



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

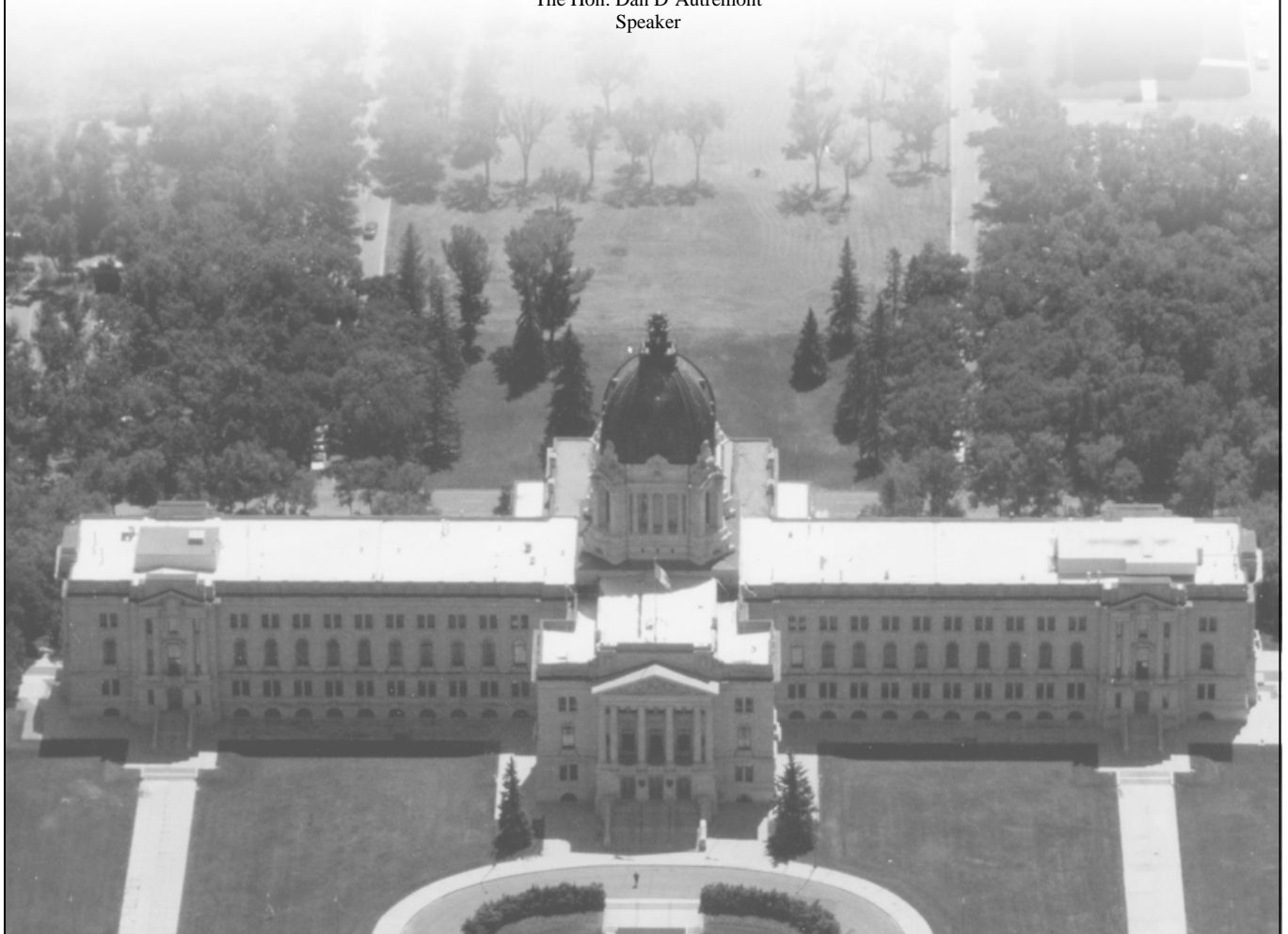
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
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 13:30.]

Clerk: — Members, Mr. Speaker is not present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Deputy Speaker: — On Thursday, April the 30th, 2015, a point of order was raised by the Opposition House Leader. The Opposition House Leader indicated that the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford used language during members' statements which repeatedly has been found to be unparliamentary. He cited three occasions when ministers have apologized for using similar language.

I have reviewed the record, and at page 7059 of *Hansard* the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford stated the following, which I quote, "... the NDP is just making stuff up ...". I have reviewed the past instances of this type of language and find that on March 23rd, 2015, March 19th, 2015, and March 25th, 2013, members have withdrawn and apologized for similar comments. Therefore I find the point of order well taken.

Before calling on the member to withdraw his remarks, I want to comment about how some points of order have been raised recently. It would be helpful to the Chair if the alleged breach of order is clearly articulated. I would ask members to be much more specific when they raise and respond to points of orders.

I now call on the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford to withdraw and apologize for the cited unparliamentary remark. I recognize the member.

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, comments I made in my member's statement last Thursday, I wish to withdraw and apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has withdrawn his remarks, and that closes the issue.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm going to be asking if I . . . right now I will ask for a leave for an extended introduction today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and

thanks to members for the leave. It is a great honour for us to welcome a very special guest seated in your gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker, today. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, His Excellency Nicolas Chapuis, the ambassador of France to Canada. With the ambassador today is Monsieur Jean-Cristophe Fleury, the consul general of France in Vancouver. They're accompanied by officials from Intergovernmental Affairs, Melinda Carter and Laurie Hutton.

Monsieur le Président, en français, j'ai le plaisir de vous introduire son excellence Nicolas Chapuis, Ambassadeur de France. Ce sera sa première visite en Saskatchewan, et nous sommes très contents de lui souhaiter la bienvenue à l'Assemblée législative ici à Regina.

La France et la Saskatchewan font preuve un amitié spécial, que l'on parle de culture et histoire partagé, et en matière de commerce, surtout l'export d'uranium — comment est-qu'on dit lentils? — lentils aussi et moutarde qui provient du Saskatchewan.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, in French, I have the pleasure to introduce to you His Excellency Nicolas Chapuis, ambassador of France. This will be his first visit in Saskatchewan, and we are very happy to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly here in Regina.]

France and Saskatchewan have a special friendship that speaks to a shared culture and history and, in matters of commerce, especially the export of uranium — how do you say lentils? — also lentils and mustard coming from Saskatchewan.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ambassador has a very special, very busy schedule here during his time, his first visit to Saskatchewan. Yesterday he met with members of our province's vibrant French community. We thank him for doing that. His Excellency will also meet with the Lieutenant Governor, a number of government representatives, and officials from the University of Regina. I'm going to have a chance to meet with the ambassador in just a little while from now after question period.

But perhaps the most important event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, marking the ambassador's first visit will come later today when His Excellency very graciously and generously honours some Saskatchewan heroes, four veterans who helped liberate France nearly 71 years ago: James Bennett of Regina, formerly of Yorkton; Howard Leyton-Brown of Regina; John Milani of Regina; and Arthur Ramshaw of Nokomis. Mr. Deputy Speaker and members, His Excellency will present these courageous gentlemen with the Legion of Honour, the National Order of France. This is the highest commendation, similar to the Order of Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it recognizes the heroism of Canadians, including these four Saskatchewan gentlemen. And we want to thank the ambassador and, through him, the people of France for the honour that they would bestow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, President Hollande, the French president, President Hollande said France and Canada are "united by the blood that was spilled and the alliance that was forged during the two successive world wars in the 20th century," and that the

ambassador would mark that alliance and that bond that we have during his visit is very special to these four and to all of us in Saskatchewan. We're very, very grateful for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the commercial relationship between France and Saskatchewan is well known, driven principally by uranium but not exclusive to uranium. As I mentioned, perhaps poorly, in French, there's a great agricultural trade between Saskatchewan and France. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hope to see that relationship become even more robust with the advent of CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement], with the opportunities that will exist for Areva in-province, but also for the expansion, to the mutual benefit of the people of France and the people of the province of Saskatchewan, owing to CETA.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just ask all members to join with me in welcoming this very special guest to the Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming His Excellency and the consul general here to the legislature today.

And, Mr. Speaker, the ties and the bonds between our country and our province and the nation of France are indeed strong and historical. We think of the many settlers who came to the province and Canada from France. We think of the ongoing relationship through trade and social ties. And as the Premier points out, we also think of the strong partnership as an ally that Canada has had with France over many years and tragically, Mr. Speaker, over many battles and through many wars as well.

And I would like to extend a particular thank you and word of appreciation to His Excellency for coming to Saskatchewan and recognizing veterans from our province in the way that he is doing. That's very important and meaningful to their families and meaningful to the entire province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wish His Excellency all the best as he spends his duration of time here in the province, and a safe return to Ottawa, and all the best with his career beyond that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to the legislature a friend, a constituent, friend, and neighbour, Ms. Bonnie Gleim who is seated in your gallery. Bonnie operates an SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] insurance agency right next to my constituency office. So claims aside, we've gotten to know each other fairly well and we're on good speaking terms in spite of my mishaps along the way. But Bonnie Gleim was diagnosed with MS [multiple sclerosis] some 20 years ago, and in the interim she has become a very strong advocate and a leading voice, particularly in her fundraising efforts to help overcome this crippling disease.

Bonnie has contributed countless hours to volunteering and organizing the annual MS Walk in the community of Eastend. In the 16 previous years, southwest Saskatchewan has raised an astounding \$350,000 in support of MS research. And just yesterday was the 17th annual walk, and they raised another \$31,000 as a result of that event. The efforts and the goodwill in the community on behalf of MS are really quite outstanding.

This year Bonnie was named the incoming Chair for the MS Society of Canada, the Saskatchewan division board. Bonnie is most deserving of this recognition. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to have Bonnie join us this afternoon in her Legislative Assembly, and I would ask all of my colleagues to make her and her colleagues welcome in their legislature.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through to all members of the Assembly, I have the honour of introducing two very important guests who have joined us in the legislature today. Child Find Saskatchewan, which was first established in 1984, works across our province to educate and advocate for the protection and the rights of children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce the president of Child Find Saskatchewan, Phyllis Hallatt who has travelled from Saskatoon to be here with us today. And Ms. Hallatt has also brought with her the Child Find Saskatchewan provincial coordinator, Conrad Mitzel. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming Ms. Hallatt and Mr. Mitzel to the Assembly today.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the loyal opposition and with the Minister of Social Services, I too would like to join in welcoming the guests to their legislature. And I know they've been working hard at Child Find Saskatchewan for many years and have done some incredible work. We really appreciate the work that they continue to do. And this is not a happy situation when we find when children do go missing, but they're there and they provide resources to make sure we can do all we can to get kids back home. So I would like to welcome them to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Cypress Hills introduced Ms. Gleim in the gallery, and she is joined with Eugene Paquin from my constituency who also serves on the provincial executive of the MS Society. He has been a tireless advocate and has met with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] across the province with regard to multiple sclerosis issues and has been a strong advocate for families and people that suffer from the disease. I want to welcome him to the legislature and also want to commend him, not just for his work there but for persons with disabilities, because he deals with hard of hearing issues as well as other things. So I want to welcome him to his legislature.

And while I'm on my feet as well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Minister of Social Services welcoming the people here from Child Find. They were here recently. These are people that are in the same office building as my constituency office and people that I see often regularly, and certainly concur as to their hard work and commitment and want to welcome them to the legislature as well today.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to join some of the members in the government in welcoming folks from the MS Society of Saskatchewan here today: Eugene Paquin from Saskatoon, Bonnie Gleim, Brian Duck. We have an opportunity later this afternoon to meet with the MS Society and to hear a little bit more about ongoing work that they do, and we're looking forward to that at 5 o'clock. But I just want to say thank you to these folks and all those who are involved with MS research, support, and service and providing information to those who perhaps are newly diagnosed or on that journey.

So thank you for all the work that you do in supporting citizens of Saskatchewan in their journey with MS. So thank you. I'd ask all members to welcome them as well.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the west gallery, there are 20 students from A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw that I'd like to welcome here, along with their teacher. Ms. Carrie Kiefer. Ms. Kiefer has brought us students here every year, so it's kind of an honour to have them again repeat here. And A.E. Peacock is no stranger to the records of this legislature because they are very noted for all their extracurricular activities, always in football and volleyball. And this is the social studies 30 class, so I ask all members to welcome A.E. Peacock Collegiate to their Legislative Assembly.

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

[13:45]

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To you and through you, it's my absolute pleasure to introduce, sitting in the west gallery, a group of 21 grade 7 and 8 students from Coronation Park Community School. Mr. Speaker, with them today is their teacher, Ms. Nicole Blondeau.

And I let them know earlier — I had a chance to have a little discussion with them — I went to Coronation Park Community School, and there might be one trophy left in that . . . If you could dust off the cobwebs and everything off the one trophy that's still there . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's archived, yes. It's probably archived. But I look forward to meeting a little later here with this group, and I'd like all members to join with me in welcoming this group of awesome students to their legislature.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just briefly mention my constituent with the MS Society. Mr. Brian Duck is in your gallery. He certainly gives back to his community as much as he can. He's been with the MS Society for 25 years or so, only to be overmatched . . . or his 45 years with the Regina High Noon Optimist Club. So he's definitely given back to his community. I'd like all members to welcome him, as they already have, one more time.

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join with members on both sides of the House, they did miss one member up there from the MS Society, so I'll do a reintroduction to four individuals in the Speaker's gallery. Bonnie Grove we also met with this morning. She isn't in attendance right now.

But I also want to mention a great meeting that we did have this morning, myself and the Minister of Health, with Eugene Paquin, Bonnie Gleim, Brian Duck has been mentioned, but also Erin Kuan has been left out up there. So we're . . . really great meeting with Erin as well. I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for support for 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 students often do not get the one-on-one attention they need. And none of this is acceptable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 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 students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

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

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to present a petition on P3 [public-private partnership] accountability. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are from Kamsack, Sturgis, and all throughout Saskatchewan. And 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 whereas 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. They 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's 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 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 from Saskatoon and 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 Yarrow Youth Farm.

The government is planning to close Yarrow Youth Farm and create an open-custody wing in Kilburn Hall to accommodate Yarrow's residents. The provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has declared it can't 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. And Kilburn Hall has a more institutional environment that could intimidate and alienate teens that have committed minor offences. And so I would 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.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition come from Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

MS Awareness Month

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you're no doubt aware, May is MS Awareness Month in Canada. Across the country, the MS Society will work to inform the public about their services and mission, and to engage their supporters in the fight to end MS.

MS is an inflammatory disease that affects the ability of nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord to communicate properly with each other. There's no known cure for MS. And while it is most often diagnosed in young adults aged 15 to 40, we know that it can affect younger children and older adults as well.

MS is unpredictable and can affect vision, hearing, memory, balance, and mobility. Its effects can be physical, emotional, and clearly financial. Currently there is no cure but each day researchers are learning more about what causes MS and are zeroing in on ways to prevent it. Saskatchewan has the highest per capita rate of multiple sclerosis in the nation. Our government is committed to helping find viable treatment options for our MS patients.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in bringing awareness to MS Month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too rise today in recognition of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. Organized each year by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, MS Awareness Month is a time for us to raise awareness of this disease that affects so many families in our province. With chapters all over the country, the MS Society runs many events each year, including today's red carnation day, to raise the profile of the disease.

The MS Society also does a great deal of work in funding research for a cure. Their efforts have sponsored more than \$140 million in research since 1948. Although the root cause of MS remains unknown, each year of research brings us one step closer to a cure. New and better treatments are being discovered all the time.

I ask all members to join me in thanking those delegates who are here in the gallery today for their years of hard work raising awareness and funding research and also in committing to making sure that everyone living with MS in our province has the support and treatment that they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Awareness and Prevention Regarding Missing Persons

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this House to inform all members that May 2015 has been officially proclaimed the Missing Children's Month. Missing Children's Month is an important opportunity to raise awareness in Saskatchewan and across Canada on behalf of missing children, youth, and their families.

This year marks Child Find Saskatchewan's 24th annual Green Ribbon of Hope campaign which runs through the month of May. Green ribbons may be obtained at TD Canada Trust and RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] Royal Bank branches or by calling Child Find Saskatchewan.

I'm proud to note that our government is providing \$50,000 in funding to Child Find Saskatchewan in support of their Alert Youth program and expand on their All About Me ID clinics.

Mr. Speaker, this week has also been declared Missing Persons Week. There are currently more than 120 people missing in the province. They are cherished family members and friends. We are thankful for the work being done here in Saskatchewan by the provincial partnership committee on missing persons, a truly Saskatchewan approach to looking at this difficult issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Missing Persons Week and Missing Children's Month and thank those who are working to bring awareness and preventing future missing persons and children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Historic Military Milestones

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This week we will remember the 70th anniversary of a number of milestones in our country's military history. Tomorrow marks 70 years since our country's fighting men and women defeated the German forces in the Netherlands. More than 7,600 Canadians died fighting to liberate the Dutch from Hitler's forces with many Saskatchewan fighters among the dead. The Dutch people have never forgotten the sacrifice made by Canadians for their freedom, and anyone who has been to the Netherlands can attest to their gratitude.

Friday is VE [Victory in Europe] Day, which marks the end of the war in Europe and the final surrender of the Nazi regime. My father fought in the Second World War and was proud to serve his country and fight against oppression and hate. Like many other Saskatchewan people, he stepped up to promote the values of fairness and democracy and stand against Hitler's tyranny. Saskatchewan sailors, soldiers, and airmen and women served with bravery and courage and their sacrifice should never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War this week and in thanking all the men and women who fought and continue to fight for our rights and freedoms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Family to Reunite in Saskatchewan

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a case of a little boy that crossed my desk as a minister, and that this government has worked on tirelessly for a number of years. It has held interest in the hearts of many Saskatchewan people.

Last Friday we learned that four-year-old Ajjab Afridi will be coming to live in Canada with his adoptive family. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Canadian embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan has approved a visa for Ajjab to travel with his adoptive mother to his new family's home in Saskatoon. Ajjab was born in September 2010 to his mother, who was in failing health and living in severe poverty in Pakistan. She thought it was best that her son be adopted by her sister Waheeda and her brother-in-law Ashfaq so that he would have a better life in Canada. Since Ajjab's birth, Waheeda has been living in Peshawar, Pakistan and raising Ajjab as her own.

Our government has advocated for the Afridi family case, writing to the federal government numerous times and issuing a letter of no objection for Ajjab to come to Canada. This has not been an easy time for the Afridi family but they hope their family can finally be reunited by mid-May on Canadian soil.

I'd like to thank everyone who has worked diligently on this case lobbying for the reunification of the Afridi family. Mr. Speaker, this is such good news; a family is together at last. Ajjab Afridi will soon call Saskatchewan home, and home is where he belongs. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Support for Camp fYrefly

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this past weekend I had the pleasure of attending a fundraising event for Camp fYrefly summer camp which was held at the home of co-founders, Tony Bidulka and Herb McFaul, both recognized as Saskatoon's 2014 Citizens of the Year specifically for their support of this camp.

Camp fYrefly Saskatchewan is an educational, social, and personal learning retreat for sexual minority and gender-variant youth. It focuses on building and nurturing their leadership potential and personal resiliency in an effort to help them learn how to make significant contributions to their own lives and to their schools, homes, and group home environments and communities.

Camp fYrefly was founded in 2004 as a university community education project from educators at the University of Alberta. In 2008, in partnership with the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina and the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, committees of dedicated volunteers were formed by Tony Bidulka and Herb McFaul with the now realized goal of bringing Camp fYrefly to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government supports gender- and sexually-diverse youth throughout the province, which is why we're providing \$25,000 to Camp fYrefly Saskatchewan. We want to ensure that all our youth feel safe and supported at schools and in their communities. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the co-founders, Tony Bidulka and Herb McFaull, for putting on a wonderful event, and I would like to thank the Camp fYrefly team and volunteers who put on this supportive retreat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Health Foundation's Health Care Celebration

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was honoured to attend the recently held Moose Jaw Health Foundation 10th annual Health Care Celebration. The Chair of the capital campaign, Dave Reidy, announced that more than \$5 million has been raised to date for the Health Foundation's \$8 million capital campaign. This is an outstanding achievement that shows the exceptional generosity of Moose Jaw's people and the business community.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, the Health Foundation's capital campaign has a motto of Equipping the Hospital of Tomorrow . . . Today. The Health Foundation is one step closer to being able to purchase new life-saving medical equipment for the new Moose Jaw regional hospital which is set to open later this year. Some of the equipment that will be included is a CT [computerized tomography] scanner and Saskatchewan's first MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] to be located outside of Regina or Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, two major donations were also announced at the health care celebration. The Moose Jaw Kinsmen Club presented the Health Foundation with a cheque for \$100,000, and the Mosaic Company will again match donations up to \$150,000 to this week's 800 CHAB Family First Radiothon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Moose Jaw Health Foundation for raising \$5 million so far and wishing them all the best in reaching their \$8 million goal. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Expenditures Prior to and During Government Trade Missions

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Alison Redford got in a fair bit of trouble for having one taxpayer-funded travel scout. Why does this Premier have two?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, there are officers who are tasked

to make sure that trade missions are managed in a logistically efficient way. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's true that our government has engaged in more trade missions. Ministers are involved. I'm involved. And so it's certainly true that officials have been sent ahead of time in markets. They've done so, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a way to manage costs as efficiently as possible, I believe, including ensuring that they are flying even overseas in economy, even though by policy of the government, they could fly in business class.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been able to manage the overall travel of government, including what happens in the ministries and what happens in the front benches by ministers, so that it is significantly lower than what happened under members opposite when they were in office. And all the while, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've been able, I think, to see some good results that come from those trade missions.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to continue the practice. We'll be careful with the funds that are expended, as we always have been, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we're going to continue with trade missions and continue with doing what has been successful, I think, for the economy and the people of the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, that was a very similar answer to what Premier Redford gave when she was confronted with this, Mr. Speaker.

This government has been anything but careful when it comes to taxpayers' dollars on these advance trips. The Premier's two travel scouts spent \$23,493.76 for a 16-day advance visit to Singapore, Japan, and the Philippines. The Premier's two travel scouts left nearly two months early before his trip. My question to the Premier: how on earth can he possibly justify this?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well first of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the member opposite is prone to hyperbole. Let me just be pretty clear. The folks that have been going on these trips, on the missions ahead of time, are within the ministry. There's a clear role for them to be doing so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we're in market, we like to get as much into the agenda, as much into the program as possible. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to make sure that we are using taxpayers' dollars efficiently, both in terms of what happens in advance and also what happens in terms of when I arrive and when the delegation arrives. Sometimes it's ministers and sometimes it's me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the practice of travel for government is important for us, but it's important that we do so in a way that's economical. And it's important that we learn the lessons from members opposite. When they were in office, they had the chance to actually demonstrate some leadership, and we saw huge travel bills rung up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've got lots of information to share with members opposite about how travel costs are actually down.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the while our government can, I think, point to results for Saskatchewan people. I think if you talk to the CEO [chief executive officer] of Cameco . . . And by the way, when we travel in Asia — and he's referenced some Asian communities, countries — Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we travel there, we are advancing the case for Saskatchewan fertilizers, for potash, for uranium.

I just recently attended and witnessed the signing of a sale, 7 million pounds of uranium to India. That's the first time ever, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Cameco folks say they don't think it would happen without the trade missions that we're doing. We're likely going to continue on a cost-effective basis both the advance and the missions, delivering results for Saskatchewan people, which is a far cry from what members opposite used to do when they were in office.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, you can do trade missions without wasting money on travel scouts that this Premier is so fond of using. You know, Alison Redford, Mr. Speaker, she had one travel scout that did these advance trips. This Premier has two that are paid through the ministry.

For their entire first week in Hiroshima, the Premier's two travel scouts had about 7 hours and 45 minutes of work meetings on their schedule. On Monday they arrived and settled in. On Tuesday they discussed logistics for an MOU [memorandum of understanding] signing ceremony. On Wednesday they spent an hour and a half touring a hotel. On Thursday they transferred to a different hotel. On Friday they visited a banquet room, a hotel room, met with hotel staff and viewed a reception room. My question to the Premier: does he actually think and believe that this is a wise use of taxpayers' money?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, both of the officials in question that the member is referring to now are part of the public service of the province of Saskatchewan. They are not travel scouts for anyone. They have important duties within the ministry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When it is that we have planned a trade mission abroad, their role doubles. They also undertake these advances. We've looked at the costs of the advances. I've asked specific questions about this to make sure that we're getting value for the taxpayers' dollars.

As I said, I think in the trip that's referenced by the hon. member and the subsequent trips, though the policy would allow them to fly business class, they fly economy as do, as do elected members of the government when we're flying domestically, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would also point this out. Here are the facts in terms of which side of the House actually cared enough about the taxpayers' dollars when it came to the issue of travel. The number of out-of-province trips in 2014-15, compared to '06-07 — that was the last full year of members opposite — has decreased by 72 per cent or 94 less trips. One hundred and thirty-one trips by the high-flying NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Deputy

Speaker, 37 under the Saskatchewan Party. The only difference is for the 37 out-of-province trips on this side of the House, we actually delivered for Saskatchewan people. They'll have to account for the 131 trips they took, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I don't think they sold any potash, and I know they didn't sell any uranium.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when you look at the travel itineraries of the Premier's two travel scouts — remember Alison Redford only had one travel scout; this Premier thinks it's necessary to have two — you see nothing, Mr. Speaker, in these documents that required two travel scouts to travel to these countries far in advance. These are basic logistics that could and should be sorted out by email, by phone, by Skype, and by working with Canadian embassies.

What the internal documents from the Premier's two travel scouts reveal, Mr. Speaker, is this Sask Party government's massive sense of entitlement. In each city, in each city that the Premier planned to visit, his two travel scouts spent time evaluating at least two ritzy hotels to determine which ritzy hotel was nicer. Again you'd think, Mr. Speaker, that online reviews could help with that. You'd think working with the embassy could help with that, Mr. Speaker, but not this Premier. He sends two travel scouts to go in advance to compare one luxurious hotel to another.

My question to the Premier: why on earth are Saskatchewan taxpayers paying the bill for two travel scouts to go in advance and judge one foreign luxury hotel to the other?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — These individuals are professionals within Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, providing professional services throughout the year. And also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have also performed these duties with respect to scouting out locations. Often it's to find the most cost-effective accommodations.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unlike members opposite when they were in government — and he might want to turn around and ask the member for Lakeview about travel policy when members were the government not very long ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker — here are the facts. You should look at the overall amounts for travel and the results from travel, I think, in terms of comparing parties in this House. The cost of our out-of-province travel on this side of the House overall has decreased 75 per cent or about 200,000 — under the NDP, \$263,000; under the Saskatchewan Party, \$63,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

If you want to talk about entitlement, you want to talk about what side of this House today is still entitled, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you need to look over on your left hand. You need to ask the member for Lakeview why, when he was the Health minister, were taxpayers paying for him to go to attorneys general meetings in places like, I don't know, all over the United States. I don't know why they would even want him there, but he was travelling on the government's dime, Mr.

Deputy Speaker. We got a long list of practices of members opposite, including Maynard Sonntag, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Their overall travel bill was higher with or without scouts. But here's the difference — they delivered nothing for the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Alison Redford's travel scout had a big title and a big salary as well. The difference is this Premier has two; Alison Redford only had one, Mr. Speaker.

When you look at the advance work being done as detailed in the government's own documents, Mr. Speaker, basic logistics, basic logistics, Mr. Speaker, that could be found out through email, through Skype, through the embassy. It's not like the Canadian embassy is going to set the Premier up in some dive in a slum, Mr. Speaker. They're going to be in a good hotel. But this Premier has to send a travel scout to go in advance and judge one great hotel to another, Mr. Speaker. That's where the priorities lie.

At every hotel the travel scouts went to, they asked if the Premier and his wife could get complimentary upgrades to even fancier rooms. They asked, "Can you assign a hotel staffer 24-7, provide us with a cell number in case we need anything for the Premier's entire stay?" Mr. Speaker, it's baffling to me why the Premier and his delegation can't pick up a phone and call the front desk like any other person staying in a hotel would do.

But again, Mr. Speaker, these are basic questions that could and should have been sorted out from here by phone, by email, by Skype, and working with the embassy. But this Premier sends two travel scouts two months in advance to go check out to make sure everything is just right for him. My question to the Premier: how can he justify this waste of taxpayers' money?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very interesting line of questions coming from that particular member and that side of the House. Here are some basic numbers. I think you have to look at total government travel and compare the two sides, when they were in power and what we've done since 2007. Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the last five years, I believe it is, for the last seven years, sorry, for the entire time of the Saskatchewan Party government in terms of out-of-province travel, the total amount that the government has spent, \$3.9 million.

The total amount for the NDP for the same time period in advance of the '07 election — here's entitlement, Mr. Deputy Speaker — \$5.45 million, unadjusted for inflation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These folks in office were travelling around, the point of which I'm not sure because we didn't see many results. We didn't see them advancing the potash file or the uranium file.

We're going to make sure the trips are done as efficiently as possible, that we're in market for a short period of time, that we're out of market for a short period of time, and that the overall costs are down. And the fact of the matter is, for all of his bluster, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point is this: costs for the

Saskatchewan Party travel down versus what the NDP used to spend, unadjusted for inflation. And the focus is always on results.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't have to take our word for it. Industry is saying publicly, very publicly recently that results are being delivered to Saskatchewan people. We're selling our product. We're promoting the province, and we're doing so in a way more cost-effective way than members opposite ever did.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, zero answers, zero accountability, zero rationale, Mr. Speaker, about why this Premier needs to send two — two — well-paid travel scouts in advance just to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that he can get upgrades for his rooms.

Here are the other questions that the Premier's two travel scouts asked: "Invitation to VIP reception on opening night. How many people? Just one? Does this run concurrent to the cocktail reception?" "Premier's delegation may be quite large. Any concerns around this?" "Is there a possibility to secure additional banquet tickets for the rest of the Premier's delegation?" "Can the Premier bring his photographer to the event?"

Mr. Speaker, all this sounds very self-entitled, which is problematic enough, Mr. Speaker. But again why should Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan taxpayers pay to send two travel scouts to go and sort out the most basic logistics, things that could easily be done from here through phone, through email, through Skype, and through working with Canadian embassies? Could the Premier please provide an answer.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll compare the record on this side of the House in terms of travel and results from travel, the overall costs including all that he's referenced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll do that any day of the week.

With respect to some of the achievements in terms of trade missions, in terms of November 2014, Canpotex as a part of the trade mission signed two sales agreements that will see millions of tonnes of Saskatchewan potash shipped to India. Obviously the precursor work to the uranium sale that was announced was also very much a part of that mission.

Two new labour migration MOUs with the Philippines, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a unique memorandum from the Philippines signed, I think, in large measure because of the trade mission that we were there. I think now we have a preferred relationship with the Philippines in terms of immigration policy, even preferred over Manitoba, in part because of our protection for foreign workers, but also part of the reason is because we go to trade missions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would just point out to my honourable friend again that the overall costs of travel on this side of the House are way lower

than they were under the NDP, even though the NDP were not availing any results for industry here for Saskatchewan people.

We're going to continue with this. We're going to continue with engagement. We'll watch our costs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll ensure that they're, that people are actually paying less, unadjusted for inflation, than they were before and getting better results.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, these high-ranking officials, they're not hammering out a deal. What they're doing is asking if the Premier can get an upgrade on his room, Mr. Speaker. They're asking which hotel is nicer and checking out banquet rooms and banquet tickets. This is not stuff that you need to send two travel scouts in advance across the globe to do. This is stuff you can do through email, phone, and Skype, and that would be a well . . . use of taxpayers' dollars, the opposite of what we've seen from this Premier.

Here's what else the internal documents show. The Premier's travel scouts attempted to inspect the vehicles that would be used to transport his delegation. Even when, even when the Canadian embassy could provide a 21-passenger bus for the delegation, the Premier's scouts requested a separate car to transport the Premier and one or two members of the delegation. In the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, the two travel scouts arranged a three-vehicle motorcade for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, and for his delegation.

And the travel scouts, Mr. Speaker, they note — now this is very important, this is really important to send high-ranking individuals for — they note that there is no VIP [very important person] terminal in the airport, so the Premier will have to use "the facilities that regular passengers use," Mr. Speaker.

These are the types of questions that these travel scouts are doing. Talk about entitlement and talk about a complete abandonment of good Saskatchewan common sense. My question to the Premier: how on earth can he justify this spending?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — How can we justify the spending? The spending is a million and a half less under our government than it was for the last seven years of the NDP. It was less. How can we justify the spending? Why doesn't he turn around and ask the member for Lakeview, while he was the Health minister . . . And by the way, remember last session and all the requests for money to be paid back? Has he asked the member for Lakeview to pay back? While he was the Health minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he went to attorneys general meeting in Juneau, Alaska; Sun Valley, Idaho; Monterey, California; Sylvan Lake Resort. I think it was a family holiday. I think these were family holidays. Twelve thousand dollars spent on the taxpayers' dime to go to these attorneys general meeting when he was a Health minister. That's just part of the narrative.

The rest of the narrative is waste by members' opposite. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$5.5 million spent in their last seven years

compared to 3.9 million spent . . . This is the total number. These are the total numbers in our first seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's a savings to taxpayers of \$1.5 million.

What you don't get though from this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you did get from that side of the House is folks coming back from the mission saying there were no MOUs signed. There were no sales made of any particular resource that the people of the province have. We sort of blew your money without much to show for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Things are different today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the explanation from the Premier about why he needs two travel scouts to go months in advance . . . Premier Redford, Mr. Speaker, only had one. Those were inappropriate, but at least she only had one, Mr. Speaker. The types of questions being asked were, will the Premier have to go through regular security? Can he get a nice upgrade to the fancy hotel? Mr. Speaker, it's ridiculous that he would stand and try to justify these questions and this type of unnecessary travel.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that taxpayers paid about \$23,500 for the 16-day advance visit to Singapore, Japan, the Philippines. And we know that taxpayers paid nearly \$14,000 for a one-week advance trip to India last September which was well after, well after Alison Redford got in hot water for her use of one, one travel scout. That's about \$37,500 for only two of these advance trips just for the Premier's travel scouts to sort out basic logistics, to evaluate ritzy hotels one to the other, to sort out room upgrades for the Premier, inquire about menus, inquire about wardrobe.

My question to the Premier: how many other trips have these two travel scouts gone on, and what has been the total cost to Saskatchewan taxpayers?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Leader of the Opposition is now actually interested in the total costs because we'll get into that today. And we'll get into it in estimates later this week, and we'll find out that the NDP blew money on travel at a far greater rate than any government could conceive of blowing, especially when they weren't delivering results for people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to point out to the member opposite that it's not just Saskatchewan that has this practice of sending public servants on advance missions . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What's that? The member for Saskatoon says, is Alberta one? Yes, Alberta's one. Yes. But so is British Columbia, so is Ontario, and so is NDP Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it's not quite so shocking after all.

This member is so desperate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he's looking at a government that's now well into its second year, second term. He must have thought, well we'll just change leaders. We don't have to tell them anything about policy, but we'll change the leaders. I'm different than Lingenfelter. It will all turn

around. We're a year away from an election, and he's 30 points behind, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we see more and more desperation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP province of Manitoba undertakes the same practice. I'm not sure if they're watching the dollars; I'm sure they are in terms of overall expenditure. Let me assure the hon. member that we are. That's why travel is down \$1.5 million from when the NDP were in office.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, such incredible arrogance and entitlement we're hearing from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how he can think he can justify to Saskatchewan people that work hard and pay their taxes, Mr. Speaker, that it is appropriate to have high-ranking officials, two of them, Mr. Speaker, go across the globe to ask questions about whether or not he can get a complimentary upgrade on his hotel room, whether or not he'll have to use regular security, and whether or not, Mr. Speaker, he can have a motorcade to go through the city, Mr. Speaker. But these are the types of dollars being spent by this Premier who, from that answer, is not showing any sort of remorse or recognition that it's inappropriate; in fact digging in his heels, saying this is a good use of money.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, this is the Premier. This is the government that said they had no money. They couldn't send one official, not one government official to northern Saskatchewan for an important meeting on health care and on the economy. Couldn't find one, but he's got money for two travel scouts, Mr. Speaker, to head to the North.

At every ritzy hotel they went to evaluate for the Premier, the travel scouts asked two questions about the Premier's hotel rooms which have been redacted. The reason for the redaction is section 29(1) of the Act which has to do with personal information. Mr. Speaker, these scouts have spent a lot of money, paid for by the Saskatchewan taxpayers. They deserve to know, the public deserves to know what these travel scouts are actually asking and doing. So to the Premier: what are his travel scouts asking about hotel rooms that needs to be blacked out?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is trying to characterize this debate in certain ways. I'm just here trying to defend NDP Premier Greg Selinger from this attack because he undertakes the same practice. I don't know to what extent, but he undertakes the same practice.

In fact, provinces that have in-market representation . . . Remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not have any offices around the world. Most, a lot of provinces have offices in different markets around the world: British Columbia in Asia, and Alberta in Asia. Alberta's got an office in Washington and through many locations in Europe.

So even some provinces with offices in market still will send advance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of them is NDP Manitoba. The reason that you do this is to make sure the trip's as

coordinated as possible, that it can be short in duration, that the program is useful. There's been many occasions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where a mission was cancelled on my part. I just said I didn't think there was value there for taxpayers.

These are the kinds of questions we get. We ask questions around when are we flying economy, how are we going to maximize value. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the difference is these questions were never asked by members opposite when they had the chance, when they were in government for 16 long, dark years, the last seven of which they spent \$5.9 million travelling all over the place. Compare that to what we've spent, same time period. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's \$1.5 million less, and industry is saying the results are far better.

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

Release of Information Concerning Worker

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier admits that he personally directed a leak of confidential employment information about a private citizen. That leak is now being investigated, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier's office is being investigated, the Ministry of Health as well. But over and over again, that Premier has said the information leaked to reporters was general. But now we know for a fact those claims were not accurate. Why did the Premier say that it was general information when that clearly was not the case, and will he finally admit that what he did was wrong?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've already indicated both in the House and outside the House to the media that I had asked for general information to be provided for the reasons that I have given, which is that we simply wanted health care workers to know that what Mr. Bowden was facing in the workplace had nothing to do with him coming forward but rather had to do with complaints from colleagues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I indicated that the information was general in nature. That was certainly the case with the first email. I can confirm for the House this, Mr. Deputy Speaker: that last Thursday I learned of a second email that was sent to one reporter, Mr. Murray Mandryk of the *Leader-Post*, and it had specific information in it. It was provided on background. Certainly that's the assurance from the senior staff person, and I take that person at her word, that it was provided on background, again for the same reasons, but specific information which is not what was asked for by myself. And so we've had a meeting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've had a direct conversation. This is not going to happen again, and she is no longer going to be working on this file.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 613 — *The Green Energy, Green Jobs and Diversified, Sustainable Economy Act*

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 613, *The Green Energy, Green Jobs and Diversified, Sustainable Economy Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Nutana that Bill No. 613, *The Green Energy, Green Jobs and Diversified, Sustainable Economy Act* be now introduced and read for a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the member.

Ms. Sproule: — Next sitting of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Lawrence: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its seventh report. I move:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Services 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 178

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 178 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2015*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's my honour to be able to rise today and make some comments on Bill No. 178 that was introduced recently. This is the one budget bill that we've seen this year, and it deals with some changes that are required to *The Income Tax Act, 2000* to bring a number of things in line with the Canadian federal *Income Tax Act*, and then some significant policy changes that this government is introducing with respect to programs that Saskatchewan people have come to rely on and, I think, a number of changes that are benefiting some major corporations here in the province, Mr. Speaker. So I'll want to address a few of those in the bill today and maybe ask a few questions about why the government is taking this approach.

[14:30]

So if we look at the actual bill itself, the first change that we see is a definition change in clause 2(bb). And what they're doing here is they're changing the definition of taxation year, because apparently in the past there was special rules for taxation years of testamentary trusts, and so now they're removing that and they're just bringing it in line with section 249 of the federal *Income Tax Act* where the general definition of taxation year resides. So it just really referred to section 249 now of the federal Act.

It's kind of interesting when you see these retroactive changes that go back 13 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would be curious to know why these things take as long as they do. But then I started looking at some of the clauses in the *Income Tax Act* and, boy, they're pretty dense and a complicated section. So I think you really need a lot of expertise to be able to analyze these well and properly, and so maybe that's why it took 13 years to make this kind of change.

The second change that we're dealing with in the bill is an amendment to section 35(8), and what's explained there is that, again the Canada Revenue Agency has asked that there be changes made to the provincial Act to conform to the federal Act. And as you know, our income tax regimes are very closely parallel in Saskatchewan and federally. And I think every province makes efforts to tie them in as closely as they can so that, you know, filing income tax isn't as complicated, or more complicated than it already is.

Anyways this change here is going back to January 1st, 2012, so it's going back three years and it's changing the definition just to simplify what total charitable gifts are. And I just find that it's interesting that it's being simplified, because the language itself in this subsection is incredibly, incredibly dense, and I'm not sure how you could really even begin to understand

its meaning. But it looks like section 118.1(1) of the federal Act has a definition of total charitable gifts and this is just really bringing in the changes that the federal Act has.

I'm tempted to read out that subsection just so you could see, Mr. Speaker, how incredibly dense the language is and . . . Yes, well perhaps I will just so you can see this is a very complicated issue that I'm not sure any ordinary layperson would even get meaning out of it. And I'm not sure I understand it, but it says the following:

"In applying the definition of 'total charitable gifts' in subsection 118.1(1) of the federal Act for the purposes of subsection (1)", the words 'to the extent that the amount was not included in determining an amount that was deducted under this section in computing any individual's tax payable under this Part for a preceding taxation year' in that definition are to be read as 'to the extent that the amount was not included in determining an amount that was deducted for preceding taxation year pursuant to this section in computing the individual's tax payable pursuant to this Act or pursuant to section 118.1 of the federal Act in computing the individual's tax pursuant to Part I of the federal Act'".

So it's as clear as mud to me. But I think at this point we have to assume that the officials are clear on what is exactly required under the federal Act. And we need to sort of determine whether these are appropriate changes, and we'll certainly have more questions in committee when we have an opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, these are complicated questions, and I think we would have to rely on the officials to talk about some of the meanings that we find in that particular subclause.

The next change that we see . . . And again, happy to be involved in adjourned debates, especially when the Finance minister pipes up. And he's always easy to hear, so we look forward to his comments as this debate unrolls as well, although he did have his opportunity when he gave his second reading speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And maybe he forgot . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it was a really good speech. I'll give him that. But maybe he forgot that it's our turn now to have some comments on this. At any rate . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll keep trying here, despite I hear the dulcet tones of our Finance minister across the way.

Section 35(8) is being repealed, and we're substituting . . . Actually the only change there is they're adding subsection (d) which is a new change to the federal Act, that this province has been asked by the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] to make the changes, I guess, not retroactive but comparable so that this section now is in line again with the federal Act.

Now this, interestingly enough, goes back to February of 2004. So again these are fairly lengthy retroactive clauses. We're looking at 11 years in this case, and this is just for an amendment that was made to clarify the treatment of foreign interest income for the purposes of computing the foreign tax credit. So there's a new subclause in the federal Act, and it now applies to the purposes of this section in the Saskatchewan income tax Act, 2000.

We get into some of the policy changes now when we look at changes to section 37 of the existing income tax Act, and that deals with graduate tuition tax credit. And we know there was much made of this in the budget, and certainly a lot of people in Saskatchewan are expressing concern about the way the government is changing this tax credit. It's been very well received by students here in Saskatchewan, and I think in many ways has been relied on by students here in Saskatchewan.

But what we see now is they're making a change so that the non-refundable portion of it is now effective immediately . . . where it was a refundable income tax credit, used in very important ways by individuals who were struggling making ends meet, single moms, people with large student loans depending on the studies that they undertook, and people that are struggling to make ends meet with income that isn't quite enough to pay all the bills, Mr. Speaker. So this was an important benefit that many, many, many students in Saskatchewan have relied on for the last few years.

Converting it to a non-refundable income tax credit is actually ruling out the people that probably need it the most, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it seems a bit mean spirited in a sense that this government is choosing to create this version of this graduate retention program, sadly, and I think to the detriment of a number of individuals who would be able to benefit from this if it remained in its current form.

So I think we're still receiving comments from people who are realizing the impact it's going to have on them and their ability to meet their debt obligations and their student loans and to continue to develop their careers in their chosen paths, you know, with struggles with the cost of living and in particular the cost of housing in a lot of urban centres in Saskatchewan where we know people are really struggling.

So converting this to an entirely non-refundable income tax credit is something that will have a significant impact on those that need the help the most, and certainly I think we will continue to question why this government has gone this route.

Section 39, changes there as well, and in this particular case this is the low-income tax credit. And what has happened here is that the CRA is asking for this government to conform to an amendment made to the federal Act from 2014 year and forward — this is interesting — to remove the requirement for a specific application for the federal goods and services tax credit.

And I remember when I finished university and had small children, this was a tax credit that really meant a lot. It was a small amount often but it meant a lot for us as a family, but we had to apply for it. And I'm not sure how many people were fully informed that that was the process that was necessary. And I think this is a good move, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we're removing the requirement for individuals to apply. As long as they file their income tax, it's known automatically whether or not they're eligible for this credit. So why would you make them apply when you already have that information through their tax return? So this is a change I think that makes a lot of sense and I think it will certainly help individuals who aren't familiar with the intricacies of filling out a tax form. It's a complicated process, and if people are able to access a tax credit that they're eligible for without having to go through the

process of applying, I think that makes sense and it's already information that the government has. So I think it's fine.

Going on, section 39 has a number of other changes in terms of the tax credit. But the graduate retention tax credit, I think a lot of those changes are just ones that have to reflect the government policy changes that were introduced in the previous clause that I spoke to. And so those are just — what would you call it? — technical or bureaucratic changes that are required. For example, in section 39.1 it sets out the tuition rebate instalment amounts, and it's just being clarified now to show that this is a lifetime maximum benefit and that it's only for the years 2012 to 2014 that they can claim in respect to the program. So those are just minor changes that are being introduced in section 39.

Moving on, another important policy change this government introduced in this budget, you know, section 39.2. And again, this is a budget where we're still seeing record revenues flowing into the government's coffers through the good fortunes of our natural resource sector and our farming sector, and all the hard-working sectors that are out there. We still see cuts to benefits to families that were really appreciated and certainly encouraged families to be more active, for children to be able to have access to certain programs.

And I think of, for example, when my two sons were playing soccer, Mr. Speaker, and I know soccer is like one-third the expense of what sports like hockey or swimming or different other sports involved, but soccer fees were a lot of money. And again, when you're looking at paying down student loans, you're looking at trying to buy a house and secure a mortgage and put some money away for that, when you're looking at rising costs of living, these types of benefits are ones that make sports or music lessons or all those types of activities that are over and above what we can get through our school system . . . But they're important, because they get families out moving. We get them being exposed to different kinds of cultural activities. These are ones that are really, really cherished and important.

And again, what we see in this government is a bit of a mean-spirited approach where all of a sudden there's an income test. Out of the blue, we see an income test. We see that \$60,000 is now decided to be the amount where if you make a penny over \$60,000 regardless of what . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We see someone over there is talking about free money. This government, if that's the truth, then they would be cutting out this benefit altogether. But all of a sudden the backbenchers come alive when they think they have something to add to the debate. And certainly, you know, we'll look forward to their comments in committee as well. If they think that there should be no what they call free money, I think they should be careful about what they're calling for, Mr. Speaker.

What we see is a mean-spirited approach by this government to draw a line in the sand and say, \$60,000. A penny more, you're out. You're not eligible. Your family has to make it on your own. And again, why in this case an income test and not in others? It's not clear. And certainly we know . . . I think what is clear is that they're looking to save money, because they've been spending so much money that now all of a sudden, when

we see some revenues dropping in the oil and gas sector, they're desperate to find ways to cut. And what do they do? They pick on families.

So it's really unfortunate we see a government with this kind of mean-spirited and small-minded approach. It's unfortunate and it's affecting families and it's stopping kids from having access to programs that they currently have access to. And that's not the way to go, Mr. Speaker. That's not the way we think Saskatchewan should be moving forward. It's moving backwards. It's not moving forward at all.

The other thing we see though, who's going to get the benefit of these changes in *The Income Tax Act*? It's not active families. It's not graduates. It's actually a large corporation who is now going to benefit from changes to the manufacturing — I have to find the right name — manufacturing and processing exporter tax. This is where the benefits are flowing. The benefits are now flowing to large corporations who are going to save millions of dollars in taxes by the benefit of this new, changes to . . . Well it's the creation of a new tax incentive.

And it's not a tax incentive for a family that's trying to pay their bills. It's not a tax incentive for a family who needs a program like Radius offers to youth in the summertime, families that need help and support. It's not an incentive for graduates, Mr. Speaker. It is an incentive for manufacturers and processors. And the change is now found under section 64.3(1). This is the new change to *The Income Tax Act*, and the benefit and the incentive that's being created here is for two components: a general hiring tax credit and a head office tax credit. So what happens if this large corporation is able to create a head office here in Saskatchewan? They get \$10,000 each year in tax credits for each incremental full-time head employee hired by an eligible business. So let's say, Mr. Speaker, they have seven employees. That's \$70,000 in tax credits that this corporation gets. That's equal to the amount that this government has cut when they cut the program for the youth companionship program through Radius in Saskatoon.

[14:45]

So seven employees and a head office, a tax credit of \$70,000, and yet this government cannot find ways to support families who rely on the youth companionship program. I think the contrast is stark. I think it is shameful and I think it really indicates where this government is pointed, and it's certainly not for the families of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So that's an interesting tax incentive. Again, you know, we see that tax incentives for industries in Saskatchewan in the cultural spheres, such as the film employment tax credit, was seen as something that's shameful, but now we have a tax incentive here for manufacturing and processing and this is the best thing since sliced bread, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So you've really got to wonder what kind of thinking goes into these changes, and what sort of maybe representations were made by advocates of this tax incentive.

Who lobbied the government in order to get this tax incentive? Whose idea was it to provide this type of tax incentive to large manufacturers and creative industries? Now it says creative industries, but the irony of that, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no

more large-scale film industry in Saskatchewan. We're down to about 140 people that, in the province, scattered across the province, that would consider themselves to be . . . that would be their career or the industry that they work in. And so it's hardly imaginable how this tax incentive will apply. We're looking forward to see if it does, and certainly we'll keep an eye on that.

But I think the notion that it's for creative industries, I don't think that was the intent of this. And I certainly don't think that the lobbyists who approached the government to get this tax incentive were lobbying on behalf of film companies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but of course we'll never know because we don't have our lobbyist registry yet. But it will come, and we will continue to keep an eye on that once that registry is finally set up. And you know, I guess, were there people from the graduate studies programs that were lobbying the government for changes to the graduate retention program? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker, but I think the people that were lobbying this government were very, were very careful about making applications for things that are in their interests.

You know, and interestingly enough, we saw in this budget a change in the way royalties are calculated for potash, and I don't profess to understand all the details, but what I did hear from potash officials last week at their reception was that it was out of the blue. It was a complete surprise, and it was not well received by the potash industry. So you've got to wonder again, who's lobbying these guys and who's making these kinds of representations?

There's a few sections as well, other sections that are being changed. Sections 68 and 95 are also being amended. Again, this is at the request of the Canada Revenue Agency and this is to conform to another amendment to the federal Act. And this is just adding provisions to allow a refund of excess instalment amounts paid on account of a taxpayers' tax liability for a year. And I believe that currently those are just being held for the next tax year; I'm not entirely sure. But this seems to make it clear that these excess instalment amounts are now refundable to the taxpayer which is, I think, a welcome change.

There's some changes to section 124 of the Act. I'm just going to go to that section, Mr. Speaker. It's near the end of the bill here. And that's section 17 of this Act — that's Bill 128 — and this is just to add some regulation authorities, so new powers are being added to allow for regulations for the manufacturing and processing exporter tax incentive and the corporate income tax, tax rebate for capital investment and primary steel production.

Again we see the singling out of one particular industry and that's primary steel production. We don't know what sort of lobby effort was made on the part of the steel production industry here in Saskatchewan. Interesting that that's where the tax incentives are flowing out of this budget, and certainly we know it's not going to active families. It's not going to graduates from this province. And certainly it seems like these changes are benefiting the few and not the many that need the help here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Like I said, with the cost of living the way it is, housing, particularly housing . . . That's the one thing I hear over and

over and over in my conversations in Saskatoon, is the impact of high housing rates and difficulty finding suitable and adequate housing that's at a reasonable price. And I think the things like this where you see a cut to the active families benefit and the graduate retention program are really hitting those people that are struggling just to make ends meet. Their utility bills have gone up and the cost of living has been skyrocketing. And I think you talk to anybody and look at their grocery bill over the last few years; we can all feel the impacts of these climbing prices.

So again, not sure who's advocating for graduates and we're not sure who's advocating for active families. I think if people knew ahead of time and were consulted they would have made a case to this government. But I think it's only steel producers and others that are making representations that they should have benefits under tax incentives, that other sectors of the community and groups and families and communities are not making those representations. I can't figure it out otherwise, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So at this point, I think we want to continue this discussion and others of my colleagues are going to want to be able to speak to this, so I would like to move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 178, *An Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 178, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2015*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To accommodate the work of committees later this day, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:52.]

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