



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

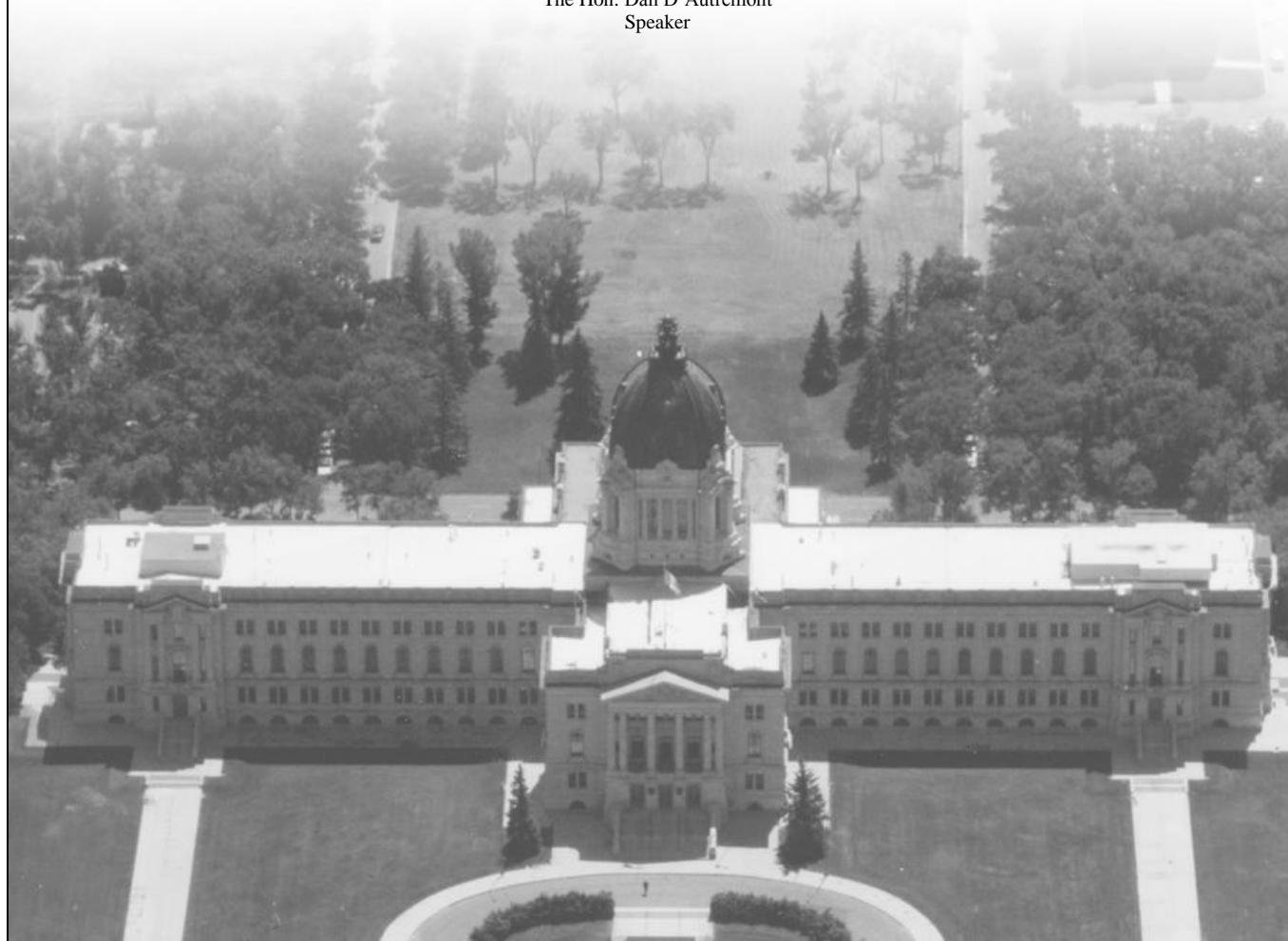
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The 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 — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
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

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave for an extended introduction this morning.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to hon. members for the leave. It's a bittersweet introduction I have, Mr. Speaker, for members of the House today. Seated in your gallery is a very special woman, a special person, Mr. Speaker, in the city and in the province of Saskatchewan. She is joined by her family members. Her name is Bonnie Donison — maybe Bonnie will give us a wave — and with her are her son Lance Donison, his wife, Renae, and Bonnie's grandson Jett.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bittersweet day because after many, many, many, many years of wonderful public service, Bonnie has confirmed that she's going to be retiring from her work in executive government. Mr. Speaker, she is currently in the office of the Minister of Government Relations as a ministerial assistant working very, very hard and effectively on the onerous PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] file, helping people across the province with their claims among other things. And, Mr. Speaker, just having to work with the Minister of Government Relations would be enough that we should celebrate her today, but her service to our province goes beyond that, Mr. Speaker. In fact she has served under four premiers in various roles in different parts of government.

She first started working with Premier Thatcher, a year before I was born, Mr. Speaker. It's hard when we see her today, it's hard to figure out that math unless there's a DeLorean involved and some sort of time travel, but it's true, Mr. Speaker.

And I was able to work very directly with Bonnie as leader of the opposition, when she came in to help me in the earliest days in the office. And what an amazing historical perspective she could offer. She was just very, very supportive and efficient and professional in the administrative duties that she had. But more importantly, she had some very good advice and very good counsel for me personally that I benefited from that she was willing to dispense, Mr. Speaker.

And she also could offer the lessons of history. She told amazing stories, frankly, about how Premier Thatcher operated, for example. Some of it's been accounted in Eisler's book, if people have read that. It's a good one. But stories like he would basically have the budget of the province before him most days

in a giant ledger and be very much hands-on as both premier and treasurer.

And more than the historical context though, Bonnie has a unique ability to make sure that those to whom she might be offering advice or support keep their perspective and keep their context and remember why we're here in the first place, which is to serve the province of Saskatchewan. Hers is a reputation for professionalism and sensitivity. She always has a smile to offer and a good and kind encouraging word, Mr. Speaker.

And were all of those years of service in government not enough, she also spent 17 years at CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] in radio and television. I think she was there when CBC hired a new young anchorman in Costa Maragos. I'm sure Costa would never have thought that Bonnie would be in the workforce after Costa had retired, but here we are, Mr. Speaker.

And so we wanted to introduce Bonnie today, together with those that she loves dearly. We love her and we're going to miss her, although hopefully she's available. I think she has even offered if we need some help in PDAP to come back and do that.

Mr. Speaker, Martin Luther King Jr. has a famous quote that's I think fitting for today when he said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't need a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul full of love, committed to love.

Mr. Speaker, that is Bonnie Donison, and I just wanted to introduce her more formally today to you and through you to all members and ask them to help me welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier on behalf of the official opposition in welcoming Bonnie to the Chamber today, in a building that she is very, very familiar with for the many years of service as articulated by the Premier. And on behalf of the official opposition we want to add our words of thanks, recognizing the different administrations that you've served in and in more recent years the important work that you've been doing as well.

I know in speaking with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, he mentioned his appreciation for the help with a number of PDAP issues and your role in that. So I want to say to you and to your family members, welcome. Thank you for your commitment to this province. Thank you for the work that you have done, and we wish you all the best in whatever is next for you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in

acknowledging Bonnie Donison. Mr. Speaker, I've known Bonnie for about 15 years now, but especially in the last year and a half I've had the privilege of being her co-worker.

Mr. Speaker, she is patient, as the Premier attested to. She is compassionate, and I've had many compliments from members on both sides of the House about the good work she's done on the PDAP file. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly going to miss her when she retires next month and I just . . . I know all our office staff are going to as well and, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Assembly to both welcome her to the Assembly but to wish her many happy, healthy years in retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleagues here in the legislature to offer congratulations to Bonnie Donison. And I was trying to calculate the number of years that I've known Bonnie, but it's not quite as old as the Premier is, but almost. And so I would say between three and four decades I've known Bonnie.

And all through those years and all the different things that she's done, the one thing that you provide, and I know you're going to do this for the rest of your life, is a big smile, a big greeting, and the willingness to ask, well how are you and how's your family. And I know that that characteristic is what served you so well as a member of the civil service in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to introduce Bonnie Donison and recognize her family, Lance, Renae, and Jett. I first met Bonnie Donison many, many years ago when she was a reporter with the CBC, and that's a story that we're not going to tell here today.

And then I got to know her much better after I became elected. Bonnie worked for a period of time as a constituency assistant in my constituency office in Moose Jaw, near the end of our term in opposition, where she was a relentless voice for the concerns of the people of Thunder Creek. And after we became government in 2007, Bonnie was asked, and appropriately so, to come to work for the new government in Regina. I was blessed to have Bonnie serve in my office, Enterprise Saskatchewan office, as ministerial assistant where she continued to set an example as to the way that the public should be treated by government.

I'm going to out Bonnie now as a bit of a political partisan too. And Bonnie helped greatly in Thunder Creek in election campaigns, even managing one. Bonnie has knocked on a lot of doors, and she's very much appreciated by the people of Thunder Creek as well as she is by the people around the province. Bonnie should give lessons in the proper way for government to treat the public. She always treats them with the greatest of respect and does everything possible to solve any issues that they may have.

Truly a gentle soul, Bonnie has become a great friend to me and my wife, Linda, as well as many others in Thunder Creek

constituency and hundreds of people that she has come in contact through her career — probably thousands — around the province of Saskatchewan.

On behalf of the constituency of Thunder Creek and of course myself and my wife, Linda, I thank Bonnie for a lifetime of service to the province and wish her well in retirement.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join my colleagues in paying tribute to Bonnie Donison. And it's nice to see the family here today with Bonnie. I've known Bonnie for many years, but we did have the opportunity to work together in CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] for three years. During that time, Mr. Speaker, we would have the odd brainstorming session in my office, which we often called policy sessions, and I received an awful lot of sage political advice from Bonnie. It was quite often I would hear such words as, Mr. Thatcher used to do it this way. And other times, well I remember Mr. Thatcher had said this. And so I really took those words to heart and I really appreciated it.

On the PDAP file, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit about that because we know of the catastrophic floods we had in 2010 and 2011 and more in '12. We totally revamped the PDAP file from end to the other, and a lot of that was in part to Bonnie. As you know, Bonnie's a bit of a softie, and so when somebody would have a real issue with PDAP, again in our policy sessions Bonnie would say, is there nothing we can do to help these people? And that precipitated some of the changes that came about in PDAP. So for that I would really, really like to thank Bonnie.

I'd like to also just thank her personally for her commitment, her support, her dedication to the province of Saskatchewan. But most of all I'd really like to thank her for her friendship. And I would ask all members to join me in wishing her well in her retirement when it does come. So thank you, Bonnie.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, we have a school group in the west gallery from Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg. There's seven grade 10 students, social studies political decision-making class. And they're brought here by their teacher, Raymond Michaud. And Raymond brings a class to the legislature, I believe, every year. So it's very nice to see the group from Gravelbourg here again today. And I'm going to be meeting with them right after question period, and so I'll have a chance to meet all of the students personally and answer some questions. So I'd ask all members to please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I have the honour of introducing a couple of groups here today that have joined us in their legislature.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the annual National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The day commemorates the 1989 murders of 14 female engineering students at École Polytechnique in Montreal. It was a senseless

act of gender-based violence that still shocks us 24 years later.

Mr. Speaker, those young women were targeted and attacked primarily because they were women studying in a male-dominated industry, and that's why I'm so delighted today to welcome our guests in the gallery. They are all either working in the field of engineering or studying to become engineers in our province. They demonstrate our commitment as a society to overcome the events of December the 9th, 1989, and to recognize the rights of anyone, including women and children, to pursue any career that they choose in the country.

Joining us in the gallery today — and I ask them to give us a wave — is a professor of engineering from the U of R [University of Regina], Dena McMartin. We have U of R engineering students, Tracey Ozipko, Demi Wiens, Iyonia Rabayaa, Sarah Ali, Rabiya Adulkadir. And working in Saskatchewan we have Enisa Zanacic, Jasmine Wang, Margaret Hodges, Ian Sloman, and Bob McDonald. And with them is Pat Faulconbridge from the Status of Women. And, Mr. Speaker, I really would ask everyone to help me and welcome these outstanding citizens to our Assembly today.

I also have another group of people that are very important to all of us in the province. We have groups from the Salvation Army. I know that we all walked in to the sound of music today, and I think the members should know that the band's name — and I love the name — is actually Bandits. So with them today is Major Mike Hoeft who is the area commander from Prairie West. And I met Mike when we were walking a mile in red shoes in Melfort this summer. We also have Major Doug and Joanne Binner, corps officers from the Haven of Hope Ministries in downtown Regina.

The Salvation Army responds to the needs of the people of Saskatchewan in the form of shelter for homeless men, cold-weather shelters, battered women's homes, feeding groups, and the list goes on. But right now on our minds at this time of the year is Christmas. Last year at Christmas of 2012, there was 9,073 adults and more than 15,500 children and teens were helped by the Salvation Army's different programs such as food hampers and toys for children, equalling \$339,823. And this year we anticipate the need is going to be great as well. So in the spirit of Christmas, I urge everyone to donate. So I'd like to welcome them to their Assembly.

And last but not least, I want to introduce Brenda Szala, Allison Szeles, and Ivana Vuckovic from the Ministry of Social Services who are also with us today. And while I'm on my feet, thank you, Bonnie, for everything you've done for us. You're a good friend.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased on behalf of the official opposition to welcome the delegation here for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women — Professor Dena McMartin, of course Pat Faulconbridge from the Status of Women office, and all of the fine engineering students and engineers who are doing their part to fight against all forms of violence against women by living your lives and pursuing careers that you should be able to

pursue.

So we appreciate all that you do to ensure that gender-based violence will someday be a thing of the past. So thank you and welcome to your Legislative Assembly. And to the engineering students, best of luck, best wishes for your career going forward. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, although he's been recognized, I would like to just introduce and welcome Bob McDonald. He's a dear friend.

As many will know here, he works with APEGS [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan]. He's an engineer, a lawyer. He's a historian. But he has worked tirelessly to make sure that Saskatchewan communities are increasingly inclusive. And with that same spirit, he's worked tirelessly with engineers and geoscientists across Saskatchewan to ensure that that profession is increasingly inclusive. And so Bob's presence here today doesn't surprise us, but it just reminds us of the importance of his work. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to help welcome Bob to his Assembly.

And we just want to as well offer to Bonnie our sincere thanks for your wonderful service and friendship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to join in in welcoming Mr. Bob McDonald and Margaret Hodges and the whole team and Dena McMartin from the engineering. But especially Bob McDonald because he is that special person that's both an engineer and a lawyer, and he uses those skills to deal with many, many issues. And Bob, we thank you very much for all of the work that you do for the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I also want to introduce Mr. Grant Schmidt who is sitting behind us here on the floor. Mr. Grant Schmidt is the former member from Melville, former minister in the Grant Devine government, and we welcome him here today to be part of the proceedings. He did many interesting things over the years in his roles as a minister, and he also is a lawyer who I've dealt with on many files over many years as a lawyer. But welcome to the Assembly, Grant. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in her earlier welcome to the officers from the Salvation Army and thank them for the music that was played before the sitting this morning, but more importantly to thank them for the important work that they do throughout the year in communities throughout the province. And as we are in the kettle campaign now, when we go to malls and shopping centres, I encourage all people in the province to give generously at this time of year.

And I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to say a couple of words. Throughout the sitting we have many guests that come to the Assembly. Some come once and some come more often. And one group that comes all the time, Mr. Speaker, are the representatives from the House of Prayer. And they never want recognition or to be identified perhaps, but on behalf of the official opposition, we do thank them for their presence here in the Assembly, their faithful presence, and their prayers for all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Regina Lakeview in welcoming Grant Schmidt to the Chamber today. I first met Mr. Schmidt during the 1980s, and he was my boss when he served as minister of Social Services and I was working at Legal Aid. Mr. Schmidt made a strong contribution to the province during that period of time, and I would like to welcome him to the Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the Minister of Social Services and the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the folks from the Salvation Army and also the folks from Social Services and the good work they do.

But I do want to pay special attention to a couple of friends from the Salvation Army, Major Doug Binner and his wife, Joanne. I have to tell you, Doug and I went to school together, and actually he grew up in Parkbeg. Of course we've been talking a lot about Parkbeg and Gainer the Gopher, but Doug would know Gainer personally. But Doug and I went to school in Mortlach, Saskatchewan. So welcome, Doug, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to our school . . . or our Chamber.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to you and through you and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, a group seated in the east gallery. I'm speaking of the group of English as additional language students with the Regina Open Door Society that are here today with their teacher, Deana Pageot, an old colleague of the member from Regina Douglas Park once upon a time, I understand, and mother of an old friend of mine. And so it's good to see Deana Pageot here in her legislature.

But, Mr. Speaker, these 14 students come to us from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Vietnam. And we had a chance to visit and had a chance to reflect on the fact that the slogan of Saskatchewan is *Multis e gentibus vires*, "from many peoples, strength." And certainly these individuals here at their Legislative Assembly are that strength that is the promise of our motto. So it's really good to see them here today. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd

like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the Regina Open Door Society. The open door societies across Saskatchewan are usually the first point of contact for people coming from around the world to call Saskatchewan home. We're very proud of our connection with the Open Door Society and our ongoing projects with them. The Open Door Society is an absolute fabulous organization that just welcomes anybody, no judgment, just be able to bring them into Saskatchewan and call Saskatchewan home.

So thank you very much. I can't see you up there, but thank you very much for what you're doing on behalf of all the new people calling Saskatchewan home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition in support of anti-bullying initiatives. And we know that bullying causes serious harm and that consequences of bullying are devastating, including depression, self-harm, and addictions and suicide. And other provinces have brought forward legislation and various tools and programs to show swift and effective government action. And we know it's a human rights issue, one of safety and inclusion. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to protect Saskatchewan's children from bullying because the lives of young people are at stake and this government must do more to protect our youth.

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

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 risky, costly P3 [public-private partnership] scheme of this government. They reference a lack of accountability and transparency to this scheme, the fact that this government has been unwilling to expose any daylight to the plan or provide the answers and facts that people deserve. And certainly they're concerned by the added cost, the forfeiture of control, and the needless delay. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to use the traditional build model rather than a P3 privatization model to build new schools for Saskatchewan.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents in Regina. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition because the leaders and residents of northern Saskatchewan are concerned about the seniors' care in the North. The Croft report of 2009 showed a serious shortage of long-term care beds for seniors, and the problem has only gotten worse. Seniors have done their part for this province and it's time for the government to do their part. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to treat northern Saskatchewan's senior citizens with respect and dignity and immediately invest in a long-term care facility in the La Ronge area.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. The petitioners draw attention to the fact that the gym at Sacred Heart Community School in north central Regina is now quite literally falling apart, has been closed indefinitely, and is no longer safe for students or staff.

They point out that the school and the community have raised the issue with the Sask Party provincial government since 2007 without resolution. There is a temporary solution in place, Mr. Speaker, with the refurbishment of the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart community church, but certainly the students and staff and community are calling for a permanent solution.

They point out as well that the Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in north central Regina with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that enrolment has increased by 100 students over the past four years and that attendance and learning outcomes are steadily improving, and they point out that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym. In the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium at Sacred Heart Community School.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Regina. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

#### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

**Mr. McCall:** — Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault,

Annie Turcotte, and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

Mr. Speaker, these are the names of the 14 women that were murdered on December 6th, 1989 at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Tomorrow is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. It provides an opportunity to remember these women as well as many others who have been violated, hurt, or murdered because of their gender, because they were women.

Even though it has been 24 years since this tragic demonstration of misogyny, Canada is still not a safe place for all women, and almost half of Canadian women will face gender-based violence in their lives. And we are also aware, Mr. Speaker, much of this is rooted in a deep-seated pattern of racist violence. The count of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in our country is staggering.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to those 14 women to use this day to reflect on today's realities, to do our part to end violence against women that still occurs. It is important to not only mourn and reflect, but to use these important days as a call to action. Initiatives like the white ribbon campaign aim to curb the patterns of violence that impact so many women, and recognize the role that men must play to end violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to recognize those women we have lost and to remember the lessons that we must learn if we are to move forward. We must show that we do not tolerate violence of women and will stand up to make it a thing of the past.

[10:30]

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to remind all members that tomorrow is the International Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Each year on December 6th, Canadians mark the anniversary of the murders of 14 female engineering students at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. It was and still is an act of gender-based violence that shocked the world.

Mr. Speaker, we know that violence against women and girls continues to happen in every region, every country, every culture. Saskatchewan women and girls have the right to live in safety. That's why our government supports many programs and services delivered by community-based organizations that help people experiencing interpersonal violence. In this fiscal year we are investing \$28 million in 81 agencies supporting women at risk of violence, and another \$11.8 million in sexual assault programs and services.

Today my colleagues and I are wearing white ribbons as a symbol of our pledge to work towards a future without violence against women and girls. I ask that we also take some time today to remember the women who live daily with the threat of violence, and commit ourselves to helping them whenever we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

### Christmas Greetings

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, these days it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season. For some, I know the holidays can be a busy and stressful time, but I hope everyone in Saskatchewan can take some time to focus on what matters the most and to enjoy the true meaning of this holiday season and the values that Saskatchewan people are known for: generosity, kindness, and selflessness.

Saskatchewan has a rich and diverse heritage where we all celebrate the holidays in different ways. For many of us, this is a time to celebrate the birth of Christ and his incredible message of peace, love, and redemption. My family and I will be celebrating Christmas in the same way our parents and grandparents did in our Norwegian tradition. I know the same is true for the Leader of the Opposition and his family. And I know many others will also be embracing their heritage during the holiday season.

However they celebrate the season, I hope it's a good one for all Saskatchewan families, and on behalf of the official opposition I wish them a very Merry Christmas. May it be a time of thankful reflection on the past year and hopeful expectation for a positive, prosperous, and peaceful new year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

### International Volunteer Day

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, December the 5th, is International Volunteer Day in Canada and around the world. Recognized by the United Nations since 1985, this day was declared to thank all volunteers for their efforts and to increase the public's awareness on volunteers' contributions to society.

Mr. Speaker, our government values the commitment of the many volunteers of our own province, along with the millions who generously give their time worldwide. Every day across this great province, we see volunteers donating their valuable time at schools, in their communities, and to organizations such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Speaker, their tireless work and priceless contributions, in collaboration with not-for-profit organizations, support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities and help create a stronger Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing volunteers in this province, but also across the country and around the world, who devote their talents, skills, and resources to helping others in communities across the globe. Those who choose to volunteer make a valuable contribution to society and help their communities and this province to continue to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

### Christmas Greetings

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, signs of the Christmas season are all around us. We admire the brightly lit up homes dotting our provincial landscape. We observe consumers crowding the malls looking for those special gifts. Christmas music is heard throughout the malls, including our legislative rotunda, and community carol festivals are being performed across our province.

The message of the angel 2,000 years ago to the shepherds on the Judean hillside was: "Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord." Mr. Speaker, this message has reverberated throughout the ages.

This is truly a joyful time of the year. We all look forward to the gathering of family and friends and the opening of gifts. We enjoy the aroma coming out of the kitchen as we look forward to savouring the Christmas meal. The beauty of the Christmas season can remind us all of the beauty in the life that we often take for granted — our family, our friends, and our faith.

Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan Party caucus extends our best wishes for this Christmas season. Please drive carefully as you travel during the holidays. Merry Christmas and have a blessed New Year.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

### Rhodes Scholar from Indian Head

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Rhodes Scholarship is the oldest and perhaps the most prestigious international graduate scholarship in the world. Each year 83 students from all over the world are selected to receive this honour. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to share with the Assembly today that one of the 11 outstanding Canadians to earn this honour this year is a former constituent of mine, Jonathan Pedde.

Jonathan lived on a farm east of Indian Head before attending high school at Luther College here in Regina. Before he left to study economics, math, and engineering at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Jonathan was already a licensed pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Cadets in Squadron 691, Hawk Squadron. But it was volunteer work in Africa and India through The Sharing Way, a relief development organization, that shaped his worldwide view.

Mr. Speaker, once at Oxford, Jonathan plans on pursuing his master's in economics. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mr. Jonathan Pedde on receiving this prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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



### Government Response to Layoffs

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The layoffs of potash workers announced this week, Mr. Speaker, were devastating. The Premier said on Tuesday: “We will be immediately dispatching our rapid response teams to provide support and explore other opportunities in other sectors.” Mr. Speaker, we’ve learned from potash workers that most of them haven’t heard a thing about these rapid response teams. And the Premier told the media yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that he thinks the rapid response teams have simply called the management of PotashCorp.

To the Premier: what did he mean when he said he was immediately dispatching rapid response teams?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the rapid response team within the Ministry of the Economy are teams this government has developed to respond to those occasions where there are layoffs. And we’ve seen them in the past, Mr. Speaker, be it with respect to the Sears announcement or the plant in Moose Jaw.

What happens, Mr. Speaker, is ministry officials contact first the company to make arrangements that are coordinated with the company because obviously the companies themselves are dealing with severance and trying to, we would expect, assist employees. Mr. Speaker, then what happens is — and as the Minister of the Economy has pointed out, we don’t know the individual employees affected, frankly, by the layoffs — so that initial contact is made and then, where necessary and where requested, meetings are established and set up with the employees.

This process does not happen overnight, but the teams themselves are dispatched. The action is caused immediately and the meetings with employees for assistance happens subsequently.

Mr. Speaker, I can also tell you that with respect to this question, we’ve also been coordinating with employers like the city of Regina who’ve indicated a demand for those who have the same sorts of skills of those who have been laid off as a result of the potash announcement. The same is true as well for SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. Saskjobs.ca, the website was immediately tagged so that the folks who are accessing it in the wake of the announcement can be better served.

Mr. Speaker, that’s what I meant when I indicated that these teams would be dispatched, the process would be initiated. And that is exactly what has happened. And what’s going to continue to happen, Mr. Speaker, beyond just working with the employees in terms of the rapid response team, we’re actually identifying other employers across the country who are saying we’ve got a job for these folks. And we’ll make sure they have that information.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, immediately dispatching rapid response teams suggests something more than simply placing a

phone call to the management of PotashCorp. Immediately dispatching, Mr. Speaker, were the Premier’s words.

My question to the Premier: of the 440 laid-off workers, how many have been contacted and how many have been offered assistance by the rapid response teams?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of locations where there will be dislocated, laid-off employees as a result of this announcement by the Potash Corporation, and so that’s why the calls are made, to the member who asked the question. We need to determine the location. We need to determine who has been affected, and then we move to meetings. And meetings will be established and assistance will be provided.

So I’m not sure about the line of questioning. I think it’s fair to say that we want to ensure that we are as responsive as we possibly can be. But in order to do that, we need to know which employees at what locations are affected and who they are. And then when we know that, meetings can be arranged. And my understanding from the Minister of the Economy is that those meetings are being organized. Employees can expect to hear from the rapid response team in terms of the meetings beyond what we’ve already done in terms of contacting the company.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this government has a habit of coming up with a snappy catchphrase that sounds good, Mr. Speaker, but doesn’t actually deliver for Saskatchewan families. The title of the government’s news release proudly proclaim, “Rapid response teams will assist workers affected by layoffs.” But the union president said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that nothing has really happened on this front.

My question to the Premier: why didn’t any real action follow up after the boastful news release?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Isn’t it interesting that the author of the phrase smart growth, without anything to back it up, that the author of eggs in baskets as the sort of economic theory of the NDP [New Democratic Party], would talk about buzzwords?

Here’s the difference. This is serious. Here’s the difference. Since 2009, since 2009 this government has established a rapid response team. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, the women and men who work on this team, they take their jobs pretty seriously. And when there is a dislocation, whether it was in Moose Jaw at a plant, whether it was with respect to Sears, whatever the layoffs have been since they were established many, many years ago, they take their work very seriously. And as soon as they have the information that they need — i.e., who are the employees affected, where are they affected, what could possibly be offered in terms of transition — the meetings happen.

In the meantime, the press release is issued because the rapid response team is dispatched in an event like this. Immediately,

that first contact is made. We can get into all the specifics of how this works. I'm happy to do that. But you know, the Leader of the Opposition probably owes the people that are on this rapid response team a little bit more respect. They're not a cliché. They're not a buzzword. They're here to help the workers, Mr. Speaker, and they've been doing it since 2009.

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

### Provincial Auditor's Report

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's extremely rare in both the public and the private sector for an auditor to issue an adverse audit opinion. Yet yesterday, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our province's history, the Provincial Auditor refused to endorse this government's financial statements. My question is for the Premier: does he accept the auditor's scathing criticism, or does he stubbornly dismiss it?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the premise of the member's question is certainly incomplete if not inaccurate. Because here's what the auditor said about the summary financial statements of the province of Saskatchewan: "We are pleased to report . . ." This is a quote from the auditor. "We are pleased to report that we have issued an 'unqualified' audit report on these financial statements." She is referencing summary financial statements.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have called for us to report on summary financial statements. The auditor has called for us to report on summary financial statements. The auditor has now confirmed that there is an unqualified opinion as to the accuracy of the summary financial statements, and moreover that last year the surplus in summary financial for the Government of Saskatchewan was \$37.5 million and this year, at mid year, the summary surplus is \$467 million.

And the question to the Leader of the Opposition of the NDP is this: do they agree with the auditor that the summary financial statements of the province are unqualified and are in a surplus position?

[10:45]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, some pretty strong attempts by the Premier there for deflection on the issue of receiving an adverse audit opinion, something that's unheard of in Saskatchewan's history.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier can engage in his rhetoric on this issue if he wants, but this is the Provincial Auditor. This is the independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who refused to endorse the government's financial statements. The auditor said the government General Revenue Fund financial statements were "full of errors" and "not reliable." Yet the Finance minister yesterday, Mr. Speaker, simply said, well please just trust us on this.

To the Premier: how can Saskatchewan people possibly trust a

government whose financial statements are proven to be full of errors and not reliable?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Does the Leader of the Opposition agree with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, when the Provincial Auditor says, "We are pleased to report that we have issued an 'unqualified' audit report on these financial statements"? Does he agree that those summary financial statements show last year's budget in a \$35.7 million surplus? Does he agree that this year's budget under those summary financial statements, which we reported, Mr. Speaker, as well as GRF [General Revenue Fund], are in a surplus position of \$467 million?

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's mentor, Pat Atkinson, talked about this particular issue. Here's what she said, just in May of 2011. She said:

The NDP held the very same position as the Saskatchewan Party does now [that there is a place for the General Revenue Fund and summary financial statements, that's what she was alluding to] and we held that position for five years.

Mr. Speaker, they probably held it because it reports on the operating fund and it reports on the summary financial basis. It's an unqualified report from the auditor on this province's summary financial statements, an unqualified report on another surplus budget in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the adverse audit opinion is the first time ever an auditor has issued that in the province of Saskatchewan. I don't think the Premier understands the seriousness and the gravity of the situation, of this opinion coming from the auditor. The government claimed that there was a surplus of about \$60 million at the end of last fiscal year, but the Provincial Auditor says that the truth is that this government ran a deficit of close to \$600 million.

For the first time ever, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor refused to endorse this government's financial statements. So the first time ever in our province's history, the Provincial Auditor issued an adverse opinion and warned legislators and the public that ". . . much of the information included in the GRF 2013 financial statements is wrong . . ."

My question to the Premier: how many more adverse opinions will this government have to receive before it stops inserting inaccurate spin into its financial statements?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, you can ask the same question over and over again. He might want to answer a question. They want us to budget and report on a summary basis. That's what they want. They want us to report on a summary basis. The auditor wants us to report focused on a summary basis.

On a summary financial basis, this province of Saskatchewan has received an unqualified audit from that Provincial Auditor.

That is the fact of the matter. I've already read the quote, and the surplus is a \$35 million surplus last year and a \$460 million surplus . . . And the member from Lakeview's waving it away. Well you can't have it both ways. You can't say budget on a summary financial basis and then when the auditor says the summaries are actually unqualified and right and accurate and there's a surplus, you can't sort of just change the game then and focus only on one thing, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hope there'll be another question because the auditor made some comments yesterday in the media about the operating fund being a management tool, but how we should focus more on the summary financial statements. I think that's something we're going to look at, Mr. Speaker. We don't think that's unreasonable that we would feature summary financial statements potentially, but also make sure the province understands that on an operating account basis this government is ensuring that the money coming in is matched and balanced with the money going out.

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

#### Emergency Medical Services

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, can the Health minister provide a guarantee that the Pasqua ER [emergency room] will remain open beyond December 15th?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Great news. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we can. Some very good news today. I've just been informed by the Health minister, and there is a release that's going to be issued immediately, that all the shifts have been filled in terms of Pasqua ER through until the end of December.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that — even separate from the challenges around supply of ER docs that have, you know, that have caused certainly issues at Pasqua — Christmas, the month of December is actually a traditionally very difficult time on the shifting side. So we credit the region. We credit the ER docs, those who have been involved in the decision. We also credit the ministry and the Minister of Health for their work on this file. The Pasqua will remain open until the end of December.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour and this government's record on health care services is concerning. So it's no wonder Saskatchewan families aren't sure they can trust this government to keep the Pasqua ER open.

The Wolseley hospital has been shut down for five months. The government claims it's temporary, but local residents no longer believe that. And it's not just Wolseley that is experiencing reduced health care services under this government. The emergency rooms in Big River, Central Butte, Coronach, Spiritwood, and Wakaw are all still closed. After two years of waiting, local residents don't believe the government anymore

when it says these closures are just temporary.

To the minister: when will this government admit it has no plan to reopen these rural ERs?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I note the Minister of Rural and Remote Health has met even very recently, as of the 2nd of this month of December, with those from the community involved with respect to the Wolseley situation. We're not going to admit that because it's simply, what the member is asserting, because it's not true, Mr. Speaker.

I remember not very long ago the NDP sent out a press release decrying the closure of the Shellbrook hospital. And then I remember being up there a week later with the minister and the member when we opened up a brand new hospital, of course, that had been open for some time.

Mr. Speaker, this government is about recruiting more doctors to the province: 300 more are practising, 1,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker. We're about investing in health care capital. We do have a plan for doctor recruitment, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan for the Wolseley hospital that the minister's been working on. And we have every expectation that that particular hospital and other situations are going to be rectified by the long-term planning and vision of the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, health care service reductions are happening all over this province under this government. For months Wadena and Wynyard have alternated emergency services each week, leaving residents to remember which ER to race to in the event of an emergency.

The ER in Gull Lake was shut for 36 hours this week, will be closed this weekend, and it will also be closed over Christmas. The ER in Cabri is closed every weekend in December and also every evening from 5 p.m. until 9 a.m. And Big River, Central Butte, Coronach, Spiritwood and Wakaw have all been closed for two years.

To the minister: how many other hospitals have reduced services, and when will this government admit these closures really aren't temporary?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the surest way we can avoid any interruptions at all in service in rural Saskatchewan or frankly in any other . . . in urban Saskatchewan, in northern Saskatchewan is to ensure that we have a proper complement of staff: that we have enough doctors practising and available, that we have enough nurses here in the province. And as the members of this House will know, we inherited a situation where we were between 800 and 1,000 nurses short just in 2007. We now have 1,000 more nurses from that day practising. We have 300 more doctors, Mr. Speaker. In long-term care we've seen significant increases, increases in staff working and

supporting those who need it.

With respect to what's going on in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, this government has a vision where we want to ensure that the proper scope of practice is applied to keep rural facilities open. That means the greater deployment of nurse practitioners in co-operation with doctors, including RNs [registered nurses] as well. And, Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased to note that the CEC [collaborative emergency centre], the new collaborative model that recognizes that scope of practice, that provides that service, is open and providing service in Maidstone, one to open in Shaunavon. The Throne Speech highlighted a number of others.

Mr. Speaker, I think rural Saskatchewan and those communities are encouraged by this development. It speaks to the innovation we're going to bring to ensure that rural Saskatchewan gets the health care that it deserves.

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

### Classroom Size and Support for Education

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government seems confused about the definitions of minimum and maximum. When it comes to minimum care standards in seniors' care, the government seems to say that minimum standards would limit care, as if a minimum standard somehow acts as a maximum.

And when we would push for caps in class sizes, the government has said a cap would mean school divisions couldn't respond to the challenges related to the composition of those classes, like increased needs for support for English as an additional language. That's nonsense. A cap would just specify the maximum number of students in each classroom. It would simply mean an end to overcrowded classrooms.

To the minister: has he heard enough about the negative effects of overcrowding yet, or is he still just ready for more strange excuses about why he won't implement a cap on classroom sizes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Mr. Speaker, our government has provided \$266 million for support for learning, an increase of over 4 per cent from the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, the member specifically raised the issue of English as an additional language. Mr. Speaker, I can advise that, because of the increase in growth in our population of 100,000, a lot of those people came from other countries, and supports for English as an additional language is something that's important. And we have in fact increased the number of EAL [English as an additional language] teachers by 15 per cent since the previous year. Mr. Speaker, we're proud of that record. And we will watch and monitor the immigrant population coming into our province and, where required, we will provide those supports.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, this is what's happening in Manitoba. Manitoba is phasing in a cap on class sizes, and it's added 130 teachers this year as it works towards a full implementation of that cap. But here in Saskatchewan we know that a number of teachers has not even kept pace with the increase of the number of students. And that's simply not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: why do other jurisdictions recognize the importance of having smaller class sizes, but this government doesn't?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, an easy answer for us to give would be to say that it's not the number of students that are in the classroom, but it's the composition that matters. And while that may be important, I can advise the member opposite that we've looked carefully at EAL. We've looked at special supports. We've increased this by approximately 266, \$267 million last year.

But if we want to talk numbers, the most recent provincial data reports an average class size of 17.9, which is down from the 2007-2008 number of 18.1. There are certainly exceptions . . . [inaudible] . . . there are pressures. We're working to address those.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that Saskatoon Catholic was hiring 24 more teachers this year. Saskatoon Public was authorized to hire 36 more teachers this year. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line in our government is that there are more students. There are more teachers. That will continue to grow. It is something that we make no apologies for, Mr. Speaker. We're moving forward. There's more work to do. But, Mr. Speaker, it's getting better, not worse.

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

### Children in Care

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a few fundamental responsibilities of a government. One is to provide accurate information about the public's finances. Another fundamental responsibility of government is to do everything that it can to protect our most vulnerable citizens. We keep hearing concerns, Mr. Speaker, about their child protection system.

In recent months, Mr. Speaker, we've heard of another tragic death of a foster child, the fifth child in care to die under suspicious or criminal circumstances in just the last several years. And just yesterday the Provincial Auditor reported that the government is still not doing enough to protect vulnerable little ones. My question to the Premier: does he accept the auditor's judgment, or does he dismiss it?

[11:00]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Fewer children in care is the answer. Mr. Speaker, that is an important measure of a government, is how that society, when the government is obviously in operation, treats those who are most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. And actually

it's an important measure for us. It has been whether it's children in care, whether it's the disabled community in this province, whether it's seniors or those who are on . . . those who have low income, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we can inform the House again that child welfare caseloads are down by 20 per cent over the last four years. I would point that out. I would point out that the number of front-line child care protection workers is up over 90, Mr. Speaker.

The auditor has highlighted ongoing concerns. We share those concerns. We understand and this Minister of Social Services understands that we need to continually strive to do better because we're talking about our kids in this province and those who need the help of government more than any other. And that's why we have deployed more resources. That's why we see less children in care. It's why even caseloads are down, but, Mr. Speaker, as long as there is one, work must continue.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, contrary to the words that the Premier provides about more resources, we've heard from the Children's Advocate a very different scenario, a very different situation and concerns.

My question in the previous question, Mr. Speaker, was whether or not this Premier accepts the judgment of the auditor or whether he dismisses it. And saying that more resources are provided, Mr. Speaker, to me would suggest that he's dismissing the concerns.

We know the Children's Advocate said cutbacks at the Ministry of Social Services means the management of cases is not what it should be. And the Children's Advocate has drawn a direct correlation between the deaths of children in care and non-compliance with ministry policy. In reference to the deaths he said, "These cases shared common themes regarding non-compliance with Ministry of Social Services policy in the areas of risk assessment, child protection investigations, and case management."

And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor said, "The ministry has not yet achieved an acceptable level of compliance with its established standards, both at First Nations agencies and in its own service areas."

My question to the Premier: in light of the words from the Children's Advocate, in light of words from the auditor, why has this not occurred?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think there's a premise to this question again that I simply can't agree with. The Leader of the Opposition would have people watching believe there's been inaction. It's just not the case, Mr. Speaker.

Since our government took over, we've seen increased funding to child and family services by over \$104 million, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that there's a declining number of children in care. We have announced over \$8 million lift even this

December for front-line workers, 4,000 to \$6,000 per year lift; invested 53.7 million in the last three child and youth agenda budgets; 90 additional child protection workers, Mr. Speaker. This speaks to a government that's acting.

It's also speaking to a government that will listen when others are pointing out different things we can do. We are interested in specific ideas that the Leader of the Opposition might have that we're not doing, frankly.

Mr. Speaker, we're also under the understanding that in order for us to afford these increases in resources in this province, in order for us to ensure quality of life for those who are vulnerable, for better education or health care, we're going to need an ongoing strong economy in the province of Saskatchewan. And that gives me the greatest hope of all that we can continue to make progress because our economy is growing, Mr. Speaker, in ways that we haven't seen it.

Mr. Speaker, we think we need to ensure that the elements of our growth plan are continuing in Saskatchewan so that we can see that growth continue so that we can provide the very best quality of life for all the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 216 to 222.

**The Speaker:** — Would the member please repeat that so we can hear.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order the answers to questions 216 to 222.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered questions 216 to 222.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

### Investment in Post-Secondary Education

**Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today, on our last day of this sitting, to be up today to speak about this very important issue that the people of this province, and more so I can say my actual family, is having the great privilege of experiencing under this government.

Because as everyone in the House knows, and the public that watches and listens to me, whenever I get a chance to brag about them, my two girls Alyssa and Mackenzie who are currently students, University of Saskatchewan: second year for Alyssa, first year for Mackenzie. And I'm very proud to say of course that my wife and I both graduated from the University of Saskatchewan as well. So one of us was on the dean's honour

roll; one was not. I won't tell you who was which one, but I think everyone can understand that one pretty quickly.

But it's today's debate that is important to me as a father, and not just as a politician. Because at the close of my comments, I'll move a motion that talks about the actions of this government, the investments of this government, into post-secondary education.

Now I talked about the University of Saskatchewan. I also want to talk about SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and the other levels of post-secondary education as well, which my other colleagues will do when they get up to speak, Mr. Speaker.

One thing that's really important here is that I find that as a government since 2007, the ministers who've been in charge of this particular file have worked hand in hand with their partners in the academic institutions. And I want to give especially the thanks to the officials in the ministry who have recognized over the years serious shortfalls in planning for the future. One thing this government takes a lot of pride in, Mr. Speaker, is that we have had a growth agenda. We have a plan for that growth moving forward, and we rely greatly on the academic institutions in this province to train our children, our youth, in some cases maybe some adults, to get ready for the workforce.

In this case I can speak about my daughters, specifically that within the College of Arts and Science they're finding some great challenges in the academic endeavours they're undertaking, but they're loving the learning opportunities that are provided by the professors there. And their friends are also experiencing the same kind of challenge, but the same kind of experience as a lot of us did by going to university. We had a lot of fun in university, but we had the challenge of opening up our minds to new thoughts, new endeavours, and new research, and new opportunities for our future.

That's one thing that we can't lose sight of, Mr. Speaker, is this government has always wanted to work towards a mandate of leaving what we have today better for the future. And every day we walk out of this House, we on this side believe firmly that our actions relay that to the public in this province, Mr. Speaker, is that we do not legislate and change the law for the sake of merely changing the name of a law or to have fanfare around legislation. We do these things in concert with consultation with the ministry officials and those in institutions that rely on change to adapt as well to the growth that's happening in this province.

And what I found very concerning in regards to this most recent legislative change the minister has put forward in regards to Bill 118, we talk about changing SIAST into a polytechnical institution, a learning realm that is something new in this province. Because what it does, Mr. Speaker . . . And I'll be honest. I've had some chance to look at some of the proposals of the minister and his staff, how this is going to change.

One thing we're recognizing in this province, Mr. Speaker, is that for years, too many years, institutions and the academia and the working public, the corporate partners in this province always seem to have the best intentions of the province in mind and the future. But one thing that we started to see, Mr.

Speaker, is that there was a need for more research. And we were training students in the academic institutions, especially SIAST, that were hands-on technical training to get them ready for the workforce in the community.

And in cases now, Mr. Speaker, what we're finding is that as we're seeing corporate Saskatchewan expand and opportunities develop for our future generations, those same employers, those same corporate entities would like to expand and look at research on how applied research can help them and assist them in their bottom line. Input costs can be reduced means more labour can be hired. More profits isn't a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, because they reinvest again into the community and this province and in our youth.

So in this case with the polytechnical changes to Bill. No. 118, we are going to see, and has been acknowledged by the president, Dr. Larry Rosia — I believe is how you pronounce his name — when it comes to SIAST is we're going to see a partnership develop unlike no other time before, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to see corporate Saskatchewan, the business community in Saskatchewan, who wants to have an idea looked at in a practical sense and applied research model using our academic institution, SIAST, and the students in those technical institutions to take new technology, new applied learning concepts to actually look at what is needed in corporate Saskatchewan and the business community and then study that inside the school environment under the supervision of the instructors. But also looking at those instructors liaisons with the corporate Saskatchewan and business community and the experts in the field to ensure that the applied research is going to be used in the short term. And maybe if it's not, then they're going to find the reasons why it didn't work. And the students will learn from that and then better themselves by learning more so under the applied research models to apply the data and those techniques into the community, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I'm thinking that as a government we are going to keep moving forward — I know we will — to ensure that every time we look at a legislative change, we're doing it for that purpose alone.

Now the member from Saskatoon Nutana stood up in the House and made some initial comments to Bill 118. And I'm very concerned at her take on this because she is a well-educated, learned individual who I would have thought would have done much more research and homework in this field. But this is a quote from *Hansard* from November 26, 2013. The member from Saskatoon Nutana said, and much to my dismay:

So I think what we're talking about here really is merely semantics, and despite the great fanfare and excitement with which the minister announced this new brave new world of the polytechnic in Saskatoon, I think it's just a word. And I don't think that a whole lot of attention needs to be paid to that.

Well that's bothersome, Mr. Speaker. That's bothersome to me as a member of this Legislative Assembly, but more so as a parent. And I have lots of friends who have children who are now currently in SIAST, in university, and their children will move forward in the future. For a member opposite to have that

level or lack of level of understanding, and what this bill truly means and how it's going to advance the co-operation level between our academic institutions and business community in Saskatchewan to tackle new, innovative ways of applying concerns in the business community to get our students to actually look at that research model and then learn from that, which gives them problem-solving . . . You know what it is, Mr. Speaker? This is a new niche. This is a niche that's being addressed, for too many years was overlooked, I believe, but was never looked at in a model of how a name like the polytechnic would be able to be advanced into SIAST and then utilized to move research models forward.

And one interesting factor of this too, Mr. Speaker, my other colleagues would talk about other great things this government's done in regard to student support and academic support. I know that. One thing we're losing sight of when we look at this particular Bill 118 as well is the level of corporate involvement that's going to allow for financial support to come to institutions like SIAST. Because with the research, these corporate entities will be paying and helping, assisting with a lot of that funding moving forward because, Mr. Speaker, it's going to have a net gain result hopefully for those corporate entities. So it's no different than a private corporation paying millions and millions of dollars for some research foundation or company to study something like how you may apply science to a certain kind of metal, how a metal might be used in new drill bits, let's say, whatever.

But in cases like this, this money now will be injected directly into the SIAST institutions, into programs to assist those students, those instructors, to actually develop new techniques and learn from those techniques so when those students leave school, they have that new, current knowledge base which takes them into the future, into this brave new world, as the member from Saskatoon Nutana calls it. It's, definitely it's a brave new world. It's a new world in Saskatchewan because we're leading the nation in so many aspects when it comes to investment. Why not allow the academic institutions to benefit from that same kind of monetary investment and allow our students to gain from that money inasmuch as they're applying their knowledge and their practical hands-on technique to something new and innovative that they're going to use in the future, moving out of school, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're moving on, exactly, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Greystone talks about Husky, how Husky is involved in the academic institutions, how they're applying their needs-based rationale for their business model into the academic institutions, using that expertise within our youth who are more than willing to learn. They are sponges sucking up all this knowledge, Mr. Speaker, and why not give them a chance to learn new things? And based on what's been happening in the past, for sure, to build an academic foundation, but if you have new, innovative ways of doing business, apply that in the academic institutions so the students are ready when they hit the field.

I know this is common sense. It should be very much so. But again I want to bring up what a member from the other side talks about. Again, on November 25th of this year, the member from Athabasca who spoke to many, many bills in initial introduction, and I understand that. That was his job. He seems

to be carrying the weight over there, for some reason, on these files. You know what . . . is that he says:

They're not going to change policy. They're not going to change direction. They're not going to radically implement some new way of doing business. All they're simply going to do is their agenda, their agenda in this bill, and to address all the issues that we've raised in the opposition. [And] . . . they're going to do is change SIAST to the name Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

[11:15]

Again, Mr. Speaker, that is blatant disregard for the hard work that's been happening within the ministry officials and the academic leaders in this province. To have that ignorance of what's happening around the entire file is bothersome to me as a member. Because you know what, Mr. Speaker? This is all about academics. This is all about learning. This is all about research. Members opposite should do some homework, do some simple homework like I did. Just google what polytechnic is. Talk about what's happening over . . . Look what's happening in Alberta with SAIT [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology] and how they've developed a relationship in the business community to develop new, innovative ways of doing product development, applied research, and then using it in the field, Mr. Speaker. It's very bothersome when I hear members opposite come up with these kinds of quotes.

You know what? It's also very bothersome, Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite fail to recognize that when it comes to advanced education funding, you know what? We have a record of injecting money, resources into this, into the institutions, which we understand is required and important, not just for capital dollars, that's important too, but assistance to those students who are going to be the leaders of this province. They're going to be the corporate business leaders, the innovative leaders, the research and development people that are going to be moving things forward long after we're all gone, Mr. Speaker. We have to recognize that. And my daughters, I hope, will have that opportunity because of what's happened within the academic institutions, to benefit from these kinds of funding models, Mr. Speaker. This is very important stuff.

I think what's also really important, Mr. Speaker, is that, you know what? When I talked about Husky there for a second, Mr. Speaker, you know what? SIAST received — and this was reported in *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker, on November 21st of this year — \$1.25 million was injected to the power engineering program at SIAST, Mr. Speaker. Now let's just talk about that alone. The power engineering program's been on for many, many years. We know that. And they've produced many a grad who's gone out to work in the business community, in the heavy plant, in the industrial sector of our province, and also across Canada, and I would think even around the world because of the great graduation rates we see from SIAST.

But with this dollar injection, this kind of new way of doing business, with opening up the concept, for once, of partnerships with business, we're allowing for this kind of corporate donation to come in to help support and fund specific engineering programs, in this case to possibly advance to new equipment purchases, largest ever in this time, Mr. Speaker.

You know what's important here is that these corporate leaders now have a mechanism and will have the mechanism because of the good work of the Minister of Advanced Education, because of this Act change, to actually make a new way of doing business into this brave, new world that we hear opposite from the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

I have to question why the members opposite would be so opposed to this bill, moving this legislation change forward to give our youth, the future of this province, the best thing possible that could ever happen — chances for advancement, chances for education, chances to learn, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? It's one of those things that really . . . when you sit back as a member of the government and you listen to the rhetoric from the other side on this particular file especially, that they've failed to recognize all of the great things that have been done by this government to make the future of our children that much better, all the opportunities that are around are helping the corporate people in this province, the business sector in this province, recognize that we have some of the highest, brightest, sharpest minds, highest learning minds in the country because of the fact that we're giving all this advancement to them, Mr. Speaker.

And this isn't in spite of some glamorous, big, flashy news release. We want to do these things to prepare this province because it's part of our growth plan. Without these kind of new ways of doing business, without the great leadership that we have in cabinet from ministers who are every day proposing new ideas to make this province better, Mr. Speaker, if we were to lay the groundwork with the NDP and done nothing more than leave it, we'd be so far behind right now, Mr. Speaker. So it's important to recognize that.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I will close off in conclusion by reading my motion:

That this Assembly supports the government's actions and investment in post-secondary education across the province so that Saskatchewan is prepared for growth by continuing to be a leader in research, innovation, and supports for students.

Mr. Speaker, that's very important. I look forward to hearing what my colleagues have to say.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly supports the government's actions and investment in post-secondary education across the province so that Saskatchewan is prepared for growth by continuing to be a leader in research, innovation, and support for students.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide some comments today on this motion.

I think there was some miswording in the motion though

because it should have read that this Assembly condemns the government's inactions and investment in post-secondary education across the province so that Saskatchewan is prepared for growth. Because we know full well, Mr. Speaker, that there's a number of areas where this government has not been active, and they have not provided the leadership that's required to support education in this province.

We were quite surprised to see the wording in this motion and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member from Moose Jaw is asking, what am I talking about. Just give me a chance and I'll let you know because there's certainly a number of points that we need to raise in this debate.

Let's start with then where the inactions and lack of investment start. And we can talk about the University of Saskatchewan. Here we see that there are a number of job cuts, that it's been off-loaded with a huge amount of debt from this government. It's the largest university in the province but we saw 248 jobs cut last August. We know that more job cuts are on the way, perhaps even the beginning of next week. We know that this government pushed \$100 million on to the books of the university. And why? Just so they can arrange their accounting a little bit differently, and we know what the auditor has to say about that.

We know that the university was required to borrow money at a high interest rate to build an Academic Health Sciences Building. We know that the accreditation at the medical school is a serious issue for the university, and the minister said it would never happen under his watch. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? It's happened. The lack of accreditation really threatens our health system and we know that the Sask Party's abandonment of the health sciences project will have devastating consequences when it comes to attracting all the doctors and nurses that this government talks about attracting. So this is a serious, serious problem that completely belies what the member said in his motion. So it just isn't making sense, Mr. Speaker.

We know that the University of Saskatchewan has the second-highest tuition in this country. We know that tuition has increased during this government's watch. We know that the tuition this year was the highest, year over year, in the country. And we know that the Premier told reporters that Stats Canada was wrong. That's their approach to this. But Stats Canada says the Sask tuition average is \$6,395. The Premier never apologized for that. He just assessed blame on Stats Canada and walked away from the issue.

We know that students are struggling. They're struggling with high student loans. They're struggling with high rental costs. They're working very hard to pay for their university education. We know that this government just did away with any kind of tuition freeze and to provide students that financial support that they need to get through their advanced education, Mr. Speaker.

Look at the Throne Speech for example, Mr. Speaker. In the Throne Speech we have very limited mention of this subject and it again completely belies what the member's motion is trying to say. There was only 50 forward-looking mentions in the Throne Speech. And in the Throne Speech we had a very, very sparse mention of post-secondary, so obviously not a



priority, but you had the audacity to bring forward a motion that says that. Clearly this motion does not meet the actions of this government.

We have a year old . . . Or let's talk about SIAST. We know that changing the name is just rebranding. There's absolutely nothing new in the bill. There's a few minor changes, but they're trumpeting it as if it's a brand new bill. There are minor changes in the previous bill that are being presented under this new bill, and that's clearly obvious, Mr. Speaker. If you take the time to compare the old bill and you'll . . . used to be a CEO [chief executive officer], now it's a president; used to be an institute, now it's a polytechnic.

We see in New Zealand they're doing the exact opposite. They're changing the name of their polytechnic to institute. It's just a rebranding and a new name, and the member didn't speak about that at all in his initial comments. So I think if he's concerned about the rebranding, he should speak to the Minister of Advanced Education if he's concerned about that.

We know that this government is more focused on the name change than any other substantial changes to help. We know SIAST needs more training spaces. That's what's needed and this bill does nothing to address that. We know the labour shortage that exists in this province. We know we need skills training, and we know this government has shown a dismissive attitude to putting in place the number of seats that are needed to meet the economy's needs.

We see all kinds of oversight in advanced education, and a good example of that is the International Performance Assessment Centre, IPAC-CO2 [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO<sub>2</sub>]. And we know that the geologic storage of carbon dioxide research project has struggled under the weight of overspending, millions of wasted dollars, and conflict of interest problems. We know that there are other financial and contractual mismanagement concerns raised by the Provincial Auditor.

So we do know, one thing that is admirable in this current session, Mr. Speaker, is the introduction of 700 new seats in adult basic education. That is a step in the right direction, and we congratulate the government for that. But we know that more work is needed, and that's certainly one of the favourite phrases of this government, and we would absolutely agree with that.

When we look at the motion, again, as I say, it's not properly worded because it should say that we condemn this government's inaction in post-secondary education. They've changed the name of an institute, but we know that there's all kinds of reports that are coming out. And again I want to mention again the tuition increase. We see the CBC posted a story in September of 2013, and they say that university students in Saskatchewan were hit this year with the biggest tuition increase in Canada.

And what we're opposed to is inaction on the part of this government, Mr. Speaker. We see the corporate community stepping up to the plate. We see the corporate community filling in where the government should be a leader. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, when I had a conversation with the president, the

current president of the University of Saskatchewan, she indicated that when it comes to applied research, the corporate community is doing its part, but when it comes to pure research, that there's a serious lack in funding and that they were falling behind. She did say that, and we're behind in that area and that we need more leadership in the area of pure research because pure research is looking 20 years down the road. And although there is considerable investment in pure research, but there could always be more.

And that's the thing, Mr. Speaker, that we're . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, the minister's going to check it out and I'm glad he will because that was basically something that we needed to look at. So pure research is important and the member opposite made no mention of pure research at all, and I think that's something where we could see further investment.

Applied research, we are proud to see that the corporate community is stepping up and that's an important part of research for sure. But we're looking for support across the board, Mr. Speaker, in all kinds of research and not just applied research.

Again, articles about the medical school put on probation. We see on October 5th from *The Globe and Mail*, "There's bad news for the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine. It has now been officially put on probation by the committee on accreditation of Canadian medical schools." This is something the minister said wouldn't happen under his watch, but it has. And there's a lot of things . . .

It says our only medical school is found to be weak or deficient on 10 standards, such as faculty not providing timely feedback to students. There has been insufficient progress on fixing problems that could mean continued warning of probation or probation itself. And certainly the president has acknowledged that and makes it clear that restructuring of the college remains a very critical priority.

We see another story from *The StarPhoenix* on August 7th of this year, "Workforce planning cuts 248 U of S jobs." So again we see all the bad news is coming out in the newspaper, which is contradictory to the motion that members moved. And that's why I suggest that perhaps he misworded the words. Because we see there's inaction on that part, and we see all these cuts coming in the University of Saskatchewan — quite alarming.

I know that others of my colleagues are waiting to enter the debate and speak about the failure of this government on the part of education of First Nations. And we've heard lots of questions in the Assembly this session, Mr. Speaker, about the weaknesses in this government's approach to First Nations education.

We see them failing to support a motion to condemn the federal government for . . . In fact they wouldn't even allow the motion to be introduced, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government should be condemned for memos coming from the PMO [Prime Minister's Office] suggesting that Aboriginal education is not a priority and that the Senate should follow the party line when they're introducing those kinds of memos. This government refused to bring that to the attention of the federal government and call them on it. And we think that's a real shame, Mr.

Speaker.

So again I think the wording in the motion is wrong, that inaction would be a better description. And that really in this Assembly, we should be condemning this government for its failure to provide for pure research, for more advanced research, and for supporting students — instead of giving them the highest tuition in Canada, to have lower rents and better living conditions for students. We see the exact opposite.

So I'm very happy to have been able to rise in the debate and look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

[11:30]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured and very excited to enter into this debate. And I think to start out with, we have to look at the premise of this motion, Mr. Speaker. The Assembly supports the government's actions in investment in post-secondary education across the province of Saskatchewan. The premise is, are you in favour of investment in post-secondary education?

If you listen to the members opposite, I would argue it's like they don't. They aren't supportive of investment in post-secondary education. If you further listen to members opposite about a number of different issues, almost anything happening in this province, you'd think that everything is going downhill, including post-secondary education, that everything is deteriorating. I think if you look at the record of the province and of this government, you would argue that it's not.

You know, previously one of the members opposite and I were speaking at a SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] event at one point. And something that he said . . . And I pointed it out here before in this Assembly, but it really shocked me. I always thought it was a bit of an act or, you know, maybe a bit of a game, but he said, "New Democrats by nature are critical people." And I think if we sit in this Assembly and we listen to the members opposite day after day, we see it. It's truly in their DNA. I've said before quite jokingly that my blood type is R-B positive. I'm B positive and I think a lot of the members across from me may be B negative.

But you know, that aside, Mr. Speaker, are things perfect in post-secondary education? No, because if they were, there would be absolutely no work to do. There'd be no investment to be made. We recognize the needs that the institutions have, whether universities, SIAST, the college system, or what have you, Mr. Speaker. And I think we address those needs. We respond to those needs as quickly and as best as we possibly can. And I'm very proud of our institutions, our government, the work being done and the strides being made.

And again we have to think, look at this motion and the record through fact and logic and not through emotion. So I'm going to go through some of these facts as quickly as I possibly can. I know 10 minutes is not a whole lot of time.

Let's just look at the record. 333 million for the U of S

[University of Saskatchewan]. That's a 59 per cent operating increase since 2007 and '08, Mr. Speaker. U of R, 105.3 million, 36 per cent increase. 147 million for SIAST, a 23 per cent increase since '07-08. SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], \$5.7 million this year, a 51.6 per cent increase from 2007. Gabriel Dumont Institute, 10.55 million this year, Mr. Speaker, a 39 per cent increase. Colleges, 61 per cent increase operating from '07-08.

When we look at capital, Mr. Speaker, University of Saskatchewan, 260.3 million in capital investment in the last six years. U of R, 59.6 million in capital investment since '07-08. SIAST, 31.1 million, '07-08. Regional colleges, 51 million in capital investment since '07-08.

And I'll touch on some more investment coming quite quickly that I'm very appreciative of our Premier, Deputy Premier, our caucus colleagues, treasury board, also the former minister of Advanced Education from Saskatoon as well as our current Minister of Advanced Education from Saskatoon for the work that they've done to make this come to fruition to benefit not only the east part of the province, Mr. Speaker, east central, but the whole province of Saskatchewan.

When we look at student support, 4.6 billion — that's a "b," not an "m," Mr. Speaker — since '07-08 in support for post-secondary institutions and students, \$115.5 million in student supports this year alone.

Let's recap some of this, Mr. Speaker. SIAST, 147 million, a 23 per cent operating increase since '07-08; 31.1 million in capital operating since '07-08. And I know these are a lot of numbers, and the members might want to check *Hansard* later. It might be difficult to write them all down. Since '07, apprenticeship seats have increased by 70 per cent under our government.

Now let's look at some of the record of the NDP, Mr. Speaker. Since 1991, between '91 and '07, the NDP allowed tuition at SIAST to increase by 336 per cent. Now we hear over and over about tuition freezes and all the like, Mr. Speaker. But if we look at the record of our government, the increases under our government, small increments that have increased to make sure that the educational institutions stay feasible, that they stay on solid financial ground, Mr. Speaker. It only makes sense to slowly increase so it's not a big impact to students. They have the financial wherewithal to continue operating. Not like under the members opposite when they'd have drastic increases in a short period of time to make up for freezes that they had put in place. And that doesn't serve the people of the province well. It doesn't serve the students well, Mr. Speaker. And it definitely doesn't serve again the educational institutions of this province very well at all.

My focus, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to focus more on the regional colleges in the province. Again, the operating funds increased by 61 per cent in the last six years, 51 million capital investment. And again, the commitment to the area of the province I'm from, to Parkland Regional College — I'll touch on that a bit more — 4,681 students enrolled in '11-12, with over 50 per cent being First Nations and Métis, Mr. Speaker. And I know the work that the regional college does in Yorkton is great when you go to the graduation classes there and see how many of our First Nations and Métis students are

graduating, getting engaged in the workforce, and helping to address the labour shortage that we have in the province.

When we look at student housing, Mr. Speaker, another support that we sometimes don't really attribute or don't equate to post-secondary education, but huge advancements in our housing for students in the province: 34.8 million towards student housing since taking government; 1,136 new units complete or under construction for students in communities like La Ronge, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, and Prince Albert. This budget provides the U of R with 10 million to begin construction with a new 605-bed student residence and a child care facility, Mr. Speaker. At the U of S we're providing \$15 million for 400 beds. That's the first investment in student housing there since the 1960s.

So between '91 and 2007, under the 16 years of the NDP, they did not fund any student housing projects at the U of S or the U of R. We have. From '01 to '07, the NDP provided only 840,000 for student housing province-wide. We have provided a 4,000 per cent increase in our first six years compared to the NDP's last six years.

When we look at other supports for students, Mr. Speaker, and we've talked about, I've touched on tuitions briefly. And yes, there have been slight increases, but I want to point out a few things that the government, our government has done to support students.

A recent development is the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings which allows parents to top up and add on to their RESPs [registered education savings plan] for their child's education.

The Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship, \$5 million matched by institutions for senior undergrad and grad students as well as I know our government has been matching bursaries and scholarships at the college level as well. In fact this last semester, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a contribution by the Yorkton Tribal Council of \$150,000 matched by our government totals, in that one little program alone, that one little segment of it alone, \$300,000 for support for students when it comes to cost of education.

Our graduate retention program, we all know what that's about — \$20,000 over a seven-year period for those that choose to stay and work in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, 40,000 students have taken advantage of that program and more all the time, another way that students get some of their tuition back once they stay and earn in the province.

We have the rural physician nurse retention program for underserved health areas although not directly attributed to . . . you know, maybe more for health and developing health care in our rural areas. But another support for those in education . . . coming out of their education and helping to address some of the issues in the province.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, one health professional I know, have a very close tie to, a Saskatchewan resident, she was actually recruited by California as well as Sunrise Health Region in the Yorkton area. Mr. Speaker, choices all over the world to go, where did she choose? Sunrise Health Region in Yorkton

because of the programs in place, because of our recruitment and retention programs, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I don't have a whole lot of time left here and a huge amount of information. But I just want to point out, with the college system there's been huge investments. Almost every regional college in the province has gotten an infrastructure investment in the last six years as well as huge increases as I stated with operating capital.

The Parkland College in Yorkton, as we all know, our government contributed \$10 million for that project. We're looking at sod turning very shortly, if it hasn't happened already. Design stage is pretty well done. And we'll be looking at that facility opening in the fall of 2015, adding 360 more training seats, a wide range of services and skills trades to the area. And you know, I'm just so happy with the college. We finally got that project under way again with the credit of members on this side of the House and with the hard work of the community and the college in Yorkton.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion put forward by the member from Carlton, and I won't be going onside with any members opposite any time soon. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Glad to join the debate today on post-secondary education and its place in Saskatchewan and the support that is forthcoming or not from this government, the plan that is forthcoming or not for the sector from this government.

And it's often said, Mr. Speaker, that post-secondary education is, education generally is one of the great levellers in our society. It's that key to a better future, better jobs, better pay, better standard of living.

And certainly that's been the experience in my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for me, the opportunities I was afforded by my parents saving, by my grandmother saving, and in terms of our generation, in terms of my brothers and sister and I having that opportunity to go on to post-secondary education — be it through SIAST, as in the case with one sister; or through Briercrest Bible College, as was the case with my younger brother; or through the University of Regina and then on to global opportunities through post-secondary education, as is the case with my older brother, but again building upon a firm foundation of, in his case, a Bachelor of Admin and economics degree from the University of Regina — it is something that makes a tremendous difference in peoples' lives and by extension in community and by extension for the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that this government has approached post-secondary education, it's been interesting to see the different sort of permutations that have been undergone. And in 2007, I can still remember the then member for Silver Springs but the Finance critic for the then official opposition commenting on our tuition level and saying that, you know, Saskatchewan should be at the national average at a bare minimum, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that we had the

fourth-highest level of tuition in the country at the time, that this was unacceptable, and something needed to be done about it.

And certainly into the campaign, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, again in 2011, there were different measures brought forward that impacted post-secondary education, but one of the fundamental components of post-secondary education, particularly on the university side, is the question of tuition. And the members opposite signed themselves up for a negotiated tuition freeze and making sure that the universities had the funds that would have been otherwise garnered through tuition for the most part.

There's some dispute about that, Mr. Speaker, but that I think was a case of them riding the coattails of what had happened under the final years of the Calvert administration in terms of a tuition freeze that was fully funded and then the different offerings that were made in the 2007 campaign. And again, Mr. Speaker, I remember very well, as I was the minister of Advanced Education and Employment at the time, bringing forward a platform that proposed a \$1,000 cut to tuition to rebalance tuition and then pegging it to the cost of inflation.

[11:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party alongside brought forward a platform that said, well we're going to freeze tuition, and we'll take it from there. And again, Mr. Speaker, there are different reasons why people make their decisions in campaigns, but in 2007 members opposite won that election of course, and then for the most part, fortunately carried forward with a platform and an approach to policy that made sure that tuition stayed within some reasonable balance.

Well it's interesting. I hear the member from Arm River-Watrous yelping from his chair. And you know, for a fellow that has got the Carlton Trail Regional College in his backyard and the kind of mess that was made of that institution by this government, Mr. Speaker, you'd think he'd have a little pause when it comes to yelling from his chair, but I guess not.

Anyway in terms of the system as a whole, Mr. Speaker, there are different positions brought forward on tuition. But for the most part, there was some security provided to students as they plan their lives forward in terms of the tuition freeze. All that has changed in the recent circumstance, Mr. Speaker, where the apparent approach of the government now is not to provide any sort of restraint or provide funding to purchase that restraint on the question of tuition but instead cut the envelope of funding for the sector as a whole. And there's greater pressure brought to bear on tuition, and students wind up being held hostage to the needs of the institution.

So again, Mr. Speaker, and I say this from someone who went to . . . in the fall of 1990 was enrolled as a student at the University of Regina, I'm a proud grad of the University of Regina and am currently a member of the master's of public admin program through Johnson-Shoyama. And one of the things that this province got to experience on university campuses through the '90s was the fact that we got to pay for the neglect and the bad decisions that were made in the 1980s. And in terms of one generation racking it up for the one to come, you know, I got some direct experience in that, Mr.

Speaker.

I've also got some direct experience in the fact that for some of the years that I was a student on the University of Regina campus, the physical footprint of the University of Regina doubled in the time of the Romanow and Calvert administration. I've also got some direct experience from the fact that when, you know, there were some very tough years immediately after that '91 election, Mr. Speaker, and for reasons that, if members are being honest in terms of how they approach the question and not just spinning themselves, they'll understand that there was some very serious things that this province had to address.

But on the whole, between 1993-94 and 2003-2004 — and don't take our word for it, Mr. Speaker — the Canadian Association of University Teachers says that Saskatchewan was one of two jurisdictions in all of Canada that stood by the sector and increased funding, to the tune of 24 per cent operating funding increase over that period. The only other jurisdiction to increase post-secondary education funding in that time, Mr. Speaker, was BC [British Columbia], and they were on the order of I think 4 per cent cumulative for that decade. So by that one measure, Mr. Speaker, there is an exciting, diverse sector, Mr. Speaker. But for the funds that were being put up, the only time that the provincial government got some security for students on the question of tuition was when we entered into the question of whether or not there should be a freeze directly.

What we've seen since then, Mr. Speaker, is a system where there's increased demand in terms of the training spaces on the training side of the equation, Mr. Speaker. And the pressures there are very concerning because again, in terms of adding value, in terms of greater productivity, in terms of innovating in our economy, you know . . . I'm fine with the polytechnic announcement for SIAST, Mr. Speaker, but in many ways that's primarily a rebranding exercise. And in terms of providing degrees, that power has been extended to SIAST, and we're glad to see that, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of whether or not we're going to be meeting the great demands that students are looking to institutions like SIAST and the regional college system, SIIT, First Nations University, and to our universities — University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina — whether or not we're going to be able to meet those demands are very much questions of tuition. They're questions of quality, and they're questions of accessibility in whether or not we have the capacity in the system to meet this tremendous demand.

I think of one last item, Mr. Speaker, where the First Nations University of Canada was up in Prince Albert on Monday and announced that they are looking to meet better the demand out of Prince Albert and the North, Mr. Speaker. And you know, again if this was a government that was truly attuned to the sector, it's funny that a member from Prince Albert should move this motion and start off the debate. But those hopes and dreams and the need for that support for that institution was apparently nowhere in the speech.

But again that's the difference between the hype that we hear from members opposite and the reality on the ground are two different things, often as not. And we think of that particularly

as we know that that government are going through the treasury board process to assemble the next year's budget. And we hear things like a 1.5 per cent reduction being bandied about for all departments, and we wonder how that is going to impact post-secondary education in this province.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my place and await the next round of back-patting from members opposite.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Advanced Education for asking me to enter into this debate about something that is very personal to me, because it's obviously right within my constituency at the U of S of Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been able to attend over 25 events at the University of Saskatchewan, seven events at the U of R, and probably another dozen at SIAST. It's very exciting to sit down and talk to the faculty and talk to the staff and to the students as how things are going within the university and within the technical institutes. And I can report to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they're very happy with the investment that this government is able to provide for them versus what was happening in the dark days of the NDP in the 16 years.

First off, our government . . . I want to talk about student housing which is very critical to students. And certainly as Legislative Secretary of Immigration, international students coming through, all around the world, coming back to Saskatchewan, it is very important for them to have secure housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a very calming feeling for students.

I remember sitting in Saskatoon and watching the papers every August and September, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the NDP were in power there was a housing crisis. Every year students were scrambling for beds. They were scrambling to find a place to live. Some of them have come throughout Saskatchewan and around the world. This is the stress that they don't need coming back to the university, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I wanted to say that this government, since taking power in 2007, is working very hard at addressing all of these needs.

We've invested \$38.4 million toward student housing since taking government. I think that's a huge number, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At the U of S we provided \$15 million for 400 beds, the first investment in student housing since the 1960s. The total number of beds on campus at the U of S is more than 1,000 in just three short years. Between 1991 and 2007 the NDP did not fund any student housing projects at the U of S, U of R at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have increased student housing funding by over 4,000 per cent in six short years.

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I was really encouraged that the NDP were going to bring this up in debate. They were going to stand up and talk about this in the House and we were going to have a good exciting debate about post-secondary. But as it turns out, they have no ideas. They have no plan for post-secondary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All we got from the

leader was his famous saying about more eggs in more baskets. I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition now, what is the egg in the basket that is for post-secondary? I would like to hear from him what his plans are for post-secondary. It was just embarrassing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all he could come up with was his cliché of eggs in baskets. I would like to hear a little bit more about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the good news is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House, we do have a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I can absolutely say that our plan is working.

Here's what's happening in Saskatchewan overall. There are more people living here than ever before, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are more people working here than ever before, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate across Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in reference to post-secondary, \$117 million for student supports this year — \$388 million in student supports since we took government in 2007.

The Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, \$2,000 per new Sask high school graduates that are attending post-secondary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and over 4,500 students have accessed that. The Sask advantage grant for education savings allows parents to put an extra \$250 away in their child's RESP for post-secondary. The Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunities Scholarship, \$5 million matched by institutions for seniors and undergraduates and graduate students. The U of R alone, \$59 million in capital investments. SIAST, \$31 million in capital investments since we took government. Regional colleges, \$51 million in capital investments. \$4 billion since '07-08 in support for post-secondary institutions.

Now I'll flip it over to what they did. Here's what they did between 1991 and 2000. Students faced substantial tuition increases. U of S, 175 per cent increase. U of R, 144. And in SIAST, Mr. Deputy Speaker — this is outstanding — a 336 per cent increase in tuition rates. And on top of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they just didn't increase the tuition rates, they also cut funding on the other side of it — '93-94, down 1.3 per cent at U of R, down two point five at U of S; '94-95, 4 per cent cut at U of R, 4 per cent cut at U of S; 1997-98, point six per cent cut at the U of R and point one per cent cut at the U of S.

By the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recently saw a YouTube video from the Leader of the Opposition. We were expecting him to come out with his growth plan and how he was going to address all the needs within Saskatchewan. This YouTube video had nothing to do with post-secondary, not even mentioned in this. This is how this leader wants to lead the province at some point in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker? He can't even talk about what his plan is in the universities and growth, agriculture, manufacturing — all very vague ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's very disconcerting for the people of Saskatchewan to see that the opposition is so ineffective at what they are doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to touch base on what the member from Athabasca said when he was talking about this bill. Quote, Bill No. 118, which I think is the cornerstone of that government's post-secondary agenda. Mr. Speaker, they're all doing today under this bill, and they've announced it with great fanfare. They've done what they're going to change the name. They're going to change the policy. They're not going to

change direction. They mean they're not going to do anything radical about doing business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really don't think that they actually even read the bill on this one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there is more than just changing a name in this. We are evolving post-secondary within Saskatchewan to make sure that it is up to par and at a lot of places above the national average to make sure that our students here in Saskatchewan have the best advantage to moving their education forward.

And I just want to mention some of these numbers again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I think it's very critical. Our record, \$333 million for the U of S, a 59 per cent increase; 105 million for U of R, 36 per cent increase; \$147 million for SIAST, 23 per cent increase; 10.5 million for Gabriel Dumont Institute, a 39 per cent increase; the U of S, \$260.3 million in capital investment.

And I want to touch on the Health Sciences Building just for one second, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They announced a Health Sciences Building a long time ago. Then they announced it again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and yet they still didn't do anything. They talk about having fanfare? They are famous for making announcements, but they're not actually doing anything on the ground. Shovel never hit the ground. Lots of press releases, but never actually did anything.

[12:00]

I think it was the member from Regina Lakeview who made that announcement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What this government is doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we are talking about growth and we are talking about the evolution of Saskatchewan to the new Saskatchewan. We are tired of the 16 years under the NDP where everything the status quo was the norm. Things have to change here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is the change on this side of the House. The NDP will not evolve, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are stuck in the past and they do not have the ability to evolve.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very, very honoured to talk about this on behalf of the Saskatoon Sutherland constituency which the University of Saskatchewan is in, as well as on behalf of the government. It is very, very impressive what our government has done in six short years. We have done more for post-secondary in six years than 16 years with the NDP.

It is absolutely embarrassing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they stand up and criticize what we are doing when they did nothing for students. They did nothing on capital and they did nothing for operating, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They should be embarrassed about talking about this. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing me to enter into the debate, and I support the motion of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured and pleased to participate in the debate that's being presented today. And, Mr. Speaker, I find it completely strange, somewhat strange that in light of all the trauma in the potash

industry as a result of the layoffs, Mr. Speaker, that we're having the Saskatchewan Party bring forward a motion, again back-patting themselves when it comes to post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, when all the tough decisions being made in the . . . and of course the trauma to the families impacted and affected by all the layoffs.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many families, not just the 440 that were impacted with a direct layoff notice in the potash sector, but many people that provide contracts. I understand one company alone had to lay off 45 workers, and there's contracts and other services, Mr. Speaker. And a few weeks away from Christmas, we see the Saskatchewan Party taking the opportunity on a debate to talk about their commitment to post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker.

What I want to point out, and I think it has a lot of relevance to this, Mr. Speaker, and I want to talk a bit about a press release that talks about Saskatchewan emerging as a star. In some of the quotes, Mr. Speaker, it says:

In fact, the lineup, by the only measure . . . of economic growth that really counts, is quite different.

The winner is Saskatchewan . . .

That's one of the quotes, Mr. Speaker. And another quote that we have, Mr. Speaker, from the same article is that "Saskatchewan has had so many economic . . . [challenges] in recent years . . ." And, Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say that ". . . the province's stunning expansion in the first two years of the decade." And the quote that we have here, "With such a good start, and with a couple of . . . [rather] good years, Saskatchewan's economy grew more than 32 per cent over the decade," Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, it all talks about how Saskatchewan is a star, of how Saskatchewan is really coming on strong and that there's great promise that the province has, Mr. Speaker. And the article, Mr. Speaker, is back from the year 2000. And it's really important to note that the people of Saskatchewan know the history of the province and that people were really . . . It took many, many years to rebuild.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we hear the bragging that the Saskatchewan Party is doing as it talks about some of the post-secondary challenges. Mr. Speaker, the point that we would raise — and not one of them can challenge this — the question I would have for them: are the universities deeper in debt, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this government's choice to put some of the debt load onto the universities? The answer is yes. The universities are deeper in debt. This government allowed the universities to go further into debt, Mr. Speaker. And there's no question about it that someday that bill will come due.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, that I'll ask which is factual, Mr. Speaker, is you look at the overall challenges with the tuition rate. Why does Stats Canada say that Saskatchewan has the second-highest tuition rates in the country, Mr. Speaker? The fact is Stats Canada says that's the rate. They're the second-highest in the country. And yet the Sask Party says, oh no, that's not us.

Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the issues of the layoffs that are occurring, both at the U of S and the U of R, that these are some of the things that really impact people's lives. And, Mr. Speaker, you look at the tuition rates, second-highest in the country. You look at the debt load increasing, Mr. Speaker. And now we look at some of the layoffs. So you can't tell me then in this Assembly that the Saskatchewan Party coming along, bragging about all their money that they've invested into the post-secondary system in the province, that they haven't dealt with the real serious issues that many of our post-secondary institutions need a lot of help from this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the time that they have a vast amount of wealth, they've got tons of money, Mr. Speaker, and yet they have not correspondingly supported the institutions of higher learning to the degree that's going to be effective for Saskatchewan for many, many, many years. Tell me this today, Mr. Speaker. If all the money that they're talking about, and all we hear from the members across the way is millions here, millions there, Mr. Speaker, why is it the net effect is that universities have a huge debt burden today? Why is it university students in our province are paying the second-highest tuition, Mr. Speaker, in the country, Mr. Speaker? And why is it today, the third point I will make, you're seeing layoffs occur on a grand scale at many of our institutions?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I made a comment about SIAST changing the name, you know, from SIAST to Polytechnic. Now, Mr. Speaker, you obviously want to modernize the language. That was my point earlier when I talked about modernizing our institutions and modernizing our language. Those are important gestures to make in concert and consultation and agreement with the institution. But you notice how, Mr. Speaker, how the Saskatchewan Party tries to change the channel, deflect peoples' attention, not from the issues that they refused to deal with, but rather the ones they want to highlight.

And the issues that they refused to deal with, I will remind the people of Saskatchewan, these are the actual facts, and I'd like anybody in the Saskatchewan Party to stand up and challenge these facts. Fact number one, the universities have a greater amount of debt today because the Saskatchewan Party government forced that debt upon them by withdrawing financial support at a crucial time on some of their capital projects. The second point, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the students of the province of Saskatchewan are paying the second-highest tuition rates of all the provinces, Mr. Speaker, the second-highest in the country. That is also a fact, Mr. Speaker. And now we look at the layoffs occurring at many of our institutions. That is also a fact, Mr. Speaker.

Now we look at all these points, Mr. Speaker, and people across the province will say, well those are facts. But why is the Sask Party keep talking about their money? The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is they have not done enough. A name change is not enough to support SIAST, Mr. Speaker. And some of the dollars that they speak about is not enough to avert the high cost of tuition that many of our students and our families pay, Mr. Speaker. And the money that they're talking about today is still not enough to avert a lot of the massive layoffs that have occurred in the past. And we anticipate that more layoffs are coming our way as we talk about places like SIAST, the U of S, and you know, and the U of R.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you look at the situation, and it's really amazing how the Saskatchewan Party just want to forget about history. The world began in 2007; Mr. Speaker, that's their world. And nothing occurred, nothing occurred before 1991. And what a lot of people know in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and history will prove it, the conservatives across the way, they refuse to talk about the billions of dollars of debt they left this province in. And, Mr. Speaker, what they refused to also admit today is that they inherited tons of money from this administration and the people of Saskatchewan. And they have squandered that opportunity. They have squandered the opportunity.

We see problems in health care. We see problems in not only reporting the finances of the province where the auditor has, in the first time in the history of Saskatchewan, lambasted the government for not properly recording the books, Mr. Speaker. And now we see their bragging rights on how they're bragging about all the money they put into post-secondary schools in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, from our side of the House, we understand the history. We know the challenges. But I point out to the people of Saskatchewan, all the bragging they do, why do we still pay the second highest tuition rates? Why are there always layoffs at the U of S, U of R, and SIAST? And the third point is, how come they have so much debt? All those three problems are courtesy of that Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for 65-minute debate has expired. Questions? Ten minutes of questions. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Sutherland. And we heard the Premier say that Stats Canada was wrong when it says that Saskatchewan has the second-highest tuition in Canada. Who does the member agree with? Does he agree with Stats Canada or does he agree with the Premier?

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Who I agree with is the Minister of Advanced Education who stood in this House last week and listed off all of the universities that have a higher tuition than our current universities. Very proud to say that the Minister of Advanced Education can look at the whole picture and see what's going on within Saskatchewan and be able to make sure that our students are paying a competitive rate, and that they're absolutely looking for housing, and that they make sure that they are well taken care of. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing is very important at our universities, especially for students who move from different communities and rural Saskatchewan to attend post-secondary institutions. That is why our government has invested \$34.8 million towards student housing since 2007.

That's an over 4,000 per cent increase in our first six years compared to the NDP's last six years. Between 1991 and 2007, the NDP did not fund a single student housing project at the U of S or the U of R.

To the member from Regina Elphinstone: why did you ignore student housing needs, especially those of students for smaller communities and rural Saskatchewan?

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In terms of the University of Regina, there was funding provided to the university to make sure that they had the room to go forward with the North and South Residence in conjunction with the Canada Summer Games. So when the member comes forward with a very narrow definition of what sort of support was provided for the university, that's obviously not recognized.

But given that that member's from the city of Regina and represents a Regina constituency, can the member inform the House as to whether or not there will be the \$10 million that the University of Regina is still waiting for for their student residence plans?

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, on September 12, 2013 the Statistics Canada said this: undergraduate students in Ontario paid the highest average fees in Canada, \$7,259; followed by students in Saskatchewan who paid 6,394 dollars in university student tuition fees. Once again, to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland: would he agree with Stats Canada or does he agree with the Premier, who says that these numbers are wrong?

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — There's a few facts that we have here. There is a fact that the U of S, what we have invested in the U of S is up 175 per cent, U of R up 144 per cent, SIAST is up. What I want to talk about is why the nimble nine over there is so focused in on this, when they have such a horrible record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would almost call it, not the nimble nine, I would say it's almost a nonsensical nine, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And in regards to the Health Sciences Building, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what they did is announce things. What we do over here is we do things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As Elvis the King would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a little less conversation, and a little more action please. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Doke:** — Mr. Speaker, our government is making great strides in enhancing post-secondary education support for students since 2007. We have increased student supports by nearly 120 per cent in our first six years, compared to the NDP's last six years. In the last year alone we have provided

\$117 million to support Saskatchewan students. Additionally our government has made improvements to the student loans to increase eligibility.

Mr. Speaker, these young people are the future of our province, which is why our government aims to ensure there is financial support readily available to these students. To the member from Athabasca: why does your caucus continue to ignore the benefits and potential of these programs for our students?

[12:15]

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, what's really important is the facts are still before the people of Saskatchewan. Second-highest tuition rates in the country, the U of S and the U of R have huge debt loads, the layoffs that are continuing to happen all throughout our province — Mr. Speaker, these are the problems that the people of Saskatchewan see in the newspapers every single month, Mr. Speaker.

The challenges we have, Mr. Speaker, is that this government, it is much like a hockey game, Mr. Speaker, where you have your forwards and you have your defencemen and you have your goalie. Mr. Speaker, what happens now is the universities are now all by themselves in trying to develop a future for the people of Saskatchewan, the young people, and they're the only member of the team that's on the ice. The government has basically taken away the forwards and the defence have no game plan. They've got high tuition rates, high debt, Mr. Speaker, and that's not a good game plan.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Does the member from Sutherland agree that the Minister of Advanced Education broke his promise to never allow the U of S's College of Medicine to be on probation on his watch?

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I would like to say is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is here's how we're helping out students at the university: the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, first and foremost; the Saskatchewan advantage grant in education savings; and the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship. This is how we're helping students on the ground at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan and all of our post-secondary institutions.

I can't believe that the member from Athabasca compares what the students are going through in their university to a hockey game, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a very serious subject, and to compare it to a hockey game with four people on the ice and this and that, it doesn't make any sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think the member from Athabasca should apologize and say that this is a very serious issue for our students.



Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite were second to none when it came to scaring our young people out of Saskatchewan. In the last six years, we've done a lot to reverse this trend. Now more than ever, young people are choosing to stay home in our province and to continue their education and enter the workforce. This is largely due to programs such as the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, which over 4,500 students have received since its inception, and the graduate retention program that over 40,000 students have benefited from in the last seven years.

Those are impressive numbers, Mr. Speaker, and the benefits of these programs have a lasting impact on our province. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: why does your caucus refuse to support these programs that help keep Saskatchewan's young people home in their province?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I'm not sure what the question is about, Mr. Speaker, because I'd like the member to demonstrate where we have refused to support those programs. I think that's misleading at best.

Now what I would like to point out though . . . And when it comes to graduate programs here in the province, we see that last year's Stats Canada says Saskatchewan's tuition increases for graduate students was the highest in Canada at 4.9 per cent. And we know that it's even higher for international graduate students who have seen an increase of 6.7 per cent in Saskatchewan. These students need all the support they can get, Mr. Speaker, and we really question why this government is failing to provide more support for these people.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again we see a bit of a disconnect between Sask Party hype and the reality on the ground. In August, the University of Saskatchewan announced 248 jobs cut. And if you listen to members opposite, somehow that would be a great thing.

And again, TransformUS reports on Monday, and we'll see what they have to say about the workforce complement required at the University of Saskatchewan. But these are some very hard decisions being made by the university and officials because of course they expected one thing in terms of, and were led to expect one thing in terms of funding from the members opposite, but have been delivered something else.

To the member from Sutherland: to those that have been laid off and to those that will be facing an uncertain future in terms of their jobs, and at the University of Saskatchewan to name one institution, how does he square his rhetoric with their reality?

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 605

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Wotherspoon that **Bill No. 605 — *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to enter into debate on Bill 605, *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a common sense approach and I'm proud of the good work that the member from Regina Rosemont, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, has done in bringing this bill forward. I hope it's something that we can co-operate with the government on in order to pass it and ensure that any P3 deals that the government enters into are fully transparent and fully accountable to taxpayers. Because the reality is that Saskatchewan people don't want secret deals. Secret deals are not in the best interests of taxpayers. What Saskatchewan people want is for P3 deals to be transparent and accountable, and they don't want us to go down the P3 road if the costs are not competitive.

So what this bill would do is ensure an independent accountability watchdog is in place on each P3. This bill would prevent the government from using the P3 method for major capital projects if there are less than three bidders on the contract. And this bill would also require the full price tag of the project, including the cost of credit, to be reported to taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, I think all that is good Saskatchewan common sense, and frankly it's just the right thing to do because Saskatchewan people deserve transparency and accountability from their government. And the need for greater transparency and accountability is top of mind for Saskatchewan people right now.

Yesterday we learned that, for the first time ever, the Provincial Auditor refused to endorse this government's financial statements. It is extremely rare in both the public and private sector for an auditor to issue an adverse audit opinion, but that's what the independent, non-partisan Provincial Auditor did this week. The auditor says the government's GRF financial statements were "full of errors" and "not reliable." The auditor warned legislators and the public that "much of the information included in the GRF 2013 financial statements is wrong." Mr. Speaker, to me that doesn't sound like transparency and accountability to taxpayers.

Now we have a lot of concerns about the way this government reports its finances, but we'll keep pushing those issues in the weeks and the months ahead. But today we have an opportunity to make some good strides in improving transparency and accountability in one particular area — public-private partnership deals that the government enters into. We want to

shine a light on P3 deals so government, taxpayers, and the opposition can make common sense, fact-based decisions. This government is talking about allowing private companies to operate our kids' schools along with other valuable public services and infrastructure, so we think facts and ongoing responsibility to Saskatchewan people should absolutely be a requirement in the law.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will agree to co-operate with the NDP to pass Bill 605, *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*. I look forward to the vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — The motion before the House is Bill No. 605, *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — I believe the nos have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:24 until 12:26.]

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 7]

Brotten	Forbes	Belanger
Chartier	McCall	Nilson
Sproule		

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 43]

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Duncan	Draude	Krawetz
Boyd	Eagles	McMorris
Cheveldayoff	Harpauer	Toth
Doherty	Norris	Reiter
McMillan	Harrison	Wyant
Tell	Weekes	Elhard
Hart	Brkich	Hutchinson
Makowsky	Ottenbreit	Campeau
Wilson	Marchuk	Ross
Kirsch	Michelson	Doke
Cox	Merriman	Jurgens
Steinley	Hickie	Lawrence
Tochor	Moe	Phillips
Docherty		

**Principal Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 7; those opposed, 43.

**The Speaker:** — The motion fails. I recognize the Government House Leader.

## STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

### Acknowledgements and Christmas Greetings

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It being the last day of the session, I'd like to extend some thoughts and thank yous on behalf of myself and colleagues in this place.

Firstly to all of our families, our spouses, our children, our significant others that make this possible. We put in awfully long hours in this place, Mr. Speaker, and our families make some very, very real sacrifices for us to both serve in public life and to attend and serve in this Assembly. And I want to acknowledge that on behalf of, I know, myself but also I'm sure all other members.

I would really like to thank sincerely the staff here in the building who do such a great job for us. From the Clerks sitting at the table here in the Assembly to the Pages who have done a great job here this session through the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff, to visitor services, the building maintenance personnel who do a magnificent job in making sure that this building, this incredible building, stays the way it was originally built — all of whom do their job with a tremendous amount of pride, a tremendous amount of professionalism, and something that is recognized by all members, and I want to acknowledge that.

[12:30]

I want to thank the media for keeping people informed as to what happens in this place, and they are very diligent about their work as well.

I want to acknowledge our staffs, whether it be our constituency assistants back in our ridings that deal first-hand with constituents, whether it be staffs in a minister's office, staff in Executive Council, our caucus office staff as well, who do a great job on both sides of the aisle.

I want to thank my staff as well, Mr. Speaker — Graham Stewart who's our executive director of House business, David Cooper, and Jarret Coels, both of whom do great work.

I want to acknowledge as well the Opposition House Leader, my friend who . . . We have a very productive and professional relationship. One of the things I think outside of this place, Mr. Speaker, people don't realize, is the amount of co-operation and discussion between the parties necessary to make the place operate in a smooth fashion. So I want to acknowledge that, even point out, the example of . . . We actually did two very, very significant studies this year, reshaping both the directives and the standing orders, actually resulting in the banning of omnibus bills in this Assembly, something we didn't make a big deal about but something which I think is significant.

I want to just extend Merry Christmas to all the folks here, all the folks watching at home, all of the folks right across the province. So we look forward to coming back here after Christmas, but in the interim, have a very happy and safe holiday season.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well amen to that. Again this is, as the old song goes, it is in so many ways the most wonderful time of the year, this Christmas season. And I'd start there, Mr. Speaker, and join with the Government House Leader in saying thank you, as is just and right, to so many that help us about doing the work of the people's business.

So again, to add to what the Government House Leader has said, you know, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I don't know if I should apologize at this point for anything now or future, but I'll leave that on an as-required basis.

But a very special thanks to everyone, the Clerk and the Clerk's table, with the Legislative Assembly staff generally, the staff in the building, staff in the constituency offices, and indeed the public service. I'd like to not just thank my colleagues and our leader but the incredible group of folks that we work with to do our job. And again there's a lot of talk around about the nine. You know, it's so much more than that, Mr. Speaker. It's more like, you know, 27. But anyway we've got a very important job before us as the official opposition, and we nine certainly do that in conjunction with so many others. So to them I say thank you very much.

And I too would like to say thank you to members opposite and to the Government House Leader. Again as he had referenced, one of the main sort of jobs that we have between us is to make sure that, as best we can, ensure that the process works as smoothly and as efficiently as possible so that we need not get into procedural or process fights because Lord knows we've got enough to fight about when it comes to the issues of the day. But that work, Mr. Speaker, takes a lot of diligence and a fairly significant measure of trust. So I just want to say, very publicly, thank you to the Government House Leader for that work.

Mr. Speaker, again Merry Christmas to all throughout legislature land but to the members opposite, to the Premier and to everyone across the way, Merry Christmas. And, Mr. Speaker, again to everybody that helps us do this work of the people's business, we express our gratitude and express the best of the season to them.

The last thing I'd say, Mr. Speaker, to those who have gone on from the service in this Assembly, and we'd had a very, you know, great recognition today of one such servant of the public, but we know there are others throughout the different orders of service that are brought to bear here in the Legislative Assembly. To them we say thank you so much and Merry Christmas. And to those in particular that are able to get out there with friends and family, we wish you all the best for the season, getting reconnected with constituents as the case may be. We wish you Merry Christmas and all the best in that.

And to those that have those tables that don't have everyone around them that has been the case in years past and those that are experiencing loss and difficulties in health and those kind of hard challenges at this season, Mr. Speaker, those are the things that can make what is the most wonderful time of the year kind of hard. And all our best goes out to those that are grappling with that and that, you know, may the peace and joy of the season transcend something of that hardship. So we'll leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. And I'd close off to just say on behalf of the official opposition Merry Christmas to all.

**The Speaker:** — I am advised that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here for Royal Assent. All please rise.

### ROYAL ASSENT

[At 12:38 Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following bills.]

**Her Honour:** — Pray be seated.

**The Speaker:** — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly in its present session has passed several bills which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour and to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Clerk:** — Your Honour, the bills are as follows:

Bill No. 110 - *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*  
 Bill No. 903 - *St. Thomas More College Amendment Act, 2013*  
 Bill No. 121 - *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*

**Her Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

**The Speaker:** — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has voted the supplies required to enable government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 131 - *The Appropriation Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Her Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this bill.

[Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 12:41.]

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — Before I move the adjournment motion, it's my pleasure as well to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and thank you for an interesting session.

I'd also like to thank all of the legislative staff, especially our new Pages who have just learned the system here, and I'd like to thank them for their efforts. So I think we should all give thanks to our constituency assistants who fill in for us so diligently and ably while we're in session and away from our constituencies, and to thank our families as well.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House stands adjourned pursuant to rule 3(1) until 1:30 p.m. Monday, March 3rd, 2014. Is it the pleasure

of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:42.]



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall .....	4421
Brotten .....	4421, 4423
Reiter .....	4421
Nilson .....	4422, 4423
Stewart .....	4422
Huyghebaert .....	4422
Draude .....	4422
Chartier .....	4423
Norris .....	4423
Morgan .....	4424
Forbes .....	4424
McCall .....	4424
Merriman .....	4424

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes .....	4424
Wotherspoon .....	4424
Vermette .....	4425
McCall .....	4425

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</b>	
McCall .....	4425
Wilson .....	4425
<b>Christmas Greetings</b>	
Nilson .....	4426
Toth .....	4426
<b>International Volunteer Day</b>	
Docherty .....	4426
<b>Rhodes Scholar from Indian Head</b>	
McMorris .....	4426
<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>	
<b>Government Response to Layoffs</b>	
Brotten .....	4427
Wall .....	4427
<b>Provincial Auditor's Report</b>	
Brotten .....	4428
Wall .....	4428
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Chartier .....	4429
Wall .....	4429
<b>Classroom Size and Support for Education</b>	
Forbes .....	4430
Morgan .....	4430
<b>Children in Care</b>	
Brotten .....	4430
Wall .....	4430

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ottenbreit .....	4431
------------------	------

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

##### Investment in Post-Secondary Education

Hickie .....	4431
Sproule .....	4434, 4441
Ottenbreit .....	4436
McCall .....	4437, 4442
Merriman .....	4439, 4441
Belanger .....	4440
Docherty .....	4441
Doke .....	4442
Chartier .....	4442
Lawrence .....	4443

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 605 — *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act***

**Broten** .....4443

**Recorded Division**.....4444

**STATEMENT BY A MEMBER**

**Acknowledgements and Christmas Greetings**

**Harrison**.....4444

**McCall** .....4445

**The Speaker**.....4445

**ROYAL ASSENT** .....4445

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---

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