



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

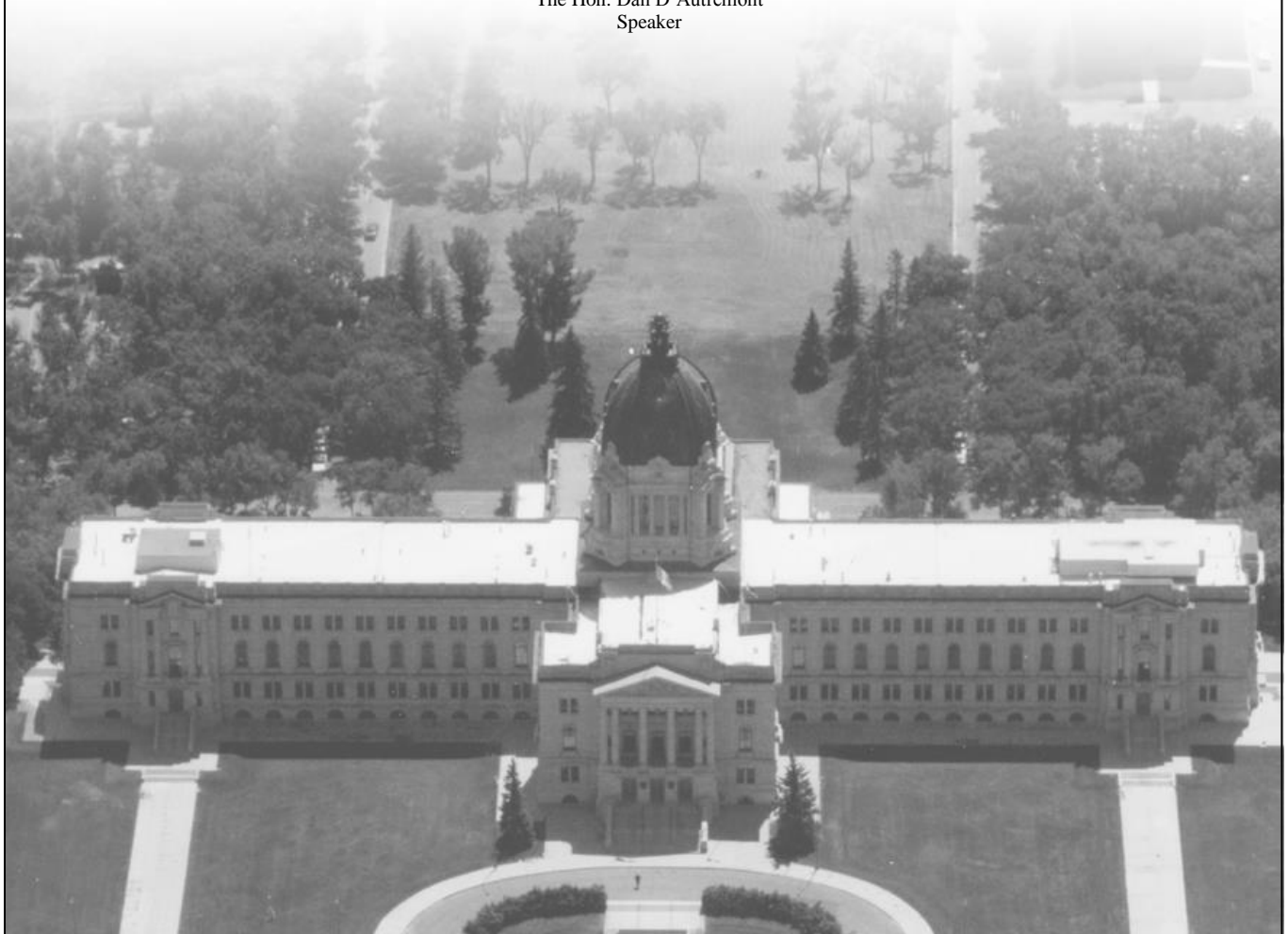
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Clerk: — Members, I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker is not present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I rise today to present a petition in support of education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services that government provides its citizens. And we know that this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence. It's failed to deliver a real plan to close the Aboriginal education gap, support English as an additional language students, support community schools and their communities and students. And we also know that this government has cut more than 350 full-time equivalent educational assistants from our growing schools since 2007. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that . . . [inaudible] . . . the best education system for today and for Saskatchewan's future.

I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately prioritize education by laying out a long-term vision and plan for the necessary resources to provide the best quality education for Saskatchewan that reflects Saskatchewan's demographics and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with education sector, and that builds strong educational infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents of our province as it relates to the improper reporting of our finances by this government and the management of our finances by this government. They are certainly concerned with the I guess first in Canadian history, being this failed audit of this government and the fact that the Provincial Auditor, the independent Provincial Auditor, has called the reporting of this government misleading, materially wrong, and not trustworthy, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair,

true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada, in compliance with public sector accounting standards, and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina and Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: 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 community have raised this issue with the Sask Party provincial government since 2007 without resolution.

They point out that any school needs a gym as a place for the school and the community to gather together to engage in cultural and educational activities and to promote physical activity, which is good for the mind, body, and spirit of all children. They point out that the gym at Sacred Heart has played an important role in the school's efforts to become a literacy leader, having served as a gathering place for the very successful reading assemblies and reading nights. They point out that 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 and more over the last 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 of Sacred Heart Community School.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from North Battleford, Rapid View, and Tisdale. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Women's Day

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, March 8th is International Women's Day. It's a day to celebrate the many milestones that have been achieved on the road to women's equality. And it's a day to recommit ourselves to pushing forward for the rights and opportunities that women and girls around the world deserve.

Mr. Speaker, as the dad of two young daughters, I'm passionate about this. I want my daughters to grow up in a world in which the rights and equality of women are never questioned, a world in which all glass ceilings have long been shattered, a world in which women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of our society and our economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have much work left to do to make that happen, and we must accelerate our progress. It's not good enough that just 11 of 58 MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] are women. We can do better than that. It's unacceptable that we top the list of provinces when it comes to women living in shelters because of spousal abuse and that we are the only province to have more children than women living in shelters. And it's completely unacceptable that we have still not had an inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women in the country.

Mr. Speaker, much progress has been made, but there is so much left to do. On International Women's Day, let's recommit ourselves to that work.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Though names like Scott, Douglas, and Diefenbaker distinguish the history of our province, today, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that there are others — names such as Hilda Neatby, historian and Companion of the Order of Canada; Sarah Ramsland, Saskatchewan's first MLA; Sylvia Fedoruk, cancer researcher, curler, and lieutenant governor; and Ethel Catherwood, Canada's only female gold winner in individual track and field — that deserve the same recognition and renown. These names belong to pioneering women of Saskatchewan's history, individuals of humbling fortitude and achievement whose contributions are felt by those of all genders.

March 8th is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate the empowerment of women while acknowledging that women continue to face unique obstacles. We do this not out of sentiment but because we understand, in the words of Ban Ki-Moon, that equality for women means progress for all.

Fifty years ago, in 1964, Saskatchewan proudly established the women's division, one of the first government units in the country dedicated to the advancement of women. Today the Status of Women office continues. Our 2014 theme is Communities in Action: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, recognizing that issues like interpersonal violence, sexual assault, and cyberbullying continue to threaten their well-being.

The aforementioned names are only a very small sampling of the extraordinary women who have called this province home. So to the women across Saskatchewan and Canada and around

the world, I invite all members to join me in sending our very best on Saturday, the 39th International Women's Day.

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

Performing Artist Named Woman of the Year

Ms. Sproule: — Today is International Women's Day and to celebrate, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists has honoured Saskatchewan's own Jean Freeman with ACTRA's [Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists] 2014 Woman of the Year Award.

Jean now joins previous distinguished recipients such as Shirley Jones and Mary Walsh. Jean is an accomplished actor, writer, communicator, and pioneer in the now decimated Saskatchewan film and television industry.

Jean was born in Weyburn and was the first actor to join the Saskatchewan branch of ACTRA in 1967. She was also one of the first employees of CKCK TV and later became a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio on-air personality on *Matinee Comment* in Winnipeg and Regina. She has received numerous honours, including a Lifetime Achievement Award in the Mayor's Arts and Business Awards, Woman of Distinction from the Regina YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], and Trimark Canadian Women's Mentor Arts and Culture Award.

Some of you will remember Jean as the mayor's grandmother, a role she played on *Corner Gas*, a show that put Saskatchewan and our film industry on the map. During last year's dismantling of the film and television tax credit by the Saskatchewan government, Jean fought back and was applauded for the vision and strength she provided to her union and Saskatchewan's entertainment industry. Unfortunately for Jean, the families of the Saskatchewan film industry, and the people of the province, the cuts were still made.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to please join me in congratulating Jean Freeman for receiving the 2014 ACTRA National Woman of the Year Award.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Equipment Dealers Association Donates to Parkland College

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last week the Canada West Equipment Dealers Association announced a \$250,000 donation in support of Parkland College's Trades and Technology Centre in Yorkton. The contribution will support the delivery of 24 students per year at the centre in the field of agricultural mechanics as well as allow the college to provide and educate a qualified labour pool market which will in part support agricultural equipment dealers in the region, province, and Western Canada.

The centre brings a significant expansion of services and programs to the Parkland region and will provide the space to train more than 350 skilled graduates per year as well as

upgrade the skills of 2,000 workers annually in a variety of fields that are experiencing a labour shortage throughout the province. Backed by a \$10 million investment from our government and the capital campaign support from dozens of community groups and businesses, the Parkland College is moving quickly to build the new centre. Construction is set to begin early this spring and the facility is scheduled to open in September of 2015.

At the event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the pleasure to meet with John Schmeiser and Cameron Bode from Canada West Equipment Dealers Association. Canada West is one of the largest equipment dealer associations in North America, and represents approximately 400 farm, industrial, and outdoor equipment dealers throughout Western Canada.

I ask that all members join me in thanking the Canada West Equipment Dealers Association for their generous contribution to ensure our province's agriculture industry will have properly trained employees now and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Potash Company Strengthens First Nations and Métis Engagement

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise before you today to highlight some of the work being done by BHP Billiton to strengthen engagement of First Nations and Métis people and businesses throughout our province. I had the privilege to attend a luncheon yesterday and hear from Mr. Alex Archila, asset president of BHP Billiton's potash options in Saskatoon.

BHP is working hard to develop approaches that reflect local community circumstances as well as their business aspirations. BHP's strategy is to understand community values as they relate to the environment, to health, safety, and cultural concerns and then align those concerns and values with corporate approaches to sustainable development. Mr. Speaker, this strategy is particularly important when developing resource projects here in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada.

Late last year BHP and the Kawacatoose, Day Star, and Muskowekwan First Nations signed an opportunities agreement for the Jansen potash project. The agreement will increase community-based economic development, create jobs, and manage local environmental issues. It also includes mutual management on the environmental impact of the potash mine as well as initiatives for training, education, and labour force development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking BHP Billiton for working to develop Aboriginal business strategies that are mutually beneficial to both Aboriginal communities and Saskatchewan corporations. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Cougars Win Track and Field Championship

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege for me to rise in the House today to honour some of our hard-working U of R [University of Regina] athletes once again.

On February 23rd, the University of Regina Cougars men won the Canada West track and field championship in Edmonton. The Cougars secured nine medals in total and finished with 83 points in the team standing, which was 16 points ahead of their closest competitor, the Victoria Vikings. This was the men's third Can West title after their back-to-back championship wins in 2010 and 2011.

Mr. Speaker, it was high jumper Jeremy Eckert that started the victory for the Cougars. Eckert easily cleared the bar at 2.16 metres and broke the Can West record that stood since 1979.

It wasn't just the athletes winning. The team's head coach and a good friend of mine, Bruce McCannel, was named Can West Male Coach of the Year. And Bruce was a very impressive athlete in his own right, winning many CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] championships for the Cougars when he was a university athlete.

Next up for this all-star team is the Canadian Interuniversity Sport championships that starts in Edmonton today and runs till the 8th.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our student athletes here in Regina and the coaches that lead them to excel. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the University of Regina Cougars on their impressive Can West championship win, and wish them all the best this week in Edmonton at the CIS championships. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Spending Priorities

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition keeps calling on the government to spend more taxpayers' money with no plan of how he would oversee this spending and no plan of how he would pay for it. Today's *StarPhoenix* editorial makes this very point:

It's difficult to reconcile NDP Leader Cam Broten's criticism of the government for not granting every penny requested by . . . health regions to address urgent issues in nursing homes with the need for responsible budgeting and spending of taxpayers' money.

It goes on to say that the job of opposition requires: “. . . presenting options that stay within the means of the taxpayers to support them.”

Mr. Speaker, one year into his leadership, the NDP [New Democratic Party] leader is failing at this job. By our account, the NDP leader and his caucus have called for \$1.6 billion of

new government spending with no idea how they would pay for it. That means higher taxes, huge deficits, or both. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan voters soundly rejected Dwain Lingenfelter and his reckless \$5 billion spending spree. Today's editorial suggests the new NDP leader has not learned anything: "... he demonstrates a reckless approach to spending public money that raises questions about how the NDP would run the province if he's given the reins."

Reckless spending by the old NDP leader, reckless spending by the new NDP leader. That may be a different leader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it's the same old NDP.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Nursing Care

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In November because of patient safety concerns, this government put a moratorium on the abolishment, replacement, and vacancy management of registered nurse positions, but this government has now lifted that moratorium. Our province's nurses, Mr. Speaker, say, "This decision is deeply troubling ... [because] concerns around patient safety, which were the reason for the pause, have not been addressed."

My question for the Premier is: why is his government lifting the moratorium on getting rid of nursing positions?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, quality of care and patient safety is of the utmost importance to this government. Certainly that is something that is shared by our RHAs [regional health authority] as well as organizations like SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] and our other providers. We are equally committed to ensuring that we have a strong nursing workforce in Saskatchewan in our health system.

Mr. Speaker, as the members opposite will know, we came into government in 2007. And we knew and recognized something that the members opposite clearly would not recognize, that we had a lack of RNs [registered nurse] within the health care system and that was having a negative impact on the system, Mr. Speaker. At that time we committed to 800 additional RN positions. Mr. Speaker, today we have exceeded that 800 positions by 200, bringing us to over 1,000 RNs within the system, Mr. Speaker, and putting us in a position to have 18 per cent more RNs, Mr. Speaker, 18 per cent more nurses per capita than the national average.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with the president of SUN. I did by phone on Friday. I met with her Monday morning. She is meeting, has a meeting with the deputy minister of Health today. We look forward to bringing together, I hope, a resolution to a new partnership and to a new CBA [collective bargaining agreement].

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the

Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to listen to what the nurses are saying today, what nurses are saying as their concerns are related to patient safety. A few months ago we heard from Tracy Zambory, the president of SUN, as the minister referenced. She said that staffing levels are "dangerously low" and that nurses are "very fearful for patient safety." Those are her words.

Our province's nurses, Mr. Speaker, say those concerns about patient safety have still not been addressed. Yet this government's saying it's okay for health regions to get rid of nursing positions or simply not to fill nursing position vacancies. That doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker, especially when we keep hearing concerns about patient safety, and especially when we hear concerns about a quality of care that's concerning for many patients as a result of short-staffing problems.

My question is for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Why does this government think it's okay to get rid of nursing positions or simply not fill nursing vacancies?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to correct the Leader of the Opposition or perhaps pose a question to him. Mr. Speaker, we believe, as well as RHAs and as well as SUN and other provider groups, Mr. Speaker, that we need the right provider in the right place for the right patient, Mr. Speaker. That may very well be an RN, Mr. Speaker, but it may be another provider group, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we indicated to the SUN president, Mr. Speaker, that as we work our way towards a, I would hope a successful renewal of a partnership agreement — a first of its kind in Canada, very successful agreement, Mr. Speaker — that we would indicate to the regions that while this takes place that there would be no loss of employment for SUN members, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that SUN members may be working in different areas because of changes to the workplace, Mr. Speaker, but we want to ensure, as do SUN and our other providers, that all of our providers are working to the top of their scope, Mr. Speaker, in ensuring that we do have that right provider in the right place for the right patient.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the moratorium on abolishing nursing positions was supposed to be in place until a thorough review of patient safety data, evidence, and research was completed. The government, Mr. Speaker, promised to do that. But now the government has broken that promise, and this is the concern that nurses have because it ties in directly to patient safety.

The patient safety review has not been completed, but the moratorium on abolishing nursing positions is being lifted. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is this: why is the government pulling the plug on the patient safety review?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last three months, we did take part, as did the regions and the Ministry of Health in a data review. There were two surveys that were sent out to the RHAs. The first survey was information that was requested by SUN, Mr. Speaker, of nine RHAs that they had concerns about in terms of a change in practice that was being contemplated. That information was provided, Mr. Speaker. A second survey was requested, Mr. Speaker, and that information was publicly available through information that regions already have to send to CIHI [Canadian Institute of Health Information], Mr. Speaker.

What we felt was that rather than a broad look at a data review, Mr. Speaker, that we would engage with SUN and with front-line workers on specific areas of changes in practice, Mr. Speaker, that they did raise concerns about. That offer still stands, Mr. Speaker. And the ministry is talking to SUN today to have a further discussion about how we proceed with that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government will go through the motions of listening. This government will go through the motions of saying that there'll be a patient safety review, but it's . . . The test, Mr. Speaker, is how it's lived out in the actions. And when nurses are concerned about the patient safety review coming to an end, when the nurses are concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the moratorium being lifted, I think people in the province will listen to what nurses are saying with respect to patient safety over the spin coming from this minister.

We keep hearing concerns about patient safety. We keep hearing concerns about a quality of care that is concerning. Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the member from Riversdale brought forward the concerns of Kerrie Anderson who spent a lot of time in Royal University Hospital because of her MS [multiple sclerosis], endured a lot of unnecessary pain because of what she identified as shortages in front-line staffing.

We saw, Mr. Speaker, yesterday how this government completely dismissed her concerns. So unfortunately, it's not surprising that they're also dismissing the concerns that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses are raising around patient safety. My question for the Premier is this: what will it take for his government to start listening to patients, start listening to front-line health care providers and start listening to the nurses in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, what it will take for government to start listening to patients and nurses and other providers, Mr. Speaker, already took place, and that was the 2007 election, Mr. Speaker. Here's what nurses were saying, Mr. Speaker: "It's frustrating to see a profession you love so much in the communities you care for be disrespected by your own government." Mr. Speaker, that was SUN in 2006.

What did we do, Mr. Speaker? We committed to hiring more RNs in the system, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we today have

over 1,000 RN positions within the system that didn't exist under the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. In fact we are home to 20 per cent more nurses than just six years ago. That's an 18 per cent increase in RNs, a 37 per cent increase in LPNs [licensed practical nurse], and 58 per cent more nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as far as negotiations with SUN, certainly I'm not going to conduct that on the floor of the Assembly. We look forward though to resuming a discussion about a partnership that has been very successful, that the members opposite never accomplished, Mr. Speaker, and a collective bargaining agreement with SUN, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we do have the proper complement of health providers within the system, whether they be RNs, whether they be LPNs, whether they be physicians, Mr. Speaker.

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

Standards in Care Facilities

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week we've heard many concerning details about this government's approach to seniors' care. We heard that the boiler at St. Mary's Villa was on the list of needed repairs, but it was ignored and three seniors died due to tragic carbon monoxide poisoning. We learned that this government forced health regions to pare back their urgent requests for much needed staff, equipment, and repairs. And we learned about the consequences of this government's decision to get rid of the province-wide minimum care standard. It means the standard of care for seniors is both uneven and inadequate.

To the minister: has he heard enough to recognize the need for province-wide minimum care standards?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the government's record when it comes to investing in the life safety and emergency of our health capital within this province, Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated while there certainly is much more work that needs to be done, this government has invested \$145.5 million in the last six years, compared to only \$22 million, Mr. Speaker, including in the year that the member references.

And yes, we couldn't get to all of the projects. In 2008-2009, \$100 million of which Saskatoon Health Region received \$30 million. Mr. Speaker, the year before that, the year before Saskatoon Health Region received \$30 million for life safety and emergency equipment, under the NDP they received \$1.5 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the neglect left over by the members opposite when they were in government has put us in a position where we have a large deficit, Mr. Speaker, to take care of when it comes to the maintenance of our facilities, Mr. Speaker, and when it comes to building new facilities within this province, Mr. Speaker. But certainly this government has indicated and demonstrated that we are committed to doing that.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister actually read through the 250 pages of urgent requests from the health regions, he would know that the reality for seniors in care facilities does not match his rhetoric.

The standard of care is uneven and inadequate. The urgent request document shows that if you're a senior in Heartland Health Region, you get about three hours less care per week than you do if you're a senior in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. That's because this government chose to do away with province-wide minimum care standards.

To the minister: how can this government defend a seniors' care system in which the standard of care is different depending on which community you live?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to correct the member opposite, we do have, through the special care home program guidelines, we do have minimum standards that we have put in place for all regions to follow, who operate long-term care facilities, special care facilities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Urgent Issues Action Fund, this was — as an editorial just this morning in *The StarPhoenix* has indicated — this was extraordinary funding and mid-year funding, Mr. Speaker, that has been provided that will result in significant improvements, Mr. Speaker, to long-term care, something that that editorial and in fact former NDP cabinet ministers have indicated that seniors' care had been long neglected, Mr. Speaker. That their focus was elsewhere, I believe is what Pat Atkinson had to say on the matter.

Mr. Speaker, as for the decisions that we've had to make, I would just quote *The StarPhoenix* and I quote: "For Mr. Broten to say that the government should have forked over \$18.5 million in order to meet every request made by the regions suggests that he's simply trying to pander to public sentiment in a sensitive area," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to being able to report later this spring on the progress that we've made through the Urgent Issues Action Fund and the good work that that will have done.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are so many problems in seniors' care, yet this government continually refuses to listen to residents, their families, and front-line staff. This has to stop. It is unacceptable for the standards of seniors' care to be so uneven and inadequate.

Later today I will introduce legislation that will establish a residents-in-care bill of rights and require the government to regulate province-wide minimum care standards. A legislative bill of rights is a step that the government's own Law Reform Commission said would help address problems in seniors' care.

To the minister: will he agree today to work with the NDP to pass this legislation and start fixing the broken seniors' care system?

[10:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly I will have a look at the legislation that the member would be proposing, although I would say that the Law Reform Commission, even in their own document, had indicated in the majority of long-term care facilities that they did survey in the province during their work, that many of those facilities had already adopted a bill of rights for their residents. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the guidelines that we have put in place, the standards that we have put in place, much of them could be read and considered as roles and responsibilities, as a bill of rights so to speak, Mr. Speaker. That being said, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly look at that.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of listening to the residents, that's certainly what we have done through the work of the CEO [chief executive officer] report and the tour, Mr. Speaker, something that had never been done, in fact ensuring that we linked back the \$10 million Urgent Issues Action Fund to what the residents were actually saying, Mr. Speaker, to the point where, yes, some of the requests, Mr. Speaker, are going to be funded within the Urgent Issues Action Fund, Mr. Speaker. And we will look to see where we can continue to make further improvements.

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

Grain Transportation

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's been three days since the emergency debate in this legislature about the crisis in grain transportation. We supported the government's motion because we stand by producers and want to help them get their bumper crop to market. But in these three days, the federal government seems to have again ignored Western Canadian producers.

Just yesterday, Gerry Ritz, the federal Ag minister who has done nothing to help farmers, said he's still waiting for the "right time" to do something. To the minister: what pressure is he putting on the federal minister to wake up and realize the right time is now?

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

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a very, very serious problem for our agricultural producers and indeed the economy of this province. We're losing billions of dollars because of poor rail service, and not only in grain but also in potash, in forest products, in coal, and oil.

This is unacceptable, and we've made that very clear to the federal government. We expect them to, we very much expect them to come up with emergency legislation that will legislate

levels of service and reciprocal penalties between the rail companies and the grain companies, and we expect this to happen very quickly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well we would agree we certainly need that emergency legislation. The problem is that federal Minister Ritz is still sitting on his hands. He's waiting for the right time to do anything. The bumper crop has to move. Every day that passes puts farmers deeper in debt and more at risk.

One of the ways that could help move the grain is to open up competition between the duopoly on the rail system. And on Tuesday the Ag minister admitted that, contrary to calling it a dumb idea the day before, he actually believes legislated open running rights could be a part of the solution to end this crisis. And while we welcome this flip-flop, what producers in Saskatchewan need is a minister to stand up to big rail and to the federal government and demand real penalties with strict enforcement and long-term solutions like open running rights.

Will the minister do the right thing, now being the right time, and call on the federal government to stand up to the railways?

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

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — That's exactly what we are doing, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the members opposite, we are demanding the federal government come up very quickly with emergency legislation that will force the railways into level of service agreements with the grain companies and impose reciprocal penalties on the grain companies and/or railways.

Mr. Speaker, that is far stronger action than advocating for dual running rights, which are already available to the railways and are already used in certain areas of the rail system, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ministry of Highways Contracts

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is the government that was the first government in all of Canada to actually fail an audit on its central books, Mr. Speaker. It claimed that there was a razor-thin \$60 million surplus, but the auditor exposed the truth. And the truth is that the government had a \$600 million deficit.

But it's not just the Premier and the Finance minister that have it wrong, Mr. Speaker, it's also the Highways minister. In the fall the Highways ministry said that 13 per cent of the highway contracts in 2012-2013 were not completed on time.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the journalists dug into that claim and they exposed the truth. Almost half of the highway contracts in 2012 and 2013 were not completed on time. To the minister: why does this government have such a hard time delivering the facts to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to highways in this province, a great number of factors play into it, Mr. Speaker. For example, the number of projects that were behind schedule last fall, weather played a huge role in this, Mr. Speaker. We had projects around the province that were nearing completion. We had an early winter, and the projects were delayed.

Mr. Speaker, the case that the member opposite is speaking to about what actions should be taken, I'm sure he's speaking to the CBC news story that was on last night. He should also be aware as well then that the deputy minister of Highways was interviewed on that news story, and he indicated that officials in the ministry are concerned about this. They're looking at potential ways to deal with this. They met with the Heavy Construction Association and are looking at ways to solve this problem.

But in cases like the weather, Mr. Speaker, that can't be controlled, even though the NDP thinks they can control everything, Mr. Speaker. In those instances it's just one of those things that happen. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that the ministry officials are looking into this issue. It is a problem, and they're dealing with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Excuses, excuses, excuses, Mr. Speaker. What we've learned is this government's system for highway contracts is in complete shambles. This government has no way of tracking whether highway contracts are late and by how much, Mr. Speaker. This is a system that takes up \$387 million of taxpayers' money every year, and there's no accountability built into that system. That's totally unacceptable to the people and to the Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Again to the minister, without excuses: why is this government failing to keep track of all the highways contracts it signs every single year?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's absolute nonsense. Of course the Ministry of Highways keeps track of every contract.

Mr. Speaker, that member is a former minister of Highways. He probably has forgotten that already, Mr. Speaker, conveniently because he's embarrassed of his record. But, Mr. Speaker, that member should well know that he probably didn't have that problem under his tenure because they didn't build any highways, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's been record highways budgets under this government. We have spent far, far more than those members ever, ever dreamt of, Mr. Speaker. We're working to correct the infrastructure deficit that they left behind. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that and continue to grow this economy

in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, there were 125 highway projects last year, and it shouldn't be that difficult to actually keep track of 125 projects. But the government couldn't do that, Mr. Speaker. It originally said that 16 of those projects were late, but journalists exposed the truth. There was actually 57 projects that were late, Mr. Speaker.

This government should know what is happening with highways contracts, and they should ensure that they are delivered on time. When the needs out of highways are not prioritized, Mr. Speaker, the seriousness is people's lives are put at risk. Once again to the minister of excuses: why is this government failing to keep track of all the highway contracts . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member knows full well that ministers are to be addressed by their correct title, so I would ask the minister to withdraw the remark and apologize.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the comment, but to the minister . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member to withdraw the remark and apologize.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment and I apologize. Again to the minister: why is this government totally failing, failing to keep track of all the highway contracts it signs every single year?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As everyone in this room is well aware, that just simply isn't the case. And, Mr. Speaker, that member making comments that the ministry doesn't keep track of all the contracts frankly does a complete disservice to the very good officials in the Ministry of Highways.

He heard in that news story that the deputy minister said he's very concerned about the lateness of some of the contracts, and they're looking at possibilities to rectify the situation. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, there is many, many variables around this. There's weather conditions. There's all sorts of things that are happening.

Mr. Speaker, just simply the fact that he raises this with that sort of sarcastic attitude about the good officials in the Ministry of Highways frankly I think is disgraceful, Mr. Speaker. And he should be apologizing to those officials as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That government had seven long years to figure out how to be the

government, Mr. Speaker, but it can't even answer basic questions about the contracts it signs with the road builders. And that's completely unacceptable.

And here is Ken Rasmussen, a well-respected public administration professor, has to say about this government's failure, and I quote: "The fact that they don't seem to be aware of the magnitude of the problem, the severity of the problem would be a concern. It should be a concern . . ."

The Deputy Speaker: — The time has expired. Introduction of bills. Oh sorry, sorry. My mistake. Sorry. Go ahead. Sorry.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "It should be a concern for the legislature and it should be a concern for citizens," Mr. Speaker. Well it is a huge concern for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when this government can't even get the basics of governing right.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will this government get serious about fixing up the broken Highways contracting system to ensure that the highways are built on time — not to blame the Highways workers, Mr. Speaker — and to make sure that these roads are safe for our families? When will they do that?

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations can reply. I recognize him.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, the rhetoric from the member opposite, a former minister of Highways himself who did very, very little during his tenure, Mr. Speaker, it's . . . They do a great job of criticizing, but they didn't do a very good job of governing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, record Highways investments under this government through all six years. Mr. Speaker, the record of those members in government is pathetic, frankly. And, Mr. Speaker, again I would bring this back to the fact that the member's comments about ministry officials keeping track of contracts is just, frankly it's terrible. He owes an apology to those officials in the Ministry of Highways.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I look at what's happened around this province, all the highways projects we've done, record capital budgets, record operating budgets. Mr. Speaker, we're fixing, we're building new highways, new projects all over this province to keep the growth going in this province, to keep infrastructure improving, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to do that.

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

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — To request leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of

Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — I stand to introduce a former member of this honourable Assembly and now president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, Mr. Harold Martens and his wife, Sylvia. They're seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're accompanied by Harold and Sylvia's son Joe and his wife, Honey, and Harold and Sylvia's grandchildren: Chase, Lincoln, and Charmayne. I'd ask all members of this honourable Assembly to extend a warm welcome to the Martens family.

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

[10:45]

Mr. Broten: — With leave to join introductions, please.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to join in introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Agriculture minister in welcoming Harold Martens to the Assembly, along with the Martens family who live in a beautiful part of the province that is valued by everyone in the province. And it's good to see them here in the Assembly today. Welcome.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 606 — *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014*

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 606, *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Riversdale that Bill No. 606, *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Ms. Chartier: — Next sitting of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting of the House.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Privatization of Crown Corporations

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Glad to join the debate today here in the 75 minutes. A fine introduction there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just to set the stage properly, I'll read out the motion, and of course we'll get around to moving it in the debate itself. But, Mr. Speaker, today we're considering:

That this Assembly condemns the government for undermining our Crown corporations and breaking its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to protect our Crown corporations from privatization.

Mr. Speaker, there are events that have taken place over the last couple of years, certainly since the past election, that are very much part of the history of this province. And certainly in terms of my understanding of the political history of this province, Mr. Speaker, I think we're back into a very interesting stage as regards to the question of Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Crown corporations in the case of SaskTel have been with us since the first decade of this province's existence. In different forms, they've come together, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the delivery of services to the people of Saskatchewan. You think of the big ones in terms of SaskPower, in terms of SaskEnergy, in terms of SaskTel, and Sask Government Insurance, Mr. Speaker. But certainly there are other Crown utilities and agencies that have sought, through the people of Saskatchewan, to provide better services and better returns on investment to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come to this from a perspective of the second son of Doug McCall who's a 35-year gas fitter with SaskPower and then SaskEnergy of course after SaskEnergy was devolved as the gas division of SaskPower in the '80s by the then Progressive Conservative government, Mr. Speaker. And I remember very well the concern around the McCall kitchen table about what was going to happen with SaskEnergy when that then government tried to sell off SaskEnergy.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I raise that for not just my own . . . sort of to put my own sort of marker in terms of how I approach these debates, but certainly historically, Mr. Speaker, we know that many people opposite in different ways were aligned with that government of the day, be it as staff or supporters or officials on different constituency associations, Mr. Speaker, or as in the case of the Premier of this province, Mr. Speaker, then working in this very legislature as ministerial assistants.

And I believe that then the now Premier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, served a tour of duty in the Office of Public Participation, which was headed up by then MLA for Wolseley, Graham

Taylor. And, Mr. Speaker, that particular agency, that particular office, Public Participation, was of course the way that the then Conservatives were framing the privatization debate. And we saw all sorts of things being sold off or attempted to be sold off in some of the most unseemly of manners, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one of the spearheads, one of the tip, the tip of that spearhead, was the Office of Public Participation.

And of course we know that the Premier said that he's learned many lessons from the time he had spent working for that government about what not to do, and I think he had learned some lessons about what to do as well. And it's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the way some of these things emerge over time. But certainly when the now Premier assumed the leadership of the official opposition, he was confronted with his past and, you know, asked about what are the lessons that you're taking from that time. And he had said, well there's a lot of lessons on how not to do things.

But in 1991, Mr. Speaker, he was so nonplussed and so, you know, turned off by the experience he had had that he had sought a nomination in Swift Current, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, there's a fine mustachioed picture of the then seeking-nomination candidate that you can look up for historical sake, Mr. Speaker. But I think the point that I want to make here is that while other people were learning the lessons of the Devine government, the individual from Swift Current was seeking a nomination. And you know, there are fewer endorsements other than giving yourself up for nomination, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that you think the agenda's been great.

So in 1991 he didn't win the nomination, but I think we take that as certainly approval for the then agenda of the Devine Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, and the way that that government pursued privatization and a number of other things that were very damaging to the fiscal and social health of this province. But when we hear different things over the years about members around Crown corporations, we know that they come to it from a very ideological, very right wing perspective. And it's not so much about pragmatics or what makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

When the government took the pledge and voted for the Crown corporation protection Act or the then opposition took the pledge and voted for the Crown corporation protection Act after the 2003 election — in which of course 2003, one of the turning issues in that election was privatization — and the way that the then leader of the official opposition, Elwin Hermanson, said that they'd be open for bids . . . And certainly there's a fairly good list of quotes from then members of the official opposition, some of them still seated in this place, Mr. Speaker, talking about, you know, selling off SaskTel to get the best bang for the buck.

You go back to the late '90s exercise around trying to consider the future of Saskatchewan's Crowns and the then submission from the Progressive Conservatives headed up by the current member from Kindersley where they would have sold SaskTel off, you know, lock, stock, and barrel as soon as they could have. The current member from Melville-Saltcoats, who in '98 opined that, you know, they'd missed the boat on selling SaskTel, and maybe it wasn't too late after all, but they should really have sold it off when competition came to this province.

And you look at that record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's not surprising that in 2003 privatization was a definite issue. And that Elwin Hermanson was straightforward enough and honest enough to talk about what was happening with their agenda for Crown privatization, I think did a favour to the people of Saskatchewan because with that kind of information on the table, the people of Saskatchewan made an informed decision. And they didn't choose the privatization agenda of Elwin Hermanson and the Sask Party.

And one of the things that's interesting about the days that followed that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Sask Party learned a lesson. They're like okay, well you know we're still right wingers. That's who we are. We still have this ideology. We want to get government out of the way. We want to sell off public assets. But how do we do that? How do we square that with the fact that the people of Saskatchewan don't support that? How do they square that circle?

So on the surface, Mr. Speaker, we see things like the vote for the Crown protection Act and the way that they all took the pledge there. And then subsequently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you saw two straight elections where the Premier of the province said, absolutely we will not be privatizing Crown corporations. We support the Crown corporation protection Act, full stop, period.

And you saw different ways where that played out in terms of . . . I think of the Information Services Corporation where they sold off a significant chunk of the assets of that corporation, where up until the years before, the then minister, the member from Silver Springs was saying, oh absolutely we value our Crown corporations. This is not for sale. We'll never sell it. And then of course, you know, after the 2000 election, guess what's up on the auction block?

And after the 2011 election, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it turns out that there were some caveats and there was some, you know, there was some fine print that people should've really read about how they were approaching Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming. And it wasn't, you know . . . We're not going to sell off existing stores. But all the new stores, those are going to be private. And they play some of these, you know, semantic games in terms of, oh this is exactly what we've been promising. And you know, if the people of Saskatchewan didn't get it, well apparently it's on them.

And you see that approach, the way that there's been activity on the surface and lip service being paid on the surface, Mr. Speaker. But when you get down into the guts of the individual corporations, I think of the way that Ledcor is playing a role in terms of different of our corporations on installs. I think of the way that Northland Power is running a significant chunk of our power generating grid up in The Battlefords, all of which is work that SaskPower could have done, you know, quite handily, thank you very much. But it helped them to manage the look of the books, and it helped this government to sell off something that should've otherwise made sense as part of a public utility.

And, Mr. Speaker, again that sort of slavish devotion to that right wing ideology of privatization is something that we see playing itself out in many different ways. But again, back on the

other side, how do they square that with the fact that the people of Saskatchewan don't support that?

Well it's going to be interesting, Mr. Speaker, because we've had the Premier come forward and say that we need to have another conversation about Crown corporations in this province and where we're at in terms of the future of Crown corporations in this province. And one of the ways that he got that conversation substantially under way was by opening up the Sask Gaming Corp for bids. And this is something that had been definitely refused in 2007, in 2011. And again, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't talked about on the hustings and, you know, we find this out in February that this is what's going to be offered. And in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, the actual workers in the corporation found out about these games that were being played with their livelihoods on the floor of the casino.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that — it's sad in fact — that, you know, this is a government that ran what *The StarPhoenix* called hateful ads about resource revenue sharing, hateful ads about resource revenue sharing, and played divisive games with the lives in this province, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to Sask Gaming Corp, suddenly they can't support the aims and ambitions of First Nations and First Nations people enough. Suddenly that's their fundamental concern in life.

And you know, into this there are bunch of things that flow, but for one, Mr. Speaker, in terms of that government pursuing that deal, they could have done so quite handily all by themselves, thank you very much. But why did they need the Saskatchewan NDP to sign off on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It's because they wanted political coverage to proceed with what is a larger agenda of privatization. And again, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the history, if you look at the way that this government and the party that is represented in those government benches, the way that they've approached the questions of privatization, it's always that struggle. They can't wait to privatize things, but they know that it's not acceptable to the broader public. So what do they do? We see these piecemeal privatizations. We see these stealth privatizations. And here with the Sask Gaming Corp, we saw one that was a full-frontal privatization. It was ready to go like that.

[11:00]

But they wanted to have the NDP sign off on their plan, you know, despite the fact that they could have proceeded quite handily under the Crown corporations protection Act and that then the public would have had a say. The public would have had full say in terms of the hearings that are safeguarded in that Act, and then it would have been subject to final approval in an election, which is where the people of Saskatchewan ultimately have their say. But they didn't want to do that, Mr. Speaker.

So was it really about an honest effort and making a respectful reply to a request coming forth from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, or was it about Sask Party political gains? I think it was about the latter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that's pretty clear.

But in terms of the way that privatization is alive and well in this province under the leadership of that government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the way that we see the debate

unfolding. You know, they've apparently . . . The one lesson they've learned from history is that they can't have a straightforward debate about privatization. They can't debate it on their merits, so they've got to tilt the table, Mr. Speaker. They've got to spin it. They've got to get at it sideways. So we're going to have that debate, but part of it is, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Premier is already breaking his word. And that's why I'm pleased to move this motion today:

That this Assembly condemns the government for undermining our Crown corporations and breaking its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to protect our Crown corporations from privatization.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved:

That this Assembly condemns the government for undermining our Crown corporations and breaking its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to protect our Crown corporations from privatization.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, when I first read the member from Elphinstone's motion, I was a little bit surprised. I thought maybe the staff had written it up and he hadn't actually read it before they submitted it, but after listening to him I kind of understand where he believes he's coming from.

The first word that came to my mind though when I was listening to him was hypocrisy. Because if you want to actually balance the scales, if you want to really look at the records of this government as opposed to the opposition when they were in government, there's stark contrast, Mr. Speaker. And I'll endeavour as much as I can in the 10 minutes I have to point out some of those.

And again listening to the member from Elphinstone, I find that it's again the same old NDP. They're coming from a place of insinuation and fear, not from fact. And, you know, again comparing records, there's a lot of facts to be presented here.

He did point out some very interesting things that we do believe in, a lot of us on this side of the House do believe in, is that the strength of the Crowns is integral to a strong economy in our province. If you look around the world in a lot of other jurisdictions, it's recognized that a solid host of Crown utilities does in fact lend some stability to the environment, the economic environment and the business environment within the province, and we see that happening in this province today.

In fact I can point to a lot of different ventures in my jurisdiction, in my area in and around Yorkton, when it comes to stable power, stable gas delivery. And we look at what's happening there with record development of our agricultural industry and value added there with the canola plants, with grain millers, the P & H grain handling facility there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as a lot of different manufacturing that

goes on there with Leon Ram and Morris and Parkland Welding and a lot of these other businesses in the area that are doing a lot. They not only support our economy, but develop a huge amount of jobs and employment opportunities for our people of this province.

You know, again looking at the member's motion, he used the word undermine. And I don't know if they've got a different definition for the word undermine, but it just doesn't seem to fit into when you actually look at the facts and records again of what the NDP did for a number of years, very many years, as opposed to our record with the Crown corporations here.

So I will get right into some of the meat here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again I have already touched on the fact that we do see the Crowns, the Crown utility, as a very important part of our economy in the province. And again I pointed out to some of the instances around my area in Yorkton. We want to look at the actual management of the Crowns. And I would point to the record of the NDP being very much one of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the lack of investment, mediocre investment. I'll try and get to some of those details, but honestly very mediocre investment into some of those Crown corporations.

And then looking at some of the dividends drawn back out and admittedly going to possibly very good ventures, but the amount of dividends drawn out making those Crowns very unstable, not a very good business model. Whereas I would argue the way the Crowns are being managed right now, a lot more stable, a lot more investment in infrastructure, a lot stronger Crowns. Admittedly gaining some debt because they are gaining business debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Anybody that's run a business knows from time to time you have to accumulate some debt when you're investing back into your company. For example, when I ran my company in Yorkton, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some pieces of equipment were running upwards of half a million dollars. I didn't have a half million dollars in the bank, but I would have to finance that equipment, amortize it over a period of time, invest back in my company, get more of a client base, which the utilities here are doing — SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel. I will try and get to those numbers as well when we look at the customer base they are drawing from now, Mr. Speaker, and how it's been built up over the last six years, and again the success and the stability and the positives that those Crown corporations do have.

Again when I'd buy equipment, I'd amortize it over years, build up a customer base which would give me the capacity, the financial capacity and flow to finance more equipment, to build my customer base even farther, get to the point of having a large number of customers, being able to employ a large number of people in our area, pay them better, and really help to drive the environment of economy and business in my area as best as I could.

And I see these Crown corporations doing the exact same thing right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are employing more people. They are investing record numbers back in infrastructure. SaskPower for example, if we look at that, SaskPower I think under the NDP, very minimal — \$300 million a year maybe investment at a high. We're looking at

SaskPower over the next 10 years, investing upwards of nine and a half billion dollars. This year alone we should have invested through SaskPower 1.3 billion to upgrade Saskatchewan's electrical infrastructure.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy, when we look at them, they will be investing over 180 million this year, expanding and ensuring the integrity of their distribution system.

SaskTel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, investments more than \$300 million, investing in areas that the NDP never did. They saw no value in rural Saskatchewan. They saw nothing outside of Regina and Saskatoon. We're looking at the Crown corporations investing in our rural areas, investing back in our province, not outside of our borders losing millions and millions of dollars. In fact I think I've seen numbers in some of my notes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where upwards of \$350 million lost in different ventures outside the province by failed capital investments by those members when they were in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're looking at the Crowns now investing back in our province, back in our communities, back into rural Saskatchewan, back into the North where those two members sit across and criticize our records from the North. And we look at the lacklustre performance they had. And we're looking at the record investments going into all different areas, whether it's infrastructure, whether it's telecommunications, to encourage investment into those northern areas to help employment of all people in the North. We're looking to job opportunities where they're having to draw people from the South and fly them up north for mining and all the other opportunities that we have up now there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we wouldn't see a lot of those investments if it wasn't for the capital investment and the strengthening of the Crown corporations and investing in areas that the NDP never would. We see the value of our economy. We see the value of the North. We see the value of our rural. And we're doing what we can through the Crown corporations to make sure they're investing in, again, telecommunications, energy delivery, power delivery, and what we can do there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another Crown, I know it wasn't mentioned here today — it is a Crown; I see it as a utility as well — is STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], where admittedly some routes have had to have been drawn down because of a lack of ridership. One or two people a week at the very most can be dealt with in other ways, as well as shipping goods. But when we look at where STC is going that major carriers will not go, again enhancing the transportation in those areas and enhancing the balance of life and the quality of life in those areas as well.

Again, Mr. Speaker, you know, talking about that, our *Vision 2020 and Beyond* plan for growth in Saskatchewan fits right in with our plan for the Crown corporations and how they're actually being managed and how they're being utilized, when we're seeing that they are enhancing the quality of life in Saskatchewan with again added economic opportunities in areas that the NDP ignored. We see added opportunities in employment, very good jobs that are online now that weren't there before because of the total lack of attention by the NDP,

and really I'd say the mismanagement of the Crowns when they were in power.

You know I really . . . I want to touch on a few things, the positives that were said by the members of the opposition. The member for Nutana, I noticed a quote that was in my notes where I give her credit. She was quoted as saying this: "We well know that there's a \$10 billion infrastructure deficit. So they're beginning to catch up on that and that's a good thing." That was from April 10th of 2013, the member from Nutana.

Then we look back in history a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the member from Athabasca back in 2011: "Lowest bundle may not have worked. It may have been politically popular, but does it hurt the Crowns in the end?" He's asking a question. So that's very interesting coming from that member, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So before my time does come to a close here . . . I know a couple of other members are definitely going to want to get in on this debate. Just a point to be made again with the dividends. The NDP took unsustainable dividends, 181 per cent in 2001, 114 per cent in 2002. The NDP took a 10-year average capital expenditure to the Crowns was less than 65 per cent of the Saskatchewan Party's past three years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again it points to the record of the NDP where they're totally continually drawing down the income of the Crown corporations, making them financially unstable, and then not investing back into the businesses, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we see now a power grid that has to have billions of dollars investment, and all the other utilities need billions of investment over the next years to make them sustainable. I'm very proud of our government's record and I'm happy to not support the member from Elphinstone's motion and speak against it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter this discussion. I'm disappointed that we have to have it at this point in time in Saskatchewan, but I'm very pleased to enter this discussion here today on an issue that's critical to the future of our province and that being the health and welfare of our Crown corporations, their ability to serve the people of this province, communities across this province, not just today but well into the future. The facts will speak for themselves on this front. You know, the member from Yorkton, he can get up and run through a revisionist history that's been written by maybe caucus staff. Or I'm not sure who's done, prepared those sorts of lines, Mr. Speaker, but the facts themselves will speak for themselves. And that government will be judged by their record on this front, and their record isn't a good one.

Those members can thump their desks all they want, Mr. Speaker, but the people of this province know this government's record when it comes to our Crown corporations. They know that it wasn't too long ago that that government, that . . . or before they were government, were outright in their willingness to privatize our Crown corporations. They then came around and started using softer language. Then they started offering commitments that they wouldn't sell off our

Crown corporations, a promise that they've broken, Mr. Speaker.

Not only have they broken that promise. They've actively undermined those Crown corporations with deliberate actions, ripping money out of those Crown corporations at every turn to pull into general revenues — and we know what the auditor says about the general revenues of this government, the accounting of this government — as well as at every turn outsourcing the opportunities, the jobs for Saskatchewan people within that Crown sector.

[11:15]

We know the Crown sector's been such a vital piece of developing Saskatchewan. We know how important it is alongside a strong private sector in building the economy here in this province. We know what it means in the lives of so many who are connected to it by way of a business that's connected to it, by way of supplies or somebody who works directly within the Crown corporation. And the undermining and outsourcing of this government come at a direct cost to Saskatchewan people, real people in communities all across this province. It's something we stand ardently opposed to.

So it's with some passion and with some pride that I speak in support of our Crown corporations, the value of those Crown corporations, stand against the willingness and the deliberate actions of this government to undermine, to outsource, to weaken our Crown corporations, and to privatize our Crown corporations — something that clearly isn't in the best interest of Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan communities all across this province, nor for today or for our future.

So I'll be speaking in support of the motion put forward by the hon. member and my good friend from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. That motion reads as follows:

That this Assembly condemns the government for undermining our Crown corporations and breaking its commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to protect our Crown corporations from privatization.

As I say, I mean, that government had pretended to Saskatchewan people, they took the oath that they wouldn't be privatizing our Crown corporations. And they've of course broken that promise. We've seen them sell off DirectWest. We've seen them take ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], a Crown corporation that delivered \$18 million a year to the treasury here in Saskatchewan, to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and they've sold that asset off without any consultation with Saskatchewan people.

And they went before Saskatchewan people in the last election and they promised they wouldn't be selling off our Crown corporations. Right after that election, they went directly at ISC, selling it off and to really what it would seem for short-term cash. Because the other concern on this whole piece is this government is using these dollars to plug holes within its budgets, to prop up its books, to play a game with Saskatchewan people — which is all part of why this government has failed an audit for the first time in Canadian history, because of its improper bookkeeping.

We know that that government, since they've been in power, have taken over \$2 billion from our Crown corporations. Those are dollars that the Crowns haven't had to make the investments that they require. And those costs come directly on the backs of Saskatchewan families who see, on bill after bill after bill, big hikes as a consequence of that government.

It's interesting of course that this government broke its promise as it relates to ISC after the election, that they took the oath and promised they wouldn't sell off our Crown corporations, selling that off. And it's interesting as well to see where those dollars went. They privatized ISC and those dollars simply flowed back into budgets, not even leaving any sort of a legacy for the people of Saskatchewan. And I think Saskatchewan people deserved better answers as to their Crown corporations.

We see a government scrambling right now, a government that wants to pretend one thing on billboards and news releases, but can't get the job done when it comes to managing the finances of this province and won't put the finances in a true and fair state to Saskatchewan people. As we say, the auditor has weighed in, calling the reporting of that government as it relates to our finances. She, and I quote, says, "They're misleading," that they're "materially wrong," and that they aren't trustworthy, Mr. Speaker. Now that should be a concern for all Saskatchewan people and should be a concern that this government just uses the Crown corporations as an untapped reserve or as a reserve, I guess, that they're tapping at every moment, transferring dollars across, forcing our Crowns to take on more debt and adding costs to Saskatchewan families.

The Crowns play such an important role, as I say, in providing the services our communities need, families need well into the future. And they have such an important role, being owned by the people of the province, to do so with the best interests of the families here in Saskatchewan. This government seems entirely out of touch with the reality of Saskatchewan households as it relates to cost of living and the lack of affordability. It's in this area that our Crown corporations can be such a vital tool, not just for today but well into the future. The undermining and the costly outsourcing is all piling up at households across Saskatchewan with added costs on bill after bill after bill.

In Saskatchewan, people know that the reason they own those Crown corporations is to deliver those quality services and to do so at an affordable rate. And Saskatchewan people are concerned with this government's outsourcing that's costing them more, with the deliberate privatization that we're seeing, and the willingness to open up, as the Premier says, the debate — we'll have that debate, and we'll stand strongly on the side of the Crown corporations here in Saskatchewan.

Just maybe to review a little bit of the record as it relates to the current Premier on this front, the Premier said back in 2005 in this Assembly, "There's too much state-owned enterprise in the province of Saskatchewan." So I mean, that explains a lot when you look at the undermining, the outsourcing, the willingness to privatize, the outright privatization that we've seen of this government when you go back and read a comment like that.

Going back a little further to 2003, the current Premier says . . . actually I'll go to 2002: "Our position is that we want to move out of STC. We want to move out the cost that is to the

taxpayers." Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of the Premier saying that he wants to sell off STC, a vital and invaluable service to the people of this province, and a service that's run, I believe, quite efficiently to connect families in a large, vast province and, in many cases, families and people to health care.

Moving some of those quotes forward, we then had this sort of change in position from that Premier and this government who said they then wouldn't be selling off our Crown corporations. But of course as we say, that's been a broken promise to the people of Saskatchewan.

When it comes to this Saskatchewan Party government, that Premier, with our Crown corporations, I believe Saskatchewan people can't trust them with our Crown corporations. And Saskatchewan people know the value of those Crown corporations in creating quality employment, in being an important contributor to our economy. And that government's approach of outsourcing opportunity such as what we see with Texas plates all over our province on SaskPower and SaskEnergy vehicles, exporting those profits far outside Saskatchewan and not providing that quality employment that those Crowns should in our province, is something that's troubling.

Not to mention the fact that all these decisions of that government in this outsourcing and privatization costs more. So it just doesn't make sense. It's selling off the opportunity and advantage for Saskatchewan people, the one that they should rightfully have today and well into the future. We'll stand opposed to those actions any day of the week, and we'll stand for a strong, vibrant Crown sector that's meeting the needs of communities here today, meeting the needs of families here today and well into the future.

I'm glad that finally we're starting to see a factual debate on this front. I'm glad finally we're letting . . . having government speak in a more honest way about this. Their willingness now to privatize, we'll proudly oppose that approach any day of the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to begin by saying it's going to be a pleasure today to take part in this debate on this discussion. But it's a very sombre statement I want to start off with, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

NDP privatizations. The NDP sold their remaining interest in the Lloydminster heavy oil upgrader in 1998 for \$310 million to Husky Oil. The NDP government completed the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan in 1993 and 1994.

Cameco was created in 1988 by a merger of Saskatchewan mining and development corporation and Eldorado Nuclear. Originally 62 per cent of the company was owned by the government. In 1996 the NDP sold 10 million shares. In 2002 the NDP sold the remaining 5 million shares.

Four power purchase agreements were signed by the NDP between 1999 and 2006. They contracted out power

procurement to private companies. That isn't sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was probably a good decision. Nothing wrong with using taxpayers' dollars in a very efficient manner, looking at a means to provide services to this great province and to the people who built this province, stayed in the province, and during those years, sadly though, were leaving this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Here's what I thought was very stark in comparison to the members opposite's debate motion today. In 1999, then deputy premier and Crown Investments Corporation minister Dwain Lingenfelter announced the sale of Saskatchewan's 50 per cent share in Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation for \$80 million to MacMillan Bloedel.

Today we hear from opposite across the way that the members of the NDP are chastising this government for breaking our promise on the privatization issue when clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have facts, we have figures — and I'll go into some of those in a while — that the NDP chose to privatize what would be, at the time, clearly Crown corporations which in and of themselves supported the economic development of this province. They chose to do those privatizations freely. And today the members opposite stand in their place and criticize our government for doing something that we really have not broken a promise on.

We support *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are solid behind that statement, behind the Act. It's hypocrisy to have members opposite criticize and challenge us and question us that we are, in fact, privatizing Crown corporations, when in fact those Crown corporations that are so important to our province that we've talked about before provide our way of life, provide low utility bundles for our people, our population, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are protected by the Act that this party, when in opposition, clearly supported in 2004 for a good reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have a time like no other time, I believe, in this province. Maybe not since the creation of this province when we saw utilities and the Crowns working to expand and provide services for the fine women and men in our province as they forge forward to create a better place for the children and grandchildren.

I want to thank the members of the Crown corporations. Those women and men who work in some of the worst conditions that we've seen, in 50 below wind chills outside, but who day in, day out, are there to support our people. We have people who call in to the Crowns to complain about outages, complain about service needs, whether it be SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SaskPower, and they proudly serve this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's one thing that we have to recognize, and we say it time and time again, that Saskatchewan is a place to be, no longer a place to be from. And that's because the province is growing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as the member from Yorkton clearly stated, my colleague, there is a mechanization for a corporation to invest dollars to expand.

Sadly we talk about, as well, the history of this province with the lack of infrastructure that we inherited, the decline or the . . .

not so much the demise or decline of infrastructure, just that it wasn't enough plan for it, inasmuch as that we find and hear and can pick out quotes that the NDP government of the day, before 2007, were planning for decline. They were very, very proud to have mediocrity as the norm. And then they challenge a question our Premier today, who was leader of the party at the time, in opposition, about trying to grow the province even by 100,000 people. I'll get in some quotes about that too later on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I have time.

One thing that's happened in this province is that we're seeing housing starts and business starts and expansions of business, because those people believe in this province and we need the services that go along with that through the Crown corporations, through tel, energy, and power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the point where they're working day and night to provide those services. And we're very proud to support that.

We had a population increase in this province like no other time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one thing that we have to recognize is that we have a plan for growth. We had the plan for growth since before 2007. Our leader of the party talked about that. He had a policy document. He had 100 points where the party developed a plan to show how this province could grow, how this party would work if in government at one time and have the honour to serve. And we're seeing many of those initiatives come to fruition in the last seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One thing we're definitely doing that we're very proud of is we're recognizing that growth cannot happen without the stability of the Crown corporations, those that supply us with utility bundles that we so need to ensure we attract business and retain business, whether it's large corporations or small mom-and-pop operations, the ones that drive the economy, the small business leaders in this province.

And to that point the motion falls on its face when you read the words, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our actions are clear here that we have seen the Crown corporations expand in this province to provide those services to the women and men, the taxpayers who pay our salaries and proudly have moved back and are staying in this province and expanding this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:30]

You know, I touched on some of the sombre moments about privatization, but let's not forget how much money the NDP lost on investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Clearly if they would have not failed at investing . . . And they never should have, because the government should stay out of investments. Let the business sector invest in some of these I believe far-fetched ideas. They lost \$329.42 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over their tenure in ventures.

Now I've got to tell you, when I first became an MLA I knew about some of these. Like there was the one that we hear about many times, about Navigata, \$90.8 million lost. You know, we took over Big Sky Farms. We inherited that situation, lost \$26 million. Of course near and dear to my heart, SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], \$35 million lost.

The NDP government tried many other times, and I think other members here will know these. I don't have to go through them list by list because my time's running out, but over \$329 million lost in investments. And they stand in their place and they ridicule and they ask questions about why are we asking the Crown corporations to expand, take on debt for infrastructure needs. Because they failed to do that. Because they made these ridiculous investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which lost the taxpayers of the province all this money. Had they not done that, they could have invested that in infrastructure, which they clearly decided not to do.

So now we have a province that's growing. My daughters are staying in this province because they see they have a future here now. We're very happy with that.

We have members on this side of the House who have grandchildren who are going to hopefully stay in this province because now there is a beacon of light which is that we recognize that this province has more potential. Every day we wake up and it's another day of a challenge to make it be a better place to live and be.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I think what's really bothersome to our party is that when we had to look at expanding the Crown corporations infrastructure because the party opposite would strip dividends, strip and strip and strip dividends from the Crown corporations and fail to recognize that they should have invested in infrastructure because infrastructure does fail. We know that. Things do crumble. Things do have to be renewed. And they chose opposite to let that course run and not make the investments that they should have.

So they stand in their place and they chastise this government and, more so, the women and men who lead those Crown corporations, who put forth strong business cases to support the infrastructure growth and the demands of this province as part of the growth plan. It's not so much as that's part of our growth plan, but they have to support their initiatives because they're being tasked by business and people in this province asking for those services, which is a great thing on their part, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no way that I can support the member's opposite motion. But I can definitely say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I've hit on some of the highlights of the NDP privatization. My colleagues will do the same after. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, today in question period we had a number of questions around the grain trade and what's happening in the grain trade. What we know is that Saskatchewan farmers, Alberta farmers, Manitoba farmers are subject to the international trade, international corporations. And, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question in this discussion this morning is about how much control do we retain as Saskatchewan citizens, as the legislature of Saskatchewan, over some crucial parts of our economy?

And, Mr. Speaker, over many years the Saskatchewan Crown corporations have become part of our way of keeping some local control. And what's fundamentally frustrating for me and for many people in Saskatchewan is that the Premier muses at different times, 2003 he made the comment basically that:

The Sask. Party has committed to selling off the government's "non-core" assets and use the proceeds to reduce the province's debt. It would review the major Crown corporations and be "open to anything," said Wall.

This is the *Leader-Post*, September 3rd, 2003.

Now just recently last year, our Minister of Highways reflected on some of the comments about SaskTel and about the possibility that it was for sale. And basically the comments scare people in Saskatchewan. And the reason that they scare people in Saskatchewan is that there appears to be a lack of a sense of how crucial these corporations are for the province, for its economy, for the jobs, for the people, for communities across the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in February 1992, some very capable chartered accountants were asked to prepare a report which is called the *Report of the Saskatchewan Financial Management Review Commission*. And that report was brought forward in this province because the province was bankrupt. Mr. Mazenkowski was the federal Finance minister. He ended up putting some backstops in to try to help keep the province from going bankrupt, and some of the conditions that he had was, well look, you better check and see what you're doing in your province and why you're in such financial trouble.

Well that group went forward and looked at the Crown corporations and how they'd been managed by a predecessor government to these members opposite who basically said, we're open for business. Well they ended up running the Crown corporations into the ground. They ended up guaranteeing loans without really knowing how much there was there, and they created a huge mess for the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately some of the language and some of the things that have been learned by the Premier — and he's spread it around to some of his other colleagues — are lessons that weren't learned from those 1980 times. What we know in the province, and the member who just spoke from Prince Albert listed off some of the things that had to be done because of this report, and that was get your finances in order, sell off some of those assets to just try to deal with some of the issues that are there.

What we are concerned about on this side of the House is that the government enters into an agreement through SaskPower with Northland Power in North Battleford and they won't tell us how much it costs. We don't know how much it costs. Well that is a major decision being made by a Crown corporation to privatize, to sell off a chunk of our corporation. And they don't even tell us how much that's going to cost us in the long run.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would prefer if this government was more open and more accountable and told us what these costs were, but it may be that we'll need another Gass Commission to actually sort out decisions that are like that.

We also see on a regular basis, and any member who lives in any part of Saskatchewan knows about the coffee shop conversations with Crown employees who are concerned about their jobs. We see what's happened in SaskPower with the various tasks that are there that have been contracted out. We see what's happening in SaskTel where jobs are contracted out, whether it's the Texas plates or whether it's the other aspects of setting up some of this new metering. Those are the kinds of tasks that Saskatchewan ingenuity and Saskatchewan people could do in a very positive way.

But what happens is, there's this push to kind of keep a shell there but transfer a lot of the jobs. We know that they're also now trying some of that in some of the government departments where you have Ontario companies screwing up our camping system, where you have problems arising out of what's happened as far as the issues related to hunting and fishing licences. All that stuff is way away from what happens here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned that the types of decisions these people are making is because they've run out of money. They've got all kinds of commitments. They've run out of money, and they're trying to pick up cash anywhere they can. So you can do that in a couple of different ways. One is you can set up projects that are funded by promises to cover the cost later, P3 kind of projects. You can borrow money directly or indirectly.

What we've seen is this government has been borrowing money through the Crowns and then taking their dividends and using it for the general revenues of the province. How does this work? We're in the best times that Saskatchewan has ever seen, and our government is running out of money and they're borrowing and they're creating all kinds of things that are happening in this province. And that's why people are fundamentally afraid of the ability of the Premier and the Finance minister to manage the finances of this province.

Now what do we do when it comes to Crown corporations? Well, Mr. Speaker, these are about the long-term future of the province. And what we have to make sure that we do is that we make decisions that are appropriate business decisions, that we make them in a way that looks at not just what's going to happen in the next one or two years before an election, but what's going to happen to make sure that it's part of the long-term future of the economy.

Any one of us who travels outside of Saskatchewan always gets surprised questions when they hear that we still own our own telephone company, which allows us to have all kinds of technological things that other states or provinces or countries don't have. We also, through the power corporation, we end up having much more control over what happens.

Now I know that a number of these members don't have a long memory and they haven't looked at things like the Gass report. I encourage them to sit down and read what a mess their predecessors put the province in. We all suffered in trying to clear up the debts that were there, whether it was municipalities or whether it was educational institutions, health institutions. We don't want that to happen again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's not allow our Premier to muse about these important assets for our province. Let's make sure that he says very clearly that what we have and what we've built here in Saskatchewan will be built on and strengthened. And, Mr. Speaker, there are many people in the province who are very concerned when the Premier goes off on these different tangents.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what does this motion today talk about? It talks about a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what it means to be a member of this legislature. It means to have a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to make appropriate decisions for the long-term future of the province of Saskatchewan. Many of us are extremely concerned about the short-term decision making, the let's get some dollars here because we're short of money decision making that we see happening.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not a Saskatchewan way of doing business. It's not a Saskatchewan way of governing. It's not a Saskatchewan way of thinking. And, Mr. Speaker, if these members opposite persist in that type of attitude, they will be gone soon.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Well the member opposite just sat down, and he was talking about Saskatchewan. This is not Saskatchewan. This is not Saskatchewan. I would like welcome you to the new Saskatchewan.

The three speeches we just heard from the members opposite were utter and total nonsense. It was ridiculous to sit here and listen. One of the members from Elphinstone talked about the 1980s. I wasn't even born yet. Get over it. We're not the 1980 Conservatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to start this speech off with a thank you. I would like to thank the employees of SaskEnergy. We can all agree in this Chamber that last weekend was a pretty cold week in Saskatchewan, the coldest ever in quite a few communities. And those men and women at SaskEnergy did an absolutely amazing job. Twenty-three of our communities reached 47, minus 47 degrees celsius without the wind chill. It was much colder in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the men and women worked 24-7 to ensure that when people needed it the most, that furnaces were on, people were safe. And I just want to say thank you very much to the hard-working men of the Crown corporation of Sask. And men and women of the Crown corporation of SaskEnergy did a wonderful, wonderful job last weekend.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a few corrections I'll have to make after listening to the members opposite's speeches. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's totally an unbelievable statement for those men . . . There's the three men that spoke for the NDP, stood in their spots and talked about how wonderful they treated the Crown corporations under their 16 years. It's an unbelievable statement that they think people don't realize actually what went on when they were in government. I don't know how they continue to stick their heads in the sand like an ostrich and pretend nothing happened under their terms in

government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:45]

But just for a reference, to talk about SaskEnergy and the wonderful job they did last weekend, since 2008, including '08 to '03, the gross capital spending has totalled \$970.5 million of capital investment for SaskEnergy. This is compared to \$434 million under the previous five years of the NDP government. Now that's pretty close to 50 per cent more invested in SaskEnergy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you wonder why some of our Crown corporations had to increase their debt ratio a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The members opposite totally ignored infrastructure, infrastructure investments into our Crown corporations. But a few things they didn't ignore — and this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be some fantastic reading for the NDP caucus, a couple of their researchers, after their speech — SaskTel dividend history, Mr. Deputy Speaker: 2000, the NDP took 94 per cent; 2001, the NDP took 90 per cent; 2002, the NDP took 90 per cent; 2003, the NDP took 92 per cent.

In stark contrast, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2008, dividends 64 per cent; 2009, dividend 80 per cent; 2010, 90 per cent; 2012, 65 per cent for SaskTel.

Mr. Speaker, but I would like to talk about a few more of the dividends that our members opposite don't really tell the public about, how much the dividends they took or actually how much they invested, because it's embarrassing really, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some investments that they did take from SaskPower were . . . I'll get those in a few seconds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I want to talk about some more of our investments.

Average infrastructure investment from 2000 to 2007 was \$568 million from the NDP. Mr. Deputy Speaker, infrastructure investment from 2008 to 2012, \$1.2 billion. That's an investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our infrastructure across our province. It's an investment in the people of Saskatchewan. It's an investment that shows businesses that want to come to Saskatchewan that we are serious about the companies that provide our power and provide our energy, provide the things that businesses need to get started in our province, Mr. Speaker. And that's why businesses are coming to Saskatchewan more and more.

And I think why this speech, this debate came about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I can take some insight into the opposition, is they want to talk about privatization. They want to have the debate that they've tried to have for the last 93 elections, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so they could scare the people of our province. It's all about fearmongering from the NDP again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to scare people. They talk about people losing their jobs. I think they don't realize that we live in this province as well. And my neighbours are SaskPower workers. My neighbours work for SaskEnergy. And we know these individuals and these employees as well as they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm not hearing the same response from . . . their having fear of the Sask Party being in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know our government takes pride in our Crown corporations. We support our Crown corporations through

infrastructure investment, and they don't have the same fear that they've shown on the other side of the benches.

And there's another thing that we wanted to have a little conversation about and it's . . . There was a conversation in the news a couple of weeks ago about casinos, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I would like to read a quote from Chief Perry Bellegarde. Yes, I was talking to him all weekend. In fact on Sunday I offered, can we meet with Premier Wall to clear the air, get on the same page? He said no. Do you want a copy of the MOU [memorandum of understanding]? He said no. That's why I'm disheartened.

And I'm really disappointed in what's happened with this because we're getting caught with a good opportunity. Again, it's not rushed. And to everybody else that's listening throughout Saskatchewan, what was proposed was strictly limited to Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw — no other Crown corporations, just those two in particular. That was it. It was just to start the process. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is obviously about the conversation that FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] wanted to have about Casino Regina and Moose Jaw.

And those members over there at the start had some tacit agreement from the Leader of the Opposition, and then those members over there did a one-eighty on the FSIN. And my question, Mr. Speaker, is . . . There is two members from Athabasca and Cumberland. Where were they in this conversation? In this caucus meeting when the nine agreed, the nine of them agreed to totally change their mind and flip-flop on this issue, Mr. Speaker, which is kind of what they've been known to, where were the two members from the North sticking up for the FSIN, sticking up for the voice of First Nations people across the province, which had a great, a great opportunity to get more involved in the economy of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Where was the voice of the two members from the North? Is their voice so weak in that caucus among nine of them that they couldn't be heard? They could not talk, they could not talk to their members and say, this is a wonderful opportunity? This is a wonderful opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to take this opportunity. We want to take Chief Perry Bellegarde's advice and say, you know what? This is a fantastic opportunity for First Nations people across the province, and we're going to stick up for them. We're going to make sure that our caucus colleagues know that we want this opportunity. Nothing. Silence. Nothing. They had this one quick meeting, changed their mind. Their leader flip-flops. They won't even have a conversation with Chief Bellegarde and the Premier to try and get something started, Mr. Speaker.

I find it very disheartening that they just go blindly through the night. They have no plan. They have no policy anywhere. They have had a new leader for a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they don't got a lick of policy on their website. They have no idea where they're going. And they want to rehash this Crown corporation privatization debate so they can scare a few people, a few Crown employees, and make them think that they're trying to protect the rights of the workers, when I think the member from Rosemont just rehashed his speech he gave a couple of days ago, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's all just fearmongering, and I think it's time for them to jump into the

21st century, into a new Saskatchewan and come on board, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government has been investing in the growth and sustainability of our Crowns, unlike members opposite. We have the numbers to prove our government's strong support of Saskatchewan's Crown corporations. For example SaskPower's investing over 9.4 billion in capital infrastructure over the next 10 years. From 1998 to 2008, the NDP only invested 3.2 billion in capital infrastructure. In the same number of years under the NDP, SaskPower invested less than one-third of what they're investing under our government. While the NDP were in government, they pushed SaskPower to have artificially lower rates and to defer investment just for their own political gain. SaskPower suffered from their political rhetoric.

Our government is committed to healthy Crowns with competitive rates. To the member of Regina Elphinstone: how can you say that the government hasn't invested in Crowns when the people of Saskatchewan are seeing them flourish under our government rather than fail under the NDP leadership?

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Perhaps that member could explain to the House how it is that when that government across the way solemnly pledged that the situation at SaskPower demanded no dividend be taken from SaskPower, what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They went around and they took a dividend — 120 million, 120 million of, you know, dividend they said they weren't going to take.

The situation was such that SaskPower was going to keep that money and reinvest it in the provisions of the corporation. So what happens instead, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They say they aren't going to take a dividend; instead they take \$120 million dividend. So if they want to talk about keeping their word, maybe they can start there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course Saskatchewan people across our province are concerned by the broken promises of this government as it relates to our Crowns — the privatization, the outsourcing, the selling off of opportunity for Saskatchewan people that we see from this government.

My question is to the member from Walsh Acres, and my question is: would he ever support the privatization of a current Crown corporation? If so, which ones?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

and thank you very much to my colleague for the question. I found my SaskPower notes, so if you want to talk about broken promises, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of the broken promises the NDP would have. Obviously they're the masters of breaking promises. Some of the dividends they stripped from SaskPower and didn't invest any money was: 1993, 100 per cent of their earnings; 1998, 114 per cent of the earnings; 1999, 97 per cent of their earnings; 2001, 181 per cent of the earnings; 2002, 114 per cent of the earnings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find it unbelievable that they want to have a conversation about Crown corporations when they stripped that many dividends from SaskPower under their term. Mr. Speaker, I support our Crown corporations and the Crown corporation protection Act. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know how greater economic opportunities benefit people, and we know the significant economic and social benefits for First Nations people that these greater economic opportunities provide, Mr. Speaker. And we know even more that those benefits are even more significant for First Nations when they create their own opportunities.

My question is to the member from Rosemont. Why did the NDP sabotage the possibility for an improved quality of life for First Nations people by vetoing the possible sale of Casino Regina and Casino Moose Jaw to First Nations people, an agreement that could have provided untold opportunities for First Nations people?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed that he'd have a question like that, from a friend and the hon. member from Douglas Park. For that government to pretend somehow that they have sincere interests in the discussions with First Nations around economic futures is simply not on with the record of this government.

I'll also remind that member that they have a pretty big majority over there. In fact we have a pretty small opposition and that if some sort of deal that was put together between that government and the First Nations of Saskatchewan was signed in good faith by that Premier, then he should be able to move forward and bring that to the light of day.

For this opposition to be sort of pushed into a position somehow that we should be supporting a secret, private, backroom deal instead of applying *The Crown Corporations Act* and that kind of accountability, questions, and due diligence that Saskatchewan people deserve, simply isn't on. And we're going to stand up for Saskatchewan people on that front.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For the member from Regina Walsh Acres, he's talked about

his neighbours that work at SaskEnergy, SaskPower. When my colleague, the member from Rosemont, asked him a very straightforward question about would that member support the privatization of any Crown corporations, he of course did not answer the question. So if he doesn't want to answer to us, perhaps he could tell us what he would say to his neighbours that work for Crown corporations. Will that member support the privatization of any Crown corporations?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the members don't like to listen to our answers when we're answering, but I said it at the end of my answer last time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we will continue to support *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* and will continue to support our Crown corporations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I answered that the first time. And I think that when I talk to my neighbours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to talk to our neighbours about our record, not only on Crown corporations but on growing this province, on having more people come to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I talk to my neighbours, I'm proud of our government's record. When you talk to your neighbours, are you guys proud of what you've done?

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

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, this government is proud of our investments in our Crown corporations. In our first five years in government, capital expenditures at SaskTel, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy totalled over \$5 billion. This is 95 per cent more than the NDP spent during their final five years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our investments in these corporations aren't the only things that have increased. Since 2007 SaskEnergy has seen its customer base increase by more than 30,000, with customer levels expanding at more than double the 10-year average. It is now at its highest customer level in history, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And our government will continue to support growth such as this to ensure long-term success of our Crown corporations.

To the member from Regina Lakeview: do you agree that our Crown corporations are much stronger now that there is a government that takes Crown investments seriously?

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite doesn't acknowledge that this money that goes into these Crown corporations comes from the ratepayers, the shareholders, the people of Saskatchewan. It's not this government. This government has been putting those Crown corporations in debt and then taking that money for other expenditures in a way that they should not do it.

And that member and other members are standing up here and saying, I wasn't born yet. I don't know what's going on. Well everybody in this province is concerned because there are steps being taken by this Premier that are putting us back into

financial difficulty, and none of us want that. We want clear, accessible books. We want clear accountability. And we need that before we can trust anything these people do.

[12:00]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the challenges that we have is keeping straight the story from members opposite in terms of what their position is on the Crown corporations. And I guess one of the things that is a little difficult to sort through is the way that the position keeps changing.

And you know, you need look no further than the position of the Premier when it comes to the Crowns to understand how challenging that is. You go from the '80s when he worked for the Devine Conservatives, trying to sell off everything that wasn't nailed down. You go to September 3rd, 2003, where he stated, the Sask Party is committed to selling off the government's non-core assets and use the proceeds to reduce the province's debt. It would review the major Crown corporations and be "open to anything." Or is it the Premier that campaigned in 2007 saying that they wouldn't privatize anything? To the member from Walsh Acres: who are we to believe?

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm very happy to be able to take this last question from the hon. member for Elphinstone. Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan will believe a government that fulfilled 120 promises in their first term. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan will believe a government that's tabled seven consecutive balanced budgets, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to believe that people have invested money into the Crown corporations instead of strip money from Crown corporations, taken 181 per cent of a dividend. I don't even know how. That's mathematically impossible. Maybe the figure man over there from Regina Rosemont can . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The time for debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Plans for New Schools

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

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. Thank you for the slow clap over there. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to enter into this debate to talk about what is an emergent issue in our province right now. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had unprecedented amount of people coming into Saskatchewan. We've had people coming in from Western Canada, Eastern Canada, United States, and believe it or not, we've actually had people in here from Texas. I know that might be a foreign concept to the members opposite, but yes, we do have people coming here from all across North America as well as around the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And one of the most important things that we need to do is to make sure that they feel welcome here, not just in their workplace but in their homes. And certainly one of the most pivotal areas of our community is our school systems, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And within our school systems, we have seen a huge amount, unprecedented growth in what is now being called the new normal in Saskatchewan. We have classrooms that are getting extremely large. Teachers are having to adapt on a daily basis to bringing in new students and teaching them in the existing facilities.

What we have over on this side of the House is a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a plan to deal with what is going on within our education system. The plan is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to continue to build schools in a traditional manner. We have been doing that since we took over or since we came into power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2007. Now we have an even larger need. And how do we solve that larger need? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to go into our P3 [public-private partnership] format and be able to provide nine joint, new joint-use schools throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very, very concerned why the members opposite are not in support of this, because the Leader of the Opposition wasn't even there when we announced these nine joint new schools even though on multiple times, I believe it was 51 or 52 times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he got up and read a petition about a school in Hampton Village.

I'd like him to go and talk to the people in Hampton Village because actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been over in Hampton Village talking to some of the residents over there. They couldn't be more excited about having a school in their area. They're not really concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about how the school is getting there. All they're concerned about is, is this going to be a good school for my kids? When is it going to open? And how fast can we get this done?

And I'd like to ask the members opposite over there, because they are so dead set against this proposal that we have, if we do a traditional build, what schools get built first? Do we do the ones in Martensville? Do we do the ones in Regina? Where do we do those ones? Because if we do a traditional build, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it could take up to 10 to 15 years to meet that emergent problem.

Well now we are into a whole other problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the birth rates that are going on in Saskatchewan. All of those people are coming, all of those children are coming up into our school system, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. We couldn't catch up if we were doing a traditional build. It would almost be next to impossible to be able to try to get ahead of this without doing an emergent nine joint new schools.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this whole P3 program, I'd like to find out what the opposition has to say. What is their plan? They're against our plan, but they don't actually have a plan of their own. The leader has been in power, the new leader has been in power over there for a year — nothing. We are still waiting over here. The people of Saskatchewan are waiting to hear what they have to say.

So I thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would talk a little bit about plans because maybe they don't over there understand what a plan is. So I thought it may be very simple and I could help them out with this of what a definition of a plan is. It's a set of actions that have been thought out as a way to achieving something. This is what we are doing. We have a plan. We have multiple plans. We had a plan after our Premier Wall was in opposition for one year. Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Is that what you are offering? Mr. Deputy Speaker, my apologies for that.

What I would like to say is, we have had a plan since the inception of this party. We knew what we were going to do. We knew how we were going to grow the province and we had a road map on how to get there. They had a plan. At least the former leader had a plan. It was a disastrous plan of \$5.1 billion, but he had a plan.

Now over there I think they're scared to have a plan because they're not quite sure what they can do. They don't have any ideas. They say that they're supporting our government when we have a good idea. I haven't seen nothing over there from support from them. But maybe we shouldn't call it a plan. Maybe that's too big of a word for them over there. Maybe we should call it something different. Maybe we should call it a program. Maybe we should call it a process, a system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also notice that a couple of the members opposite were former teachers. Now as my wife was a former teacher, she had a teacher's plan. She would go in and teach a subject. They would have a plan on what to do. I'm wondering if the members opposite would go into their classrooms, in their day, with no plan on what they're going to do. I wonder how their students would react when they had nothing to be able to go forward on a minute-by-minute basis. Absolutely nothing. Yes, well I guess if things keep going, they might be falling back on that teaching career, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the positive feedback that we have heard from the people within the school system. Just give me a half a second here, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes. As my colleague said, I'll get to that in a minute. Here we have, quote . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We do have a plan. We have a great plan. What's your plan? Please tell me what your plan is.

This is a quote from Ray Morrison, Chair of the Saskatoon school board: "To say that I am pleased to be here today for this announcement would be a serious, serious understatement." Because he understands exactly what's going on within the

Saskatoon school system. We have great quotes coming from people in Regina as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They understand. When I go to the school to pick up my kids, what are their teachers saying? They're saying that they want a school. They want it now. They want qualified teachers and they want this to happen. They don't want to talk about it for another three or four years like the members opposite would. They actually want to have a plan.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very, very happy to be in on this debate. As a father of four, as talking to teachers and talking to other parents on my son's hockey team, they are very excited about this school system, so they would actually like to get this done immediately. So I am very, very happy to enter into this debate. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:11.]

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