



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

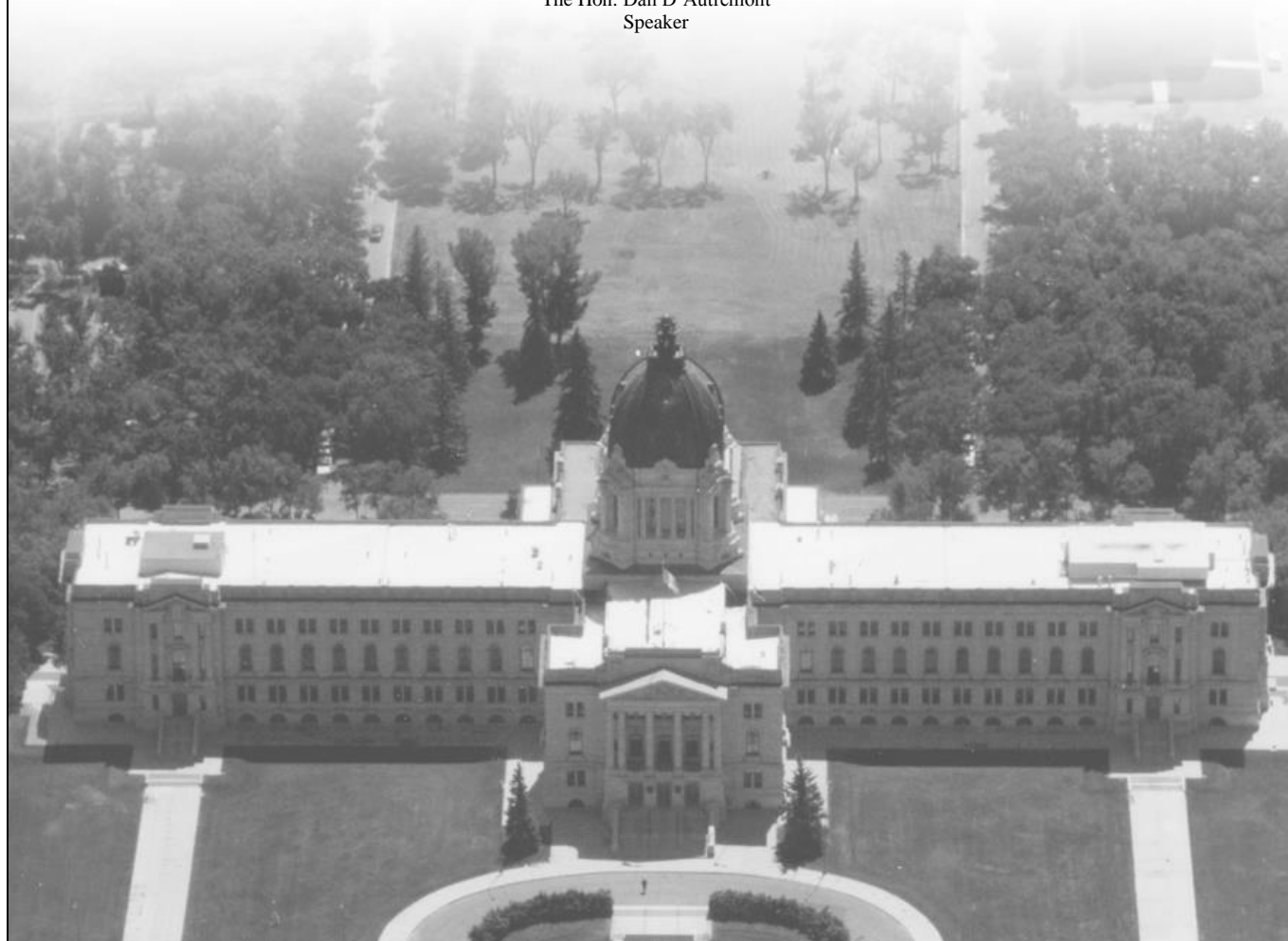
of the

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
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Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would seek your leave and leave of members for an extended introduction this morning.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to members for that leave.

It's a great pleasure and an honour for me to be able to introduce a friend of the province of Saskatchewan, a good friend of mine. Former Premier Ed Stelmach has joined us from Alberta, Mr. Speaker. He's seated on the floor of the Assembly today. Later this day, the premier will provide an address to Junior Achievement, an excellent organization here in the province. That speech will happen a little bit later on in Regina. And I just wanted, if I could, to get an introduction on to the record and to express the thanks of the province of Saskatchewan to Mr. Stelmach for his leadership in Western Canada and in the province next door.

Mr. Speaker, he served as premier of Alberta from '06 to 2011, October of 2011. Prior to becoming premier, he held a number of portfolios in the government and was a very effective and successful cabinet minister in Transportation, Infrastructure, and International Intergovernmental Relations. And he was also, Mr. Speaker, the Government Whip. He served for 18 years in the Legislative Assembly, first elected in 1993 for the constituency of Vegreville-Viking.

Mr. Speaker, he is an active farmer. They are farming still today. When I have the occasion to call the former premier, I'm usually catching him on his farm, being about the business of that. And, Mr. Speaker, I can share with the House as well that Ed was the first person of Ukrainian heritage to serve as Alberta's premier and just the second person of Ukrainian descent to be elected as premier of Canada.

He and his wife, Marie, who also has become a good friend certainly to Tami and I, have four kids and I think seven grandchildren now, Mr. Speaker, that they're enjoying.

And just if I may, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to members of the House that shortly after the '07 election it was the desire of the new government to become part of what's become known as the New West Partnership. It was something called TILMA, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement between Alberta and between British Columbia which created

this pretty dynamic free trade zone, and we wanted to be a part of that free trade zone. We wanted to make business an easier proposition in Western Canada by being a part of it. And, Mr. Speaker, the first call that I made was to then Premier Stelmach to ask what he thought of that. And from that day forward he was a champion for Saskatchewan to become part of what became the New West Partnership, the New West Partnership which has now seen the harmonization of transportation regulations in the three provinces, the New West Partnership that means if you're registered to do business in Regina you're automatically registered to do business in Edmonton as well as knocking down all of those barriers.

I was also honoured to work alongside former Premier Stelmach on energy issues in this country, proud of his clarion voice of support for the resource sector not just in his province but across Western Canada, proud of his work with the federal government to make sure we don't do anything nationally to hurt what is increasingly an important economic engine. These were manifestations of the leadership of Ed Stelmach.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other province involved was British Columbia, and in terms of the New West Partnership and our entry into that, I can tell you that there was a good cop and a bad cop amongst those two premiers, and Ed Stelmach was the good cop. And I'm hoping that we can send a transcript of this particular introduction to Gordon Campbell somewhere in London where he can read it there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to welcome Ed to this Legislative Assembly today, to thank him for his service to the country, to Alberta certainly, but also to Western Canada, and thank him as well for his steadfast support of the interests of the province of Saskatchewan as well. I'd ask all members to join with me please in welcoming former Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I, on behalf of the official opposition, would like to extend a welcome to Premier Ed Stelmach as well, an individual who has had a long and distinguished career as a legislator and as a premier in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And I know this evening as he speaks with Junior Achievement that they'll greatly appreciate his remarks and get a lot out of it, I'm sure. So I wish Mr. Stelmach all the best during his time in Saskatchewan and thank him for his presence here in the Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some very special guests that have gathered and are seated in your gallery. These people are family members and friends of a prominent Regina resident, tireless Ukrainian nation builder, family man, and my friend Ed Lysyk. Joining us today are Janet Lysyk — just give us a little wave — Crystal Lysyk, Kathy Sabo, Angus Sabo, Brian Lysyk, Ashley Mantei, and others behind that row. One very special person of course is Orest Gawdyda who is the president of the UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress], Regina branch.

Later today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be making a statement commemorating the life of this very influential person. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition I'd like to join with the Deputy Premier in extending a welcome to the family and friends of Ed Lysyk, Mr. Speaker, and pleased to hear that the Deputy Premier will be making some remarks later on. But on behalf of the official opposition, we're greatly appreciative for all that was done by Ed in the province of Saskatchewan. So welcome here today.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you 20 grade 12 students from Winston Knoll Collegiate here in Regina. If you would give us a wave. Our students are also accompanied again by Scott McKillop.

Scott has been absolutely one of those teachers that we can just be so proud of because he always brings his classrooms to the Legislative Assembly. They have the opportunity to observe some very, most likely, very lively debate that goes on in the House. But also we have an opportunity then to meet and discuss the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. So thank you very much again, Scott, for bringing your classroom, and I look forward to meeting and discussing politics with them.

While I'm on my feet, I would also like to extend a welcome to a very good friend of mine, Mary Vogel. Mary Vogel and I were realtors, worked many years together, but Mary and I have also formed a very good friendship. So again thank you very much, Mary, for your commitment to the business community but also to the Ukrainian community. So thank you very much for attending today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce a number of guests who are seated in your gallery. Joining us this morning is Travis Low, the executive director of the Parkinson Society of Saskatchewan; Pat Duggleby, board Chair; and John Dawes, a member of the Parkinson Society. Also with us are Gordon McKay, the associate dean from the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, as well as Chris Stoichef.

I'll be meeting with representatives of the Parkinson's community today later after question period. And I would invite all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, it's my pleasure to welcome the guests from

the Parkinson Society of Saskatchewan to the legislature. Thank you for all the work that you do with respect to advocacy, support, and of course research.

My grandpa actually, many years ago, lived with Parkinson's, and I know the challenges that he faced. So again just on a personal note and on behalf of the opposition, thank you for all that you do, and welcome to your legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Minister of Health and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale in welcoming the Parkinson group to their Legislative Assembly. I'd specifically like to welcome Travis Low.

Travis worked as a constituency assistant in the constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs in my office. He did an excellent job. But, Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about is Travis's commitment to Parkinson's. His grandfather and his father both have been afflicted with the disease and Travis wanted to do something. In his late 20s, I believe, he created a fundraiser that is well renowned in Saskatoon, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for Parkinson's.

Travis has been recognized in the province as one of the top 30 under-30 leaders. He has been recognized as a youth leader across the country, Mr. Speaker. So please, all members, help me in welcoming Travis Low and thank him for all that he does in our great province.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to join in recognizing the important work of those advocating for more attention on Parkinson's, and specifically when my colleague makes mention of young leaders, I'd like to highlight again the presence of Chris Stoichef. Chris is the past president of the USSU [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union], played a very, very important leadership role on that campus when it came to issues of child care and a number of other student-focused initiatives including those focusing on First Nations and Métis students.

And so I'd just like to ask you and through your Chair to all members of the Assembly in helping welcome Chris and all the delegates that are here today to speak about Parkinson's to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you my uncle and aunt, Kerry and Brenda Rendek who came down from Martensville today to take in the proceedings, my cousin Tiffany Rendek and her friend Paige as well, who are watching I think what is their first question period. So I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

[10:15]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater support for education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services that government provides to citizens. And this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence. And we know that this government has 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 know that we must build the best educational system for today and for Saskatchewan's future.

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

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 with the necessary resources to provide the best quality education for Saskatchewan that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, that builds strong educational infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

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

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the unsafe conditions on Dewdney Avenue, the inundation of heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue. And the residents in the community are looking for action to ensure safety on Dewdney Avenue. They note that any further delays by that government are entirely unacceptable in addressing a problem that was created by that government. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include the rerouting of heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government simply ignored the calls to maintain this program. Instead, it cancelled the RPO. That means the dream of home ownership is destroyed for many families in the North. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building communities in our province's beautiful North.

Signed by many good people of this province. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I stand today to present a petition for highway improvements for northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, of course highway improvements are necessary all throughout the province of Saskatchewan. But this one in particular is for northern Saskatchewan, and the people that have signed the petition are from Patuanak and from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And this particular road that we're presenting this petition on serves the community of Patuanak and the English River First Nation. And the prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to commit to repairing and upgrading Highway 918.

And, Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to present a petition for real action on climate change. And the people who signed this petition bring to our attention a number of items, some of which include the fact that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada and that slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy efficiency program set the province on a backward course. And we know that since 2009 the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent, including another 35 per cent cut in the most recent budget.

So the prayer reads as follows:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact a real plan and allocate appropriate funding in the provincial budget to tackle climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, helping families

transition to energy-efficient homes, and encouraging everyone in the province to take real action to protect the environment.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Humboldt, and North Battleford. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Volunteer Week

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, it's Volunteer Week in Canada. This week gives us a chance to celebrate our volunteers here in the province and across Canada. This is the 11th consecutive year of the National Volunteer Week campaign. This is an opportunity that gives us a chance to recognize the dedication of volunteers to their communities.

We are fortunate to have the spirit of volunteerism alive and well in our province, and we now have a reputation at home and around the globe to have an incredible presence of volunteers working to strengthen our communities. Mr. Speaker, volunteering takes a number of shapes, but there is a common denominator. Volunteers are sacrificing their time for the collective good, and it doesn't get more nobler than that.

Volunteers and volunteer-based organizations in this province are a driving force for change. Whether this is delivering meals, community service, coaching teams, campaigning, or helping build homes, these people are making a difference. Volunteering in our communities unites us as a province and speaks to each of us across the diversity that is present in Saskatchewan. We are fortunate to have strong community organizations that support and coordinate volunteer efforts in our communities. Organizations like United Way in Regina and Volunteer Saskatoon promote volunteerism across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues join with me in recognizing National Volunteer Week and the generosity of Saskatchewan people who transform their time and energies into better communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Parkinson's Awareness Month

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The month of April is Parkinson's Awareness Month, and April 11th is World Parkinson's Day. Every April, Parkinson Society Saskatchewan and its regional partners across Canada use the month of April to raise awareness for Parkinson's disease.

The theme chosen for this month is Everyday Heroes. This theme was chosen to bring awareness to the strength and courage of the many people on a daily basis in overcoming the challenges of living with a chronic disease. Parkinson's affects more than 100,000 Canadians, and in Saskatchewan there are over 4,000 people living with this disease. Parkinson's is a disease that has no cure. Symptoms include resting tremor,

slowness of movement, stiffness of muscles, and difficulty with balance and walking.

Parkinson Society Saskatchewan is the voice of the people living with Parkinson's disease in our province. This organization provides education, support, and advocacy on behalf of Saskatchewan residents who have this disease. Mr. Speaker, Parkinson Society Saskatchewan is to be congratulated for its efforts in raising awareness of Parkinson's and for its work on behalf of those who are coping with this disease.

Saskatchewan health regions provide services to assist individuals with Parkinson's disease manage their symptoms and maintain their independence.

Mr. Speaker, those living with Parkinson's disease are truly everyday heroes. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the remarkable courage, determination, and strength in living with this challenging disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, Parkinson's is a disease with no cure, but there are treatments that can relieve the symptoms and improve the quality of life for the 100,000 Canadians who live with Parkinson's.

This disease begins by affecting motor skills and movement. It limits mobility. It often results in dementia, and is incredibly challenging for those living with it as well as their families. While the average age of diagnosis for Parkinson's is 65, there are Canadians as young as 25 who have been diagnosed with the disease. Sadly more and more Canadians are being diagnosed at earlier ages.

Parkinson Society Canada and Saskatchewan have funded more than \$21 million in disease research nationally. Parkinson Society Saskatchewan has launched a new website, livewellwithparkinsons.com, as a tool for patients to find information about medications, reading materials, nutrition, and even recipes for Parkinson's patients to live fuller, healthier lives. The Parkinson Society also has a fresh tulip sales campaign starting this week called Don't Park Parkinson's, and will be hosting a Parkinson Connection Education Conference later this month. Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members of the House to join with me in recognizing Parkinson's Awareness Month.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Remembering Ed Lysyk

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I learned about the passing of Ed Lysyk on April 3rd. Ed was a prominent Regina resident, tireless Ukrainian nation builder, and above all, a family man. I had the pleasure of introducing his family seated today in the Speaker's gallery.

The son of an RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officer, Ed settled in Regina after law school in 1977 and practised law in the city until his retirement in 2005. Ed was very involved in the Ukrainian-Canadian community, both in Regina and at the

national level. He served as president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Saskatchewan provincial council for five years, concluding his term in 2011. He also served as a representative on the national board.

Ed was president of the Regina branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and was instrumental in supporting initiatives such as the adult Ukrainian language immersion course held in Trident Camp, also known as Oselya Trizub, at Crystal Lake in the great constituency of Canora-Pelly. From 2009-12 Ed provided his wise counsel as part of the Saskatchewan Ukraine relations advisory committee and in 2010 I had the pleasure of travelling to Ukraine with Ed as members of an official delegation. Most recently Ed was involved in commemorating the Holodomor and he was instrumental in creating the Holodomor memorial statue.

In May 2013 Ed was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contributions to the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the tireless contributions of Ed Lysyk.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.]

May his memory be eternal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Saskatchewan Athlete Competes in Masters Golf Tournament

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a momentous year for Saskatchewan athletes on the world stage, from Olympic gold medallists to our province's first Super Bowl champion and, Mr. Speaker, at 10:31 this morning, about five minutes from now, we'll be able to add competing at the Masters to this list.

We are all very proud of Weyburn's Graham DeLaet who will be teeing off at the Masters, the first Saskatchewanian to ever merit an invite in the 78 years of this very prestigious golf tournament.

Mr. Speaker, Graham had an incredible 2013: third at the Travelers; tied for second at the Barclays; competed at the 2013 open championship, his first major championship; and a 3-1-1 record at the Presidents Cup, only the second Canadian to ever play at this team competition; finishing the year at 32nd in the world rankings.

Mr. Speaker, he started off in 2014 really where he left off last year with back-to-back tied-for-second finishes and, in nine starts, five top 10's and a career high 26 in the world rankings. Mr. Speaker, Graham has a game that should be able to play well at Augusta National. He's one of the longest hitters on the tour. His average of 303.3 yards is good for 10th overall as well as ranking sixth in accuracy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join me in wishing Graham DeLaet the best of luck this weekend as he represents Saskatchewan at the world stage. Go low,

Graham. Thank you.

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

Northlands College Gala

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, Northlands College Video Essay Contest Gala was held in La Ronge. Five videos were selected for the final round of judging.

The evening was sponsored by RAM Safety and C&C Fire Extinguisher Services that donated \$500 each for a total of \$1,000, matched with grant funding for a total of \$2,000 for bursary prizes. Visions North Community Futures Development Corporation sponsored the gala and the grand prize trip to Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Mr. Speaker, Dale Apesis took home the top prize of a \$1,250 bursary as well as the trip to Florida. I should mention that it was encouraging to learn that Dale is a first-year student.

Mr. Speaker, Northlands College is helping to build students' leadership skills and personal development so that they become role models in their communities. Mr. Speaker, it's easy to recognize the valuable contribution and educational opportunities that Northlands College offers to students in northern Saskatchewan. In particular it has ensured that a skilled workforce is available to meet the North's labour market demand and have increased the participation and success of First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the winners from the evening and to Northlands College for the great work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dental Hygienists Week

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April 6th to the 12th is Dental Hygienists Week in Saskatchewan and across Canada, a week sure to bring a bright, clean, healthy smile to everyone's face.

Dental hygienists are in the front lines of oral care, and oral care is important for overall health. Problems that show up in the mouth may be indicators of other health issues. Research has shown links in adults between the problems of oral health and conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke, Mr. Speaker.

There are over 500 registered dental hygienists in Saskatchewan. Dental hygienists are life-long learners, staying current on the best practices, adapting to new technologies, adapting to new procedures. They are the professionals that help us maintain good oral health. They teach proper care of the mouth and how to properly brush your teeth and how to, when to floss. Dental hygienists work in dental clinics, schools, and public health facilities. They are found in primary care centres, hospitals, and are found in home cares and other outreach programs.

Mr. Speaker, dental hygienists are involved in research and they work for the government developing policy. They are invaluable members to the health care sector. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to recognize these valuable health professionals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Patient Safety and Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has repeatedly said that he wants front-line workers to bring forth their concerns, but he's refusing to protect them from retaliation. Here's a quote from SUN's [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] latest newsletter sent out late yesterday afternoon:

On March 28, 2014, SUN requested a letter of protection, from the Ministry of Health, for all members coming forward with concerns relating to the impacts of model of care changes on patient safety or the application of Lean in their workplaces. The intended purpose of this letter of protection is to ensure that SUN members have a way to provide feedback on any changes they feel may be negatively impacting the safety of their patients without fear of retaliation.

As of yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they received no such guarantee of protection. My question to the Premier: why doesn't he want nurses to be able to bring forward concerns about patient safety without fear of reprisal or retaliation?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we absolutely want our nurses to know, and all of our health care professionals to know, that they need to provide very direct and honest input, both to the regions and to the elected Government of Saskatchewan, any elected member indeed in this House, without any fear at all.

My understanding from the Minister of Health is that this most recent letter has come in framed as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has just framed it, and that it's under consideration. I think there have been requests dating back even to the previous government with respect to whistle-blower protection.

We need to find the very best way — whether it's legislated, whether it's some other option — the very best way, the most effective way to ensure that front-line health care workers feel completely confident, completely comfortable and protected in bringing forward any information they have in the interests of patient safety and patient care.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has claimed that he wants to hear from front-line health care providers when it comes to the concerns that they have around lean. It's puzzling, Mr. Speaker, why they won't provide the guarantee of safety for the nurses who want to bring forward concerns about patient

safety.

Mr. Speaker, a review of the government's lean pet project was already in the auditor's work plan for next year. It's good to hear. We might see that that review happens a bit more quickly. But the government's messaging on this is a bit odd. They say they first want to give the auditor some lean training and then they will unleash her to do the work, Mr. Speaker. Well we think the auditor should be able to do her job, look at the whole picture, and not just what the government wants her to see. So we'll be watching this closely.

But what's absolutely bizarre today, Mr. Speaker, is that the government doesn't want more concerns coming forward from nurses and front-line health care providers about patient safety because it's more preoccupied with promoting its lean pet project.

My question to the Premier: why does he not want nurses to feel safe to raise the alarm over patient safety when it comes to his lean project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we've learned in recent days to double check the facts in terms of the preambles from the member who just asked the question. Mr. Speaker, he would have this House believe that the government has somehow directed or asked the auditor to take lean training. Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House and the member that it's simply not the case. My understanding of the situation is that there may be an interest in learning a little bit more about lean principles before that becomes the subject of the auditor's work, which would make a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to this review of lean because, as you know, the particular contract that has raised the interest of members opposite, the lean initiatives of the government in general have already saved more taxpayers' dollars than they have cost. And we have seen measurable improvements in patient-centred care, Mr. Speaker, reductions in wait times, the elimination of cancellation of appointments that have plagued some parts of the health care system. You know, there's more work to be done. And we want to ensure that we're improving this lean process as it makes its way towards completion and we have that capacity in the province.

But nobody has directed the auditor to take any training. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would just advise the member of this in case he was unaware of it. But in subsequent questions, he may want to clarify that in fact the auditor, to the extent she's interested in lean, is going to voluntarily, or on her own, become more familiar with its principles.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, instead of spending untold millions on his pet lean project, Mr. Speaker, the Premier should want to know what front-line health care providers, what nurses are saying, Mr. Speaker, about the reality in our hospitals, in our care facilities, and in our home care programs. He should want to hear concerns from the nurses, especially, especially, Mr. Speaker, when those concerns are directly tied

to patient safety and the concerns that health care providers have about it.

Based on the government's own data, Dr. Mark Lemstra says it is "... wrong to publicly state that lean has had a positive impact when their own data indicates the opposite."

My question to the Premier: does he agree with Dr. Mark Lemstra, or does he stubbornly dismiss the scathing assessment that lean is actually having a negative impact on patient safety in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we take much of what Dr. Lemstra has said very seriously and in the constructive manner in which it's offered. We respectfully disagree with him with respect to his opinion on lean.

We would point to groups like the SMA for example, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the doctors of the province — for whom the Leader of the Opposition worked as a researcher, I would point out — who have said that this is precisely the right approach for the health care system. We would point to countless other quotes from nurses and patients in the system that have said this is an important process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to what the auditor has said, with respect to the member's question previous, here's a direct quote. She said in the media today:

We know that lean is an area that we need to do some audit work on, but to be honest, we don't know enough about lean to figure out what that would look like. What we're hoping is that the time that will be spend that day will give us a better perspective about what audit work we can do.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition takes that quote and torques it as some sort of government directive to the auditor, which we're not in a place to offer those directives; neither would we, Mr. Speaker. We'd ask the Leader of the Opposition to please finally stick to the facts.

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

Mr. Broten: — The problem is, Mr. Speaker, the government says they don't agree with Dr. Mark Lemstra, but Dr. Mark Lemstra is using the data and the figures from government, the data that's taken, Mr. Speaker, from the Health Quality Council's own website. And this government data, it shows that adverse events are up, overall satisfaction of patients is down, the number of patients satisfied with their pain management is down, the mortality rate for major surgery is up, and the rate of infections, Mr. Speaker, has also jumped.

My specific question to the Premier: will he at least admit that his government's own data is accurate?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member will know that we are in the midst of

deploying lean throughout the entire health care system. Mr. Speaker, we are at the beginning of what is going to be a multi-year commitment to implementing lean within the health care system, one of the things that we're trying to achieve while ensuring that the benefits and the efficiencies that we've found have already paid for the cost of lean and the JBA [John Black and Associates] contract.

What is at the heart of lean is quality improvement, continuous improvement, and reducing the defects and the errors within the health care system. Mr. Speaker, I know that just in terms of the information that we are seeing certainly any time that we do see those, whether it be critical incidents or medication errors, what we are trying to do is be vigilant as a health system to report those accurately, report them when they do happen. We believe that that's under-reported within the health care system, not just in Saskatchewan.

But we do have work to do on this front, Mr. Speaker, but I think what we're doing in Saskatchewan is being recognized at a national and an international level, Mr. Speaker, and lean is a big part of that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: does he support government's own data when it comes to the statistics that Dr. Mark Lemstra has used indicating that lean is not working?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just say that we're early into the lean process, Mr. Speaker. Well the members opposite, they think it's funny, Mr. Speaker.

We take the position that we need to, Mr. Speaker, we take the position that we do, we need to do a better job within the health care system in Saskatchewan, in Canada, across North America, in reducing errors, in reducing defects, in reducing things like medication errors. Continuous improvement, quality improvement, is a large part of that, Mr. Speaker. To say that the information that is being provided through critical incidents and other reporting mechanisms through the system indicate that lean is not working, I think that that is not the case, Mr. Speaker. In fact I think what we're seeing is that there is more reporting.

Mr. Speaker, if that was the case, the members opposite then would have to explain, under the member from Lakeview, why critical incidents went up 66 per cent in one year. Does that mean that the NDP [New Democratic Party] health care system got that much worse in one single year?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, no response from the Premier whether or not he actually believes the government's own data, the data that is clearly on display through the Health Quality Council. When we read about the infection rate jumping by 86 per cent, that ought to be a concern for this government because it also fits, Mr. Speaker, with what we're hearing from nurses.

SUN says this: “Efficiencies, found by scaling back high-touch surface cleaning in operating and emergency rooms, have resulted in rising hospital-acquired infection rates in some regions.”

But again, Mr. Speaker, we have the Premier dismissing that fact and not admitting that the government’s own statistics are correct. My specific question to the Premier: will he admit that the infection rate is going up, and will he admit it’s because of cuts to cleaning in our health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the work that we’re doing within the health care system, certainly we understand, we’ve acknowledged that we need to do a better job when it comes to patient safety and to reducing the amount of error and the defects within the health care system. Lean has been a big part of identifying the waste within the system, the errors within the system, and identifying ways to improve on the record within the health care system.

This isn’t just a Saskatchewan issue. This is a North American issue. This is a world-wide issue. In fact, Mr. Speaker, here’s some of the evidence. What we’ve done in Saskatchewan through the work of lean, we have adopted as a pilot project in Saskatoon a stop-the-line safety alert system, so that whether that be front-line staff or that be patients or family members now have one way that they can access the system to say something is happening that is potentially unsafe. You know who else is looking at that, Mr. Speaker? The United Kingdom. The minister of Health for the United Kingdom was at Virginia Mason just three weeks ago and says that they will adopt stop-the-line, which we’re already doing.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they talk about listening to health care professionals, but then we have a statement from SUN yesterday that clearly states this government is unwilling to provide protection to registered nurses when they speak up about patient safety. Mr. Speaker, when we see that pain is not being managed properly, according to the government’s own data, this fits with what we’re hearing from front-line health care providers.

We’ve heard that two-thirds of nurses are saying that patient safety is getting worse in hospitals and care facilities throughout Saskatchewan. So the data shows it. And what we hear from nurses, Mr. Speaker, it’s also backed up. But the Premier, the Premier is continually dismissing this and he won’t even admit whether or not the government’s own statistics are correct. He doesn’t want nurses to be able to speak about patient safety, Mr. Speaker, because his government is more concerned, more concerned with promoting their lean pet project.

They have \$40 million, Mr. Speaker, \$40 million for one US [United States] consultant, \$3,500 a day per sensei to fly them in to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They have \$17 million last year alone for kaizen promotion offices and untold millions to force training on health care workers where they learn Japanese words and learn how to fold paper airplanes.

My question to the Premier, and I hope he gets up and answers this: when will he admit that patient safety is being harmed? When will he admit that they’ve lost their way with lean?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so the record of the members opposite, and they will know this: in 2004-2005, critical incidences 63, the following year, 105 — a 66 per cent increase in critical incidents. What did they do to that? Well, Mr. Speaker, we know what they didn’t do. They didn’t hire front-line staff. When they had the nurses’ union say they needed 600 additional nursing positions, they ignored that, Mr. Speaker. We hired the 600. We added 800. We added two more to bring that up to 800 and brought that in fact up to 1,000.

Mr. Speaker, here’s some of the work that we’re trying to improve within the health care system and where it has real benefits. For example, in St. Joseph’s Hospital in Estevan, prior to some lean work, 40 per cent of patients did not receive the standard of care to prevent blood clots within 12 hours of admission. Today 100 per cent of patients receive that. Mr. Speaker, an example like that, there are more than 33,000 extra in-patient days that could be avoided if we do better work like this, Mr. Speaker. We think we’re on the right path.

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

Ministry of Education Sector Plan

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier’s lean project isn’t just confined to health care. We’ve learned that it’s taking over education as well. Educators, parents, and students are concerned about that because they’ve heard and witnessed about the impact of lean in its deployment on our health care system. The deputy minister of Education, who’s also the deputy minister of lean, says the education sector strategic plan, which we understand will be released tomorrow, is a kaizen, lean-based plan.

To the Education minister: what guarantees can he give educators, teachers, students that the lean project will not hurt our already strained education system?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, what’s being rolled out will be the first time ever that we’ve had an education system with a sector plan that was actually developed by the sector. Our partners in education are excited about the direction that it’s going. We chose, Mr. Speaker, to put things on pause. We engaged the services of Russ Mirasty and Patricia Prowse before we went ahead with things. And, Mr. Speaker, the things that we’re going ahead with are things that we are genuinely excited about.

And, Mr. Speaker, I’d urge the member to stay tuned and see what’s going to happen tomorrow. It will be a good day for education in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The strategic plan presentations given to school boards were riddled with Japanese terminology and even titled hoshin kanri. School board documents show that the government said the sector plan was supposed to be released on budget day, but it wasn't. In committee the deputy minister for lean and Education said this, quote: This government took the time to remove Japanese terminology from the plan. I quote:

That feedback has been received. So we do refer to it as our sector plan. This hoshin kanri title is really a description of a methodology that's lean, but wherever possible we're going to be anglicizing that language and providing it in plain English.

To the minister: is that why the sector plan has been delayed, the release, that they simply wanted to wash the Japanese language and put it in plain English? And did that delay also require a second printing of that plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a quote from Janet Foord, president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association: "We are proud of the fact that the 28 locally elected and autonomous public, separate, and Francophone school boards in this province have chosen to unanimously endorse this collaborative and historic undertaking."

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to read a letter from Gwen Dueck, executive director of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation: "Teachers see the need for strategic and long-term sector planning and applaud the ministry for leadership in this initiative." She also said, "It is with great appreciation that we write today on behalf of the 13,000 members of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to acknowledge the Ministry of Education's recent education and sector planning."

Mr. Speaker, we'll make no apologies for taking some additional time to make sure everything is exactly as it should be and to make sure that everything is the best it possibly can be. This is a plan that was developed by and for the sector. Those people that participated in it are excited about it, and it will serve the students of our province well because in our province it is students first, unlike . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No answer from the minister on two very straightforward questions.

What we do know is that government has spent already \$250,000 on lean consultants in education and that this government has already given \$180,000 to school divisions for lean work and that the new budget shows that the government plans to spend about \$370,000 more this year for lean consultants in school divisions. So just on consultants alone that's an \$800,000 tab, and we have no idea how much in total the Ministry of Education is spending on lean, including the training and staff time as well as the divisions' staff and

administration time.

Meanwhile this government has no new dollars for the basics in education or for implementing its strategic plan. To the minister: why is this government pouring so much money into the Premier's lean pet project while ignoring the basics that matter in classrooms across Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have given more funding to education than anyone else in the history of the province. Mr. Speaker, the members over there handled education by closing 176 schools.

Mr. Speaker, we've had an increase each and every year to the overall operating grant for school divisions, 26 per cent since November 2007. Pre-K [pre-kindergarten] total funding this year, \$1.8 billion. We built 40 schools. We announced that we've already built 20. We've got 18 that are joint use plus another two. Forty schools that we've built in this province, as opposed to closing 176.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent a record amount of money, \$700 million record capital investment, plus we've reduced property taxes by \$165 million. And we're going to take lessons from those people? Not in my lifetime.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, I guess the minister can say whatever he wants, all the rhetoric in the world, pretend what he likes, but you know, I think the students that are here and the teachers of this province know the reality.

That minister has been forcing reviews of lean across education. But it's apparent he didn't factor in a few important things like the cost of demoralizing the teaching professionals of this province or the cost of under-resourcing the classrooms, the cost of not providing the needed supports for learning — essentially, the cost of shortchanging the students of today. You know, and that seems like a whole lot of muda to me, Mr. Speaker. You know, wasted opportunity.

The apparent lean kaizen model might be a good fit for some businesses, but we're talking about education and that certainly brings some different challenges. And this project seems to distract from what matters. And unlike cars off a production line, we can't recall students 5 or 10 years down the road. We have one chance to get it right. To the minister: when will he get it right for the students today and stop ignoring the basics that matter in our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we've engaged with teachers. We've engaged with students. We've engaged with parents. And we're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk a lot about standardized testing. I'll tell you what their position was on standardized testing. I'm quoting from a note from the transition binder, and I'm going to read about it:

Since 2000, the Department has increased its large-scale assessment activity in Grades 4 through to 11 in response to increased emphases on accountability within public administration, and to Saskatchewan's standing on international . . . [tests]. The Assessment For Learning Program has grown from . . . 11,000 students' abilities annually to over 70,000 students in multiple grade levels . . .

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the students and teachers in this province: you want to talk about standardized testing, you want to talk a bad record, talk about the people over there.

You want to talk about somebody that listens, that cares, that's going to do right for them, talk to the people on this side of the House because we've built 40 schools. We've increased funding to record levels. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of work left to do but none that we're taking lessons from the people over there.

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

Provision of Home Care

Ms. Chartier: — We learned three weeks ago that the home care program in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region is stretched so thin it is not able to meet the needs of new clients and it's cutting services for existing clients. At that time, the Premier, the Health minister, and the Rural Health minister were all caught off guard, and they were unaware of the major capacity challenges in the home care program here in our capital city. Hopefully that was a wake-up call for them and they are now paying more attention to this vital service.

To the minister: what is the current status of the home care program here in Regina?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what the region had identified back several weeks ago is that no new people would be turned away from home care, that they would have to ensure that all those individuals that were in home care still needed the level of care that they did need to be provided, and they'd also be prioritizing those that would be of an urgent nature.

Within the first week of that issue being raised and that plan being put forward by the region, I can say that within the first couple of days, 17 new people had been already enrolled into home care, 10 within the first three days. Ten of those people had already had service accessed to them.

They are still working through whether or not this is just a temporary issue or whether or not they are going to have to expand some of the services or perhaps bring on some additional staff, but they are working through that. They currently are working through that process.

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

Ms. Chartier: — We keep hearing from people who require home care services but are being negatively affected by the capacity challenges. We hear about people having their existing services cut back significantly, and we hear about people having to wait far too long to access services.

To the minister: how many people have had their vital home care services cut back, and how many people are waiting to access home care services now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We will be able to provide that information to the member later this afternoon at committee. I think that's probably a good opportunity for us to discuss this issue and provide an up-to-date report from the regional health authority.

Mr. Speaker, we are certainly working with the regional health authority. The region's working with their home care staff to alleviate the situation, making a determination of whether or not this is a new norm that is being set for the region or whether or not this is just a temporary situation that they can work through.

As well what we are doing in this budget is providing dollars for the Home First/Quick Response program, annualizing it for \$4.5 million, as the Finance minister has indicated, to annualize it in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. We think that that will be a benefit in the long term for those individuals that do need it.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 129, *The Executive Government Administration Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee on the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill now be read a third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 129, *The Executive Government Administration Act* and that the bill now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 129 — *The Executive Government Administration Act*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 129, *The Executive Government Administration Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 130, *The Executive Government Administration Consequential Amendments Act, 2013*, a bilingual bill without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?

I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill 130, and that the bill now be read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested to waive leave of consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 130, *The Executive Government Administration Consequential Amendments Act, 2013* and that the bill now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 130 — *The Executive Government Administration Consequential Amendments Act, 2013****Loi de 2013 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Executive Government Administration Act***

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move this bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 130, *The Executive Government Administration Consequential Amendments Act, 2013* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answers to questions 331 to 339.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 331 through 339.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Improving the Lives of People With Disabilities

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud and honoured to rise and speak today. And at the end of my comments, I will be moving that this Assembly commend the government's initiatives to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for someone with a disability to live, work, and raise a family. I'm honoured for a number of reasons and I'm happy to discuss these initiatives because they are a genuine commitment of this government to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight the excellent work of the present Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] in her past role as the minister of Social Services. While she was minister of Social Services, she helped lay the groundwork for the elimination of the 440-person wait-list and the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to look back to October 28, 2008, and reference or quote the following, this from the past minister of Social Services:

This is the largest investment in the history of the province to support people with intellectual disabilities. Over four years, we will be able to help more than 400 people who are currently on a waiting list for new or expanded services. Support for people with disabilities is a priority for this government, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Saskatchewan benefits from the province's prosperity.

She went on to announce:

. . . that the government is committed to developing a new income assistance plan specifically for people with disabilities, separate from the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. The first phase of the new plan will be initiated in 2009-10 [she said].

In response to requests from the disability community, we will implement a separate assistance plan for people with disabilities beginning in the next budget year . . . We will be consulting with stakeholders in the design and rollout of this program.

That's a quote, Mr. Speaker, from 2008. We all know how that ended up. And especially, as the Premier has said on many occasions, the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

[11:00]

I will speak further on engaging the disability community, but for now I just wanted to highlight the premise of a promise made and a promise kept.

Where else has the government reached a target? So I wondered what happened to the 440 wait-list and the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program. I hate pretending to be prophetic; they should all hang out their shingles as fortune tellers. Well how amazing, or maybe this is not so amazing. It is simple as keeping a promise.

Let's talk further about the 440 wait-list. In the NDP's last 10 years in government, well that was a dark and cold period, almost glacial, but regardless, Mr. Speaker, the NDP in their last 10 years served 99 new clients. That's right, 99 in 10 years. As a comparison, our government eliminated the so-called 440 wait-list and they went further by providing services to another 300 clients. Now if my math is correct, that's 740. So that's 7.4 times better in three less years.

I don't want to call this a wait-list now, so what do you call it when no one is on it? I guess we could hire more paleontologists tasked with a job of digging up more NDP programmatic inefficiencies. Oh, the bones of NDP programs past. So we bury wait-lists and the members opposite talk about the environmental record and the carbon footprints. Sorry, we won't apologize for burying wait-lists. No, when these NDP programmatic graveyards turned into oil, now that would at least be useful — a big, orange, viscous blob.

We will not create another wait-list like the one we inherited in 2007. We'll identify the client's needs as they come forward and plan with the client, family, and community to meet those

needs. There will always be work to do as we work with families and individuals with disabilities to plan their future needs.

But here are some highlights, Mr. Speaker. Here are some highlights in terms of the 440 wait-list. We have achieved a significant milestone in the development of new services for Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities. We worked with families, communities, and agencies to identify funding to support 440 people with intellectual disabilities and developed specialized residential and day programs. Through collaboration with people with disabilities, their families, CBOs [community-based organization], and approved homes, services are in place or in development for 440 people who are waiting for specialized residential and day programs to meet their needs. There will always be work to do as we work with families and individuals with disabilities to plan for future needs and forecast those needs, and to budgeting for future years. Over 300 people on top of the 440 already served, Mr. Speaker, and I've already said that.

Here is some history, Mr. Speaker. From 2007 and 2008 to today, funding has increased by over 100 per cent — that's 105 per cent — \$34.7 million to \$71.2 million for group homes for people with intellectual disabilities. Total group home spaces for people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan has increased by 19 per cent. Funding has increased by 78 per cent for day programs for people with intellectual disabilities, and funding for supported independent living for people with intellectual disabilities has increased by 65 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Now talk about the torch being passed seamlessly from minister to minister of Social Services. The current minister ensured that the promise at the end of the 440 wait-list was complete, and didn't stop there. Her ministry went further. As I said earlier, if there was a service delivery wait-list, and there isn't, it would have been at least 740. So what is it?

Clients are being served. Their needs are being addressed. The services are flexible and timely. That is thanks to the current Minister of Social Services and the officials of the ministry. She needs to be commended for the commitment and integrity to do the right thing for people with disabilities and their families. So the needs are being addressed on an ongoing basis. I guess zero translates to zero in other languages as well, including Japanese. As Brooks would say from *The Shawshank Redemption*, easy peasy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about a couple of other things, particularly the issue of paratransit as well as the disability strategy. I'd like to begin by providing an overview of paratransit services. Our government has maintained that we want to be the best place in Canada to live for people with disabilities. We've increased funding to paratransit services by 34 per cent since 2008. Paratransit funding for 2014-15 is \$3.537 million. That's \$2.987 million for operating, \$550,000 for capital. The amount budgeted for capital and operational funding will remain the same this year as last year.

In terms of operational funding, participating communities are reimbursed for their operations that occur in the year prior, and those grants are calculated using a formula that distributes

operating funding based on paratransit usage in their communities.

In terms of capital funding, 10 \$55,000 grants are being distributed this year to nine communities across the province. These grants have been finalized, and municipalities received notification on this April 8, 2014, by both email and hard copy. Those municipalities receiving funding this year, Mr. Speaker, and I'll list some of them. Well actually I'll list them all: Estevan, Maple Creek, Moose Jaw, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Regina, two to Saskatoon, Shellbrook, and Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca likes to grumble on a daily basis about two things, highways and then mocking when we say there's more work to be done. And I thank him for giving me something to talk about. Apparently he thinks there is such a thing as a permanent solution to things that experience wear and tear like highways and infrastructures.

I think we would all be interested in the member providing us with answers to the socialist utopia where nothing wears out and nothing requires maintenance. Wow, we're all ears. Please let us know where the static state exists. Oh I'm sorry. That's a vacuum. I apologize. Apparently he thinks we live in vacuums, and there's no maintenance required and things don't age and wear out.

How does this tie into the motion? Well because he also mumbles and grumbles about programmatic changes. Yes, there's more work to be done because the only constant in this world is change. I encourage the member to understand the world is not static; it is constantly changing.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the initiative I've been involved with as Legislative Secretary for disability issues. It is to assist the development of a comprehensive disability strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the disability strategy was put forward in order to help make Saskatchewan the best province for people with disabilities to live. It was to provide support for children and adults with physical, sensory, psychiatric, cognitive, and intellectual disabilities. We will also recognize the role of family and caregivers when identifying needed changes in support and priority areas as identified in the Saskatchewan plan for growth. Those areas are housing, transportation, employment, education, support for caregivers, and a community inclusion.

The citizen consultation team, consisting of members of the disability community, has been appointed to consult with Saskatchewan people about disability issues. Our government is committed to making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for persons with disabilities to live. Together with the disability community and all Saskatchewan citizens, the province is developing a comprehensive disability strategy to make that a reality.

Led by the Ministry of Social Services, the development of the strategy will be broad-based and will seek input from: the public, members of the disability community, government ministries, as well as community-based organizations, employers, municipalities, school divisions, post-secondary

institutions, and health authorities.

A citizen consultation team consisting of members of the disability community has been appointed to consult with Saskatchewan people about disability issues. The team will begin engagement consultations in the spring of 2014. So they're actually beginning April 28th in Swift Current, and they're going for the whole month of May. And that can be found, those disability strategy consultations can be found on the Facebook page right now, Sask Disability.

The citizen consultation team is a 15-member team. It was announced in October of 2013, and it's meeting monthly to develop a plan for public consultation taking place, as I said, this spring. Information collected through this process will be used to inform the development of the disabilities strategy . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, we did just meet yesterday.

To date the group has focused on the framework for the engagement consultation, which includes the definition of disability as well as the draft vision, principles, and values to be considered by the public during the public engagement consultations. Following the public consultations, the citizen consultation team will work with government to develop recommendations that will form the basis for the provincial disability strategy. In terms of engagement and consultation, the citizen consultation team is actively working on the public consultation plan which will include 15 public forums across the province. It has been determined that the forums will take place, as I said, in late April and early May 2014, with the first forum to be held April 28th, 2014, in Swift Current.

I'd like to take an opportunity to highlight some of the members of the citizen consultation team because they are an absolutely amazing group. Amy Alsop is the citizen consultation Co-Chair. Amy is a Regina woman with a vision disability, and she's got experience advocating to persons with disabilities in the workplace and very involved in SaskTel's internal advocacy group, SaskTel Employee Network on Disability. She's also a Paralympian, two-time Paralympian in Sydney and in Athens.

Merv Bender, executive director of Prince Albert and District Community Service Centre. He's also instrumental in the development of SAID.

Larry Carlson is a Regina man with an acquired brain injury, a retired provincial civil servant working in the field of disabilities his entire life in terms of special education. Roger Carver, a Saskatoon man who is deaf, provided leadership and advocacy training to deaf communities across Canada. Dawn Desautels, Dawn is a mother of an adult son with a developmental disability, lives in Shaunavon where she is a board member of the Cypress Hills Ability Centres.

Carole Eaton, retired psychologist living in Regina, spent her entire life working with psychiatric disabilities. Lynette Griffin, working on the paratransit for the city of Regina. Charmaine Landrie, a Lloydminster woman employed as a consultant of the cognitive disability strategy. Andrea Lavallee, whose son Max has spinal muscular atrophy type II, lives in Meadow Lake. Michael Lavis, Regina man, founding member and the executive director of Creative Options Regina.

Marie Lindenschmidt, a mother of a child with autism. Laurie McSymytz, resident worker in Wynyard working with the paraplegic association. Eugene Paquin, who has also worked with the United Way and disability community. Shaun Soonias, who works with FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] on the disability file. And Ian Wilkinson, a Saskatoon resident, father of a child with autism.

Mr. Speaker, there's outstanding examples of the best in the province that are deserving of our recognition and support. We look forward to the work on the public consultations. I'd like to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Social Services for her help. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly commend the government's initiatives to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for someone with a disability to live, work, and raise a family.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Coronation has moved:

That this Assembly commend the government's initiatives to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for someone with a disability to live, work, and raise a family.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into this debate on this motion. And of course this is like a rerun from a year ago when we had almost exactly the same motion with the government congratulating itself yet again. It seems to be a habit of this government to want to congratulate itself before the work is done.

And we see areas of concern, and we know there are areas of concern. In fact the member actually alluded to some of those that we'll talk more about. But just the arrogance and the out-of-touch way this government is . . . of what's really happening in this province. And I lost count. I know at least four times the member over there has said, there's more work to do. There's more work to do. You know, it reminds me when I used to say that, and my mom gave me this little round thing. And I said, so what is it? A round TUIT. When will they get around to it?

[11:15]

You know, here you are . . . Here they keep saying, more work to do. Whenever something comes up, oh yes, we'll get to it. There's more work to do. There's more work to do. And they come up with excuses. But at the same time, the same time, Mr. Speaker, they want to congratulate themselves and take this 75-minute debate to congratulate themselves on a job well done.

And of course last year when they announced the complete elimination of the 440 list, people were amazed. People were amazed and actually came to this House and said, hey, what about me? And then, you know, then they brought it out they had more work to do, more work to do. We'll touch base with you.

But that's not good enough. That's simply not good enough, is it? You know, the slick promotion, this catchy phrase of 440, we know that's simply not true. There are people out there who need support. And while this government is busy congratulating itself, there is absolutely more work to do, more work to do. And whether it's Craig Bayliss and others who've come forward to this House, concerned that they're being shoved aside, shoved aside, there is work to do.

And so while we look forward to that, and we look forward to the disability strategy . . . It was announced a year ago. That was part of the discussion. Here we are a year later. They're going to get into the consultations. That will take another year. And this will take time that go into the election campaign.

And we know for many of the folks over there, the campaign has already started. It's two years into it. We know that the Premier has been nominated. And I understand two or three have been nominated, and a couple now are suggesting they're not going to run. So this is part of the campaign that we're into right now.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk about some of the issues that are facing people in Saskatchewan. And we know paratransit, and the member alluded to the good work that they've done. I hope he's not saying that that's the end of the line, that there's nothing more to be done. We know for example that there is. This is an issue that needs attention.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from a story from *metro* Saskatoon, "The realities of life if you're disabled in Saskatchewan and depend on Paratransit." And I quote:

You have to wait hours for a ride to the grocery store and you've missed several appointments this year. You have trouble finding a job because you don't have regular transportation. For the events that you are able to go to, you have to leave early and sometimes you are denied a ride outright. There's a reservation option, but that can only be booked a week in advance.

So this is a problem. This is a problem.

And he talks about the report that they've done about paratransit here in Saskatchewan and how it's really difficult to use this. And I quote, and the writer is Hilary Nelson, and she writes and I quote:

The system is under stress, and the denial rate is rising. An acceptable denial rate is one to two per cent in Canada; Regina's current denial rate is 9.2 per cent. Seeking to lower the denial rate by questioning eligibility before one is able to request a ride is not fair play.

What this is causing is hundreds if not thousands of people being denied the ability to get on paratransit. This is a crisis. This is a crisis. So they should be dealing with it right away. Right away this needs to be dealt with.

And, Mr. Speaker, as the Social Services critic, we have raised issues and we will continue to raise issues around the concern of children in care. And we've seen the cut in salaries that we see in this budget and we wonder what does that mean. We've

not seen a plan. There's been no plan by this government to put forward, what do they really mean to help children in care?

And we know, Mr. Speaker, and this is not a record to be proud of, of that side over there, that in just the last four years, 81 vulnerable children have died, have died — 81 deaths since just 2010. So while they're putting this forward, this resolution forward, there are issues. There are issues that we need to attend to as a legislature, Mr. Speaker, and that's really something that we should be debating. That's what we should be debating here, Mr. Speaker.

And we can go on and on. And you know, I raised this in the House last night. And time goes by so quickly in this debate, but you know while we've been attending to . . . And I want to say congratulations to DISC [Disability Income Support Coalition] and the advocates who have been working so hard on behalf of folks who are living with disabilities, and I think that's important. But we had questions last night about families and children who are on social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you know, but today there are over 12,000 kids going to school — I hope they're in school — going to school in Saskatchewan whose family are on social assistance. And that has been the average, floating around 12,000 or 12,000-plus for the last five years. Children going to school because . . . and they're living in families with social assistance. That is something that we need to focus on. We need to focus on, other than congratulating ourselves, on what the government really should be doing, really should be doing. It's part of their work. It's what they should do, and they should just step up and do the right thing.

So here we have over 12,000 kids who are in families who are being supported by social assistance. That is a travesty. And that is something that should be done, and I don't see any effort. I don't see a plan by this government to really tackle, to tackle those issues, to really tackle those issues. And here we have, continuing with the families, how many families? Well we know it's been well over 5,000 families for the last five years, for the last five years. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that needs to be addressed.

And I want to, and I know the other side likes to bring forward letters and quotes in support of the good work that they've done. And fair enough. But you know, really I think at some point we really need to talk about what's really important to people in Saskatchewan who are in vulnerable situations. And the big picture really would be a poverty elimination or a poverty reduction strategy. And I think this government really should be taking a look at this. And this is what we really should be focusing on. And part of that would be the disability strategy, but you've got to have the big picture first.

And I want to quote from the editorial from *The StarPhoenix*, March 15th, 2014. And I hope the government's been paying attention to this, but what is said here is:

What at first glance may seem to be a couple of disparate news items identify a larger issue of the provincial government allowing ideology to impede sound public policy that would save taxpayers money over the long term.

The first involves the government's reaction to the Cost of Poverty campaign launched by a coalition of Saskatchewan community groups, which notes that poverty ends up costing Saskatchewan's economy \$3.8 billion a year, including \$420 million in health care alone.

And then it goes on and talks about how:

Saskatchewan and British Columbia are now the only provinces without a poverty reduction strategy after Alberta, long the standard bearer for personal responsibility, recently adopting a comprehensive policy. Yet Social Services Minister June Draude insists that Saskatchewan's growth in average weekly earnings and its low unemployment rate somehow point to a superior anti-poverty strategy in this province where a tenth of the population is impoverished.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is so many issues that need addressing, but we need to have a bigger picture. And while DISC and many have worked so hard on the SAID program, and that deserves a lot of merit, we need a bigger picture answer from this government. So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of this motion. In fact I will have a lot of questions about it.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — I'm very happy to have the opportunity to enter into this debate. And it's really important that we talk about the attitude that prevails in this House. We talk a lot and we say a lot, there's more work to be done. And we do that because the work is ongoing. There's a reason that there's, you know, 48 over here and not so much over there, is because we know there's work to be done, and we're willing to start getting that work done and moving forward.

We talk about attitude. So our government says that it is our goal to make Saskatchewan the best place to live in Canada for people with disabilities, and this is just another step towards that goal. We'll talk about their attitude. So their last minister of Social Services, when asked about intellectually disabled people being put in jails, he simply noted, he simply noted that it doesn't fall under his portfolio. Attitude. Attitude.

We have a disability strategy. We talk about more work to be done. They sit there, they roll their eyes, wave their arms when we say there's more work to be done. Do they really think that the work is done or will be done? It is ongoing. There are people born that need our help every day. So instead of putting them on a list and letting them languish on that list, we put forward strategies to get rid of that list.

Now instead of making a list of people we have to help, we go ongoing. So let's go back to '08:

In response to requests from the disability community, [so we consult] we will implement a separate assistance plan for people with disabilities beginning in the next budget year.

And that was from our former minister of Social Services. "We will be consulting with stakeholders in the design and rollout of

this program.” So that’s our previous Social Services minister. So that’s August ’08.

November ’09, this is part of the strategy. We’re moving forward. We talked about the SAID program:

More than 3,000 people who were eligible for the new program have been invited to enrol by the Ministry of Social Services, as part of the program’s implementation, with the first benefits paid for in the month of December. So far, more than 2,000 people have already enrolled in that new program.

So that’s 2009. So that’s about a year later, a little over a year later. So that’s part of the strategy. That’s moving forward.

Are we done? No, we’re not done. There’s more work to be done. So by 2012, because there’s more work to be done:

As of June 1st, 2012 the eligibility criteria for the SAID program is based on a new disability impact assessment administered by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. This assessment process is used to determine if applicants who are living independently meet the criteria of having a significant and enduring disability.

So does that mean the work is done? No, we’re looking into it because we know the work isn’t done. There’s more work to do. “On June 1st, 2012 SAID program rules were expanded to allow individuals with disabilities who live independently to apply for this program.” Why? Because the work wasn’t done. As we consult with the stakeholders we have to actually expand what the program does.

Now the member, when he stood up before, says we like to stand up and congratulate ourselves before the work is done. It’s not congratulating ourselves. It’s just pointing out that we’re making progress. The work isn’t done; that’s why there’s more work to do. It will be a sad day when those guys decide, on the other side, that the work is done. It’s not going to be done. Why? Because the province is growing. Because every day people who need help. There’s more work to do.

So we like to quote other people because it’s not about us. It’s about what the people say about us. It’s the people of Saskatchewan that we need to listen to. So I’m going to talk about some folks from my old hometown down in Estevan. And this is when we announced the elimination of the 440-person wait-list. That was allowed to grow over 10 years. I just shake my head at that, that their attitude goes back to, it doesn’t fall under his portfolio. Like that’s just, I can’t believe that somebody actually said that.

[11:30]

So in Estevan, Carol Cundall said when we announced the elimination:

We were honoured to have . . . a role in this partnership to benefit people with intellectual disabilities in our community and our province. I’m proud to say we were part of a team that helped develop solutions that enabled everyone on the waitlist to be supported in their own

communities.

“When the government announced the 440 wait-list initiative, I was given . . .” And this is a new quote. I apologize for those in Hansard. So the new quote from Rosemary Fenrich is:

“When the government announced the 440 waitlist initiative, I was given hope for my son’s future,” a parent of an individual served by the initiative, and a board member of Prairie Branches Enterprise Inc. of northwest Saskatchewan. “. . . the government built group homes for rural CBOs like Prairie Branches, has allowed my son to move out into his own home within a short distance from our town. This alleviates stress and anxiety not only for my son, but for our family as it enables us to visit him and be there for him as needed.”

So as opposed to, that it doesn’t fall under his portfolio. And when actually confronted, and I want to read the actual, the quote here, when confronted about people with intellectual disabilities being placed in psychiatric wards or jail, then-minister Yates said, and I quote, “There is no mandate under the law to provide services for intellectually disabled people.”

So there’s no mandate under the law. So there has to be a law to do the right thing? It’s the right thing to do to take care of these people. You don’t allow a list to grow from zero to 440. And you know, it comes up over 300 people more than that 440 were served. And since that time — I don’t have the numbers — there are more people being served. Why? Because there’s more work to be done.

You know, it’s sad. And it’s really sad that they really feel that someday the work’s going to be done. It will be . . . I can’t even think of that, that they actually think that the work’ll be done. If you don’t do the work, I guess it’s done.

So this is not an easy process. Takes a while. Funding has increased by over 100 per cent — 105 per cent — 34.7 million to 71.2 million for group homes for people with intellectual disabilities. Total group homes for people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan has increased by 19 per cent, from less than 900 to well over 1,000. Funding has increased by 98 per cent, 14.5 million to 28.7 million. Funding for supported independent living people with intellectual disabilities has increased by 65 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it’s my pleasure to wade into this debate today. It’s interesting, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow just made the comment that this motion isn’t about them, Mr. Speaker. But it very clearly is:

That this Assembly commend the government’s initiatives to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for someone with a disability to live, work, and raise a family.

This is totally about them, Mr. Speaker. This is about some serious back-patting going on. I think the members opposite are going to be needing to see a physical therapist, a chiropractor, acupuncture, something like that, Mr. Speaker, because they are spending an inordinate amount of time doing some serious self-congratulations and back-patting, Mr. Speaker.

And it is not the role of government to pat themselves on the back. Admittedly, they say there is more work to be done and that work will always continue. But it is not the job of government to say, aren't we the best, Mr. Speaker. If you're doing such a bang-up job, let people who are being served sing your praise, Mr. Speaker. It is not the job of government to sing your own praises, Mr. Speaker, especially when there are so many vulnerable people who are still underserved in this province. I've got a list of many people who would say Saskatchewan isn't the best place in Canada for someone with a disability to live, work, and raise a family.

I'd like to draw your attention to some written questions I asked this fall, Mr. Speaker, around community living service division clients. Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Health how many clients of the CLSD or community living service division are waiting for a group home placement, are residing in mental health in-patient facilities in Saskatoon as of October 1st, 2013. Mr. Speaker, five individuals as of October 1st, 2013 had been staying in the Dubé Centre in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Dubé Centre is an acute psychiatric hospital. It is a place where people go when they are in crisis, Mr. Speaker. It is not a home. The reality is the people who visit Dubé, there's many, many different reasons why people are there. But there are people who are in psychosis, Mr. Speaker, who are experiencing suicidal ideation. It is not a home. A home isn't a place where you get exactly the same meal every Monday, every Tuesday, where you don't get any residential supports, Mr. Speaker. The Dubé Centre is an acute psychiatric hospital.

The fact that there were community living service division clients staying, long stays, Mr. Speaker. One of the longest clients as of October 1st of last year was since March 6th, 2012. And from my understanding, he is still there. So he's just spent his second year . . . Anniversary is not the word; it's nothing to celebrate, Mr. Speaker. But this individual has been in the Dubé Centre for two years in an acute psychiatric facility, Mr. Speaker, not a residential facility. And that gives me some concern, Mr. Speaker. These are community living service division clients.

The reality is Valley View is closing, and we need to build or this government needs to build some really great community supports for people who will be moving into the community, which is absolutely imperative. And I know there's been some great work done with a committee last year. I haven't been the Social Services critic for some time now, so I haven't been following quite as closely.

But I do have some concerns when we have some individuals who have some of those complex needs who are not being served right now. So I worry about, I have some very serious concerns about people who will be moving from Valley View into the community, that they will not get the services that they need. We have people who today, right now on this point in

time, Mr. Speaker, who are not getting the services they need. These are people with complex issues who have some kind of cognitive impairment but also face some possible, some mental health challenges.

But the Dubé Centre is not the place, if you're living with a disability, to call home, Mr. Speaker, and that is the cold, hard reality that we have. The latest numbers I have are five individuals, but one person has been there for more than two years, Mr. Speaker, in a hospital. That is not the place for people to call home, Mr. Speaker. So that is one group of people who would not be saying Saskatchewan is the best place to live and work with a disability.

I think it's important to talk about FASD, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The reality is the numbers, from my understanding in Saskatchewan and in Canada, we don't keep precise numbers particularly because there are some stigma around alcohol consumption and pregnancy, and those are hard numbers to track. But the number that is suggested by experts is that there's 10 in every 1,000 people who are living with FASD, Mr. Speaker.

So some of the . . . Last year, actually it was almost two years ago I had the opportunity to attend the conference that the Ministry of Social Services was a sponsor or supporter of as well as community organizations, had the opportunity to listen to Myles Himmelreich — my apologies if I'm not pronouncing his name correctly. And he was quite an amazing individual, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

He is an adult living with FASD, an incredibly articulate man. But the one thing that he really emphasized is that when you're living with FASD as an adult, you really need the supports. You can live and you can work and you can lead a full and productive life, but you need the supports to ensure that you can do that. You need the reminder to pay your rent. You need the reminder sometimes to do all those things that we take for granted, Mr. Speaker, because of the damage that has happened to your brain because of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. You need some additional supports, Mr. Speaker.

And the reality is here in Saskatchewan there's been a huge focus on prevention which . . . I would not take anything away from prevention. Prevention is absolutely critical. But we have a whole host of people who are living with FASD, Mr. Speaker. We have the cognitive disability strategy here in Saskatchewan which does in fact provide support to people with FASD, but it's not without some huge challenges. The cognitive disability strategy requires that you have someone manage the resources that it provides, and often adults with FASD are left to manage these resources on their own. They don't have other individuals to support them or help them, Mr. Speaker.

So the reality is, the reality is people living with FASD — adults, young adults, adults — do not have the supports that they need. There is a program at CUMFI [Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.] in Saskatoon, which is in my constituency coincidentally, but it often has a wait-list. There was funding that was targeted to health regions but it's for women at risk of having children with FASD, although many of them have FASD themselves. And that was targeted to prevention. So again I wouldn't take anything away from prevention but we

have a whole host of people who could be living a much fuller, more productive life if they were given the proper supports. And so I know that there are many families and many individuals who are impacted by FASD and are not getting the services that they need, Mr. Speaker, to lead that full and productive life. So they wouldn't think that the back-patting is something that would be appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

I think I would be remiss if I didn't touch on paratransit. I had the opportunity last summer to meet with three individuals in particular who really expressed some concerns about paratransit. Well they talked about the importance of paratransit, how people living with a disability really rely on it, that you rely on it to get to work, to get to job interviews, to get to doctor appointments. But you have to . . . It's like planning a vacation, booking your trip to your doctor, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have to plan very far in advance because there are such limited services. That is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

You want people . . . We want to support community inclusion and the opportunity for people to live the lives that we all deserve to live, Mr. Speaker. And for community inclusion to work, you need to have the supports in place.

Paratransit, as I said, is so vital to so many people living with disabilities. It provides independence and it is the . . . Independence, Mr. Speaker, is the basis for dignity. And I think this government . . . I have to point out that here in Regina that there are literally more than 1,000 people being turned away, as many as . . . pardon me, as many as 1,000 being turned away in a month, in a city like Regina. People are not getting the services that they need to live the full lives that they need to. Inclusion requires support, whether it's an adult living with FASD who needs some daily or weekly support, some reminders in life, or it's the person with a disability who needs to get to work and has to book paratransit.

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

[11:45]

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the 10 minutes the member from Riversdale . . . I didn't quite catch if she actually supported or didn't support the motion. I wasn't . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you very much. I'm glad to hear that she supports that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I've heard from the two members over there is, consistently they say, oh you're patting yourselves on the back. Look how good you think you are. Mr. Speaker, I stand here as a parent, as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], as a father, to say I am extremely proud of our record that we have done on the SAID program and working with people with disabilities across our province.

They are arrogantly, stubbornly, and dismissively not looking back at their record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because their record was absolutely pitiful in this area. From 1992 on until 2007, they let the so-called 440 list go from zero to 440. I'd like them to be able to stand up and answer the questions on how that happened.

The member from Lakeview I believe was the minister of Health during that time. How did that happen under his record? You know why it happened, Mr. Speaker? Again my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow said this. This is their attitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Kevin Yates: "There is no mandate under law to provide services for intellectually disabled people." That is absolutely disgusting.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I haven't seen their attitude change at all. They think we've done absolutely nothing. We've put over 11,000 people . . . taken them out of the direct Social Services program and put them into the SAID program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What is coming out of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are different words — dignity, respect, equality. That's what we're hearing. And this isn't us saying it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the community saying it. I'll get into some quotes from people around the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it's absolutely shameful.

What I want to talk about obviously is very important to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when my daughter was born there were some issues. In 1999 when my daughter was born there was some problems with her. We had such a difficult process with dealing with the government, dealing with the region, the health region in Saskatoon. We had so many problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under their watch.

My daughter does have an intellectual disability. And the only reason and the only time we found services was talking to other parents. I couldn't get a straight answer from anybody within the health region. I couldn't get a straight answer from the minister of Health. Even though I wrote him a letter at that time, I got nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was absolutely shameful. I had to take my daughter out of province because they wouldn't even answer my letters on how I could get the services provided for my daughter at the time, my two-year-old daughter, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They have nothing to say about what we've done with people with intellectual and physical disabilities. We sit down with the stakeholders. We've talked to the former minister of Social Services, and now the Minister of Social Services sits down and talks to people.

I've called the Minister of Social Services on a Wednesday and said, I have somebody with an intellectual disability who's having some difficulty finding a location. She personally came up to Saskatoon with her chief of staff, met the person 48 hours later. That's the kind of service that we're getting from our Minister of Social Services.

I was absolutely proud. The father of this individual was in tears because he couldn't believe, first of all, that he got to me. He called me Wednesday morning. I got back to him Wednesday afternoon. Friday morning at 10 o'clock, we sat down in the Park Town Hotel in Saskatoon, and the Minister of Social Services was on top of it. As soon as the gentleman left, was on the phone dealing with the case. That is how this government reacts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very quickly.

Over there, they talk about it. They've talked about 100 things over there in the dark 16 years that they were running this province, but they never actually did anything, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. They did absolutely nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to touch on a couple of quotes and these again from the member from Riversdale. These aren't our quotes. We're not patting ourselves on the back. The difference with this government is we're talking to stakeholders. Then we actually do it. We actually listen to them. And then we take what our policy is and what their vision of what needs to happen. We put it together, and we make it happen.

The difference over there is all they did was listen. They did not do anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An. Hon. Member: — Didn't even listen.

Mr. Merriman: — Absolutely. The rare time that they actually did listen, it went in one ear and out the other like probably talking to a small child, just right through their ears, right over their head.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here's a quote from Amy McNeil, the executive director of SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres], in the *Leader-Post* of March 2014: "We are leading the country, if not North America and the world, in supports for people with disabilities, and it is something that the Saskatchewan Party should be very proud of."

Now these are the people that were working with people with disabilities back in the dark days. They saw no support, no funding, and couldn't get in to see the minister. They got run around from department to department, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they would never actually get any action.

The member from Saskatoon city centre, he asked us, what's your plan? Mr. Deputy Speaker, our plan's right here. I'd like to see where their plan is because they have nothing over there. They have no plan. I've seen no vision on a strategy for people with disabilities. I've seen no strategy for health care. I've seen nothing from them. All they're doing over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is slinging mud at us. They have nothing. It is very depressing.

You know what? Coming into politics I thought, you know what? The opposition would actually be challenging the government and coming up with some new ideas saying, maybe you should try this. Maybe you should look at that. I haven't heard anything from them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, absolutely nothing. It's very, very disconcerting when the opposition doesn't even have something to oppose what the government's ideals are. Here's our plan. Here's what we're doing. What are they doing over there? Nothing. That leader's been over there for over a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, hasn't done a thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All they do is continually cast stones at us. It is absolutely depressing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the stats. I only have a few minutes. We started out with a goal on the SAID program to put 8,000 people on. That quickly went to 10,000. Now we're over at 11,000 people that are on the SAID program. Why is this happening, is because we keep expanding the scope of the SAID program because that's what the stakeholders tell us, is we started off with a great idea. We have

something that . . . And you know what? There's this other group over here that we need to look at, so we include them in there. So our numbers are going up.

And it's absolutely encouraging to me again as a father that we are listening to the stakeholders. We're not dictating this top down, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is what the stakeholders and the people in the community are talking to us about, and we are reacting. We're reacting very quickly. We react on our vision 2020. We also react within our budget every year. We make sure that we're looking at everything, working with people in the autistic community to be able to help them to be productive, work within the environment that they want to work, and become part of the economic engine within Saskatchewan.

We're tapping into this potential of people with disabilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know what? I commend the Minister of Social Services for absolutely having that come through and make sure that we are tapping in, not just the people abroad, but we're tapping into our Aboriginal community. We're tapping into the people with disabilities because we need the labour force here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to touch on quickly why we need this, why we are able to do these programs. And as the members have said, and we will continue to say again, the job never is done. There is more work to do. The reason we have the ability to do the SAID program and other programs similar to it is because of growth, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The growth within this province allows us the ability to invest in people that are more vulnerable, and that includes people within our health care system, people with disabilities, certainly foremost our students, our youngest Saskatchewan people. This gives us the ability to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I am absolutely excited that we, as a government, are listening. Because if the point of the government . . . and they should know that better than anybody else. They stopped listening to the people of Saskatchewan. That's why they've got nine members over there and we've got 49 over here. Because the people of Saskatchewan know that we are listening to them. And we will continue to listen to them until our work is getting closer to completion. But it's going to continually evolve, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's going to keep going on and on because we don't stop listening. They stopped listening. That's why they think the work should be done. Oh well, we finished this one project and we'll move on. No. Absolutely not. The next project is coming, and the next project.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that I will conclude my remarks. But I want to say that absolutely I will be supporting the member from Coronation Park's motion and I'm very, very disappointed in the NDP that they're not supporting this motion. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to enter into the debate today. And I'm always amazed, Mr. Speaker, of how some of these first-term MLAs give us a history lesson on what happened in the NDP years, Mr. Speaker, which proves to me that they're simply reading

from notes that were handed to them. And some of their feigned compassion for the disabled people, Mr. Speaker, really goes to show the shallowness of the Saskatchewan Party government when it comes to dealing with the disability community, Mr. Speaker.

It is obvious that they don't know the history, Mr. Speaker, of what the governments in the past have done and compared to what this government's done. They simply have to simply read from their notes, Mr. Speaker, and that's really a crying shame.

So I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, a couple of things that I want to talk about. And first of all, we mentioned briefly about the paratransit challenges that the province currently, or the people within the disability community have.

At one time the city and the province shared the costs 50/50. It now appears that the province is reducing its share to 30 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And despite the demand for the paratransit services, Mr. Speaker, this government has not increased funding despite record revenues. We've seen that evidenced time and time again. We talk about record revenues, Mr. Speaker. Not record debt that the former NDP government struggled under, but record revenues. And yet you see the paratransit system being denied an increase in funding support, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the people with disabilities that need the paratransit support, Mr. Speaker, because these are people that have cognitive challenges; they have diabetes; they have physical challenges as well. And they use the paratransit system to access health services. They use the paratransit system to getting to work, to getting groceries, to paying bills. It really provides them with a valuable service for independence, Mr. Speaker. And yet we see this government callously cutting back. And it appears once again they're going back to 30 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk briefly about Valley View, Mr. Speaker. We're obviously hearing that the government now has a plan to shut down Valley View. Now we're watching very closely, Mr. Speaker, the transition from Valley View to community care for many of these people that have some severe challenges, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Moose Jaw was speaking about how, well actually glowingly praising his government about the services that they're providing the disability community. Now we're watching very closely what happens in Moose Jaw, the transition of those people that were in Valley View for years, how the community's going to adapt, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, what services and what support that member's going to ensure on behalf of the Sask Party government — that the transition is done with compassion, with care, and the proper support, Mr. Speaker. We're going to watch that very carefully, Mr. Speaker, because it's really important to see what kind of influence that they have on their government besides reading prepared notes for them and presented to them to read in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We're going to watch that very carefully.

We're going to watch, see what they do and the members, both members from Moose Jaw, you be very, very aware that we're

going to be watching how the transition works. And if there's problems, we're going to bring forward the issues that the people of Moose Jaw and the families affected by their decision to close Valley View and the transition process . . . We're going to be keeping a very, very close watch on what happens through the entire transition as Valley View starts to close, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Moose Jaw is going to be certainly put on notice today that we're going to be seeing whether he puts his money where his mouth is when it comes to supports for the community transition from Valley View, for the people impacted by the Valley View choice that the government has made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly turn my attention to northern Saskatchewan. And I want to pay attention to a good friend of mine who has many years of advocating for the disability community, Mr. Speaker. The gentleman's name of course is Gary Tinker.

Gary Tinker was born and raised in northern Saskatchewan, spent a few years out of the North, but Gary is originally from Pinehouse. And, Mr. Speaker, Gary has been a champion for the disability community in northern Saskatchewan for years. And one of the things that's really important is I want to pay tribute to Gary during this disability debate because Gary has not allowed his challenges to stop him from providing supports and raising awareness for many people in northern Saskatchewan that have disabilities.

Now Gary tells me that he wants to share, he wants to share the recognition with all the people that helped him. And for your information, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the staff over the years, the staff that have assisted Gary in getting the awareness campaign going and of course establishing the Gary Tinker Federation.

Now there's well over 600 people in northern Saskatchewan that have disabilities, and they have a small but dedicated staff that work very hard, people like Randy Stomp, Mr. Speaker, that has worked with the Gary Tinker Federation for years. Randy has been very vigilant and professional and dedicated to providing that kind of support, and I want to recognize Randy Stomp for that. They also have a new gentleman that joined their team by the name of Mike Taylor. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to also welcome Mike to the fold and to tell him that his work has not gone unnoticed.

[12:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at people like Randy Stomp who has worked many, many years, Mike Taylor who's brought his skills and his expertise to the federation, and you look at Gary Tinker himself, these are some of the individuals that work within the disability community in northern Saskatchewan. And I want to take the opportunity to recognize some of the work that he's done and his team has done.

Mr. Speaker, Gary Tinker started a walk in the northern part of Saskatchewan because he wanted to raise the awareness of some of the challenges I mentioned, of the disability community that really needed the support and really to be recognized for their extra challenges of having a disability in northern Saskatchewan. Because one of the most startling

comments that I ever heard him make is that it's difficult for many people to push a wheelchair down a gravel highway. And that's kind of the contrast that I would use.

We know that the disability community has challenges all day long. In northern Saskatchewan there are unique challenges, as I mentioned earlier, trying to push a wheelchair down a gravel road. So these are some of the things I think in northern Saskatchewan that we wanted to recognize, but we don't want to dismiss any of the challenges that the disability community faces all throughout the province.

So very quickly, Rachelle who is their administrator at their office, Mike Taylor, Randy Stomp, these are the team that Gary built and they've dedicated their lives to bringing awareness to the northern disability community in northern Saskatchewan. I know that when he started his walk on August 1st, 1989, Gary started this walk at 5 a.m., Mr. Speaker. And it's an amazing thing to watch. A young guy on crutches, you know, walking 650 kilometres, you know, just to raise awareness.

And if you can imagine walking 5 kilometres, imagine walking, with two crutches, 650 kilometres. So he started this walk on August 1st, 1989 at 5 a.m. and 79 days later he arrived here. He wants to recognize his home community of Pinehouse Lake. He wants to recognize the council and the people that helped him, people like their mayor, their former mayor Greg Ross; their past councillors, Ida Ratt-Natomagan; his brother Dominic Tinker; the administrator at the time, Lawrence Yew; Rene Rediron; Jim Marsh. These were the council members at the time that supported Gary in his endeavour.

And, Mr. Speaker, 25 years later . . . Well almost 25. He's going to be celebrating 25 years in the next couple of years. But well over 20 years ago, Gary started this walk. He brought recognition for the disability community to the North and their incredibly unique challenges. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's only fitting that I stand here today as the MLA for Athabasca to thank Gary and thank his team for doing the great work to raise awareness for disability issues in northern Saskatchewan.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A question for the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. I was listening carefully to his speech and I'm just curious if he could give us an update, details on what is the latest on the transition for the residents of Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw, for both the residents and the employees. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Wakamow . . . or Moose Jaw Wakamow. Sorry.

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes, Moose Jaw Wakamow. Well you know, as we've said, there's more work to be done. Both the member from Moose Jaw North and myself, we meet with Doug Conn and June Avivi, the Chairs of the transition committee probably every two, three months, whenever they sit

down and have time to actually sit down and give us a call. We're actually still in the process, and I'm sure as you're going over the budget you take a look at what we're doing, and how we're going forward with this. I do believe right now there's . . . At last count there was 89 individualized plans for the people that actually live out there. So it's continuing. That's the update.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the last budget, Mr. Speaker, the government budget, there was 446 million for people with disabilities, large increases across the board to all those important programs, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Centre at the end of his speech even admitted the SAID program is a very good program. But when it came time to vote for the budget, he voted against it. So was this just a case of old NDP style politics or does he really oppose the SAID program?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, it wasn't the first time I said that. It won't be the last time I said that. And I've said it for many years now, that there takes a lot of . . . It was a good thing, the SAID program. There are still issues that we need to deal with and I want to talk about this, Mr. Speaker, because this is why I voted against the budget, because I thought we needed a bigger strategy. And when I referred to *The StarPhoenix*, this is what they said. And I quote *The StarPhoenix*:

. . . it's hard to understand Ms. Draude's reluctance to develop a comprehensive strategy to . . . [eliminate] poverty when it could reduce her department's \$720 million assistance tab while also laying [out] the foundation to curb a health . . . budget that's eating up more than 40 per cent of the government's budget.

That's why I didn't vote for the budget.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Does the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow think it's acceptable that people with cognitive disabilities should be calling an acute psychiatric facility home?

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Let's talk about what the last NDP minister of Social Services actually had to say and what their plan is. "When confronted about people with intellectual disabilities placed in psychiatric wards or jails, then Minister Yates said, "There's no mandate under the law to provide services for intellectually disabled people." That in itself is just so dishonourable. We say there's more work to be done. We say we have to work on this.

You know, we talk about our record compared to your record. You guys get pretty upset about that. We want to talk about

what other people say as well. The people from the Disability Income Support Coalition actually sent us a letter. And just to say it quick: “We want to thank you for the commitment you have made to improve the quality of life for the people with disabilities for a long time.”

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP’s record on providing services for people with disabilities, quite frankly, was dismal. Dismal. We’ve heard the reason why, and it lies in their attitude, Mr. Speaker. And I’ll quote Mr. Yates again. “There is no mandate under law to provide services for intellectually disabled people.” Mr. Speaker, imagine. Imagine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Disability Income Support Coalition stated that the NDP’s disability framework, and I quote, “ignores the deep, pervasive, and lifelong poverty that so many people with disabilities face.”

After the election, Mr. Speaker, that same organization in a letter to Premier Wall stated, “We want to thank you for the commitment you have made to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.”

To the member from Athabasca, based on your last policy document, policy 11 — a.k.a. [also known as] the tree book, signed off by your former leader, and nowhere to be found — and your record in government, can we find your policy? Where can we find your policy and your plan for people with disabilities . . .

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things that we ought to know when we speak about the disability community overall is that it’s important to note that as we begin to look at the challenges that the disabled community has, it’s important that governments come along with a matrix of supports at the right time, at the right place — whether it’s a housing allowance, whether it’s a training allowance, or whether it’s a transition strategy, whether it’s further employment opportunities, or whether it’s even the paratransit supports.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do all we can through the matrix of supports for the disabled community to remove the barriers that they have to lead a productive life. We have to exhaust all avenues of support towards the disabled community to ensure that they’re able to reach their full productive life, Mr. Speaker.

Now I look back at the point. They’re slashing the paratransit program; they’re shutting Valley View down with no plan, Mr. Speaker, and they’re not recognizing northern disabled issues. Shame on them, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I’ve been

listening to the speeches today and the heckling from the other side. And they go on and on about the 440 wait-list be completely eliminated; it was completely eliminated. But last year we brought forward several people who had a different experience. A very different experience. And for example, the Birns family still didn’t have day programming. And I want to know if the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow agrees with Jennifer Birns, who came to the legislature with her brother, Devon, that it was disgusting for the government to say the family turned down an offer of services when it simply wasn’t true.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes. We talk about that 440 wait-list. We also talk about the extra, the extra 300 people to be done. And when . . . And he’s sitting there instead of listening to the answer. They ask a question and don’t listen.

We say there’s more work to be done and they get mad. They bring people forward and there’s more work to be done. We say there’s more work to be done. There’s a reason there’s nine over there. It’s because you thought the work was done. The work isn’t done. There will be people every year that come forward and move through the system and need our help. And do you know what? Like the member from Saskatoon said, we answer those questions. We work with those people. We do not ignore them. We sit there and we actually listen. We work with the people. And yes, there’s more work to be done.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government’s focus is on ensuring Saskatchewan is the best place in Canada for people with disabilities. Funding in all areas of support for disabilities has increased since taking power in 2007. The results of this effort were applauded by Amy McNeil, executive director of SARC, who was quoted saying, “We are leading the country, if not North America and the world, in supports for people with disabilities, and it’s something the Saskatchewan Party should be very proud of.”

To the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: if you can’t believe the majority in this room, when will you and your caucus open your hearts to what the majority of the disability community is saying about our government’s initiatives on disabilities?

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like that member to think about the individual who has lived in an acute psychiatric hospital for more than two years. The minister is laughing, Mr. Speaker. Someone on the community living service division responsibility list is living in an acute psychiatric facility for more than two years, Mr. Speaker. Don’t pat yourselves on the back until those people have a home that they can call a real place to live, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has worked hard to ensure Saskatchewan is the best place to live for people with disabilities. One of the ways our government has strived to achieve that status is the creation of the SAID program. We've added 11,900 people to the SAID program and will be putting up to 4,200 more per year in the pockets of recipients. Quite . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 606

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Chartier that **Bill No. 606 — *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's indeed my pleasure, my honour to be able to rise today to speak to this bill. We introduced the bill a while back here in the legislature, and I know it's not the first time a bill of this sort has been introduced by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. And certainly I think it's something that this government needs to take a careful look at, at least before dismissing it outright, and I'm going to speak to some of those reasons here today. It's Bill 606 and the name of the bill is *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

So in terms of preparing my comments today, I thought first of all I'd like to find out what is a bill of rights and why is that important. And sometimes we think about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. One of the most famous bill of rights that we would know about is the one in the United States Constitution.

But I go to my original source as always which is Wikipedia of course. And what we find out in Wikipedia is that a bill of rights is sometimes called the declaration of rights, and it's a list of the most important rights of citizens of a country. So typically when we see bills of rights, they're at the nationwide level, and the history of these bills comes through long struggles for people to get their rights and freedoms established in law. I'm going to quote from the Wikipedia page here.

It says:

The purpose of these bills is to protect those rights against infringement. The term "bill of rights" originates from England, where it refers to the Bill of Rights enacted by Parliament in 1689, following the Glorious Revolution,

asserting the supremacy of Parliament over the monarch, and listing a number of fundamental rights and liberties.

So what we see is that when we legislate these rights, Mr. Speaker, it gives them a weight and a significance that you can't get through policy statements or what this government has chosen to do, which is to describe some of these rights in a series of guidelines rather than legislating them.

Another page I went to on the Internet when I was looking for why we have bills of rights is I went to a page called Ask.com, and I asked, what is the purpose of a bill of rights? And I'll give you a quote there as well. It says:

The bill of rights serves to protect citizens from excess government power. It achieves this by ensuring that there is a separation of powers between differing government organs, increasing independence of the judiciary and providing the electorate representatives with more authority. The Bill of Rights is embedded in the constitution.

So that's in the American context, Mr. Speaker, but we could see a number of countries and throughout the ages we've had a number of bills of rights. And indeed probably the most famous bill of rights that we can cite is the Magna Carta which was signed in 1215. That's going way back, but that's where we start to see the rights of citizens vis-à-vis the monarchy being established.

We can go on. There's one from Hungary from the year 1222. The Golden Bull of 1222. We've got the Constitution of Greece in 1822. We've got the Canadian Bill of Rights that was established in 1960. The *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, 1990*. So there's all kinds of bills of rights that have been established.

What we also see in terms of bills of rights is a trend to specific special interest groups. And there are things like a consumer bill of rights, a homeless bill of rights, taxpayer bill of rights, veterans' bill of rights — and these bill of rights are ones that are legislatively introduced to protect certain interest groups.

So what we're asking for here is the ability to have that kind of bill of rights established for the vulnerable seniors here in Saskatchewan. This isn't anything new. It's been done in a number of other provinces. We know that Ontario has introduced such legislation, as has British Columbia. So this isn't a complete stretch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and in fact it's a trend I think that should be honoured and followed rather than avoiding it and just relying on guidelines.

I found some other information on the Internet on seniors and human rights. And what we're told on the Canadian Heritage home page in an archived document was that seniors make up 12 per cent of the total population. And ageism, which is discrimination against seniors, describes negative attitudes and stereotypes towards older people. It also refers to the tendency of constructing a society based on the assumption that everyone's young and thus failing to accommodate the needs of seniors.

So there's a number of international initiatives that have taken place to deal with the prejudice of aging, and also we know that

there are some legal rights and legal protections for seniors, specifically the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of course the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

So at a high level, we know that ageism is one of the areas that would be protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So there is a level of recognition there for seniors.

In Saskatchewan we don't have any such legislation. And this has been addressed recently by the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan who issued a final report after a long period of consultation on civil rights in Saskatchewan long-term care facilities. And I'd like to devote much of my comments today, Mr. Speaker, to some of the recommendations that were found in this report that was issued in May of 2013.

There is a number of recommendations that were made by the commission. I think Doug Surtees was the chairman who had the responsibility for the report. There are eight specific recommendations that the commission has made, and we're really hoping to see this government take that seriously and give the seniors the legislative and regulatory backup that they need in order to ensure that their rights are protected here in Saskatchewan and particularly in the special care facilities.

Just backing up a little bit, Mr. Speaker, the whole maze of care as people move towards their senior years is complex and perplexing I think, especially for people that are encountering it for the first time.

And you know, I have to say that even in my own family, we're experiencing some of that right at the moment. My father had serious surgery last Saturday and is recuperating now in the hospital. But the questions about care are now starting to surface. If he recovers well from the surgery, what next? And we know that he has a number of needs that now exist that didn't exist two weeks ago. So for our own family, it's wading through this maze of sort of what next and all the possibilities.

And we don't even know if he will be able to return home at this point. So all of a sudden we as a family are faced with this. He's 87 years old. He's been in good health right up till now. He's worried about his strawberries, to make sure that they get uncovered for the spring, you know, and he's worried about all these things. But he can't really even walk at this point, and there's a number of health issues that arise from the serious surgery that he had.

So I think when you're in that kind of situation as a family, especially for the first time, there's a lot of vulnerability and a whole bunch of mystery, especially to us, in terms of how do the doctors come into the hospital? When do they visit? When do you talk to the nurse? Are you allowed to, you know, bother them because we know how busy they are. And yet even last night when I was there and he was having trouble keeping things down, I didn't know if I should be calling the nurse or just deal with it myself. I was very glad to be there, but it's difficult. So I think as families face these kinds of crises in their own stories, and I know my story is not unique by any stretch of the imagination, how do we ensure that my old dad, his rights are being respected?

Often when you are in long-term care, you know, the dignities

of life are often removed for necessary reasons. And in terms of our bodily functions and all the things that happen as our bodies age, it's not pretty sometimes. And I think it's very difficult for people who are private to have to have that kind of treatment. So where are their rights? And we know that elder abuse is a serious issue and one that often falls between the cracks because again of the vulnerability of the people that are experiencing the abuse.

So back to the recommendations that the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan has made, the first recommendation they make is that a residents' bill of rights should be required for all long-term care homes. And they cite a number of reasons for that in their paper. They looked at what's going on in other provinces.

And one of the quotes I think I want to share with you is found on page 6, about the need for reform. And they talk . . . Professor Surtees talks about the lack of communication and how patients and their families, like our family, don't always understand what questions should be asked and how to communicate with the staff. And often the staff aren't able to effectively communicate with the family. An enshrined bill of rights would give families sort of a better focus on how they can ensure that their loved ones' rights are being met.

One of the things they said at page 6:

There is wide agreement that improved education for staff and administrators is an indispensable step toward improving the living conditions of residents in long-term care. At present, the training in abuse awareness provided to staff of long-term care facilities is uneven.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think part of the concern here is that we're spending too much time looking at the efficiencies that are claimed within the lean process. We're not doing the type of training that is most important for patient care in long-term care facilities, and that's training in abuse awareness. We know, according to this report, that that training is uneven, and yet we see the focus completely skewed. And the focus is on efficiencies as the number one priority rather than the care and rights of the seniors.

There's a number of other recommendations that are in place. The second one is that there should be legislation that should set out a minimum standard for a residents' bill of rights, with each long-term care home drafting its own document.

We've often commented as the official opposition on our concerns about the removal of minimum standards of care. I know the Health minister often refers to the new manual that came out in 2013, the special care home program guidelines. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I did a Google search to see if the word . . . how would these guidelines deal with complaints, the word complaint does not show up once in that entire 200-and-some page document. So we have no idea under the new policy manual how complaints of abuse are to be instigated. And to me, Mr. Speaker, this is a serious omission and a very glaring omission on the part of these guidelines.

And I think if you look at our proposed bill, you will see that the right of complaint is built into the legislation so that the

families of these seniors and the seniors themselves who still require and have some form of autonomy . . . I mean we always have to keep the autonomy at utmost prominence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because as some writers have pointed out, we have children's bills of rights. Children are vulnerable. We have seniors' bills of rights.

Seniors are vulnerable. The seniors are adults and, in many cases, even if they have lost some of their capacity, they still . . . we have to ultimately protect their right to autonomy. And I think that's one of the things that may be overlooked when we have guidelines such as those that were presented by the government recently without the legislative protection that a bill of rights would afford these individuals.

The legislation should provide a default residents' bill of rights to apply in the event that a long-term care home does not draft its own. We know that care homes are busy and that the necessity to draft their own bill of rights or the requirement could be an onerous one, particularly if they are overwhelmed with other duties. So what the recommendation — and certainly you'll find that in our draft bill — is that the legislation should have a backup bill of rights if the particular care home isn't able to draft its own. So there'd be a default.

The next recommendation is that this bill of rights must be posted. We know that bills of rights are being drafted in varying shapes and forms in certain care homes, but not consistently. So we need to ensure that they're posted, and that more importantly there be — this is the fifth recommendation — that there be an enforcement mechanism for the residents' bill of rights.

And it's unfortunate at this point that under the guidelines we don't even have the word complaint showing up once, which was quite shocking and alarming from my perspective. We know that, like in my family when we're dealing with all the emotional requirements and the confusion of the health requirements, we're not even sure what our rights are right now. And this is in the hospital context.

For some reason, Mr. Speaker, the private care homes in the regulations, there are actually legislated requirements. And for some reason it doesn't exist in Saskatchewan for the special care homes that are operated by the government. So I'm not exactly clear why the government has chosen to not make those kinds of things required in the special care homes when they actually are regulated. And I'm just trying to find that particular piece of regulation. So I'm not sure why they're included there and not included in the . . . Oh, here it is. No, I still haven't found it. I guess I'll have to refer to it later. But the private care regulations do have certain requirements in them that we're not seeing in the special care regulations.

I did find it, Mr. Speaker, and it's section 34 under *The Personal Care Homes Regulations* from 1996. And it states in there, in section 34, a number of rights and privileges of residents. And in fact, in the Law Reform Commission's report, they suggested that this particular set of regulations even goes further than many of the generalized regulations. And they've cited, for example, section (g) of 34(1) which says:

In addition to any of the rights and privileges that the

residents may have at law, each resident has the following right and privileges . . .

(g) to receive visitors privately at the home between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. without giving prior notice to the licensee.

So we see this kind of very specific provision in the regulations for personal care homes but we see nothing in legislation for seniors' care home.

So, Mr. Speaker, realistically our concern, and we've raised it a number of times here, is what we've seen from this government is a lessening of the standards of care and actually removing them from regulations. We've seen them create a new document called special care guidelines — it's a long name — but not once in those guidelines do we see the word complaint, which is critical to the enforcement of rights is the ability to ensure that you can make a complaint. And we feel, as other jurisdictions have done like in Ontario and BC [British Columbia] that to enshrine seniors' bill of rights in legislation is a necessary and important step to moving forward for seniors in Saskatchewan. And I think that's echoed by the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan in their report from last year.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I'm hoping the individuals in the House here that are listening today are convinced that this type of bill is something that has value and should be incorporated into our legislative suite of protections for vulnerable people in our society like seniors. And I hope that all the members will do the right thing when the vote comes and to vote in favour of this bill. Thank you very much. And I'd like to now adjourn the debate on this bill.

The Speaker: — The motion by the member was that this bill be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	5131
Brotten	5131, 5132
Krawetz	5131
Ross	5132
Duncan	5132
Chartier	5132
Cheveldayoff	5132
Norris	5132
Harrison	5132

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	5133
Wotherspoon	5133
Vermette	5133
Belanger	5133
Sproule	5133

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Volunteer Week	
Forbes	5134
Parkinson's Awareness Month	
Merriman	5134
Nilson	5134
Remembering Ed Lysyk	
Krawetz	5134
Saskatchewan Athlete Competes in Masters Golf Tournament	
Duncan	5135
Northlands College Gala	
Jurgens	5135
Dental Hygienists Week	
Tochor	5135

QUESTION PERIOD

Patient Safety and Lean Initiative	
Brotten	5136
Wall	5136
Duncan	5137
Ministry of Education Sector Plan	
Wotherspoon	5138
Morgan	5138
Provision of Home Care	
Chartier	5140
Duncan	5140

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice	
Michelson	5140

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 129 — <i>The Executive Government Administration Act</i>	
Wyant	5141
Bill No. 130 — <i>The Executive Government Administration Consequential Amendments Act, 2013</i>	
<i>Loi de 2013 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Executive Government Administration Act</i>	
Wyant	5141

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ottenbreit	5141
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SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Improving the Lives of People With Disabilities	
Docherty	5141
Forbes	5144, 5151
Lawrence	5145, 5151
Chartier	5146, 5151
Merriman	5148
Belanger	5149, 5152
Makowsky	5151

Marchuk	5152
Wilson	5152
Campeau	5153
PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 606 — <i>The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act, 2014</i>	
Sproule	5153

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