



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

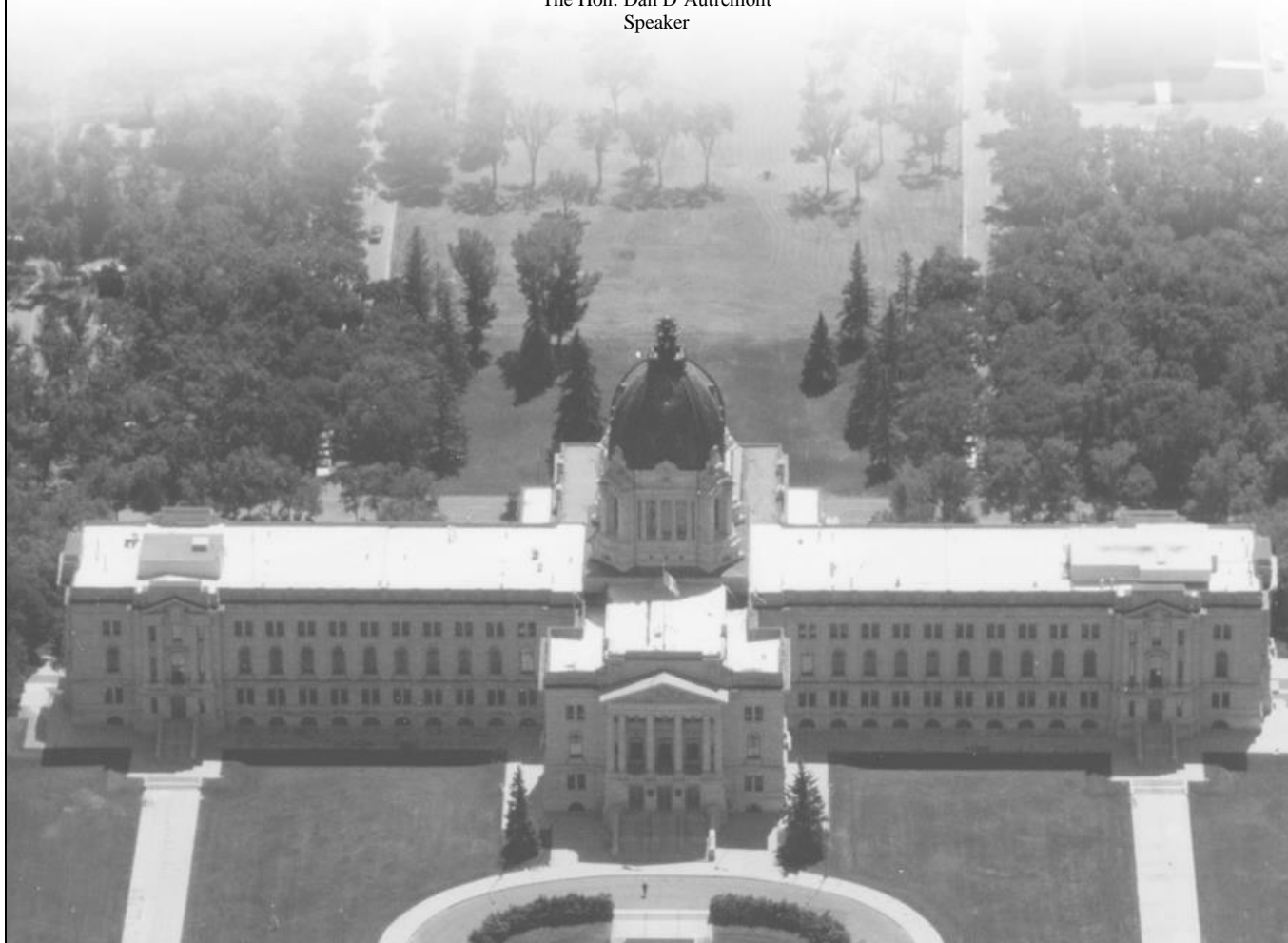
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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, Hon. 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, 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.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Energy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today we proclaimed Co-operatives Week in Saskatchewan in recognition of the important work done in our province by co-operatives.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce a few people that are with us and comment on their ongoing success of co-operatives here in Saskatchewan. Seated in the east gallery, I believe — yes, I see them there — I think, I'm not sure all of the representatives of the co-operative movement are with us this afternoon, but they were certainly there this morning. And it is very good to see them: Dusty MacDonald, president of Federated Co-ops Ltd.; Beryl Bauer, president of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association; Myles Shaw, director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada; Myrna Hewitt, executive vice-president of marketing at the Affinity Credit Union; Brad Schultz, director of Federated Co-ops Ltd.; and Ryan Anderson, director, Federated Co-ops Ltd.

I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature here this afternoon and helping to proclaim the important Co-operatives Week this week.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite and welcome these fine leaders in our province to their Assembly seated in the east gallery here today. Of course we had many more that were here just a little while ago in the rotunda to raise the flag for Co-operatives Week.

This is really important, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the rich and vast contributions of co-operatives to Saskatchewan, both from a historical perspective but to who we are today, and to build that bright future, Mr. Speaker, that we all believe in. We recognize that co-ops play a key role, whether it's in lending to small- and medium-sized businesses through credit unions, whether it's in a refinery, in retailing, in child care, and in health care through seniors' care, Mr. Speaker. We have an exceptional array of co-operatives with many individuals who are involved in making them a great success to their members and to the people of this province.

So it's my pleasure to join with the minister opposite, welcome these fine community leaders, and to recognize all that make co-operatives such a success in building our economy and building our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a

pleasure today to introduce four guests in your gallery. I see with us today, and if they could just give a wave, Dannel Pickering, Vanessa Spencer — it's her first time here actually — Kari Pruden, and Tom Howe.

These folks are no strangers to this House. They're members of SEIU [Service Employees International Union] West, a very important union we have here in Saskatchewan and across North America, as they provide important services in the public sector. And they make sure every day, every day people are cared for well in various settings here in Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members here to give these folks a warm welcome to their House. Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce, in your gallery, Mr. Andrew McFadyen. Mr. McFadyen is an advocate for children or individuals living with MPS [mucopolysaccharidosis]. And he's here today and will make his presence known for as many days as necessary until the minister reverses his unjust decision on the funding of Vimizim for the three Akhter children here in Saskatchewan. So with that, I would like to ask all my colleagues to welcome Mr. McFadyen to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too want to join with the member opposite in welcoming Andrew McFadyen to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. Mr. McFadyen works tirelessly on behalf of people across this country through his foundation, The Isaac Foundation, named in honour of his own son, Mr. Speaker. And I've had an opportunity to meet with Mr. McFadyen on a number of occasions. Last week was the most recent time; I'm sure it wasn't the last time though. And so I want to ask all members and my colleagues to join with me in welcoming Mr. McFadyen to the legislature.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Introduction of Pages

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce this session's Pages. We have with us today Sabra Leier, Chantal Kimpinski, Tayler Kosloski, and Sydney McWilliams. They are returning for this session.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of GSAs [gay-straight alliance] in Saskatchewan schools. And we know gay-straight alliances, or gender sexual alliances, are important in our schools, but yet this province lags behind others in securing the rights of gender- and sexual-diverse students. And we know this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our

schools for sexual-diverse students or students bullied because of their sexual identity or sexual orientation.

And we know that GSAs can play a pivotal role in providing good inclusive, anti-oppressive learning environments and offering reprieve from bullying and assault. And we know that this government must act and must act now so that students have simple, easy-to-understand information about gender sexuality alliances in their schools, and how to form a gender and sexual alliance so that they can know who to talk to in order to form a GSA. And this government must act now so that under no circumstances gender- or sexual-diverse students are denied the right to form GSAs in their schools.

So we in the prayer ask that:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to pass *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act* and enshrine in legislation the right of Saskatchewan students to form GSAs within their schools in order to foster caring, accepting, inclusive environments and deliver equal opportunities for all students to reach their full potential.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Regina, Melville, Melfort, and Swift Current. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition today for a residents-in-care bill of rights. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that residents in care have the right to dignity, respect, and safety. They point out that residents in care have the right to individualized care that meets or exceeds the minimum quality of care standards; that this is in fact the responsibility of the provincial government to ensure consistent standards of care in facilities throughout Saskatchewan; and that requiring each care home to post a residents-in-care bill of rights will guarantee that senior residents have individualized care plans and minimum quality of care standards.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan adopt Bill 606, *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act* which would provide Saskatchewan seniors with the right to a quality, high-level standard of care in seniors' care homes.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals in Big River and Prince Albert. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition from students and citizens here in the province of Saskatchewan. They're concerned about the state of affairs on our province's campus.

They state in the petition, Mr. Speaker, that Canadian full-time students in undergraduate programs pay 3.3 per cent more on average in tuition fees for the 2014-15 academic year this fall than they did the previous year. They point out a similar increase in the year previous. They point out a report released by Statistics Canada that labelled Saskatchewan as the province with the highest increase in tuition, with tuition for the 2014-15 year having increased by 4 per cent in the province for undergraduate students and over 5 per cent for graduate students. And they also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the average Canadian student in 2014 graduated with debt of over \$27,000, not including credit card and other private debt.

Mr. Speaker, in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately increase the funding for post-secondary education in this province with a legislated provision that this increase in funding be used to lower tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from here in the good city of Regina. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina — how quickly we forget — Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present a petition today from residents of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about schools and the fact that we need better schools.

Too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under-resourced. The Sask Party government's eliminated hundreds of educational assistants positions. Students don't often get the one-on-one attention they need. Conditions of our schools are rundown, unsafe, or uninspected, and the government refuses to release the information of \$1.5 billion in known repairs about the schools. The government plans to rent schools from private corporations. This is expensive and reckless, and none of this is acceptable given the record revenues that the government has had over the last eight years.

So the people 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.

And these are signed by people from across Saskatchewan including Assiniboia, White City, Vanguard, and Rockglen. I so submit, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place today to provide a petition in support of affordable housing from all throughout Saskatchewan, but this particular petition is from northwestern

Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to restore the rent-to-own option for responsible renters of the social housing program and to reinstate their remote housing program.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've had petitions signed from all throughout the land, and this particular page has been signed primarily from people from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Remembering Wes Funk

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, it's with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to Wes Funk, a stalwart in Saskatchewan's literary community. Wes was the author of several books including *Wes Side Story*, *Dead Rock Stars*, *Cherry Blossoms*, and *Baggage*. He was a fervent supporter and promoter of Saskatchewan writers through his heavy involvement in the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild and the Saskatoon Writers' Coop, and as host of *Lit Happens* on Shaw TV. I know many Saskatchewan authors credit Wes with inspiring them, motivating them, and helping them achieve their dreams.

Wes was boisterous, joyful, kind, caring, generous, open, and genuine. As one of his friends posted on social media:

It's my belief that Wes wouldn't want us all moping dourly around at his loss, though heart-wrenchingly sad. Wes would want us to look to the future and keep doing our thing: pursuing our passions, advancing our art, and living our lives to the full. That's just what he was doing, and it was a great example to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in expressing our deepest condolences to Wes's family and friends and to say a hearty thank you to Wes for his countless contributions to our province. Thank you.

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

#### Citizens Unite During Forest Fires

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to acknowledge and express our gratitude for firefighters, volunteers, organizations, community leaders, and for all those who provided aid during the wildfire emergencies this past summer.

To the First Nation and community leaders in the North, thank you for your efforts on the ground and for your leadership throughout the evacuation efforts. To the Canadian Armed Forces and our professional and volunteer firefighters, thank you for your hard work and for your dedication to the safety of Saskatchewan citizens. Of course, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the citizens of Saskatchewan for answering the call to help those in need, be it through volunteer efforts, donations, or

offering professional services and supplies to those who needed it.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, lastly I must acknowledge the up to 10,000 people who slept on cots in gymnasiums, who left their homes, and who faced uncertainty every day for weeks. Thank you to the evacuees for your patience and for your courage. Saskatchewan, you should be proud.

I ask all members to recognize and thank those who put all their efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of all Saskatchewan people. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

#### International Day for Disaster Reduction

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand and recognize the International Day for Disaster Reduction. Today provides the chance to promote a culture of disaster reduction, focusing on prevention, preparedness, and mitigation.

Since 1989, this international day has been celebrated with the approval of the UN [United Nations] General Assembly. The focus of this year's international day is on the role of local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge in disaster prevention. This year's theme is appropriate for us in Saskatchewan, having endured a record-breaking season of forest fires. Knowing early warning signs in nature allows responders to act quickly to mitigate the impact of fast-onset disasters. Indigenous knowledge passed on from generation to generation complements modern science and is vital to prevention.

Thinking back on this year's tragic fires, the contributions of indigenous knowledge certainly played a role in fighting the fires here in our province, but we can always do more, Mr. Speaker. We should strive to better collaborate with our northern communities to fully utilize the contribution of indigenous knowledge to show and prevent disasters like the one that impacted so many this summer. On the International Day for Disaster Reduction, we should commit to build more disaster-resilient communities, starting with acknowledging and incorporating traditional knowledge in disaster preparedness plans. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

#### Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I can say with confidence that we all have friends and family that have had to fight breast cancer. That is why October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer for women in Saskatchewan, with an anticipated 710 new diagnoses this year alone.

Mr. Speaker, early detection is key, and screening programs such as the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency screening program for breast cancer help with early diagnoses. Approximately 75

per cent of breast cancers diagnosed are in the early stages, which means this program helps give women and their medical teams the best chance to beat this disease. Thanks to early screening programs, the five-year survival rate is now at 88 per cent. That's the highest it has ever been.

Mr. Speaker, our government is dedicated to help create a better life for Saskatchewan women and families fighting breast cancer. In the 2015-16 budget we provided the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency \$157.3 million. That's up 1.6 million from last year. This funding will help enhance treatment facilities and options and will contribute to furthering cancer research.

Mr. Speaker, we are working hard to make sure that everyone who faces the fight against breast cancer comes out of the other side of this fight as a survivor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Co-operatives Week

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week has been proclaimed Co-operatives Week in Saskatchewan. As part of the ongoing annual recognition, co-operatives have been an integral part of the province's economy for decades.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that Saskatchewan is home of more than 1,300 incorporated co-operatives that are creating jobs and providing the residents of Saskatchewan with service in both rural and urban communities. From retail to wholesale businesses to credit unions and child care, co-operatives literally cross every part of our economy and operate in cities, towns, and villages across Saskatchewan.

Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, I along with some of my colleagues had the pleasure of kicking off Co-op Week with a flag-raising ceremony here in the Legislative Building.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome all members to join me in congratulating all of those who are involved with a co-operative movement. They are an important partner in our economic growth and continue to help make us the province the best to live in, to work, invest, and to do business. Co-operatives are a proud Saskatchewan tradition that help keep our province strong. And with that, I ask all members to recognize and appreciate co-operatives as we celebrate Co-operatives Week in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Physician Numbers in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to inform you that we have well over 500 more physicians in Saskatchewan than we did eight years ago. This is a 30 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, and it represents a great improvement in residents' access to physician services across Saskatchewan. Along with the overall increase in physicians, there has been a 23 per cent increase in family physicians and a 35 per cent increase in specialists, including a 50 per cent increase in pediatricians. Mr. Speaker, this is good news for families all across our province. Today more than ever, people have access

to the health care professionals they need.

Mr. Speaker, this is in contrast to the history of the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] governments where we lost hundreds of physicians and health care professionals. Under the NDP, the recruitment of specialists dwindled, rural and remote communities were forgotten, and medical graduates were not retained.

Today our government was elected on commitments to increase the number of doctors, educate and recruit more physicians, and provide incentives to retain more health care professionals after graduation. Mr. Speaker, we have kept those promises. With 500 new physicians in our province, the evidence speaks for itself: our government is moving Saskatchewan forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

### Trans-Pacific Partnership

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just last week the Canadian government signed the largest trade agreement in history. The Trans-Pacific Partnership includes 12 countries and over 800 million people. It removes tariffs and other trade barriers with Saskatchewan's most important trading partners, opening up many potential new markets for Saskatchewan exporters. It has been endorsed by numerous exporters, including virtually every agricultural organization that represents Saskatchewan producers. The TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] means more markets, more exports, more opportunities, and more jobs for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that's why our government strongly supports the TPP.

And where does the NDP stand? It's hard to say. At first an NDP caucus spokesperson appeared to support the TPP, but since then at least three provincial NDP candidates have posted their opposition to the TPP on social media. And where does the NDP leader stand? Who knows? He hasn't said a word about the most important trade deal in history. Here's the problem: on one hand, it's good for Saskatchewan; on the other hand, his federal party and leader Tom Mulcair are against it. So here's the question: does the NDP leader support or oppose the TPP? Will he stand for Saskatchewan, or will he bow down to Thomas Mulcair?

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Emergency Room Wait Times

**Mr. Broten:** — Michael Line was 45 years old, and he had a history of heart trouble. When he showed up at the emergency room on August 19 with chest pains, he was left for three and a half hours in the waiting room. And he died. I'm sure all of us in this House extend our deepest condolences to Michael's family and friends, but what they need, and what we all need, are answers and accountability and action.

So my question to the Premier: how did this happen?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And certainly on behalf of the government I extend our condolences to the family on the tragic loss of Mr. Line.

Mr. Speaker, I can inform members of the House that the family has been in communication with me through correspondence. They've had contact with the minister's office as well, the Minister of Health's office.

Mr. Speaker, I can also inform the House that the Cypress Health Region has looked at the case, although the review is ongoing, certainly in terms of recommendations that can come from this, from this tragedy, Mr. Speaker. The analysis looked at areas including patient examination rooms, patient flow in ER [emergency room], and staffing changeovers at the ends of the shifts, Mr. Speaker. There's being action taken on these fronts as a result of this tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, it's of course not a lot of comfort to the family, to whom we again extend our condolences, but the region is looking very specifically at recommendations that this might be avoided again in the future.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Michael Line waited three and a half hours. That's about the average wait in Saskatchewan now from when someone arrives in an ER to when they finally see a doctor — almost three and a half hours. A few years ago the average wait was one hour and 42 minutes. So the average wait doubled.

At the Reginal General Hospital, the average wait to be assessed in the ER is even worse. It's almost four and a half hours. And we're hearing more and more about the horrific consequences of those long ER waits, including Michael Line's premature death. ER wait times are a huge problem. So can the Premier, can the Premier please explain why he walked away from his ER wait time commitment?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not walked away from that commitment. Mr. Speaker, the government noted the challenges around wait times in the ER years ago and we have confirmed our commitment to shorten those wait times.

Mr. Speaker, evidence of that commitment can be seen in the very significant increase in human resource personnel across the health care system. We just heard in member statements that the government has exceeded its goal of attracting 500 more doctors to the province of Saskatchewan, with more work to be done. Over 2,000 more nurses of every designation practising now in the province versus the complement that was here when members opposite had the chance to form the government, Mr. Speaker.

This remains an ongoing priority for the government, the issue of wait times in emergency, Mr. Speaker. And health regions are taking different approaches to trying to meet the need and solve the problem and meet the objective that we have that there

oughtn't to be any wait times, frankly, for emergencies, by definition. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue that work. We're going to continue to work with the regions, with health care professionals to provide that kind of emergency care to Saskatchewan people.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier should read the annual report from the Ministry of Health and he will see that the commitment will not be met. With a lot of fanfare, Mr. Speaker, a lot of fanfare, the Premier repeatedly announced over the last four years that his government would eliminate ER waits by 2017. But the Ministry of Health documents show the Premier has now walked away from that goal, walked away from that goal because it's too hard.

Now I agree that the target was ambitious, and I think most Saskatchewan people would not be upset if the government fell a bit short of that target as long, as long, Mr. Speaker, as it was making significant progress. But that's not happening. Speak to any patient who's visited an ER in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, will know this government is not making progress. The government's own documents say ER waits have not substantially improved.

My question to the Premier: why has there been almost no progress towards achieving his commitment?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to again correct the record after the member has incorrectly portrayed the intentions of the government. This government — my office, myself, the government, the ministers — have never nor will they walk away from a goal that has been set. Mr. Speaker. That's why there's an additional \$4.7 million in this year's budget. That's why we've increased the complement of health care professionals and doctors significantly over the last number of years. That's why we're working through systems, including ER room management in the case of Cypress Hills, to deliver on the goals of the government.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to set goals. And I agree with the member opposite. The people of this province would rather their government set goals even if they fall short of them in terms of their own timeline, Mr. Speaker.

Because the people of this province got tired of precisely the opposite tact taken by members opposite. Because I sat on those benches when our Health critic would ask the minister of Health of the NDP, why don't you hire the nurses that are needed? SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] says we need a thousand more; why won't you at least set a goal? And the minister of Health stood up at the time, the NDP minister of Health, stood up at the time and said, no we're not going to set health care goals. And do you know what the reason was, Mr. Speaker? Because we'll fall short. We'll probably fall short of the goals, so we're not even going to bother to set them.

We've taken a different approach in terms of setting a goal for an increased complement of nurses; we've exceeded that goal. An increased complement of doctors; we've exceeded that goal.

We set goals in terms of beds for long-term care patients across this province after the NDP closed them. We met that goal, Mr. Speaker. We'll not back away from emergency room objectives that we have, the goals that we have. And we'll back up the goals with more resources, as we've done in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, they're not even making time on ER waits. They're going in the wrong direction. The ministry's very own documents, Mr. Speaker, show how they're walking away from their commitment, Mr. Speaker, with secrecy, with not making an announcement, Mr. Speaker, compared to the hype and the over-the-top comments we saw with the Premier when he actually made the commitment.

Here's what the media reported to the Premier saying in one of his many announcements on this. This is what the Premier said: "If the goal of 'zero' wait times is not met, then setting the goal and answering to it publicly should at least mean the government is on the right path." But they're not on the right path, Mr. Speaker. Recent data shows that the average ER wait time doubled, and then stabilized to three and a half hours almost. In Regina General the average wait is almost four and a half hours.

Mr. Speaker, I can't even begin to tell the Premier how many horrific stories I've heard from patients about how waits in the ERs have affected their health, Mr. Speaker, in a very serious way. These aren't just statistics to be brushed off, to be explained away. These are lives, precious lives of Saskatchewan people who go the emergency room — in their most desperate moments very often, Mr. Speaker — some of these lives that have ended far too soon. The Premier said he'd publicly answer if he failed to meet his commitment on ER wait times. So what's his explanation for not making any real progress?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, the spring budget included \$4.7 million towards our emergency room, emergency department wait time reduction initiative. Mr. Speaker, I think the provincial team that is comprised of physicians, other providers, patients and their family members across this province, I think would be quite surprised to hear from the Leader of the Opposition that we had walked away from this because they are still doing the work that needs to take place as we make progress on this goal.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing projects being put in place in a number of cities, including in Regina for example. A new patient treatment and assessment in Regina Qu'Appelle has led to a 27 per cent reduction in time to assessment for non-emergent visits. Mr. Speaker, that is progress for those particular patients.

We're seeing for example our connecting to care programs both in Regina and Saskatoon, seeing that people are diverted from the emergency rooms where normally their care would have

been provided. We now have found a better way to provide care for these individuals. As well, Mr. Speaker, through some work that's been done at St. Paul's, for example for ED [emergency department] patients, that have presented a 50 per cent in reduction from time of the emergency department to the time they find a bed.

We are seeing progress, but we have a long way to go to make improvements on the mistakes of the previous government.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I understand why the Premier would hand this off to the Health minister because this government's record, according to the ministry's very own document, Mr. Speaker, is not very flattering. Not very flattering, especially in the face of the word that the Premier provided to the people of the province.

The Premier unveiled this ER wait time commitment at the start of 2012. He said, "No one will wait to receive emergency room care." He then proceeded, Mr. Speaker, to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on John Black lean, where they sent front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker, into these workshops where they learned Japanese words and learned how to fold paper airplanes.

No wonder, Mr. Speaker, that we see these, the results that are lacking and that are concerning for Saskatchewan people, because their priorities are so horribly misplaced. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, that almost four years later from the Premier unveiling his zero waits commitment the Ministry of Health admits that no significant progress has been made on ER wait times.

And now the Premier has quietly, very quietly walked away from the commitment that he very loudly made to Saskatchewan people. And he can laugh all he wants, but that is cold comfort to the many people who are going to emergency rooms who need care right away, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely unacceptable to have the Premier and the Deputy Premier just sitting there chuckling like this is a big joke for Saskatchewan patients. Absolutely unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: very clearly his fascination with the John Black lean pet project has not worked, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I stutter, Deputy Premier. That's all right. It's not a big deal. What does matter, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that patients are well cared for in the province. My question to the Premier: the John Black lean project has failed horribly, is not bringing results. So now what is his plan for ER wait times in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well I can say that, Mr. Speaker, we do have our team in place that is using the \$4.7 million in this year's budget. They had money in last year's budget to work with health regions to put in place initiatives that will see reductions in our wait times in our emergency departments. I consider that this is complex work. The same was true for the surgical initiative, which we had some of the longest waits for surgery in all of Canada. But



it took some time, and it took a number of years to get down to the point where we can offer surgery within three months in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I can talk about the police and crisis teams that we're funding both in Regina and Saskatoon. For example, in Saskatoon in six months, 238 patients were contacted through this program and only 105 of those needed transport to hospital. In the majority of those cases before this program, most of those would have ended up in the emergency room. Same for the Lighthouse, a paramedic program, a pilot program in Saskatoon to provide services.

Here is what we heard from members opposite when the member from Lakeview was the Health minister in 2001 when there was an emergency overcrowding: "But what I would say is we know that all across Canada there's a shortage of nurses." Well what do you need to do? Then hire more nurses. That's exactly what we've done on this side — hired more providers, more physicians, more nurses, and put in resources to where they're needed.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, it's frustrating to hear these responses because we see, Mr. Speaker, in the ministry's own documents that this government is not making progress when it comes to wait times for ERs. We see the Premier quietly walk away from a very public and a very loud proclamation that he made with respect to eliminating wait times in Saskatchewan. He just wants to quietly sweep it under the rug.

Mr. Speaker, Michael Line's life was cut tragically short. It was cut tragically short because of an ER wait time that was completely unacceptable. Now the Ministry of Health admits that there were nine critical incidents last year which were the result of "delay or failure to reach a patient for emergent and scheduled services." A critical incident is a serious adverse health event including the actual or potential loss of life, limb, or function. There were nine such incidents related to delays last year, which is a 350 per cent increase from last year. Does the Premier know how many of those critical incidents were related to long ER wait times, and how many of those incidents were premature deaths like Michael Line's?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, this is certainly a very important issue and a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I can say that the government has not walked away from wanting to see reductions in the waits that people are waiting in our emergency departments.

And, Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the evidence of that is the fact that if we were to quietly back away from wanting to reduce wait times in our emergency departments, why would we put \$4.7 million in the provincial budget that everybody sees on budget day and that shows a financial commitment to this? It also shows, Mr. Speaker, that we wanted to ensure that we have a team that has been assembled to look at different ideas, different initiatives from not just in Canada but across North America, that has shown improvements in wait times in emergency departments.

Key to that, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring that we are treating people in an appropriate way both before they get to the emergency department — and that's why we've put in place the paramedic program at the Lighthouse; that's why we've put in place the connecting to care programs — but as well after they've visited the emergency department. And that's Home First/Quick Response that's ensuring that people have placements in the right bed or the supports to go back to their own community. That's where . . . our priority.

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

### Funding for Education

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Many schools in our province are struggling because of massive enrolment increases that this government stubbornly refuses to fund. Just as one example in Saskatoon, there are 1,160 more students this fall, but the Sask Party government didn't give any extra money to the schools to cover these new students. In fact they scrapped the mid-year adjustment. The Chair of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic school division says, "It's tough when you're being asked to always do more with less dollars."

1,160 new students, similar story in Regina, with not a single extra penny from this government to help meet the needs of those students in classrooms across Saskatchewan. How can the Education minister possibly defend such neglect for the students of this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, I want to once again set the record straight. No school division saw a decrease in operating funding this year. Despite it being a tough budget for the province, education spending increased by 14 per cent.

While we were able to provide for the largest education budget in the history of our province at nearly \$2 billion, we weren't able to commit to all of the funding-projected enrolments that we had. We asked the divisions to work with us. The divisions have agreed to do that. The divisions are continuing to work with us. And, Mr. Speaker, we've asked the divisions to budget within their means.

This is a problem that's unique to this government because under that government they dealt with enrolment decline. They dealt with closing 176 schools. They weren't dealing with the issues that we have of growth.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's appalling that the Education minister takes and questions the statements of a school board Chair like that of Greater Catholic Saskatoon Schools, who says that they're having to do more with less. It's a shame that the Education minister really denies the reality in classroom and that his measures defy common sense when he scrapped the mid-year adjustment for students.

The 1,160 new students in Saskatoon schools this year will add an additional cost of \$7.4 million in additional expenses, but not

a single nickel, additional nickel to meet the needs of those new students. Schools in our capital city here in Regina are in a similar situation, just like so many others across Saskatchewan. Prairie Spirit School Division has 300 new students, none of which the Sask Party funded.

This is Sask Party neglect, and all of our kids are paying for it. Why won't the Education minister just admit it was a mistake not to fund these thousands of new students? Why won't he fix the problem?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the budget that this province has given the school divisions is record funding. There has never been as much funding as there is now. Mr. Speaker, between 2007-2015 — I want to do some numbers for the members opposite — Saskatoon Public's enrolment increased by 17 per cent; their operating funding increased by 39 per cent. Saskatoon Catholic, enrolment increased by 12 per cent; operating funding, 38 per cent. Prairie Spirit, enrolment increased 18 per cent; operating increased 31 per cent. Regina Public, enrolment increased 6 per cent; operating funding, 37 per cent. Mr. Speaker, Regina Catholic, enrolment increased 11 per cent; operating funding, 35 per cent. Prairie Valley, no increase in enrolment; operating funding increased 22 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the monies that we've given the school . . . We'd like to give more money to the school divisions. We realize that they do good work. They work hard. They provide the services that we need for the best and brightest of our future. And, Mr. Speaker, we've done far more than the members opposite have ever done.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister needs to wake up to the reality in classrooms across Saskatchewan, stop denying the reality and stop disrespecting the voice of educational leaders in this province.

A key reason for this population, these enrolment increases, is immigration. Over the last four years we've seen almost 50,000 immigrants move here directly from other countries. Meanwhile in terms of people moving between provinces, we've actually had a net loss of 2,600 people over the last four years. We celebrate the increasing diversity of our province, but it's crucial that the government understand that they need to invest in the students across this province.

In Saskatoon Catholic Schools alone, the need for help with English as an additional language jumped 19 per cent this year alone, but no new money from the Sask Party. That hurts all of our kids. Does the Education minister recognize that many of these new students have extra needs which cost extra money? Yes or no?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that the province's enrolment has gone up. We're pleased that the population has gone up. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that immigrant students, when they come to our province, pose

additional challenges for our school divisions.

This year's budget alone, English as additional language teachers, we have increased that number by 8 per cent. We heard loud and clear from teachers that money previously earmarked for standardized testing would be better spent elsewhere. We responded by allocating \$4.6 million directly to supports for their classrooms, specifically so that they could deal with the challenges that they face from some of these students.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for just a moment or so about the things that happened under the previous administration. In 1993 and '94, the NDP actually reduced the operating grant from the province. In 1995 they didn't do a reduction; they gave the school division zero. This was at a time when there were over 20,000 more students in our education than there are today. Mr. Speaker, they planned for decline. We're not doing that.

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

#### Release of Reports on Seniors' Care

**Ms. Chartier:** — Why is the Health minister refusing to release the most recent health region reports on the state of seniors' care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, because the reports are now at the ministry, now that they've been completed by all 12 health regions. The ministry is reviewing those, and they will be released shortly.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These internal health region reports on the state of seniors' care were finished over the summer, perhaps with the exception of the two northern ones. We would have liked to have seen the other ones before now. The only reason the Sask Party is delaying the release of these reports is to sanitize them. The Health minister should table those reports today in the Assembly. Why won't he do that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, yes we had delays, obviously because of some issues out of the control of the health regions, particularly in northern Saskatchewan. The reports have been compiled. They are being looked at by the Ministry of Health and they will be reported publicly.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — This is the minister who released the last reports almost a year later, only after being questioned multiple

times in committee, Mr. Speaker, and then cut and pasted reports. To the Health minister: on whose desk are these reports sitting right now and what is happening to them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I would have to check to see who exactly has the report on whose desk. They're not sitting on my desk currently, but I'd have to find out who exactly has the reports. They are at the ministry. The information will be reported on publicly as I have committed, and that will be done in short order.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this delay is completely unacceptable. He told me in the spring that they would be ready at that point, just a few months . . . not long after I had asked in the spring. Perhaps the Premier and the Health minister have already forgotten about the Ombudsman's damning report on the state of seniors' care. She heard about residents suffering because of widespread, widespread short-staffing and the lack of clear standards.

If the government actually took this seriously, the internal reports would dig into these problems. But the government cares way more about trying to manage its own reputation than actually solving the seniors' care crisis. That's why it's sitting on these internal reports. We'd like them tabled today, Mr. Speaker. How can the minister possibly justify this delay?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again as I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, the ministry is compiling all the information that is being provided by the regions, knowing that it is 156 facilities that were being toured across the summer, across this province, knowing that those tours couldn't be completed in a timely fashion in a number of our health regions because of the issues in the northern areas because of forest fires and the impact that that had on the fact that we had patients, residents that were transferred to other health regions outside of the North. Mr. Speaker, when they are ready to be provided to the public and tabled, I will be doing that, and that will be shortly.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

#### Who Will You Help Campaign

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is time we acknowledge, on this record, violence against women is a serious problem in this country and we need to take action to address it. For all our efforts to achieve equality between genders, there is a reality of life women experience that differs sharply from their masculine counterparts, and that is the risk of harassment and abuse. The presence of violence against women's lives lives to an unequal and intolerable degree. Canadian women are four times more likely to be

victims of intimate partner violence, 11 times more likely to be a victim of sexual violence. And of course we're all concerned about the acts of violence that have led to the deaths and disappearance of too many indigenous Canadian women.

Addressing this problem is no small task. Compassionate support for victims of violence, as well as accountability for its perpetrators, are all part of the solution. Yet experts are now agreeing that the best way to bring this problem to an end is to change the unhealthy behaviours and attitudes that underlie gender violence.

As one step in this journey, our government is proud to launch Who Will You Help public awareness campaign to combat sexual violence and abuse. Over the next few weeks, a video with a powerful message will be airing on television, in movie theatres, and across social media encouraging everyone to be mindful of their role in ending violence. This video hopes to remind people that we all have a responsibility to protect vulnerable women and girls, including when that means intervening to stop inappropriate or criminal behaviour. By speaking up, we can be part of the solution.

Over the long weekend, the Who Will You Help video made an unofficial debut on social media, aiming to influence the conversation on what we all have to be thankful for. The online response from Saskatchewan people has been inspiring. The video from the Government of Saskatchewan Facebook account has now received 1,000 likes and almost 900 shares and more than 150,000 views. We are gratified that our community partners, including STOPS to Violence [Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions], PATHS [Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan], local transition houses, and police are sharing our video.

But most encouragingly, young people are posting the video to their own walls with messages to their friends. One young woman from Dalmeny, Saskatchewan reposted the video alongside the comment "Your voice can and will make a difference." Another asked her Facebook friends to please use their energy to speak up and help when they see these crimes that offend taking place. This is the type of change we need to see. I would like to commend everyone who has watched, liked, and shared this video for being part of the solution to violence. And for those of you who have not yet seen it, I encourage you to watch it on YouTube and consider who will you help.

Mr. Speaker, attitudes that legitimize sexual violence and misogyny are an ongoing impediment to the safety of our province's women and girls. So on behalf of 561,830 women that call Saskatchewan their home, let's all pledge to be active in the quest toward equality, healthy relationships, and gender equality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for sending over a copy of his remarks early on.

I want to acknowledge some of the comments that the minister made. As one of those women in the province and the mother of two daughters, I appreciate his comments about, although

without limiting the suffering of men too that are victimized, the presence of violence affects women's lives to an unequal and intolerable degree, and that attitudes that legitimize sexual violence and misogyny are an ongoing impediment to the safety of our province's women and girls. Those are very true statements, Mr. Speaker.

Whether we looked at school cheers or chants that come up, that we hear, that are sang at campuses across Canada, or we hear about Dalhousie and the difficulties that female students face there, Mr. Speaker. Or we had a reporter here, a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] reporter here in Saskatchewan this summer at Craven, who was on the receiving end of some unwanted sexual attention, Mr. Speaker. The reality is these things happen every day to women, Mr. Speaker. And this is a good campaign, and yes, cultural change is absolutely imperative. The reality is there is still sexual violence and harassment that goes on every day.

I remember 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, working as a waitress in restaurants and bars, and being on the receiving end now. And even as a 45-year-old MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Speaker, I know that I get comments from people that my male colleagues would not receive. This is a very real issue, and that culture change, starting with young people, is absolutely imperative.

But I also would have to add, Mr. Speaker, that that culture shift is really important, but when we talk about fleeing intimate partner violence and stopping sexual harassment, some of the things that need to happen, Mr. Speaker, are housing. Housing is often a huge impediment to women leaving their domestic situation. The lack of child care and those kinds of supports, affordability. All those kinds of things make it very difficult for some women to leave family situations where they are experiencing intimate partner violence.

So although I commend the government on this campaign and I think it really is a great place to start in changing those patterns and the culture — it really is a culture shift — I think that there's much work that this government could and should be doing on ensuring that the supports are there in place for women when they leave. But I also would like to thank all the organizations that work very hard on the issue around harassment and sexual violence and intimate partner violence, including STOPS to Violence, PATHS, the local transition houses, and our police services. But with that, I'll conclude my remarks.

**The Speaker:** — Ministerial statements. I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

### **Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement**

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On October the 5th, the Government of Canada successfully concluded negotiations of a free trade agreement with 11 other members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This was a significant announcement for our economy. Saskatchewan's economy is the most reliant on exports in a nation whose economy is one of the most reliant on exports. That's why we fully support this agreement that achieves real access to the TPP market for our products.

Once the agreement is implemented, our exporters of agricultural products, agricultural equipment, and industrial goods will have duty-free access for the majority of their products to a market of close to 800 million people. For instance, within three years, Malaysia will be eliminating tariffs of up to 30 per cent on harvesters, mowers, and ag equipment. Japan will be significantly reducing tariff on fresh and chilled beef, while eliminating tariffs of up to 50 per cent on processed beef within 15 years. Vietnam, a country with significant growth potential, will be eliminating its tariffs on canola oil within five years. The Parliament of Canada is required to ratify this agreement for it to take effect.

In 2014, Saskatchewan exported more than \$25 billion in goods to the 11 TPP members, representing more than 71 per cent of our total exports. Today, even before we benefit from the agreement, one in five Saskatchewan jobs depend on international exports. By not signing the TPP agreement, more than 71 per cent of those jobs would be placed at risk. It's close to 81,000 jobs that depend on continued trade with those 11 TPP countries. Non-ratification of the agreement would place our exporters at significant disadvantage, and that's why our Premier called on all federal party leaders to commit to honouring the agreement if they are elected on October the 19th.

Last Tuesday, on the front pages of both the *Leader-Post* and *The StarPhoenix*, it was encouraging to see so many positive comments about the agreement from many stakeholder groups, including the Barley Council of Canada, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, and even, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP who indicated that . . . They said, the TPP sounds promising for Saskatchewan.

It's been more than a week now, Mr. Speaker, since the agreement has been signed. I actually have a copy of the agreement, the public materials of the agreement right here with me, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to table that. I'm hopeful that the opposition are going to stand up and support this agreement. I'm hopeful that they don't say that they need to see the details. The details are right . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, no. Mr. Speaker, the details are right here, are right here. So we're happy to table that agreement, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to their support. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, pleased to join with the minister opposite in entering into a brief discussion of the TPP and the discussion of it. It's good to see that there's some detail that might be able to be shared. Of course that's critically important for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly we see many things that sound promising for Saskatchewan on this front. There's also some matters that are cause for some concern which is why it's critically important of course to have the details, details which are referenced by the minister. And of course then we just need to make sure that there's the proper assessment and scrutiny to make sure that we have the net benefit that Saskatchewan people deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And members opposite . . . I know it's kind of cute, Mr. Speaker. We know they're very close friends of the Harper government, Mr. Speaker, and we know that the minister opposite has a close relationship and support for Stephen Harper. So it makes sense that, you know, I guess that he maybe has those details here today, and he's tabling them and urging for immediate review of all of those details, Mr. Speaker.

As we've said before, as we've said before, Mr. Speaker, we see promise in this deal. Saskatchewan people and Canadians deserve appropriate scrutiny, and the details are important. To date right now we simply have the high-level summary from the federal government. And you know, as I say, there seems to be many elements that are important to Saskatchewan from agricultural products as well as machinery and metals and minerals, Mr. Speaker. But we also know that there's been some legitimate concerns which should be fully understood, Mr. Speaker, and I think all people in Saskatchewan and Canadians certainly deserve a responsible government to conduct that review.

[14:30]

So we're not going to get caught up in the gamesmanship or the support of Stephen Harper that we see here today from this government, Mr. Speaker. What we will do, what we'll always do is recognize that we have a very important role for trade in this province. We will always support expansion and diversification of trade, Mr. Speaker, with countries that have good environmental records, with good labour standards, with democratic processes. That sort of trade and expansion is important to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. So we'll stay out of the games that we get from members opposite.

**The Speaker:** — I would like to remind the House of rule 19(2), ministerial statements: "A Ministerial statement shall be restricted to a new policy, program or government direction to matters within its administrative competence." TPP is not within the provincial competence.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

##### Standing Committee on House Services

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that the committee considered committee membership changes on May 28th, 2015 which were tabled with the Clerk pursuant to rule 136(6), and I am now presenting its 12th report.

**The Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Opposition House

Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I am further instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that the committee considered committee membership changes August 25th, 2015 which were tabled with the Clerk pursuant to rule 136(6), and I am now presenting its 13th report.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the House Services Committee.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I of course move:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair of the House Services Committee:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — At this time I would like to table a report that was previously tabled on June the 6th from the Lieutenant Governor. Pursuant to section 67 of *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy effective May 21, 2015: the Hon. Dan D'Autremont, Chair; the Hon. James Reiter; the Hon. Jeremy Harrison; the Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff; Doreen Eagles, MLA; David Forbes, MLA; Warren McCall, MLA. I so table.

In accordance with the Board of Internal Economy directive 23, I table a copy of the following reports prepared for the Sask Party caucus by the accounting firm MNP: audited financial statements for the year ending March 31st, 2015; Report on the Opinion on Internal Controls; Report on the Opinion on Compliance with Directives.

Pursuant to Board of Internal Economy directive 23, Caucus Accountability and Disclosure, I hereby table the audited financial statements for 2014-2015 fiscal year, prepared for the NDP caucus by the accounting firm of MWC Chartered Professional Accountants LLP. I so table.

As per directive 22, Members' Accountability and Disclosure, clause (1), I table a copy of the reports of the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015 for all of the MLAs. I so table.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a motion regarding sitting days of the legislature.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to move a motion regarding sitting days for this session. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Legislature Sitting Days

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day, the subsequent sitting days of the fourth session of the twenty-seventh legislature shall be in accordance with the conditions set out by this order as follows:

That the Assembly will sit from Wednesday, October 14th, 2015 (sessional day 67) for 24 sitting days, concluding at the end of the daily adjournment on Thursday, November 26th, 2015 (sessional day no. 90);

That the rules that govern the conduct of business within the parliamentary calendar shall not apply in accordance with rule 5, sittings outside calendar periods;

That the Clerk of the Assembly shall publish a schedule that shows the days on which the Assembly shall meet in accordance with the order; and further

That when this Assembly adjourns on November 26th, 2015 (sessional day no. 90), it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days clear notice, if possible, of such date and time.

I so submit, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, the subsequent sitting days of the fourth session of the twenty-seventh legislature shall be in accordance with the conditions set out by this order as follows:

1. That the Assembly will sit from Wednesday, October 14th, 2015 (sessional day no. 67) for 24 sitting days concluding at the time of the daily adjournment on Thursday, November 26, 2015 (sessional day no. 90).

2. That the rules that govern the conduct of business within the parliamentary calendar shall not apply in accordance with rule 5, sitting outside the calendar periods.

3. That the Clerk of the Assembly shall publish a schedule that shows the days on which the Assembly shall meet in accordance with this order; and further

That when this Assembly adjourns on November 26, 2015 (sessional day no. 90), it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days clear notice, if possible, of such date and time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour? I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise briefly to address this motion here today which sets out the parameters of the fall sitting. Certainly we're amenable to the sitting days. It's important for us to do the work. We'd always be pleased with an extension of the sitting days for the scrutiny of actions of government.

But what's a notable departure by this government in this stage of their term is that they're unwilling, Mr. Speaker, to do what governments have done time and time again in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, which is that they come at the start of the session and they lay out their vision and their plan for people of the resources. They lay out some accountability to the people of this province as to where dollars are flowing, where the finances are at, Mr. Speaker. They lay out a vision of where their plan meets the realities of Saskatchewan people.

And it's sad to see, Mr. Speaker, a departure, a historical departure on this front by this government, Mr. Speaker. And it's surprising, to be honest, to many people across this province. It's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, in that we have of course so much opportunity in this province but also many areas which need actions, need vision, and need plans, Mr. Speaker. And for this government to simply sit on its hands, Mr. Speaker, to not take its place, to be unwilling to lay out a vision and a plan for the people of this province as it relates to the opportunities and challenges across this province is highly unaccountable, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I hear from people across this province. Many that believe that the government has changed in a significant way. I hear from many, Mr. Speaker, that there's a growing arrogance in this Sask Party government, a lack of accountability, Mr. Speaker, a disconnect if you will, on those things that really matter to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And that couldn't be more evident, all of those points, Mr. Speaker, when you look at a government that's grown, I guess, so entitled that they feel that they don't need to lay out their vision and their plan to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, maybe it's that they've simply — and they can heckle, Mr. Speaker — maybe it's that they've run out of steam. Maybe it's that they're lacking in new ideas. Maybe it's that, Mr. Speaker, that they've lost that touch with everyday families and communities across Saskatchewan, workers across Saskatchewan who deserve action, Mr. Speaker, on the issues that matter to them. But it's awfully telling, Mr. Speaker, that we see a government resume a sitting and deny Saskatchewan people the opportunity to have a vision and plan shared and some accountability back to those people.

It's almost like, Mr. Speaker, that kind of late in this term, with this large majority, Mr. Speaker, like they're just sort of mailing it in, Mr. Speaker. And we see it here today as well — just mailing it in, Mr. Speaker. We see it here today as well that, you know, with the initial day, the first day of the sitting which would normally have a Throne Speech and have stakeholders from across this province and workers and communities that would be connected, Mr. Speaker, they would be coming in here to hear the plan of government, to hear where the dollars are going, Mr. Speaker. But instead we see this government not provide that and try to break that precedent, not provide that accountability, not provide that vision and plan, Mr. Speaker. But actually what we've seen is wanting to play sort of political games as we've seen here today, Mr. Speaker.

So pretty telling, Mr. Speaker, that a government comes back with a large majority, that seems to be growing out of touch with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, who increasingly seem to be all about their own political self-interest, Mr. Speaker, or the political self-interest of Stephen Harper, Mr. Speaker. As we can see here today, which is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And we hear from the Minister of Finance who's running a massive deficit, Mr. Speaker. We know that that's been his record basically for every day that he's been in office, Mr. Speaker, and he wants to shout loudly across the floor.

But what I think Saskatchewan people would rather see instead of a government that's mailing it in, and a Minister of Finance who's shouting across the floor, I think what they'd like to see is a vision and a plan. And for the minister who is presiding over a large deficit that they've created, Mr. Speaker, I think they'd like to know where all the money went, and I think that they'd like to see how that minister is going to be able to get finances back in line, Mr. Speaker. Because Saskatchewan people increasingly aren't trusting this Sask Party government with their finances or their management, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And to be frank, I think Saskatchewan people continue to see how this government (a) couldn't manage the finances during the best of days, Mr. Speaker, during the days with record revenues, during that time where they were piling up debt, Mr. Speaker, and not saving a penny, and privatizing and liquidating public assets every step of the way, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's very telling that we have this Finance minister not providing some of the plan here to Saskatchewan people here today, shouting across the floor.

But Saskatchewan people are anxious about what his next move will be and what that government's next move will be. And I know there's many people telling me that we just can't afford four more years of a Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. And when we see a government that's so willing to turn at any time to privatization and selling off of assets to fill budgetary holes that were created by the mismanagement of this government, there's a growing uneasiness across Saskatchewan because Saskatchewan people are smart. When they look at the public assets and the Crowns that they were a part of building, Mr. Speaker, they know that by reckless, short-sighted moves of a government, by a stroke of a pen, Mr. Speaker, that when they're gone, they're gone. And these are all reasons, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people are concerned.

So when we, you know, see that government show up at the Assembly, they've had a significant amount of time away from this legislature. You'd expect they'd have a vision and a plan in response to the realities that Saskatchewan people are facing. We don't see anything here being announced, Mr. Speaker. We see the political games in the federal election to support Stephen Harper, Mr. Speaker, but we don't see a vision and plan to ensure affordability for families, to ensure opportunity for young people. And we don't see the plans to ensure the security and dignity that seniors deserve, Mr. Speaker. Not a vision and plan that addresses the pressures in health care, the ER waits that have almost doubled under this government, Mr. Speaker, and the lack of progress on that front. Not a vision and plan to make sure that seniors have the protection that they deserve. In crisis right now, Mr. Speaker, many of the senior care environments across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, not having the supports to ensure those working on the front lines to provide that care, Mr. Speaker.

We don't see any vision and plan from this government, who will boast and brag about enrolment growth, Mr. Speaker, and about population growth, but totally unwilling to get the job done where it matters in the lives of students and teachers and education workers across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And we don't hear any vision and plan, Mr. Speaker, to address the lack of affordability, the cost of living pressures that Saskatchewan families are facing all across Saskatchewan, many of which, Mr. Speaker, have been exacerbated or caused directly by the actions of this government, Mr. Speaker.

So it says to us, and I think to many Saskatchewan people, that this is a government that has increasingly grown arrogant, that has increasingly grown entitled, Mr. Speaker, that has fallen out of touch, Mr. Speaker, with the real Saskatchewan and the reality of Saskatchewan families and communities, and an unwillingness to provide the leadership that Saskatchewan people deserve to capture the opportunities that each and every one of them have and each and every one of our communities have, but to address the challenges that we face as well, Mr. Speaker.

We don't see a government providing the accountability that they should on the spending of this government. And for this government, it's big spending, Mr. Speaker, on pet projects and projects that are ballooning, Mr. Speaker, by the day. We have a government that didn't even bat an eye, Mr. Speaker, when it came to just advancing and signing on to a \$1 billion overrun, Mr. Speaker, on a P3 [public-private partnership] with a French company, Mr. Speaker, and no accountability back to Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan people deserve better. They deserve a government that's going to be transparent, that's going to be open, that's going to govern in the best interests of Saskatchewan people today and for tomorrow. And they certainly deserve a government that understands the pressures and challenges that Saskatchewan people are facing.

We see a government that boasts and brags about many things, Mr. Speaker, but are unwilling to ensure real action to improve procurement, Mr. Speaker, to ensure a fair shot for Saskatchewan companies, a better opportunity for

Saskatchewan companies and workers here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we see a government that's, at every turn, so willing and ready to outsource and privatize services and roles that could be provided here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

It's sort of a low-wage strategy, if you will, of this government. Maybe that's its economic plan, Mr. Speaker. But the reality in how this is working out for many Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, is that they're working incredibly hard, many of them in precarious work, piecing together two and three jobs just to pay the bills, Mr. Speaker. And we see a government that's actively pursuing an agenda that's making things not better on that front, but making things worse, Mr. Speaker.

We deserve and Saskatchewan people deserve to have a government that's committed to building good, mortgage-paying jobs here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We deserve a government that's going to actually get the best value for Saskatchewan taxpayers when it comes to procurement, to ensure a fair shot for Saskatchewan companies, and to ensure full opportunities for Saskatchewan workers here in this province.

We deserve a government, Mr. Speaker, that's going to get it right in the classrooms and support the next generation so they can live up to their full potential, and thus that our province can then live up to our full potential, Mr. Speaker. These are the kinds of matters that we should be hearing today in this Assembly. It's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, to see the departure that we see from this government to not bring forward a vision or a plan, to disregard the need for a Throne Speech, to engage first off right into federal political games, Mr. Speaker, but not to focus on what matters to Saskatchewan people.

So you know, I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, and I won't here today. I'm disappointed that we're not discussing a vision and a plan for Saskatchewan people. I'm disappointed that we don't see measures in place and actions to address the challenges and pressures that Saskatchewan people are facing. I'm disappointed that I don't see plans that allow us to fulfill the opportunity that every Saskatchewan person and community deserves.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, you know, as I say, as I hear from many people across this province noting that this government has grown an increasing sense of entitlement, a growing sense of arrogance, Mr. Speaker, and has lost its touch with everyday families across Saskatchewan and the realities across Saskatchewan, I think it's awfully evident to see that here today, where a government comes into the Assembly and doesn't provide a Throne Speech, doesn't lay out measures to improve people's lives.

So that'll be our focus, Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition, and for now, Mr. Speaker, as Saskatchewan New Democrats working directly with Saskatchewan people, all the communities of this province to ensure that we ensure opportunity for young people, affordability for families, and dignity and security for seniors across this province, and that every single child in this province is given the opportunity to live up to their full potential, and thus our province lives up to the full potential.

At this point in time I won't get into any more points, but I do know the member from Athabasca would like to enter this discussion on this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased once again to stand in my place and to offer my support to my colleague that's obviously made some very compelling early statements about the challenges we face in this Assembly when we have a government that basically has become bankrupt of ideas, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly it wants to be able to thwart what I think is really important, thwart the information that people of Saskatchewan should have as it relates to their finances and where we're heading in the future. And that's really, really important to many, many families that we've spoken to as we've travelled throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to do, to the people that may be listening, is to basically draw out a picture or explain to them the process that we undertake here in the Assembly so many of the young people that are listening could understand exactly what we're trying to debate, what we're trying to determine here as a problem that we see the Saskatchewan Party creating, and that they should know that this is something that is totally unacceptable in the sense of how government should act and how government should conduct themselves, Mr. Speaker.

We saw evidence of that under the most recent ruling around the TPP debate, Mr. Speaker. That was just, I think, insulting to the people of Saskatchewan's intelligence when you bring a TPP agreement here and say, here it is; will you guys blindly sign this agreement but without us seeing the document and being able to research it? And obviously calling the motion out of order, Mr. Speaker, obviously shows that there is a bit of work that needs to be done from the strategic perspective of the Saskatchewan Party as it conducts itself here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously we're a trade-dependent province, Mr. Speaker, something that the NDP want to really herald, something that's really important, Mr. Speaker. We know that there's a lot of discussion in and around our caucus from our colleagues, our former cabinet colleagues, and all the people that give the NDP advice, Mr. Speaker. We know that these agreements are really, really important. We want to know the details. We know we're a trade-dependent province, Mr. Speaker, and for that type of style of crass politics and gamesmanship at a critical time in Saskatchewan's economy and the Canadian economy, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly was very insulting to the people of Saskatchewan's intelligence. And I'm pleased to see that the ruling was out of order in the sense of having that debate.

And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that there's more resources and more time spent on actually researching the issue and bringing forward some solid issues and solid points that the TPP may offer to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We need to see the agreement. We need to see the detail. And we certainly need to research it as everybody would expect us to do as the official opposition.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, again we've seen evidence of how the gamesmanship and the silliness that can occur in this



particular Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and we're pleased that that particular motion was ruled out of order. And therefore it'll give us more time, more time to understand what the TPP is about, Mr. Speaker.

And again I reiterate the comment I made at the outset. We are a trade-dependent province. I hear from our leader of how important some of these deals are. We hear from the deputy leader, we hear from many business community people — the leaders that are out there — that tell us trade is really important for Saskatchewan. The economy of Saskatchewan deserves it, Mr. Speaker. And we know on the NDP that the economy is the issue, Mr. Speaker. We've got to continue building and continue strengthening our communities, our people, our businesses, Mr. Speaker, on all sectors.

And one of the things that I find myself at times smirking and smiling on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition . . . or the Saskatchewan Party, opposition to the NDP, Mr. Speaker, come along and they try and create these little scenarios, these little plays and trying to create the division. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage that particular member that tried that particular manoeuvre here to study the history of Saskatchewan and he'll soon realize that every time the economy of Saskatchewan was in full swing and things were going absolutely excellent for all people of Saskatchewan, the NDP were the government of the day, Mr. Speaker.

Do your history. Check out the facts, Mr. Speaker, and people will quickly realize that the NDP do indeed have a lot of thought and a lot of credibility when it comes to strengthening the economy of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because we engage the business community. Why? Because we don't get involved with these silly little political gamesmanship. And, Mr. Speaker, above all else, we balance in the interests of many, many quarters and many, many sections and many people of Saskatchewan's aspirations to be part of that economy, Mr. Speaker.

And we also include the importance of balancing our interests against the environment when it comes to the economy. We've got to make sure we maintain that balance. We've got to see a strong sector such as the Crown corporations. That's got to be a key, pivotal part of our economic plan. We want to involve as many people throughout the province of Saskatchewan, whether they're in the far North or the eastern part of the province, Mr. Speaker, in the small towns to our biggest cities.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we prepare that economy, prepare the people that are going to drive that economy by giving the basic important building blocks of education, security, and involvement, Mr. Speaker. And we talked about the challenge today where we hear 1,100 students in Saskatoon alone, 1,100 students are not being properly funded. And, Mr. Speaker, isn't that a key, pivotal part of the economic building that is necessary to strengthen our province overall? And these are all the issues that we bring in too as New Democrats. When we speak about the economy, Mr. Speaker, it's not about floating out a trial balloon on the TPP saying, don't read it, just sign. Mr. Speaker, we want to see what the details are. And that's what any, any party in the province of Saskatchewan that's worth their salt will at the very least read what the TPP's about, Mr. Speaker.

We appreciate that, again I reiterate, that we're a trade-dependent province, Mr. Speaker. So it's really important that we work very hard to secure these deals, to learn about these deals, but incorporate a whole whack of other factors when we talk about the economy, Mr. Speaker. And some of those other factors, Mr. Speaker, is to strengthen the position of Saskatchewan people's interests to things like involvement of the Aboriginal community, things like incorporating the fact that we have many immigrant communities settling in Saskatchewan, that we have to make sure we had the labour force necessary to continue driving that economy, Mr. Speaker. We've got to make sure that we research all these issues. And this is the only way, Mr. Speaker, that we could build a lasting economy that could serve many, many people long after we stop being part of this particular Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

And this gives us the confidence that our children and grandchildren will inherit a greater Saskatchewan, and that is what we talk about on this side of the Assembly. When New Democrats talk about the economy, Mr. Speaker, it is not regurgitating some of the comments from Prime Minister Harper, which we see every now and then from that side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I sit here and I smile because a lot of times you say, oh I understood the Premier said, oh we're not sure who we're going to vote for, is what the Premier said. And, Mr. Speaker, the news flash is 80 per cent of his people behind him have Conservative memberships, federal Conservative memberships. So it doesn't really take a lot of rocket science to figure out who they're voting for. But at least it was an effort to try and distance himself from the Prime Minister, which I think will no longer be Prime Minister fairly soon, Mr. Speaker.

But people in Saskatchewan, they know what's going on. A lot of people that follow politics know that 90 per cent if not 100 per cent of the Saskatchewan Party caucus are going to vote Conservative, Mr. Speaker. We know that. And the bottom line is they've eradicated the Liberals on that side. There's no more Liberals on that side and, Mr. Speaker, they are full-blown conservatives. People of Saskatchewan know that.

So I wish the Premier would not come along and say, well we're not certain who we're going to vote for. I think he's hedging his bets in terms of where the winner's going to go. Our money of course is on our national counterpart. I think they're going to do very well, Mr. Speaker. I think they're going to do very well. And I think what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada will realize that when it comes to economic building, the Saskatchewan Party or the Conservatives have . . . they can barely hold their own, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP will show them how to strengthen and build an economy that is inclusive, that's certainly going to balance the many interests that are out there, whether it's environmental or inclusiveness or training the young people to be the labour force of tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. We want to build the greatest shining example of how an economy can be built using our values, Mr. Speaker — not the old, same old, same old approach by the conservatives which is to try and separate people, Mr. Speaker, or divide people and try and hoodwink people and say that they are the only ones that could drive the

economy, Mr. Speaker. That is absolutely false. It is absolutely false. We've seen evidence of that over our time, certainly in government and over the history of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason we are being able to say that confidently today, Mr. Speaker, the reason why we're able to say that confidently today . . . And I want to explain to the students that might be watching here. There's a lot of young people are watching this channel to try and understand politics a bit better, Mr. Speaker. Typically what would happen is every session . . . As we come to Regina, there's two sittings that we have. We have the fall sitting, which we're at now, and that typically runs anywhere from five to six weeks, Mr. Speaker. And then we have the spring sitting which usually starts in March.

Well what happens is, the reason why it's divided in two, for those that are listening, is that typically the Government of Saskatchewan would do what they call a Throne Speech. And what the Throne Speech does, Mr. Speaker, it identifies what their priorities are, what their aspirations are as a government. It sets out the tone of their next year of operation. Plus, Mr. Speaker, they also introduce some of the bills that they want to bring forward, because the opposition then can critique the Speech from the Throne and they can also begin to have a first look at what their agenda is for the bills.

That's what typically the fall sitting's about. So it gives the opposition the opportunity to say, okay, what's the government's tone? What is their plan? What is their vision? What are some of the bills they're bringing forward? So as we begin to understand the bills and research the bills and understand what their plan is, then we have the Christmas break in which they go back, the government does, and they determine, based on their budget, how they're going to meet the obligations that they've identified in their Throne Speech. Because it's all about what their priorities are, Mr. Speaker. And that's how it's typically done.

So the fall sitting, the fall sitting is you set the tone and you introduce your bills, and then the opposition has their first opportunity to critique the Throne Speech and also the bills. And then they go away and they bring their budget in and they bring the final debate process that's attached to the bills. So we have two particular sittings, and each sitting certainly plays a role.

But, Mr. Speaker, today now, as a result of this particular motion, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this particular motion, the Saskatchewan Party decided not to have a Throne Speech. They decided, oh we're not going to have a Throne Speech, which leads us to believe they're not going to have a budget, Mr. Speaker. So this is the first time in a long time . . . I've been here for a few years, Mr. Speaker. I've been privileged and honoured to be here for a few years. This is the first time I've seen a government come along and not provide a Throne Speech for what they see the future of Saskatchewan in terms of the challenges and the opportunities of what they would do if they were government, Mr. Speaker. They have decided that they're not going to do that this year.

And that's why we have this motion today, a motion to identify the sitting days so we're done at the end of November. That

gives us 25 sitting days, Mr. Speaker. No Throne Speech, so we're very safe to assume there's going to be no budget, Mr. Speaker. So the people of Saskatchewan are all sitting there, as we are, saying, well what is this government up to, Mr. Speaker? What are their plans? What is the budget going to look like? Where are their priorities? And just how bad are our finances, Mr. Speaker? This is one of the things that people are asking us as we sit.

So the students that may be listening today, I can tell you today, what typically should happen in a fall sitting is we should have a Speech from the Throne, which is basically a message from the government that these would be their priorities. Following the Speech from the Throne, in the spring, we would have a budget and they would identify how their budget would again fulfill their comments or their vision attached to the Speech from the Throne.

So, Mr. Speaker, what one would quickly begin to realize is that the Saskatchewan Party are not only broke, Mr. Speaker, but they have run out of ideas, Mr. Speaker. They are sitting on their hands saying we shouldn't bring any information forward, because, quite frankly, they don't have any new ideas, Mr. Speaker.

And I think, from the perspective of the finances, Mr. Speaker, as identified by my Regina Rosemont colleague, is they I think borrowed about \$700 million last year. Is that the correct amount? And now it's \$1.3 billion more on to our debt, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan need to know, where has the money gone? Where has the money gone?

And, Mr. Speaker, after eight years, eight years of record revenue — and this is what's really important, to the students and the people that are listening — that I would point out eight years of record revenue, and today, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this past year's operations, we now have added \$1.3 billion more into debt, Mr. Speaker. And now we're having this process where the House Leader from the Saskatchewan Party has basically said, all we're doing, all we are doing is we're going to be limiting the amount of days we're sitting in the fall sitting. There's not going to be no Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker.

And this is exactly the challenge that many people in Saskatchewan are going to be asking themselves fairly soon, is where has the money gone, and why isn't there a budget in place for next year? Because, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen is if there's no budget next year, then the election is on, and guess what? The Saskatchewan Party doesn't have to explain how badly they've mismanaged the finances of this province and how badly they've mismanaged the economy, Mr. Speaker. Because all that's going to be coming out fairly soon, early next year, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't think the Premier wants to go into an election based on what we think is happening with it, that they're ratcheting debt so high. The fact that they're going to come along and justify . . . What we think, what I personally think is their net objective is they want to sell off the Crowns so they can justify to the people of Saskatchewan, let's sell these profitable Crowns so we can balance our books, Mr. Speaker. And then their objective as a conservative party, their objectives have

been met in which they want to privatize everything. And the people of P.A. [Prince Albert] have seen a lot of examples of what we talk about when we speak about privatization, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to recap what I think, the reason why we have the situation where there is no Speech from the Throne this fall. First of all, as my colleague has said, I believe that they are running out of ideas, that they are running out of steam. After eight years we see a tired old Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. They are bankrupt of new concepts, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly, I think they don't have the cash to go forward and build a bold, brave new Saskatchewan as they always predict they could do, Mr. Speaker, because they simply don't have the ideas. They don't have the manpower. They don't have the cash, and they don't have the mandate, Mr. Speaker. And this is the reason why we see today that they are not, they are not proceeding with a Speech from the Throne. And that's why this bill limiting the amount of sitting days is before us, and this is the issue that we're speaking of today.

Now I want to contrast, Mr. Speaker, what I've heard in and around our caucus with our new leader. Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the NDP are on a level of confidence that we're going to continue building because what, frankly, we have heard on the doorstep, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we need to focus on what really matters to the people of Saskatchewan, what matters to their families, to their children in school, to their children in daycares, to their children at university levels, Mr. Speaker.

We need to focus on the high cost of living in all parts of the province. We know that many people are struggling to continue meeting some of the obligations that they have, but it doesn't help when you have your power bill going up on a steady basis. It doesn't help when you're seeing more and more debt piled on to future generations, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't help when you have the downturn in the economy that we're having. It really has a negative, drastic effect, Mr. Speaker, on what people of Saskatchewan are going through and what they're suffering through.

And our leader understands that, Mr. Speaker. Our leader has said that on numerous occasions that we're going to focus on what matters to the people of Saskatchewan. We've had that discussion in our caucus on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the other point that's really important that our leader has continually focused on and continually reminded us as caucus members is that all, Mr. Speaker, prosperity . . . The people of Saskatchewan should benefit people, Mr. Speaker, that all the people of Saskatchewan should benefit our prosperity, not just the rich and the few that the Saskatchewan Party cater to, Mr. Speaker, but absolutely everybody from all corners of our province should, Mr. Speaker, be the benefactors of our economy, Mr. Speaker, not just the chosen few.

So I wanted to recapture if I can, Mr. Speaker, to the young people that are listening and all the people that are listening in general. Number one, no Throne Speech from this fall, Mr. Speaker, to identify what the government's priorities are. So we're not having no Throne Speech as a result of this bill. So you can bet your bottom dollar we're not going to have a budget, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and his entourage want to

have an election without telling the people of Saskatchewan what the budget looks like, what challenges exist out there, Mr. Speaker. And this is what's really, really important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they smile and laugh and sit in the comforts of their chair talking about all you NDP guys are always beating up on the Saskatchewan Party guys. And rightfully so, Mr. Speaker, rightfully so. The people of Saskatchewan should know that the Saskatchewan Party are running out of ideas. They're running out of money. They're running out of time, Mr. Speaker and, quite frankly, they're running on empty.

And the people of Saskatchewan know that this Premier has changed, Mr. Speaker. This Premier has changed. The Saskatchewan Party members have also changed. They've become, Mr. Speaker, what I think, in the long run, a tired, old government, Mr. Speaker. They've run out of steam. They've run out of ideas. And as a result of that, the people of Saskatchewan can sense that, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm not going to quote one of my colleagues, I want to quote today's *Leader-Post*. Mr. Speaker, today's *Leader-Post*, Tuesday, October 13th, the headline reads "Sask Party support dips," Mr. Speaker. And this is going to be a continual trend, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be a continual trend, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member knows you're not allowed to use exhibits in the House, so please refrain from doing so. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from the *Leader-Post* again, and the headline reads "Sask Party support dips," Mr. Speaker. We see that trend continuing, Mr. Speaker, because obviously the people of Saskatchewan are astute enough to know that as you look at the Saskatchewan Party, as we said, there's a lot of things that have changed over there, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of things that have changed. And after eight years of record revenue, they forgot the people that mattered the most, Mr. Speaker, the people that went to talk to them about a wide variety of issues, whether it's health care, housing, highways. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party has arrogantly dismissed some of those concerns, and we're seeing evidence of that in this Assembly on a regular basis.

They know as well as we know that they have lost their way. And the biggest question they're asking, the people of Saskatchewan have asked, in the last eight years of record revenue, where did the money go, Mr. Speaker? Where did the money go? And you look at the facts. We have more debt, as my colleague has indicated. The rainy day fund has been depleted, Mr. Speaker. They've sold off a few Crowns; they want to sell more. And now they had to borrow I think \$700 million last year to balance the budget is what they said. But then the Minister of Finance came along and said, oh no, no, it's not debt for capital. It's operating debt.

[15:15]

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know debt is debt. And when you have to go back and borrow \$700 million to balance your budget, you have to borrow \$700 million to balance your budget, and they all stand up and crow, look, our

budget is balanced. And the people of Saskatchewan kind of hold their nose and say, what's up with that math?

And again, Mr. Speaker, I think a lot of people in Saskatchewan are beginning to realize that the Saskatchewan Party, after the record revenues have stopped and the money is gone, all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, they do not want to tell us what the situation is when it comes to the financing of our province and the finances of our province, Mr. Speaker. And that is of great concern, great concern, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of having the right to know where we're at financially.

So, Mr. Speaker, the motion that is today that we simply not have a Throne Speech is very, very concerning to the opposition. We want to know what's going on over there. Just how bad is it, Mr. Speaker? Just how bad is it in the sense that they don't even want to go forward with the budget? And the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know where things are at, Mr. Speaker.

And after you've seen, as I've indicated, they have spent every single penny, drained the rainy day fund and added a mountain of debt, so people are saying, okay you spent this money. You've drained the rainy day fund and then you've added debt, but yet you've had record revenue. And yet we find people all throughout Saskatchewan are saying, well that didn't help my family; we're still facing a huge amount of increases in the cost of living.

So we're trying to figure out here how in the heck is it, Mr. Speaker, that you could have record revenue, then after eight years you've drained your rainy day fund, you've spent every single penny you've had, and now you're adding more debt — \$1.3 billion and counting this year alone. We just simply can't understand where the money went, Mr. Speaker.

And this is an important part of the people of Saskatchewan, I would ask them, like with the bottom line, the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is this party has had, the Saskatchewan Party has had record revenues, eight years of record revenues. And after eight years of record revenues — don't forget record revenues, Mr. Speaker — they've drained the rainy day fund. They've drained the rainy day fund. They've spent every single penny that they've had, Mr. Speaker. And just to add insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, they are now adding on more debt. And as a final, I think the final nail in their coffin, Mr. Speaker, is that they are not letting the people of Saskatchewan know where our finances are, and they want to go into the next election without having a budget. And this is evidenced today that the Throne Speech is not present today because they're not going to come forward with the budget, Mr. Speaker.

And based on the fact that they refuse to have that courage, the NDP on this side are saying, bring on the election, Mr. Speaker, because we will tell the people of Saskatchewan exactly where the finances are, Mr. Speaker. They're going to hide from their record, Mr. Speaker. They're hiding from their record, and rightfully so, Mr. Speaker. Bring it on because the people of Saskatchewan had enough of this kind of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, and families have had enough suffering. And yet despite record revenue, there are many areas and many people and many communities that are still suffering because of the

Sask Party's priorities. They're misplaced.

They have spent money on lean programs, Mr. Speaker. They've blown a lot of money on silly projects, on the Premier's pricey pet projects, that's what we use — a triple P deal, Mr. Speaker. Now we're hearing that the Regina bypass is going to be \$1 billion over budget and counting, Mr. Speaker.

So really, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a lot of questions the people of Saskatchewan have and a lot of answers that they deserve, Mr. Speaker, but they're getting neither, neither from the Saskatchewan Party. And this is where I think, Mr. Speaker, it is really, really troublesome from our perspective as opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Now as I said before, Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, as we speak in the caucus — and our leader has a great amount of influence and certainly has a great amount of say when it comes to the future of Saskatchewan — we have a number of principles. And the leader, our future premier, has always reminded us as caucus members to go out there and listen to what people are saying. Listen to what Saskatchewan people are saying. Make sure that we advise them that the prosperity will benefit all not just the chosen few. And the fact of the matter is the Saskatchewan Party and their leader have changed, Mr. Speaker, have changed for the worst.

And this is what really is beginning to resonate throughout Saskatchewan that this is a totally different ball game now, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly, it's important that we learn as politicians that we're in this business for public service, and when we begin to disregard what the public is saying, what the people are saying, they will quickly send you a message, Mr. Speaker. That's what's really, really important that we understand. And our leader has pointed that out on numerous occasions where he simply indicated that if we're going have prosperity, we're going to benefit all people if we're going to make sure that we're going to deal with the issues that matter. That is what we're constantly reminded of, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, again as we pointed out, they sometimes tend to — the Saskatchewan Party do — sometimes they can become arrogantly dismissive of the issues that are bring forward. And our leader has constantly reminded us that we're not going to have misplaced spending like the Saskatchewan Party. We're going to do right for what the people of Saskatchewan want. We're going to listen to them. We're going to make sure that the economy and the benefits are felt throughout all the province, and we're going to make sure that everybody is included, Mr. Speaker.

In building that brave new economy, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party have lost their way tremendously. Despite the inheritance that they have, they just messed it up, Mr. Speaker. For eight years I've been sitting in this Assembly telling them, please don't mess it up. And, Mr. Speaker, they messed it up. We're seeing now as a result of how they've handled the circumstance that we now have a mountain of debt, Mr. Speaker. We have a mountain of debt, and we're seeing that each year this province is growing more and more into debt.

As a result of last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, 700 million they had to borrow just to balance the budget, and then they have the

audacity to come into the Assembly and saying, we balanced the budget. Well if you borrow \$700 million to balance your budget . . . I wouldn't mind sending the Minister of Finance a memo, well guess what? Your budget is not balanced, so stop saying that to the people of Saskatchewan. Because when you say that, Mr. Speaker, you are insulting their intelligence. A lot of people in the province know exactly what's going on. The business community knows and, Mr. Speaker, the academic community knows it. Many people that managed finances know this as well, and the many people that manage homes, families that manage their homes, they know what debt is. And all they see from the Saskatchewan Party: despite record revenue, they're also getting record debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that we hear as we travel throughout the province, on doorsteps and at kitchen tables, is Saskatchewan people tell us that their biggest concern is their own health care. We heard yet another example today of how the health care system has failed a gentleman and his family. We hear constant reminders of seniors' care and how dismal the service is to many of our seniors that are in their last years and the pioneers that built our province, and how they are treated.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've bumped into many of these older people and they are very stoic people; they're very strong. And in northern Saskatchewan I'm blessed to have many older people that I'm friends with and they tell me a lot of things, Mr. Speaker, about what is necessary for the future. And what they don't do, Mr. Speaker, is tell us, go and hire an American-based consultant, the toxic John Black lean program, and spend a bunch of money on that particular program. That is not their priority as senior citizens in northern Saskatchewan. They say that was a big waste of money, Mr. Speaker.

And no matter how much they justify, the Saskatchewan Party do, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are not fooled. And they certainly aren't convinced that the John Black contract, which was a completely misplaced project, was of any benefit to our province. It wasn't. It cost us a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, and that was compliments of the Saskatchewan Party.

And again, Mr. Speaker, you talk about the ER wait times and 2017. The Premier made a bold statement. Where are we now? Where are we at in terms of the actual objectives, Mr. Speaker, that they have failed miserably? So on wait times, you look at what they've done. They've failed miserably on wait times. There are tremendous concerns from a number of areas, Mr. Speaker. We've heard all the challenges with some of the hospitals that aren't maintained properly. We hear the challenges of some of the communities — I think Craik was one of them — in the sense of them coming to the Assembly and demanding doctor services, Mr. Speaker.

These problems are all throughout Saskatchewan. They are in every community. And again they ask the question, where did all the money go? Because health care was our number one concern. And, Mr. Speaker, we have quite frankly seen a dismal performance by this government when it comes to providing service in health, in proper health care, to the many people in the province, especially the senior citizens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at northern Saskatchewan in general

and I get access to a lot of information from southern Saskatchewan from a lot of different rallies that we go to, to a lot of different meetings and gatherings, and certainly a lot of the discussions we have in caucus. And as an NDP caucus we do have a lot of discussion. Our leader is not going to sit by and make hasty decisions. There are things that are really important to him as we've indicated: inclusiveness, being fair, being open-minded, not allowing the people of Saskatchewan to be hoodwinked on some of these challenges. It is really, really important from his perspective, is that we, again, that we really, really focus on what matters and what affects our families and the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we hear issues around health care, not necessarily of the . . . just about not having doctors available, or the senior citizens having some difficult times, or the fact that we're having people dying on wait times, waiting in the emergency room and dying like we heard today of the gentleman that sadly passed away, Mr. Speaker. There are tons and tons of examples of people that have come forward to this Assembly and sat in these chairs as they watched the proceedings, and quite frankly had some devastating issues that really impacted one of their loved ones, and really, really, really had some traumatic events happen where loss of life was the end result. And, Mr. Speaker, we look at the examples that they mentioned: Dave Carr, Darrell Meck, Dale Winacott, just to name a few of the people that have been here. And there have been hundreds of people that have come forward, Mr. Speaker.

So you look at these challenges. People are finally coming to their Assembly, and I admire their courage because they have had enough of the Saskatchewan Party who have lost their way and who have changed, Mr. Speaker. And we're seeing evidence of that today, the negative change that's impacting the people of Saskatchewan today. It's not just the debt, not that the fact that they blew the Heritage, or the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, as we used to call it. Not the fact that they've had record revenue, Mr. Speaker, not the fact that they've added debt over the last eight years. They're coming here because they're tired of being ignored.

They're quite frankly tired of being ignored, and they're quite frankly tired of this government not responding to their issues, not acknowledging their concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, those people will continue to come to the Assembly. And I encourage them, and to also point out that I admire their courage to come forward and say what is wrong with this current government's treatment of their issues, their community, or their family.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a few times that we've seen, as we bought things forward, you know, to the concerns, of the Saskatchewan Party, they've been very dismissive. They've been arrogantly dismissive, whether it's the Preeceville issue with Mr. Floyd Head or whether it's the issue on Craik or some of the other gentlemen and ladies that I mention here that had some very, very severe issues and the end result was not good, Mr. Speaker, that this Saskatchewan Party continues to flounder and they continue being dismissive of these concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of attitude will certainly catch up to you in the end.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as well that one of the things that we often talk about is the importance of agriculture,

and our leader really speaks a lot about that as well because he travels all throughout the province. And I can tell you that it's sure nice having him show up in Buffalo Narrows, as it is showing up in La Ronge and showing up in a number of communities. And there first-hand he begins to hear some of the issues that the people are bringing forward. And that really reinforces what he fundamentally believes right through his core and the fact that we need to start talking about things that matter to people, and we need to start respecting the people's opinions more. And most important, Mr. Speaker, is you've got to make sure that the opportunities and the revenues we have today can benefit as many people out there as possible. And that's not something that we see under the Saskatchewan Party government.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we certainly want to talk about is we talk about health care in general, and these are some of the comments that we talk about. We're going to prioritize health care, Mr. Speaker. It is something that is fundamental and really important to the NDP, is that health care should be a shining example of how health care could be delivered by a province. Saskatchewan wants to lead that particular charge, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly can.

We forced the Saskatchewan Party government to put an end to the toxic lean program. We were paying millions of dollars to this consultant from the States to tell us how to run our health care system, Mr. Speaker, when we had front-line workers that could have saved the Saskatchewan Party government and the taxpayers a bunch of money. And what happened? The Saskatchewan Party once again arrogantly dismissed those individuals and simply plowed ahead, plowed ahead with their plan to bring John Black, lean program, and the senseis, and that was their solution to try and deal with the challenges of health care costs in the province, Mr. Speaker.

We are also going to make sure that we focus on the front line. The same way that the Saskatchewan Party ignored the front-line workers, an NDP government will begin to engage the front-line workers to the extent that is necessary to make sure that their involvement and their contributions are made and that we use that information to build a better health care system under an NDP government as opposed to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

And we are also going to look at some of the decisions. Again, we forced them to get rid of John Black — toxic waste of money, toxic waste of money. And, Mr. Speaker, we all have examples of how they have squandered a lot of money paying a consultant to basically do nothing but bring in Japanese senseis to do paper planes and also to learn Japanese language. And, Mr. Speaker, with the full respect to the Japanese culture, we want to make sure that we can learn as much as we can from all cultures. But what we don't want to do is learn from an American-based consultant how to run a health care system, a health care system in Saskatchewan.

Our front-line workers know what to do. They have the experience. They know exactly what has to occur in order for us to build a better health care system. And, Mr. Speaker, an NDP government will engage them fully and respect their

participation and start using their ideas and utilizing them to make sure we build the best health care system that we can.

There's basic things like capping the cost of ambulance fees, fully re-opening the City Hospital. These are some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that I think that the NDP are working their ways in terms of building a platform, a responsible platform. But the number one thing that's really important to us is that prioritizing health care is something that's really, really key to our future.

Now we've spent a bit of time on seniors' care, Mr. Speaker. Obviously it goes without saying that seniors' care is pretty important to us as an issue. We know that there's been these issues all throughout the province. And we're going to continue, as our leader has done, continue shining the light on that problem in the sense of how poorly and how badly we have treated many of our senior citizens in many of our group homes and many other places as well, Mr. Speaker.

We need to make sure that we bring something forward substantial, something that's really going to raise the bar in terms of providing service to seniors. And that's why we would bring in what they call *The Residents-in-Care Bill of Rights Act*. And I think, Mr. Speaker, we would certainly make sure that there's minimum standards of care put in place and that we had adequate staffing levels as some of the components of that residents-in-care bill of rights Act that the NDP are trying to put forward. This is something that's really, really important, as well as a seniors' ombudsman. These are some of the ideas that we have pushed and pushed onto the Saskatchewan Party.

But, Mr. Speaker, the greatest victory I think in the last six months is we got rid of John Black, the toxic John Black lean program that the Premier and many of the members of the caucus, the Saskatchewan Party caucus, continued to defend even though they knew they were wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the challenges that we're going to have as it comes to the financing. I think overall, Mr. Speaker, another pile of debt that people need to incorporate as to how the province of Saskatchewan is going to operate in the future is all around the P3 model that the Premier and his cabinet are bringing forward, Mr. Speaker. Many people know that the P3 model . . . if you look at the challenge they have with schools. We've heard discussion from the member, or our Finance critic, and where he's indicated that P3s throughout many other jurisdictions in the country have proven to be a lot more expensive than a traditional government build process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we know, P3s, what I've said before, that I look at the P3s as a more expensive proposition for the people of Saskatchewan. This is typically how I think it works. First of all, the government puts out a project and companies throughout the country, throughout the world, as we've seen evidence of recently, they have the right to bid on these projects. And what would happen, Mr. Speaker, is that if a certain company decides to build a school, as an example, they would actually finance that school. They'd use their money. They would build it, and then they would maintain that school.

Now people out there would say, well what's the challenge with that? Well, Mr. Speaker, the challenge is (a) first of all, when

they build it, they make a profit. There's nothing wrong with that. We anticipate companies building things in the province that profit should be their bottom line, and it's something that's really, really important, that the business community knows that we understand that. Nothing wrong with that. But the people that are putting up the financing for these schools, they want interest on that particular money. So they're going to charge us a lot more than we would traditionally have to borrow from the different sources, Mr. Speaker. And whether you want to admit it or not, when you're borrowing money at the rate that the Saskatchewan Party is borrowing, it's going to add some dramatic financial burden to future generations. We know that.

But the Premier is bent on making sure he gets all the good news before the next election, and he's punting that debt down the road. It's a legacy of debt that we're seeing from this particular Premier and this party and, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't stop there. So the company is going to lend us money at a greater interest rate, and we're locked in for 20, 30 years in some of these projects.

Secondly, and I think the most important, compelling argument under this rent-a-school scheme is the fact that they will control this asset. It's under their control unless and until it's paid off by the government. So some of these agreements, Mr. Speaker, would really thwart a lot of accessibility issues that many schools enjoy today.

And I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker: back home in Ile-a-la-Crosse, when we have the gym, guess who makes decisions around who gets to use that gym? The local school board does, Mr. Speaker, in concert with the staff and of course in concert with some of the programmers in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse, not some corporation in Eastern Canada.

And that's exactly one of the challenges that we see with the P3 model, that they will limit access to the school because they want to protect their asset because that's their school. It's not owned by the taxpayers. It's not owned by the government. It's not owned by the parents or the teachers. It is owned by that particular company, Mr. Speaker. They can dictate who goes into that school and who doesn't, and they can dictate any changes, any changes to any of the school facilities or use of the facilities. And that is where I think a lot of parents are beginning to realize that this P3 model program really has some challenges, not from the affordability issue, Mr. Speaker, but it's also from the accessibility issue and really who's in control, Mr. Speaker, who's in control of that particular asset.

And this is where I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to really pay attention to what we're getting into. And my colleague and the critic for . . . the Finance critic really put forward a bill which I think is only fair, Mr. Speaker, where he asks for the P3 accountability and transparency Act. He's asking for all the details to come forward so the people of Saskatchewan can actually see how these deals look; what are the financial obligations around a P3. And, Mr. Speaker, they won't do it. The Saskatchewan Party won't do it.

So you look at the challenge we have. And this is why we're here today talking about this motion brought forward by the Saskatchewan Party House Leader to limit the amount of, or to dictate the amount of days we're sitting here in the fall without

bringing forward a Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is that they want to hide from their legacy of debt, whether it's cleaning out the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's spending every penny they have, or whether it's adding \$1.3 billion in debt despite having record revenue.

And the final piece, Mr. Speaker, the final nail in the coffin of our future financing is of course the P3 model that the Saskatchewan Party wants to impose on people. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to know what those costs are and what the people of Saskatchewan are obligated to as a result of someone in the Saskatchewan Party caucus signing on the dotted line, agreeing to these P3 models that are costly and don't provide any control for the local people and, Mr. Speaker, that again, that aren't being held to account to the people of the Saskatchewan through the proper process which is this Legislative Assembly.

So we think we're going to have a really rough ride financially as a party and as a province, because this particular Sask Party has really put Saskatchewan behind the eight ball. We have not seen any evidence, Mr. Speaker, that they're willing to share the information that we have spoken about. It is just absolutely ludicrous in the sense of denying that information to the people of Saskatchewan because the taxpayers out there will know this, Mr. Speaker. And I'm a taxpayer and I pay a lot of tax, Mr. Speaker: land tax and GST [goods and services tax] and income tax, Mr. Speaker. But a lot of other people in Saskatchewan, the business community, families, they all know they do a lot to contribute to the well-being of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, taxpayers watch very carefully how we manage the financing of our province, which is fair, Mr. Speaker, because they are obviously paying the bills. But a lot of taxpayers are beginning to realize that the P3 model that the Saskatchewan Party is trying to impose on the people of Saskatchewan without sharing any details, without sharing any details, that the P3 model, the debt that the P3 model provides us is really deferred taxation, Mr. Speaker, deferred taxation that the Saskatchewan Party does not want to deal with. They're going to leave the debt there for the next generation to take care of. This way the Saskatchewan Party can say, no new taxes. We're just going to defer those taxes until four or five years down the road because I don't want, as the Premier would like us to believe, he doesn't want to deal with that problem right now. I'll let somebody else down the road deal with that issue.

And that's exactly what P3s are. They're deferred debt that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be hooked on for the next 20 years at a higher interest rate and certainly not having access and control of our schools. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what's really insulting.

And all that the Sask Party was asked to do by the opposition — by my colleague, the critic for Finance — is give us the information. What exactly are the P3 model is going to cost us? We need to know that so we can share that with the people of Saskatchewan. So we proposed the bill, the P3 financial accountability and transparency Act and, Mr. Speaker, we've heard nothing from the Saskatchewan Party because they don't want to share that information.

So I want to recap from one particular issue on why I think

there is no Throne Speech at this particular sitting, Mr. Speaker, because the Saskatchewan Party are bankrupt of ideas. Mr. Speaker, they ran out of money, and the people of Saskatchewan are saying, where has the money gone?

And it's worse, Mr. Speaker, it's worse than that. Not only did they spend every penny, as we have indicated, they have now added more debt, \$1.3 billion this year. Mr. Speaker, they have drained the rainy day fund. That money's gone as well. And to add insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, to add insult to injury, what they've done is they have added debt on to future generations through their P3 models. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to know what the debt is so the people of Saskatchewan could be apprised of that. And, Mr. Speaker, they will not give us that information.

We look at the Regina south bypass project. We know now it's a \$1 billion cost overrun, and this is a bill that will continue building up. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people want information on that particular project. We know that that alone, Mr. Speaker, is \$1 billion over what was originally scheduled, and some company out of France, I believe, got the contract. No people from Saskatchewan got the contract.

So all of these particular issues, Mr. Speaker, is an issue that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know. And the Saskatchewan Party is holding all that information. That's why we don't have a Throne Speech this fall and that's why we won't have a budget. That's what the Premier wants to go into an election without a budget because that budget is going to be very painful for the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, part of the other issue is we've talked about the importance of education. We've talked about that at great length of why it's important that we properly fund school divisions and be respectful of students, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we need to also look at issues that are really important, whether it's bullying, and we have an anti-bullying bill that's going to make sure that everyone in the school is not bullied.

[15:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, we look at the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] movement, and the fact that many of our young people that are struggling with their identity certainly have a lot of challenges as well. They're subjected to bullying and harassment and the list goes on. And as a compassionate people and certainly as a compassionate province, we want to make sure that schools are safe, that it's a good place for people to learn, and that there ought to be those support mechanisms in place, Mr. Speaker. We, as part of our process within the New Democratic Party, believe that it's fundamental that we respect all people in our schools and we provide as much protection and support that we can, including those students that are struggling with their sexual identity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at some of the challenges with the schools themselves. We hear how the government is going to the P3 model, but what's really, really disturbing as well is, as you look at the financing again, is that the Sask Party know that they have a backlog in school repairs of \$1.5 billion. We've asked for that report, and they spend less than 2 per cent of what is required to begin that work. So we know that there's all

kinds of issues. We've heard in the session how some of these schools are also having a lot of challenges.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question we have is, how is it that you go into debt for a longer term? How is it that you can't deal with the big \$1.5 billion challenge in meeting some of our school needs, and how is it some schools are getting some of the supports and others are not? And yet they've had record revenue, Mr. Speaker; that again doesn't add up in our books. And this is where I think it's really, really important that people in the province of Saskatchewan start paying attention to how the misplaced priorities of the Saskatchewan Party is really having a drastic, negative effect on our schools and our children and certainly on our communities.

So we have spoken at great lengths about the schools. We spoke at great lengths about the debt, about the P3 model, and of how the health care system is challenged, Mr. Speaker. And this is where we go back again as to what I think is fundamental to our position as the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker. Every time that the economy was doing really well in the province, Mr. Speaker, the NDP were in charge. And we had four fundamental principles that I think that really, really help. And I won't get into detail of all the principles but issues, for example, of being very inclusive of all sectors, you know, and understanding that the business community has a vital role to play. We understand that within the NDP party.

We know that small business, medium-sized business, and large corporations can do a tremendous amount of good for the people of Saskatchewan. So they have an important, important role to play. We know that. We accept that. We embrace that. And we want to continue building our relationship with those large corporations because it's the right thing to do for people who need their jobs and for people out there that are looking for that kind of work. And, Mr. Speaker, it's good for the economy; it's good for everyone. So we want to be very inclusive of the role that the business community plays, and we also want to be very respectful, Mr. Speaker.

The other issue that's really important is the role of the Crown. We think that there is a place for the role of the Crowns, that the people of Saskatchewan want to keep the SaskTel. They want to keep the SaskPower. They want to make sure that they keep the SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Mr. Speaker. These are really important cornerstones to what we think is the basis of a family of Crown corporations, that they have to be part of the solution. Mr. Speaker, they have to be part of the solution so the Crown corporations do play a pivotal role when it comes to the economy and how we position the supply of goods and services and basic things like energy to make sure that the economy continues moving forward. We need to make sure that the Crowns are an important part of that.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, is the protection of the environment. People in the province of Saskatchewan and throughout the world, thank goodness, and especially the young people, Mr. Speaker — I notice a lot of young people — are getting more and more active when it comes to the protection of the environment. The young people are going to drive that particular change. And any party that doesn't realize that, very quickly in the future is going to realize that the young people demand that type of respect for the environment, and they know



that it's important for their family members to work. But they also know, they're smart enough and astute enough to know that yes, you can balance the needs of the economy with the protection of the environment, that there is ways and means in which you can achieve that.

And the young people know that, Mr. Speaker. I find, when we attend different rallies and different functions, when it comes to the environment that many, many young people are there. And they're demanding that governments, senior governments do more to protect our waterways, do more to protect our forests, do more to protect our wildlife, do more to protect our environmental interests as a province, and certainly as a country. And I think the day is coming that the environmental issues will be in the forefront, Mr. Speaker, on par with the economy.

And right now as you see evidence, federally especially, that Prime Minister Harper has thrown the environmental integrity of our federal government as something that's not important, and that it's all hands on getting the economy moving, which is important, but at the expense of the environment. The environment is not being taken into any account when it comes to some of these projects. That's a shame, Mr. Speaker, because we should have that environmental conscience, but we also know that people need to work. People need a job. People need to pay their bills. People need to raise their children.

We understand that in the NDP side but, Mr. Speaker, the worry we have is the amount of debt and disregard that the Saskatchewan Party have for addressing cost-of-living prices, and certainly the fact that they haven't spent money on issues that are important to families and what's important to the province overall. We're telling the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party has changed, they have changed for the worst. Now we're seeing evidence that the financing of our province is in dire straits, and that something has got to be done to address this particular challenge. At the very least let the people of Saskatchewan know where we're at when it comes to the financing of our province and of our future.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is really, really important to point out that when it comes to the environment, when you talk about the balance and the importance of the economy as it relates to the environment, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Saskatchewan Party cut programs, cut funding to climate change, Mr. Speaker. It scrapped programs like EnerGuide. Its own technology fund doesn't have a start date, Mr. Speaker.

When you talk about the Sask Party, they start talking climate change and the challenge to the environment is really a myth based on witchcraft reasoning — Mr. Speaker, this is the type of language that the conservatives and the Saskatchewan Party use. But, Mr. Speaker, we have got to provide leadership as a province, because whether we want to admit it or not, Saskatchewan has the highest per capita emissions in the country. So we need to begin to address what our challenges are.

And, Mr. Speaker, the green economy overall is a great opportunity. I often speak about this in caucus, that if you look at the green technology and the green opportunity and look at the renewable resource sector itself, whether it's solar power,

wind power, or whatever the opportunity is, Mr. Speaker, this is a growing opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan. And we have led on a number of issues, whether it's health care or the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. Now it's time that Saskatchewan embrace what I think is going to be a great opportunity in forging a really balanced economy, and that is to take full opportunity attached to the green economy.

And I was privileged, Mr. Speaker, to be able to attend a number of hearings throughout the province as a former member of the Committee on the Economy, where we travelled throughout Saskatchewan and spoke about the opportunity attached to the green technology and green energy. And there was an incredible amount of energy, incredible ideas out there, Mr. Speaker. And we went through several weeks of travelling throughout the province, and everywhere we went, the most amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the fact of the matter is that people wanted to embrace green technology, wanted to build a green economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, all they have gotten from the Saskatchewan Party is program cuts, closed doors. And when you talk about the issues of global warming, some of them call it witchcraft reasoning. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a crying shame. Because we know that the weather is changing throughout the country, and as long as they continue sitting on that misinformation, the Sask Party does, that they don't think there's a problem. And the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to realize that, and the young people are certainly going to have their say when the time comes.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I talked about some of the challenges when we sit in caucus and deal with issues, and our leader has been quite forceful and quite forthright when it comes to talking about the issues that matter and to make sure that everybody benefits from what Saskatchewan has, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen, what we've seen that the Saskatchewan Party has done is not come forward. They have not come forward with a detailed list of how much debt we have as a province. They have not done that. We have asked them through a variety of bills. Nothing. It's very, very quiet. And now we're not going to have a Throne Speech, and now we're not going to have a budget for next year.

So, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Assembly, we think that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know — what are they hiding? How bad is our financing, and what plans do they have to address those deficits? Because we know there are deficits. We have a right to know. We've been asking this and, Mr. Speaker, all we got from the Saskatchewan Party is a muted response. They sit there and hope that the issue goes away. But, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue holding them to account.

Now, Mr. Speaker, how can . . . when we talk about misplaced priorities, how does this affect us? I spoke about the kids in the school system that don't have the proper supports. I spoke about the families that are struggling through health care. I spoke about some of the crumbling highways. I spoke about some of the challenges around housing. I spoke about some of the issues that . . . whether it's the John Black lean program, like the list goes on as to what I spoke about that is plaguing the Saskatchewan Party government.

And we know that it's having a negative effect on them, because they have not been forthright when it comes to our finances. The people of Saskatchewan, as I've reiterated here time and time again, have a right to know where our finances are. Because whether it's P3s or whether it's current debt or whether it's dealing with the errors that they have made to things like the John Black lean program, the taxpayer is paying for their mistakes. They're paying for their misplaced priority, Mr. Speaker, and that's why, one of the reasons why we have got to know where we're at financially. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the Saskatchewan Party is serving the people of Saskatchewan well if they don't provide that information in a fair and forthright manner, especially before an election is called, and now we're seeing that they're not going to do that.

Now how does this affect certain areas, Mr. Speaker? How does it affect families in my riding? I'll give you an example. The cost of living for every day, a family — throughout all of the province, but I'm more acutely aware of the ones in my constituency, Mr. Speaker — whether you look at the power bills, they're way up. And we know that, because one of the things that we have to pay is the Minister for SaskPower, the smart meter problem that they had. I don't know what the final cost was for all the bills that the people have to pay now because the minister didn't read a couple of memos that warned us about the smart meter fiasco. He didn't read that memo. It mustn't have crossed his desk. But as the Minister for SaskPower, he ought to have known these were issues, and he just didn't pay attention. And that cost the people of Saskatchewan money.

And every day as you go pay your power bill, like the rest of us do, you can think a portion of that bill is based on the mismanagement of the Crown corporation, SaskPower, because the minister didn't pay attention to the memo that warned him about the smart meter failures and yet he still plowed ahead. And what happens today, Mr. Speaker — I don't know what the final tally was; perhaps my Finance critic would know what the final tally is for the smart meter failure — but everyone, everyone in the province of Saskatchewan is paying for his mistake.

Now we look at some of the property taxes, Mr. Speaker, the delivery on energy bills, property taxes. Post-secondary students are paying more for the tuition costs as we've talked about today. So whether it's your power bill or whether it's your energy bill or your property taxes or your young students going to university, all these costs are being paid by one individual — the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. And sometimes the taxpayer gets tired of the debt that's being piled on by this particular government. And, Mr. Speaker, we look at the failures that they've had in many areas, and it's not getting any prettier.

We warn the people of Saskatchewan that we've got to have accountability from the Sask Party government and that they should not go into the election without the people of Saskatchewan knowing the true debt that we're under and some of the issues that they're going to present after the election. Because, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do our darndest as an NDP caucus to form the next government and again, Mr. Speaker, provide better hope and opportunity than the Saskatchewan Party is currently providing the people of

Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, in our particular area, we've had the northern fire management program. We've heard a lot about the challenges with the evacuation and fire program, Mr. Speaker. It has been really a very trying summer. I've had the opportunity to travel to a number of communities, as my colleague has from Cumberland and many of the other of my colleagues. I think my leader went to both of the northern constituencies and visited a lot of the communities and families. And, Mr. Speaker, it was a very trying summer. You have smoke around your community on a regular basis and families being moved out because of the danger. And, Mr. Speaker, we looked . . . At the time, we didn't want to do any of the political work that was necessary. We said, after everything's settled down, we need to begin to see exactly how the Saskatchewan Party dropped the ball when it comes to protecting these northern communities.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that firefighting teams in northern Saskatchewan were cut by the Saskatchewan Party. There was a lot of positions that were cut within the SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] forest fire protection branch, Mr. Speaker. There was a tremendous amount of qualified people that were let go, and many of those people had years and years and tons of experience, Mr. Speaker. What happened was the Saskatchewan Party terminated those positions. Mr. Speaker, what they've also done is they also reduced the budget.

I don't know. Again you look back at this, and they reduced the budget from typically what is a \$110 million firefighting budget. They reduced it to 55 million. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they wanted to again tout the fact . . . or tout their main message that the budget is balanced. So where do you cut? You cut the forest fire program by \$50 million and, all of a sudden, you've got a balanced budget. That was their reasoning. But we all know typically and traditionally that the firefighting budget in northern Saskatchewan is going to stay \$100-plus million each year. Why? Because we have a thing called global warming, Mr. Speaker. It is a fact of life, and people in northern Saskatchewan realize that.

But they didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. They didn't . . . They reduced the budget to 55 million. They also fired fire tower personnel that were out there actually watching for fires, Mr. Speaker. They fired a lot of the firefighting crew, Mr. Speaker, which was really unfair. They reduced a lot of equipment and authority that many of these fire bases could have had and could have really reacted sooner and quicker if they had that authority to stop some of these fires from spreading.

And, Mr. Speaker, they were very ill-prepared, very ill-prepared for what people in northern Saskatchewan actually knew was going to happen last year, and that, because it's a dry year and that the fire season was upon us, and that it was going to be one heck of a fire season. And that's why I made the member statement today about incorporating indigenous knowledge as we look towards trying to prevent catastrophes of this sort, when we look at the forest fire season that impacted northern Saskatchewan.

So another example, Mr. Speaker, of how the Saskatchewan Party is able to find \$100 million for a Japanese John Black lean exercise, but cuts the firefighting program, cuts the personnel, cuts the equipment and the authority lines for the northern bases. And cuts and cuts and cuts to a point where these guys are trying their very best to deal with the fire situation with half the resources that they're left with, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we really, really are very supportive and very, very respectful and very appreciative of the work that many of these forest fire fighting crews have done in northern Saskatchewan.

And they're professional enough, many of the people that work with the firefighting program in northern Saskatchewan are professional enough not to be critical of their own department. But they know, they know that the Saskatchewan Party dropped the ball when it came to the issue of preparing these communities and providing them with the proper resources to protect our communities, protect lives, protect property.

And, Mr. Speaker, of all the people that lost hundreds of dollars if not thousands of dollars relocating their families to the South, and those families that lost cabins, Mr. Speaker, that lost cabins that they've had in their family for years and years, these are the people that really paid the price. It was not the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. It was those people in those communities that really struggled. And the only people that really stood by them were the SERM firefighting crews that had meagre resources and yet done a tremendous job.

And what happens at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker? The Minister of Finance turns around and blames northern Saskatchewan's forest fighting costs and not his mismanagement of our funds, Mr. Speaker. And I said to the people in the North, that's exactly what he'll do. He'll come along and he'll blame northern Saskatchewan for the deficit that we have, Mr. Speaker. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fallacy, because the bottom line for mismanaging our finances rests with him and the Saskatchewan Party, not the northern people and the forest fire fighting season, because we knew exactly what it was going to cost.

And, Mr. Speaker, he still had the audacity of saying, oh no, it wasn't us that were mismanaging the finances; it was the northern people that cost us this deficit, so now I've got to fix it. And that's the furthest from the truth, Mr. Speaker. The northern people, the northern people knew exactly what was going to happen. They were apprised of this, Mr. Speaker. And what they wanted to do is find some reason to weasel out of the fact that they couldn't manage their way out of a wet paper bag when it comes to the finances of this province. So what do they do? They blame the northern communities and northern people because of the firefighting costs when they knew very well they didn't allocate enough resources to the forest fire fighting budget.

Mr. Speaker, we are actually talking about a number of issues around the action that's necessary for the environment. We talked about training people in northern Saskatchewan. People in the North were kind of basically smiling, because after all the fire season happened and after all the costs that were typically part of the firefighting program were backfilled by the government . . . and that's why they claim they went into the

deficit. And after the fire season, because they have a green-up kind of a period where the forest begins to green up, and obviously winter going away and spring coming in and more warm, moist conditions, and of course the trees begin to green up and there's less and less challenge of firefighting costs once the forest's in its green-up phase.

Well then, Mr. Speaker, what happens after all that crisis, about two or three weeks later, they started training northern firefighters. After half the North burned down, the Saskatchewan Party must have got a memo from someone saying, let's train northern forest fire fighters because they'll be able to fight the fire. But this of course happened several weeks after the fire season was basically settled down. And again, I can point out to the people in the North who were kind of smiling and laughing on that one, because they said, oh my goodness, they trained 130 people. They trained 130 people after the fire season was over. That's what you call poor leadership, Mr. Speaker. And a lot of people in the province and the people in the North knew that as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again the question that we would ask today as a member of the opposition, I would ask this question to the people of Saskatchewan. We cannot afford four more years of the Sask Party government. We simply cannot afford them anymore. And the question we ask is, how can the people trust them with health care and seniors' care when we see example after example of people coming to the Assembly telling the people of the province and telling the Sask Party the challenge we have with health care and, Mr. Speaker, also with the financing and also with education. How could we trust them to build a future? Because obviously today they've run out of steam. They've run out of ideas, and they ran out of money, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why they'll not go forward in an election with the budget because they don't want the people of Saskatchewan to know exactly how bad their budget is. And the Saskatchewan Party blew through record revenues in good times. In good times, they had record revenue. Money's gone. Money's spent. Where did it go, Mr. Speaker? That's the question we have on this side of the Assembly.

And the other question we have is, how much more have they put us in debt to P3 and borrowing that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know? Because the taxpayers are paying that, Mr. Speaker, and they continue paying that to utilities, to university charges, through higher costs of food and higher costs of fuel, and the list goes on and on and on.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Saskatchewan Party have had their fun in the sun. I think it's time that the people of Saskatchewan send them a message that we're tired of your arrogance. We're tired of your mismanagement. We're tired of the fact that you have placed our province in a precarious situation, not only when it comes to the economy but of the future costs of borrowing through things like P3s. And we're just basically tired of the fact that the Saskatchewan Party have lost their way. They're a tired, old government that's seen its best days because of the record revenue left behind for them by the NDP and the people of Saskatchewan. Now that the money's gone, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is floundering. They don't know what to do.

But I know one thing that they will not do is they'll not come forward before the next election with a budget because they don't want the people of Saskatchewan to know just how bad the finances are of our province. They'd much rather go into an election without the people knowing that because the people of Saskatchewan would quickly find out that they have mismanaged our economy, mismanaged our finances, and really squandered the opportunity for growth that we had as a province.

It's something that the NDP would not have done, Mr. Speaker. We have continued capitalizing and building on people like Romanow and Calvert's legacy. That would have been the proper thing to do, Mr. Speaker. Instead all we've seen is misplaced spending, whether it's the John Black lean program or the P3 model or just spending on things like limousine services and travel scouts. Mr. Speaker, that's not what the people of Saskatchewan voted for, and I think you're going to find out fairly quickly that they're going to send the Saskatchewan Party a message. Because things have changed. They have changed for the worse, and the people of Saskatchewan that are paying attention to this know this, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why the NDP have a resurgence of ideas. They have a lot of confidence and they continue building an alternative to that government, Mr. Speaker, because we have a great plan that's inclusive of everyone and we're going to deal with issues that matter to families. That's our directive from our leader, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to build on that vision that he's had. And this way, Mr. Speaker, we believe if they acknowledge the people of Saskatchewan, they acknowledge their challenges, and that we also share with them our vision as a party, our vision as a party and the importance of really dealing with what matters to people, Mr. Speaker. We think that will pay off.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also know that the people of Saskatchewan are very stoic and strong people. They will also share with us the challenges that we have to meet when we become government, because we obviously will be able to tell the people of Saskatchewan what the Saskatchewan Party's been hiding all these years.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that as you acknowledge people and you share with them your vision but you also challenge them to share the burden of making Saskatchewan a better place — because we all have to do our part, Mr. Speaker — I think that leaves them with hope. That's exactly what our leader speaks about, is recognizing Saskatchewan's people's challenges, being forthright, and serving as public servants should, serving to the best of your ability to be inclusive of everyone dealing with what matters to people, Mr. Speaker. And that, I think, in the long run will provide them with hope, and that's exactly what the NDP wish to do.

It is a complex business. It is a strategic process that we have to undertake. But all the issues that I spoke about — whether it's inclusiveness of students, making sure that we deal with the environment as well as the economy, making sure that we deal with the debt that's being left behind, and making sure that we protect our Crowns, build on health care — these are all issues

that the NDP and our leader talk about in caucus on a regular basis. Because he constantly reminds us what's important to Saskatchewan is what we want to represent and what we want to build upon.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of issues that we brought forward, but the bottom line is this. As I wrap up my comments, the bottom line is this: there's no Speech from the Throne this fall because the Saskatchewan Party government does not want to go into the next election with the budget that is before them, because they're ashamed of their mismanagement and they have squandered the opportunity that they've had for the last eight years of record revenue. They have squandered the growth opportunity for Saskatchewan, and they have compromised the taxpayers of this province for the next 20 or 30 years based on the debt they've piled on and their P3 rent-a-school schemes, Mr. Speaker.

People of Saskatchewan are bright. They know what's going on. They've seen this act before, Mr. Speaker. And they're going to start sending the Saskatchewan Party a message that enough is enough. You've mismanaged this province long enough. We don't want no more four years of the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

It's time for a renewed, reinvigorated, and visionary NDP government with a new leader, a new agenda, a new plan that respects people, that's inclusive of everyone. And, Mr. Speaker, above all else, Mr. Speaker, is to share the opportunity all throughout the land, not special friends or insiders that the Saskatchewan Party currently catered to, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what they're doing today. And, Mr. Speaker, I tell them, shame on them, because the bottom line, the bottom line is you've squandered an opportunity.

I've stood up in this Assembly for a number of years that they've been in power, eight years. And every single time we had the opportunity to tell them, don't mess up the economy, an opportunity that was handed to you, Mr. Speaker, what do they do? They mess up and squander the opportunity handed to them, handed to them by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They've squandered that.

We know that on this side of the Assembly. We see evidence of that every day through some of the examples that I brought up, Mr. Speaker. And I say, shame on them. The people of Saskatchewan and the taxpayers know very well that whether it's debt, it's considered deferred taxation. And whether it's a P3 rent-a-school model, that's also deferred taxation. Debt is debt is debt.

[16:15]

I don't know what more we can say to the Saskatchewan Party, but I'll say one thing, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance is going to have a difficult time explaining to organizations like the chamber of commerce, organizations like the small business associations, of the people that are aware what's going on, the think tanks that are out there. He's going to have to explain how they've squandered the opportunity that was presented to them eight years ago. And how, after eight years of record revenues, we have more debt piling on, more debt coming in the future through P3s, and no rainy day fund. And oil at where it is, Mr.

Speaker. I can tell you that this is not the leadership that Saskatchewan people wanted.

And I think they're going to send the Saskatchewan Party a message next election that we had enough of that silliness. We're going to go back to the NDP where we can provide a visionary plan, a plan that deals with what matters to people, a plan that balances many people's interests, a plan that builds on our strengths, Mr. Speaker, and a plan that we're going to have to share. The challenges of some of the decisions made by the Sask Party, everything from John Black's expensive lean project and hiring senseis at \$6,500 a month to tell us how to speak Japanese.

Mr. Speaker, they have misplaced priorities. They have really ignored a lot of issues that were of grave concern. And today now we see that the people of Saskatchewan are again ignored, when we don't have a Speech from the Throne to see where the Saskatchewan Party is going. We don't have a budget for next year, Mr. Speaker, because they want to hide what they've done. And the people of Saskatchewan ought to know that the Sask Party and their leader have changed dramatically for the bad. And we can't have four more years of Sask Party rule, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, the NDP are ready. We are going to work very hard in our caucus and in our leader. We have had a lot of discussion on what a smart growth strategy would look like, on how we would develop an environmental agenda to make sure young people are engaged, of how we would use best practices from across the country, Mr. Speaker, from across the country to really build a strong Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, of how we would try and get out of the bad deals that the Saskatchewan Party has mortgaged our future on, such as P3s. The list goes on as to the opportunities that we think we have as a governing party to really bring change and effective change, Mr. Speaker, and to point out that the conservatives do not have a monopoly on how to build a good economy because they never have developed a good economy.

In the history of Saskatchewan conservatives, Mr. Speaker, every good economy in the province of Saskatchewan historically was developed with the people by an NDP government. So we have our history. We have our background and we have the confidence to move forward to again build the economy that we think needs to be built, and that is to be very respectful of things like the environment, inclusiveness, and really engaging the educational challenge that we have to build a labour force, and, Mr. Speaker, protecting the Crowns, having a good health care system. These are all components of what we think Saskatchewan should look like in the year 2016 and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of issues that I want to speak of, and I hope to do that over the next five weeks. But I'll finish with this, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party are hiding from their debt, Mr. Speaker. They're hiding from their mismanagement. They're hiding from what their agenda is on the Crowns. They're hiding from their failure in health care. They're hiding from their failure for not providing supports at the right critical time. They're hiding from their failures of having our universities and municipalities laden with debt. We all know that the property tax in these cities are going to go up and

small communities are going to go up.

They're hiding from the fact that they have not helped the communities resolve basic issues such as water and sewer infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. They're hiding from the fact that they've placed many northern communities at risk because they've cut programs within the forest fire fighting costs because they wanted to appear to balance the budget. But they borrowed 700 million but said it was okay because it's operational debt, not debt in general. We couldn't figure out what the minister meant by that. Debt, to us, is debt.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan cannot afford four more years of the Saskatchewan Party government. They have changed. They have mismanaged and squandered the opportunity. It's time for a fresh new premier and an invigorated team, Mr. Speaker, that will respect what the people of Saskatchewan have to say, and we'll deal with issues that matter. And, Mr. Speaker, we will have a smart growth strategy for Saskatchewan that's inclusive of everyone.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I have said what I wanted to say on this particular motion. I think it's a shame that we're not having a Speech from the Throne. But as I said at the outset, we want to make sure that people of Saskatchewan know exactly what's plaguing the finances of our province, compliments of the Sask Party government.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the House is the motion moved by the Government House Leader:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, the subsequent sitting days of the fourth session of the twenty-seventh legislature shall be in accordance with the conditions set out by this order as follows:

- (1) That the Assembly will sit from Wednesday, October 14th, 2015 (sessional day no. 67) for 24 sitting days, concluding at the time of the daily adjournment on Thursday, November 26th, 2015 (sessional day no. 90);
- (2) That the rules that govern the conduct of business within the parliamentary calendar shall not apply, in accordance with rule 5, sittings outside calendar periods;
- (3) That the Clerk of the Assembly shall publish a schedule that shows the days on which the Assembly shall meet, in accordance with this order; and further

That when this Assembly adjourns on November 26th, 2015 (sessional day no. 90), it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days clear notice, if possible, of such date and time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 179

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 179** — *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on the debate and have a discussion, a further discussion on a new bill that's been proposed, Bill 179, *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act*.

I guess I'd like to start out with just some opening comments and talk about health care. And I think health care is pretty important to many individuals, families, our communities. It is crucial that you have good health coverage, and people in this province expect that from a government.

So when I look at this, I was thinking a little bit about this and my grandfather and just the days as a . . . And I look at him as a veteran, a very proud man — and I've said that before in this House — very proud Métis man who wanted to make sure his family had the best quality of life. And I think about the homestead, the farm where we spent many, many, many days, summers with the family. And I think about health care in general and people in those days, back in the day, whether it's the '40s, the '50s, and the struggles that farm families had back then, people who truly lived off the land. And I say lived off the land because it was survival for them, whether you had a small homestead or maybe you had a bigger . . . maybe you were a number of families together farming. But at the end of the day, health care was crucial. And back then, families struggled to make sure that there was health care provided.

And you know, you talk about stories; you hear some of, I guess, our seniors. You can talk about those back in the day with the struggles, and they'd talk about health care and the struggles that went on. Some of the stories are pretty sad, where if they didn't have the resources or the ways and the means to take a loved one to see a doctor, or if it was a pay-for-health-care at that time, to pay for that. So you hear different stories of many pioneers talk about the issues that faced them.

And I guess over time people have come to a . . . even myself. And I'm going to go back and forth a little because I think it's important to talk about the quality of health care that we as Canadian citizens want to have, we as Canadian citizens want our children, our grandchildren to have, our parents to have. And time and time again we've seen some challenges in this province. And you know, I'm going to get into that a little bit here and there, but I know for myself, I want to go to a hospital,

and we talk about today we've seen our leader talk about wait times and, you know, families that struggle with that.

And we see the challenges, when we have a government who had such opportunity to fix the health care system. And whether that was back in the day, the vision of the people of our province was to come forward to make sure everyone had access to health care, and I guess you could say affordable health care, you know, health care in general so that your loved one was taken care of. And we've watched how that has evolved in Saskatchewan. We know the story. People have come to expect a good quality of health care.

And there are great, I think about great opportunities for our young people too, and I talk about whether they're training to be nurses, doctors, to stay in our province. People want that. So we want our community members to stay in the province whether you're in the rural, the urban, the North. We want people to have opportunity to training. So we want to make sure that there's nurses, that there's doctors, that there's caregivers to provide the health care that we've come to expect or to make sure that we want our loved ones to be able to be taken care of in a certain way.

And I think about some of the challenge that face some people, and I'm going to get into MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] and talk about where they're going with that and the plan. And we'll talk about Alberta, and where they're going, and we'll give some examples of that. We are seeing some of the data information that we're being provided. There's questions because yes, we want to make sure health care is provided, and I say that in the sense of you want to make sure that it's covered. And when I say covered in the sense of, you go to a hospital, you want to make sure your loved one . . .

And I think about my grandkids. You know, if one of them should be sick, you know, gets sick, and you go to see a doctor, you want to make sure that the health care is the best that you can provide for that grandchild or your child or your parents or caregiver. You go to a health facility, you want the best. You go see a doctor. You want to make sure that Saskatchewan people . . . And I think it's in Canada, we've seen where it came from and how it evolved and the coverage has . . . And having said that, Mr. Speaker, thinking about the quality health care that people talk about and want to make sure they have, we've come to a certain standard. We want it in a timely manner. We want our loved ones to be taken care of.

And I start thinking about the MRIs. And you know, they introduced this bill 179. They brought it in, and they're talking about now going ahead. And we'll go through the process of the minister introducing the bill, MRIs. It'll be a facility in the province that they're wanting to bring in. There'll be a licensing fee and a way in. They talked about, if you look at the bill, they talk about regulations and the areas that they're going to make sure that . . . And I guess there is a lot of questions, and people will have questions about where they're going with this, with an MRI, and have, you know, somebody licensed, not a health care facility. It's going to be a private I guess facility, organization, or a business that's operating MRIs in our province.

And we look at Alberta and there's an example, Alberta. What went on in Alberta? You know, you would think, okay, well if

that's private, you can pay. You get in a line and you go and have your MRI; this will help you get a surgery or get medical attention that you need. And some of the data and information that's being provided is that's not what's happened. It has not improved, people that get into . . . So when we look at that, you know, there's different ways to look at it. Some will question that. Some will say maybe it is better over there. You know, I have no proof of that. I can just go by what I hear, what people talk about.

But when I think about our province and I think about Saskatchewan going in this direction, and I think about, you know, you're going to pay for your MRI, we look about the most vulnerable. And if somebody can pay to have an MRI and they can get ahead of the line, get to the doctor sooner, let's just give an example of a list of, you may have a doctor or a surgeon who has 100 patients waiting for an MRI. And if somebody was to get an MRI, would this mean that you pay and you, whether it was Saskatchewan or you go somewhere and you pay for it and you get an MRI, would this mean that . . . you know, and that's the questions people are going to ask.

Will an individual who has an MRI, if the surgeon receives that MRI and he says, well this patient's got their MRI. These 100 don't. We're still waiting for whatever reason. They haven't come forward. Will they jump ahead of those individuals? And those are tough questions people want to ask. And I know you have the most vulnerable that maybe couldn't afford to pay for that, you know. And it's fair . . . I think about my own grandchildren; maybe some of my kids could afford it. Some can't. Does that mean that they would jump ahead? And those are questions that people would ask. And I would hope not . . . that you know, there is a system in place that would take care.

[16:30]

And I have not heard from government yet, and maybe we will, that there is ways that they're going to undertake to ensure that that will never happen in our province, that somebody who can pay will go ahead of somebody — and that is the question — of somebody who is more vulnerable. We know that there are some out there, and that's fine. But I guess what the concern is, Mr. Speaker, is for the most vulnerable. We talk about that, the most vulnerable that need their surgeries, need an MRI. And I think about that, and I've talked about there might be, you know, there may be different circumstances. And then when I think about why has the government brought this forward? Who do they consult? I don't know. And those are questions that I think the public wants to know, and I think we have a right to ask these questions, and we have. We'd better make sure that we're asking those questions as an opposition.

But I think further the government should be asking . . . And I don't know, maybe the minister will share with time or we'll find out. Who did they consult? Who came to them with the idea saying this will be a better way of doing MRIs in the province of Saskatchewan? And I don't know what information they're providing to the government to say we would like to go ahead. And you know, I'm not sure that this is the way to go. I'm not saying that . . . I don't have all the answers. But there's a lot of questions, and I know people will have questions. And they'll want to make sure, they'll want to make sure that their health care of their family and their loved ones . . . And if they

can afford to pay for it, to get in that lineup of the MRI to have it first. They want to make sure that they're taken care of.

And I think about talking a little bit about individuals and those that, you know, of the most vulnerable. And I talk about that, that they're not left behind. Who is left behind? And you hope that they're not left behind, if they can't afford, you know, to pay for this, that they're not left behind. And those are some of the challenges, Mr. Speaker, that I think we need to ask ourselves as a province. We don't want to leave anyone behind.

We've seen how this government likes to leave people behind when they've had record revenue. For year after year this government has had record revenue. The good people of our province have provided this government with a record revenue for different ways, whether it's through taxes, whether . . . And my colleague talked about it earlier. There's many ways.

This government has taken the record revenue, and we have seen what they've done with it, and how they've wasted, whether it's the lean . . . We see that, and we wonder about it. Well if you could spend money there. Smart meters. You know we see the way the government's going with wasting the dollars and tax dollars of hard-working men and women and community members of our good province. We've seen how this government has wasted so much. And they can say, well it was our ideas. It was their pet projects they wanted to go ahead with it. But at the end of the day, it is the people of this province that suffer and pay the price.

And I mean government, when it's election time, may pay the price. And we may have individuals who will not support them anymore and send them a message. Let's hope that happens. My colleague has talked about that. You know, he gave some good insight into, I guess, election coming up and the way government is handling . . . And he talked about having, you know, a budget, and that's important with dollars. Government has the dollars, and the government of the day decides where those dollars go. Whether we're going to have . . .

When I think about this, Mr. Speaker, it's like, when I think about the dollars that a government is allocated to utilize, and if other provinces have done MRIs, private ones, and it's not taking care of the wait times and it hasn't dealt with that, or they're waiting longer for MRIs, if that's happening, why do we go back? And any other province that you want to look at, and if it's not working, why would you want to go there?

And if it's not making it easier and the wait times for MRIs are not going to make it where individuals get their MRI and they get their surgery or whatever requirements of treatment that they need from the physician, a surgeon, whoever — when I look at that, governments had the money. Why don't they take our public system that we have in our province and . . . You know, there are struggles. We're hearing that every day. Government decides how budgets are going to be, and the health regions carry on the health. And we've heard, even today in question period, we've heard many concerns from seniors, from individuals, from families who have suffered, who have suffered because of the lack . . . and the waiting time. And you know, our heart goes out to those individuals and anyone who suffers. When you go to a health care, you're expecting a certain care and attention in a timely manner, and if that doesn't

happen, it's sad. And you think of the families, and my heart goes out to them.

But having said that, this government has had such an opportunity to provide the best health care in the province when we've had a record revenue year after year since they've been in power. You know, we talk about, and my colleagues talked about, the previous government getting things ready — the NDP, prior to the government coming in in 2007. You know, they had it handed to them pretty good. And I know they'll say, oh no, that's not so, and that's fine. The people of our province when you talk to them, they know it. You can't. It's not going to be smoke and mirrors, and you're not going to . . . People don't buy it. They understand it and they know the tough work that was done. And the good people of our province did the hard work to get things where they are today.

But you know, I want to go back to talking about the priorities. And if the government wanted to make it a priority to have MRIs and having the wait times on MRIs so that you, Saskatchewan residents, can get in and have an MRI, honestly I believe the government, and the government, the Sask Party government of the day, could fix that. They could address that. We've seen what they've done with 40 million, with the lean, the smart meters. The list goes on of stuff that they have spent on their pet projects. We see that time and time again. Having said that, utilize, make a system better. So if it means we're going to train more, do we have to have more MRIs, you know, what would it take? How come they're not talking to individuals or finding out? And has the government looked into that? Like I don't know because they don't share a lot with us. Everything's so secretive. But I'm hoping that they did a lot of consulting with individuals, with doctors and whoever. And I'm hoping, and that's all I can say. I'm hoping they've done their due diligence, which we're all supposed to be doing in this House. And that's why we represent the people of this good province. And it is an honour to serve the people of this province.

So when I think about that and I think about individuals and whether, you know, you would have to make that tough decision on whether you can afford to pay for a private MRI, or should we all have access to MRIs in a timely manner, is that the government . . . It isn't because the government hasn't had the resources. Let's be very clear. Let's make no mistake about that. It isn't because the government did not have the resources. Our province did well. They had record revenue year after year. Did they? Well, you know what? They have again . . . And I say this because it's their priorities, their priorities.

Whether I look in the rural, the urban, the North, we talked about it today. Education is another area where this government has had record . . . When you look at the government previous and the challenges that they had, to clean up, a mess to clean up, now here's a government who has such opportunity to help the people of our province, to make sure things are right, to make sure that individuals have the best health care, have the best quality of life. That's what people want from this province, whether it's seniors . . . And we've seen the record, and we've seen the many families coming to this Legislative Assembly so hurt and so unhappy and dissatisfied with the way their loved one was being taken care of by this government and the way this government is doing it. And it's wrong. It is wrong when

you have so much opportunity to see individuals, families, suffer.

Mr. Speaker, you know, when you think about the quality of life that our seniors should have, that our grandchildren should have, the next future . . . And we talk about our future. And I hear many people when they're campaigning talk about the future, the future generation. But once they get in again, if they are so lucky to win, then I see . . . And exactly this government, it had such opportunities that it could have fixed.

And if MRIs are a problem, again I go back to this. Why aren't they taking the opportunity to correct it with the resources that they have had if they really wanted to correct it? And I don't know who they consulted or who came forward. And I said this earlier, Mr. Speaker: who spoke to them about why we want private MRIs versus the public? And if it is because we need to train more staff, then train the staff. Why can't we provide that in our province to make sure? Like, why does it have to be a private or . . . Let's fix it. If it's a problem, if the government's saying . . . and that's why I'm assuming they're doing this, because they're saying it's a problem.

If they know it's a problem, why didn't they fix it when they had all the money? Now they don't have as much money, they're claiming. And we see all of that. And my colleague, the member from Athabasca, you know, said some facts that I think the public needs to know about.

And I think the public is starting to ask questions. And you could say what . . . You know, individuals can say, well I don't think the public is really paying much attention. They are. Mr. Speaker, the public is paying attention and they want some answers.

Now I don't know if they consulted with the . . . When you look at our public health care system, we have a union. Have they talked with the unions? Do the unions support this? Do the health care workers, they support it? Have they consulted with them? Do they think it's good? Who have they talked to? Who have they consulted with? That would be interesting and I would like to . . . And hopefully we'll get that information at some point because it's, like I say, it's trouble to get the information. We've seen that today. Some of the documents and reports, you know, in a timely manner so the public and for all of us as members of the Legislative Assembly can deal with and figure out, is this the best thing for Saskatchewan people?

So when I think about that and the challenge that many . . . I guess if you look at a family that's suffering an illness, and there are many of them, and, you know — it's for whatever reason — want the best care. And they should get the best care in the province of Saskatchewan with the resources and the opportunity we have. And many of them I think are starting to see that there's problems.

When I go visit loved ones or I visit people in the health care system, whether they're in the hospitals . . . And the staff that are in there, the front-line staff are doing a great job. They're doing all they can. They're trying to provide the best care they can for our loved ones. And I thank them for that. They're doing their best. They're overworked. There are not enough staff. We see the cuts. And why is that, when we have a



province that's doing so well?

And this government's solution is get the lean in there. Well I've heard many health care people talk to me and tell me about the lean and what it's not done. So when we think about the challenge that many people face, who do they go to? You have a government who's supposed to provide all these.

We pay our taxes and they do. Many people, they work hard. Some people are working two and three jobs to make ends meet. They're struggling to pay their rent, to provide groceries, provide prescriptions, the drugs, the medicines that they need to take care of themselves.

Now when we think about that, and here's a government that's, like I've said, has had such an opportunity. If they really were serious about fixing the problems, they could have. And it's their priorities, but they have other priorities. It's not the same priorities that I would have, and I don't think it's the same priorities that they would have with many people in the province. They may think so. That's fine. They're the government of the day.

The people of our province will elect a government of the day to take care of the business, to run the affairs of our province, to make sure we provide the services that Saskatchewan people come to expect, and good services. And we do, we have some great workers. We have people who work for our ministries who do a great job. They're endless.

But when I go back to MRIs, and I think about this and all the health care people that are out there doing what they can try to do, and I don't know if the minister or the ministry did their homework to make sure . . . And I've said this: why? Why? I'm assuming and I'm hoping that they would do this, they would do their due diligence to find out. Why always do something after other provinces have done it? And if it doesn't work, then why does Saskatchewan seem to follow after the fact?

[16:45]

And I think about the P3s. Now they want to go. Every other province is bailing out of them. Auditors from other provinces are saying this is the wrong way. It's costing, it's going to cost more to the taxpayers, and then we see this government go ahead with it. Just fire away. It doesn't matter. It's something that they want to do, so they're going to do it.

So we see that. Saskatchewan and the so-called province that people in this province have come to love. Many of us say we love our province. We love Saskatchewan. We're very proud. We're proud of what our province has to offer people. But having said that, and I say this, I think, pay attention to the public. When people start asking some tough questions, they want some answers by the government, and I mean they want answers. They want to contact their MLAs. They want to talk to government. They want to know that their loved ones and their family are being taken care of.

And the dollars, the hard-earned dollars that they earn. Many, like I've said, some of them work two jobs, three jobs to make ends meet, to pay the rent. I know many of those individuals who are very proud, who work hard, but they want their dollars

to be taken care of when the government has them. And they hear about the waste. And I mean, my colleague went through a list today of the waste and priorities that this government wants to go ahead with and push ahead with when it doesn't . . .

And you wonder why and, honestly, you wonder why. What's driving them to do these things, these pet projects, and what's going to make it a quality of life? It doesn't make our quality of life any better. But they push ahead with it. They push ahead with it.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that's the challenges. And they're going to do some door knocking, and they're going to hear from the public. And you know, you hear people talking out there, and many people will tell me this — and they have — when I'm talking to them. They supported this government. They supported the Sask Party. They said, you know, I did for two terms, but I'm really starting to question. When I have people tell me that, they should pay attention.

And I want to make sure that we ask the questions when we talk about health care. And there's many areas of the health care. It's not just MRIs that we want to look at. They're going to focus on the MRIs. And there must be a reason why, and I don't know. They're not going to share it with us, but they'll do the reasons. And I've asked this: who did they consult with? Who exactly is asking for MRIs to come into the province? And what information did they share?

And maybe there is information, reports, or data that says it is better to go this way. I'm not sure that that is so. I haven't seen anything. And again, I don't know that government is so willing to share everything. They share when they want in a timely manner when you ask, even when you ask for information that you need to make an informed decision. And taxpayers want to make an informed decision.

And we talked, my colleague talked about the budget, that we're going to the polls. We're going into a provincial election. After this federal election on the 19th, we'll be getting ready to go into a provincial election come April the 4th. But people aren't going to really get to see the finances. And I look at that, you know, and I think about that. My colleague, the member from Athabasca, talked about that. And he said about the true picture of the finances, the public, will they get it? And where are we at? Well the people aren't going to know until after the election.

So having said that, take some of those dollars, the 40 million for lean, you know, the smart meters. Take some of those dollars maybe, and you could have utilized some of those dollars to make sure that we have more staffing to do MRIs in our health facilities; to make sure that, in the House, it's a system that's working. And if there are areas where we can improve education, let's sit down as Saskatchewan people and let's fix it.

We know we can fix it when we work together. Saskatchewan people are very proud. We have the resources. Well we had the resources. There isn't much left. You know, when you go and you look at what's left . . . And I know my colleague talked about the debt, and you see a government who, to balance its budget it cuts, you know, the firefighting services. It cuts, and

everywhere that it wants to cut, it cuts. And it's scary, it's scary to see where this government will go to balance its budget. And it's many people that have suffered from the cuts that this government has come out with, and we wonder why. Like the rainy day fund, where has all the money gone? People are asking that.

Like we're supposed to have so much opportunity, you know. We're supposed to have so much opportunity in our province. And at the end of the day, you know, they can heckle all they want, Mr. Speaker, and say what they want, but the people will ask those questions, come a time. We've said that. We've sat in this House. I've been here awhile and people will start asking, well where exactly?

It's their priorities as a government. You have won that. The people have entrusted you with an opportunity. They'll expect you to take care of that, and they will, they will do their evaluation on this government. And I don't know, you know, they can mock all they want. They can do what they want, but at the end of the day the people of our province will decide. Come election time they'll send the message. And when you're not listening to the people anymore, when you're not taking care of the business that needs to be taken care of and their priorities and what matters to working men and women and people in this province, you'll get a message. You'll pay a price. You will pay a price for that.

But having said that, having said that, Mr. Speaker, this government, it's an old government. We know that. They've got their little area they want to go look at, where looking after . . . Oh well I guess they have their friends, and there's certainly a small group of individuals that get taken care of, but the rest of us in this province will struggle. We'll continue to struggle. And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the good people of this province, I know when they've had enough, when they've had enough they'll send the message. And maybe there won't be as many members on that side of the House. And all the laughing and the mocking they've done, there's nine members on this side of the House as opposition trying to do the business we've been asked to do, they may get a message. And if I was them, I would pay attention to it, but whatever.

Having said that, I want to go back to the MRIs and how important, you know, that it is to have that service should you need that service, should you need that service to be provided in a public facility that you go . . . And no one's put ahead of anyone else and those most vulnerable that can't afford to pay are not disadvantaged or lesser or less opportunity.

And I'm worried about that. I know people wonder about that. What will happen? We see at the government's privatization where they're going. They do it very quietly, and some people don't even realize it's going on. Some are, people are talking and my colleague talked about that. People are paying attention. They're watching what's going on and that's the concern that many residents have. And I hope that they come forward come election time to say that. Well the government denies that it's not willing to privatize, and we see where they've sold off things. And my colleague talked about that, things that were sold off, that this government is selling off and looking at selling off. Who knows where it's going to go? But we're sure worried. And I know a lot of the unions have expressed their

concern about privatization. We look at P.A. and we look at the laundry services. We look at the corrections facility.

So that privatization, anytime you say that, government, this is good for you, people are a little concerned, Mr. Speaker. They don't exactly trust the way it's put to them. And they have good reason to be worried, and I guess wonder what the government's up to. And they have to ask those tough questions, whether it's our families, whether it's the working men and women, our seniors. We have seen how many in our province have been treated.

So if this government's going to focus on a certain area and privatizing, and if that's their agenda why they want to go to the MRIs . . . And I talked about the different areas that this government has quietly, quietly are selling off, and we'll see where they'll go. And I hope the good people, and I know the people of our province, the good people of our province will know what these guys are up to. They're not going to pull the wool over their eyes. You can only do it so long.

You've been entrusted with an opportunity, and I mean this. The people have entrusted you and they've asked you, please take care of the business. Make sure we have opportunities to do MRIs. Make sure that our loved ones are, when they go to emergency, that they have the care that they're supposed to be provided. Make sure that our loved ones in our long-term care, that it's being provided.

Make sure that we can afford to live and pay our bills, utility bills. You look at the cost of utility bills. You look at the different areas where government . . . You know, under the previous, it was affordable. Our province provided bundles and the cheapest bundles of utilities in the province. And that was amazing to hear people talk about that. Now we see, I know back home even our electrical bill, it's unreal how high it goes up, up, up every time. Who pays for it, for the mistakes they . . . And I go think about the smart meters, and the mistakes that go on.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, this bill bring forward, government at the end of the day will go ahead. They have their majority. They'll do what they want. But I hope the good people of our province look at this. And there are questions that people want to ask. And I know my colleagues will continue to ask some questions, and we're going to debate this bill. It's not done. It's not going anywhere. But at the end of the day we'll take an opportunity. We'll ask the right questions, well hopefully the due diligence that the government has done. Hopefully they've done that, that they've consulted with everyone they're supposed to. I don't know who they would have consulted with, and maybe the minister will share that and maybe they won't. Government shares what they want. Sometimes you have some of those members on the other side who do a great job, and I give them credit. They share that information as the minister with the ministry, and I say, thank you.

But it's not always that way. It's not always that way. Sometimes it's a little tougher to get the information when you're asking for it, not just for us, for the public. We as an opposition have a job to do. It's to hold the government to account, and we try to do that. And I think today in question

period . . . And my colleague has talked about it. We will continue to do that, ask some of those tough questions.

But at the end of the day, I'm just about winding up to end of the day here and quit, you know. But having said that, the government is going to be asked the tough questions. Are they going to go ahead with this? Are they going to make sure that the public . . . Because the public's going to have some, has concerns about the way they're bringing this in, Mr. Speaker, the way they're bringing it in. They're worried about private health care. Is that where this is going? Like who knows where they're going to go? I have no idea. It's their agenda. They're moving forward with it. So where does it end? Where does it end?

Because we see the challenges that our province is going . . . We see the challenges, families and some of the loved ones have gone through. And I've talked about, whether it's seniors . . . So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues will have an opportunity to ask some questions and debate this bill again, and we'll have committee, but at this time, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 179.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 179, *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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