



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

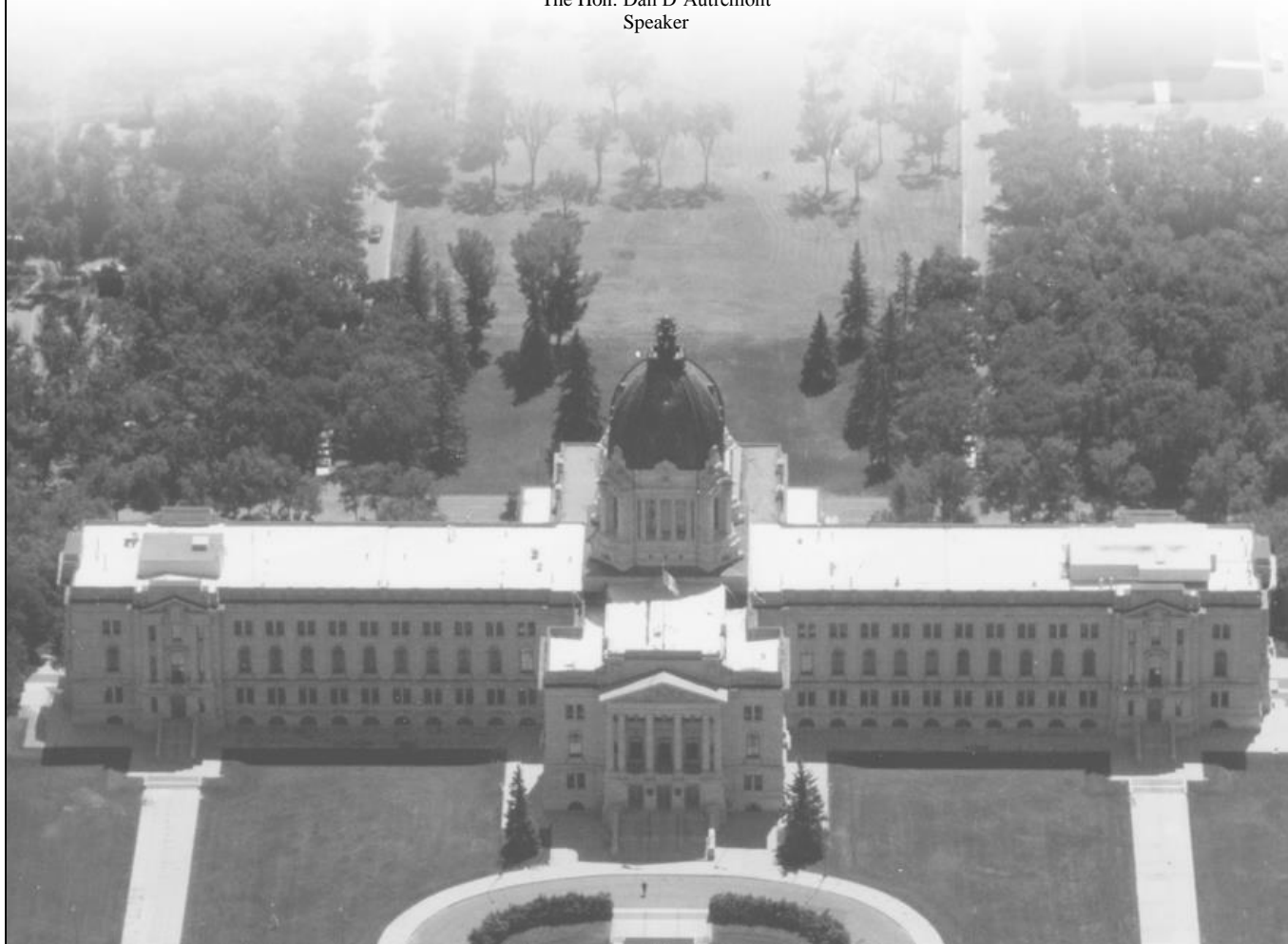
of the

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, Hon. 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, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, 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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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
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a brief shout-out and welcome to fellow southerner, Mr. Dale Burnay all the way from Assiniboia. He's an avid politico and a Twitterer and keenly follows Saskatchewan politics. So from having been a neighbour of him in the town of Lafleche, I just want to say welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in calling for greater support for education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services the government provides to its citizens and that 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 we must build the best education system for today and for Saskatchewan's future. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately prioritize education by laying out a long-term vision and plan 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, and 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, the people signing this petition come from Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present petitions as it relates to the unsafe conditions that that government has created on Dewdney Avenue and their failure to respond and make sure that there is adequate safe flow of traffic, Mr. Speaker. I know that members opposite have ignored this issue from the get-go. They've ignored proposals that have been sent them directly from myself and from our city councillor, Mr. Speaker, and we need to get those dangerous heavy-haul trucks off of Dewdney. 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 rerouting the 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 are signed by concerned residents of Regina as well as White City. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and in other parts of the North and is getting worse. Shelter is a basic need for everyone, but under this government, it's getting harder and harder for people to find adequate housing, especially families, seniors, women and children who face abusive situations. The problem is getting worse because of the rising level of poverty and skyrocketed home ownership costs. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of better seniors' care. The petitioners point out that many seniors are having to wait in hospital beds due to the lack of spaces in care facilities; that we and they continue to hear an increasing number of stories about the adverse effects of chronic understaffing in seniors' care facilities, including unanswered calls for help, seniors being left unattended on toilets for hours on end, and seniors not receiving baths for weeks at a time.

They also talk about the provincial government's response to the seniors' care crisis being inadequate as evidenced by the fact that the recent provincial, last year's provincial budget included no new long-term care spaces for seniors, and the minister's only proposed solution to chronic understaffing challenges was to ask health region CEOs [chief executive officer] to go on a tour of care facilities. So we look forward to different, more measures in this budget, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully

request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care in our province, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public facilities, private facilities, and for home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in seniors' care facilities; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks in Regina, Central Butte, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of infrastructure accountability. And the petitioners point out that residents and taxpayers of Saskatchewan have a right to know how their money is spent. They point out that it's in the best interest of the residents and taxpayers of Saskatchewan to receive the best value for their tax dollar in government procurement of Crown infrastructure, goods or services on their behalf. And they point out that cost savings or value for taxpayers' money has not been realized or has been the subject of audit and dispute in other jurisdictions in public-private partnership projects. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners humbly pray:

That your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately pass *The Public-Private Partnership Transparency and Accountability Act*.

This particular batch of petitions is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Humboldt, Carrot River, Canora, Melville, Prince Albert, Air Ronge, and La Ronge. I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition for real action on climate change. The petitioners want to bring to the attention of the Legislative Assembly a number of items, including the fact that Saskatchewan's emissions continue to grow. As of October 2013, it was 74 million. There's no signs of decreasing. Slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses — the energy efficiency programs — have set this province on a backwards course. And since 2009 the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent, including a 35 per cent cut in the '14-15 budget.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, 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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was signed by individuals from Vanscoy, Air Ronge, Saskatoon, and Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

New Software Program Developed for Ebola Research

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa has caught the world's attention, and many countries and international organizations are doing what they can to help. There is one constituent of Saskatoon Centre who is contributing to the fight: Brett Trost.

Brett Trost, a recent Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] graduate of the computer science program at the University of Saskatchewan, has helped develop a software program now used for Ebola research at the US [United States] National Institutes of Health. The new system, PIIKA [Platform for Intelligent, Integrated Kinome Analysis], that Brett and his supervisor, Anthony Kusalik, created studies of how Ebola affects cells and what cells do to fight the infection. Trost stated in a recent *Star Phoenix* article, and I quote, "Clearly Ebola is a major concern, given the unprecedented outbreak in Africa. Better understanding of how Ebola hijacks cell-signalling mechanisms will ultimately allow us to develop better treatments."

This work is part of the new field called bioinformatics which combines computer science and molecular biology. Trost feels that bioinformatics has a great potential to improve human health. To quote him again, "The chance that I might one day play even a small part in improving treatments for human diseases is a huge motivator for me." Trost was also the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] recipient of the prestigious Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating Brett Trost on this amazing contribution he has made in the fight against Ebola. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Convention

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week has been a busy week with the annual SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention running March 9th to 12th in Saskatoon. SARM has been a staple in this province since 1905, making this convention the 110th annual. Mr. Speaker, Acting President Ray Orb ran an informative convention, and I'd like to congratulate Ray on his election as president just this morning.

One of the things that this government appreciates most is the open dialogue with our RMs [rural municipality] to see what is working and what is not in rural Saskatchewan. Issues like provincial revenue sharing, STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society], highways, education, property tax, and landfill waste management are important. These are conversations that we have to have.

In addition to passing resolutions that covered a wide array of

topics, SARM hosted over 170 exhibitors for the trade show and hosted various ministers, the Premier, and John Gormley as some of the guest speakers. The bear-pit for cabinet ministers was also a success for both sides. With over 2,000 people attending this convention annually, our rural voice is strong.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join with me in congratulating SARM for yet another successful convention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

New Music Director Selected for Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize an exciting turn of events for an important cultural institution in our province. Eric Paetkau has been selected as the 16th music director of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Paetkau currently calls Toronto home, but he was born on the prairies and also attended Rosthern Junior College.

Maestro Paetkau is trained as a violinist and violist and studied conducting in the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands. He was the founding director of the group of 27 chamber orchestra, which recently recorded a Juno-nominated record with well-known Saskatoon trumpeter Guy Few. He has also played with a number of prestigious ensembles, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company, the National Ballet of Canada Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, and the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

After many years of highs and lows, it is so great to see the energy and momentum at the SSO [Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra]. In addition to the excitement that comes from a new musical director, the organization has begun a new fundraising program with the aim of raising \$200,000 to mark the 85th anniversary of the orchestra, and every dollar raised by donors will be matched by the Remai Foundation. I'm certain that the orchestra will have no problem reaching its goal, given the deep-rooted community support for the fifth oldest orchestra in Canada.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming Eric Paetkau back to Saskatchewan and in wishing him and the SSO all the best as they begin to prepare for another 85 seasons of success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Education.

Graduate Students' Association Awards

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I had the pleasure of attending the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association third annual Graduate Awards Gala. I was attending there with the member for Saskatoon Centre, and I can say we had a pleasant and an enjoyable evening. It was an evening of celebration and inspiration recognizing the research, hard work, and achievement of the graduate students.

Dr. Monique Haakensen, a specialist in passive water treatment,

constructed wetlands, biogeochemistry, and genetic microbial profiling, and a U of S alumni was the keynote speaker. She spoke, Mr. Speaker, on change and how change continues to evolve, a remarkably timely message for the young people that were there.

The most exciting part of the evening was the award presentations. The winners included, and you'll pardon me if I mispronounce some of the names: Belinda C. Daniels for Excellence in Aboriginal Research; Ahmed Abdel-Salam for Research Excellence in the Sciences; Keshini Madara Marasinghe for Professional Excellence; Zohreh Izadifar for Interdisciplinary Research; Dr. Alexander Moewes for Advising Excellence; Annie Battiste for Exceptional Academic Counsellor; and Omeasoo Butt for Outstanding Past GSA [Graduate Students' Association] Executive.

The University of Saskatchewan has set a goal of being one of the most research-intensive universities in North America. The Graduate Awards Gala is an outstanding event that puts the spotlight on research and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate all of the winners and congratulate the graduate students for the great work that they do in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Governor General Awards for Bravery Recipients

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am honoured to stand in the House to recognize the heroic acts of Tyler Campbell and Chris Clark, security officers working in the Saskatoon Health Region. On the evening of March 15th, 2013, Tyler and Chris rescued a woman from a burning room in the Irene and Leslie Dubé Centre for Mental Health. Thick smoke made entry into the room difficult, but the security officers risked their own lives and made it through. They were able to find the patient and bring her to the safety area. Other members of the team assisted and safely secured the area around the fire.

Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Clark received the Governor General's Medal of Bravery at a ceremony in Ottawa. Joining them were two colleagues, Stacy Anweiler and Roel Benedicto, and registered nurse Steve Atchison who will receive letters of commendation. They were also joined in Ottawa with Constable Steven Enns from Estevan who my colleague, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Estevan, spoke about earlier in the week. Mr. Speaker, we are extremely proud of the courage and the leadership these men showed, risking their lives to save the life of another.

I would ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Tyler Campbell and Chris Clark for their Governor General's Medal of Bravery. We thank them for going above and beyond the call of duty when they were needed most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Inspiring Leadership Forum

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a great honour I had yesterday to speak at the sixth annual University of Regina Inspiring Leadership Forum, with over 300 guests in attendance. Guest speakers also included Kim Campbell, Canada's first female prime minister; Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female president; and Mary Simon, a former Canadian diplomat. I was privileged to be on the moderator's panel with Louise Simard and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] President Debra Button.

Mr. Speaker, ladies from all over Saskatchewan came to hear the inspiring words of strong women who have earned their way into leadership positions. This was a great opportunity for female leaders of the future to gain confidence and to learn from each other. The atmosphere at the event was full of positivity and passion and ambition.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan and in this building, we are very lucky to have women in roles of leadership to be role models for our next generation of leaders. As a woman who has political experience for a number of years, I was very excited to see that many more women are considering the leadership role in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the University of Regina and President Timmons for putting on a fantastic event. And I'd like to thank all the inspirational speakers for sharing their stories. Thank you.

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

Brother and Sister Team at Canada Winter Games

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to recognize the accomplishments of two of my constituents who participated in the Canada Winter Games in Prince George. This brother and sister team from Delmas participated in the slalom race, giant slalom, and super-giant slalom.

Louis Lacoursier, age 15, placed 23rd in the slalom under 16, and Amy Lacoursier, age 14, placed 36th in the slalom under 16. Amy did very well, considering she is only 14 years old and was competing against 15- and 16-year-olds.

Slalom is a competitive, downhill racing, skiing race over a winding and zigzagging course that is marked by poles or gates. Mr. Speaker, both of these athletes started skiing at the age of three at Table Mountain Regional Park, which is not far from their home. Mr. Speaker, Louis and Amy were excited to travel with Team Saskatchewan to participate in the games and found it to be a rewarding experience to both meet and compete against other athletes.

As are all of the members here today, I am truly proud of our athletes who represented our province in the Canada Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating Louis and Amy Lacoursier and all of the other athletes who represented our province in Prince George.

Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Quality of Care in Emergency Rooms and the Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — On Monday, 88-year-old Sorn Kear was taken to the Royal University Hospital by ambulance at 3:30 in the morning. He spent eight hours waiting in a curtained-off area before he got a CT [computerized tomography] scan.

After his scan, staff tried to move him back to the curtained-off area, but it had already been given to another patient in the chaos of an overcrowded emergency room, so Mr. Kear was left for six hours sitting on a gurney in the hallway right by the nurses' station at the entrance to the emergency room. He was feeling horribly nauseous and he was incredibly embarrassed to be out in the open at the entrance of the ER [emergency room] in a hospital gown, surrounded by a ton of people. Is this the quality of emergency room care that the Premier thinks is acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Premier today, I'll be taking the questions directed at him under Health.

Mr. Speaker, any time you hear of a case like this it is unacceptable. We believe that not only the general public but specifically seniors deserve the best possible care in our health facilities, in our long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker.

I am not aware of the details around this situation, this circumstance. I'm not sure if my office or the Minister of Health's office has been contacted yet, but I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to offer that information over. We can contact the family and the individual in question and see if we can help out.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable, but under this government, it is typical. And that, Mr. Speaker, is an absolute shame.

Mr. Kear's daughter Audrey was shocked by the conditions at the emergency room at the Royal University Hospital, Mr. Speaker. And the Finance minister is heckling, Mr. Speaker. This is the Finance minister, under record revenues, who has allowed this situation to be created, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kear's daughter thought the extreme overcrowding, the hallway medicine, and the utter chaos of the emergency room, Mr. Speaker, she thought that that would be something that wasn't normal, but staff in the emergency room told her that this was just a typical day. This government has had record windfall revenues every single year, but long waits in emergency rooms and hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker, is now

typical. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. How can he explain that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier today, I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition, he's not in the . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll be taking questions on his behalf under Health and the government.

Mr. Speaker, again any time a situation like this arises where there's long waits in the ER, specifically with somebody that's very ill and especially with a senior citizen, we want to be sure that we look into the case and find out what has been going on.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will point out to the members of the House, the members opposite, the investment that we have made in emergency room wait times, the initiatives around that: whether it's through Home First home care for senior citizens making sure that they're healthy in their homes and getting the service they need before they need an emergency room; with investments in primary health clinics, more access to patients in communities before they would need that service; investments in health facilities around the province that our government has undertaken over the past seven years where we see new facilities being opened and planned under this government. We saw 52 closed under the opposition.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kear's daughter Audrey called the Premier. She called the Health minister because she was outraged at the treatment that her dad received, but they had no decent answers, Mr. Speaker, to alleviate the concerns of Audrey and her father.

An 88-year-old man in extreme pain, feeling nauseous, waits eight hours for an emergency CT scan. And that's bad enough, but at least he was in a curtained-off area with a little bit of privacy. After his scan he was left right out in the open at the nurses' station in the hallway in a hospital gown for six hours on a gurney, Mr. Speaker.

This happened just last Monday, long after the 14-day lean exercise in February in which the government cancelled a bunch of surgeries and asked John Black for yet more advice, Mr. Speaker. Staff told Mr. Kear's daughter Audrey that it's typical for patients to wait too long in the emergency room and to be crammed into hospital hallways.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Does he acknowledge that these conditions are now typical and when can we expect some meaningful action to start fixing this mess?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, we started acting shortly after November 7th of 2007 cleaning up the mess left by the members opposite. Again I'll point out: 52 hospitals; the Plains Health Centre which was very accessible to especially rural people around the province, Mr. Speaker, able to hit the Ring

Road and get to the facility very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I'll point to some other projects specifically around Saskatoon Health Region. The new CEO there, the former deputy minister that has undertaken a 14-day challenge has been empowering front-line staff to tackle persistent overcapacity. It has resulted in fewer temporary beds and fewer patients waiting for beds, Mr. Speaker.

To clarify a point I made earlier, the Health minister's office has been in contact with the family. The ministry and the region are looking into it, and we'll have maybe something to report in the days to come.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it's ridiculous. The second Health minister here stands up, brags about their record in the face of these stories like Mr. Kear's who sits in the front room of the emergency room at the desk, Mr. Speaker, in a gown, for hours, waiting for care, crammed into a hallway with other patients. And he's bragging about his record, Mr. Speaker. It makes no sense.

And then he proves my point as well. He says, well, we did the 14-day lean exercise where we cancelled a bunch of surgeries and went to John Black for more advice. That was before this, Mr. Speaker. This happened just on Monday.

This government's plan, in its fascination with the John Black lean project, clearly is not working. They have had record windfall revenues year after year, but this is the reality that we're seeing. No end of money for Japanese sensei, for American consultants, and a flavour-of-the-day lean methodology, Mr. Speaker, but so little for the things that actually matter on the front lines, so little to actually address the basics.

And we have the former Health minister who has played a big role in getting us into the John Black mess, Mr. Speaker, he's the one bragging right now. It's unbelievable. Their dismissive approach is endemic in that entire government, Mr. Speaker.

My question to this Premier: when will the government start wasting its time and its money on wasteful pet projects? When will it start to fix the things that Saskatchewan families actually need when it comes to emergency medicine?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, listening to that member stand and speak the way he is, you'd think there was absolutely nobody waiting for any service in Saskatchewan when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. That's the farthest thing from the truth.

We had multiple people waiting for all types of services, Mr. Speaker, because we had doctors leaving the province. We had nurses leaving the province. We had health care facilities closing. Mr. Speaker, we had the longest waiting lists — again, as a member has reminded me — under the NDP [New Democratic Party]. Where they had a plan to reduce wait-lists,

to do all these sort of grand things, Mr. Speaker, what did we see? A 61 per cent increase in wait-lists in this province, Mr. Speaker. We saw a lack of investment in our health care facilities. We saw a lack of investment in training spots. We saw a lack of investment in residency positions.

Mr. Speaker, just the other day we saw medical students up in the gallery, a dozen of them. I would argue, under the members opposite we would have saw about half of those, and maybe half of those would have stayed in the province. Now we're seeing 12 possible graduates with over 60 per cent of them will stay in the province at the very least, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's responses make absolutely no sense. He stands. He congratulates himself, as do the members there, about the job that they've done, but let's look at the results, Mr. Speaker. We have family after family coming forward. We have Audrey calling the Premier, calling the Health minister, calling the opposition, outraged at the treatment that her 88-year-old father received. The government's story does not add up, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look where they've been hemorrhaging money. They've had no end of money for the John Black lean project. That's where they'll put their resources. That's where they'll put their time. They've got no end of resources for that, but they won't address the things that matter.

Well here's an idea how we could improve on emergency waits and the prevalence of hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker. And they're mocking here, Mr. Speaker. How about we actually use City Hospital in Saskatoon properly? How about we have proper acute care in City Hospital? How about not shutting down the emergency room of City Hospital at 8:30 every evening, Mr. Speaker?

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Saskatchewan people want City Hospital properly used. Mr. Kear's daughter wants it used. I want it used properly. Why won't this Premier use City Hospital properly?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, let's talk about lean. Mr. Speaker, we've seen a \$40.5 million total investment in lean. We've seen 125 million of savings to this point, and there's a lot of savings to be tallied up after that initial document has been drafted, Mr. Speaker.

Where have we been hemorrhaging money? We've been hemorrhaging money in debt reduction. We've been hemorrhaging money in tax reductions for people in this province. We've been hemorrhaging money in a new process for patient treatment and assessment. We've been hemorrhaging money in police and crisis team work. We've been hemorrhaging money in Lighthouse paramedic pilot projects, senior house calls, hot-spotting projects, again, the Saskatoon challenge, Mr. Speaker.

We've also been spending on a project that I'd like to bring back to light, the Moose Jaw Hospital. The member yesterday talked about an 80 per cent reduction in beds. Mr. Speaker, that new lean-designed facility in Moose Jaw was 121 beds previously at 80 per cent occupancy. That facility now: 115 beds, flexible beds that experts come to the patients and the services come to the patients, not the patients being dragged around a facility to find services elsewhere, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Buy Local Day

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, a recent study found that optimism among small businesses in our province plunged to a six-year low in February. In fact over the last five months, small business optimism in Saskatchewan has continually declined.

Today we have a chance to give small businesses in our province a boost by supporting a bill put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, *The Buy Local Day Act*. A grassroots group of local business owners called Sasklandia supports this bill. The Broadway Business Improvement District supports this bill, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is also fully supportive of this bill. Will the Premier support this common sense legislation when it comes to a vote later today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The short answer to whether the government will be supporting the bill is yes, despite some obvious drafting issues. I'd actually point to clause 3, Mr. Speaker, where the NDP, the Leader of the Opposition's bill, he actually spelled business wrong in the bill. It's a one-page bill, Mr. Speaker, and there's four clauses, and he spelled business wrong.

But we will be supporting the bill. The government has a long-standing position that we would like to see every day being buy-local day, Mr. Speaker. So we will be supporting that bill.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this is great news. We welcome the government's support by the Leader of the Opposition. The bill is straightforward and it doesn't require extensive review in committee. It simply proclaims the first Saturday of each month as Buy Local Day, which is a common sense way to promote the incredible value of local businesses, to put Saskatchewan first, and to create greater economic diversity and sustainability in our province. My question is: will the Premier agree to fast track this bill?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've already indicated that the government will be supporting the legislation. We'll be having a vote on second reading later today. The bill will be . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I asked for order, and I would appreciate if I could hear the minister's response. Since both sides seem to be in agreement on this, I'm not sure what all the hollering is about. I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well as the member opposite should know as a former Opposition House Leader, there's a process. There's a second reading vote. It goes to committee and then is reported out to the House. So that process will be followed. As I said, the government believes every day should be buy-local day, Mr. Speaker.

We've taken real steps in this direction as well. We have proclamations for Small Business Week, Red Tape Awareness Week, Women Entrepreneurs Week, Co-operatives Week, and we've taken real action, Mr. Speaker. We've reduced the small business tax rate in 2011 from 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent. And I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this is the only economic policy we've seen from the opposition. This government has fostered the environment for small businesses to thrive in this province and lead our province forward.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, as the former Government House Leader knows, there is a way to fast track bills, and that's to go quickly through committee and get it back in the House for third reading.

Now it's always a good thing when there is an outbreak of common sense in this place so, while we have a bit of that happening, I'm wondering: will the Premier also agree to pass the bill put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the bill that would fix this government's horribly flawed procurement policy? That would be another very positive step this Assembly could take today to boost Saskatchewan businesses. Will the Premier agree to that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've already pointed out the process, which the former Opposition House Leader should know, if they wish to bring their next bill forward, they can.

I guess what I would ask actually of the official opposition is if they would agree to an amendment to fix the spelling of the word business in their bill, Mr. Speaker. It's a one-page bill. So I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for the unanimous consent of the House right now to amend their bill such that business would be spelled right rather than wrong.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Contract With Housing Developer

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of angry and frustrated people in Prince Albert about Deveraux Developments being handed a contract for a health region housing project. It appears that this contract may have

been tailor-made for Deveraux.

To the Minister of Sask Housing: did this government influence this decision in any way because of its special relationship with this developer?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this is the same developer that bungled an affordable housing project here in the city. The Social Services minister has said that this government had a special relationship with this company, and she said the Saskatchewan Party didn't want to "thump on them."

She even questioned whether there are desperate homeless people in our province. First off, an FYI [for your information] for the minister: there are a lot of desperate homeless people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same developer that this government admits it has a special relationship with. So once again to the minister: how can the people of Prince Albert, given their past treatment for a number of years under the Saskatchewan government, have any confidence that this government didn't interfere with that decision?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — As has happened in the past, we need to correct statements that the NDP say in this House. And I have never said that this government has a relationship with the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Special relationship.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Or a special relationship. He just corrected it. It's words that have never been spoken by this minister.

And his statement, when I said that there were no desperate homeless people, I was referring to a specific project and the wait-list for a project that we did not go forward with. And the wait-list for that project, there was nobody that was homeless that was on that list. It was not a broad statement for the whole entire province.

Again I will say that there is no interference with the project that he is mentioning in P.A. [Prince Albert], and we do have a very successful project with Deveraux in Moose Jaw.

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

State of Provincial Educational Facilities

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Last week we heard about schools that literally have their roofs propped up with temporary posts because they're structurally not sound, propped up with two-by-fours and two-by-sixes. On Monday, we had parents

that had to travel all the way from Esterhazy to raise very serious concerns relating to the quality of their kids' elementary school and the unsafe air quality. We know of at least \$1.5 billion of school infrastructure needs, but this government is keeping the details secret.

You know, it's bad enough that we had to fight this government to get the release of the VFA report which outlines \$2.2 billion in health infrastructure needs, so why is the Education minister now making us fight to get the truth about the state of our kids' schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we take infrastructure in our schools very seriously. When problems are brought up, we want to be able to deal with them as well and as quickly as we can.

Mr. Speaker, under the previous administration, there were 176 schools that were closed in our province, 176 schools that aren't looking for capital, that are not looking for students. They have gone away, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the schools that didn't close were neglected by the members opposite.

We've invested almost four times what the NDP did into schools across the province. We're going to continue to make a significant investment. The members should wait until next week and see what the budget looks like. We continue to remain committed to the education system in our province. We continue to remain committed to the teachers and students in our province, unlike the members opposite who scared away 35,000 students.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty interesting that the minister conveniently leaves out the fact that the auditor has been critical of this government and its funding for school infrastructure as it touts and boosts its supposed record at a time when there's \$1.5 billion of infrastructure needs. The auditor said, "The current level of funding is not sufficient, contributing to an infrastructure deficit."

What did this government do in response to that recommendation last year? Well they cut the funding by \$24 million, Mr. Speaker. Despite raking in record revenues, this government hasn't been able to get the job done when it comes to our schools.

To the minister: what's wrong with shining a light on the true state of our kids' schools? What doesn't this government want parents to know?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, once again we have to correct the members opposite. We don't cut funding on education. We haven't cut funding on education. In fact, education funding continues to go up in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give the members opposite some numbers. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon and area, we have injected

over \$155 million in capital: new or like-new schools in Willowgrove, Nutana Collegiate, Holy Family, Georges Vanier, Holy Cross, St. Matthew, E.D. Feehan, St. Mary, Martensville, Warman. Mr. Speaker, we have now six new joint-use schools in Evergreen, Rosewood, Stonebridge, Hampton Village, Warman, and Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, Regina area, some of the members over there are from Regina until they go off to their next careers after the next election. We've invested over \$135 million in this area. New or like-new schools: Balcarres, Lumsden Elementary, Emerald Ridge, École Monseigneur de Laval, Campbell, Scott Collegiate, Arcola, Douglas Park, Seven Stones, Sacred Heart, École Connaught; three new joint-use schools in Harbour Landing, northwest, and Greens on Gardiner.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue doing those kind of things because that's what our province needs. That's what the citizens are expecting, and Mr. Speaker, this is a record that we are . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we know that minister doesn't listen to the education sector. Now we know as well the minister doesn't even read his own budget documents. It's clear in black print that the budget was cut last year for school infrastructure by \$24 million. The minister should read that. He should know it as well.

The auditor has called for transparency around school infrastructure needs, but this government refuses to release information it has about the state of our schools. Apparently it's some big cabinet secret. Even school divisions aren't afforded proper transparency. School divisions have been clear about their concerns on this front. This was even noted by government officials in committee in January. The auditor has called for more transparency. School divisions need more transparency, and parents deserve more transparency.

To the minister: what will it take for that government to finally release the list, all the documentation around the \$1.5 billion, of the state of our schools, of the educational needs in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some of the things that aren't on any lists anymore are things that have been completed. The member for Athabasca should consider \$4 million that went to a brand new school in Turnor Lake. The member for Cumberland should consider a \$33 million renovation at Churchill High School in La Ronge. While they can beak off all they want and say it was a long, long time ago, Mr. Speaker, it was under this government, not under that government did that happen.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon Nutana: \$14 million renovation to Nutana Collegiate. I was on the Saskatoon Public School Board, Mr. Speaker, when that was started, when we were lobbying the government then, and it was not until this government came in that there was funding made available for that. Mr. Speaker, those are the projects that are important in

this province, and those are the projects that we're going to continue to do. We will take no lessons from that group over there.

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

Provision of Services in Moose Jaw Hospital

Ms. Chartier: — Yesterday the Rural Health minister struggled to answer basic questions about the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw. He refused to go out into the rotunda to answer questions from the media. When the Moose Jaw media tried to get answers from the member from Moose Jaw North, he also refused to talk. To the minister: what is it about the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw that leaves this government so speechless?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, we had a really good meeting yesterday with the people that were in the Assembly, to hear their concerns, and we had some questions for them as well. We've agreed to meet again and trade some information, Mr. Speaker, around the specialties around the hyperbaric chamber and what other options are being used province-wide, Canada-wide, worldwide right now in lieu of that. So we'll be getting back together to share that information as well as we're open to entertaining community-based options for that facility.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm glad the member asked another question. I wanted to bring to light again, you know, there's questions about the Moose Jaw facility. And I would point out that because the facility, the design of it, we were able to put an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] in there that's going to serve thousands and thousands of patients, not like the hyperbaric chamber. It's less than 20 per year, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's interesting that they had an NDP cabinet minister from their area that never got a hospital built, Mr. Speaker. We got it built and, Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of that fact, and it'll be serving the members of Moose Jaw and area for many years to come.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Quality of Life in Rural Saskatchewan

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very honoured to be part of the debate that we're going to have today on health care and education and agriculture and highways in rural Saskatchewan. The motion that I will read at the end of the debate says:

That this Assembly supports this government's action towards improving quality of life in rural Saskatchewan

through investments in health care and education, supporting agricultural programs for producers, and record investments in highways and infrastructure; furthermore

This Assembly condemns the NDP opposition for its demands for increased spending without any recognition for the cost of its promises and for the failure to present any policy that supports a better quality of life for rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are going to be delighted to be taking part in this speech and talking about the changes that have happened in rural Saskatchewan since 2007 but are also going to be waiting with bated breath to hear what the members opposite say about rural Saskatchewan. I hope there is going to be some realism in the speeches that come forward. And to be fair, I know that none of them on that side of the house live in rural Saskatchewan, so anything they talk about will be a rant about rural Saskatchewan or a hearsay.

I know the members opposite don't have, don't like to talk about the past, but many of my colleagues, including myself, are here because of a monumental mistake the NDP made a number of years ago. The NDP wrote off rural Saskatchewan. Probably it was a political decision, and their decision was that they don't have to worry about people in rural Saskatchewan. They didn't need rural Saskatchewan to form government.

The Kelvington-Wadenas, the Melforts, the Canora-Pellys, the Saltcoats, Wood River, even the Humboldt, and Thunder Creek — the government at that time decided they didn't need rural Saskatchewan to form government. The NDP continued to ignore them, and the NDP believed they could keep their base happy. Mr. Speaker, even the member from Athabasca knows that the NDP had written off his seat. That's why of course the member was elected as a Liberal. The NDP wrote off the member's riding, and then the member wormed his way back in the back door into the NDP, but nothing changed the whole time he was in government when they were under the NDP.

The past the Leader of the Opposition won't talk about is that not long ago the NDP members decided that rural Saskatchewan wasn't a part of what they needed to do. But people in Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, know what happened. They know what the NDP did when they were in government. Our constituents remember, even if the members opposite don't remember what happened.

We remember getting on buses and travelling to Regina by the busload to talk to the NDP about closing hospitals, closing 52 hospitals. Not to even mention the Plains hospital, 52 hospitals were closed by the members opposite. Rural Saskatchewan, the devastation that happened because of that, is something that we still live with in rural Saskatchewan, but the NDP didn't listen to the people that came to this legislature in busloads to make sure that they knew the impact they had on our province.

We all remember that school after school after school was closed by the NDP government when they were in opposition. One hundred and seventy-five schools were closed, Mr. Speaker, and the people, the families had to leave to survive because the NDP did not care about what was happening in rural Saskatchewan.

We do remember the education portion of property tax. Sixty per cent of the cost of education was borne on the back of property owners. The NDP said that they were going to do something about it, that they were going to change the status quo, Mr. Speaker, but they never did.

Mr. Speaker, we remember the cutbacks to the municipalities. We remember the crumbling roads, and we remember the local municipalities that came to the legislature, to the NDP government, and asked them to do something about rural Saskatchewan. And their voice was not heard.

And to add insult to injury, the NDP raised taxes. They raised PST [provincial sales tax]. They raised property tax. They raised income tax. They had surtaxes. In fact I don't think there was a tax the members opposite didn't love.

Mr. Speaker, people of rural Saskatchewan, and let me rephrase that, all the people of Saskatchewan know what the responsibility of government truly is. They know that responsibility is health care and highways and schools and a safety net for vulnerable people and safeguarding our environment. That's the priorities of the people of the province. They ask government to provide services that individuals find difficult to get for themselves, and the top of the list is always health care, Mr. Speaker. That's why in our government, Mr. Speaker, we have invested over \$1 billion in health care in the last six years — \$1 billion. That's three times the amount of money the NDP spent on capital and health care in the last six years of their government, a 3 to 1 ratio.

Mr. Speaker, also as government, we've changed the cost-sharing formula for capital to 80/20 per cent. Our government listened to the concerns of the towns that were struggling to raise their share of the money for the 13 long-term care facilities, and Kelvington was one of them. We've put \$200 million of provincial commitment into long-term care facilities. There was \$26 million in the last year's budget for rural long-term facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a few minutes to talk to you about what happens when a town like Kelvington receives a new integrated facility. The initial approval for the community of Kelvington was for a long-term care facility to replace the one that we have in our town. The community advised that it couldn't afford the original proposed LTC [long-term care] program, even with the funding share of 80/20. Using a lean 3P [production preparation process] approach, an alternative that the NDP really doesn't like, was used to explore how to reduce the budget from the estimated \$21.9 million to approximately \$15 million, provincial share of 12 million and the local share of 3 million. Mr. Speaker, in July of 2012 the scope changed for the project. The change enabled the Kelvington long-term care to provide and renovate the existing long-term care facility to include an acute care, primary health care, and emergency service.

Mr. Speaker, now going into our town, when you enter from the south of the town, you are seeing a new facility being built. The town is proud of the fact that we've been seeing the building go up over winter, the very long, cold winter that we've had. We will now have seven acute care beds and also including a family room that can be developed into an eighth room if the future

demands it. We have an interdisciplinary primary care clinic that includes seven multi-purpose patient rooms and clinic rooms. There's a lab and an X-ray and an ER and a trauma room. Renovations to the existing long-term care facility includes wheelchair-accessible washrooms. The project would not have been possible without the hard work and the dedication and the efforts of the Kelvington & District Health Care Facility Foundation, the town of Kelvington, and the surrounding municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, the Kelvington Integrated Health Care Facility's 3P team received a provincial award of excellence at the Health Care Quality Summit in Saskatoon for their work. The health care system has four aims: better care, better health, better value, and better teams. The team received the Better Value Award.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP talk about lean, but the people of Kelvington and Wadena know the difference it made in the budget for them. They know that when a hospital is gone from the community, way too often the community doesn't survive. We know that when those hospitals were closed in the 52 communities, I'm not sure if there was one new house ever built in a community where the hospital was removed. People do not feel it's a home. They don't see it as the future. People have to believe that rural Saskatchewan can be the place where they are living. Mr. Speaker, we continue to know that as a government, this is a priority for the people that we represent. And the members opposite should realize that every rural seat is held by the members on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, other Sask Party initiatives was the 3P 225-bed long-term care facility in Swift Current. The approximate cost of that was \$80 million. Mr. Speaker, we all heard the discussion lately on the new Moose Jaw Hospital that was not even talked about under the NDP government. The construction is under way at that time. Mr. Speaker, we are now going to have a new children's hospital in Saskatoon, \$215 million in provincial commitment. Construction began in 2014 and the completion is 2017. The new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, the projected cost of \$110 million is on the books.

Mr. Speaker, today in Saskatchewan we are proud of the fact that we have over 40 physicians providing locum coverage. Mr. Speaker, these locums are helping to stabilize services in communities like Kamsack and Maidstone and La Ronge and Watrous and Shaunavon. The 2014-15 budget provides \$5.2 million for the rural locum pool, and I thank the members in this government for recognizing the importance of that. Mr. Speaker, during the 2011 election, the Premier committed to a 20-physician rural locum pool, and we're keeping that promise by filling these positions.

Mr. Speaker, supporting expansion of training seats for health care professionals by adding new training seats for nurse practitioners, we've supported new nurses and nurse practitioners to practise in underserved rural and remote communities by forgiving up to \$20,000 in student loans. Kelvington and Foam Lake both have nurse practitioners which have benefited the health care in these communities.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have talked about doctors. We have 423 more doctors in Saskatchewan now than we did

under the NDP, a 24.3 per cent increase. And I am very pleased to say that Kelvington and Wadena have been the beneficiaries of the physician recruitment policy called Saskdocs, a one-stop shop for physicians who'd like to practise in Saskatchewan.

We've increased the medical training seats at the College of Medicine from 60 to 100 each year. We've increased the post-graduate residency seats at the College of Medicine from 60 to 120. The \$685,000 for the continuation of the rural physician incentive, Mr. Speaker, one of the best . . . We have one of the best physician compensation rates in all of Canada. There's \$3 million for distributive medical education. And we've expanded the distributive post-secondary education program, helping doctors receive practice in smaller communities, communities like Prince Albert and Swift Current and La Ronge and North Battleford, and Moose Jaw was added in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 our government has added, and I want the members to realize this and to acknowledge it: 423 more doctors are practising in Saskatchewan, a 29 per cent increase in specialists under the government, a 44 per cent increase in pediatricians, a 20 per cent increase in family practitioners. The physician turnover has decreased, and the local grad retention now is at 75 per cent. That's up 17 per cent from just two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I know the members opposite job is to oppose. Their job is to criticize and oppose, but it's also to bring up new ideas. That's right. They have a responsibility to the people of this province — unless they just want to remain in opposition forever, which could happen — to bring up new ideas. What is your policy? What is your policy that's going to help rural Saskatchewan? What's your policy that's going to help the schools and people live in rural Saskatchewan?

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency don't have time for slick ads that say nothing. They don't have time to listen to the Leader of the Opposition screaming until he's red in the face, talking about opposing what's happening but never really putting anything down on paper, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite could have spent or would have spent \$5 billion more had they been elected in 2011, and the red would've continued. And today, two years later, they're still saying yes to anyone who will talk to them, no matter what the cost is involved. You come forward, we'll say yes, and we're going to say, we're going to do it. There is no conscious . . . or no realization that it's going to cost money.

Rural Saskatchewan, all of Saskatchewan, won't go down that road again. We're not going to say . . . They don't believe that what government says is what should be happening, Mr. Speaker. They know that the money belongs to them; it does not belong to government. And they'll be way better at spending their money than the NDP ever was.

So, Mr. Speaker, the leader asked about, where has all the money gone? We know where the money went, and so do the people in Saskatchewan, especially rural Saskatchewan — debt reduction, tax reduction, and infrastructure. That's where the money has gone, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to conclude my remarks by moving:

That this Assembly supports this government's actions towards improving quality of life in rural Saskatchewan through investments in health care and education, supporting agricultural programs for producers, record investments in Highways and Infrastructure; and further

That this Assembly condemns the NDP opposition for its demands for increasing spending without any recognition for the cost of its promises and for its failure to present any policy that supports a better quality of life for rural Saskatchewan.

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kelvington-Wadena:

That this Assembly supports this government's actions towards improving quality of life in rural Saskatchewan through investments in health care and education, supporting agricultural programs for producers, and record investments in Highways and Infrastructure; and further

That this Assembly condemns the NDP opposition for its demands for increased spending without any recognition for the cost of its promises and for its failures to present any policy that supports a better quality of life for rural Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to be able to rise in the Assembly today to enter into this debate. I find it shocking and disappointing at the approach that the previous member took in her words today, and really the insulting fashion with which she addressed the role that we as the members of the opposition are playing here and our experience in rural Saskatchewan.

You know, the thought that there is no connections, I am deeply rooted in the rural experience. My rural experience has been, well I grew up on the farm. I lived in a small town for many years. I have brothers, I have sisters, and my parents live in a small town. So that experience is real to me, and it's shocking and disappointing to hear the member accuse us of not having those connections. That's really disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

I am hearing lots from people in the rural areas about how this government is letting them down, and there's any number of areas that I could speak at length, but unfortunately I only have a few minutes available today.

First of all though, I do want to address the concerns I'm hearing from many parts of the province about the issues with flooding, Mr. Speaker. We don't see any vision on the part of this government or any leadership in terms of what to do when we are hearing stories that we're in an extreme state of hydraulic water levels that are going to be excessive for 20 years. And what we hear the Minister of the Environment saying at SUMA was that he just hopes it doesn't rain this year.

Mr. Speaker, that's not a progressive and positive outlook.

And certainly the RM leaders that I've been meeting with — I've met with RM leaders from Humboldt; I've met with RM leaders in Melfort; I've met with RM leaders in Yorkton; I've met with RM leaders in Saltcoats and Langenburg; I've met with RM leaders in Eyebrow and in Caron; and certainly with leaders down in the southeast corner as well — and what I'm hearing from them is there is a lot of fear. There's a lot of concern about their ability to deliver the services they need to deliver given the record high water levels.

I've seen roads that are destroyed. We know the situation in the Quill Lakes where even the highways in Dafoe now have to be raised up several feet. These are things that affect farm businesses. We have farmers who have to drive, you know, 10, 15 miles to get to a part of their property which used to have a road that was half a mile away, and water levels are so high they cannot access their own crops. Their cattle are being stranded. And we see from this government, the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] program is simply not sufficient.

I've heard from a number of farmers just this winter about the damage caused by harvest last year, and I've seen tracks of the combines. One farmer told me there's a large farm north of Caron where they had to pull out combines 5,000 times. They had a large operation and they pulled out 5,000 combines. The destruction to the surface, to the topsoil is immense and there's no opportunity, no support whatsoever for this kind of destruction of farm land. And that's just the farmers.

The RMs themselves, I'm talking to leaders who are prepared to declare themselves a state of disaster because all of their bridges are getting washed out. These are not cheap. And certainly with the funding formula that this government's provided to them, there's enough for basic services, but this government keeps adding responsibilities on to these governments in addition to the additional support. So there's really no net benefit for the RMs.

We see a government that has increased spending . . . increased its revenues certainly by 80 per cent or 70 per cent, depending on how you look at it, but they've increased spending as well, Mr. Speaker. We know the cupboards are bare.

They've had record revenues, but with all the misplaced priorities that we've been hearing about . . . And certainly the member from Kelvington should pay attention to this because she should be a leader in the backbench in convincing the government that they have misplaced spending, that they have misplaced priorities, and that rural people are not being well served by this government. But instead she goes on to brag and brag about things that I think they should take a second look at.

I think one of the examples, the supreme examples we have of the arrogance and pride of this particular government is some of the heckles that the Minister of the Economy has been throwing across the floor in the last couple of days. What he stated is that — this is how he looks at rural people — he said, "We could raise taxes twice and they would still vote for us." Well I want to put that out there, Mr. Speaker, and I want to see what rural people think about that. So we're going to run that past a few

folks, and then maybe we'll see what happens at the polls. I challenge him to take that platform to the polls in the next election. If he's that proud and that arrogant about his performance, I think there's a real issue here in this government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to actually quote from the Scriptures. I don't often do this, but in Proverbs, chapter 16, verse 18 — this is from the *King James 2000 Bible* — it says this: "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." And I think this is something that this government needs to start paying attention to, Mr. Speaker. The arrogance and the hubris that we see coming from across the way is something that I think the average voter needs to pay attention to. And I'm hoping people start thinking about that.

And indeed, just to make sure that the members opposite understand what hubris is, I've jotted down a definition so they know what it means. Hubris means a loss of contact with reality and an overestimation of one's own competence, especially when the person exhibiting it is in a position of power. And it's too bad the member from Walsh Acres had to chat through that description because that's a word I think he needs to start understanding, is hubris. And the extreme arrogance that comes from him, in that backbench position, is something I think . . . Well I'm pretty sure we won't be seeing him in the next round when we go forward. We won't have to listen to that kind of nonsense anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out right here some of the things that we have been talking about. The member from Kelvington obviously isn't paying attention. On February 10th, on February 10th our party issued a news release saying, "Brotten wants government to stop scaling back rural health care." We have rural folks coming on the first day of the sitting, Mr. Speaker, saying there's desperate need for more facilities and a doctor in Craik, and this government arrogantly and stubbornly dismissed those requests. So that's just one example, and that was in February. Another example, February 5th, just last month: "Province raises water prices." So again we have a government that's charging small towns extra money and they don't have the extra resources to be able to do it. God knows where the money has gone, Mr. Speaker, but when they continue to raise fees like this for rural people, this hurts. This isn't a place where people are busting with pride at some of the decisions this government has made. So the disconnect between what the member from Kelvington is saying and the reality that rural people are facing is alarming and appalling.

Mr. Speaker, there are other things that we've talked about. February 18th we talked about seniors being sent away from home. There's no room for them, there's no place for them in their own home. We know that seniors in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region will now be subject to a 150-kilometre radius first-bed policy. So this is a health care policy that is affecting rural people, and it's hurting rural people, Mr. Speaker. What this means is that anybody waiting for . . . A senior in that health region who's waiting for a space in long-term care will wait in the first available bed which might be as far away as Cupar, Long Lake valley, or Lestock. And depending on where you're from, it could be doubly far, Mr. Speaker.

Our Health critic has said we should be working harder to keep seniors close to home, close to their family, close to their family doctor. And I think of my own mother, Mr. Speaker, who's now 85 years old. She'll be 86 this year. Her memory is starting to fail her and she's becoming more scared because she knows she's not certain anymore about everything that's going on. She remembers a lot of things, but I can tell that she's becoming very concerned about her future. And my dad too. He's 88. We heard about an 88-year-old gentleman today who spent seven hours in hallway medicine. Mr. Speaker, if that happened to my dad, look out. I mean this is not acceptable, and we have the arrogance of this government telling us that everything's fine, that we're great. We've done everything right and people love us. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, again Proverbs has the story: pride goeth before the fall. This is just another example of it. There's others we have prepared here.

Again, we've been asking about the misplaced priorities of this government and we're calling for progress in what matters to people, and that's what this government doesn't get. There's a number of things that we've seen this government misplace priorities and spending on the wrong things. For example, and the classic example is the toxic John Black lean project, keeping tens of millions of dollars out of front-line care. It's disgusting. We know that there's a bloated health administration. We know that this government's use of consultants has gone up 228 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And that's something even the auditor is calling upon them saying, wait a minute, boys and girls, you need to check this out, and maybe check it a little bit.

I know of one consultant who was paid \$35 million by this government in the last few years. These are projects that could be done by a stronger and fortified public service. The smart meter fiasco, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that fiasco's over yet, but we know that this government basically was stubbornly giving away money to the manufacturers of these meters and in giving them a special deal. We know there's all kinds of wasteful, entitlement behaviour. And I think I've run out of time, but I certainly will not support this motion as written.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand up in the Assembly and address the motion set before us this morning by my colleague, the member from Kelvington-Wadena. Because, Mr. Speaker, I think, as a member who represents rural Saskatchewan, this is very close and dear to my heart about what happens in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity of serving in this Assembly for a number of years, and I've seen the devastation that has taken place through the years through actions of government, namely the NDP government. Mr. Speaker, let me speak first of all to the fact that when we talk about a government supporting rural Saskatchewan, we don't talk about it just on the basis of the rural community; we talk about it as how it impacts all of Saskatchewan people. And this government is committed to making a better quality of life for the people right across this province.

But let me speak about the times of the NDP for a moment. Let me remind people of what happened in rural Saskatchewan during the NDP years, the school closures that took place.

People's lives, students' lives were disrupted as the NDP closed school after school. And it seemed, Mr. Speaker, that the plan the NDP had at the time was to reduce the population of students in rural Saskatchewan. Their plan was all based on the fact that that population would never grow, that school numbers would continue to decrease, and as a result we saw them closing school after school. We saw the disruption in families' lives and students' lives and in parents' lives.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you think I'm speaking just of something that never really happened, you should have been there. You should have been in the meetings that took place across rural Saskatchewan as these closures took place. And, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate travesty in all of that is that since 2007, we have seen such a growth of student numbers, population numbers across this province that this government has been forced to deal with the capital infrastructure deficit that has been left in this province, including schools.

[11:15]

The NDP opposition this morning was addressing or speaking to the issue of capital construction. And I believe my colleague, the Minister of Education, pointed out that this government is committed to making sure that we have a school environment that young people can look forward to going to school and working and learning in healthy and top-notch school facilities. And when we talk about building schools in the province of Saskatchewan, what we've been forced to do because of the capital deficit is, in many cases, portable schools just to address the needs of schools that have found that their enrolments have increased dramatically.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to building rural Saskatchewan, building the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan — not only rural Saskatchewan, but all of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as well, let me speak for a moment about health care. We've heard my colleagues. My colleague from Kelvington-Wadena already pointed out some of the challenges that we faced as a result of the closure of hospitals across Saskatchewan.

The NDP record: 52 hospitals closed. And one that sticks out today, even if you spend the time visiting in the hospitals here in Regina, in the Pasqua and the General, I have yet not to run across someone who will not raise the issue of the closure of the Plains health care facility. That comes up time and time again. And that facility, Mr. Speaker, was one that rural Saskatchewan really looked to because of easy access to the facility. I've had friends who've worked in the emergency measures, running ambulances, and they talked about how convenient it was to access the Plains health care centre and then the challenges they faced as that was closed and they were forced to get either to the Pasqua or to the General.

Mr. Speaker, through the NDP years we saw nothing but reductions. We saw nothing but closures — closures of heavy care beds, a failure to address the needs of long-term care facilities that were falling apart.

What has the Saskatchewan Party government done? Since 2007 we have 13 new long-term care facilities that are under

construction or are completed. And tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be my pleasure to join with the ministers of Health and Rural Health as we officially open the new integrated health care facility in Kipling. Mr. Speaker . . .

[Applause]

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, that's a facility that I've been working on for a number of years.

And while the NDP closed facilities, I will acknowledge the fact that they at least placed one facility and put one facility in place. That was the Moosomin health care facility. I'll give them credit for that, Mr. Speaker. But closing 52 and replacing it with one just does not cut the bill, cut the fat, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we opening the Kipling integrated health facility and last week we saw the new facility in Radville officially open, we have . . . as my colleagues from Moose Jaw are now experiencing. While the NDP had, time and time again, they had cabinet ministers from Moose Jaw sitting around the cabinet table, what did they do — and even the Premier, I'm reminded, even the Premier — what did they do when it came to addressing the depleted, the facility in Moose Jaw? Absolutely nothing.

But when you drive around the city of Moose Jaw today, what do you see going up? And I'm sure the residents of Moose Jaw were really pleased to see this and are looking forward to the day when that facility will be opened, a brand new facility being put in place in the city of Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. We also have in this province, Mr. Speaker, commitment to a new children's hospital in Saskatoon and a new hospital in North Battleford and a commitment to the Plains surgical outpatient centre here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I think the actions of this government speak louder than words. Mr. Speaker, there is a commitment on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party government to ensure that the people of this province, whether they live in the rural or the urban centres, have the expectation that they will have access to quality health care across the province.

Mr. Speaker, let me speak for a moment as well to agriculture. What's the one thing that most people remember most in this province when it comes to NDP policy regarding agriculture?

An Hon. Member: — GRIP [gross revenue insurance program].

Mr. Toth: — Exactly. The elimination of the GRIP program in 1991. The NDP were elected, a GRIP program that was finally put in place that gave agriculture producers an opportunity to kind of plan their farming operations, and the NDP were elected and they immediately tore up that contract. In fact they unilaterally changed the contract. They didn't just bring it before the Legislative Assembly, they tore it up. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as a result the poor agriculture producers had to rethink how they move forward in regards to the agricultural programs. But, Mr. Speaker, we didn't leave agriculture producers sitting there. We addressed some of the issues that really were coming forward, and if I have a moment I'll get to that in a moment.

But one thing I would like to speak to is the fact that one of the commitments we made was addressing the issue of property tax on education; the first government that actually stood up to the plate and addressed the issue. I remember, Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, a former premier of this province speaking to SARM — I believe it was when he was speaking to SARM — and when asked about property tax, his comment was, "The status quo is not on." Well what did he do? Did we see anything from that premier or his government of the day? Absolutely nothing.

But, Mr. Speaker, following the 2007 election, this government made a commitment to address the issue of property tax on education. We not only made a commitment; we acted on that and we've addressed it. And I know the people across all of Saskatchewan and rural Saskatchewan were pleased to see that here was a government that its actions spoke louder than its words.

Mr. Speaker, we've also, when it comes to . . . I see my time's running out, but there's so much more that a person could add. But when it comes to highways, look at the commitment that this government has made to highway construction in the province of Saskatchewan. This government has made a commitment to address highways. We not only have twin highways, we not only are announcing a new further twinning of highways in the province of Saskatchewan, or passing lanes, but there is a commitment to, a further commitment to larger dollars into the highway budget across this province, more than the NDP actually did in 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, there's so much that a person could speak about as to what has been done. Unfortunately my time's run out, but I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to enter this debate.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's kind of interesting joining the debate today. It seems to have a bit of a throwback Thursday flavour to it in terms of the speaking lineup from members opposite, in that they've put up members that have announced that they're retiring. And I could be wrong, but I believe we'll see the member from Melville-Saltcoats hit the floor next. And you know, I certainly enjoy the vocal stylings of the member from Melville-Saltcoats, so it's always interesting to see him get on the floor.

In terms of the relation to the content and the veracity of what is said, that's not always there because of course we know that the member from Melville-Saltcoats said, you know, in opposition you can say just about anything you want, in defence of something that happened when he'd wound up in the government benches, Mr. Speaker. But again he certainly does sling it with a lot of passion, a lot of force. So we'll look forward to that one.

And then of course we have the mover of the motion and the individual preceding me just now, the member from Moosomin participating in the debate. And again it's . . . I'm a bit torn here because I don't want to appear disrespectful in terms of the way that I respect the service that has been rendered by those individuals to the people of this province but, Mr. Speaker, given again the content of what's gone on, there's some

response that is demanded. And I guess the first place I'd start, Mr. Speaker, is with another, with another proverb. I guess it's like Bible-reading Thursday over here, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of there's a proverb that is quoted on one of the meeting room walls in the House of Commons where it's, "Where there is no vision, the people shall perish."

And it's interesting that in terms of a motion that comes forward from this government where it's, you know, the internal contradictions in one sentence alone, it seems to be a rear-view mirror approach to the situation facing the province. And I guess it explains a lot, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that this government has conducted itself over the past couple of weeks.

We've seen, you know, as late as yesterday . . . And I hear him bellowing from his chair right now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Kindersley, you know, a big shot in that government, former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the power behind the throne, we're all led to understand in terms of this government. But in terms of what he had to say yesterday when they come back from the SARM convention, and again this relates to the member from Moosomin talking about education property tax, well yesterday they floated the old trial balloon about raising property tax.

And the Finance minister said, you know, we need the revenue; absolutely we're going to be looking at raising the property tax. And in the back and forth across the floor, the member from Kindersley, the Minister of the Economy — and you know, he's a big shot in that government so I imagine he's speaking the truth — in terms of what he had to say in the debate was he said, you know, we can raise it two times, Mr. Speaker, and they'll still vote for us. You know, it's an interesting study in how far this government has come.

And one thing, one thing I'll give them credit for, Mr. Speaker. The Premier himself generally does a good job of evincing a sense of humility, a sense of you've got to work for the trust of the people every day. You've got to get up and look forward. You've got to get up and make sure that you're connected to the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. And I can only, I can only surmise that that seems to be slipping from the top because the lieutenants over there are certainly taking a lot of advantages, taking for granted support that has come their way over these many years.

And in terms of the speeches we've just heard now, I hope to goodness that those members were good enough to give similar kind of speeches in caucus. When we had people come here from Craik who've had this, who've had the situation with their health care raised with this government before, and what kind of response, what kind of welcome did they get from this government? Well it certainly wasn't a warm one, Mr. Speaker. And it certainly wasn't the kind of reaction you'd expect between people who've had in many cases a years-, a decades-long relationship. But instead we saw many of the members over there that come from those communities sit on their hands and pretend that, you know, everything was awesome and, you know, pay attention to their own internal monologue. But what the people from those, that community from Craik in particular but also from Central Butte and from Coronach, what those people were saying needs to be

listened to.

And if a government is on its toes and if it's really working for the trust, for the people, then you're going to see that effort made, Mr. Speaker. You're going to see that willingness to work with people. You're not going to see them saying that, well you know, it's fine that you came here but, you know, you got it wrong. The concerns you're bringing forward are somehow ill-founded, or that they've not understood the situation; people being disrespected in a fundamental way.

And that makes sense, Mr. Speaker, when you hear the words from people like the Minister of the Economy, who again is a big shot in that cabinet and that government, talking about how you could raise education property taxes two times and the people in rural Saskatchewan would still vote for them. And I think today he added to that, that you know, we own them. And that kind of disrespect, Mr. Speaker, it eventually gets paid.

So now I hear the Minister of Finance yelling from his chair about the need to work for the people's respect. And again, Mr. Speaker, I hope he's giving the same kind of speech in caucus when he's talking to his fellow colleagues about, you know, maybe our heads are getting too big here. Maybe our heads are getting so inflated that we might float away. Maybe we should be careful about being so arrogant that we talk about owning people in rural Saskatchewan. Maybe we should think about that. And maybe we should think about, you know, resolutions that in the very same sentence where, you know, having got through in the first part congratulating themselves, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And they can try to shout me down all they want, but it's just, it's part of the deal, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the trend in terms of the way these guys do their business.

You know, if you're Sask Party, it means never having to say you're sorry. If you're Sask Party, it means you've got it right; everybody else has got it wrong. So why bother listening to the official opposition or people from rural Saskatchewan? Because they take you for granted. Because they're arrogant, Mr. Speaker, and in terms of approaching the people of Saskatchewan in that spirit, well we'll see how that works out for them.

[11:30]

But in their very own motion, Mr. Speaker, where they get through congratulating themselves in the first part, and then in the second part stating:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP opposition for its demands for increased spending without any recognition for the cost of its promises . . .

You know, so on the one hand, it's a condemnation about, you know, the promises and then carrying on:

. . . and for its failure to present any policy that supports a better quality of life for rural Saskatchewan.

So again we've had a bit of to and fro in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, about the merits of proper spelling and, you know, sign me up for that. I'm all in favour of good spelling, Mr.

Speaker. But I'm also in favour of, you know, putting forward something that makes sense, that's not at war against itself, Mr. Speaker, in the very same sentence.

And so in terms of, I guess in terms of the critique they like to make of the official opposition and the concerns that are brought to us by the people of Saskatchewan and in many cases rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and the way that they are in turn brought forward in this House, I would say, you know, maybe listen. Maybe don't be in such a hurry to condemn. Don't be in such a hurry to climb up self-righteousness mountain and say that, you know, we're the Sask Party. We don't need to apologize. We don't need to listen to anybody. We'll just do our own thing.

And again in the words of the Minister of the Economy, we own them in rural Saskatchewan. We own them in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine somebody saying that? Well here we are right on the floor of the House today, Mr. Speaker, hitting it again today in terms of the arrogance that has grown into the root and branch of the Saskatchewan Party and the way that they conduct themselves in politics.

This week, Mr. Speaker, we had people coming from the Esterhazy school, and in the very same day you had this government, you know, climbing all over a positive announcement made by a potash corporation in terms of an expansion and the \$1.7 billion of investment that's attended. But you know, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what is the basic job of the government, you know, they can't connect the fact that in this community the elementary school's in such a poor state of repairs that the kids have to wear jackets because they keep the windows open because the air quality is so poor. Mr. Speaker, maybe they could get a little more consistent. Maybe they could think about . . .

The Speaker: — Time has expired. Next presenter. I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate today, especially because the debate today and the motion today put forward is about rural Saskatchewan, and I take great interest in the members opposite talking about rural Saskatchewan with their vast experience.

I think it was the member for Saskatoon Nutana said that the members opposite actually have experience in rural Saskatchewan. I want to tell that member what experience in rural Saskatchewan is like after 16 years of NDP government. I lived it, Mr. Speaker. Many on this side lived in rural Saskatchewan under the NDP. And I might remind that member, Mr. Speaker, that — you know what? — that's why every rural riding is represented on this side of the House. And unless I'm getting old, Mr. Speaker, I don't see one rural member on the NDP side of the House. That's what I call experience, Mr. Speaker, with rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to . . . I think because lack of policy on the members opposite with an election coming — what, about a year away — and the members opposite are criticizing well pretty well everything, and that's their job, to be critical in opposition. We did it; we did it very well. We got to be here

and they got to be there. I think the message that we're looking for or the thing we're trying to pass across to them, if you want to be government, you've got to tell people what you stand for. What do the NDP stand for? And with the absence of that, we have nothing to go by. We have to go by their past record, and I'd like to go there for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the member from Moosomin and the member for Kelvington-Wadena, both touched on health care, and that's an important issue for rural Saskatchewan. And you know, it's being a little repetitive about the 52 hospitals closed under the NDP, but they did it. We lived it. We saw our hospitals close. Good example was Langenburg hospital. They were raising money to build a new facility, raised their money. Remember at that time, the community raised 35 per cent, and the government of the day, the NDP, would give 65.

Well Langenburg raised their 35, had the money in the bank. And the Premier at the time, Mr. Romanow . . . And I think Louise Simard was Health minister, was she not? They not only didn't build that hospital, they closed the one they actually had. You know what? They didn't have to come and fix that Langenburg hospital with infrastructure dollars. It was gone. It's never been there since. That's the record of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you know what's in these pages, Mr. Speaker. Probably not; you haven't seen them. But I have on these three pages a list of communities across rural Saskatchewan, and there's some from urban Saskatchewan here too of the larger centres. But places like Climax, Coronach, Cut Knife, Goodsoil. Where's Goodsoil? Right there. Here we are, Meadow Lake area. They know what I'm talking about. Invermay, the member from Canora-Pelly knows Invermay very well. He lived there. He saw this happen. Theodore, member for Kelvington-Wadena's constituency. Norquay. And I talked about Langenburg. I won't repeat myself. Mildred, Pangman, Rockglen. I could go on, Mr. Speaker. I have 52 communities that saw their hospital closed under the NDP.

Now should they get elected after this next election — well I doubt it; it's a stretch but say they should — what are they going to do out to us in rural Saskatchewan again? I'm getting old. I can't take much more of this. It's kind of why I'm stepping down ahead of the game. I want to see a Saskatchewan Party in power when I'm out there in my retirement age, Mr. Speaker, taking advantage of the good times in rural Saskatchewan, for that matter, right across this great province of Saskatchewan. I'm going to retire here and enjoy every minute of it. Might be a little critical of my colleagues from time to time, but I'm going to enjoy it, Mr. Speaker.

But I think what scares me the most is someday, somewhere down the line, people of this province may forget. I don't think they will, but they might. Because there's so many new people coming into this province that don't know what the NDP stand for. They don't know what the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] stood for. I mean they don't know who Allan Blakeney was. They don't know who Tommy Douglas was. So to, you know, kind of spread fearmongering and be critical of every issue and saying if it isn't for the NDP, you won't survive out there, those days are gone.

Because most people in this province like the Premier that we

have today because he's optimistic. You know, he's criticized over there and actually I think there was a column or two in the media kind of criticizing the Premier because of his optimism. My God, what a change. For 100 years or 60 years, whatever it was, we sold gloom and doom in this province. We finally get a Premier in this province that's optimistic and is proud of the work that the Saskatchewan people do. And, Mr. Speaker, there's still, still got a few people in this province that would criticize that. Mr. Speaker, times are changing — not fast enough for some of us, but they're changing. The good times I think are here.

I have an apartment in Regina and it's so nice to see so many young, new families living in those apartments, Mr. Speaker. You know, at one time our seniors at home had nowhere to go but they'd move to the larger centres. In fact they weren't alone. They took their kids and their young grandchildren with them because they were going on. They weren't stopping in Regina or Saskatoon. They were going on to Alberta. And we saw that trend, that out-migration for many, many years. And you know, the members were here the other day, people were here from my constituency talking about Esterhazy school and a real serious issue. And it's been dealt with now and that was a good issue to bring to the forefront.

But, Mr. Speaker, the problem is that we have a growing population. A great problem to have; they never had that on that side of the House. We saw an out-migration of every community in this province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, and I know the member for education, the critic for Education over there knows exactly what I'm talking about. Two of my kids are teachers. And you know, my son, my oldest son was in a small school in Saltcoats at the time when he first got out of school or university and got a job. But you know what his biggest concern was? They were closing schools so fast that he had to try and jump to a larger centre. He wasn't alone. Many of the others had to do that. Because he was worried: what they did at that time because of the out-migration of young people is that grade 9, 10, 11, and 12 were transferred under the NDP to the Yorkton school because Yorkton was losing population of students in there. So what was happening is we were losing not only our kids; we were losing our teachers. And our young people like that had to move to the larger centres.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on here for a long time, but I think it's time we compared the record of the NDP in health care, Mr. Speaker, to some of the things that have been done under the Sask Party government. And that's the comparison in the next election I think people will go by in the absence of any policy from the members opposite.

But over the last number of years, we've invested \$1 billion into health care capital. Hospitals, Mr. Speaker, Swift Current long-term care facility, needed badly; Moose Jaw, new hospital coming in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. I know my colleagues have talked about it. The new children's hospital in Saskatoon, it's on the way; North Battleford, new hospital there; and we're committed to a new Plains surgical outpatient centre in Regina. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we'll let our policy stand for itself.

But you might be surprised, Mr. Speaker, that I would have

another number of pages in this same speech, and I know I only have 10 minutes so I've got to hurry it a little bit. But this time I've got probably 12, 15 pages with nothing but communities across this province where the NDP government, same thing again except not hospitals. This time they closed 176 schools across the province. So when the members opposite get critical that we aren't fixing schools fast enough across this province, they should . . . I'm sure they saw the Minister of Education today get hoarse because he was listing off so many new schools that the Sask Party government is building across the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could go through this list, and we don't have time right now, but there's probably every constituent or every MLA on this side of the House, and there's a number on that side of the House, that had schools closed in their constituency. And if they only knew what that does to a community out there — it kills that community. Once a school goes, that community pretty well dries up. And it's a good thing to see out there because that optimism that the Premier brings to the table and I think members on this side try to bring to the table, is those small communities. They're turning around, Mr. Speaker. They're going strong out there. They're growing.

My small community of Saltcoats right now. You couldn't give a house away 15 years ago. I know. My mom and dad retired and then they went to the care home for health reasons later on. But they had a house. You couldn't sell that house, and it was about 10 or 12 years old. Mr. Speaker, hindsight's 20/20. If we'd have kept that house, we'd have made about four times as much because right now I think the town of Saltcoats has 14 or 15 brand new homes just built. Houses are actually selling that couldn't move before or being remodelled, and it's a great thing to see in rural Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, you know, I had more to say and I'm sure when the budget comes in we'll have a lot more to say and a lot more optimism, Mr. Speaker, to say, but I would . . . You know, I think on this side of the House it would be so much easier to listen to the criticisms of the member opposite if, when they get up and ask questions, if they would add to that, their prelim to that, is: this is what we would do if we ever got to be government.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in my last few seconds, the Leader of the Opposition gets up — and I know he takes all the gravy train over there and probably some members over there don't get to ask too many questions — and he, you know, gets himself, his face on the camera and that, but he doesn't tell us what he sees. We saw what he did last election for Mr. Lingenfelter. His promise was to spend 5 billion more than actually was affordable. And that was under Mr. Lingenfelter, but the Leader of the Opposition was . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join in the debate today, and I want to point out that I find it surprisingly strange that the motion that's being discussed today and the presentation being made on behalf of the Sask Party government are being made by members who cannot wait to get out of Dodge soon enough,

Mr. Speaker. These are members that have quit the Saskatchewan Party government. They have retired from politics, Mr. Speaker, and yet in their parting wave, in their parting shot, Mr. Speaker, they try and rewrite the history of Saskatchewan. All those members would know, Mr. Speaker, that when the NDP took over government in 1991, we were facing bankruptcy. We had \$15.5 billion in debt that the Conservative government left the province of Saskatchewan in. We were facing bankruptcy as a province.

Why don't they talk about that, Mr. Speaker? Because it's a shameful record. They don't want to bring that up, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to bring that up, Mr. Speaker, because they know that almost . . . I think it was the second-highest payment every year, the second-highest payment every year that the Saskatchewan government had to pay in the 1990s was the interest on the debt alone, Mr. Speaker, \$15.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. And this is what I find passing strange is that you sit here and you start talking about trying to rewrite history. People in Saskatchewan will not be fooled by how they try and rewrite the history of Saskatchewan. They know the incredible debt that we had to go through in the 1990s.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we want to point out is that instead of back-patting themselves which we see often from this particular government, we should take the effort, as the members of the Assembly here, to make sure that we recognize the true builders of the Saskatchewan that we're very proud of, Mr. Speaker. And by some of the true builders in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the producers in many of our communities, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about the small businesses that dot the landscape of Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan. I'm talking about the community-minded people who volunteer countless hours, Mr. Speaker, in making their community stronger. I'm talking about the organizations and the groups out there that just relentlessly work to build their community and make it stronger and prouder, Mr. Speaker. It has nothing to do with the Saskatchewan Party back-patting themselves on a regular basis here, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

So from our effort, from our point of view, Mr. Speaker, in the history of Saskatchewan, they should recognize those people instead of giving themselves a pat on the back every five seconds here. And instead of trying to rewrite the history, they should recognize what builds rural Saskatchewan, and that is strong-minded people, good business people and certainly, Mr. Speaker, the many producers throughout the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, from my perspective here I see this motion as simple theatrics on behalf of the members that are leaving this Assembly. These are theatrics in their effort in trying to rewrite history. And from my perspective of standing here today — I often make the statement to many of my constituents and I think this every single day — so much money was available to the Sask Party government. It received so little progress. Record revenues, record revenues, and the Sask Party can't even get it right. They cannot get it right, Mr. Speaker.

And if you look at some of the examples that I would use, some of the examples I would use, Mr. Speaker, they have lost so much revenues and opportunity in particular with the

transportation crisis facing the ag producers of our province, Mr. Speaker. How many billions of dollars did we lose as a result of the transportation crisis in rural Saskatchewan? And yet not a peep from the Saskatchewan Party government or any of their rural members. They sat on their hands and they sat on their cash, Mr. Speaker, when our farmers had a difficult time of trying to get their product to market because they had this transportation issue that they had to deal with. We've heard it, Mr. Speaker, we've heard it from many, many sectors. And yet today again the government's sitting there, arrogantly patting themselves on the back when they know that the grain transportation crisis still affects the Saskatchewan producers today and thus affects rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And this is a government, again, that sat on their hands and sat on their cash when rural Saskatchewan needed them the most. They refused to stand up to Ottawa. They refused to look at any long-term strategy to be able to use the revenues we have today to build a stronger tomorrow for all of Saskatchewan, and that includes rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely nothing in the kitty for future generations, or to build, Mr. Speaker. And we in the NDP often speak about the future and the challenges, what may lay ahead for many of our families and our friends and our communities, Mr. Speaker.

The agricultural critic and I had the opportunity to view some of the areas and to visit some of the areas that are deeply affected by the flooding that happened last year, Mr. Speaker. We saw farm fields, driveways, houses, all being flooded. We saw, Mr. Speaker, how many of the families were really struggling with trying to retain and keep their homes in some of the constituencies that they brag about today, Mr. Speaker, that they personally brag about. We saw the incredible trauma that some of the families was going . . . And we also looked at how PDAP was not responding adequately to making sure that they mitigate the problem of flooding in some of these farm families and these farm locations, Mr. Speaker.

We look at the challenges of the future, Mr. Speaker, with the lower oil prices. We look at the argument around surface rights. No leadership from this government. We looked at the revenue-sharing discussion today at SARM. Again, there's no leadership from this government at all. We looked at the affordability for families: whether it is your power bill or telephone bill or taxes, these are all going up through the roof, Mr. Speaker. And yet you also look at the health care challenges. So you look at the agricultural crisis, the flooding crisis, the lower oil prices, the surface rights that they refuse to have, Mr. Speaker. Why aren't they releasing the report for the state of our schools? All this, Mr. Speaker, all of this is in a time of prosperity and opportunity.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we on the NDP tell the people of rural Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party is taking you for granted, and they have not delivered despite having record revenues, Mr. Speaker, record revenues. And this is the most important thing that we tell people throughout our travels is that they have simply failed to meet the test, failed the test of leadership, Mr. Speaker.

And now we're in the situation where lower oil prices having us re-look at the budget and trying to figure out exactly what to do now because we're in this situation now where we don't have as

much revenues coming in. Why didn't they put together a visionary plan, a visionary plan that protected the agricultural sector, Mr. Speaker? Why didn't they look at a plan that spoke about engaging the Aboriginal community to the extent that they should be engaged — \$90 billion, Mr. Speaker?

And now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw North is chirping from his chair. And that's the only time you hear the member from Moose Jaw North chirping from his chair is when he's heckling in this Assembly. But when the time comes for him to speak on behalf of Moose Jaw, all you hear from him is silence, Mr. Speaker — silence, silence, silence.

And once again they're sitting on their hands, Mr. Speaker, and they're sitting on their cash now as we see the debate here today from the MLAs that are leaving. My advice to them is, too little, too late. You had the opportunity. The bus has left the station, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the people that should be recognized are people like Mosaic. They're the ones putting the money into potash, not the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

And I also want to take special aim at Prince Albert. Again you see the headline from the *Daily Herald*: "Laundry workers relieved to find closure." They're trying to find ways they can keep their laundry services going. These are the examples of how they have decimated opportunities for future generations, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why on this side of the House, we say shame on the Saskatchewan Party. You were left with so much — billions in the bank, a growing population, a booming economy — and you couldn't figure it out. Mr. Speaker, that's why we don't support their motion, and that's why we say shame on them for taking rural Saskatchewan for granted and for not doing the right thing for them for lasting opportunity for years and years to come. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed. Questions. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly ironic to see the Premier taking credit for a big, shiny potash project in Esterhazy while he fails to do his actual job, ensuring safe learning spaces for the kids in Esterhazy. To the member from Melville-Saltcoats: does he agree with that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad the member opposite brought the question up about Mosaic, because for my constituency that is tremendous news right now. You know, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Premier was saying that was our doing; it was Mosaic's. But you know what? When you get out of the road of business and let them do their business, it's amazing how they can expand in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this legislature, ambulance services have been at the forefront of the discussion. This week the members of the opposition have proposed changes to ambulance fees. To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: are you in favour of eliminating the per kilometre change, and if so, how will this policy cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I think what's at issue here is the absolute failure of this government to deliver for rural residents, and part of that is the exorbitant interest fees that this government has nailed on people who can't even afford to pay for the ambulance bill itself. I think it's really shameful that he brings the question up when he should be looking at his own cabinet. And I hope the member is speaking up through his, on behalf of his citizens so that the cabinet will make the right decision.

So I think it was clear on Monday, when the individuals had to come in and raise this issue, that this is a government that doesn't listen, that it's taking its rural residents for granted, and that it's time for those backbenchers to start laying it on the line for the cabinet so that people know what's really going on out there.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the member from Moosomin, when the government was defeated in 1991 by the NDP, the former Conservative government, what was the second-highest payment that we had as a budget? And can he confirm the amount of dollars that was owing by the people of Saskatchewan under the Devine government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just respond to the question by saying that over the years and the work of this government, this government has made a real effort to address many of the needs left . . . Where people of Saskatchewan had at one time looked to the NDP, but finally quit looking to the NDP because every time they looked to the NDP they found that we were falling further and further behind.

We found that we were behind in heavy-care construction in the province of Saskatchewan. We found that we were losing heavy-care beds and that people had no access to heavy-care beds. We found that young people across this province were leaving the province. But not only that, even students going to school were finding out that they were having to travel further because of the neglect that the NDP were leaving this province in. And the NDP would like to say that was because of what they inherited. I would have to say to you . . .

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, we all know that the NDP refused to release any type of policy and have denied the very

document that their leader cut his teeth on. Yet as much as they want to deny their past promises to the people of Saskatchewan, it's hard to deny the citizens that they ignored the most — rural Saskatchewan.

There may be one member opposite who has an inkling of policy. The member from Nutana last year paid \$500 for a document labelled, *Initial Report: Climate Change/Energy Policy*. To the member from Nutana: since the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have already paid for this report, will you table it in the House today?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it interesting when we have a debate about rural people and what's happening in rural areas and we're hearing from a government that is taking them for granted, that we have these kinds of strange questions coming from the backbenchers.

What we're talking about today and the topic that we're talking about, may I remind the backbenchers we're talking about this government's treatment of rural people. And I think we've amply pointed out some of the issues that rural people are going to start raising and they have started raising, and that when we hear the Minister of the Economy saying, well you know, we could double taxes and people would still vote for us, we're going to see what happens in the next election, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Moosomin, and I understand that he's resigning and I know his answers will be straightforward and frank . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Moving on, moving on. My mistake, Mr. Speaker. But he wants to talk about spending. He wants to talk about spending. I would like to know, and I will ask the member from Moosomin who is finishing up in the next while — he can be frank and straightforward — what he sees the benefits of rural Saskatchewan, in fact anybody in Saskatchewan, from the Premier's pet project like the Premier's library here in Regina.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't quite catch all the question, but I'd like to point out that, given the record of this government and given where we've gone, what has happened since 2007?

An Hon. Member: — Record population.

Mr. Toth: — Exactly, record population in the province of Saskatchewan. More people working today than we've ever seen in the province of Saskatchewan. More money put into agriculture to support the agricultural community of the province of Saskatchewan. More money put into addressing the needs of doctors and nurses. Where the NDP saw doctors and nurses leaving the province, we have more doctors and nurses practising in the province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh

Acres.

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find this whole conversation quite interesting, as there are two members that stand up and give a speech on rural Saskatchewan for the opposition, and no one really once mentioned any policy that they'd have for rural Saskatchewan, how they'd make things better. The only thing they have is to talk about heckles from across the floor because they really don't have any inkling of what's going on in rural Saskatchewan.

And I find the unbelievable arrogance coming from the member from Nutana and the member from Elphinstone thinking that they speak on behalf of rural Saskatchewan. Not one bit of contrition, not one time to say, you know what? We maybe got it wrong; that's why we don't have any members from rural Saskatchewan. Meanwhile when they should have a policy in place, like when you're looking at the leader's opposition tree book, there's not one mention of rural Saskatchewan in their whole policy book, not one mention.

So to the member opposite, to the member from Nutana, you don't mention your policy on rural Saskatchewan once in your tree book. And you're the Ag critic and haven't asked one question on ag this session. How do you think people of rural Saskatchewan feel you should treat them?

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

Ms. Sproule: — I need to correct the member from Walsh Acres on two points here. I did ask a question of the Agriculture minister yesterday which he refused to answer. And secondly, two of our members represent half of the geographical area of this province. If you think that the members from the North don't represent rural Saskatchewan, you haven't looked at the map lately.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do have a caucus that listens to rural people. We have a caucus that's active in rural areas. And this is a government that is so caught up in its own pet projects and misplaced priorities that they don't have a clue what's actually going on in rural Saskatchewan. And I think that's good. We're going to see the results of that in the next election.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess we heard yesterday from the Minister of the Economy, the member from Kindersley, that they're going to raise property tax, they could raise property tax two times and everyone in rural Saskatchewan would still vote for them. Further on that score today, Mr. Speaker, we hear him say that they own rural Saskatchewan.

I guess my question to the member from Melville-Saltcoats: does he agree with the Minister of the Economy on those outrageous statements?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the member opposite, I believe that everybody across rural Saskatchewan that I've talked to in my time in here will never in a million years vote for another NDP MLA as long as they live. So, Mr. Speaker, I think if the member opposite talked about raising taxes double what they are now, it would still end up being about a third what they were in 2007 when we came to power.

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

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the members opposite were in government, it was tough times for the people of rural Saskatchewan. They closed 52 hospitals, 19 long-term care facilities, 176 schools, 31 rural agriculture offices, and they tore up contracts for the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about the ways that they ignored rural residents. The NDP didn't care about rural Saskatchewan when they were in government, and they certainly don't care about rural Saskatchewan now.

The Speaker: — Seventy-five minute debate has elapsed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 607

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Broten that **Bill No. 607** — *The Buy Local Day Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to *The Buy Local Day Act*. We know that this is the time today for it to be voted on. We know that this is a simple, straightforward bill. We had the former government House leader speak to it today in question period, so we're looking forward to this vote. It's a simple, straightforward bill. It shouldn't be controversial, and we know that it will be embraced by every single member of this House. So what we're going to . . . All it simply does is proclaim the first Saturday of every month as Buy Local Day. It's common sense, a simple way to promote the value of local businesses to our province's economy and to our communities.

I think, you know, rather than spending a lot of time in providing an extensive commentary on this again, I just want to share with the Assembly a letter that I believe was provided to all members today. This is from the Broadway Business Improvement District, and this has been a very vibrant business improvement district in my riding for many, many years. I remember the former, I think, the original director was Heather Larson, and she was a huge contributor to the vibrancy and the excitement that we see on Broadway Avenue and certainly a

revitalization from the '70s when things weren't quite so positive on Broadway Avenue. And a lot of members who lived in Saskatoon will remember Broadway in those years.

But since then, through the efforts of the local business improvement district and the local businesses, there's a lot of community pride in that area. Indeed you know, one of the iconic buildings on the street is in the news these days as we know that the Farnam Block, which has been an apartment building, a restaurant, bookstore, and more recently a very popular pub in the Broadway area, is now being slated for demolition, and just the community spirit that's coming out and activism that you see coming. Peter Garden's bookstore, Turning the Tide, a very popular local bookstore right on Broadway Avenue, you know, the building is now slated for demolition. But I'm happy to say that Peter's going to relocate just two doors down from me, which makes it a lot easier for me to get there to do my book shopping, by the way.

But there's a lot of really strong, vibrant businesses in the Broadway area, and I'm sure many of the members from Saskatoon frequent it often. And I'm hoping that on the first Saturday of every month, we'll now see each other wandering down the street on Broadway Avenue or other parts of Saskatoon. Certainly there's a farmers' market and a lot of businesses on 33rd Street downtown.

So this is a positive bill, and I am just going to share with you a letter that was written to the Legislative Assembly and to all the members from Sarah Marchildon who is the executive director of the Broadway Business Improvement District. And what she says is this:

To all members of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly:

As one of the province's original commercial main streets, today's Broadway Business Improvement District — Broadway BID — continues to be a successful example of a community built on local business.

On behalf of our approximately 150 merchants, the Broadway BID board of directors wholly endorses the implementation of the proposed buy local day Act. During our 29 years as a business improvement district, we have proudly fostered an environment in which small local businesses have thrived. As a commercial district nestled in the heart of an established residential area amidst three schools, we have seen first-hand how local businesses can serve the whole community. Locally invested dollars support the district's employment and development. Local property ownership adds a level of community engagement and accountability. Local business people build invaluable relationships with the community through their investment and sponsorship of neighbourhood events, school groups, and organizations.

By proclaiming a provincially recognized Buy Local Day, the Act aligns resoundingly with our BID's values to celebrate and support local business as a means towards economic sustainability and prosperity. We are pleased to offer the buy local Act our full and enthusiastic support.

Sincerely,
Sarah Marchildon
Executive Director

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

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I have really nothing more to say. I just look forward to the vote. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Leader of the Opposition that Bill No. 607, *The Buy Local Day Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:12.]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:06 until 12:09.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 42]

Morgan	Stewart	Wyant
Krawetz	Boyd	McMorris
Harpauer	Toth	Huyghebaert
Doherty	Docherty	Harrison
Tell	Ottenbreit	Norris
Hart	Bjornerud	Brkich
Makowsky	Draude	Wilson
Marchuk	Ross	Michelson
Hutchinson	Young	Steinley
Merriman	Lawrence	Elhard
Parent	Phillips	Doke
Brotten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

The Speaker: — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — nil]

Senior Committee Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, 42 in favour; opposed, nil.

The Speaker: — The ayes, 42; nays, 0. Carried. To which committee shall this Bill be committed? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Brotten: — I designate that Bill No. 607, *The Buy Local Day Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands designated to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

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

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Minister of Energy and Resources
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