



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

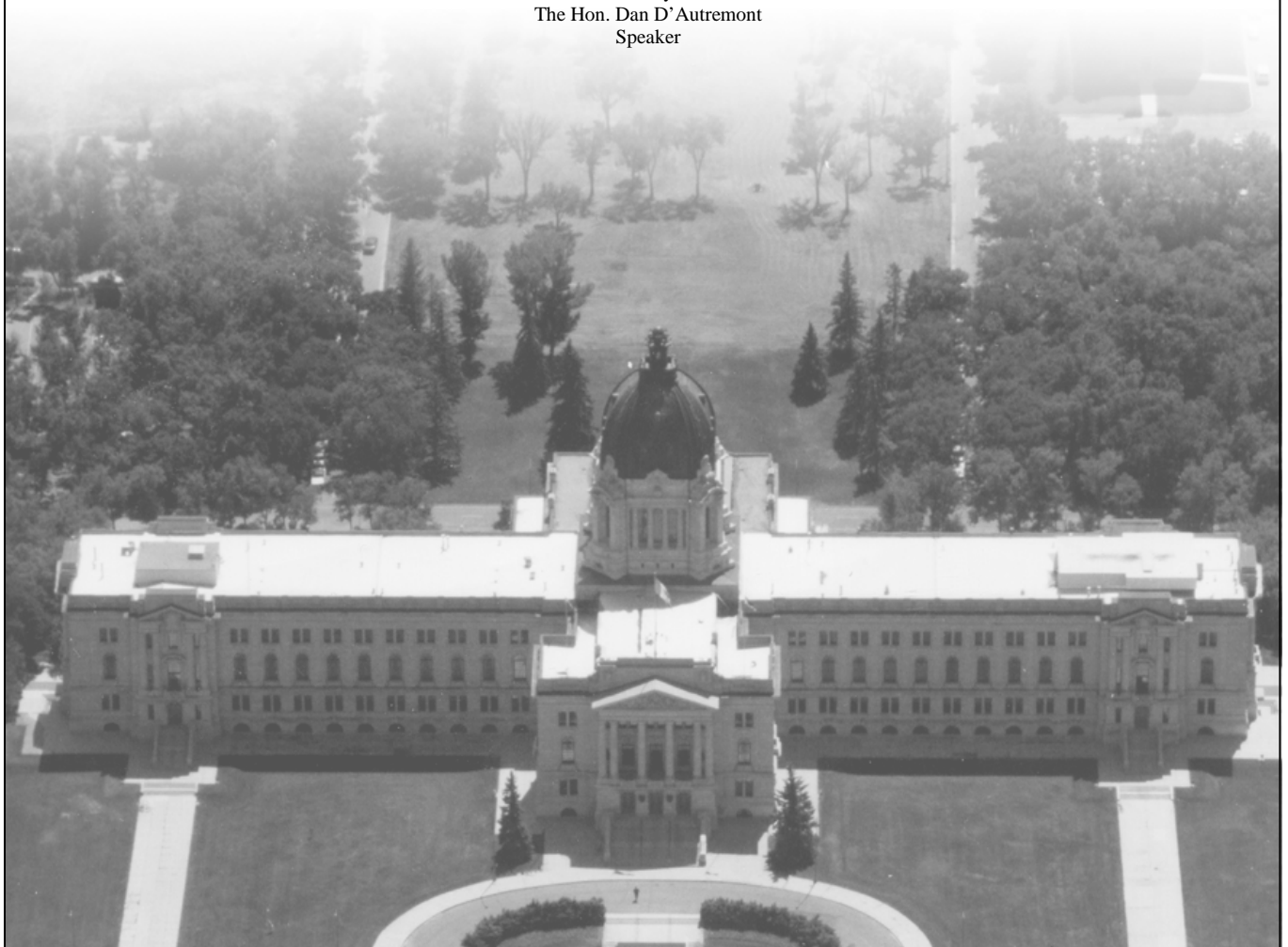
of the

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
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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
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Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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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.]

Clerk: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker will not be present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, I have received the annual report for the Advocate for Children and Youth, and I do now lay it on the Table.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to make an introduction this morning. Yesterday we had in the legislature guests from the state of South Dakota, including an elected member of the legislature. They learned a lot about the difference and the comparables between their system and our system. And on their recommendation, we today have four guests from the state of North Dakota visiting us, and I'd like to through you and to all members of the legislature, introduce our guests who are sitting in the west gallery this morning.

With us today are Shawn Wenko, the executive director of Williston Economic Development, of course Williston, North Dakota. We have Jeni Fleck who is the sales director for the Williston Convention and Visitor Bureau, and we have Kristie and Brent Bogar who are here from Bismarck. Brent is the owner-operator of a consulting firm. I'd like all members of the legislature to make our guests feel welcome here today and encourage their questions of our system when we have a chance to visit after today's session.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Cypress Hills in welcoming the guests from North Dakota. People often forget how close Williston is to Regina. For anybody who likes to travel on the train, it's almost worth going down to Williston and catch the train to go to Minneapolis or to go to Seattle as it is to go out to Melville and catch the Canadian train. I've done that a few times because it's interesting but also a good place to go.

Williston has changed so much in the last number of years with the oil industry. I think a lot of our Canadians don't recognize that this group of people here helped facilitate the purchase of the Olympic village at Whistler and move it to Williston so they could have housing for their oil workers. So I'd like to say thank you to these people for coming here, and we look forward to many more years of working together with them. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to you, through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce another school group today from Yorkton, a group of 43 grade 4 and 5 students from Yorkdale Central School in Yorkton. With them are their teachers, Ms. Julie Wilson, who I had the pleasure to spend some time with at the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] banquet and conference that was here just a few short days ago. Also Ms. Kathleen Henderson is with them and chaperone Sharon Walker, Mr. Speaker. So I ask all members to welcome these fine people to their Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see we have a bunch of fine firefighters from Moose Jaw in your gallery. So I just ask all members to welcome them and join me in thanking them for their service to the community of Moose Jaw of the province of Saskatchewan. And I look forward to meeting with them, I think, a little bit later with some other members of our government. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome and acknowledge these Moose Jaw firefighters to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome the large delegation that we have in the Assembly, as members will recognize many of these faces. The firefighters have been here on different days and sharing information with members.

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have the president of the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association, Mr. Kirby Benning, who is no stranger to the Assembly of course. Welcome, Kirby. We have a number of Moose Jaw firefighters who have come here to share some concerns today. We have Ian Clark, Chris Mealing, Ken Neff, Craig Flanagan, Sterling Macdiarmid, Matt Murray, Robin Anweshey, Matt Crocker, Bill Howes, Gord Hewitt, Jason R. Hutchinson. Mr. Speaker, those are the firefighters and we also have a private citizen along, Mr. Brent Evan.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this important delegation here to the Assembly.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — I'd like to join with the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and the Leader of the Opposition to welcome our fine firefighters from Moose Jaw and the president of the association. Looking forward to sitting down with you folks again and having a chat a little later. So looking forward to that, and we'll see you after question period.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member of Parks, Culture and Sport.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in the west gallery, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members, the province's 2015 Saskatchewaner, Ashlyn George. Give us a little wave, Ashlyn.

Since January, she's toured Saskatchewan, experiencing everything from a kiteboarding festival in Regina to a cross-country ski festival in La Ronge, from the innovative Rayner Dairy Research farm to the Great Western Brewing Company. Ashlyn is busy promoting our province to the world, and she's doing a wonderful job.

Since she's started, Ashlyn has gained thousands of followers. Her audience, between Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, has grown to more than 13,000. Back in March, she posted a photo of herself and the Saskatchewaner vehicle under the northern lights outside of Saskatoon. That photo received more than 600 likes. More recently she posted a video showcasing Solo Italia, a pasta supply business in Ogema. This video was viewed on Facebook more than 20,000 times and shared nearly 400 times. Ashlyn has outstanding social media photography and videography skills.

She also has a passion for travel. Ashlyn applied for the Saskatchewaner position back in the fall while touring Madagascar. She spent the last five years traveling the world — Australia, New Zealand, to Europe, Asia, South America, and most recently Africa — but she promises us she's thrilled to be back in her home province, rediscovering the place she grew up and showcasing Saskatchewan to the world. Mr. Speaker, please join me and all members in welcoming Ashlyn to her legislature.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too would like to welcome Ashlyn — I can't quite see her this morning — to the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the official opposition, we just want to thank you for the bang-up job that she's doing representing Saskatchewan, and also our complete envy at the wonderful job opportunity she has. I think all of us would love to tag along with her on her adventures because we know how wonderful Saskatchewan is and that there's so many things to see and do here. So, Ashlyn, you're doing it for us, but on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly as well.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to like to welcome Joanne and Richard Lepp to the Legislative Assembly today. They're seated in the west gallery. Richard and Joanne are with the Saskatchewan House of Prayer. I had the opportunity to have a really nice visit with Joanne this morning, and she again presented me with petitions of informed consent. So please everyone extend a warm welcome to Richard and Joanne for their hard work. They sit up there, and they pray

for us lots, and some days we really need it. So thank you very much, Richard and Joanne. We appreciate your vigilance.

Also I'd like to welcome Kirby Benning who's also a constituent of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. So thank you very much for attending today, Kirby. So if everyone here would give them a warm welcome.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce a school group that's here today. The school group is from St. Luke School, which is about five houses from where I live in Saskatoon. Seated in the west gallery are 42 of the best- and brightest-looking students in the province. They are joined today by their teachers, Curtis Wagner and Cari Karakochuk. And they have some chaperones with them today: Jill Mierke, Scott Gregor, Lyndsey Newton, Gail Prefontaine, Leslie Schreiner, Jenna Shenher, and Cory Kos.

So I am asking all members to join with me in welcoming them. I look forward to meeting them later in the day and hope that they have a pleasant day in the provincial capital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of better schools here in Saskatchewan. And we know that far too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under-resourced and that the Sask Party government has eliminated hundreds of educational assistant positions and that students often do not get the one-on-one attention they need. None of this is acceptable, given the record revenues this government has had over the last eight years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping classroom sizes, increasing support for our students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition are from Regina. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North, and it 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, skyrocketing home ownership costs.

And 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.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to present a petition in support of maintaining hyperbaric services at the Moose Jaw Hospital. The petitioners point out that the people of Moose Jaw have worked hard for many years through fundraising and community activism in order to procure a hyperbaric chamber for the Moose Jaw Hospital.

They point out that hyperbaric treatments are essential for the proper treatment for many people living with diabetes, cancer, and other conditions. The petitioners point out that the existing hyperbaric chamber is the only unit of its kind currently in operation between Edmonton and Toronto. And they also point out that hyperbaric services will no longer be offered in the new design for the Moose Jaw Hospital because of the changes to the hospital design initiated through the John Black version of lean. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly require the Sask Party government to reverse its decision to scrap the hyperbaric chamber and to instead ensure that this service continues to be provided in the new Moose Jaw Hospital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of retaining the Yarrow Youth Farm. The government has closed Yarrow Youth Farm and created an open-custody wing in Kilburn Hall, which is a secure custody unit for youth considered a greater risk to their communities. The provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has declared he cannot endorse such a rationalization, as low-risk teens could be influenced and pressured by close proximity to high-risk youth who may be involved in serious crimes or gangs. Kilburn Hall is a much more institutional environment that could intimidate and alienate teens that have committed minor offences. So 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 government to keep Yarrow Youth Farm open, to ensure a caring home environment for youth who have committed minor

offences, and provide support to help these young people redirect their lives by setting more positive goals.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is signed by folks from Saskatoon. I so submit.

[10:15]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

May Day Significant for Workers' Rights

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is May Day, a very important day for workers and workers' rights everywhere. Also known as International Labour Day, May Day traces its roots back to the 19th century fight for an eight-hour workday, something many of us take for granted here in modern times.

It was on this day in 1886 that thousands of workers from all over North America came together to fight for a change in Chicago's Haymarket Square. For more than 100 years, workers have marked May Day as a time to remember the hard-fought gains that have been made to advance workers' rights and to improve workplace safety but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also a time to reflect on what we can all do to make our workplaces safer and what the idea of workers' rights mean in the modern era.

May Day has always been about promotion and protection of rights on the international scale, and when we look around the world, we know that there is so much more that needs to be done. Too many people continue to work in unacceptably unsafe conditions and millions work long hours for poverty wages and some earn no wages at all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing May Day today and in committing to continue the fight for fairness, safety, and workers' rights around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bronze for Pat Canadians at Telus Cup

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend the Regina Pat Canadians won the bronze medal at the Telus Cup held in Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec. The Pat Canadians defeated the Strathmore Bisons 6-3 in a third-place game. Arthur Miller led the charge, netting two goals and assisting on another. And a name we all might find familiar in Regina, Owen Sillinger, added a goal and assist, and Curtis Meger made 25 saves in that. Sillinger was also the tournament's leading scorer and MVP [most valuable player] with six goals and 17 points in seven games, following the footsteps of his famous father.

Mr. Speaker, this was a first appearance in 16 years for the Pat Canadians at the midget AAA national championship. Brad

Herauf, the coach of this year's team, was a player back on the team in 1999 when the Pat Canadians brought home the national championship.

This year's bronze medal is the team's seventh medal in eight appearances at the nationals. Mr. Speaker, the Pat Canadians dominated throughout the Saskatchewan Midget AAA Hockey League playoffs, losing just one game and defeating North Battleford in the final. At the western regional tournament, the team carried one win, one loss, and one tie record into the championship game.

Last week at the Telus Cup, the Pat Canadians went undefeated in the round robin before falling 3-1 to Toronto in the semi-finals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Regina Pat Canadians on a great season, an impressive playoff run, and winning a bronze medal at the national championships. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hockey Championships for First Nations Youth

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to take part in a great sporting event over the weekend in Saskatoon. The FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] youth hockey championships were hosted by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band at the Jemini 4 arena. There were 80 First Nations teams from all over Saskatchewan, with teams in the novice, atom, peewee, bantam, and midget divisions, as well as a female division.

The FSIN youth hockey championship has been ongoing since 2002. They were created to give kids more opportunity to participate in hockey and to create youth empowerment in our First Nations communities. Youth involved in sports help build character in many positive ways. Co-operation with teammates, working towards a common goal, is important to teach the value of courage, humility, perseverance. Research proves that youth hockey has a positive effect on First Nations children by providing them with the opportunity to explore their identity, develop initiative, learn to control their emotions, and acquire social skills.

I ask all members to join me in thanking everyone who helped to make this event a success, including the Lac La Ronge Indian Band sports, culture and recreation director Kevin Roberts, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Team Woodland coordinator Barrett Halkett, and all of the coaches, parents, volunteers, and the referees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Know Your Rights Conference

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged to rise in the House today to acknowledge an empowering event I hosted in my constituency last Saturday. On April 25th the Islamic Youth Centre of Regina, in conjunction with the Prairie Somali-Canadian community,

gathered in a day-long event of family activities, prayer, potluck, and concluding in a panel discussion with representatives from groups that provide support to newcomers. We had 170 participants attend this discussion, Mr. Speaker. This event was organized to better understand some of the social, language, and integration issues that the Somali community is facing.

Many of the attendees reside in my constituency, and they asked to have representatives from several ministries and organizations to provide information, direction, and support to their families and their community.

The community panel consisted of the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, Rhonda Rosenberg and Meka Okochi; the Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing, Mari Petroski; Ministry of Social Services, Ashley Young from the Regina Children's Justice Centre; Lesley Kitsch who runs the ongoing protection involvement for immigrant families; Regina Police Services, Constable Dale McArthur; Regina Open Door Society, Laura Strong; Street Culture Kidz, Mike Gerrand; SaskCulture, Paul Gingras; Ministry of Economy, Kirk Westgard, the executive director of immigration services.

I ask that all members join me in thanking our panel and guests for their involvement with the program which was titled the Know Your Rights Conference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Women of Distinction Awards Gala

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last Thursday the 34th YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Regina Women of Distinction Awards Gala was held at the Conexus Arts Centre here in Regina. There were a total of 46 women nominated and awards were presented to 12 nominees at the end of the evening. The Regina Women of Distinction award program is an integral part of the YWCA's commitment to supporting women in the realization of their full potential.

Since 1981 the awards gala has recognized women whose outstanding achievements contribute to the health, the future of our community, and are an inspiration to others. The YWCA Women of Distinction nominee is a woman who displays a substantial, significant contribution in her field of endeavour whether it be locally, nationally, or internationally. These women are making a big difference in their community every day, whether it be in the fields of their business, arts, science, or volunteering.

Presented by PotashCorp, all proceeds of the night went directly to support the YWCA's Regina program for women and children including Big Sisters of Regina, the Isabel Johnson centre, and My Aunt's Place and many others. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating not only the 12 winners of the Regina Women of Distinction Awards but all 46 nominees who work hard within their community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose

Jaw Wakamow.

Habitat for Humanity Day

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to advise all members that May 1st is Saskatchewan Habitat for Humanity Day. This day is being celebrated to honour all the work that Habitat for Humanity does in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the continuing need for affordable housing in our province. Through our partnership with Habitat for Humanity, we continue to support families in realizing their dream of home ownership.

On Tuesday this dream came true for three more families who received the keys to their new homes which were constructed as part of the Habitat Plains project. The Habitat Plains project consists of nine new townhouse-style homes for families in need of a safe, affordable place to call home. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what supporting Habitat is all about. It's about helping families embark on a brighter future, knowing that their housing challenges are behind them.

Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Habitat for Humanity as we work together to keep Saskatchewan strong. Our government is proud to partner with Habitat. Since March 2009, we have committed \$7.85 million to Habitat. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in thanking Habitat for Humanity for the vision and continued dedication to improving the quality of life for Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Correspondence Regarding Member's Comments

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, almost every day the government has to correct misinformation brought forward by the NDP [New Democratic Party]. A couple of days ago in Highways estimates, the member for Athabasca raised a number of concerns that he said came right from Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. Yesterday that same member received a letter from the association regarding his performance in estimates. The letter reads, and I quote:

I am writing to express concern with your misrepresentation of our association's working relationship with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure.

At no time has the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association or any member been contacted by the NDP opposition or any of your staff to provide an opinion on the current working relationship between the organization and our respective partners. Nor have we asked to comment on any particular aspect of the pavement quality index as noted by you during the 26th session of April.

The views and opinions highlighted during the meeting

were not obtained through consultation with anyone within the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association and do not properly represent the views of our board.

So once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP is just making stuff up, and this time they tried to pass off their nonsense as coming directly from the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association.

Will the member opposite do the right thing today, correct his misrepresentations of their position and apologize? If he wants to take a moment before QP [question period] to do that, we would certainly give him leave. Will he do that today? We're about to find out.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Release of Information Concerning Worker

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Privacy Commissioner has officially opened four investigations into the Premier's personal decision to leak confidential information. I wonder if the Premier has read the legislation and if he is aware of the consequences of breaking it.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I will take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Certainly it is our understanding that the Privacy Commissioner, as stated by the Leader of the Opposition, has begun his work. Mr. Speaker, he has an established process for conducting a review of this nature and, out of respect for that work, I wouldn't comment further on that work.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's important for me to just place once again on the public record what in fact took place on March 30th. The Leader of the Opposition came into the House and asked on three occasions for an assurance from the Premier that an employee of a health region, of a facility would be protected for coming forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That assurance was given in good faith, not knowing what else may have been occurring with respect to that employee's record, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What was provided on a background basis to reporters was an indication that we had assurances from the region and from the facility that the employee's suspension with pay had no direct relationship with his attendance at the legislature on March 30th. Certainly that is the position of the government, and that's why we took this step.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, no one in the province is believing that story, Mr. Speaker, because we know it was this Premier that leaked confidential, private information of this care aid whistle-blower, Mr. Speaker. And you know, yesterday we

asked the Premier if he would release the email leaks, Mr. Speaker. If they're so general, if they're so specific, if they're so innocuous, why is the Premier afraid to table the emails that he directed to be sent by his chief of operations and communications?

You know, Mr. Speaker, you think the members opposite would take this much more seriously. The consequences, as I asked in my question, the consequences of breaking this particular law include a fine and jail time. Was the Premier aware of that before he asked for the private information from the Saskatoon Health Region CEO [chief executive officer], and before he ordered his chief of communications and operations to leak this confidential information about the care aid?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What the Saskatoon Health Region CEO has indicated, and I quote, "We suspended with pay because of receipt of numerous complaints that were serious enough that they required his removal from the workplace." This scenario that's playing out right now actually predates when he went to the legislature. He went on to say, "This was the culmination of numerous complaints. The significance of those complaints prompted our action."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope all members of this House can agree that when complaints are raised by co-workers against one of their co-workers, that the obligation of the facility and the region, the employer, has an obligation to treat those complaints seriously. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hate to think that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't believe those complaints were serious enough in nature, and in fact that they, in some cases, predated his attendance at the legislature. That's why the facility, the region, and this government takes this very seriously.

[10:30]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what this government takes seriously, what this Premier takes seriously, Mr. Speaker, is how he can discredit and drag this care aid's name through the mud, Mr. Speaker, by leaking confidential, private information. It is absolutely appalling. And for this government to be sticking to its lines, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, the consequences for breaking this law are significant. Now I'm not arguing for specific consequences. I'll leave that up to the proper authorities. But the fact, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a serious matter . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . They make fun of it, Mr. Speaker, because they don't think this is important, Mr. Speaker. But they should, because it is. It's about the law in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier was personally and heavily involved in the leaking of confidential information about a health care whistle-blower that came to the legislature. The occupant of the

highest office in this province has done everything that he can to drag this care aid's name through the mud, Mr. Speaker. And now the Premier, and very high-ranking . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Deputy Premier says this is exaggeration. He should read the legislation, Mr. Speaker, and see how serious this is.

Now the Premier and very high-ranking people in his government are under investigation, Mr. Speaker, by the Privacy Commissioner. The consequences for breaking this law include a fine and include jail time. Does the Premier . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member from Sutherland says I said that. It's because it's important. My question to the Premier: does he recognize how serious this is, or is he still just shrugging this off as no big deal?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, we'll let the commissioner do his work. Mr. Speaker. What I know absolutely that the Premier and this government take seriously is the commitment that he made in this House in relation to a request from the Leader of the Opposition. On three occasions the Leader of the Opposition asked, on March 30th, for protection for an employee based on coming forward. And the Premier in good faith, not knowing — and certainly I don't know the information at the time, the Premier didn't know that information at the time — but in good faith provided that commitment.

What the Premier wanted to demonstrate is that his commitment remained intact because the employee was not suspended with pay for coming forward. That has been made plain and clear by the health region, Mr. Speaker. It's plain and clear in terms of the timeline of when complaints were lodged against this employee, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition didn't take the time to actually find out about the gentleman in question before he asked for that assurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is what is clear, and that is why the Premier made the commitment that he did, but also why he wanted to correct the record, that in fact this employee was not suspended because he did come forward.

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

Mr. Broten: — Here we go again, Mr. Speaker, this government trying to sully the reputation, as opposed to allowing due process to take place. Straight from the mouth of the Health minister, Mr. Speaker. Unbelievable.

What is absolutely clear in the government's actions, in this Premier's actions, Mr. Speaker, is that he was not acting in the public interest. He was trying to act in his political interest. And now they are simply digging that hole deeper and deeper, Mr. Speaker, and it's absolutely appalling.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General assure us today on the public record that the results of these four investigations will be referred to an out-of-province prosecutor?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we are going to let the Privacy Commissioner do the work that he is responsible to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that that's appropriate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's also appropriate to say, to put on the record that Saskatoon Health Region and every other health region, and specific to this region, has in its collective bargaining agreement section 4.03 that does provide protection for employees with respect to coming forward, Mr. Speaker. So that assurance was already put in place.

The Premier gave his assurance, not knowing what in fact had taken place with this particular employee but in light of the questions from the Leader of the Opposition on three occasions — who apparently didn't bother to do his homework, big surprise on that front, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but gave his assurances that because of this employee coming forward that there would be no retribution in the workplace. The region has confirmed that in fact that did not take place, that the suspension with pay was unrelated to why he attended, and the Premier simply wanted to maintain and verify that the commitment that he made in good faith on March 30th to the Leader of the Opposition is intact. And it remains to this day.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we have four investigations going on, the Premier and very high-ranking individuals. My question, Mr. Speaker, was to the Attorney General, not to the Health minister. A straightforward question: will the Attorney General assure us today on the public record that the results of these four investigations will be referred to an out-of-province prosecutor? Will he confirm that?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister and the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition talks about due process. We should let the Information and Privacy Commissioner do his work. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to speculate on the results of that work or what recommendations he may or may not make. And once those recommendations are made, after his investigation is done, which the Premier has indicated on the record that we will fully co-operate with, we'll deal with the consequences of that once those reports are done.

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

Hyperbaric Chamber in Moose Jaw and Provision of Hyperbaric Services

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we're joined by a large delegation of firefighters from Moose Jaw today. They've come to the legislature because they want this government to save the hyperbaric chamber. Firefighters raised money so our province could get a hyperbaric chamber, and they do not want our province to lose this valuable, valuable asset. Will the Premier

and the two Health ministers listen to these firefighters today and commit to keep the hyperbaric chamber?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and certainly we look forward to having an opportunity to speak with the firefighters later this day. I know the rural and remote minister will be there, as well as members of this side of the House. I'll also be making an effort to attend.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I've said publicly is that we are looking for a way to continue to provide hyperbaric services to the people of this province. We're going through a process right now to make that determination of what is the best way to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're looking at different options currently. That may be an in-hospital type of setting. It may also be an outpatient type of setting, knowing that the nature of this type of service, the vast majority of services are provided on an outpatient basis. They're provided that way in other jurisdictions as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we look forward to the information that they're able to provide for us later this afternoon. That'll obviously be a part of the decision that we'll have to make coming up, and we look forward to those deliberations.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government's dragging of its feet on this issue is very concerning to people here in the province. These firefighters, Mr. Speaker, and many other firefighters across the province are frustrated that this government keeps minimizing the tremendous value of the hyperbaric chamber.

They point to the 4,000, over 4,000 treatments given, and they say that attention needs to be given to the significant number of hours required in treating the most serious cases. We've heard similar frustration from the doctor, David Amies, who said that he doesn't think that the Premier and the two Health ministers are getting the right information about the value of the chamber, or they're choosing not to listen to that information.

How much evidence does the Premier and his two Health ministers need to hear before they will recognize the tremendous value of the hyperbaric chamber?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times in this House and outside the House, we are going through a process of identifying options for how to continue to grow our hyperbaric services in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of decisions that need to be made in terms of a location, whether it be continue in the city of Moose Jaw, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or perhaps could more people in fact be served by the hyperbaric services if it was in one of our larger tertiary centres or in a larger city. Those are some of the options that we're looking at.

We're also looking at the fact that this piece of equipment is, portions of it are reaching the end of its lifespan, and so that there will be some dollars that would be required for some components of that, that would need to be changed out. That is a part of the consideration as well. So we're looking at, both on a capital side in terms of the location, but as well in terms of the services that provided. We know that nearly 50 per cent of the services is in relation to radiation therapy. Does it make sense to perhaps have the service located closer to one of our centres that provides cancer treatment? Those are all the types of things that we're looking at in terms of the options, how to best utilize the service. And we will be making the decision accordingly.

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

Mr. Broten: — And what the minister failed to say is that he's looking at sending patients out of province and clawing back these important health care systems out of this province. Mr. Speaker, in a time when we've had record prosperity in this province, reducing health care services in the province, it makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, instead of getting agitated here, Mr. Speaker, I want the minister to hear the story of Brent Evans. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The man is up in the gallery, Deputy Premier. Unbelievable. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, that they would be . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Currently the Leader of the Opposition has the floor. Members will be given a chance to respond. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Brent Evans is here today. He was a victim of carbon monoxide poisoning. His son found him lying on the shop of his floor close to death. He was transported to Moose Jaw Union Hospital and was treated in the hyperbaric chamber three times in one day. He suffered no side effects of the carbon monoxide poisoning. So it's no wonder why he says the hyperbaric chamber's invaluable and he wants to see this life-saving piece of equipment stay in Moose Jaw, stay in the hospital.

Why won't the Premier and his two health ministers just listen to Brent Evans and the Moose Jaw firefighters today and finally make the decision to keep the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I do want to correct the Leader of the Opposition once again in this House. Not just under this government but under the former government as well, not every person in this province that requires hyperbaric services is provided that service in the province. We do send people out of the province for hyperbaric services, depending on their condition, knowing that hyperbaric services are not a primary treatment. They are a secondary treatment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So yes, we are looking at the cost to provide the service out of the province because that's a part of what we already do today and what

happened under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to carbon monoxide poisoning, I can tell the members opposite over the nearly 16 years of service for the hyperbaric services, roughly 3 per cent of the time that it was provided as a secondary treatment in relation to carbon monoxide poisoning. I'm not minimizing the fact that it has been used. But, Mr. Speaker, the majority of the time that the hyperbaric chamber has been used, well over 90 per cent of the time is on an outpatient clinic type of basis.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to make an evaluation of whether or not it makes sense to have it in a hospital or whether or not it makes sense to have it in a clinic type of setting, an outpatient setting, where the vast majority of patients have been served over those 16 years.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government should listen to Dr. Amies. This government should listen to the firefighters. This government should listen to Brent, Mr. Speaker, whose life was saved because he had access to this treatment in a hospital when he had carbon monoxide poisoning. The government can try to continue to minimize, can try to downplay the importance of this service here in Saskatchewan, but that is a disservice to the patients and the people of this province. No question about it.

Mr. Speaker, the firefighters who have joined us today . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Wood River is heckling. That's how serious he takes it. Mr. Speaker, the firefighters that have joined us today question whether this government has given proper thought to the reduction in health care costs that can be achieved through hyperbaric treatment. They question whether this government has calculated how much it will cost to send patients out of province, and they question the lives that will be lost because of the delay in getting people into a hyperbaric chamber if we have to send those patients out of province. And they especially question, Mr. Speaker, why it is taking so long for this government to make a decision. My question to the Premier: what's his answer?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I just want to correct for the record, because of what I think the Leader of the Opposition is trying to, the information he's trying to pass on.

In terms of the delay in sending people out of the province and the concerns that that may raise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we currently send people out of the province. We always have, and that will probably be a part of the considerations going into the future. That took place; it does today. It took place under the NDP. Not every single person that has hyperbaric services from Saskatchewan is treated in Saskatchewan because hyperbaric services are a secondary treatment. We need to ensure that we're treating the primary way to treat somebody before we

look at secondary ways like hyperbaric.

So for the Leader of the Opposition to cause further concern that people will not have the services that they need because of the delay of transferring people out of the province for hyperbaric services, that currently happens today, and it happened under the NDP.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are looking at is all of the options on how to continue to provide hyperbaric services to the people of this province. I don't want to allow for the Leader of the Opposition to leave the impression with people that we're not going to provide this type of service. We are going to provide this type of service, but we're trying to determine the way to most efficiently provide this service for the greater number of people.

[10:45]

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

Protection for Children in Care

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are many concerning issues in the report from the Advocate for Children and Youth, including the number of critical injuries. A shocking number of kids in this government's care attempted suicide over the past year, and that's heartbreaking. And the report identifies major shortcomings into mental health services for our kids. To the minister: what's the government going to do to address this?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Children's Advocate for all the work that he does and the report that he brings forward every year, as well as the special investigations that he does. The work that the Children's Advocate does is critical.

We are happy that there is progress in this report that is being pointed out, but there's also more work that needs to be done. And he touches on a number of ministries where that work needs to be done, Social Services being only one of them. Mr. Speaker, we will work with the Children's Advocate on how we can make improvements for all the children within our province.

What we won't do is go back to a system where, seriously, we didn't even know how to track our children, and where we had up to 21 children in a foster home. And that's the way it was when the NDP were government.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty serious matter and the minister tends to want to play political games with this, talking about, you know, going in the past. This is what's happening now in this province. She needs to take it seriously, and the government over there needs to take it seriously.

When you have 16 children in the government's care attempting suicide, and when you have 3 children in the government's care who has died as a result of suicide, this government should be taking significant steps, significant steps to address shortcomings in mental health services for kids. Ten children in this government's care were not kept safe and were victims of physical or sexual assault. What is the minister going to do to address this now?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, a lot of work has been done, including in the Ministry of Health, where there was now a mental health and addictions action plan. And we'll be acting on the recommendations of that report in due course. Mr. Speaker, what we've done is we have introduced an electronic system so that we can track our children around the province. That was never there before.

We have brought down the caseload, the number of children in our care, quite significantly by adding more supports to homes and families before the family becomes at risk, Mr. Speaker. We've added more front-line workers, even though we have fewer children in our care, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting that the member opposite wants to do a dramatic act on how, you know, why don't we show that this is important. Well, Mr. Speaker, this government has committed more dollars each and every budget since we've been government to child and family protection issues. And we've increased that budget by over 150 per cent, Mr. Speaker. But when the NDP put out a press release where the opposition wants budget to reroute spending to priority areas, there was not one mention of child protection in that document.

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

Child Care Spaces

Ms. Chartier: — The Children's Advocate is expressing concern today about the lack to access to child care. He confirms that only one in five children have access to licensed child care, the lowest level in the country. Despite years of record revenue, this government has failed to get serious about child care. To the minister: when will this government finally start delivering safe, affordable, regulated child care spaces?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that we're going to do is continue on the direction that we're going, which is to increase child care spaces, something that did not happen under the previous administration. Since we formed government we've increased licensed child care spaces by 53 per cent, or 4,935 since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we've also made a commitment in our joint-use schools that are under construction that we will add a 90-space child care centre in each one of those. We're going to continue doing that. We know that there's a huge need for it. We hear

from families. We hear from parents. As part of our growing economy, there's more people working. There's a greater need for child care and, Mr. Speaker, we've increased it by 53 per cent, which is something that never happened when the members opposite were in government. We're going to continue to do that.

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

Ms. Chartier: — This is the government that scrapped its commitment this budget to 500 child care spaces. Eighty thousand children in the last five years; there are less than 14,000 spaces in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The advocate says this government's neglect of child care means that:

... most children in childcare settings are in unregulated care in private residences, meaning that we have little data about quality and availability, and that it is not operating within a system that can be monitored, supported or regulated to ensure that it is safe and developmentally appropriate.

To the minister: does this concern him?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, what concerns me is the record that we took over from the NDP. Mr. Speaker, I want to quote Pat Atkinson in May of 2011 because I agree there's been a significant ramping up in child care because there's been a different government. Mr. Speaker, Pat Atkinson, *Hansard*, March 29, 2011:

Saskatchewan has the poorest record when it comes to child daycare. And, Mr. Speaker, I take some responsibility for that because I was part of a government that did not put a lot of new resources into child daycare.

Mr. Speaker, when we formed government, there was 8,850 spaces in our province. We've increased that by over 50 per cent. We're going to continue doing that. Mr. Speaker, we'll take no advice or no direction from the members opposite. We're going to work with families. We're going to work with children. We're going to do the right thing for this province, unlike the members opposite who let it decline and decay.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its sixth report.

I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy has moved that their sixth report be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Why is the Opposition House Leader on his feet?

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has a point of order. Would you please state your point of order briefly?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In his member's statement right before question period, the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford used language which has been repeatedly found to be unparliamentary, using the same language that both the Premier and the Deputy Premier have had to apologize for in the last several weeks. And it's the same language that the Minister of Social Services apologized for on March 25th, 2013.

I would ask you to make a ruling on the unparliamentary language used by the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford in his member's statement.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was listening very closely to what the member had to say during members' statements. Certainly I know that he used a series of quotes, and what he did say was in a letter that was certainly directly sent to the member opposite, the member from Athabasca, so I think the quotes were factual. The information that was brought forward was certainly in context and well within the rules of this Assembly, so I would suggest that the point of order is not well taken.

The Deputy Speaker: — When the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford was making his member's statement, there was quite a bit of discussion across the floor, and frankly I didn't hear all of his statement. So what I will have to do is review the record and come back with a ruling on Monday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Uranium Energy Agreement

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At the end of my comments I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly supports the historic uranium energy agreement between Cameco and the Department of Atomic Energy of India of April 15th, 2015; furthermore

That this Assembly reaffirms its support for both the provincial and federal governments to continue work on similar trade and export opportunities for Saskatchewan companies across the globe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is absolutely great news for our Saskatchewan and especially for our North. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our North is a very beautiful part of the province. It's like none other on earth. It is full of diversity, full of people, and rich resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember very well the very first time that I had met our North. The stark, pristine beauty of that North is like none other on earth. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was abundantly clear that the power of mother nature was all around me. She spoke ever so silently to my heart. She sang to my soul, and she embraced my spirit. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is like yesterday that I remember that meeting of our North. It is what resonates with me today.

Since becoming an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], some of my colleagues on this side of the House and I have had the opportunity to have a tour of the McArthur River uranium mine. Meeting the employees of that mine was the absolute highlight of the tour. Looking into their eyes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I saw pride, pride in their skill set, pride in their abilities and knowledge to help provide a rich resource to the rest of the world so that they could include electricity in their quality of life. Mr. Speaker, I saw the pride in the ability to provide for themselves, for their families, for their communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also saw a company that cares. They care about employees. The living quarters and recreational activities that were available were better than adequate. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we took a tour of the cafeteria. Now when you're providing food to hundreds of employees, well there are strings and of strings of buffet tables and dessert tables, and well the food is just second to none. But I think I'm digressing a little bit. We'll get back to the topic. The company also shared how they work diligently to ensure reclamation plans and efforts are in place. This ensures a peaceful coexistence with mother nature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, uranium is a big deal for Saskatchewan, especially for our North. We have approximately 3,750 people employed at uranium mines. This includes contractors. Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's just about the size of Pinehouse and La Ronge put together. The number of employees that are residents of the North is 47 per cent.

I think the rest of the employees that work in the northern mines live in Prince Albert. At least when you go look at our parking lots, they are dedicated to Cameco employees, and there are dozens upon dozens if not hundreds of vehicles there. As I indicated, the equivalent population of two northern communities work in our mines. Forty per cent are of Aboriginal ancestry. That is a clear indicator of how our First Nations and Métis peoples are participants in our strong economy.

[11:00]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, did you know that Canada has a very long history in nuclear? According to *The Canadian Nuclear Factbook* produced by the Canadian Nuclear Association, based on data available as of November 2014, George C. Laurence designed one of the world's first nuclear reactors at the National Research Council in Ottawa in 1941.

The same fact book goes on to point out that there are 434 operable nuclear reactors worldwide which provide about 11.94 per cent of global electricity. Around the world, there are 72 reactors under construction, and 92 of them are in the planning, and there are another 92 in planning stages. Right here in Canada we have 19 reactors. They produce just a little over 16 per cent of Canada's electricity.

In Saskatchewan, our Ministry of the Economy points out that our province has been producing uranium continuously since 1953. We are the only province in Canada that has uranium, and we account for 15.6 per cent of the primary production in 2013. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is only second to the top producer around the world. We are behind Kazakhstan in production of uranium.

Our government is interested in attracting value-added activities in the nuclear cycle. We provide funding to the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan.

As we know, Sylvia Fedoruk was an amazing woman, a brilliant scientist, and she called Saskatchewan home. Through her efforts in developing effective cancer treatments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she also saved many lives. Because of her tenacity, determination, skills, and knowledge in turning uranium into treatment and sometimes cure for cancer, we see many lives that are saved. Those lives are manifest in our parents, in our brothers and sisters, in our daughters and our sons, in our friends and our relatives, people who enrich our lives and continue to make Saskatchewan strong.

Mr. Neil Alexander is the executive director of the Sylvia Fedoruk Centre for Nuclear Innovation. In an article in *On Campus News* dated April 24, 2015, we gained an understanding of Mr. Alexander's background.

Before moving to Saskatoon, Alexander worked as part of a group working on solar, wind and other renewables including using garbage as fuel, both to generate energy and as a method of recycling.

The article goes on to say:

“As part of that experience, I realized we could do the best we could with efficiency and we could do the best we could with renewables, but there was still going to be a pretty large gap,” he said. “The only way I could see filling it is with nuclear.”

That’s a quote from Mr. Alexander. Mr. Alexander, in the same article, goes on to point out that we have many applications:

From sterilization of medical equipment to scanners that look through welds to jet engine turbine fans, nuclear technology helps to keep [Saskatchewan] people safe, buildings standing and planes in the air . . .

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that our government has a plan. We call it a plan for growth, vision 2020 and beyond, and within that plan we have six growth activities that government can foster to undertake to encourage economic growth and address the challenges of that growth. Two of those activities are what I’ll be discussing in the next few minutes. One is educating, training, and developing a skilled workforce; the other is supporting increased trade investment and exports through international engagement.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out that it takes more than just wishing. It takes more than words on paper. It takes more than talk. It takes some real action. So let’s discuss what is happening in terms of the growth activity for educating, training, and developing a skilled workforce.

In the most recent balanced budget that our Finance minister, the MLA from Canora-Pelly delivered in March of this year, we see that Northlands College is dedicated to recruit northern and Aboriginal residents and provide them with the specialized skill training needed to fill higher paying jobs in Saskatchewan’s hard rock mining industries. So through the International Minerals Innovation Institute, IMII, it is providing \$1.86 million to create the mine training centre and expand mining programming. We provide IMII, the International Minerals Innovation Institute, with \$1 million annually through Innovation Saskatchewan. In partnership, the federal government provides another \$2.5 million. Central Services donated a building to be used for mine training. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a way that our government is increasing the activities to help our education, training, and developing of this workforce.

We have \$32.5 million for the Student Aid Fund. We have another \$9 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, 6.5 million for the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, and I could go on and on. We’ve increased operation funding by 2 per cent to technical institutes and federated colleges.

I was talking about the Northlands College. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the largest college, regional college in Saskatchewan and located in our North. We contribute \$6.5 million from our balanced budget to help this college. They have a dedicated mining school. They offer three mining programs: radiation environmental monitoring, mine engineering technician, and underground mining. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is one way that we are helping to achieve our plan for growth.

The second piece that I would like to talk about is regarding supporting our increased trade, investment, and exports through international engagement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our province is well served by the MLA from Swift Current who holds the position of Premier. Our Premier is a strong leader that does something exceptionally well: he creates relationships: strong relationships with the 47 MLAs on this side of the House, relationships with the people of this province, with leaders in other provinces, and indeed with leaders around the world.

It is in no small part to his reaching out to Prime Minister Modi of India over the last few years that this agreement could be achieved. It is in no small part to his constant and consistent conversations with our Prime Minister of Canada about the strengths and needs of Saskatchewan that this agreement was achieved. It is in no small part to our Premier’s work with the ministers of Economy and Trade and Innovation, along with the dedication and determination of the officials within those ministries that we, here in Saskatchewan and especially our North, are able to participate in trade with other countries.

But more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our people get to continue to work and provide their skills, knowledge, and capability toward a better quality of life in this world. In turn these employees receive a paycheque. That paycheque is what helps them to provide for themselves, to provide for their families, and to contribute to their communities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what makes our province so strong.

On behalf of our government, a heartfelt thank you to all the people of our province who just go quietly about their daily lives, making their future and ours a better place. Thank you. April 15th of this year moved us another step forward towards the full potential of Saskatchewan, another step forward into the brighter future of our people, our communities, and our province.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now move the following . . . One more second. In our plan for growth: 2020 and beyond, we clearly state we will undertake to foster economic growth by supporting increased trade, investments, and export through international engagement. April 15, 2015 is a tangible outcome of our plan for growth. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports the historic uranium energy agreement between Cameco and the Department of Atomic Energy of India of April 15, 2015; furthermore

That this Assembly reaffirms its support for both the provincial and federal government to continue work on similar trade and export opportunities for Saskatchewan companies across the globe.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Prince Albert Northcote:

That this Assembly supports the historic uranium energy agreement between Cameco and the Department of Atomic Energy of India of April 15, 2015; and further

That this Assembly reaffirms its support for both the provincial and federal governments to continue work on similar trade and export opportunities for Saskatchewan companies across the globe.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to speak about this topic of uranium in Saskatchewan because it's been part of my legal career and my political career for close to 37, 38 years.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think what we need to understand is that agreements like what we're talking about here are important as we develop relationships around the world, but they're part of a much bigger perspective and a much longer history. And over the years the uranium industry in Saskatchewan has gone through quite a number of phases, and they include obviously the phases in the '40s when the war was on and it was identified that Saskatchewan had this resource. And over the years there has been many, many efforts to make sure that the development of the uranium industry has been done in a positive way. Now practically what we have now is a continuation of that process.

When I first started practising law in Regina in 1978, one of the first tasks I had was to sit at the Bayda Commission as one of the observers on behalf of clients. And it was very interesting, the kind of public debate that took place during the Blakeney administration around how to develop this resource in Saskatchewan. As we all know, the commission laid out a number of conditions, I guess, or ideas or ways to describe how the business should go forward, and that is what happened. And practically over the years various things have happened.

One short story from that time for me was that I was the lawyer who was designated to go to Germany with the agreement between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Uranerz uranium company to have them sign the deal that created the Key Lake Road. And all of us who have travelled north to go to the uranium mines know the importance of that road for both taking supplies in but also bringing out the product.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was in 1978. And what's happened since then has been the dramatic work in engineering and problem solving, I guess I would say, that have allowed for our Saskatchewan mines to be developed in some actually quite difficult terrain to get the uranium out of the ground. And we have everything from the largest freezer plant probably on the Prairies, located underground to freeze the ground so they can actually do the mining, to the largest cement plant in Saskatchewan, located up by the mines up north. And all of those things relate to how to get this valuable resource out of the ground.

[11:15]

Now one of the longer term issues that is being addressed today as we look at the agreement that was made with India relates to this marketing of the uranium. As we know, in 1974 there was quite a bit of concern with India as a customer of Canadian technology and uranium related to the, you know, proliferation of nuclear weapons. What we, I think, now understand was that

India has its own uranium. It's only maybe 1 per cent of the world's supply, but they do have their own uranium.

In 2005 the United States and India entered into discussions which culminated in an agreement that was signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh of India on March 2nd, 2006. It's called the India-US [United States] civil nuclear co-operation agreement.

And what India did as part of that agreement was they separated out all of their civil nuclear, in other words their nuclear power plants, their nuclear research, their radiation treatment, medical treatment. I think they had about 25 of these plants that were operating, and they separated those from the research and things that they were using with, around nuclear weapons. And they effectively allowed for international inspection of the civil nuclear things, nuclear plants, but they specifically wouldn't do that and wouldn't sign the non-proliferation treaty as it related to the non-civil nuclear plants. And so that agreement in 2006 allows, moves us forward to discussions between Canada and India. But I think they are directly related to that particular situation.

Almost immediately after the agreement in 2006, France, which was one of the largest suppliers of uranium both from their nuclear companies — we know Areva in Saskatchewan as being a major company from France — they did enter into an agreement with India that allowed for supply. And so what we end up having now with the agreements that are being developed by Canada in this year are building on some of these things that happened earlier, and I think it's a recognition of the role that Canada plays on the supply side of the fuel, of the uranium. I think it's a recognition though that maybe some of the technical side, our CANDU reactors in Canada that were a major export from Canada, have not been as popular or as used around the world in the last couple of decades.

Now another aspect of this agreement related to India with US and France, other countries and now Canada, relates to an issue of another fuel which is related to uranium, which is called thorium. And some people call thorium the superfuel because it's sort of uranium plus plus, if you're going to put it that way. But the technology and the research have not developed to the full extent to use that. And one of the concerns from the countries that have much invested in uranium as a fuel — which includes US, Canada, France, Germany — is that this thorium would be used and replace uranium.

One of the interesting factors for India is that they have 25 per cent of the world's thorium in their country. And they talk about how on some of the beaches on the coasts of India, they have enough thorium in the beach sands to basically fuel the electrical needs of the city of Mumbai for a year in just in small amounts. So we've got an interesting issue, interesting point raised here.

Now what we know in Saskatchewan is that the development of uranium as a product has been important for our economy and will continue to be important. One of the most important factors from my years here in politics relates to Mr. Keith Goulet and his work in negotiating the various surface agreements that would make sure that northern people would get jobs in this industry. And that model that was developed in Saskatchewan,

in northern Saskatchewan has been used worldwide in the development of resources around the world.

And so what we know is that uranium industry continues to be an important part of Saskatchewan's economy. And we want to make sure we do it in a measured way, that we do it by looking at both the positive parts and the negative parts and making sure that we provide some of the long-term protections that are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, this motion also refers to making sure that we go into other similar trade and export opportunities. I would encourage the Premier to look at how we can export grain. We've got a lot of issues around how we get our grain to market.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very happy to join in the debate on this motion that we support the historic uranium energy agreement between Cameco and the Department of Atomic Energy of India.

Mr. Speaker, just hot off the news is Cameco is going to be increasing its capital expenditures here from 370 million to 405 million. Mr. Speaker, this is great news for Saskatchewan, for all the people who work within the uranium mines. And actually there's quite a few of them right from my constituency in Carrot River Valley that go there and work in the mines. It's a wonderful thing to see, Mr. Speaker. And we have to give, we have to give credit to our Premier, to this government, and to the federal government for going along with this, for pushing forward to get this agreement signed with India.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to back up a little bit and start talking about some of the things that we've been exporting to India. Of course me being from an agricultural end, we have exported chick peas, peas, all sorts of things to India. And this has been great. One of the reasons these things are happening is that this government on this side of the House actually believes in trade missions, on going to India.

Now that is in stark contrast, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the previous administration who didn't believe in trade missions over to India, who didn't believe that we should help move Saskatchewan forward, actually didn't believe we should have this strong economy in Saskatchewan. Fact is when you go to that side of the House, their federal cousins actually don't like seeing Western Canada being in the strong economic position because it kept on calling Western Canada having Dutch disease, Mr. Speaker. And I wonder if that side of the House goes along with their federal cousins on that.

You know, even though, even though Mr. Mulcair comes from Quebec, which gets anywhere from 40 to 50 per cent of the equalization which Western Canada supplies, for some reason he doesn't want to see that. He wants to see us all just down, down, down. So consequently, you know, Mr. Speaker, we really have to question just exactly how much they actually do support this. And I'm really hoping that they'll support this motion, Mr. Speaker, and they will reaffirm their position that they're very happy to see the uranium mining.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there should be some people who are actually jumping for joy in this. And we hear the member from Cumberland every day bringing up his petition for housing and talking about housing in northern Saskatchewan. Well take a look at this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Forty-seven per cent of the people in the North actually work in the uranium mines or 47 per cent of the workers work there, and another 40 per cent of them are Aboriginal. Now I would think that the member from Cumberland would be absolutely ecstatic to see agreements like this come forward and would praise this government for working hard to get a deal such as this made because this is putting money into the jeans of the people of the North, Mr. Speaker.

When you start looking at that and you start looking at the strong position that Saskatchewan is having in Canada, you know, Saskatchewan has become the place to be because we have jobs. We have people coming here to work in the mines. We have people coming here to work in agriculture, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is how come we can actually . . . we are so diversified we can go down that road of having the oil prices go down but yet still provide a very high quality of life to the people within Saskatchewan.

And let me get this straight, Mr. Speaker. This is not government money. This is the people of the province of Saskatchewan's money. And when they've got more money in their jeans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're going to spend more money here. And these are great-paying jobs. The member from Athabasca and the member from Cumberland should be absolutely, absolutely ecstatic and jumping up and down for joy for something like this being signed because this really puts them on the map.

These are long-term agreements that, Mr. Speaker, will help provide power for India and it also, when you improve their lifestyle over there, it all works in. And what's going to happen is they're going to want to get more grain, more foodstuffs from Canada because, you know, they got close to 1 billion people and some of them were living in some pretty primitive conditions. And if they can supply them with more electricity, Mr. Speaker, so be it. Those people are going to want to eat better food and have a better quality of life coming straight from Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, also there is that point about royalties. You know we, of course, the government gets the money on royalties. These are things that the opposition should be very happy with too because what this does is . . . They talk about their social standards and everything else. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what you have to do is you have to have a strong, strong economy. If you are going to supply hospitals for people, if you're going to supply schools for people, if you're going to supply roads for people and a high quality of life for people, you have to have a strong economy.

This government's plan for growth works on that strong economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and having this agreement is one of the things that will help with Saskatchewan's growth. And there again I go back to the point that this government, this government on this side of the House believes that that's why these trade missions are so very, very important to all of the people of Saskatchewan, to help Saskatchewan move forward.

Mr. Speaker, you take a look at Saskatchewan with its uranium. You know, we've got basically 100 per cent of all the uranium in Canada is being mined right within Saskatchewan. This is a great thing in the province, but it's also kind of unique because of our geography. And you know, we did have a chance at one time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of actually adding enrichment to Saskatchewan, but it seems to me that it was under the former administration that they really didn't want that. So that enrichment ended up going out to Ontario. Those were jobs that we could have had in Saskatchewan, and that's why this government that we have here now is different.

We believe in jobs, prosperity for the whole, for all of the province. And that also turns around, Mr. Speaker, and makes Canada move forward in the world. Mr. Speaker, would you take a look at some of the things that have happened in this province in the past seven and a half years, or basically since 2007, and it's not all due to us being as government, Mr. Speaker. You know what? It kind of started a little bit before. But I think what happened was that when companies started looking at the government that was coming in, when they started looking that the Saskatchewan Party was going to end up being in power in Saskatchewan, they saw a government that was more business friendly, a government that did not want to sit there and take over mines, did not want to sit there and run everything such as a Canadian Wheat Board. They were looking at a government that wanted to give people choice, freedom to work, and to be able to find those jobs within this great province of ours.

Mr. Speaker, that is in stark contrast to the 16 years of basically ineptitude we had when hospitals were closing, when schools were closing, and when we used to give our kids as a graduation present a suitcase so they could go to another province to work. Mr. Speaker, this is something, this is something that Saskatchewan needs. This is something that Saskatchewan enjoys, and I'm proud of our government to be able to help, to be able to help facilitate the movement of this forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place to basically respond to the 75-minute debate in which we are speaking about the value of the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan and throughout the world, Mr. Speaker.

I want to focus my comments not necessarily on the great work that Cameco is doing and certainly the notion that we want to see the mining activity continue in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There's great opportunities in the northern part of Saskatchewan. As I often tell my constituents, northern Saskatchewan is rich. We have an abundance of fresh water, a beautiful landscape, and now we see all the resources that are in our backyards, Mr. Speaker. And we always know in northern Saskatchewan that the future of the province really is dependent on making sure that the North continues being vibrant and making sure that the North continues building forward for such activities like mining, forestry, tourism, and the list goes on

and on.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . I notice the debate was on the merits of the mining sector. Cameco has done a great, phenomenal job in terms of creating opportunity for many northern Saskatchewan communities and families. We want to continue that particular work and the relationship with Cameco is certainly, myself as an elected leader from northern Saskatchewan, we have always had a lot of time for Cameco and we continue pressing them to continue on with the employment effort that is necessary for many of our communities and certainly try and maximize contracting for many of our northern-based communities, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue that type of work.

But what I want to premise my discussion on, Mr. Speaker, is what this government is not doing to facilitate some of the work that Cameco is trying to do in the northern part of our province, Mr. Speaker. And I'll give you some of the examples. What people in northern Saskatchewan see is they see a lot of these mining companies and forestry companies that are creating opportunities in the North, that they're hauling a lot of their resources out of the North on really poor roads, Mr. Speaker. That is a contrasting picture that I want to draw for the people that may be listening to this debate, Mr. Speaker.

Because what the northern people are saying is basically a couple of really and solid important points. Number one is they want to see opportunity for their young people. So they obviously want to see continued employment and continued nourishment of their families to having a really good attitude, providing the means to support their family. I think everybody certainly wants to see that objective achieved for their family. So northern people know the importance of having good jobs. Northern people know the importance of having young families strengthened, and the list goes on as to a lot of the great comments that they make.

So the second thing that they also want to point out is that yes, it's important to attract investment. Yes, it's important to continue supporting companies like Cameco and yes, absolutely the North is part of the province, and we should all do our part to strengthen our economy and strengthen our community overall. Those are statements I think many northern people have made time and time again.

But, Mr. Speaker, what they have seen is not so much the failing of any company in particular, Mr. Speaker, but the failings of the provincial government. And I'll give you a good classic example, a couple of good classic examples that many northern people have said. And this is some of the points that they had made to me on numerous occasions where they have said, if you cannot leave some of the opportunity in the North to make sure that we have decent highways, good housing for our families, Mr. Speaker, great opportunity to train our young people, and to really nourish northern communities to the extent that they should be nourished so they're allowed to grow and be strong, Mr. Speaker, then what they should not be doing is hauling out the resources at the rate they are and yet still being critical of northern people, Mr. Speaker.

That is one of the underlying messages that I hear on a continual basis as a northern MLA. And I say shame on the

government for failing to deliver on some issues that have been paramount to some of the success in the North for companies like Cameco, to ensure that the public know that when you see their resources being taken out of their backyards that there really is some benefit for the community, Mr. Speaker. And the large number of communities out there really haven't seen evidence of that from this particular government.

A couple of points I would make, Mr. Speaker, is that you look at our highway system in northern Saskatchewan, There has been very little effort made, being made to improve highways in northern Saskatchewan. And I asked the Minister of Highways that particular question during estimates and, Mr. Speaker, she said, we've increased the budget for the North. Okay. What particular highways are you fixing up in northern Saskatchewan? And, Mr. Speaker, there was a mute silence certainly from the Sask Party benches during that discussion, Mr. Speaker.

And what we found out, the Premier made a reference to a road being built in the North. There's a new road going up in northern Saskatchewan, is what he yelled across to me one afternoon. So I asked him, which road? Because it was confusing me. We didn't hear any announcement, any comments at all, Mr. Speaker. And the road that the minister was referring to, or the Premier was referring to, was a road connecting the two northern mines, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that was an investment made by Cameco themselves, or by the mining companies themselves, Mr. Speaker. It is not an extra effort being made by the provincial government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you look at what the province has failed to deliver in northern Saskatchewan when it comes to roads, Mr. Speaker, they have cancelled the Wollaston road project, Mr. Speaker. They have put no money into roads in northern Saskatchewan at all, and yet they talk at great lengths, Mr. Speaker, about how they're doing all these wonderful things for the province. But they forgot about the North, Mr. Speaker.

In northern Saskatchewan as you travel some of the northern communities, whether it's the Patuanak or English River First Nation highway, whether it's the Turnor Lake road, the Pelican Narrows main highway, Mr. Speaker, we have seen no effort and no progress by this government to fix our northern roads. Because many people suffer travelling down those roads and there's great risk and safety concerns from many people that are coming south, travelling on roads that are in very poor shape, that are in disrepair, and people are getting angrier and angrier as each kilometre is travelled, Mr. Speaker.

Because all this government is doing is taking the resources out of the North and putting nothing back in. And that's exactly what frustrates a lot of people in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of people out there that are angry about it.

And the other issue that's really concerning, Mr. Speaker, about a lot of the issues in northern Saskatchewan — I went through the example — is housing, one of the points that I find that I get really angry about when you look at northern development as a whole, Mr. Speaker, and what this government is doing. And this is a really classic example of how they're hurting northern families. We have people in the North that have rented houses

off the government for years. They have rented houses off the government for years. And when the NDP were in power, we gave these working families the opportunity to own their own home. So we sold them those houses, Mr. Speaker, and many families thrived under the opportunity to own their own home. What did this government do, Mr. Speaker, when they got into office? They cancelled that program.

So working people that go to work at Key Lake or at any of the other mines — McArthur mine, Mr. Speaker — what happens now when they own and rent a . . . when they're renting a government house, Mr. Speaker? They were told that you don't have the opportunity to buy that house off the government anymore because you're making too much money. That was the argument made by the Minister of Housing, Mr. Speaker. Why didn't they have the decency to afford the opportunity to that family to buy that house off the government so these families could become more financially stable and more independent?

And you look at some of the issues around training, Mr. Speaker, around training where they have refused to work closely with many of the communities in the North to try and provide opportunity for these families when it comes to work and the enjoyment of employment, Mr. Speaker. They have taken that away.

So my point being is that as we sit here in the Assembly and discuss the future development of the North, northerners want to see the North develop. They want to work with companies like Cameco, Areva, and the list goes on. They have embraced the role that these mining companies have made in the North and they have made some significant strides. But what you have as the result of this government's poorly placed priorities is they have working people being forced out of their homes, working people being forced out of their homes. Why? Because they got a job. That's why they're being forced out of their homes.

And you see some of the people travelling on the very bad highways throughout northern Saskatchewan. This government has not invested in northern highways and again, Mr. Speaker, that really upsets a lot of people in the North. Training opportunities — the list goes on. So while the companies have done wonderful to develop opportunities, this government has failed to deliver and that's why many northerners get so upset when they see all the resources being hauled out of the North and none of the benefit stays.

So my final message is that if they do not want to deliver, the provincial government does not want to deliver based on the resources they're taking out of the North, leave our resources in the North. We'll make a deal with the company and we'll develop a better life for ourselves as opposed to waiting for the Sask Party government to deliver on any front, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask for leave to introduce guests that are here today.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce a great bunch of students, grade 11 students. There are 15 grade 11 students from the northern community of Pinehouse. And a lot of people like to refer to our northern communities as villages. Mr. Speaker, Pinehouse is not a village. It's a really burgeoning, bustling community.

And they're accompanied today by a couple of great chaperones, Catherine Currie and Joe Durocher. And they brought these kids down, these students down, and I really want to thank the chaperones for making this trip. And, Mr. Speaker, they are from the Minahik Waskahigan High School, which is of course the translation in Cree for Pinehouse. And I want to thank them all for making the effort to come here, and to point out that it's a long ways to get to Regina.

And I'm always very pleased to see students from the North learn how the Assembly works and, Mr. Speaker, I'll be meeting with the students. And I want to point out in my final comment is that, welcome to your Assembly. This is your House.

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

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too would like to ask leave to introduce school groups.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member asked for leave to join in the introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much to Catherine and Joe for bringing their students here today. We've got 15 grade 11 students from Pinehouse Lake. And I'm going to do a special shout-out to Chad McCallum. Chad, give me a wave . . . Chad's family, so we want to kind of acknowledge that he's here.

So they've had a very busy day, and tomorrow they will also be busy. They went to the U of R [University of Regina]. They toured the U of R. Then they're going to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Heritage Centre. They came here. They're touring their Legislative Building. Then — I know this is probably going to be the best part of all — we're having a pizza party at Boston Pizza on Rochdale Avenue. Yes, what can I say? Boston Pizza has been very kind. Larry Aitken, the general manager, and Darcy, the manager of the restaurant, are helping to provide an all-you-can-eat pizza party. I know the students are really going to enjoy that. My husband, Terry, and

I are going to be joining them for that. And then tomorrow they're off to Moose Jaw to tour the Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

So these students have come here; they've got a full couple of days. And I welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Uranium Energy Agreement (continued)

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I begin with my remarks, I would also like to welcome the Pinehouse students to the Assembly. Pinehouse is one of the communities that signed an agreement, a \$600 million agreement with Cameco, and has been one of the communities that had benefited from our discussion here today. Unfortunately the member from Athabasca missed that in his remarks.

[11:45]

But first and foremost, when we're talking about this sale, we're talking about 7.1 million pounds of uranium, and it's very good for northern Saskatchewan. It's very good for all of Saskatchewan, but especially northern Saskatchewan. This will bring in some \$350 million into the Saskatchewan economy over a five-year period. And probably, before I get too far into it, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada for their efforts in bringing this sales agreement into a reality. And I would also like to note that our Premier has built a relationship in India, in the Philippines, in China, and actually around the world.

You see, the Premier believes, in fact on this side of the House we all believe that Saskatchewan is now taking its rightful place as an economic superpower. Saskatchewan has what the world wants, and we have what the world needs. In fact at a potash reception last night, the speaker mentioned that this morning 7.1 billion people will eat today because . . . thanks in part to Saskatchewan potash — 7.1 billion people. We are a world-class supplier of food, food products, known for our grain which the Premier calls "the rock star of our economy."

We have an ever-growing manufacturing sector that seems to be setting records each and every month. And we have fuel. We have the second-largest reserves of oil in an oil-rich country. We also have huge reserves of uranium, the richest uranium in the world, and the topic of today's debate.

The sale is important for what it is. It's important for northern employment, secondary industry — usually Aboriginal-ran — and royalties for all of Saskatchewan. More importantly this agreement is important for what it could be in Saskatchewan's future. India has 21 nuclear reactors online today, and they have another six nuclear reactors currently under construction. But today only 3 per cent of the electricity generated in India is generated by nuclear. Their long-term plans, or mid- to long-term plans, will increase that up to 25 per cent of their power by 2050. This is our first sale to the world's

second-fastest economy, and represents just a small fraction of what India uses in their year-to-year consumption today.

But when you think about this sevenfold increase, when you think about going from 3 per cent to 25 per cent, when you think about the 400 million people who live in India that have not got power today, you can see what kind of opportunity in the future for Saskatchewan's North is much, much brighter because of this sales agreements.

The company making this agreement, making this sale is Cameco, of course. Cameco has a long history of working with the people and the communities of northern Saskatchewan. It has 3,600 employees; 47 per cent of those employees are from the North, and 40 per cent are Aboriginal. This company is one of the foundation of the economy of the North. We have seen community agreements, as I spoke to just a minute ago, with Pinehouse and other communities that runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars. The company flies in their workforce from 13 different communities across the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As well, they work with many, many Aboriginal suppliers. In short, this is a very, very good deal for Saskatchewan.

So where does the opposition stand on this? I hear we support it. I heard that today. Today they support it. Mr. Google and I went for a walk last night. We walked through the Internet, and I put in "Cameco uranium sale to India," and I put in the Leader of the Opposition's name. And you know what came up, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Nothing. Nothing came up. He had nothing to say on it.

Maybe that's to be expected because here's a Member of the Legislative Assembly that spoke in this room 51 times about a new school and couldn't even be bothered to show up at the announcement for that school. You know, maybe he was too busy to attend. You see, with them it's not about Saskatchewan. It's all about politics.

Both the MLAs from northern Saskatchewan are from the NDP Party. But in spite of that, this government works very, very hard to get the economy of Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan working. And we all know, at least I think we all know and the member from Athabasca just said he knows that this sale is good for the North with a company that has always been a friend to the North. This is what the member of Athabasca has to say about the, up until today, about this sale. He has said, and I quote . . . End of quote.

So that leaves the member from Cumberland, the member who is being challenged by a young, well-known, and well-liked mayor from La Ronge. What did he have to say about this outstanding opportunity? And I don't know if I can use the same one twice so he had nothing to say about this. In fact, he's not even in the House. He wasn't in the House. I'm just trying to get out of this because I know I just crossed a line. With apology, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I did notice they both had much to say and in fairness, they both had a lot to say about Cameco before 2007. They spoke very, very highly of this company because it's always been good for Saskatchewan. And prior to 2007 what was good for Saskatchewan was good for the NDP. But that has changed

now. It's changed because what is good for Saskatchewan, they feel somehow, is bad for the NDP.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again, it's all about politics. In fact, all three MLAs voted against a long-term care home in La Ronge, against the expansion of Northlands College, against expanded education, job training, family services. Everything for the northern constituency, they voted against because what is good for Saskatchewan is somehow bad for them.

And what is a really strange thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they have not brought one solid proposal, policy, program into this Legislative Assembly to try to suggest something that works better. You know, maybe they're afraid that the government are going to steal their ideas. Well we've seen what their ideas do to Saskatchewan, and we don't want any of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in wrapping up . . . I get some heckling from the member from Athabasca, and maybe I've been a little tough on him because he was quiet. We saw a couple days ago in committees what happens when he's not quiet, so there's good reason why he's quiet at times. And he seems to be quiet only when he's in front of his own people. In this type of situation he always has lots to say.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this agreement is very, very good for the people of Saskatchewan. It's very, very good for all of us, especially the North, and I will be supporting this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's in fact my pleasure to enter debate here this afternoon or discussion this afternoon as it relates to the new agreement, sales agreement with India, certainly an important agreement to industry in our province, here in Saskatchewan. And the other part of the motion is urging continued action towards similar trade and export opportunities for Saskatchewan companies across the globe, and that's critically important work that this government needs to be focusing on. They also need to be focusing on making sure we have a transportation system that will allow those exports to actually get to market, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the broken system on that front.

But I'm pleased to enter in and discuss a few different aspects here today. Certainly our relationship with India is a very important one, both to Saskatchewan and to Canada. You know, India is Canada's largest trading partner, and that's a critical relationship, and we see this as expansion of that relationship. If you think of India, this is, you know, the world's largest democracy, a growing economy, a growing population, and certainly a country for which a relationship is critically important to Canada and to Saskatchewan. It was important for Prime Minister Modi to visit Canada and to be a part of building that relationship and hopefully strengthening that relationship as we move forward. We know that's an important trade relationship.

We know it's important for a host of other reasons as well. We know that those individuals that are of Indian extraction are no small part of being big contributors to building and shaping the

province that we so love here in Saskatchewan, in all facets, from business through to all aspects of our economy and civil society and academia and health care, Mr. Speaker. So we have a very important relationship with India.

Certainly when we talk about the uranium industry and those companies here in Saskatchewan, this is an important industry to this province, has been for many years, Mr. Speaker, and should be for years moving forward. Certainly government plays an important role on deals like this, and with that industry specifically, to ensure the important and needed and necessary oversight, Mr. Speaker, the regulation that needs to be set, and making sure that government is providing the management that it must. But certainly this industry and the companies engaged in this industry here in Saskatchewan are very important to Saskatchewan.

I think of the presence they have in northern Saskatchewan. It's a very important one. I think of, they have of course many different operations. I've had the chance to go up and tour some of those operations. It's certainly exciting this year to see Cigar Lake coming back online, of course lots of investment that's been made, lots of employment that's provided through places like Key Lake, through McArthur River, through McClean Lake, through Rabbit Lake, Mr. Speaker. And these are investments in jobs that are important to an entire province but certainly to the North.

When you look at the uranium industry in Saskatchewan, we know that it's about 5,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker. That's critical in a region for which governments need to be focused on, quite frankly, measures that will improve strengthened employment aspects throughout the North, greater opportunities. Those 5,000 jobs are critically important. I know that workforce I understand also is 45 per cent Aboriginal, Mr. Speaker. That's really an important statistic, but it's more than a statistic, Mr. Speaker. It's lived out in the lives of communities throughout the North. It's lived out in the lives of families, Mr. Speaker.

I often think of a gentleman that I ran into once on the Sturgeon Weir River, Mr. Speaker. We were well off the highway, well off the beaten path, and we were on a little tributary lake that was off the Sturgeon Weir River. We were navigating our way with our canoes and came around into a little lake that was beautiful, copper in colour. The walleye were biting. It was a fabulous spot. And there was some smoke coming up from the island up around the way, Mr. Speaker. As we made our way up around, as a group, we recognized that there was a moose that was strung out across a fairly elaborate drying and smoking rack, Mr. Speaker, and a family that was at play in the water and catching fish, and had a wonderful time to chat that day.

I still remember the name of the individual, the dad of the family. His name was Simon. He lived in Pelican Narrows, and he had long been employed in the uranium industry. And he said to me that it's just the best of a couple worlds from his perspective because he's allowed and able to have meaningful employment up in the North. He's able to remain within his community in Pelican Narrows. He's able to provide for his family, a family that you could see the strength within as they played on the rocks in this beautiful island up on the Sturgeon Weir, a tributary lake up on the Sturgeon Weir River, Mr. Speaker. He said that he had a chance he'd go in for I believe a

week. I think this changes from time to time, going for a week and then would be out for a period of time, which allowed him to really connect again with the land and as well his family.

[12:00]

I thought that was just a telling example of the meaningful example that goes beyond the statistics that we share, which are also important. A \$350 million trade agreement is important. The 5,000 jobs that are in place, those are important. But it's important for us to represent and understand what that means in the lives of families through the North, what this industry means for the province as well.

As we move forward, I know that there are concerns around the industry and making sure that the oversight's in place to track and make sure that uranium is used for all of its productive purposes, Mr. Speaker. That's important, and it's an important consideration of a government, and it's one to follow up on.

Certainly our healthy, strong relationship with India as well, and this agreement, should allow us to have thoughtful discussions moving forward about non-proliferation treaties and being able to advance the security and stability of our world but also the security and stability of that industry here in Saskatchewan. Certainly it's important from a perspective of global peace, but certainly it's also important from a perspective of stability and security to an important industry here in Saskatchewan, to the returns that are delivered to the province of Saskatchewan, and the returns that are delivered in the lives of many families all through northern Saskatchewan, people like Simon, Mr. Speaker.

Now government has a job to do though, Mr. Speaker. Those companies do a good job. This industry's important. The workers are world class, Mr. Speaker, but government has to do a better job when it comes to the North of delivering the benefits back to northern communities. And when I see matters of the inequity and lack of fairness with the funding for on-reserve schools, Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of what a provincial school is funded at, that's an injustice that not a single one of us should stand by, Mr. Speaker. Now that's not a critique of this industry in any way. This is a critique of government and an industry that's in the North and in ways that we can better support the North.

We regularly hear of the road conditions and some of the social conditions that aren't being addressed by government, by the member from Athabasca and the member from Cumberland, and we know them as well when we tour and meet with leaders throughout the North, Mr. Speaker. And it's fair to say that on too many important files, to the people of northern Saskatchewan, this government is an absent and negligent partner, Mr. Speaker. And so when it comes to delivering for northerners, Mr. Speaker, we should expect a lot more from this government, and that's of course critically important in the life of all those communities as well.

But as it relates to this agreement, certainly it's an expansion of or a new agreement that's important to an important industry in our province. I would urge government to take on some leadership and not sit idle on the transportation system and its failures in Saskatchewan because for our export-driven

economy and for us to be all we can be, Mr. Speaker, we need to be able to get our product to market. And I'd urge government to make this an urgent priority for building the future of Saskatchewan for people like Simon and his kids, Mr. Speaker, and for all of us all across Saskatchewan. It's been my pleasure to enter in debate here this afternoon.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Prince Albert Northcote. One of the important factors for Saskatchewan as a province and our economy is that we have good access to the North to make sure that our businesses can provide the supplies that are needed in the mining industry, the mining industry related to uranium. Can the member from Prince Albert Northcote tell me what her position is on the building of another bridge in Prince Albert which will actually deal with this specific question and make sure that the uranium mining industry isn't caught in a jam when something happens with the existing bridge? Thank you.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you for the question. As the member well knows, there was a very public announcement for our commitment to building that second bridge. We have created, we continue to create partnerships, and we are willing to partner with the federal government and with the city of Prince Albert to get that second bridge done. We'll see what happens with that. Our commitment stands. We'll see what happens with the city.

The other thing that I'd like to point out is when the members opposite had the power of the province in their hands and the Diefenbaker bridge needed repairs, they said, it's not our responsibility; make the city pay for it all by themselves. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minute our bridge needed repairs, we put \$4.2 million into bringing it back to standard. Thank you.

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

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2013 our government introduced a new uranium royalty structure that attracts new investment in uranium mines along with increases in jobs for First Nations people in the North. The then Finance critic and now Leader of the Opposition would not take any position on this royalty structure. Mr. Speaker, I guess that's no surprise to us as, after over two years of being the party leader, he hasn't yet presented a policy document to stand on anything. So, Mr. Speaker, as we have yet to see any policies from the NDP, will the member from Regina Rosemont tell the people of Saskatchewan whether or not their election platform will include a royalty review of uranium?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I know sometimes members and maybe new members get caught up in the politics of this place, but the fact of the matter is that

from CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] governments all the way through New Democratic Party governments and forward, if you look at basically the timeline of resource development and specifically uranium development in Saskatchewan, it's been under a success of CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] governments, Mr. Speaker — established in 1952, a significant expansion and new mines brought on through 1975, the Blakeney government playing a very direct role. We continue to maintain an important relationship with those companies, and we need to make sure there's stability for that industry, Mr. Speaker, because as I've said in my speech, this is an industry that's so critical to the future of Saskatchewan.

Well of course the royalties themselves, members should know, are not actually disclosed because of commercial sensitivity, so it's awfully difficult to engage in some of the technical discussion here, Mr. Speaker. But what I can assure is we will ensure stability and a no-surprises . . .

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Melfort, Tisdale. I'm going to ask him the question around home ownership. Seventy-three, 74 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan enjoy the opportunity to own their own home. Yes, it's two mortgages and obviously they have to pay down that mortgage. With the northern people that possibility is even harder to achieve for them.

Recent changes made by the Ministry of Housing that is actually kicking out working families that work at some of these uranium mines. Many of these working families that work at these uranium mines are now forced to pay rent for the rest of their lives with the option of home ownership being taken away by the Sask Party government's change of policy around home ownership.

To the member from Melfort: do you think that working people in northern Saskatchewan should have the opportunity to own their own home in northern Saskatchewan like they do all throughout the province with the rate as high as 74 per cent? Do you believe that they have a right to own their own home in . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Time has expired for the question. I'd like to remind members to put their questions through the Chair. I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in answer to the question, yes, I believe that. And in most cases in northern Saskatchewan, people have the opportunity. Now to understand this directly is that there are places where they don't have the opportunity to own their own houses because they will be on-reserve property and reserve property is community owned or reserve owned, and therefore they cannot own their houses there. Now that's being moved along, but a quick and dirty answer to that is yes.

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

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, former NDP Premier Lorne

Calvert shocked the international uranium world when he flippantly called nuclear power “the dirtiest form of energy.” Yet the current NDP leader said on March 13th, 2013 that “I support uranium mining and exporting is obviously part of mining.” It seems pretty confusing to me, Mr. Speaker, that one minute the NDP can insult the whole uranium industry and the next minute the member opposite is putting his whole support behind them. Mr. Speaker, will the member from Athabasca say once and for all if the NDP supports or does not support the mining and exporting of uranium?

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

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, every single NDP premier has supported uranium development in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Every single NDP premier will continue to support uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And what’s really apparent, Mr. Speaker, is obviously that when this whole deal was announced, Mr. Speaker, when this whole deal was announced in Ottawa, guess who was not quoted but was waving his arms up and down frantically trying to gain attention. In all the press releases from the federal government, our own Premier was not quoted in any of the press releases that were announced, but he was there waving his hands to make sure that he was part of the parade. So, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that every premier in the province of Saskatchewan with NDP roots has and will continue supporting development of Saskatchewan’s North.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we hear regularly about the grain in bins that can’t get to market of producers across Saskatchewan. We know of the broken transportation system that this government’s presiding over, and we recognize their failure to take this serious and show some leadership. This is critically important to an export-driven province and the future of Saskatchewan.

My question to the member from Melfort: what is he proposing by way of leadership to fix the broken transportation system in Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We kind of jumped from the uranium sector to the farming sector. And I always think when the opposition brings up farming and farmers, knowing that those people will sleep so much better tonight knowing that the NDP are on their side.

But you know, you’re looking at different options. You’re looking at federally regulated, but putting pressure on the systems, looking at further systems that may add to the south, taking some of the pressure off by using oil or pipelines that are actually being opposed in most cases by the federal NDP. So yes.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we all know, the members opposite have a very close relationship with the Council of Canadians. In fact, recently they met with their national chairperson, Maude Barlow. Last week the Council of Canadians came out with a news release to show their support for the Declaration of the World Uranium Symposium which, and I quote, “calls on all nations to put an end to the mining and use of uranium.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, being that most of the jobs in this sector, in the uranium mining sector are from the North, does the member from Athabasca actually support the views of the Council of Canadians? And in their recent meeting with Maude Barlow, did he stand up for Saskatchewan and the development of uranium, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That’s a yes or no. Yes or no?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca, but unfortunately time has expired.

[12:15]

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 609

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Chartier that **Bill No. 609** — *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It’s a pleasure to rise in this House today and enter into the debate on this very important bill, Bill No. 609, *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*. And I truly wish and I hope that at some point we can have a vote on this.

This is something that when you think about seniors and how much they’ve contributed to this province, and the fact that it’s wholly unfortunate that the situation we find now in terms of long-term care . . . And it is a good thing that the Ombudsman is doing her investigation into long-term care because you know for sure it’s something that we need to understand more fully.

But a good first step, a very good first step would be to pass Bill 609. It would be a signal, a powerful signal to the people of this province that we value our seniors and those who are living in personal care homes and special care facilities, that they are valued and they have respect and they have dignity. And by us not passing this, the message is murky at best.

And obviously, especially when this government on their side, and they get their spin doctors working and we know that, we

see this continually day after day in the House where they can really make a . . . It's amazing what they can say is . . . [inaudible] . . . I guess the word is, the phrase is often silk out of a sow's ear, you know. And I really am worried why these folks cannot get behind this. You know, we have had opportunities where it just is common sense for us to work together, and we've seen good rules, good laws made when we both understand fully and completely that this is the right thing to do. This is the right thing to do.

But these folks are digging their heels in, digging a hole, saying that everything's okay, that the situations that have come forward are just one-offs. And truly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that doesn't seem to be the case at all. And so this Act really makes a lot of sense, and I want to congratulate my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale for bringing this forward because I think it's one that we should fully consider and get into committee and get it back here and pass it before the end of session. We just have a couple of weeks to go. So I am very happy to rise in the House to speak.

But you know, we have a government that has put its blinders on, put its blinders on and they're ramming through situations where they know . . . And they know. They've had their information. They've had their special reports about the situation in personal care homes and special care facilities, and they should be, they should be more reflective of what they're hearing, of what they're hearing, what people are telling them about the concerns that are happening. And while we get the numbers trotted out . . . And this government is really famous for the numbers. They just keep popping them out.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that they are the government. They have a responsibility, and they have to accept that. And they have to understand that it's just not the reality of what's happening on their front lines, what's happening in our special care facilities and our personal care homes. That is not the reality. They may comfort themselves by saying so much that they've done this and they've done that, but the reality is it's not showing up in our homes for too many people.

I want to just take a moment here to reflect on the preamble because it's a very important way to set the tone for the debate. And I think that again the first preamble clause is "WHEREAS residents in care have the right to dignity, respect and safety," and that's so true. That's so true. But we hear time after time after time where the fact the people, the residents do not have, have not been treated with dignity or in a dignified way. And that's really tragic because in situations that we all would hope we don't find ourselves in, but here they are. And they're, you know, still with us, and we really want to make sure that their lives have value, that in fact . . . They are not being treated with dignity, and that's a real problem . . . and respect.

And respect is an important concept because, you know, if people are treated with respect . . . And we often use that word fairly loosely. And to me, you know, as a teacher, we would often talk about that in the classroom. Respect is around the basis that people have value. They have worth. And every resident in our long-term care facilities, special care facilities, or personal care homes have value. They are with us, and we value that they are, and it's important. That's why we must treat them with respect.

And of course safety is . . . It goes without saying really because it's so important, that we can look across the world and we have certain safety standards. And I think about the situation just a few short years ago with a fire in a long-term care home, that they were not up to standards. And we have to make sure we have the best standards, the best standards that we can possibly have in our facilities, our special care facilities and our personal care homes, and so that's really, truly the case.

The next clause talks about, "WHEREAS residents in care deserve basic guarantees of the quality of care they ought to receive." That really speaks to the minimum standards that they will have, certain levels of care, and they can expect that. Their family members can expect that. And it's not something that's general and that has no real meaning, but that really is a guarantee.

You know, we often think about guarantees that we have, particularly when we might buy a new house, might be a guarantee on the quality of the home we've bought, might be a guarantee on our car, vehicles. The guarantee really has to have meaning. Sometimes we get guarantees where we go, what does that really mean? Is that really a guarantee, or are we being not told the complete picture here? And so this is why they deserve basic guarantees of the quality that they ought to receive, and that's so, so true. So Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's a really important clause to have in the preamble.

The next preamble talks about, "WHEREAS residents in care have the right to individualized care that meets or exceeds minimum . . . care standards." And of course this is also very, very important because everyone who is in a personal care home or a special care facility has unique situations, unique challenges. And it's really important that those unique challenges and circumstances are reflected in their care and that individualized care and how it's prescribed has to at least meet or exceed the minimum quality of care standards so we all know what the benchmark is for good care in special care facilities and for personal care homes. We all know what those minimum standards are. But the key word there is that it's a minimum. The expectation is that in fact, actually, people would be receiving more than that but depending on their own unique set of circumstances. And so that's a very, very important clause to have in.

Then it goes on to talk about, "WHEREAS it is the responsibility of the provincial government to ensure consistent standards of care in facilities throughout Saskatchewan." This is the best or most important part of it all because you could have all the whereases and the best wishes you want but, if nobody's tagged with the responsibility, then it really doesn't matter much. And this is where the provincial government has to take ownership of it and has to say, you know, that they will ensure that there are consistent standards of care in facilities right throughout the province, and that it doesn't matter whether you're in Moose Jaw or Saskatoon or in North Battleford, Meadow Lake, Estevan, wherever. You will have the consistent standard of care, and it was the same throughout, and that there will be the inspections and the work done to ensure that that is the case at hand.

If it's not the case, then the whole point is, why are we doing this? Well we're doing this because we want to make sure the

residents in the special care facilities, personal care homes, have a basic level of care but also that basic level embraces their unique circumstances, and in fact it will be the best care possible.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen record revenues over the last eight years in this province. It's been a phenomenal eight years of financial growth when it comes to the province of Saskatchewan. The question is: where did the money go, and what are the priorities of this government? Clearly this helps set those priorities, and this is an important aspect of it. It's important. It's really critically important, and when we look across Canada, we should be the very best.

We've had an opportunity, that unfortunately this government has chosen not to take advantage of, to really invest in our facilities and in our standards for those patients in special care facilities and personal care homes. They decided not to do that. They've largely ignored the circumstances. They put some money in, but not nearly enough, and particularly after the minister had a chance to really make some breakthrough opportunities a year or so ago when he had a report done but instead chose to fund a very small part of that. And so this is an important bill.

I want to take a minute here to read into the record the letter that our Health critic talked about, in terms of the residents in care bill of rights, that said the NDP tabled . . . Now she was referring to the previous bill, Bill 606:

The Residents in care Bill of Rights Act, if passed, will require the government to establish minimum quality of care standards that apply to seniors' care homes throughout the province that guarantees respect, dignity, and safety for seniors.

I've reflected on that and how important that is, how important that truly is, those key three cornerstones: respect, dignity, and safety for seniors and residents in our special care homes.

Saskatchewan has a seniors' care crisis. I'm quoting here:

Saskatchewan has a seniors' care crisis, and a significant part of the problem is the government's elimination of minimum standards that has led to understaffing, underfunding, and absolutely unacceptable treatment of people.

And we've seen the impact of that, when they got rid of the minimum standards and they have a general statement that really doesn't really mean very much at all but has led to understaffing, underfunding, and absolutely unacceptable treatment of people. And she wraps up by saying:

The bill is a clear way to address the problems with seniors' care in Saskatchewan, and it would be common sense for this government to pass it because what they are doing now isn't working.

Truly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see that. We see the evidence of this government failing the seniors and the residents of special care homes and long-term facilities, and it's really tragic because these folks really deserve so much more, deserve so

much more with that.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to now move adjournment of Bill 609, *An Act respecting the Rights of Residents in Special Care Facilities and Personal Care Homes*. I do so adjourn. Thanks.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill. No. 609. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this afternoon, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:29.]

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