fund another bridge crossing in Prince Albert area, making some very pricey promises that of course at the time I was the minister of municipalities, realizing that there was a lot of lofty goals that they were projecting had they formed government. Luckily they didn't. Otherwise we'd be into a massive deficit in this province, for sure a \$5 billion deficit.

So again the responsible part of governing is to look at using

experts from outside our own ministries to help give us that particular advice moving forward, Mr. Speaker. So when we look at the overall concept of infrastructure needs and demands in this province, we have to look at what we've always campaigned on — within a balanced budget concept, Mr. Speaker. And one of those things that we have are major commitments that we have to certain institutions and infrastructure across this province, but we have to look at what's happening across with growth, across this province with our growth that we're seeing. You know, we definitely have these experts that'll be telling us across this province where there are increased demands based on population increases, economic development and activity as well, Mr. Speaker. So I mean that's one of those things where we go forward and we look at prioritizing needs in this province.

We definitely know right now that with the leadership of the previous minister of Highways and Infrastructure and the current leadership under this current minister, there is the urban highway connector program that we have in this province. It's a great tool where municipalities can negotiate with the Ministry of Highways, talking about how there can be provincial involvement to ensure that the provincial road system that services the economy of this province is maintained and utilized.

And one thing that we saw initially of course was there was this need to maintain the current bridge in Prince Albert, which we heard through various reports there was issues coming forward. Of course we all know that about a year ago there was a crack identified in one of the girders. And immediately the provincial government and the minister of Highways and Infrastructure came forward and said, we have to fix that, absolutely, because there's a safety issue, Mr. Speaker. So for us, what we did is we had to look at studying what the problem was, getting experts involved. And we see today that the bridge is currently — I believe, if I'm not mistaken — is in the last stages of this repair, and I might add a \$4.2 million repair that this province is taking the leadership to pay for that.

Now what's interesting about that particular statement, Mr. Speaker, is not too many years ago, about nine years ago when the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] government was in power, Mr. Speaker, the bridge in Prince Albert had to have some work done. And it required the top surface of the bridge, the paved area, to be torn up to get to the structural part of the bridge for the inspection and repair.

[11:15]

Now there's a 1958 agreement that was in place whereby the city of Prince Albert was responsible for the structural repairs to the bridge. Well at that time there was a mayor who thought that, you know what, to get to the structural damage, they had to tear off the pavement on top. So to replace and repair that surface area, Mr. Speaker, all they asked for, all they asked for was that the structural 50/50 component agreement be extended to the surface of the bridge, Mr. Speaker.

Well ironically, I don't know why . . . But I mean I know the member from Cumberland and the member from Athabasca have to use that bridge occasionally. They have to go across the bridge. And I'm sure they realize, as do the rest of us that cross

any bridge in this province, that to get across the bridge you have to have pavement, a surface area to drive your vehicle across, Mr. Speaker.

So the ludicrous argument back in 2003 was that the government of the day, the NDP government, the minister and the leader at the time, said that they don't believe at all that they should be responsible to pay for the surface of the bridge. They paid for half of the structural component costs but not the surface. Well that's fine, Mr. Speaker, if you can somehow take your vehicle and stay within the actual girders of the bridge and not have your vehicle fall off that girder system and, you know, not to worry about a surface area to drive on. But of course, through the opposition efforts at the time, our Premier, the current Premier that was the leader of the opposition at the time, and the critic, it was brought to the attention, Mr. Speaker, that that was a very interesting argument that the minister of Highways at the time, that they wouldn't pay for half of the cost of the surface of the bridge. They would help with the structural component based on the law of the time, Mr. Speaker.

So one thing as a government, we took leadership in the urban highway connector program I spoke about, and now we will actually fund 100 per cent of the repairs to the Diefenbaker bridge. One thing that the experts are telling us now is that because of the current \$4.2 million expenditure that we're putting into repair of the bridge, that means that the taxpayers of Prince Albert are no longer responsible to have to raise mill rates to cover off 50 per cent cost share. That's saving people of Prince Albert millions of dollars. It's simple math, Mr. Speaker.

So one thing about this current structural repair is that now the experts are saying that this bridge, the Diefenbaker bridge, will be structurally sound till 2040 and beyond, Mr. Speaker. So therefore we see the safety component addressed within this government. We're also going to see the maintain, inspection regime that this government believes is very important to ensure that any other damage that would ever come across is going to be managed and quickly dealt with. There are other repairs that the city of Prince Albert from a 2010 report say are necessary, about \$7 million worth. And they are more than welcome, as they realize that they can apply to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure under the UHC, urban highway connector program, to have portions of that or all that cost based on a negotiated timeline and schedule, Mr. Speaker.

So one thing that was actually very critical to this government is that we had this particular urban highway connector, this integral part of our highway system to maintain the economy of the area in the North, repaired to the fact that we could get primary weights up so we can have the goods and services flowing north and south in and through Prince Albert as well, Mr. Speaker. And we've done that.

So there's one thing that was interesting though. I've referenced the fact that the previous minister of Highways, Mark Wartman, had some interesting comments to say about the bridge. He said in a quote, Mr. Speaker, “. . . the bridge isn't [isn't] an integral part of Highway 2, but merely an urban highway connector road exclusively within municipal jurisdiction.”

You know, it's kind of puzzling, Mr. Speaker, that they would say it isn't an integral part of the system because sure you can

get across the river at other crossings, Mr. Speaker, but Prince Albert has a major flow through north and south. So I'm not sure why Mr. Wartman would have said that because, I don't know, maybe he never crossed that river ever, being from the South, Mr. Speaker. Maybe he was just focused on the other part of the province. But one thing that he claims, it's an urban highway connector. But the previous government did nothing to help fund or sustain that particular part of infrastructure, where our government stepped up upon forming government in 2007 and negotiated those deals, Mr. Speaker, which is very important to talk about that.

You know, I'm sure there'll be time in the future here, I'm sure I'll get a couple of questions, Mr. Speaker, by standing up today and taking part in the debate. I look forward to that because I have a lot of interesting facts that I can bring forward, Mr. Speaker, and answer these questions as they're posed. Again, Mr. Speaker, in the totality of infrastructure needs in this province, everything will be considered.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in the debate and make some comments about the second bridge. I support the motion. I support the cause. I think, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people are weighing in on the second bridge to Prince Albert, and there's many different reasons. And I know we're hearing a lot of comments from not only the leadership, the community member in Prince Albert and area. And I guess we could talk about the residents. We could talk about the industry. We could talk about tourism. I'm going to go over a lot of different areas that people rely on the bridge, you know, of Prince Albert.

Now a bridge should make sure that it's safe. Number one, we have to make sure a bridge is safe, infrastructure is there for residents. In a province that is doing as good as our province is, we hear the government constantly talking about the growth plan and all the different things that this government has done. And they're taking the credit for that. And that's fine if they want to spin it the way they want to spin. Go ahead. That does very little for the people of Prince Albert and area who utilize that bridge to make sure, whether it's business, whether it's the tourism sector, whether it's I guess bedroom communities of P.A. that rely on P.A. to go in every day for work, our children who have to travel that bridge to go to school to get a good education. P.A. offers a good education. We know that. The people in that community do a great job. There are good leaders in that community trying to make sure that residents get what they're entitled to, residents have a safe bridge, have a way to get across the river every day.

And, Mr. Speaker, we see very little, very little action from the two MLAs that represent P.A. and the MLAs in the area. What are they saying? Nothing. Very little. Nothing. They have to get up and start fighting for Prince Albert, for the residents who voted for them. I may not have voted for the Sask Party members, but the people that did expect them to stand up and fight for them. So those members need to get up and start fighting for P.A. They need to stand up for the people of Prince Albert and area to make sure they have a safe bridge. And they need to get them a second bridge, and if they want some ammunition how to do that, go back home and talk to the

people who are suffering with not having a second bridge.

Now let's make it very clear. You know, you can go on the doorsteps, and you can tell people all the things you're going to do and how you're going to fight for them. And you could tell the people of Prince Albert, yes, the priorities of Prince Albert . . . The third largest city in our province does not have the support of the MLAs, the Sask Party government, to build them a second bridge.

What is going on when you have a government that says we have a balanced budget? They like to PR [public relations] spin. Everything is going good. They don't want to talk about the real facts. If that's the case, then why isn't P.A. getting a second bridge? The growth, you talk about a growth plan. Well maybe somebody needs to stick up, and that's why we're sticking up for Prince Albert.

I mean, being a member of this Legislative Assembly and being raised in Prince Albert, I have a lot of family, a lot of ties. Being that the North uses the bridge, not only in the mining industry, it's crucial for goods and services to be transported to the North. You talk about the local business people in Prince Albert who rely on that bridge to haul their, I guess their goods, whether it's heavy equipment. You look at some of the cost that we're hearing from people that are having to go and transport their goods in a route that is costing them thousands, hundreds, and some of them the time, labour.

So there's a lot of issues going on here, Mr. Speaker. There's the right thing to do. And sometimes, you know, why, why can't the members from P.A. stand up? We don't hear much from them in this House about the second bridge. You don't hear them in their communities talking. I haven't heard, very little. They're very quiet. People are asking of them, why are they so quiet? You know, it's interesting.

Well you know what? We have to move a motion here in the House. The official opposition has to move a motion in this House to get a 75-minute debate to get the members from Prince Albert and area to get up and speak. Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Why should the opposition have to be the ones to have to stick up for the people of Prince Albert? Because their own members will not, and surrounding area will not stick up and fight for the people of Prince Albert with the current Sask Party government. They should be ashamed of themselves. They were elected to represent the people and fight and bring the concerns forward, and they are not doing that. They are silent. They are quiet. That is not respect. And you need to respect the people of Prince Albert. You have to make sure that you're voicing their concerns, whether it's the business people, whether it's the students in the outlying communities that come into Prince Albert on that bridge daily.

We look at the tourism sector. We look at in the summertime what went on, the traffic jams. We've seen the lineups on the media. You see a lot of talk, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, in the coffee shops, the conversations at the dinner table. What's going on here? Where are our members that we elected to represent us, to argue for us? How come they're not speaking out? They are quiet. They are told what to do. They are backbenchers, and they will say . . .

I'm going to tell the people in Prince Albert, remember this. When they were on your door asking for your support, and you gave them the support — I give you that; that was your right — there's nothing wrong with saying to them, because you have not stuck up for P.A., the next election we are going to show you. We are going to send you a message. You cannot take Prince Albert for granted no more. We're going to fight. They're going to give them notice. The people of Prince Albert are giving notice, Mr. Speaker. They're going to give them notice to the members and surrounding area very clearly. Wait until the election and see what's going to happen.

Not only are business paying a price, students, health. A lot of issues are being raised. We're going to make sure that we hold . . . And I'm going to remind the people of Prince Albert what went on. And when you elected Sask Party members, did they fight for you? Remember that when you go to the ballot. Remember when they're on your door. Remind them. Get a hold of them. Tell them to start fighting.

Mr. Speaker, I think a lot of frustration's going on because people with the traffic jam ups. You look at the lineup. Why is that that you have the lineup kilometres, kilometres, and row and a row and traffic, traffic? If you look at it during the summertime, when the closure of that bridge . . . Here's a tourism sector trying to do the great job, and the tourism sector does do a great job. That industry that used to be at arm's-length, I give them credit. They did a great job. And this summer in P.A., we've seen the lineup.

And you know, you see the different groups weighing in on this. And SARM has got involved, and they're going to support a second bridge for Prince Albert. So here's the campaign. They've started a campaign, and I wish them well. And we're going to be working with them. We're going to be working with the leadership, the business people, and the community of Prince Albert and area to fight for a second bridge because their members won't stick up and fight for them. But this opposition will do that. I guarantee that. It's in our heart. We're going to fight.

We've heard the concerns from people and they're saying clearly, the question goes back to this. Why are the members from Prince Albert not arguing, fighting? Where are they in the cabinet? Where are they at the caucus table? What are they telling them? We hear spin. We hear about all the good things — the growth plan, all of the balanced budgets, all the good things. And that's good. If our province is doing good, that's good.

[Applause]

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, they can clap. Go ahead, clap. Clap. That's good. Good. I'm glad that they're clapping. You know why? Why don't they give Prince Albert a second bridge? If things are so good and they're so happy and proud, then why don't they stand up for Prince Albert, the residents, the business people and give them a second bridge that they need to make sure?

Now you talk about safety, and we talk about the industry and the mining, the jobs, the freight, and the trucking companies. There's a lot of people being impacted by not having a second

bridge for Prince Albert, by having a bridge constantly, I guess, covered off to two lanes, so you have one lane going each way. It's unacceptable. And the government can sit here and say, oh yes, we're covering all the cost. We'll see at the end of the . . . what really goes on.

But I commend, I commend the leadership of Prince Albert, the mayor and council, the leaders that are leading the charge on this, the support that they're getting from SARM, the support that they're getting from a lot of different groups. And I think the chamber of commerce in Prince Albert is weighing in on this, and they're giving support.

We've seen a lot of issues and a lot of concerns. And I guess the residents of P.A. are the ones that are suffering daily as they commute to Prince Albert.

Prince Albert has a lot to offer. It is growing. It is doing a great thing. But they need a government who'll respond. And you can't keep spinning and talking about the great things in the province if so many communities are left behind, whether it's the North that utilize that. And you look at the shopping that goes on. The people that commute from the North to shop in P.A., the gateway to the North, it's clear it works. We have a good partnership with First Nations, the Métis communities in the North, and industry utilized that bridge. They do an excellent job.

[11:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into this debate this afternoon in regards to the motion from the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. Mr. Speaker, I've been listening with interest to the comments from the two members who have spoken so far, the member from Cumberland and the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. And, Mr. Speaker, no one's denying that we need sound access in P.A. across the bridge.

The members have argued we need a second bridge, and the members have also . . . The member from Cumberland was talking about the reduced traffic flow. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there's one thing that's really interesting in all of this debate so far. One has to wonder what happened over the last 16 years in maintenance and repair of the Diefenbaker bridge? One would have to ask what the previous government did and where they put their funds or where they established their priorities in maintaining that bridge, Mr. Speaker. One would have to wonder where the member from Athabasca was. In fact I believe the member from Athabasca happened to be a Highways minister at one time. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's any business person, anyone involved in the business community and the construction trade and even our boards of education are well aware of the fact that in order to maintain facilities, maintain capital budgets, you need to maintain and keep maintaining the maintenance or look after the maintenance and keep bridges, in this case, bridges in repair.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've been over that P.A. bridge, the Diefenbaker bridge, on numerous occasions. And there have been many occasions, prior to the fact that we found that there

was some significant maintenance needed to take place, where traffic flowed very efficiently, whether it was in the middle of summer in tourism season or any other season.

So I guess, Mr. Speaker, my question to the members opposite is what did they do to ensure the maintenance of the Diefenbaker bridge? So rather than a reduced flow and the reduced wait to be able to cross the bridge, we now would have had that four-way traffic which would, I think, Mr. Speaker, once the bridge's maintenance is back and the bridge is back up to speed, the traffic will flow, and this issue of a second bridge will disappear. Mr. Speaker, it's not just about the P.A. bridge. It's all about Saskatchewan growing. It's all about priorities in Saskatchewan. It's all about funding of capital infrastructure, and capital infrastructure includes highways maintenance and repair.

Mr. Speaker, in five short years, this provincial government has put over \$3.1 billion into provincial highway infrastructure and repair in the province, 73 per cent higher than the NDP spent in their last five years of government.

And if you talk about highway maintenance and repair, I can speak about one highway. I can speak about a corridor from White City through to the Manitoba border — excellent highway until the community of Kipling, and then a deteriorated piece of road that had been there for years. And thanks to the previous two ministers, we now have that construction finally taking place in the province in that area, and we'll have a corridor that people will be able to travel on from White City through to the Manitoba border, and not just the Manitoba border but to Kenosee Lake. It'll impact tourism. It'll impact the economy in that area. Mr. Speaker, it is a sound indication of what this government, the commitment this government has made to highways and infrastructure.

And it's not just No. 48. Just recently the Minister of Highways announced a number of new projects in the province of Saskatchewan and some additional cash injections to address that infrastructure, and not only are we talking highways. Coming back to the Diefenbaker bridge, Mr. Speaker, the original agreement was 50 per cent funding with 50 per cent from the city of P.A. Mr. Speaker, what has happened over the last two, three years? \$4.2 million directly from the province, 100 per cent, and that commitment to 100 per cent to make sure we get the bridge up and running and flowing and ensure that it's a safe piece, a safe bridge that people can travel on and that people can commute upon to the North.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say as well, given some of the challenges we have faced within a growing province, just the other day the Minister of Finance brought us up to date on the mid-term financial reports, and the Minister of Finance acknowledged that resource revenues had shrunk this past year in the province of Saskatchewan. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? Despite reducing the burden on the personal income tax payee in the province of Saskatchewan, despite reducing the tax on . . . or the responsibility of property owners to fund education, Mr. Speaker, we have seen phenomenal growth.

We have seen there are more people working in this province today. We have construction companies moving forward. We have advancement in the oil and gas sector in this province, in

the mining sector, Mr. Speaker. And as a result of that, that has generated additional taxes which have offset the resource revenues and have allowed the Premier and the ministers in this province and this government to move forward with its commitment to capital expenditures including highway maintenance and repair.

Mr. Speaker, if the previous government hadn't been so intent on reducing services in rural Saskatchewan, we would probably be not having this debate today. If the previous government had not determined that they were going to close 52 hospitals, and specifically the Plains Health Centre — and now we see a new facility going up on the edge of the city to address the health needs in the province of Saskatchewan — we wouldn't be having this discussion today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the closure of schools. Well I guess, Mr. Speaker, if you have no vision for growth and all your expectations are that the province isn't going to grow and that the numbers of students are going to decrease, I guess you will not spend the money on the infrastructure needed to provide the services.

Mr. Speaker, in five short years this government has made a firm commitment to address the needs of the people in Saskatchewan, to work to address their health care needs, to work towards . . . In fact, the Minister of Education just the other day, \$6.6 billion in the hands of school boards so that they could address the challenges that they were facing, the pressures that they were facing because of the increased enrolment in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I'd far rather live in this province today where there is a well-managed budget and a government that is putting forward a plan for growth in the province of Saskatchewan rather than living back in the past where we lived under a stagnant growth and a government had no vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting, truly an interesting debate. I would assume sometimes that members opposite, especially those who had the opportunity to be part of government, must have a hard time standing up and arguing, making some of their arguments, given the fact that they did such an excellent job of taking away from the people of Saskatchewan.

Coming from the rural community, I know what rural Saskatchewan faced and the farming community faced when the Romanow government did away with GRIP [gross revenue insurance program], unilaterally did away with the GRIP program. Didn't put the money into the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. And many cases they were dragged kicking and screaming to the table to put their money forward to address the CAIS program in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have had the privilege since 2007 when the electorate of Saskatchewan, we want to give . . . said to the Saskatchewan Party and the Premier Wall that we want you to move . . . We want to see this province move forward. We're going to put the direction of the province of Saskatchewan in your hands, and we want to see what you're doing. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. We are getting reports every day of how people really appreciate living in this province.

In fact at Agribition just the other day, I was chatting to a young individual, an individual came out from, to bring . . . display his livestock from outside of province and he said, I'm amazed at what's happening in this province. I am amazed at what I am seeing in this province. He said, I used to come to Agribition and it just seemed to be nothing but doom and gloom. And there's just such a positive atmosphere in the province of Saskatchewan right now. And what have we seen in our part of the province, Mr. Speaker? We have seen people from Alberta who've come to Saskatchewan and bought land because of the opportunities they have seen in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there's so much more that a person could say. And one would have to wonder why the opposition would be raising an issue of this nature when if they, in government, had done their job, we would have had a bridge that would've been well maintained, that would not . . . that would be shut down for that significant maintenance right now. And, Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the people of P.A. is 100 per cent to upgrade and bring the Diefenbaker bridge back into full capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to be able to stand here today in the Assembly to give a message to the people of Prince Albert — who I hope are watching the proceeds of the Assembly — to talk to them about one thing that's really, really important to the entire city, and that's to build a second bridge. And the second point I want to raise is to make sure that they do the necessary repairs on the Diefenbaker bridge, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out . . . I want to give a history to the people that might be watching this. A lot of people don't know this, Mr. Speaker. A lot of people don't know this, Mr. Speaker, but when the bridge . . . when the girder on the bridge cracked one and a half inches, the whole structure fell down one and a half inches. Now the engineers are telling the city, had that crack been another inch and a half, another inch and a half, and had the bridge collapsed another inch and a half — because the crack makes the bridge collapse — then you would have had the bridge become a bridge that could not be used safely, Mr. Speaker. It could not be used, it could not be used safely, Mr. Speaker. So the people of Prince Albert were told, you have an inch and a half to spare on that crack on that girder, otherwise there would have been a sure disaster, Mr. Speaker, a sure disaster.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's really, really important here is that we can park all the politics aside, Mr. Speaker. We can put all the politics aside. This is a safety issue for the people of Prince Albert. And we can talk about the \$14 million effect that it has on the economy, a negative effect on the Prince Albert economy, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about that all day. But the people of P.A. are telling the government, the Sask Party government, this point — that that bridge is in dire need of immediate repairs, bring it up to a safety standard, and for crying out loud build a second bridge. That's what they're telling the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

And I notice that the Premier's chirping from his chair. He went to Prince Albert and he was talking to the chamber of

commerce and a group of people. And what he should have said, Mr. Speaker . . . Instead of saying, well, Prince Albert needs a new bridge. That's what he said. Prince Albert needs a new bridge. And, Mr. Speaker, the point is, it was a play on words. He said they needed a new bridge. Why didn't he say, and I'm here today as the Premier to tell you, we're going to build you a new bridge? That last part he did not say, Mr. Speaker.

So you raise expectations of the people of P.A. and then you leave. And now they're all waiting. They're saying, well where is the action plan? I can tell the people of Saskatchewan that there is no action plan, that you're not getting a second bridge because the Sask Party failed you, and they failed you miserably, Mr. Speaker.

The other point that I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that there are not just two sitting MLAs that are being impacted. The member from Shellbrook, the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, the member from Batoche, the members from a number of other different areas — they're all impacted, Mr. Speaker. Why they are impacted? Because the entire region is impacted economically. So all those members have to wake up, shake up, and start doing things for their region. It's not just one little area, Mr. Speaker, that the people of P.A. are concerned about. They're concerned about the entire trading area, Mr. Speaker.

Now what we're hearing, what we're hearing, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister's not making no commitment. They're making no commitment whatsoever on building that second bridge or committing to other dollars to ensure that the traffic is safe to use the bridges in and around Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. Now they're not making no commitment on any front.

Now what the mayor and council in P.A. . . . and I can't say that for certain because I didn't meet with the mayor and council. They have to understand, the Sask Party has to understand is they want that report, the report that was commissioned by the province of Saskatchewan, that Saskatchewan taxpayers paid for. They want their report on the second bridge for Prince Albert, and they want that report ASAP [as soon as possible]. They want to see what the report says, Mr. Speaker. And what does the minister say? The minister says, oh we're not going to have that report until the end of December when everybody is celebrating New Year's and Christmas. That's when we'll unleash, unveil the document.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what the people of P.A. want is they want answers. They want answers now. Now what's going on, Mr. Speaker, is the mayor and council, I think — and I can't speak for them — they are getting awfully tired of the games that are being played. They're getting awfully tired of some of the wordsmithing by the Premier and other backbench MLAs that refuse to stand up and speak for their constituents on this very important issue, Mr. Speaker. They're getting tired of wanting a report that is not forthcoming from the Sask Party, because it is a taxpayer-paid document. They need that report as city planners and city engineers, and city leaders need to see what the report says. Well this government won't release that report to them, Mr. Speaker. They will not release that report to them.

[11:45]

And that's the most important thing that I wanted to add is that they want to be partners in this thing. They want to be able to do what they have to do to be able to position the city well, to be part of the solution. But they can't even do that because the government won't release that report. So the biggest issue that we're getting from Prince Albert, I think is they need to see that report. Can they get the report? And the minister has said no, Mr. Speaker.

Now the worrisome part in this, Mr. Speaker, is that as well it's not only an economical nor is it a public safety issue. Many people in the area, whether it's Shellbrook or whether it's Canwood or whether it's a number of other communities in and around Prince Albert, they access the city for much needed health care services. There's a hospital there that they need to go and get some care, and they also have to go see doctors, and they do a number of other things in Prince Albert. Now what happens if that bridge is further compromised in terms of being safe? Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a huge risk to those people.

It's a huge risk to industry when we hear that NRT [Northern Resources Trucking] trucks that are coming from the mines that use the bridge. And, Mr. Speaker, if that bridge is not safe — and this is my warning to the current minister, to the current Premier, to all those members that I spoke about — if that bridge is not safely repaired, you're putting at risk not just the economy which you're doing now, not just access to health care what you're doing now, but you're putting the huge problem of public safety at risk if that bridge is not repaired properly and a plan to begin the construction of a second bridge is not undertaken immediately, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, is that the mayor and council — I don't know the mayor personally, Mr. Speaker, I know of him and I know the council — when he ran for election, Mr. Speaker, this past city election, he said to the people that I'm going to run as your mayor to get you a second bridge and to make sure that the current bridge is repaired. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, His Worship Mayor Dionne is coming for the Sask Party, and he's not going to stop, Mr. Speaker. He's not going to stop. He's going to hold the member from Prince Albert Carlton to account for his lack of action on this file. He's going to make all the members from around that area account for their lack of action on this file, Mr. Speaker.

As he sees activity happening in other places, the mayor is going to come for the Sask Party. He wants his second bridge that they were promised. And the people of Prince Albert gave him the mandate. They gave him a huge mandate. And this mayor is not going to go away. He's going to be in their face and he's going to be fighting for the people of P.A. And on this side of the Assembly, we finally say, great. Finally somebody's speaking up for P.A. Somebody's fighting for P.A. Somebody is representing P.A. And, Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is it's the mayor standing alone with the council fighting for the second bridge while the rest of the MLAs from that particular area continue to sit on their hands and say nothing and do nothing, Mr. Speaker.

And the big question is, why? Why? There's five to seven seats in that area that are really important to this government. There are five to seven seats, and those five to seven MLAs, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, were given a serious talking-to. They were

given a serious talking-to by their constituents, by some of the local leaders. SARM has made a resolution. I believe SUMA is going to make a resolution as well. There are business people that are impacted, and the entire region is telling these five to seven MLAs in that area, get a commitment for that second bridge. Otherwise there are going to be serious political consequences. And, Mr. Speaker, I think those five to seven MLAs got the message. They got the message all right, Mr. Speaker. We're pretty sure of that.

And I'll tell the people of Prince Albert this — that you have the option. You have the option of turning your backs to the Sask Party candidates at the next election, the same way they've turned their backs on you, on something that's important to the area of Prince Albert. To the business community that finance some of these guys, stop it. Stop the financing. To the people that have voted to reach out to these groups, stop doing that as well. They have betrayed you. They have turned their back on you. And as far as we're concerned, in the official opposition, on the second bridge and the current bridge, we give the Sask Party a big fat F, Mr. Speaker, on this project.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to weigh in to this debate about infrastructure, basically. And you know, as I listen to this, I can remember that the member from Athabasca saying that right after the 2007 election, you know, he said, well you guys are doing good because you've got a billion dollars in the bank that we left you.

And then the Finance critic, the member from Regina Rosemont, decided, well, that wasn't enough. So he said, well, no, no, it's \$2 billion that you guys got left that you can work with. And I don't know where that comes from because he seems to be having a hard time balancing his own leadership campaign. However then the member from Athabasca — not to be outdone, Mr. Speaker — says, oh no. No, no, it's \$3 billion that we left you with. Well in all this money that's being left over, why, Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't they do anything on infrastructure?

They let the infrastructure in this province go downhill. They didn't fix roads. They didn't fix hospitals. They didn't look for schools. But you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they never had a plan for growth. You have a government now that is there that has a plan for growth, has a plan to move this province forward. You know, we're more business friendly.

Heck, I can remember a number of years ago when there was this map out, and this map was showing the line of where all the oil wells were drilled. And it surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, it went right down the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. All the wells were being drilled over there. So needless to say, you know, people from Saskatchewan, the out-migration was going on. Everybody's going to Alberta to work to find meaningful employment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the dinosaurs did not all die on the Alberta side. You know, they didn't. We had oil here too. But here's the catch, Mr. Speaker. Those dinosaurs are pretty

resilient because some of them actually came over here. And that's the NDP are the dinosaurs of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, now, Mr. Speaker. And it's not hard to tell. I think during the, you know, during the past election, the people of Saskatchewan spoke. And they didn't want those dinosaurs there. They only put nine of them over there.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about infrastructure in Saskatchewan and especially in rural Saskatchewan. The NDP, you know, under Roy's revenge, went and they shut down 52 rural hospitals including the Plains. You know, here we are, here we are trying to grow this province. We want people to be coming to this province. There were 80,000 people in the last few years. Like, Mr. Speaker, this is what growth does.

But with growth comes challenges. It's called infrastructure. The NDP, obviously they didn't have that plan for growth because they had all sorts of things that they wanted to do that didn't help growth whatsoever.

An Hon. Member: — They tried to grow potatoes.

Mr. Bradshaw: — And this was brought forward. Yes, they tried to grow potatoes. They had this great growth potential in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Mr. Speaker. You know that private-public ownership that there was nobody in the private end in there. The one where they lost \$35 million, \$35 million. Think of how many roads that could have fixed. Think of how many bridges that could have fixed. Instead of putting that money into infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, because they didn't have a plan for growth, they just sat there and wasted money.

And it wasn't, you know, it wasn't just SPUDCO. Like I mean there's so many of them here that, where they lost like they . . . The NDP actually, their plan for growth was to get into bingo. Whoopee. So they ended up, they spent \$8 million on their mega bingo. Boy, this really helped growth. This really made the infrastructure work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, and speaking of the growth, their leader, their leader over there at the present time, their interim leader, figures the growth in Saskatchewan is a myth, is a myth. Then their federal cousin, he calls growth out here in Western Canada a Dutch disease and thinks that we in Western Canada should be chastised for trying to move all, all of Canada forward.

Mr. Speaker, they off-load it. They talk about infrastructure. They off-loaded everything onto the municipalities. This government, this government believes that those municipalities needed to move, needed to move forward. They needed money for roads. They needed money for bridges. They needed all those things that were there. And Mr. Speaker, this government helped them out by giving them 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax].

You know something, Mr. Speaker? The municipalities of this province are very, very happy that they have a government in place at this time that is moving this province forward and is giving the municipalities the share of the money that they so rightly deserve for the hard-working people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we can sit there and talk about the growth in

Saskatchewan which is happening, and like I said before, which is bringing challenges. But it's far, far better than the decline under that previous administration, where for 16 years they made people go out of this province to get meaningful employment. And I have said it before in this House and I will say it again, my children have now gone through university and have graduated. And our two children are both working in this province, Mr. Speaker. This is a far cry, this is a far cry from under the previous administration when they all went to Alberta or BC to go and work.

Mr. Speaker, the good part about this is, you know, we are having more and more people cheer for the Riders in Saskatchewan than what we've ever had before. You know, you can go across, go out to BC, you can go to Alberta and you'll see, look in their stands when there's a football game being played, and there's a whole bunch of green out there. You want to know why, Mr. Speaker? Those are people who've moved from Saskatchewan out to Alberta and British Columbia. Now those people are coming back to Saskatchewan, finding meaningful employment in Saskatchewan, working here.

Our children are coming out of our schools, and we've got jobs galore. Look at the statistics. Saskatchewan's sitting there with either the lowest or second lowest unemployment. We have people working here. We have to move our infrastructure forward, and, Mr. Speaker, our government is doing this in a very systematic way. We have to spend money on our roads, on our schools, on our health system. And, Mr. Speaker, we can sit there and look at all the things. And things have to be prioritized, things have to be prioritized as to where that money goes.

This government will work under a balanced budget, as we always have, contrary to what some people are saying on the other side. They can't seem to read a financial statement. But this government is working on a fiscal responsibility, unlike the other side, who thought that they could sit there and bake potatoes or make bingo games or actually run dot-com systems. This government doesn't do these foolish things. We have a Saskatchewan-first policy, Mr. Speaker. And that is what we, on this side of the House, are going to work . . .

[12:00]

The Speaker: — Question's up. I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2011 election campaign, the NDP promised to fund only half the cost for a second bridge in Prince Albert. Yet in '03 when the Diefenbaker Bridge needed repairs, the NDP wouldn't even honour the agreement that required the government to pay for 50 per cent of the cost. At the time, Mark Wartman who was Minister of Highways stated, and I quote, "It isn't the government's responsibility. We have a law in terms of municipalities and what they are responsible for and no, I don't think that is something that we are accountable for at this point."

To the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre: how do you expect the people of Prince Albert to trust any commitment you make regarding the Prince Albert bridge because when you

were in government you wouldn't even honour a commitment to fund 50 per cent of the repairs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it interesting that the member participates in this debate in this way. When the people that sent her to this legislature are looking for her to answer the question, does she support a second bridge for Prince Albert, yes or no, she has the opportunity to make that very clear, Mr. Speaker. And she's not doing that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — To the member from Prince Albert Carlton: is the Sask Party not building the bridge because they're broke or because they are simply turning their backs on the great city of Prince Albert? Which is it?

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what this province is going to do, what this member from Prince Albert Carlton and the member from Northcote, Sask Rivers, and surrounding MLAs will do. We will always talk about, within the context of a balanced budget, funding the infrastructure deficit left by that previous government, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're going to do as MLAs and as a government, Mr. Speaker. And let's not forget we're still dealing with a massive deficit across government — health care institutions, educational institutions, roads, bridges. Mr. Speaker, we will always be there for the people in that context.

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

Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP neglected our provincial highways for 16 years while they were in government. Even the member from Athabasca agreed that the New Democratic Party did nothing to repair our province's roads. As a Liberal MLA on May 29th in 1996 he stated, "Saskatchewan highways are a mess and northern Saskatchewan is worse." Over a decade later when the member from Athabasca was serving as Minister of Highways the roads were still, and I quote, "a mess."

To the member from Cumberland: do you agree with your colleague from Athabasca that the NDP let the Saskatchewan highways become, and I quote, "a mess"?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the question. Let me be very clear. The member from Athabasca and myself are very clear. We're going to stick up for the people of Prince Albert. We're going to fight for a second bridge and we're going to make sure we work with the leadership to make sure they get a second bridge. And they're tired of being neglected by the members opposite.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, a question for the member from Prince Albert Carlton. The people of P.A. and region are looking for a government that fixes the problem and not the blame. Does that member have the ability to stand in the House, will he stand in the House today and say, does he support a second bridge for Prince Albert? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I will say is this when it comes to Prince Albert and region — and I will use numbers that these members can find anywhere in our platform and anywhere in our releases — St. Louis bridge, Mr. Speaker, and Highway No. 2 work, \$55.6 million; Highway No. 11 twinning, Mr. Speaker, \$187 million cost shared with the federal government; the water treatment facility in Prince Albert, \$24 million cost shared with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. And also, something I'm very proud to say this government did that the other party did not do, revenue sharing up by 122 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's what this MLA will stand up for day in, day out, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP lost millions of risked dollars in risky out-of-province investments. Let's go down the list. Fifteen million on Channel Lake, 90 million on Navigata, and 35 million on SPUDCO. Yet when it came to honour their commitment to fund at least 50 per cent of the repairs at the Diefenbaker bridge, the minister of Highways at the time, Mark Wartman, said, "I don't think that is something that we are accountable for at this point."

To the member from Cumberland: while you were busy wasting the taxpayers' dollars on risky investments, why did you feel that you weren't accountable to the people of Prince Albert to provide funding for 50 per cent of the cost of the Diefenbaker bridge? I'm dying to know, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't here at the time and didn't get to part in that discussion. But having said that, having said that, you know it's very interesting but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll tell you what I will do, Mr. Speaker, I will . . . Now I'm here and I'm voicing my concern for the P.A. bridge, for a second bridge. I'm backing up the leadership, the chamber, and everyone else that's finally sending a message to this government and their members who are neglecting Prince Albert. We're going to stand up for a bridge in Prince Albert and it's time we do something, and you do something.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask a very simple question to the member from Prince Albert Carlton, and I'll be very, very slow, Mr. Speaker, very slow. All the people of Prince Albert want to know. They don't want a history lesson from a guy who wasn't even here a couple of years ago. They don't want Moosomin or Carrot River defending Prince

Albert there. They want the Prince Albert people to defend Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Now the question I'm going to ask, and I just want a one-word answer: don't give us any of your bafflegab, okay? The question I'm going to ask: will you get the government, the Sask Party government, to commit to building that second bridge, yes or no? Yes or no.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's just take this really slowly for members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Let's just talk about a government that's responsible to fix the first problem, which is fixing the first bridge in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, leaving the Prince Albert economy, the chamber of commerce and business, and those users north and south of the bridge in peril, Mr. Speaker, because they failed to fund what this government is — \$4.2 million to get that bridge safe for everybody in the region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Deputy Whip . . . or Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear that those members never had a plan for highways in this province. You know, in fact the former premier, Mr. Calvert, once stated, "How we have been doing things in the past has been in many cases ad hoc without a long-term plan." I want to hear from the member from Cumberland: does he agree with Mr. Calvert that the NDP for 16 years had no plan whatsoever?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the new member should know is that it was Premier Calvert that built this economy and started bringing people back, Mr. Speaker. The member wouldn't know obviously because he hasn't been here that long. But there's no question that the current Premier has really extolled the virtues and the work of the former Premier Calvert, Mr. Speaker.

Had it not been for Calvert, we would not be enjoying the economy today. We would not be enjoying the population growth and we would not be enjoying the revenues that the current government is getting, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that that member cannot rewrite history, Mr. Speaker, because from our view, from our view, it was the Tories of the '80s that bankrupted this province. It was the New Democrats of the '90s and the 2000s, Mr. Speaker, that rebuilt the credibility, the economy, and the hope of the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And we will never take any lessons from a right wing government that doesn't even know how to run the economy properly but makes spin after spin, Mr. Speaker. And that's the important lesson that . . .

The Speaker: — Next question. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Again to the member from Prince Albert Carlton, it's a real simple question. And I guess we'd love to ask the other members from Prince

Albert or region, but his caucus has seen to have him carrying the can in this debate so that's very interesting. So we'll address those P.A. questions to the member from P.A. Carlton. Does the member from P.A. Carlton, does the member from P.A. Carlton support a second bridge for the city of Prince Albert? Yes or no.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Since 2008, \$3.1 billion invested in infrastructure . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Impact of Western Canadian Energy and Resource Boom on Central Canadian Manufacturing Sector

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Hickie.]

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

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to stand and talk on the motion that was made by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That the Assembly expresses its disagreement with NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair's contention that the Western Canadian energy and resource sector is responsible for the decline in central Canada's manufacturing sector which Mr. Mulcair has referred to [Mr. Speaker] as Dutch disease.

Mr. Speaker, I guess it kind of lends to the actual leadership ability that has been put into the hands of this individual. To make a statement like that is very discouraging. It's very disappointing that Mr. Mulcair would make such an ignorant statement without any knowledge or any consultation with people that are in it. To start taking one area of the country and put it against the other area shows a very, very lack of leadership ability, and it's very disappointing that someone in his position would make that kind of a statement. And I realize that the history of the leadership for the NDP has been very, very questionable and seeing locally that the leadership candidates, still the talent pool is very shallow as they go forward in selecting a leadership candidate.

When we look at Mr. Mulcair's statement, there's a lot of articles that are on the Dutch disease topic, and we have to question Mr. Mulcair's leadership ability. And I noticed in one of the articles in *The Financial Post* from Diane Francis, and the article says "Why Thomas Mulcair is clearly a national problem":

He got tons of attention when he recycled the "Dutch Disease" phrase to blame the booming West for the beleaguered East . . . Clearly the guy is way over his head and he makes this a national problem.

She goes on to say he toured the oil sands, Canada's economic cornerstone, by helicopter and described them as awe-inspiring. "These recent events certainly serve to reveal the character of the latest actor on Ottawa's stage who is in a major supporting role. Here's my analysis on Mulcair based on his recent milestones."

She talks about him talking about Dutch disease. Mulcair is simply a simple-minded ideologue. The Dutch Disease was named after the rise of the gilder of The Netherlands due to oil and gas exploration which began to reduce the competitiveness of the country's other exports and tourist sector.

Mulcair has seized on this to explain a world he doesn't understand. He blames Canada's booming oil exports for the moribund economics in Eastern Canada . . . The loss of jobs is due to the economic slowdown since 2008, competition from low labor jurisdictions and lousy productivity levels in Canada where they are 25% lower than the United States.

And, just to set the record straight, countries without commodities have had to import them at drastically higher prices since 2003 [So this whole thing started back in 2003] and, despite a drop in their currencies, they suffer from widespread unemployment and no growth.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, the other countries have experienced the same no growth, but for Mulcair to come forward and to say that it's at the fault of Western Canada is totally inadequate.

What's also missing from Mulcair's narrative is that Canada's self-sufficiency and surpluses in oil and commodities have saved the country from a far worse fate. Our booming commodity and energy exports have . . . [drastically] buoyed economic activity domestically as the export proceeds and inputs have remained inside Canada's borders.

The Leader of the Official Opposition should not be taking taxpayers' money for his on-the-job training.

[12:15]

Mr. Mulcair toured the oil sands for the first time, but this Diane Francis says that he clearly:

. . . does not do his homework. He has drubbed the oil sands and never visited the area. He has never conversed with global experts, CEOs, investors, workers or many westerners. After one helicopter tour, he said, golly . . . [I] had no idea of the scale of the place [Mr. Speaker]. This means that he has either a) pontificated before he listens and observes or b) he targets selectively for cynical political reasons.

And I would suggest that it's the latter. Diane Francis goes on to say:

(The . . . leader bites the hands that feed the country. But only the western ones.)

Clearly, the guy is way over his head and . . . [makes this]

a national problem. Instead of a person who raises alternatives through thoughtful . . . debate on important issues, there is now a socialist who lives in a parallel universe. There is now Mulcair who lives in the lap of luxury he rails against . . .

Mr. Speaker, I toured the oil sands. I was very fortunate to be a part of a tour a couple of years ago. And when you first go into the oil sands, Mr. Speaker, there certainly is a definite observation of a lot of construction. It goes for miles — the excavation, the trucks hauling product, the draglines that are moving the earth — and you can see for hundreds of hectares that this is what's going on. And I can say, yes, it does look rather devastating from a bird's-eye view when you look at the area where they're working, Mr. Speaker.

The oil sands is very productive. There's a lot of people working up there. And after they show you the area where the work is being constructed, they take you by bus to another area. But when they're going through this area, Mr. Speaker, after the devastation of the draglines, the trucks, the road, the construction, hauling the oil sands to production into the refinery, after you see all that and they take you to another part of the area, you see these mounds and mounds of white sand, the white sand that has been produced from the processing of the oil. So what they have done, Mr. Speaker, is actually taking the oil out of the sand, and now the sand looks very white, very clean. It's piled there on the sides as the bus goes through in continuation of the tour.

Mr. Speaker, as you tour through there, through this bus trip, from all of the excavating, past the white sands, they take you to, it really is a park atmosphere. There's lots of vegetation. There's trees. There's grass. And it looks quite natural. What this area is in particular is what has been reforested because when they do the oil sands, what they do is scrape off the top of the topsoil before they start the excavation. After the excavation, the extraction of the oil sands, and the processing of it, they take the oil out, put the sand back, and then re-cover it with the topsoil that they have originally taken, thereby starting the process of the trees, the grass.

And, Mr. Speaker, part of the area is fenced. There's a large herd of buffalo that actually are grazing there, very peaceful in an area you would never, never would estimate that had been disturbed with the machinery and the extraction of the oil.

So when Mr. Mulcair defines this as a disease, it's very disheartening. And the writer of the article, Diane Francis, when she says he is clearly a national problem, it certainly is probably more to the point than most.

Also looked at some other publications, the MacDonald-Laurier Institute publication, and it talks about the oil sand, the resources in Western Canada as well. The MacDonald-Laurier Institute has commissioned a series of essays on this very topic of Dutch disease. And they wanted to find out through research what the real effects of the high dollar on the state of manufacturing resources extracting from Canada, if there is in fact anything to that.

The commission examines the benefits of the Canadian petroleum industry to provinces other than the oil-rich and

gas-rich provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. And it turns out, Mr. Speaker, it turns out that citizens, businesses, and governments in other parts of the country enjoy substantial benefits from resources extracted in Western Canada, which is at the very least complicated by simplistic figures painted by those that decry that the impact of the Canadian dollar affects Canadian manufacturing.

International trade theorists have developed models of the global resources and the resource boom and indirectly to see if they were hurting the manufacturing sector in oil-rich countries.

Mr. Speaker, to get a sense of just how large the effect might be, we will summarize some of the papers, the models of the economic impact, the energy sector in the various provinces. The study focused on different activities and involved two different independent mythologies, which was interesting. Yet all reached a similar conclusion: that Western resources extraction showers large economic benefits to all the other provinces, contradicting the very theme of the Dutch disease that Mulcair had talked about.

One of the models said, surprisingly the lion's . . . or unsurprisingly, rather, the lion's share of both the GDP and the employment impact due to Alberta's oil sands project . . . [inaudible] . . . in Alberta. We'd all suspect that. Even so these projects shower a substantial benefit to other provinces. For example Ontario alone is projected to enjoy \$64.9 billion in high economic impact and 882,000 person-years of additional employment over a 25-year period. Mr. Speaker, that was one study that had come out.

It showed that British Columbia and Quebec also substantially benefit from Alberta's oil sands projects, experiencing GDP growth of \$28.8 billion and \$14.1 billion respectively. British Columbia gained 426,000 person-years of employment while Quebec gained 211,000 hours, person-hours . . . person-years of employment, that should read.

In another study it substantiated those figures. In fact it was even better. Ontario has experienced \$95.3 billion in higher economic output and 1.3 billion person-years of additional employment over a 25-year period. In this particular case, British Columbia and Quebec also substantially benefit, experiencing GDP growth of \$42.4 billion and \$20.7 billion respectively.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much information on this, so much information about the benefits of all of Canada because of the resource sector in Western Canada. And to have a leader, a potential . . . somebody who has aspirations to be a prime minister some day to come out and make a statement without any knowledge of what he is talking about and make that observation without the knowledge, just showed the lack of knowledge, lack of leadership, and the lack of the understanding of Canada.

If you took all the resources that we have in Western Canada and put them in some other part of the world, would Canada be better off? I would say not. In fact I don't think there's much of a question. So why would Ontario and Quebec and particularly the NDP come out to that assumption that the resource sector in Western Canada has devastating effects on the manufacturing

area of Eastern Canada?

Somewhere in the pile of papers I have here, Mr. Speaker, there's even more information on how the manufacturing areas of not only Eastern Canada but into the United States has depleted over the number of years. It has nothing to do with the resource sector of Western Canada, I can assure you, or the increase in a stronger Canadian dollar. Mr. Mulcair is definitely way out of field, in left field, way out of line when he makes an assumption that the resources of Western Canada are hurting in fact Eastern Canada. There's just no doubt about it. And it goes on, and I could go on with facts and figures for quite some time, Mr. Speaker, on the nonsense of the Mulcair statement and what it really means to Western Canada.

But probably just as, just as devastating and just as un-Canadian, you might say, is the fact that the NDP in this province have not stood up for the people of Saskatchewan. They have not denounced that. And we've got . . . There's two members on the other side, the member from Cumberland and the member from Athabasca, even in the 75-minute debate, Mr. Speaker, that are chirping and challenging what they call the backbenchers on this side for not standing up for our constituencies, not standing up for the people of P.A. because we're not building a bridge. They're yipping that from their seats time after time. And it's not only today, but it's gone on for the past number of weeks that any time they have a chance to get up and talk about it, they're saying that we're not standing up for our constituencies.

Well I don't how their caucus meeting is run. I suspect that's what it is. They are told to shut up and sit down and let the leaders take over, if they have leadership there at all. But, Mr. Speaker, that's not how the caucus runs here. When we sit around the table, we have good discussions, and then of course it comes out as the ministers . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, that is the process that we're doing, yet they stand there and say that we're not standing up for our constituencies. We are standing up for our constituencies.

But when it comes to the oil resources of Western Canada and Mulcair making the statement that he did that the oil resources are hurting Eastern Canada, those nine members sit on their hands and say nothing, absolutely say nothing about the effects that this has on the province of Saskatchewan. I'm not sure why they don't want to stand up and say, well maybe this is something we have to talk about. Why wouldn't Mulcair talk to them before he made such a statement? Why wouldn't they be on the phone telling him and saying, have you got your facts right? Because this doesn't look right to us.

And it would especially hurt Saskatchewan and as well as Alberta, but more importantly right now we're talking about the effects on Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the effects of cutting back on the resource sector to benefit Eastern Canada would just absolutely make no sense. It would definitely hurt the country in so many ways.

Mr. Speaker, the Dutch disease that we're talking about that Mr. Mulcair referred to, there's a lot of factors that can go into this. There are over 60,000 direct or indirect jobs in the combined mining and oil and gas sector here in Saskatchewan — 60,000 direct or indirect jobs. Those would be affected if

Mulcair decided to cut down.

I should say that there was one of the leadership contenders that did have a comment on the Dutch disease and on Mr. Mulcair's comments, where the other four leaders have again sat on their hands, said nothing in the best interest of the Saskatchewan people, have just made no comment on the comments that came from their national leader. The only one that did make a comment, Mr. Speaker, was — if I can find it here — was one of the leaders that said, yes, he agrees with it, but what we should be doing is raising the royalties. How would that balance? By raising the royalties, how could he possibly balance the manufacturing jobs that are downturning in eastern Ontario?

I can tell you one thing it would do, and we've seen this before when the NDP got into power a few years ago and moved a lot of the industry out of the province. And I know that the speaker at our convention was talking about the droves of people that left the province in 1944 when they saw that the socialist government was taking over. He cited that Moose Jaw could be the Calgary of today had that not happened, had they had some leadership and some insight and some development, some encouragement for the industry for the people of Saskatchewan.

[12:30]

The other thing was the takeover of the potash industry in the 1970s. Mr. Speaker, that just flattened the resource level at that point. We've started to bring it back, but what really did help us was when Alberta a few years ago decided to adjust their royalty rates. And here's Mr. Weir, the front-runner for the NDP leadership, saying that if we adjust our royalty rates, it would fix this whole situation with the Dutch disease. All the royalty rates would do would again send the industry into a tailspin one more time. We're very fortunate that we've got the industry moving forward. There's more expansion in our oil and our resource industry than ever before, both in gas and oil, and in coal with the clean coal projects, and uranium. And to have that stop would be very, very, very devastating for the province.

So what does royalties, the resource royalties do for the province? Well we saw in the past five years its growth. Our whole economic plan, the whole plan for the province as the Premier announced a number of weeks ago was a growth agenda. How do we keep the growth going in Saskatchewan? Well it's not by raising the royalties. It's not by trying to adjust the output for the petroleum industry.

The resource revenue in this province is tremendous, Mr. Speaker. It creates employment. There's more rigs being brought in. There's more drilling being done. They're looking for opportunities here. With increased employment, it increases the average wages in Saskatchewan. The average wage has gone up quite substantially since 2007, and it's now at \$928 a week. The minimum wage, you heard today, will be increasing on Saturday, on December the 1st. And, Mr. Speaker, since 2007, the minimum wage has increased by 26 per cent under this government, a great increase because we've got more resources that we have developed. We have a workforce that is eager and a province that's growing.

When you have resource revenues, it attracts immigration. We're looking for people. People are looking at Saskatchewan as the place to be. More and more people are coming into the province. They're coming here because there's opportunities. There's better wages. There's better living conditions. They're looking for places to invest from a business standpoint. With more investment, you get more employment going. So, Mr. Speaker, it's a nice position to be in as Saskatchewan continues to grow, continues to lead the country in many economic sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I don't need to remind you we're the only province in Canada with a balanced budget. When you look at that, that's pretty substantial for a province our size and a province that for many years under the NDP was a have-not status, continually have-not status. And their whole understanding was that we'd be in and out of equalization forever. That doesn't necessarily have to be the case. And it's a lot because of the resource sector that this province has and the development we're doing to bring the resources for the good of the people of Saskatchewan. And yet you've got somebody in Ottawa, a leader, that is saying that very sector is a disease. And we've got the NDP in this province that are sitting on their hands doing nothing and saying nothing to contradict that.

When we look at revenue resources, it's good for the province. With more investment, more employment, more immigration, we have an increased tax base. There's more people working in the province than ever before. We've got a higher tax base. With a higher tax base, you get more taxes to pay for the programs that we need for health and for social services and all of that.

Mr. Speaker, retail sales are up by 6.4 in September. This is the latest from Statistics Canada, 6.4 in September where the national average is 1.8 per cent. So you can see the growth that we're seeing in this province, and it's all tied largely around the oil, the resource sector.

In highways we've been able to invest in highway structure, in highway investment in a big way: \$361 million in this fiscal has been invested in highways. That's the second largest investment in highways that this province has ever seen, and it's only second to the first year when we made a higher commitment. \$3.1 billion has been spent in our highway structure improving the highways for the people of Saskatchewan since the spring of 2008 — \$3.1 billion, Mr. Speaker, just in highways alone.

And it's important when you have a growing economy that you've got transportation, that can be affected, to get the product to market and the needs to the people in remote areas, rural areas, wherever manufacturing or resource development, farming is carried on. So highways are important, and resource revenue is part of how we keep the growth in Saskatchewan going.

We've seen schools, and one-third of the schools have had investments to improve since we've taken over power in 2007. The schools were in terrible condition. And I think the former, the member from Canora-Pelly, the former minister of Education once pointed out it was easy to know which priorities would be for fixing schools. It was just simply count the pails in the hallways when it rained and see which ones had the most

pails. Education has been a priority, and we've invested very well there.

Health care — always something. Health care, both increasing in the formulary as well as building hospitals, hiring more nurses, educating more nurses and doctors, hiring more doctors. And, Mr. Speaker, the amount that we've spent on multiple sclerosis liberation is . . . We're the first in Canada to look at the liberation treatments and see how that could improve the quality of life of the people in Saskatchewan.

Resource revenue improves the seniors care and the seniors care facilities. We were able to lower taxes — personal income tax, property tax, small business tax — all been lowered partly because of the growth and the resource revenue in this province. So for Mulcair to say that that is devastating the manufacturing down east, that just doesn't make sense, and it would certainly, if we didn't have it, would certainly hurt the province of Saskatchewan and the well-being of all the people that live here.

Mr. Speaker, this province is seeing more daycare expansions and daycare spaces provided. And we've paid down the debt; 44 per cent of the debt has been paid down since we came to power.

So all this stuff makes it, life, better for the people of Saskatchewan — for growing, for families, for businesses, a better place to raise your family, to have a home, and enjoy life. And what's another great thing about all of this, Mr. Speaker, is that the resource revenue . . . We can all do it within a balanced budget even when there's a small turndown. The revenues as we heard yesterday from the mid-term financial report is resources are less than they were, but other areas, because of the growth, other areas can compensate like agriculture, like manufacturing.

The resources of my constituency in Moose Jaw North have seen considerable growth and I want to spend a little bit of time there. In Moose Jaw just because, partly because of the resources, Moose Jaw has seen more than a doubling of the revenue sharing for the city of Moose Jaw. I think it's about 124 per cent in total, 124. That's more than double the amount of revenue that we could share with the cities of the province and the municipalities of the province so that they could continue their operations and improve the quality of life for the citizens there.

I've talked a little bit about the school improvements, one-third of the schools. I know that Central Collegiate and Peacock Collegiate have seen improvements in the schools, as well as others. Additional child care spaces as well in Moose Jaw.

And probably the biggest improvement that we've seen is the announcement of our new hospital. And I'm so pleased that we are able to see that, and it all is part of those resource revenue that comes into the province that we can expand. And it certainly shows in my home constituency, in my city of Moose Jaw with a new hospital. And it's going through the planning stages right now, Mr. Speaker. It's progressing very well. And to think that if we didn't have those royalties, those resource revenues as Mulcair would indicate — and the NDP sit on their hands and don't stand up for Saskatchewan — that would be

devastating to the province. We wouldn't get these benefits. And it's really that simple.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a few minutes about the area around Moose Jaw, the Moose Jaw-Regina industrial corridor. This is designed as a heavy industrial node because of its location on the Trans-Canada Highway. It intersects just a little ways away from No. 2 North and No. 39 South going toward Weyburn and the US [United States] border. It's also served by the CP [Canadian Pacific] and the CN [Canadian National] rail lines, along with the Soo line, going into the United States to market our products across Canada and into the United States.

The Belle Plaine industrial site just east of Moose Jaw represents a near ideal large-scale industrial project. The land is flat. The transportation is excellent. There's access to water. Natural gas and electric power are readily available, and it is close to two of the fastest growing urban centres in Saskatchewan, namely Moose Jaw and Regina. And it's centred in the natural resource sector being established there. This area has experienced massive industrial construction.

I'm taking a lot of this information from the Moose Jaw city website. The area has experienced massive industrial construction and much more is under way or is coming soon. It's estimated that more than \$22 billion in major projects is slated for this province and much of it will take place in this Belle Plaine industrial park being designated as the Moose Jaw-Regina industrial corridor. Other possible developments for the Belle Plaine industrial park are being discussed and could be related to cogeneration or energy resource-linked projects.

This major industrial facility is already located in this industrial corridor park including Mosaic company, Canadian Salt Company, Yara, Tara Grain Fuels, and Alpine Plant Foods. These companies are attracted by the corridor's many competitive advantages including its rail and highway infrastructure giving optimum access to markets, major pipeline delivering natural gas at attractive prices, wide open spaces from distant urban populations, and of a substantial, sustainable supply of water.

Mr. Speaker, emergence of Moose Jaw as an economic powerhouse is thanks to a lot of world-class assets that provide the foundation of investment and constantly a driving growth unseen in the area between Moose Jaw and Regina for more than a decade and much of this century. And this growth, which Mulcair defines as a disease and the NDP here seem to support it and won't stand up for the interests of Saskatchewan, is concerning to all of us.

When we look at that Regina industrial corridor and we look at potash, the world's drive to increase food production has resulted in renewed demand for fertilizer, a key ingredient in the farmer's arsenal for increased input. Moose Jaw is a benefactor of the world's desire for more food production. There is a need to feed the planet's growing population and, of course, fertilizer is part of that. We know that the world wants more potash and the Moose Jaw area is one of the principal suppliers of potash designed for farm fields all around the globe. And yet Mr. Mulcair defines the potash industry and the resource industry as a disease, and the NDP on the other side

seem to support that and do not stand up for Saskatchewan interests.

[12:45]

When we look at Mosaic Potash, which is set up on that corridor, Mosaic Potash is one of the world's key potash suppliers. It is a well-established player in the Moose Jaw area and in the Belle Plaine mining operation. Mr. Speaker, the company employs 700 people and the number will increase and grow as the company continues its major expansion activities.

But Mosaic, which was one of the companies that's in that industrial corridor just east of Moose Jaw, is more than just 700 employees who get a good living from there and support their families. They buy groceries. They support the local economy. It's much more than those 700 workers. Mosaic supports the community in a large way. Just one of those companies, it supports the communities.

And I don't have to talk about Mosaic Stadium where the Riders play. And that's Saskatchewan pride when you talk about the Riders and what the Riders do for Saskatchewan. We know that the Grey Cup is coming next year and hopefully that trend that the hometown that hosts the Grey Cup is the ones that win the Grey Cup in the last two years, and I'm confident that the Riders will be there next year in Mosaic Place. But Mosaic Potash sponsors that.

And I can't say enough about Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw — or that Mosaic also sponsors that, where the Warriors play. They've had ups and downs all season. They've just come off two major wins lately so they're doing very well. And last year was a real banner year for the Moose Jaw Warriors, probably their best year ever in their first year at Mosaic Place. And what it has done for the community, what it has done for the city is phenomenal, Mr. Speaker. We've had some great concerts there. Alice Cooper was there. Terri Clark was there. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band just performed a little while ago. I'm sorry, Terri Clark will be coming up later on. But the point is that there's a lot of activity in Moose Jaw because of the contributions made by a great player in the resource sector — Mosaic Potash. And yet we've got Mulcair defining that as a disease. And the NDP are not supporting it. They sit on their hands and won't stand up for the Saskatchewan interests.

Mosaic Place also supports our communities through the Health Foundation, both in Regina and in Moose Jaw. At the Festival of Trees they're one of the biggest contributors, and they're also one of the biggest bidders when it comes to buying product and supporting the health foundation in both . . . [inaudible] . . . Mosaic also sponsors Hunger in Moose Jaw that supplies lunches for many needy students in the Moose Jaw area. Seven hundred workers that support their families at Mosaic Place, and hundreds of thousands of dollars that are spent in our community, and yet Mulcair defines us as a disease. And the NDP just sit on their hands. They won't support us and they don't stand up for Saskatchewan's interests.

Another major player in that very corner, Mr. Speaker, is K+S Potash. K+S, as you will remember, did their big sod-turning in June of this year to start the first new potash mine in over four decades. A \$3.25 billion solution mine will be just on the other

side of the Saskatchewan River just outside of Moose Jaw. K+S mining officials describe Moose Jaw as their home base, even though their head office is located in Saskatoon. It's located about a half an hour out of Moose Jaw. Moose Jaw's close proximity to the mine will eventually accommodate many of the 400 direct operational workers plus 400 contractors expected to be on the site working in the mine.

In the meantime, peaks of over 1,000 construction workers will be on site. And I expect it to challenge Moose Jaw and surrounding communities in keeping up with the basic demands of food and shelter and fuel and accommodations, of course.

At the company's official sod-turning in June, the president of K+S in his presentation made reference and noted that the NDP in the '70s virtually kicked them out of the province. And he made it a commitment that they would be, they are back and they're back to stay. And obviously they are. They've started construction on this three and a quarter billion dollar project.

Mr. Speaker, this is part of what keeps Saskatchewan going. And yet, the NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, defines it as a disease. And the NDP support that, that it is a disease because they have said nothing to contradict it. They've . . . obviously in support. They sit on their hands and they just won't stand up for the interest of Saskatchewan people. And it seems that same narrow-minded thought process seems to be in mind on the leadership that we're seeing for the NDP and the members opposite.

The K+S mine, the construction has started and notably supports the community with many other things, as Mosaic did. Most notably, even though they haven't started actual production, it's all costs at this point for K+S, and yet they come out and they sponsor the summer jamboree at Mosaic for Wakamow Valley. Wakamow Valley is a beautiful park in the heart of downtown Moose Jaw. They struggle to keep the park up. It's a very nice park. It's probably one of the gems, the hidden gems, of Moose Jaw. And here comes K+S and supports the jamboree to raise money for a lot of things.

And I want to mention them and commend them for their involvement in the community, even though it's all a cost process right now, as they haven't sold any potash and won't for a couple of years. But they are part of the community. They are a part of Saskatchewan. They are a part of building Saskatchewan. And they are a part of the resource sector that is so important to Saskatchewan. And Mulcair is calling it a disease, and the NDP won't stand up for Saskatchewan interests by standing up and denouncing what Mulcair is saying.

Another . . .

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

Mr. Forbes: — With leave to introduce guests, please.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt . . . Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to introduce to this House and to you, Mahlon Mitchell and April Mitchell. If you could give a wave, Mahlon and April. And Tom Graham of course is no stranger to this House as president of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] Saskatchewan.

Mahlon Mitchell is in town today speaking to the CUPE folks about his experience with the struggle that working people found themselves in Wisconsin in the last couple of years, particularly in terms of the budget repair bill. Mahlon ran for lieutenant governor in June this year, was unsuccessful in his bid. But what was interesting about Mahlon is he's a professional firefighter. He was the youngest professional firefighter to reach the presidency of the state association of professional firefighters, and this is a major accomplishment.

What was interesting in the struggle was that the firefighters were exempt from the budget repair bill, I understand. But the firefighters stood shoulder to shoulder with all the other public service workers in the state to make sure that they achieved their end. And that's a struggle that continues on.

So I'd ask all members to welcome our visitors to the legislature here and show them a warm welcome. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:56.]

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