



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

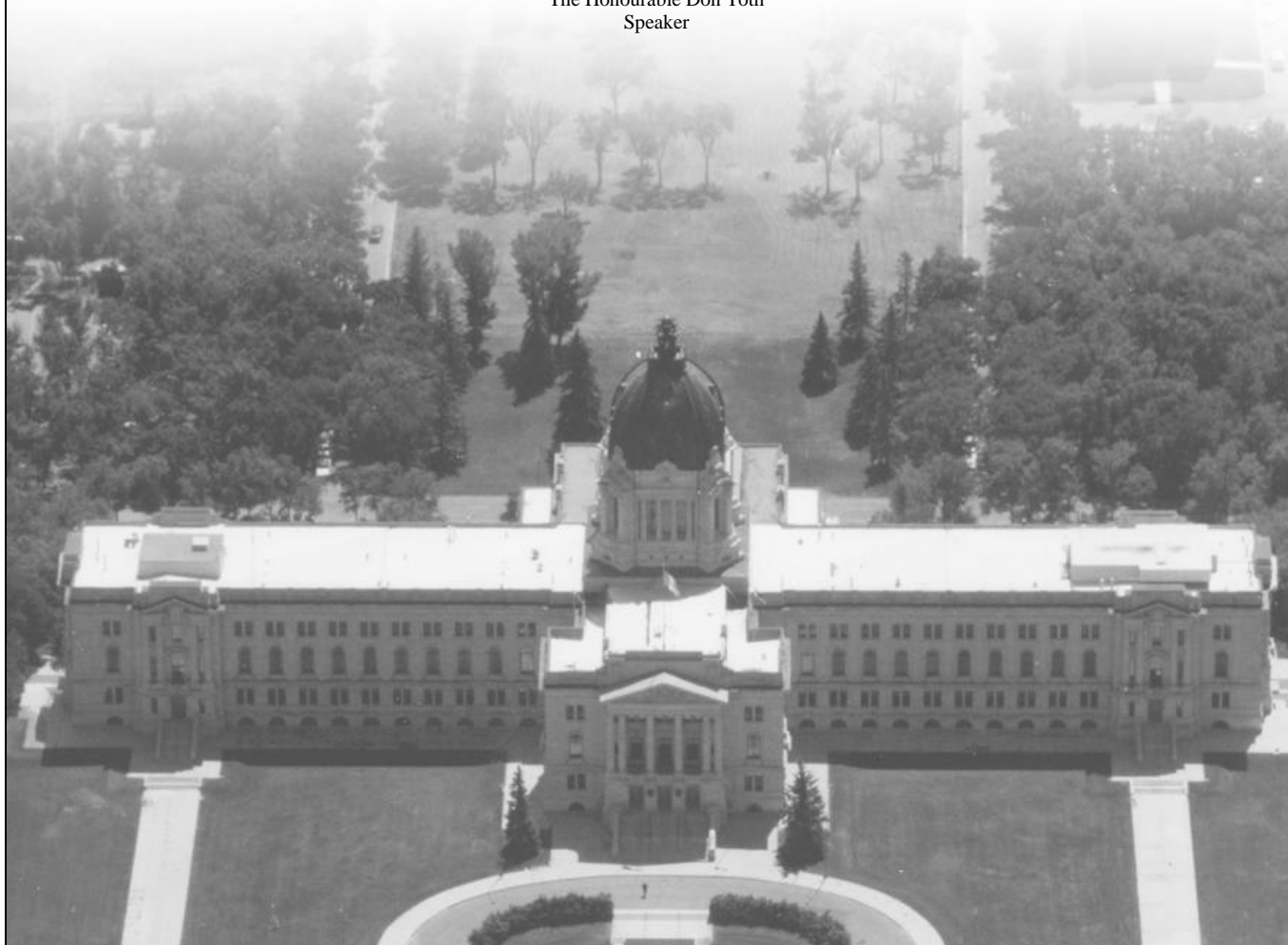
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly a group of people assembled in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today, on October 23, for the first time, has been designated Saskatchewan Youth Entrepreneurship Day. To celebrate this day, we've announced partnerships with Junior Achievement of Saskatchewan, an organization that will train youth in business and entrepreneurship skills, and a new youth education centre in Regina donated by TCU Financial Group that will be managed by Argus Group Inc., a Saskatchewan-based marketing consulting firm.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would now like to introduce to the House the following executives and young people who are part of this great partnership. Representing Junior Achievement of Saskatchewan, Councillor Darren Hill from the city of Saskatoon. If I could just have the people stand. There's Darren. Stand as I introduce you. Katherine Gagne, program director, Junior Achievement of Saskatchewan.

And with Darren and Katherine today are eight students who participate in the Junior Achievement company program. These achievers have begun the process of starting their own business and they are: Cole Shaheen, Andrea Williams, Jesse White, Jeff Myers, Jordon McArthur, Nathan Brienbach, Sean Myers and Victoria Oppenlander. Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members will grant a warm welcome to this dynamic group of young people.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce you to some members in the east gallery, members of the Saskatchewan Potash Council.

The Saskatchewan Potash Council was officially formed on September 10 and made public at a press conference the next day in Prince Albert. As part of the press conference, the main participants signed the Saskatchewan potash mining initiative. The council believed the formation of this council is truly a historical event in Saskatchewan for Saskatchewan labour and the Saskatchewan potash industry.

Mr. Speaker, we have with us today members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 892 from Esterhazy, Mosaic Potash, Doug Milham. From the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 922, Lanigan, Potash Corporation, Rick Suchy and Robert Heinrich.

We have from the Rocanville Potash Employees Association, Potash Corp, Derek Palmer. United Steelworkers Local 189, Patience Lake, Potash Corporation, Ron Greenwood and Neil Wolff. United Steelworkers Local 7458, Cory, Potash Corporation, we have Randy Rounce, Ben Medernach, and Gord Hiebert. United Steelworkers Local 7552, Vanscoy Potash, Agrium, we have Darrin Kruger, Glen Bauer, and Willy Prentice.

From United Steelworkers Local 7656, Colonsay, Mosaic Potash, we have Bruce Koob and Vern Becker. From United Steelworkers Local 7689, Allan, Potash Corporation, we have Kim Wehner and Dennis Wutzke. Also joining this group are United Steelworkers staff representative Lee Edwards, United Steelworkers national representative Roger Falconer, United Steelworkers national rep Scott Lunny, and United Steelworkers District 3 director, Steve Hunt.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to welcome these members to their Assembly. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member opposite in welcoming the folks representing the Potash Council to the legislature here this morning.

As you would know, Mr. Speaker, the potash industry represents a tremendous success story here in Saskatchewan. The industry contributes significant revenues to the province of Saskatchewan — unprecedented revenues to the province of Saskatchewan — and indeed the folks that represent that industry are welcome to the legislature. We appreciate the work that they do on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The revenues that are generated from it help the announcements of late in the last few days, and we welcome it. We continue to believe that there is a very optimistic future for the potash industry here in Saskatchewan and would want to take the occasion on behalf of the government to welcome them here this morning.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce a few guests to you and through you to the rest of the House here. I see in your gallery we have Bev Duncan, the chief executive officer for the Saskatchewan voice of those with disabilities, and so we welcome her here today. As well, people on the floor, Tammy, Melissa as well. And I think this is going to be an important day for them. So I'd like to ask the whole House to welcome those folks to this House. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce 86 students from Vanscoy. I understand they've been up since 4 o'clock this morning to drive down to the legislature and to Regina. We had a photo and a brief discussion about the legislature and the duties of an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

I'd like to also introduce some teachers and assistants that are accompanying them: Kevin Derald, Darin McKay, Amanda Schafhauser, Janet Jeffries, Betty Ferguson, Trish Van Damme, Lorrie Reichert, Kendra Danielson, and a number of parents that also have accompanied them, and also Gina Streisel.

So, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming these students and teachers and parents to their legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly for leave for extended introduction of guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave for an extension of introductions. Is that granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of this Assembly, I introduce three students from Thom Collegiate: Stephanie Hewitt — do you want to give us a wave, Stephanie — Johnny Graham, and Major Wu. I think that's the coolest name I've ever heard — Major Wu — don't you?

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, they took upon themselves to carry out a very selfless project. While clearing up the schoolyard, they discovered planters where they thought was a waste receptacle. They decided to put them to use. They thought the problem through, came up with a plan, and took action. They raised funds, purchased the flowers, did the planting, and looked after the upkeep.

But the story doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker. You see, the plants were stolen. And although these three impressive individuals were undoubtedly very disappointed, they remained upbeat. They went so far as to say they thought whoever had taken the plants probably needed them more, and only hoped they were still being properly cared for. They chose to be positive, Mr. Speaker — better and not bitter.

When the situation was made public, the community rallied around the three. New plants were supplied and the project revived. These three not only set a good example for the school and youth in general, Mr. Speaker, but also the city and the province.

One thing I haven't mentioned yet, Mr. Speaker, is that these three — Stephanie, Johnny, and Major — all have varying degrees of autism. And as a member of the standing policy committee on human services, I often hear at stakeholder

meetings with groups representing people with disabilities . . . And they feel they are often marginalized by a society that does not understand their needs, and at times they are negatively judged and their parents are negatively judged by their skills.

Today I want to acknowledge the effort and dedication the parents have made to these students. They have their teens respond in a caring and positive way regarding the theft of the flowers. I knew immediately that these are skills and values these parents have installed in their students and their kids.

I want to publicly acknowledge the time and effort that the parents have invested in their children, and I want to say, a job well done.

The parents of Stephanie, Ray and Jana Hewitt, are here today; the mother of Johnny, Bev Graham, is here today. Father, Greig, couldn't make it. And Major's father, Simon, is here, but his mother, Hanna, wasn't able to attend today.

Also with us today is our special ed teacher, Miranda Field, and teaching assistant, Glendyne Brown. I'd also like to mention, Mr. Speaker, the former teacher who helped encourage the students on this project wasn't able to attend today — Ms. Michelle Grodecki.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Major is leaving us and moving to BC — Nanaimo to be factual — and he will be missed. He said he'll email us, though. So I'd like to wish he and his family well.

One other thing I'd like to add, Mr. Speaker. When I went to visit them at school, I asked what prompted them to take on this project. Both Johnny and Major promptly said, because Stephanie said to, and you do not say no to Stephanie. Stephanie, Johnny, Major, thank you for being you. We are all here very proud of you. May God bless you and your families. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. I am wanting to introduce to you and through you my nephew who is in your gallery, Luc Préfontaine. He is one of our many young people that have left for Alberta and has come home to get educated and participate in our growth. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you and to you a member of my Rotary Club Nutana, a good friend of mine, Jim Gillis who is in your gallery, who has come down today. He's also my lawyer. Not my criminal lawyer, my book lawyer. I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine to you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### 2008 Circle of Honour Awards

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Good morning. I would like to speak this morning about the Circle of Honour Awards. It was a special night full of song, dance, and soulful notes of a flute. Pride and honour shone in the faces of those who watched recipients accept their FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] Circle of Honour Awards on Tuesday night in Saskatoon.

The list of winners was impressive. The coveted awards were given to First Nations people who have taken opportunity firmly by the hand and pushed forward. A total of 29 awards were given out to recipients of all ages, those who have served their communities through the years, and youth who are just coming into their own.

Honours were given out to stellar volunteers, athletes, artists, healers, leaders, teachers, and workplace coaches. Nearly 20 chiefs travelled many miles to join the celebration.

Citizen of the Year Awards were given to elder Edward Baldhead of One Arrow First Nation and Susan Wapass of Thunderchild First Nation. A posthumous award was accepted by family members of the late Senator Myles Venne of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band.

Students who won for academic achievement were honoured for making their lives drug- and alcohol-free. Let's join together to pay tribute to the incredible power of these awards and the role models that received them. Their service to community remains the backbone of our society. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Stresses on Saskatchewan Families

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, families across Saskatchewan are strained by an ever-increasing financial burden upon them. Strong middle-class families across Saskatchewan are increasingly stressed by the costs of living, and those living on the margins have an incredible pressure and many barriers placed upon them.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important that families can access education and the labour market. Mr. Speaker, inadequate access to quality and affordable child care is a major roadblock for families. Current wait-lists across Saskatchewan are disgraceful. For example, one child care provider in Regina has a 400-person wait-list, a 200-wait-list alone for 21 infant spaces. This is not acceptable. It's an injustice that the Sask Party is not even spending its federal transfer for child care spaces in entirety at a time of such need.

As a province, we risk squandering important social and economic benefits of this strong economy without this strategic

investment. Mr. Speaker, far too many Saskatchewan families are stressed, strained, and struggling as they are unable to find quality, affordable child care for their children. This limits their futures. This limits the future of our province. Action and investment is needed now.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

### This Year Country

**Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As today is Youth Entrepreneurship Day in our province, it is timely that I rise to highlight this province and the city I call home, Lloydminster. The CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] recently produced a report entitled *Communities in Boom: Canada's Top Entrepreneurial Cities*. Our province captured four of the top 10, with Lloydminster ranking number one in the country by a fairly wide margin. Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Regina were also recognized for their openness to small business.

The national study credits Saskatchewan's dramatic competitive rise to this province taking over from Alberta as the country's top performer. Mr. Mallett of the CFIB reflects, and I quote:

Saskatchewan in general has had a rebirth not just because of its resources but a sea change at the provincial level . . .

In addition to the change at the provincial level, I think we should recognize the work of the cities named as well as the chambers of commerce. Most of all, we should recognize and salute the women and men who make this happen with the oil on their hands and the mud on their boots. Their entrepreneurial spirit is helping make Saskatchewan stronger and a better life for everyone. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan truly is this year country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Quality of Life for Saskatchewan People

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres resides an extraordinary 22-year old woman who, like many others her age, enjoys going out with her friends. Lately, however, she's been unable to join them. After paying for her living accommodations, she is left with the paltry sum of \$135 per month for clothing, personal hygiene supplies, and transport. In an effort to cut costs, she takes the bus, but too often it is unavailable.

Mr. Speaker, this is a story of the indignity suffered by the most vulnerable in our society, as the young woman I just described is quadriplegic and confined to a wheelchair. She lacks funds available through Social Services, and, even more disconcerting, the Regina Paratransit Service she depends on is overburdened to the point that even with a 14-day advance

booking, they cannot provide her with the caring service she needs to go out with her friends. Instead all she knows is the all-too-familiar walls of her group home and the compassionate attention of those who surround her.

**Mr. Speaker,** it is time for the Sask Party government to start caring about the quality of life of Saskatchewan people. Tax cuts don't excuse a government that refuses to take responsibility for those left behind.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Saskatchewan People Benefit from New-Found Prosperity

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a historic week here in Saskatchewan. Acting on the priorities of the Saskatchewan people, our government took historic steps to ensure all Saskatchewan people benefit from our new-found prosperity.

We are implementing the largest single income tax reduction in the province's history. All Saskatchewan people, regardless of age or income, whether they're married or single, will benefit. Mr. Speaker, these measures will give Saskatchewan people the resources they need for the cost-of-living challenges.

We are committing a further \$1 billion in debt reduction, saving the Saskatchewan people hundreds of millions of dollars in interest payments. In less than a year, we have reduced the provincial debt by \$2.6 billion — almost 40 per cent. That money the taxpayers are saving can be used on priority areas such as health, education, and infrastructure. We are expanding our ready-for-growth infrastructure program by 50 per cent to \$1.5 billion.

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from Moose Jaw North has the floor. Indeed the Speaker would like to hear him, if the members would come to order. Member from Moose Jaw North.

**Mr. Michelson:** — \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. This is the largest in Saskatchewan's history and three times — three times — the capital spending of just four years ago under the socialist government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Michelson:** — Mr. Speaker, in these uncertain times it's important for the government to take steps to ensure the secure future of the people of Saskatchewan. We will maintain a balance of \$1.9 billion in our Growth and Financial Security Fund as a financial insurance policy.

Mr. Speaker, a stronger Saskatchewan means a better life for everyone. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert

Northcote.

### Help for Low-Income Citizens

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk to you about one of my constituents. Randy is physically disabled due to a motor vehicle accident that occurred in 1996. Prior to his accident, he was employed, earning a good living, and had a bright future. Because of injuries he suffered as a result of this accident, he's been receiving benefits from a Canada disability pension. The difficulty, Mr. Speaker, is that in the midst of a booming Saskatchewan and with the government sitting on a \$3 billion windfall, one of our most vulnerable citizens is barely able to survive. Randy is someone that needs assistance from this government and is receiving almost no help at all.

Mr. Speaker, after he came to my office for help, we found that the only additional assistance available to him was a small amount in a rental housing supplement. So in order to add to the small amount he receives to live on, he can be seen struggling his way down the streets of Prince Albert, searching for bottles and cans to recycle so that he can get by for another month.

At a time of increasing utilities, rent, fuel costs — all of which they've discussed having something to do with and helping to lower — something needs to be done now for low-income people. Forcing Randy to wait until next year for a tax rebate that's already been eaten up threefold by increases is not the answer. This government should be ashamed that low-income citizens in Saskatchewan are living in poverty while they sit on a \$3 billion surplus.

Where is the help for these citizens, Mr. Speaker? Why are they being left behind? Why are people like Randy being ignored by this Premier and his misguided policies?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

### Saskatchewan to Lead

**Mr. Harrison:** — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government for which the phrase, we were going to get to it, just doesn't cut it. This week our government announced historic tax cuts, committed a further 1 billion to debt reduction, and committed to continuing to invest in an infrastructure system that will ensure Saskatchewan continues to lead the global economy.

The reaction by members of the opposition to our historic initiatives? We were going to get to it, they said. When, Mr. Speaker? They had 16 years and they never got to it.

For the first time in years, Saskatchewan people are optimistic about our future. We lead the country in retail sales. For the first time ever, land sales from oil and gas rights have passed the billion dollar mark. RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] says Saskatchewan will lead the country in economic growth for the next several years. As a matter of fact, Saskatchewan will be the calm in the economic storm, in part due to our prudent decision to set aside a \$2 billion insurance policy securing the future for our people.

Mr. Speaker, for the NDP [New Democratic Party], it's always all about them. They were going to get to it. Well for us it's always about the people of Saskatchewan. We get that even if the NDP still does not.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

#### Support for Saskatchewan People

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that his MLAs have been out and about across the province listening to Saskatchewan people. Opposition MLAs have been out and about as well, Mr. Speaker — not only in our own constituencies but in many of the constituencies held by government members. And it seems, Mr. Speaker, that we've been hearing some different things.

So my question — in fact, Mr. Speaker, all of my questions today — will be to the Premier. My question to the Premier: is he aware of the immediate needs facing Saskatchewan families this fall and this coming winter, and can he tell this House what he thinks those immediate needs are?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, more than anything else I think the people of the province of Saskatchewan desire, need, they want their government to reflect their values. They want their government to reflect the confidence that they have in this province's future. They want their government to be talking about Saskatchewan as a permanent member of the club of have provinces. They want their government to share what has been some time of prosperity in a long-term, sustainable, and permanent way. They want their government to reduce debt that will benefit future generations. They want their government to invest in infrastructure that has been long-neglected by previous governments. They want their government to make sure they're looking after those who are most vulnerable among us, including those who have disabilities — intellectual and physical, Mr. Speaker.

The people of the province of Saskatchewan will not have to wait. That action is under way today. And later this day, there will be more good news for those in Saskatchewan who need the help of a government that does reflect their values and understand their priorities, Mr. Speaker,

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me share with the House and with the Premier one immediate need that we heard repeated over and over again across the province from low- and middle-income families, from communities, Mr. Speaker, from small-business people. An immediate need. The people of

Saskatchewan know that their natural gas rates are going up 20 per cent. They also have been told that they can expect their electrical rates to go up a similar amount.

Mr. Speaker, again my question to the Premier: what does the Premier intend to do to help these families and these communities and these small businesses to get through this winter with these high energy costs?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well members of this House will know, certainly that member will know, that this government took immediate action in the wake of a report from the housing task force that the government implemented in the spring, and it moved to increase the employment supplement at historic levels. That's providing immediate relief to those who need some help with those costs. It moved to increase the shelter allowances for Saskatchewan people. That is immediate help that was under way earlier this year, Mr. Speaker. It moved to provide immediate money today — the largest one-time increase for community-based organizations in the province of Saskatchewan who are helping those people.

Mr. Speaker, I think what is refreshing, what we've heard in the last couple of days for the province, is that the people of Saskatchewan will not have to, as they did in the past, wait for a government to wait till the election year, the fourth year, to do the right thing. They have a government today that is acting in its first 10 months, and that kind of action is going to continue, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, when the Sask Party was in opposition they demanded and they promised rebates in the event of rising energy costs. They consistently called the utility rate increases quote "tax grabs." And they argued, Mr. Speaker, this Sask Party argued in opposition that any government that's getting rich on energy resources ought to share that wealth with the people, Mr. Speaker.

So to the Premier, my question is this: why was it that an energy rebate was a good idea when the Sask Party was in opposition, but is a bad idea today? And why, Mr. Speaker, doesn't this Premier simply reduce the dividends that his government is taking from the Crown corporations and provide real, real and immediate relief for Saskatchewan people?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that member will know that our government's going to continue to direct our Crowns to operate in a businesslike fashion to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible cost, and we will be there. We are there today for people who are facing those high energy costs.

I direct the hon. member's attention for example, Mr. Speaker, to some immediate relief. We've already talked about the employment supplement. For families making \$25,000, relief has already been on the way to the tune of \$1,440; for families at the \$35,000 level — \$1,210.

And when you combine the initiatives we announced earlier this week, the historic tax cut brought down by our government, Mr. Speaker, those two families, the family making \$25,000, certainly a lower income family, will save a combined savings of all the initiatives — \$1,783. Much of that relief on the way now. And for a family making 35,000 — \$2,348. Sharing the prosperity of the province, Mr. Speaker, and taking immediate action to help people with rising energy costs.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Christmas is on the way, Valentine's Day is on the way, and a tax cut is on the way. We're asking about today, Mr. Speaker. We're asking about the immediate need, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, our Crown corporations, our Crown utilities provide a significant tool to provide affordability for Saskatchewan families and communities. In fact no other province in the nation has such a powerful tool. But yesterday in the Throne Speech the Premier relaunched the old Sask Party attack on the Crowns.

My question to the Premier this morning is this: why have you relaunched that attack? Is this government trying to justify now a plan to sell off the assets of the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think one of the reasons why the hon. member is sitting over there — and now we welcome the former member for Regina South who might be inquiring about his job that's opening up — but one of the reasons he's sitting over there, Mr. Speaker, is I think his party failed to learn the lesson of the last election.

That question is evidence of the fact that they didn't learn a lesson from the last election, which is this, Mr. Speaker: that when you've got no substantive policy to offer, when you lack a vision worthy of this new Saskatchewan, you try to scare people. Mr. Speaker, it didn't work then; it's not going to work today. The answer to the hon. member's question is no, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Here we are a day after the Throne Speech,

and the Premier is saying that families will just have to get through this winter as best they can, that communities are just going to have to meet the energy costs of their rinks and their community centres and their churches just as best as they can. Small-business people, farming people are just going to have to accept these energy increases as a cost of doing business, and everybody should just be patient and wait for a tax cut in the spring that's supposed to provide relief for all of this. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's just not good enough. That's not good enough for a government that has a surplus of \$3 billion.

Mr. Speaker, another immediate need that we heard, talking to the people of Saskatchewan, is in the availability of housing — in our cities, in our towns, on First Nations right across this province, in Métis communities across the North — the availability of housing.

My question this morning to the Premier: does he understand the immediacy of this need? And number two, why, why therefore would he have cut \$6 million from the budget of Sask Housing in his budget just months ago?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well actually, Mr. Speaker, actually I think there's about \$8 million committed to that member's constituency alone, just that member's riding, in terms of housing development.

I would also say to that hon. member that he ought to listen to some of the answers. He ought to listen to the fact that an employment supplement, that historic increase in the employment supplement for those who need it most to help with the high cost of housing, has been a part of the action to date. It's already been increased, Mr. Speaker. It's already part of the government's plan.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? It's an interesting series of questions about the number of months people may have to wait for the actual larger refund, even though these tax increases are retroactive to January 1, '08.

That party had 16 years to develop the right vision that's worthy of the province's history. It certainly had the last three or four years of a very robust financial statement to invest in people, to provide sustainable tax relief, to reduce the debt of the province, to fix the infrastructure deficit. They didn't do it. In 10 months we're getting it done, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, we have an immediate need, an immediate and pressing need in the province of Saskatchewan for new housing availability opportunities. So . . .

**The Speaker:** — Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, so what do we have in the Throne Speech? Well we have a commitment we're going to

reorganize Sask Housing. And then we're going to add more money to Sask Housing even though we just pulled \$6 million out of Sask Housing. The need is immediate.

This government has been in power now almost one year. Can the Premier document in this House this morning the housing projects — whether it be in student housing or whether it be in senior housing or low-income housing or First Nation or Métis housing — can the Premier document the projects that have been initiated by his government, not projects initiated by the former New Democratic Party government, not projects initiated by the federal government? Can he document this morning for this House the projects that he has initiated in this one year of office?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was a document tabled in this Legislative Assembly that does document this government's preparedness, our readiness to act on the top priorities of Saskatchewan people — priorities that had been ignored by that government when they had the financial means, not very long ago when they sat on this side of the House. But they refused to act at all, Mr. Speaker. For 16 years, they formed the government and failed to address priorities.

The document we tabled yesterday, for example, Mr. Speaker, talked about a waiting list of 400 women and men in our province with intellectual and physical disabilities who are waiting for programs, who are waiting for group home spaces — 400 people on that waiting list that that government when they were here ignored. It spoke, Mr. Speaker, that Throne Speech did, about the need to increase the seniors assistance benefit that hasn't been increased since 1992.

Mr. Speaker, we're not prepared to wait any longer. This government's going to take action on housing, on help for the vulnerable, and on securing the economic future of this fast-growing economy, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, let me repeat, the need for housing availability is immediate. We've had a government now that has lost a year in tackling this challenge. And in the meantime rents have absolutely skyrocketed, families are being thrown out of apartments by these condominium conversions, and now all this government says is we're going to reorganize and we're going to add some more money — again I repeat, after pulling \$6 million out of the housing authority.

Another immediate need related to housing, Mr. Speaker, that our MLAs heard is the pressing need in our province today for long-term care availability, particularly for seniors. Again my question to the Premier: why is there absolutely no mention in the Throne Speech about long-term care?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we inherited an infrastructure deficit from the members opposite. We inherited a waiting list for those who have physical and intellectual disabilities, who want services and a place to live independently, from those members opposite. We inherited a situation where for 16 years, for 16 years there was never an increase to the seniors' assistance benefit.

We also inherited a situation from those members opposite where there was no plan to deal with long-term care in the province of Saskatchewan. We're going to have to deal with that as well. The Minister of Health has already announced that that plan is forthcoming.

What that plan will not include, Mr. Speaker, you can have blessed assurance of this, it won't include historic increases to seniors in those long-term care facilities like that member tried to impose when he sat over here, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Let's move on to another immediate concern that we heard from families and people right across this province — again from small-business people, farmers, and so on. A few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker — you'll remember this — the price of a litre of fuel at the pumps had exceeded \$1.40 a litre. Now given the volatility of the price of oil and given the refining capacities available to us on this continent, who knows what the price of a litre of gas is going to be by the end of this session, by Christmas. Maybe it'll be \$1 a litre; maybe it'll be \$1.50 a litre — who knows?

But I do know this. When the Sask Party were in opposition they used to say, when the price skyrockets — and I think by that they meant anything over \$1 a litre — when the price of fuel at the pumps skyrockets and you have a government that's getting rich on oil revenues, that government should step up and help the consumers. That's what they said in opposition.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, what do they say? Well they say, no, there's nothing a government can do and there's nothing a government should do about the price of fuel at the pumps. So my question to the Premier this morning is this: was he wrong then or is he wrong now?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little bit shocked, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of days ago that hon. member was saying what a happy day it was in the province of Saskatchewan when we announced historic tax relief, and now he seems a little unhappy. But I want to speculate a little bit as to why he was happy a couple of days ago.

I think he was happy because he was looking at a government, notwithstanding the fact that it wasn't his government, but he was looking at a government that was prepared to share in dramatic ways the historic wealth of the province of Saskatchewan — prepared to go beyond perhaps a gimmicky program that we've actually indicated would be in the best interests of the province and move towards permanent tax relief that will benefit in a concentrated way low-income people, Mr. Speaker, and middle-income people that will drop 80,000 people from provincial tax roles altogether. That's why he was happy two days ago. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, he should still be happy today.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Another issue that our MLAs heard as we talked to the people in our province during the course of this past summer and this early fall, another immediate issue of affordability. We heard loud and clear from students, from students' parents and their families; we heard it from educators, particularly those in post-secondary education.

I read yesterday's Throne Speech. We heard it delivered in this House. No mention, Mr. Speaker, in that Throne Speech about the cost of education, the cost of tuition, the cost of books, the cost of student housing. Now graduate tax credits are a good program, a good idea. I think we came up with it.

But what about, Mr. Speaker, what about the tuition that allows a student to get into school? What about the costs facing students and their families as they try and get that education that they might earn a graduate tax credit? What, Mr. Speaker, my question again to the Premier, what does the Premier intend to do immediately to help students finance their education?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, did I just hear the hon. member for Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, take credit for coming up with our graduate recruitment plan? I think I just heard that. I don't know what he's going to say next.

I know Al Gore has already taken credit for inventing the Internet, but his party seems to now be wanting to take authorship over absolutely everything this government has done. And I don't blame them because, you know, I know we haven't had an obviously a perfect record in ten months. We've made some mistakes, but it's a pretty good record and there's some pretty innovative initiatives.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — And I think that's why he wants to take some credit, Mr. Speaker, and I guess fair enough.

What we said in the Throne Speech yesterday is what we intend to do this session. We're going to take something good — that's the graduate retention program, where students can earn almost

their entire tuition back if they stay in the province — we're going to take a good program, we're going to make it even better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, it becomes more and more obvious this morning, when the Premier does not want to address a question, he wants to divert the issue. On the question of a graduate tax and graduate retention programs, Mr. Speaker, you know, the people of Saskatchewan know a very, very viable and very progressive program was well in place before this government came anywhere close to government. And what did they do? In fact they reduced the benefits. They've reduced the benefits. They won't extend the benefits to students who are graduating outside of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier does not want to talk about, obviously he doesn't want to talk about his flip-flop in terms of helping consumers at the pumps. And he certainly doesn't want to talk about this gap, this huge gap in his Throne Speech, which does not address the immediate, the immediate needs of students and their families in this province to get into post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on because questions of affordability are very directly related, very directly related to questions of income. Mr. Speaker, in this province we have a hog industry that's in trouble. We have a cattle industry that is in some trouble. Fertilizer costs, fuel costs for our producers have skyrocketed. Beyond the generalizations that we heard in that Throne Speech yesterday which the Minister of Agriculture seemed unavailable to explain after the Throne Speech precisely — to the Premier: precisely what are this government's plans to provide and deal with the immediate needs of our food producing families in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, once again this government did not wait when it came to the crisis facing the cattle industry. I think it was maybe a week and a half after we were sworn in, the Minister of Agriculture had before the cabinet of the province of Saskatchewan a \$90 million loan program to help the industry, to help the hog industry, the cattle industry. I believe . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Which they asked for, which they asked for, I'd point out to the very helpful hon. member for Nutana.

Mr. Speaker, you will know this: that the industry requested that, they received it. Since then we have committed to funding upfront the federal-provincial farm program, something that we could never get from members opposite.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — We have committed, Mr. Speaker, and we're already acting on a review of crop insurance to improve

the program. Their record was higher premiums, lower coverage. We think that should perhaps turn around. We've finally given the farmers, to deal with the gopher scourge that we have in southwest Saskatchewan, we've given them the tools we need. There's the southwest infrastructure drought initiative the government has introduced. There's bringing the AgriStability program back to Saskatchewan, where it can be more sensitive to our needs. As with every other case, Mr. Speaker, every other question that's been asked, this government's acting, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:45]

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, this week some of us heard a small business person from northern Saskatchewan, a business that's related to the forestry, explaining that his former work force of 42 people has been reduced to 10 people.

Mr. Speaker, we have a mill in Prince Albert that sits idle. We have the communities of Big River, Carrot River, Hudson Bay very uncertain about the future of the forest industry in their communities. The short-line railroad at Meadow Lake is in some trouble.

The need in the forestry sector of our economy is immediate, immediate and pressing, Mr. Speaker. So how can it be, my question again to the Premier: how can it be that he delivers a Throne Speech in this legislature that does not even mention the word forestry?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, while it is true that our province is forecast now, I think by all the major chartered banks, to lead the country in economic growth and to be able to weather the current economic turmoil that we see, the storm around the world, there are sectors that are now and have been for some time under stress. The cattle industry is certainly one of those, Mr. Speaker, and the forestry sector to be sure is under a lot of stress as well.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to find the answers, sustainable answers around the issue of the mill closure in P.A. [Prince Albert]. And we haven't heard the last on that one, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, we're also working with communities through the community development trust funds that we have so that they can diversify away from a reliance on the forestry industry. That's about \$33 million that'll be invested. We're not waiting, Mr. Speaker; this government is taking action.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's very, very anxious

to talk about how next year country has arrived in Saskatchewan. Well I tell you what, next year country has not arrived for many of our families and many of our communities and their needs are needs this year — this year needs that should be addressed by a government that has a surplus of \$3 billion. Saskatchewan families don't just want to hear what their Premier intends to do next year. They want to know what their government is prepared to do to meet their immediate needs.

And so on behalf of all of those people of Saskatchewan, all of the people that we talked to this past summer, my question is this: what will this government do to meet the immediate needs of students, of low-income families, of workers in the forest sector, of producers on the land? What will this government do immediately to provide energy cost relief to our families and our communities and small businesses? What will this government do to deal immediately with the needs of availability of housing and long-term care?

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Premier to speak specifically what he intends to accomplish before this session rises in a matter of six weeks?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — I'll tell the hon. member exactly what this government intends to do, Mr. Speaker. We intend to make into law the changes we announced on Monday — historic and immediate relief for Saskatchewan people, the likes of which this province has never seen for low- and middle-income people. The biggest tax cut in the history of the province, will they vote against it or in favour of it?

We will, Mr. Speaker — in terms of concrete action we were on track already to do it — we'll pay down the debt by 40 per cent in our first full year as the government, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — We're going to invest \$1.5 billion — three times what they invested just a few short years ago — in the infrastructure of our province to sustain growth. We'll keep on the side about a \$2 billion insurance policy that we will weather the storm. We will continue to act in the interests of those with disabilities; we'll announce something today, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to move to increase the seniors' benefit in this province. That will also come this fall.

And I expect that we'll continue to get positive reviews from business and from unions. And from today, from the editorials that say, "Wall is making," and I'm quoting, ". . . Wall [through the Throne Speech] is making the province a stronger, more confident place."

There's more work to be done, Mr. Speaker, but we're proud of where we've come in 10 months. And we're prepared to get the work done in the future, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I recognize the minister . . . Would the members please come to order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

### New Initiatives for People with Disabilities

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the House about two very important initiatives in support of people with disabilities in our province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Today our government is pleased to announce a \$76.9 million investment in a four-year program to eliminate the wait-list for services currently faced by people with disabilities.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, in 1990 there was no wait-list for services in our province. Since that time, a wait-list has emerged. Over the past five years, both the length of the wait and the number of people on the list has grown significantly, until today when there is a wait-list which totals 440 individuals.

This program will see our operating budget increase by \$38.2 million over the next four years to address the current wait-list. This increase will support the addition of 365 residential living spaces and 214 day program spaces. These day programs are becoming increasingly effective in supporting people with physical and intellectual disabilities to lead positive and productive lives.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, our government is investing over \$2.5 million to increase supports and services provided through the approved private care homes to ensure that this important segment of care for people with disabilities is appropriately funded.

The third element of this initiative is an additional \$7.7 million to enhance and standardize the day programs currently being provided across the province. To ensure that we have adequate homes and facilities to support this important initiative, we are also committing \$27.8 million in one-time capital funding.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — The second major initiative we are pleased to announce today is that we are beginning the work immediately to implement a new stand-alone income support program for people with disabilities.

For years, Mr. Speaker, people with disabilities across Saskatchewan have been asking for a stand-alone income support program, one that affords dignified, equitable support. Until today, Mr. Speaker, that has fallen on deaf ears. Included in this program will be enhanced opportunities for individuals to earn income and fulfill their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, this is a week of historic announcements and this announcement also represents the largest investment ever made in support of disability programming here in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Our government is committed to a better life for people with disabilities and supports their inclusion and participation in their families, their communities, and our great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to rise and speak in response to the ministerial statement. And I do want to thank the minister for providing me the copy of the remarks prior to the House sitting today, and it's very kind and I want to thank her for that.

Of course this is a hopeful day and many of the points she makes are worthwhile, and it is a hopeful day for those living with disabilities in this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, with a \$3 billion surplus it's not only the right thing; it's the only thing she could have done. This is very important that they see the priorities.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was struck by . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from Saskatoon Centre deserves the same opportunity to be heard as they respond to the ministerial statement. Member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact I was struck by some of the comments that the minister said. That in fact where she said, and I quote, "Until today, Mr. Speaker, that [request] has fallen on deaf ears."

And I appreciate that because we saw last year's Throne Speech where not a word was mentioned about disabilities. And so she's come a long way after kind of a rocky start with the disabilities community to do this kind of work. So this is very, very important.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the devil is in the details. She talks about a program, a four-year program. Will we see this in the year after the next election? The devil's in the detail, and I'm very anxious to hear about this.

And of course there's other areas too that people who are living with disabilities see. In fact we heard the member from Regina Walsh Acres speak this morning about challenges around paratransit. We see that and we hear that in our communities right across Saskatchewan. This is something that this government could act on today. I was surprised not to hear anything about paratransit.

Of course we talked about housing, affordable housing, and we know, for those living with disabilities modifications, home renovations so that the housing can meet their needs is an important issue. So I hope that becomes a part of her agenda as

well.

And, Mr. Speaker, also access to services, whether it be legal issues or basic safety issues that many of us take for granted. Many people living with disabilities face issues of abuse and that type of thing, and they're asking for that as well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the design of these programs are very, very important. The first one around the wait-list is huge. I hope it happens more quickly than waiting to the fourth year to see what happens.

The income program is very, very important. And I know that many of those who are advocates within the disabilities community want to be full partners in the design of that program. They don't want it just to be given to them. And I ask the minister to make sure that they are full partners in that design.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my place. And I do want to say this is good news, a hopeful day for those with disabilities, and we look forward to more details. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

## MOTIONS

### Sitting Days of the Legislative Assembly

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, the Opposition House Leader and myself have some housekeeping motions to introduce by leave of the Assembly. First, by leave of the Assembly:

That notwithstanding rule 6(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, November 6, 2008, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, November 12, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.; and further,

That notwithstanding rule 3(3), the final day of the fall period of the parliamentary calendar shall remain Thursday, December 4, 2008.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved a motion by leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Moved by the Government House Leader, the member from Melfort, that by leave of the Assembly:

That notwithstanding rule 6(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, November 6, 2008, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, November 12, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.; and further,

That notwithstanding rule 3(3), the final day of the fall period of the parliamentary calendar shall remain

Thursday, December 4, 2008.

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:** — Agreed. Carried. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

### Leave of Absence for Members

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also have a motion to present by leave of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, that motion would read:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Saskatoon Eastview for Thursday, October 23 to Thursday, October 30 inclusive, to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Outreach Program in Nova Scotia on behalf of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from The Battlefords, the Opposition House Leader, has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[11:00]

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. The member from The Battlefords moves, by leave of the Assembly:

That the leave of the Assembly be granted to the member for Saskatoon Eastview for Thursday, October 23 to Thursday, October 30 inclusive, to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Outreach Program in Nova Scotia on behalf of this Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And finally by leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for Thursday, October 23 to Thursday, October 30 inclusive, to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Outreach Program in Nova Scotia on behalf of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. The Government House Leader has moved by leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for Thursday, October 23 to Thursday, October 30 inclusive, to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Outreach Program in Nova Scotia on behalf of this Assembly.

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:** — Agreed. Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure, a privilege, and an honour for me to be able to move the motion replying to the Throne Speech, and I want to thank the Premier for giving me this honour. And before I begin, I also want to welcome the new member for Cumberland to the House. I know what it's like to arrive in this Assembly through a by-election and so I want to wish him all the best in the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment to thank and pay tribute to the incredibly talented young people from Weyburn Comprehensive STARS [Singers Taking And Raising Spirits] choir, who performed for us in this Chamber and in the rotunda yesterday. The members of STARS choir under the direction of Colleen Weimer bring a great deal of pride to the people of Weyburn as they not only showcase their talents, whether it be during the opening of Telemiracle this past year or Weyburn's annual United Way Communion which is coming up this weekend or the vast number of performances that they give all across Western Canada and this province, Mr. Speaker. I can't tell you how proud I was yesterday of the STARS choir.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that they not only did an excellent job, but were in many ways the perfect choice for our musical entertainment for several reasons. First, they come from Weyburn. Need I say more?

Actually, Mr. Speaker, I think that the growth and optimism that we're seeing in places like Weyburn and area epitomizes what my colleagues and I are seeing across our constituents and across this great province. Mr. Speaker, right now the province of Saskatchewan ranks first in close to a dozen economic categories. And when was the last time that our province could boast of that?

Second, Mr. Speaker, their youthful exuberance, enthusiasm, and talent I believe represents another important measure, that being the fact that after far, far too long our young people are not only coming back to Saskatchewan — bringing with them their talents, their skills, their volunteer time, and their families — but they are finding more and more reason to stay in the first place, Mr. Speaker.

And I was a little hesitant, not too much but a little bit, to be the first speaker because in the past, in the few times I've had a chance to respond to budget speeches and Throne Speeches, I like to pick up what opposition members have been saying. And so I wouldn't have had this opportunity. But with question period I do, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting that housing prices and the housing markets are concerns not only in my constituency but other places. But that's an issue, Mr. Speaker, that that former government never had to face because when they were government, people were leaving this province, Mr. Speaker. There was no pressure on housing prices. So that's a challenge for this government, for one, that we will meet with very good results, I am confident, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, just finally on the choir. The third reason why I believe that the comprehensive STARS choir was the perfect choice is the name itself, STARS. S-T-A-R-S stands for Singers Taking And Raising Spirits. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this is exactly what this Throne Speech is doing for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly after hearing over the last couple of days the number of phone calls and emails coming into my office, Mr. Speaker. The response, the positive response, from this Throne Speech has been just quite overwhelming, Mr. Speaker. I think I could go as far as to say that roughly 1.015 million people are very positive on this Throne Speech, give or take maybe 20 people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as members of this Chamber will know, and as the people of Saskatchewan will come to know even more in the days and weeks to come, this Throne Speech is entitled, "A Stronger Saskatchewan. A Better Life." And I believe that this is exactly what this Throne Speech will accomplish. I will be, as I said, moving the motion in reply, and I'll be doing that at the end of my speech, Mr. Speaker.

This Throne Speech, and the plans outlined in it and by the Premier, will truly make for a stronger Saskatchewan. At a time of unprecedented revenue flowing into provincial coffers, our government is decreasing the provincial debt by an astounding 40 per cent from nearly \$7 billion to 4.2 — the lowest level since 1988.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is particularly important when you look at what's happening not only around our country, in North

America, but around the world. You look at the turmoil in the markets; you look at what even other provinces in this Confederation are having to do. I look at the business section of today's *Leader-Post*, and Ontario's announced that they're going to have to run a \$500 million deficit this year. Other provinces are going into deficit, and we are cutting our debt, Mr. Speaker. And that's very significant.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech also outlines this government's ongoing commitment to debt reduction with the goal of ultimately being a debt-free province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say — not only for members of this government, members on this side, but the members on the other side of this House — that we are all elected with the belief that we want to leave things better for future generations, Mr. Speaker.

I remember when I was first nominated to run as a Saskatchewan Party member. And I'm not sure where I heard this phrase, but something that always stuck with me, and I used in my first speech that nomination night, and it was this responsibility that I think we all feel — to put more back into this society than what we'll take out, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that this goal and this work that we are doing towards becoming a debt-free province certainly meets this standard.

And I'm sure members on the opposite side feel the same. Regardless of which side of this House we sit on, if we can achieve this as a government, as the province of Saskatchewan, then we'll all be better off and future generations will be also.

Mr. Speaker, our government is working to make Saskatchewan stronger by ensuring that, should the economic turmoil have a larger effect on our economy, that the Growth and Financial Security Fund has a cash balance of \$1.9 billion. And I think that's very prudent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's been a little bit of talk of, mainly from members on the other side of the House, that perhaps we could have done more on things like income tax cuts and debt reduction and had we spent more of this, basically the insurance policy for the province, Mr. Speaker . . . But I think it's important, especially in the current economics that are going on not only in Canada but in the world economy, it's very crucial that we be prudent in this matter and retain nearly \$2 billion in a reserve, in cash reserves.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not only . . . Maybe as another example of how important cash reserves are, Mr. Speaker, in today's *Globe and Mail* there's been talk over the last couple of weeks that General Motors is looking at buying Chrysler, which would be a huge change in the Big Three, obviously, the Big Three automakers in North America, but the entire car industry. And there's probably reasons for it. They can be more efficient. Maybe there's some Chrysler brands that GM [General Motors] would like to own. But the number one reason cited by people that know about the dealings inside and by analysts outside, the number one reason why GM is looking at buying Chrysler is that it would give them access to Chrysler's \$11.7 billion cash reserves — not only that, but billions in federal loan guarantees from the American government, Mr. Speaker.

So even companies as large as General Motors realize that it's important to have cash reserves at this point in the world's

economy. So I think it's very prudent for this government to set aside \$1.9 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think another important aspect of this government's plan to make Saskatchewan stronger is the 50 per cent increase in this upcoming budget on infrastructure spending, up to \$1.5 billion. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is important for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker. We have a pretty big infrastructure deficit in this province left over by the previous government.

When you look at schools, and I know Weyburn Comprehensive in Weyburn for one example, the Weyburn Hospital is another, that is a really pressing concern in Weyburn and area. We're a growing community and we have a quite old hospital facility and so I'm sure the Minister of Health will be listening very closely to this, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, it's not only in hospitals and schools. It's highways. You drive around places in parts of my constituency and it's quite evident that highways have had little if no, next to none, next to zero — which is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, basically none — maintenance or rebuilding over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker. And that's important as we look at increasing, not only continuing on the good economics, the good boom that we have in this province, but allowing communities to more further take part in the economic prosperity of this province.

Just as an example of what 1.5 billion means for this province. A couple of days ago, a few of my colleagues and I had the pleasure of being in Belfield, North Dakota for a trade corridor meeting, Mr. Speaker. And it was actually the day that the Premier made this historic announcement for the province. And I think that was probably the only bad part of being in North Dakota is that we weren't in the province for it, but we were checking our BlackBerries to see how the announcement went and making phone calls back home.

And later that night I had the privilege of being the keynote speaker. And so the Premier had already made the announcement, so I added that into my speech. And there were people from North Dakota and South Dakota and all the way down to, I think, there was people from Texas and Colorado and Washington, DC [District of Columbia]. And when I was able to share the news, not only of the debt reduction but the tax decreasing and this \$1.5 billion, there was just a . . . I think my colleagues agree with me that there was just a buzz around that room of what Saskatchewan is doing and the things that are going on right now. And certainly people are certainly paying attention and want us to be involved in, you know, the broader regional markets, Mr. Speaker.

Those are some of the areas, the ones that I will highlight that will make Saskatchewan stronger. They're particularly important to me, not only reducing taxes but the infrastructure — how they affect, you know, our constituents and our communities. But particularly for me the debt reduction, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that I'm very, very pleased that our government can do, something that I will be able to share with my constituents and people like my grandfather who's been very important in my life and has been a debt hawk his entire life, Mr. Speaker, a small-business man. And just

something that I'm really proud to be a part of this government and a part of this province, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that we've done together. All of us in this province have been a part of realizing these amazing announcements, historic announcements, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

Now the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, also talked about making a better life for people in Saskatchewan. And certainly we heard, you know — just obviously a much better job than I can do — the Premier explaining to members of the opposition how people in Saskatchewan will benefit this. Everybody in the province will have a share in the prosperity, and that will be dollars going back into their pockets so they can decide how best to spend it. Rather than targeting certain areas, this is money in their pocket so that they can make the best decisions for their family. And that's certainly an approach that I agree with, and I think members on this side of the House agree with — giving people money in their own pockets to make their own choices, Mr. Speaker.

And some of those positive things are 80,000 people completely removed from the provincial tax roll, Mr. Speaker. That is just an amazing number — 80,000 people. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but we're helping those that don't pay income tax currently by increasing what was, up until a couple days ago, known as the sales tax credit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's important that there's accurate information relayed to the people of Saskatchewan, to my constituents — the message that everybody will benefit. There seems to be some mixed messages coming from the other side that some people won't benefit. That certainly is not true, Mr. Speaker.

Everyone in this province over the age of 18 who files a tax return will benefit. That is over 700,000 residents of this province. If they pay taxes currently, they will have a significant tax cut. If they're lower income and they don't pay income taxes, they will see larger refundable tax credit payments, receiving those every three months. And, Mr. Speaker, some residents depending on their income will receive benefits from both measures. So this will touch directly 700,000 tax filers and of course their children, should they have children in their families. So this will help everybody in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a few more comments that I want to make. I haven't been paying too much attention to the time so I'll just keep going until somebody tells me to stop. But, Mr. Speaker . . . And I appreciate the support from the members opposite; they want me to keep going. If, Mr. Speaker, you didn't hear what they said, they want me to keep going because this is such great, historic news for this province, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that obviously I support the direction, the objectives of this government. As I said before, I'm very honoured to be asked to move the motion in reply to the Throne Speech.

One thing that I've heard that I want to comment on, over the last couple of days when the Premier made his historic announcement for this province on Tuesday that there were some that thought — particularly on the tax cut side, but in general the surplus — that, you know, perhaps we should have a commission to see what is the best way to cut taxes for people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I find that odd that on one account they want a commission or a study to, you know, determine how to best use this money, and yet they are critical that they believe that people won't feel this immediately, although it is retroactive to 2008, January 1, 2008. So, you know, it's just an odd position to take. Do you want a commission that'll take several months to study, or do you want immediate help? And we are helping people immediately.

And, Mr. Speaker, I give a lot of credit to the Minister of Social Services who I believe right now is holding a press conference where she's making some more historical announcements for the people of this province, people that need assistance from government. And so, Mr. Speaker, that certainly is great news for this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, in judging over the last couple of days how my constituents would respond to this . . . And I've heard from quite a number of them actually, including through my wife, her mother who wanted me to pass on congratulations to the Premier. She was very happy to see what we're doing. And, Mr. Speaker, judging from my constituents, how they'll react to the record tax cuts, record debt reduction, record infrastructure spending, you know, I really don't need and I don't think my colleagues need a commission to tell us what the best plan was, Mr. Speaker, because what we're doing makes sense.

And my constituents, Mr. Speaker, I think I'm pretty free to say on their behalf that they can relate to the decisions that our government is making because it's how they run their own households, Mr. Speaker. When they have a sizeable amount of extra income coming in — whether it be through an inheritance or some other gift or perhaps some lottery winnings or something of that nature, more than they budgeted for — they will pay off a part or all of their mortgage if they can. Or maybe pay off a car loan early. And they'll renovate the basement with a bit of the money or maybe add on to the house or add that garage that they always wanted. And they'll put aside some for a rainy day, for their kids' university education, maybe for their retirement so they can retire a little bit early, Mr. Speaker. And this is exactly, I believe, exactly what this government is doing and why it's being so well-received across the province and beyond, Mr. Speaker.

I talked about what we heard in North Dakota. You look at *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* over the last couple of days. I've been told it was even on CNN [Cable News Network] — I didn't see it myself but that's what I've been told — that Saskatchewan was featured on CNN not that long ago.

And, Mr. Speaker, just one other, on a personal note, I just received an email from a friend inviting us to the baptism of his first child he and his wife just had in the last few months. And at the bottom of the email he gave the date of the baptism and invited Amanda and I to it, and then he said, PS [postscript],

thanks for the tax cut. So, Mr. Speaker, it just reinforces that this is what the people of Saskatchewan wanted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in particular what people in Weyburn-Big Muddy have been waiting for is competitiveness in taxes. And many of my constituents work in the oil industry and have spent time moving back and forth between southeast Saskatchewan and Alberta —my brother included, who is still in Medicine Hat, but we're working hard to bring him back. And one of the reasons why this was happening was, despite at the time higher costs of living in Alberta, living and working in Alberta usually meant higher wages and lower taxes.

Mr. Speaker, today things are different for young families in my constituency, thanks in large part to the unprecedented activity in our oil patch and the new Bakken play that is just driving exploration, driving Crown sales. We're past the billion dollars as we already heard today in the House, a billion dollars, and we still have one sale left in December. And it just is driving the economic activity in the southeast part of the province, Mr. Speaker.

But now that these changes that we brought in in the last week, that will provide for the highest family-based tax exemption in Canada. And young people in my constituency will have an easier decision to make, whether or not to stay in Saskatchewan or perhaps leave for elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few other things I want to touch on from the Throne Speech that particularly are of importance to my constituents. And one is, one is the line in the Throne Speech about starting in the '09-10 budget that this government will enter into long-term, stable funding agreements with CBOs [community-based organization] across the province, Mr. Speaker. And we have so many CBOs in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, from Weyburn beyond into communities like Ogema and Coronach. And this is such a positive development and something they have been asking for longer than I have been elected, Mr. Speaker, but certainly since I have been elected, one thing that I have heard a lot about.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that is very positive for, I believe, not only Weyburn-Big Muddy but most of, if not all, our constituencies is the commitment to increase locally trained physicians and that being a priority and we've already . . . There's talk in the Throne Speech about what we've already have accomplished in 11 months, but the commitment for future seats, for undergraduate seats for training our young people, and new residency positions going forward, Mr. Speaker. And also the part in the Throne Speech about the comprehensive physician recruitment strategy — I think that's very important — and accelerating training and licensing for IMGs, international medical graduates. And I'm not the only one.

Obviously if you're a rural — not only rural but an MLA in this province, but particularly a rural MLA — you'll understand the importance of international medical graduates and how vitally important they are for sustaining health care in rural Saskatchewan, and so very pleased that we're moving in that direction, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to note in the Throne Speech something that will have a very positive effect on my constituents is our

commitment to increasing broadband services in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That is something that I have heard about for even longer than I've been elected, Mr. Speaker, when I worked in this building prior to my election, but that was one thing and that continues. Over the last number of months, one thing that when I'm talking to my constituents, that's what they want to see, Mr. Speaker, from this government and we're moving forward on that.

And the other thing, Mr. Speaker, that's very important to me is this government's commitment to our young men and women in uniform who serve this country and those who make the ultimate sacrifice, Mr. Speaker. I can't tell you how just pleased I am to be a part of a government that is willing to make this commitment and as the Throne Speech says, to introduce measures to honour returning soldiers as well as the sons and daughters of those who make the ultimate sacrifice, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Duncan:** — This is particularly an appropriate time that I mention, Mr. Speaker, that this Saturday I have the honour to participate in really a historical event in Weyburn. Not since World War II have we seen a military parade in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to see one this Saturday as we honour four returning soldiers from the Weyburn area. And we're going to have a flyover from the U.S. [United States] Air Force on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and these, the three out of the four young gentlemen that have returned from Afghanistan . . . One is my neighbour's son and so you know obviously being our next door neighbour, we were, you know . . . talked a little bit with them as he was away and what that must have been like for them. And you know, he's served his country proud. Another one is a member of our church congregation, Mr. Speaker, at the Weyburn Free Methodist Church.

And so we're very pleased to be able to take part in that ceremony and to honour others, Mr. Speaker, that have returned earlier — a young man from Coronach that returned a few months ago and I was able to take part in their celebrations; and also, Mr. Speaker, my wife's nephew, Vincent Leippy, who returned about a year ago but served six months in Afghanistan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, only told his father, didn't tell anybody else in the family that he was going over. He's a reservist and nobody knew that he was going to Afghanistan except for his father. We only found out when he returned safely home.

So I'm very pleased that our government is going to recognize the accomplishments and the sacrifice and just the tremendous young people in our province. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I think I've come to the end of my time. So I'll move the motion:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor:

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in

session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I so move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member from Weyburn-Big Muddy has moved, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Sutherland:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor:

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

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

[11:30]

**Ms. Schriemer:** — It's still morning. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier for the honour of seconding this motion, and it is with great pride and excitement that I rise here today in this our Legislative Assembly.

I am proud today. I am proud of our Premier. I'm proud of our cabinet. I am proud of my colleagues, and I am proud of this government.

Mr. Speaker, the feeling of excitement is on behalf of my constituents, the good people of Saskatoon Sutherland. Saskatoon Sutherland is an extremely diverse constituency. We have a mosaic of cultures. Muskeg Lake urban First Nations is a thriving business area that houses the offices of SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Inc.] and the FSIN.

We also host the beautiful University of Saskatchewan campus which includes Innovation Place where synchrotron, VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization], and InterVac [international vaccine centre] are situated. I invite all members to have a tour of VIDO and InterVac and synchrotron as it may play a very, very important role in the future of the world. We've all heard of pandemics. Well lo and behold if a pandemic should break out, VIDO and InterVac may be the place that creates the vaccine that will save the planet. That's quite an honour to have something like that in Saskatchewan. They are also building a state-of-the-art laboratory, and when it's complete it will be the most advanced laboratory of its kind in the entire world.

The other diversities in my constituency are, communities vary in income. One community earns \$40,000-plus per year per household than another community. So it's fair to say then that

the diversity in Saskatoon Sutherland is reflective of the makeup of our province.

There are challenges governing such diversity, and what has become crystal clear is that our Premier and our government is stepping up to meet those challenges. In our government's first year in office we have taken major steps to fix the problems left behind by the former government.

In March 2008, the Minister of Social Services, member from Humboldt, gave money and partnered with Egadz of Saskatoon and purchased two homes which provide vulnerable youth with safe, stable, and supportive place to live. Well what does this mean in real terms? What does this mean at the street level of the citizens of the province? What Egadz does is they counsel and work with sex trade workers and street youth. They don't hand out needles as many people think, but they hand out sandwiches, hot chocolate, and try and counsel some of these girls who are doing survival sex to leave the street. It's not a pleasant discussion; however it is an important part of having a government understand those issues and support the areas that have to deal with them.

Our record, Mr. Speaker, clearly illustrates that we are providing support for community-based organizations, more support for person with disabilities — as our Minister of Social Services announced just today an increase in funding for people with disabilities.

Let's talk about the disabled and what really happens in the real world for them. I have a constituent who has a Down's syndrome son. He's 30 years old, and actually he came to our Assembly and was introduced in the spring session. The way that the disabilities are paid is that the disabled person is paid the same way as someone on social assistance. This 30-year-old Down's syndrome gentleman lives with his parents, and as such went on a month holiday to Australia with them.

Now of course we're already saving money in the system because he's living with his parents, but the way the previous government set up this social services and disabilities funding, this young man was refused disability payments for one month because he wasn't in the country. And that to me is just not the way you're supposed to protect our vulnerable people. And this is something that obviously this government and our Minister of Social Services is cognizant of.

We have increased financial assistance to low-income individuals, families, seniors. We are creating communities that are safer. We are investing in child care and early learning, and we are protecting vulnerable children.

A quote by Aldous Huxley says, "Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored." I have to say that the previous government did ignore the facts. And I have to say that this government is not.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, our government committed to create and support the completely outfitted police unit called ICE. ICE stands for Internet child exploitation. And I would like to talk about what that really means in explicit terms. We have had an example here in our own province, in Swift Current, where an Internet pedophile lured a child, and the result of that

investigation was that the child was reunited with the family before too much damage was done.

Years ago I was attending a police investigation course regarding this topic, and the instructor showed us seized magazines that these pedophiles and Internet lurers have. This magazine had a photo of approximately a 10-month-old child, where the pedophile took a marker and made chains on the hands to bind the hands, and chains on the feet to bind the feet. As per Huxley's quote, we are not ignoring the facts; we are addressing these very ugly issues.

Mr. Speaker, this past spring our Premier directed his caucus to go out to our constituencies and talk to our citizens. I've been following politics for some time and I've really never heard of such a thing. This request, Mr. Speaker, is a request from a true and strong leader. Woodrow Wilson said, "The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people." Well, Mr. Speaker, the voices did in fact ring and our Premier and our government responded.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Schriemer:** — We responded by giving the largest single-year income tax reduction in Saskatchewan history, the largest amount of debt reduction in Saskatchewan history, the largest investment in infrastructure. The translation of these policies is that more money will be left in the hands of our citizens, and our citizens are on their way to a brighter future, a stronger Saskatchewan, and a better life.

Yesterday in the Speech from the Throne our government addressed provincial diversity and ensured the sharing of provincial prosperity and the protection of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition's behaviour is one of blaming, shaming, and name-calling. Members opposite have used words like callous, mean-spirited. They had a 16-year opportunity to listen to the people of this province and to act on what the people requested. They did nothing. They failed to do so.

Our government's behaviour is caring and clean-spirited. Our Premier, our government is forward-thinking, innovative, and cognitive of the diverse needs in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we are in a new time. We need to let loose the past. Albert Einstein said, today's problems cannot be solved if we think the way we thought when they were created. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that should be taken to task by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, what I've said is why I am proud of our Premier, I'm proud of my cabinet, I'm proud of my colleagues, and this is why I am excited for my constituents. All that I have mentioned is why I wholeheartedly support the Throne Speech. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour as always to stand in this Chamber representing the people of Riversdale and have the opportunity

to participate in a debate around the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, they often say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Well in the past 48 hours, Mr. Speaker, watching the government opposite initiate a variety of actions patterned, patterned very directly on actions of the former New Democratic Party government, I suppose that means that New Democrats across the province today should be, could be flattered.

Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade, for more than a decade now New Democrats have been paying down debt. Again the member for Moose Jaw North has much to say from his seat and very little from his feet.

For over a decade, Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade New Democrats in government have been paying down debt. It is the right thing to do. In our last term we paid down over \$1 billion in debt. Now this conservative government, this Sask Party government, is now paying down debt. Well it's appropriate, given that they were the authors of this debt in the first place.

For years now, Mr. Speaker, as our fiscal flexibility permitted — and that grew — New Democrats in government have been investing in infrastructure and innovation. And, Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest yesterday as His Honour read that list of innovative investments that are now so key to our province, whether it be the synchrotron . . . We just heard again about VIDO, the petroleum research park here in Regina — all infrastructure and innovation investments made by New Democrats in government. Well now, Mr. Speaker, the current government is as well investing in innovation and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, for the past seven years, New Democrats in government have been lowering the taxes in this province. The single largest income tax cut to its time was instituted by this government in 2000 to 2001. We lowered property taxes. We've lowered the property education portion of the property tax on farm lands. We instituted the most significant business tax review and reduction in this province's history.

Mr. Speaker, we selectively — selectively and importantly — changed royalty rates, and we lowered the provincial sales tax. For the past seven years we've been lowering the taxes of Saskatchewan people.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Now the Saskatchewan Party is lowering taxes as if it were a Saskatchewan Party idea. And you know, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the greatest imitation of all is that this Sask Party government now believes in the prudence of a Fiscal Stabilization Fund — a rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the very fund, the very principle that the Sask Party opposed when they were in opposition. It's the very fund, when it stood at \$700 million, the Sask Party labelled nothing but a political slush fund. A mountain of cash, they called it. It was a concept they promised to get rid of if elected. Well now, Mr. Speaker, what has the fund become? Well I'll tell you what it's become. It has become the rock on which we are going to build our future. It is insurance and that no one in

Saskatchewan should see any part of this fund having anything to do with being a political slush fund.

[11:45]

Well, Mr. Speaker, this party, this party has had a conversion-like call. It was a conversion on the road to Regina. So what have they done, Mr. Speaker? Well they imitated the former New Democratic Party government paying down debt, imitated the former New Democratic Party government in providing infrastructure and innovation, imitated the former NDP government in tax cuts. And now they've completed the quadrant by saying, and we too are going to have a Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, there are some very significant differences in terms of this imitation of good, solid New Democratic Party policy. Just note the history, Mr. Speaker, just note the history. And I invite colleagues to do the same. Just note the history.

When New Democrats inherited the government of this province from the party opposite in 1991, New Democrats inherited a province virtually on the verge of bankruptcy. I can recall, I can recall the member at that time from Melfort standing in this House on the government benches — I bet the member from Kindersley can remember it as well — that hon. member, Mr. Grant Hodgins, standing in this House and telling the people of Saskatchewan that this province is on the verge of bankruptcy. When New Democrats inherited government, we inherited a province on the verge of bankruptcy and an economy in some very significant difficulty.

Now when our colleagues opposite inherited government, when our colleagues opposite inherited government, what did they inherit? Well they inherited a treasury with a surplus of almost \$1.9 billion, and a global economy and a provincial economy where commodity prices are dramatically rising, and a provincial economy stronger than it's ever been before. And so through no effort of its own, Mr. Speaker, this government inherited a surplus of \$3 billion.

So again let me just illustrate the difference, Mr. Speaker. When New Democrats in government provided for the people of Saskatchewan in 2000-2001 an income tax that very closely replicates the dimension of the income tax cut now announced for next year, when New Democrats implemented that savings to the people of Saskatchewan, the surplus of the province at that time was what? — \$9.4 million; \$9.4 million. Million with an "m."

What this government implements . . . Oh, and by the way, in 2000 and 2001, the price of a barrel of oil, Mr. Speaker, was between 20 and 22.50 a barrel. This government institutes a tax cut of about \$300 million, not on a surplus of 9.4 million but on a surplus of \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Now you can do the math and I can do the math. When you're implementing savings for the Saskatchewan public, with a surplus of 9.3 or \$4 million, the savings is 30 times the size of the government's own surplus. When this tax being implemented next spring occurs, it's about 10 per cent of the government's surplus — 10 per cent. That's what they're giving

back to the people of Saskatchewan — 10 per cent. Meanwhile in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund — which they used to oppose — their own bank account, they're keeping 60 per cent of the surplus. So 10 per cent to the people of Saskatchewan through a tax cut, and 60 per cent going into their own bank account.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier in the Throne Speech is certainly right about one thing. This money, this \$3 billion surplus belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. They earned it. They worked for it. They sacrificed for it. And the resources which are now fuelling this buoyant surplus, those resources belong to the people of Saskatchewan. And those dollars, Mr. Speaker, fundamentally, fundamentally should benefit the people of Saskatchewan today and tomorrow.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no debate here. There's real benefit in paying down debt. There's long-term benefit in paying down debt. There is real benefit and long-term benefit in infrastructure investments, and now is the time to be building for the future.

But where, Mr. Speaker, this government has failed and where this government is off the mark is that many of the immediate needs of the people of Saskatchewan are not being addressed and therefore they are being left behind in this economic boom. Let me repeat again for the member from Moose Jaw North, only 10 per cent of the surplus is being returned to the people of Saskatchewan in a direct benefit through a tax cut that's to arrive next spring, while 60 per cent of the surplus is being held in the government's bank account.

Now the whole premise, Mr. Speaker, of this Throne Speech — you heard His Honour read it — the whole premise of this Throne Speech is that next year country has supposedly arrived today.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Now in some ways I will agree with the Premier and his government that there is a sense of next year country having arrived. There is a sense of a great future in this province. There's no denying it. And some of us worked very hard to get us here.

But the problem, Mr. Speaker, the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that next year country has not arrived for many, many of our people. Many, many of our people have not seen yet the benefits of next year country — many families, many communities and in fact some sectors of our economy. And according, Mr. Speaker, to this Throne Speech now under debate, according to this Throne Speech, well those who have not yet experienced next year country quite yet are just going to have to wait till next year. They're just going to have to wait till next year.

So the tax relief package, the income tax relief package, which is supposed to erase all of the burdens of affordability being faced by Saskatchewan people, when does it arrive, Mr. Speaker? Well it arrives next year. Property tax, we're now told, property tax relief will come maybe next year, or maybe the year later. The improvements for seniors that are talked about in this Throne Speech, when are they to arrive? Well in the . . .

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the proposed changes we've seen in housing identified in this Throne Speech, now we're told will come next year. Assistance to our farm families, for the food producers of our province, we're told, well we're in discussions and something may happen next year. The immigrant nurses, Mr. Speaker, which we were told and the people of Saskatchewan were told would be at work in our health care facilities this summer, now we're told by the Throne Speech may be at work next year, at the end of March.

Initiatives to tackle the climate change issue, Mr. Speaker. Now we're being told, well we might see some of those initiatives next year. And, Mr. Speaker, of significant concern is that nowhere in this Throne Speech do I see identified or read the words, duty to consult and accommodate. It's not in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. When will the First Nations and Métis communities of this province, when will the First Nations and Métis communities . . . I'm going to ask the minister to point to me the word, duty to consult and accommodate, in her Throne Speech. Point to the words. Point to the words. Mr. Speaker, they now say to the people of Saskatchewan, well we may get to that, we may get to that next year or maybe the year later.

What share of the \$3 billion surplus has gone directly to the First Nations and Métis peoples of Saskatchewan? And can you believe this, Mr. Speaker? With half of the land mass of our province covered by a forest, covered by a forest, Mr. Speaker, with a forestry industry in significant hurt with communities in the North and the Northwest wondering about their future, how can it be we have a Throne Speech that doesn't even mention the word forestry? How could the minister responsible for the forestry permit this to happen? How can we have a Throne Speech that doesn't mention forestry? And our forest industry is being told, well don't you worry, we'll deal about this next year.

This government, this government is raising utility rates on the people of Saskatchewan — SaskEnergy rates, natural gas rates — by 20 per cent, and who knows how much they're going to raise the rates on electricity this year. Fertilizer costs this year are gone up. Fuel costs this year are gone up, and the government says, well just wait for next year and we'll get around to it.

They have a \$3 billion surplus. They are returning 10 per cent of that surplus to the people of Saskatchewan in direct benefit. They're keeping 60 per cent of that surplus in their own bank account. And so I say to the government today, with the very same pen that they used to give the increases to their political staff, the dramatic increases to their political staff, with the very same pen they used to sign that paper, why don't they sign a paper today and provide some immediate relief on energy costs? Why don't they take that same pen and sign a paper today that could immediately begin the benefits to our seniors? Why don't they sign something today that they could and provide some real relief to our students who are trying to get post-secondary education? All of this could be done today.

And so, Mr. Speaker, if there is an indictment of this government and an indictment of this Throne Speech, it is that

they have failed. They have failed with all of the resources available to them, the resources that belong to the people of Saskatchewan, to meet the real and immediate needs of the province and its people today. And that, Mr. Speaker, is precisely why at the close of my remarks I will be bringing forward an amendment to this Throne Speech, and at the close of my remarks and at the end of the debate will be voting against this Throne Speech.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I take my place I want to make a broader observation about this Throne Speech and this time in our province's history. Now the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, I've sat through quite a number of Throne Speeches in this Chamber and had the opportunity myself to write a number of Throne Speeches, and this is very likely the last Throne Speech debate that I'll participate in as the leader of a political party in our province. And I regret, Mr. Speaker, I regret that this Throne Speech — and admittedly, Mr. Speaker, other Throne Speeches in recent times — has not really lifted us to a higher or a broader or a nobler vision for this province; a higher or broader or nobler vision for Saskatchewan's place in Canada; or a higher, broader, and nobler vision of Saskatchewan's place on the globe.

Recently I read with some interest — actually I read with some amusement, maybe some relief — what the Premier said to Roy MacGregor of *The Globe and Mail*. He said to Roy MacGregor that his political mantra was, don't mess it up. Now for some of us who remember, the memory that many of us have of his party in government in the 1980s, to hear the Premier and the leader of the Sask Party say that his mantra is, don't mess it up — that should be some relief I think. It should perhaps be encouraging.

Well, Mr. Speaker, at least my colleagues I think know my mantra. My mantra was, let's build a have province with a heart. Let's build a have province with a heart. That was my mantra, Mr. Speaker. That there cannot be, there cannot be social progress without economic progress, but there should never be economic progress that doesn't result in social progress.

So the Premier's mantra is, don't mess it up. My mantra was, let's build a have province with a heart. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Where this province stands today, where we have come, my mantra is not sufficient. Not even my mantra, I believe, is now sufficient to the dream.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, it was this province, it was the province of Saskatchewan that gave to all Canadians the gift of medicare. It was the Douglas and Lloyd governments here in Regina and, to his credit, it was the Diefenbaker government in Ottawa that gave to all Canadians medicare, Mr. Speaker. So what is it that we, as the people and province of Saskatchewan, could do today?

Given where we are, given the potential of our future, what is our place in this country? And what could we be doing today? What could we be reading in the Throne Speech today that someone 50 years down the road might be saying, Saskatchewan led the way. Saskatchewan gave us that.

Well I hear from members opposite they think that the highest

vision . . . I just heard from two members opposite that the highest vision is debt paydown, debt reduction. From the party that gave this debt to the people of Saskatchewan, now their major goal, their broad vision is to pay it off. Well that's a vision all right, Mr. Speaker. That's a vision all right. But it hardly, it hardly reaches the vision of our forefathers, Mr. Speaker, and our foremothers in this province.

Could we, Mr. Speaker . . .

[12:00]

**The Speaker:** — Order. It would only be respectful to allow the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to be heard in the Chambers today. I recognize the member, the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my question I guess and my point is, given where we are as a province today, is there an opportunity for Saskatchewan to again carve a unique place, a leadership place, be it in Canada or on the globe? And I actually think there is, Mr. Speaker.

You know, could we, Mr. Speaker, with the kind of resources that we have and are available to government today and are available to the people of Saskatchewan today, and with this resource, going forward, could we decide, could we decide today that we are going to build a jurisdiction where there are no children living in poverty?

**The Speaker:** — Order, members. Be plenty of time for other members to enter the debate without interfering with even their own member trying to enter the debate. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Well could we, Mr. Speaker, given the kind of resource potential that we have and what's happened in our province, could we today, could we today determine that we are going to be the jurisdiction in North America that will lead the way and show the way of how we could end child poverty? We haven't accomplished it. We didn't accomplish it when we were government. But could we set that as a defining goal and then lead the way and actually show how it can be done?

I think about environmental stewardship, Mr. Speaker. Could we, could we as a province, again with our high energy demands and our cold climate, could we demonstrate for, could we demonstrate for the continent how it could be done?

Now I know we're going to debate cap and trade, and we're going to debate carbon taxes. But I don't think we can, I don't think we can wait for those debates to be over. And I know we're going to debate the nuclear generation of electricity in this province. But you know, Mr. Speaker, no matter how that debate comes out, if we do decide to go there, it's still going to be 10, 15, 20 years. And you know, Mr. Speaker, and members know, I'm a strong supporter, proponent of carbon dioxide sequestration, carbon capture, and clean coal. But even if we succeed there, it's too late in some ways.

What can we be doing today? What can we as a province and a people be doing today that could really, really be the tipping point in North America? Really show the kind of leadership. I

mean, we've got wind resources and solar resources. We've got those technologies. Could we not, with the resources we have, dedicate enough of those resources to become a leader, a continent-wide if not global leader, in conservation of energy and show the world again how we could do it? Could we do that?

And, Mr. Speaker, what about a notion that says — you know, we're a food-producing province still; we're still rooted to the land — what about a notion that says this province could take a leadership like no other place on the globe in terms of dealing with some of the world hunger that we see around us?

You know, this recent financial crisis has brought this into focus. On the same day I read a report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, a report from the United Nations that says with an annual investment of \$30 billion, Mr. Speaker, an annual investment globally of \$30 billion we could eradicate, we could eradicate hunger on the globe.

We could provide the necessary food for 850 million people who today are without for \$30 billion a year. And then I read, same day, from *The Washington Post*, that the Wall Street executives last year, in the year 2007, Wall Street executives were paid bonuses of \$33.7 billion — bonuses alone. That's out of a compensation package of over 120 billion.

You know, there's something wrong in this economic order. There's something wrong in the way we've engineered the economic order of the globe. So, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to change the economic order in the globe in this province. But you know what? We are as people still rooted in the land. You know, we are a people that still care, and we have some resources. Could we show a province that's going to reach out again into the globe?

Mr. Speaker, my point is just this, my point is just this. And admittedly it's not just this Throne Speech. And let's speak to other throne speeches. We think a lot about ourselves. Can we lift our vision again to Saskatchewan's place in the nation and Saskatchewan's place in the globe as we build for our own families and our own people? I think we can. And it's my hope that this government, or the next government of the New Democratic Party, will again seize that vision for the broader and the bigger.

That all said, Mr. Speaker, that all said, there are some immediate issues, immediate issues that face this government, immediate issues that face the people of our province, immediate issues that need to be attended to by this legislature in this fall session. And so to draw to that focus, I want to conclude my remarks by moving the following amendment to the Throne Speech, and this will be seconded by the member of Rosemont:

That the motion be changed to read as follows, quote:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Assembly because their spending choices ignore their major responsibility to address the immediate needs of Saskatchewan people such as high utility rates, high gas prices, high property taxes, and lack of affordable housing and child care.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, has moved, seconded by the member from Regina Rosemont:

That the motion be changed to read as follows:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Assembly because their spending choices ignore their major responsibility to address the immediate needs of the Saskatchewan people such as high utility rates, high gas prices, high property taxes, and lack of affordable housing and child care.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise in the Assembly to second the amendment put forward by our hon. leader of our opposition. I'm also honoured to just take a moment and welcome our newest member, member from Cumberland, to this Assembly. I know that his voice and advocacy will be sincere and strong, both within our caucus and within this Assembly here most importantly, and that the folks in Cumberland are going to be better off for the experience of us having a new member join us.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, due to the healthy financial circumstance of our province, we are rightfully addressing debt, infrastructure, and taxes. We don't disagree with these principles. It's important that Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan businesses be recognized, and they should feel incredibly proud in their contributions to this strong economy in allowing us to address some of our provincial needs.

Our Premier focuses on a message of next year country apparently finally being achieved. Well I can assure the Premier, Mr. Speaker, with certainty, that the majority of Saskatchewan families and individuals are very aware of what next year continues to bring, and that is financial strain and burden that far outweighs any realized gain from his tax cut. I can assure the Premier that the strength of our economy has been worked towards by Saskatchewan people; strategically built by sound, responsible, economic strategies of a New Democrat government responsive to world demands; and that it is insulting to try sell our hot economy and his plan as achieving next year country for Saskatchewan families because, Mr. Speaker, where the tire hits the pavement, Saskatchewan families are concerned by their ever-increasing cost of living, by their debt loads, and by their recently devastated savings.

It is an enviable circumstance that our provincial treasury finds itself in. It is notable that, as New Democrat government, we have been focused on infrastructure investment, debt reduction, and tax reduction for many years — on a shoestring budget, I might add.

It's notable that New Democrats brought tax relief, tax reform

every bit as significant as this new announcement, and we did so when there were modest surpluses of several million — several million as a surplus opposed to \$3 billion that we are proud to experience here today. The investment comparatively is a fraction.

Mr. Speaker, as New Democrats we set an economic track record of success, and we punched well above our weight for the good of Saskatchewan people — that always being our focus. So as New Democrats we are certainly incredibly proud of Saskatchewan's economy.

The health of our economy, in fact, and the pride in this regard is no partisan issue. Saskatchewan people deserve credit and its due. Saskatchewan's economy is of envy. The Sask Party has been gifted, in trust, by the people of Saskatchewan the management of this economy for which they have had no part of building.

The NDP's economic stimulus plan of corporate tax cuts, business cuts, and royalty tax reductions have created a dynamic and robust economy within Saskatchewan which is experiencing a perfect storm of resource demand.

It is notable that the Sask Party government has not changed a single economic policy since taking office. When the Premier was pounded by industry regarding his planned royalty review, he retreated and retracted from his statements very quickly, Mr. Speaker, while reassuring that he and his Minister of Energy and Resources had misstepped and would not be changing the NDP plan that had been so incredibly successful.

But with this economic boom comes pressures, comes demands, and comes needs. There's a wonderful opportunity before Saskatchewan people and communities, but without planning and investment by this Sask Party government, this opportunity will be squandered and immense pressure placed on families and communities of Saskatchewan.

It is very apparent that the Sask Party is lacking vision. They are stuck trying their best to maintain a status quo of New Democrat government and our principles. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that the world changes quickly. New needs and opportunities emerge and the status quo doesn't cut it. Responsive government is required.

There's a significant problem, Mr. Speaker, a major disconnect between the Sask Party's government riches and the financial circumstance of families across Saskatchewan. Because as the Sask Party government is collecting record revenues and sitting on billions of surplus dollars, most families are going the other way. They're experiencing a tightening of their finances, a strain on their ability to access the quality of life that they so deserve and expect in Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a real concern.

I reference a letter from the Regina and District Food Bank. The picture on the envelope is that of an adult holding a baby, with an extremely distraught look in the adult's eyes. The caption across the envelope reads, I quote, "If our economy is thriving, why am I hungry?" Affordability of quality life is a significant issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is an incredibly common theme from residents across Saskatchewan that our booming economy is passing them by and in fact placing new pressures on their quality of life. They refer to the pounding of road infrastructure, the extra demand on public infrastructure, and the enormous new weights on their individual family's finances realized through significant increases in housing, in utilities, through skyrocketing power, gas bills, food, gas, fertilizer, and feed, just to name a few.

A housing strategy needs to be undertaken. Families and individuals are significantly hurt by the demand placed on the short supply of housing in Saskatchewan. For example, while some newcomers to Estevan with the oil industry might afford excessive rent increases, they can not necessarily find adequate housing. I've heard of story after story of workers forced to bunk together in tight quarters with each other, offering little opportunity for a full life, including family. Meanwhile middle-class, hard-working professionals, blue collar families cannot keep pace. Those living on the margins, Mr. Speaker, on fixed incomes — seniors, the disabled — are squeezed like never before.

I will reference a letter to the editor on October 8, 2008, of the *Estevan Mercury*. I'll read from the *Mercury*:

Rental prices concern writer.

[This is something I find . . . And I'm quoting here.] This is something I find totally ludicrous, rental property in Estevan is totally insane.

One of the guys I work with got a notice on his door saying that his rent is going up in January by \$430. Now that's insane. How are young people supposed to make it here? . . . If you have to pay \$1200 a month for an apartment you'll never get people into Estevan to fill the job vacancies.

[12:15]

So this exemplifies some of the struggles we have as a province. And we need leadership to make sure that we can fill those job vacancies and that quality of life is sustained in places like Estevan. It is evident that these actions do not address the immediate strain on families. And as identified in the article, it will only get worse for many in next year country.

In next year country in fact, families and individuals will be facing rent increases such as \$430 a month referenced in this article. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's \$430 a month. That's a huge increase, a huge burden. With the new tax relief measures offering individuals 400-and-some dollars a year, well the rent alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, eats up that cut 10 times over. That's a net loss just on rent alone of \$4,700.

This is not the kind of next year country families and individuals of Saskatchewan are looking for. Without addressing the housing crisis, significant social ills will infiltrate our communities. When packing people into more dense living circumstances, into inadequate housing, challenges will occur and flourish. This places strain on a community from a perspective of policing, emergency rooms, and community

safety.

A reference, a major theme that recently headlined in the October 1, 2008, copy of *The Estevan Mercury*, the headline reads, and I quote: "Boom times for Estevan mean busy times for police." It begs to question, what do we want our communities to look like and to feel like 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, or 50 years from now, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

With the sort of economic growth that is occurring, it provides us the opportunity to be in front of these challenges and ensure we realize our economic opportunities while capturing and enhancing the Saskatchewan dream as the place to live, work, and raise a family.

There are clear examples that exist displaying what the gas-pedal-down, hands-off-the-wheel, lack-of-planning style of government which our Premier and the Sask Party are employing does to communities. The province has a financial circumstance that allows them to put forward a plan that addresses the infrastructure and housing needs of municipalities, towns, and cities. Without doing so they are risking developing undesirable communities, attacking our quality of life, and stifling business growth which requires attracting and retaining families within Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have experienced worldwide market collapse. At these times of global economic turmoil, Saskatchewan families need our commitment and they deserve a government that understands the root causes of this turmoil and devastation.

But this Sask Party government doesn't get it. They're driven to blindly take us down the same road that has led to the collapse of these markets. It's been said that our Premier is an ideological and fanatical free enterpriser who has committed to unfettered free market solutions and has made his life's work deregulation and privatization.

For our Sask Party Premier to speak of regulation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is like a long-haul truck driver calling for higher gas prices. Our Premier and the Sask Party are out of line with the hard economic lessons that have been learned around the globe. Saskatchewan people are dramatically affected by these world events. They too feel the anxiety and strain that has been placed upon the shoulders of families the world over.

They see it in their savings, the very savings that are providing many retired residents just enough to get by month to month, have been attacked — the very savings that so many families, so many residents have collected for years. A lifetime of work put away as investments, as pensions, have been hit incredibly hard. It is changing the plans and decisions of so many families: postponement of retirement plans, picking up of extra work to have the safety that's needed.

Families, baby boomers, seniors are stressed within our province. Despite the pressures and strain emergent on the finances of families and retirees around this province, the Sask Party is ratcheting up the costs in their lives: skyrocketing costs of energy and power, property tax increases.

So we've learned the world over the wrong-headedness and

devastation of conservative right-wing economic policies of unfettered free market approach to economics — the very approaches that call for massive deregulation and privatization. And here in Saskatchewan we have elected a Premier, a government who believe in this very approach, the very methods that are now pointed to by economists around the world is the reason for a massive financial collapse.

As Saskatchewan New Democrats, we understand the market economy. We believe in working with it and business co-operatively. We believe in ensuring that safeguards are in place to protect our economy and the financial circumstance of the people of our province. The Sask Party wants to reverse these very protections and safeties.

At a time of such financial strain and stress on our families, our Crown corporations owned by the people of Saskatchewan for the people of Saskatchewan, are of huge value to our province. It is a shame that our Sask Party government is too ideological to provide assistance as retirees and families struggle to pay their increasing utilities.

I hear members opposite saying something about the election. A lot has changed in one year, I might remind the members. And we have constituents across this province that are facing increasing costs like crazy, and they're not getting the answers from the members opposite. This lack of response exposes a fundamentally different role for government that we espouse and that we believe in.

Mr. Speaker, current wait-lists for child care spaces in Saskatchewan are disgraceful. A child care provider in Regina currently has 400 children on a wait-list, 200 alone for 21 infant spaces. This is an issue across Saskatchewan, and it's preventing engagement with our labour market and educational opportunities. The social and economic dividends that are lost by our province in families, without meaningful action, are enormous. Even with the increase in funding announced in the Throne Speech, which was a modest amount, the Sask Party is not spending its federal transfer for child care in entirety — a complete injustice at a time of such need.

When we're talking child care, we can't just talk about operational funding. We need to be talking about capital for facilities and for expansion. We need to make sure we have the training spaces in our colleges, and we need to make sure that we can offer compensation that will attract and retain those professionals to work in those facilities.

It's no doubt that it's unwelcome news for all across Saskatchewan that significant, long-term property tax reduction was not presented by the Sask Party. Property tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was once stated to be their first priority. Now the Sask Party bides its time, sits on resources, and evidently property taxes will be increasing across Saskatchewan in 2009. I know in Regina, reassessment statements are in people's mailboxes for a couple of weeks now. Saskatchewan families cannot afford these increases.

Our Premier is too often the puppet of Stephen Harper. Let's examine. He dropped the legal challenge over equalization. He offered relentless, partisan propping for a federal election using his position as Saskatchewan's Premier to spit incorrect

information to reporters and influence the public, only trying to secure his federal cousins' electoral fortunes.

And our Premier still continues to try sell his clean coal project to Saskatchewan people as a sweetheart deal. Well this project, this funding, is a one-time fraction of the cost federal contribution while sticking the bill to ratepayers across Saskatchewan. The benefits of this project are far too huge to stick the cost on the ratepayers of Saskatchewan.

I'm going to share a few quotes though because it certainly . . . We have a lot of frustrated residents with the lack of backbone and leadership from our Premier. And so I'll quote one here and this is from *The StarPhoenix* on September 20, 2008, and I quote:

. . . Mr. Wall and his ministers turn their back on the province . . . by dropping the challenge they promised over the federal Conservatives breaking an equalization promise to Saskatchewan.

I'll move onto another quote also in *The StarPhoenix*, September 20, 2008. Quote:

. . . to suggest, as Mr. Wall has, that the offer by Mr. Harper to contribute a miniscule share in the expensive experiment to find a way to separate and sequester carbon dioxide is a gift to the province rather than what it is — a huge risk with associated costs — makes it appear the premier's political allegiances have blinded him to the welfare of the province he has sworn to represent.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite seem to be incited by this, and probably for a good reason because there's quote after quote after quote in publications across Saskatchewan that scathe the actions of the Premier.

Saskatchewan people are concerned with the incompetence of this government when tested. As highly dangerous escaped inmates, in fact alleged killers, roam through our communities Saskatchewan deserves more than a mumbling, fumbling, bumbling Minister of Corrections and Public Safety and Policing. I'll share a few quotes with you because it's certainly, it's certainly . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Okay.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So again the other side's incited, and they're frustrated as well. They're frustrated. Well I'll share a few quotes with you. From August 29 in the *Leader-Post*, I quote:

But there were three basic things we should have expected our elected officials to do . . .

- Alert the public as soon as possible;
- Provide the public with as much information as possible . . . and;
- Honestly acknowledge there is a problem related to gangs.

Hickie failed on all three counts. He may have failed more miserably than any Saskatchewan cabinet minister in recent memory.

I'll move on to some other quotes. In fact there's some words from an August 29 article in the *Leader-Post*. I quote, "egregious," "damning," and "unforgivable." I move on in that article. It also took Hickie to task for, I quote, attempting:

... to bamboozle reporters with ... [his] nonsense that there's no gang problem in Saskatchewan jails ... something that speaks either to the honesty or the competence of the minister.

You know, to recap, an utterly incompetent minister hidden by the Premier with no regard for transparency or accountability. Saskatchewan people deserve better.

Further demonstration of incompetence in action is the treatment and politicization of the civil servants. I'll read a quote here. *Leader-Post*, August 23, '08, and I quote, "Krawetz doesn't get that firing anyone without cause is a massive waste of money." I move on quote: "Nor does Krawetz seem to grasp the simple concept that it's wrong, inefficient and stupid to fire nonpartisan career civil servants."

It moves on: "He doesn't get that a true professional career civil servant absolutely *shouldn't* be "sharing the political view" of the government of the day."

We expect good government in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're not getting it. Municipalities are looking for leadership. Further delay of new revenue sharing is unfortunate. Annexation delays are a concern across the province. SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] has submitted proposals to a minister who has not even responded back to them. We have concerned folks in municipalities. We have concerned folks in SARM. We need leadership from our minister of municipalities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, stronger vision is needed. A booming economy should ensure progress within the lives of Saskatchewan people. What does Saskatchewan need? What do Saskatchewan people deserve? Nimble, responsive, effective government. Government that is accountable and transparent. Government with due process that is responsible that the public can trust. A government and a Premier who will put their needs first and stand up for them when those needs are challenged.

Saskatchewan people are not receiving this from this Sask Party government. It is our belief that growth alone does not equal progress but that economic growth is crucial to achieving progress. The end goal must be progress, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And although we're proud of our economic gains as a province, the Premier's simply wrong to suggest that the people of our province have achieved their own financial and social goals.

It's nice to make promises, but the problems are here and now. With 10 per cent of the surplus being invested back into the people, our Premier sits on over 60 per cent of the funds that our surplus provides. So many issues could be addressed here and now with the stroke of a pen — affordability, agriculture, child care, seniors, the disabled — but they have chosen otherwise.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, as an Assembly, let's cut the posturing. Let's reduce the pumped-up rhetoric of next year country, and let's place our focus on sincerity, our resources, and our energy into achieving the potential gains and addressing the important needs that rest before us.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the Throne Speech and am proud to second the amendment of non-confidence.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Recognize the member from Wood River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and enter the debate on the Throne Speech. It's very interesting to hear comments from the other side in their reply to the excellent Throne Speech that was presented yesterday. But I have to make a couple of comments about some of the remarks from the other side of the House.

The amendment is kind of a joke that they no longer enjoy the confidence of this Assembly. Well my colleague from Weyburn-Big Muddy put it very aptly that there is 1,015,000 people that very, very, very much enjoyed the contents of the Throne Speech, and there was 20, there was 20 on the other side that didn't. Those numbers are a little bit out of focus. So there's 20 people that didn't enjoy the Throne Speech, but the people of Saskatchewan did. So the amendment to me is very much a sad tale.

The other thing I'd like to comment about from remarks made on the other side was, they were talking about a successful NDP plan. I wonder where it's hidden, because I honestly think that if they had a plan at all, that might have been considered a success. But what do they do? Their plan is fear and smear. And even in their reply so far to the Throne Speech that is all they have is the fear and smear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have endured 16 years of incompetence. They want to talk about incompetence. Lord knows that this province has lived through 16 years of incompetence until we got elected in 2007. Now this province is looking at growth. There's a rebirth in this province, and growth, and they just don't like it on the other side that we're in this growth. We have gone from stagnation Saskatchewan to a Saskatchewan that is looking forward.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to make a comment in general. We have come forward with some great ideas in the last year and there's a lot of great ideas in this Throne Speech. But how many times have we come forward with something and we hear from the other side of the House, we were going to do that? But they didn't get around to it.

Mr. Speaker, there is a . . . It's shaped like a coin. It's a round circle and on it it has the letters T-U-I-T. And I think every member should have one of those on their desk because what that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a round TUIT, and when they say they don't have a round TUIT or didn't get around to it, we should have one for every one of them on that side of the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're looking at a Saskatchewan today that there are more people working. There's more people working in this province today than there has been in the history of this province. Our population is growing and it's growing very, very fast. I think it's faster than the last 50 years. Younger people are choosing to stay here.

Now let's just do a little bit of comparative analysis to what happened under this 16 years of no leadership. People were leaving the province. Why were they leaving the province? Because one, there was no jobs here. We were under a socialist regime that really hurt job growth in this province. They were moving to a jurisdiction that promoted job growth.

Now lo and behold, we have a government in this province that is forward thinking. Jobs are being created because we put the framework for businesses to start up in this province. One of the things that companies now, when they go on the Government of Saskatchewan website, they do not have to read the *Regina Manifesto*. That in itself, that in itself adds an incentive for companies to want to come to this province.

Under the previous regime, when they went on and they saw the *Regina Manifesto*, what did it say in there? We are against business. We are totally against business. Eradication of capitalism.

Now if you were a business person from outside of this jurisdiction, how would you like to enter this province with that hanging over your head? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not there any more. We do not have anything like that on our website that they had for a number of years. And granted it was published many years ago, but it was still sanctioned by the current administration, or the current NDP.

Also on that, people that wanted to do research into setting up a business in Saskatchewan, all they had to do was come across the potash Bill that allowed the government of the day to nationalize an asset within this province. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we removed that. That Bill has been rescinded, repealed. Therefore that sends a very strong message to businesses that we in this province today are open for business.

Some of the initiatives that we have done . . . The Premier announced this week the single largest single-year income tax reduction in the province's history. Now we hear from the Leader of the Opposition in his ramblings that, we lowered taxes, we lowered taxes. Well you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Right after an election they'd raise taxes, and right before an election they'd lower them. So where were the people of Saskatchewan? How were they making out? They suffered through higher taxes for a period of time and then through this magic thing called an election they'd say, are we ever going to be good to you; we're going to lower taxes.

Well you know, that happened except for 2003 when there was not an appetite for tax increases in this province. People on the other side of the House at the time when they were campaigning, they would say, there's no appetite for taxes. Then what did they do? They had the commission go out to look at the school education grants. And the report come back

— it was the Boughen Commission — and the report come back and it said, well we could fund education by upping the PST [provincial sales tax] by one point and using that money to lower the education portion of the property tax. And we all remember what happened. Right after the election, what happened? The PST went up, but we forgot about giving any of it back to the people of Saskatchewan in the form of education tax relief.

So the members want to talk about education tax relief. They're the ones that jury-rigged the system by upping the PST and not providing tax relief to the people of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another part of the announcement was \$1 billion in debt reduction. That's saving people of this province, over the year, hundreds of millions of dollars. We have reduced the debt by the neighbourhood of \$2.6 billion — almost 40 per cent of the debt. And look at the amount of money that that's saving for people in this province and for the future.

\$1.5 billion in capital commitment, and the largest in Saskatchewan's history. That's about three times what was spent just a mere four years ago. But look what this allows: roads, infrastructure, schools.

Now we have to keep in mind the record of the 16 years that the NDP were in power because all of these things suffered immensely. Hospitals were deteriorating. Schools were deteriorating. What was their solution to the hospital problem? They closed them. Fifty-two rural hospitals, they closed. What do they do with schools out in the rural area? Hey, rather than fix them up, close them. What are we doing? We're putting money into infrastructure for hospitals, schools, and roads.

You know, I had a 16-year-old student the other day that told me, he said this is the first time in his life he's ever seen a paving machine. We've never had any in our area for 16 years.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — And you know what? He's there now. We do see it now. But for 16 years he had never seen a paving machine. No wonder our rural roads are in the condition they are.

Do the people across really care? They obviously did not. They thought for southwest Saskatchewan, they thought that was that area just south of the airport here in Regina. Thank goodness there's a change.

And another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have done is like an insurance policy. It's 1.9 billion in the Growth and Financial Security Fund — 1.9 billion. Now I'll tell you what the difference is between our policy and that of the socialist government of the past. Ours is real cash. It's real money in there.

It's not a Fiscal Stabilization Fund that says, oh we've got money in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund; guess what, we're going to draw from it. So we go to a bank in New York to draw it and . . . because now the debt is increasing but they call it the Fiscal Stabilization Fund at that time, but there is no dollars in it.

\$1.9 billion is hard cash that we have in our Growth and Financial Security Fund.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to comment on that because we'll hear rhetoric from the other side of the House saying, well this money you have, you know, we could be spending it on stuff, kind of. All that they would have done is wasted it. But really, really if you consider your own business, your own house, isn't it nice to have an insurance policy? And we talk about the turbulent times in the world economies right now. We are positioned probably in Saskatchewan as the best of any place in the world to withstand this and so it's an insurance policy against further fluctuations by having this \$1.9 billion in an insurance policy.

Innovation. We have a group of women and men on this side of the House that are very forward-looking. And one of the ways of forward looking is through innovation, and again I will use that phrase again. We've gone from stagnation of the NDP past to innovation in the Saskatchewan Party future. And this is something that I think is very, very positive for the people of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear from the other side about areas where they claim that we're not putting enough money. And education is one that we've heard them talk about. Well I would like to comment that so far, over \$117 million has been committed in the budget to new construction and refurbishing existing schools. An additional 60 million was announced after the budget for projects that will begin in 2009. That is a lot of money. Had that ever come from the other side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The answer is no.

Now when we get talking about building a better and a stronger Saskatchewan, one of the ways is through infrastructure, as I mentioned. Highways — so far, so far, in the 10 months that we have been government, 1400 kilometres of work has been done in this construction year, 1400 kilometres and more to come, more to come, with the largest, \$1.5 billion toward infrastructure — 1.5 billion — the largest that this province has ever seen.

But building a stronger Saskatchewan, we want to talk about the Crowns. And I know the Leader of the Opposition had some comments about the Crowns and again trying to use the fear tactics that just don't work any more. People are wised up to the fear tactics of the socialists. So we have directed that a clear focus be provided on the Crowns for the best possible service to Saskatchewan people at the lowest possible costs. And I know, I know we're talking about a Saskatchewan-first initiative.

[12:45]

And I would like to quote from today's paper where it says the Leader of the Opposition said that, and I'm quoting, "... he had already directed the Crowns to focus first on investing in Saskatchewan and that most of the money-losers ... [be] disposed of." Again, the round TUIT — when were they going to get around to it? Well he should have one now.

But I would like to talk specifically about some of their

investments. And I think some of them may surprise some people, but it just doesn't surprise me. And I've talked about this before. Let's look at some of their investments that they're touting as, why, why do you want a Saskatchewan-first when some of these are great projects that we have outside of the province?

I'd like them to come up with one that actually was good. But I would like to tell you some that were not. Tappedinto.com lost \$6.7 million — a dot-com. Persona lost \$9.4 million. Navigata, gosh, we don't even know what Navigata lost. Navigata was up to about 70 or \$80 million loss, and the reason we don't know now, under the NDP rule it was incorporated within SaskTel's total budget so you didn't know where the loss was. And so now, now one from that side of the House may say that, well Navigata is actually showing a profit this year. Well is that based on over and above the 80 or \$90 million loss? No, no. The loss was hidden. The loss was hidden. So now they're showing maybe a little bit of a gain, but it sure doesn't cover the \$90 million loss.

How about, how about Retx.com? Isn't that another nice one? Dot-coms are really, really popular with the NDP. That was only a \$26 million loss. Craig Wireless, \$10 million loss. NST [NST Network Services of Chicago], a \$16 million loss. Clickabid, \$1.9 million loss. Soft Tracks, \$2.2 million loss. Ag Dealer, \$8.9 million loss.

But now that's out-of-province investments. But now we have a government — had a government — that, well they'd say we like to invest in the province also. We'd like to invest in potatoes. That was only a \$35 million loss in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], another one of the great gurus from the other side of the House that decided that would be a great investment.

And you know, we look at other in-province investments that the NDP wanted to prop up some of their own area. Let's look at the Meadow Lake pulp mill and how many millions of dollars — I think the last tally was about \$800 million — that went into the Meadow Lake pulp mill. What was that for? Political purposes. That's the NDP philosophy, political purposes. We can use \$800 million to prop up the pulp mill.

Well I think somebody sat and figured it out that if you took that \$800 million you could've give every employee something like 250 to \$300,000 and said just don't bother to go to work. The taxpayers of this province would've been better off if they would have done that — but an \$800 million loss.

Then we have \$100 million committed to Domtar — \$100 million that they committed to Domtar for the P.A. pulp mill. And now they talk about we're not investing in certain areas, but we know where they were investing. They were investing in equity positions in companies.

I would like to go on with another couple, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Here we have ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member from Wood River has the floor. There's been a couple of side conversations going on. I would appreciate if I could hear the member from Wood River. He has the floor right now.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll speak louder. Mega bingo was another one. Can you imagine? We have an NDP government at the time that thinks that they can take over the bingo of this province. Taking over bingo? I mean that's just totally unbelievable. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it only lost \$8 million so it didn't even come up even close to SPUDCO.

There's others. We all remember the sod-turning ceremony at Belle Plaine for the fictitious ethanol deal, but that was only — what? — \$750,000. That was a small one.

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to touch base on agriculture, but I also want to talk about municipalities, because I think one of the members opposite had talked about municipalities and revenue sharing. And I think it should be reminded to the people on that side of the House that during the 16-year reign of the NDP they cut \$680 million from municipalities. That's a 6-8-0 million dollars for municipalities, about 300 million to SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], 300 million to SARM, and the rest to sundry cuts. Now that is, that is absolutely deplorable.

And for them to have the gall to stand up and say that we haven't come up with a revenue-sharing plan as yet . . . I know our minister is working very closely on it and it will be announced in the very near future. But think of it. What happened for 16 years? How many times did that caucus talk about revenue sharing? Probably none because they were talking about making cuts.

Now so far, so far we have increased, we have increased municipal funding to levels that have never been seen in this province and we're putting more into it as funds become available — \$75 million was used for interest-free loans for building communities. That's a huge plus.

I do want to talk just a little bit about tourism, and the reason I want to talk about tourism is because the number of visits to our parks has jumped by 11 per cent in 2008 to over 3 million visitors. Now I wonder, I have to wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the wiener roast tax that we repealed had anything to do with that. Remember the wiener roast tax? That was kind of disgusting for the people of the province.

But the other thing that we did not do that the NDP were doing, you remember, remember, colleagues, when they wanted to shorten summer? They wanted the parks to stay closed until into June. Boy that's really good for the people of this province. We'll keep the parks closed. Well we didn't do that and we've seen a huge jump in people visiting our parks.

I do want to get on to agriculture in the last few minutes that I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because again, I do want to compare a little bit what we've seen in the past to what we're doing today. We do know, we do know that the NDP attacked rural Saskatchewan. They attacked rural Saskatchewan. There's no doubt about that whatsoever. Off-loading costs, remember they cut the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program.

They increased crop insurance premiums and decreased the coverage and wondering why people were getting out of crop insurance. Well if your coverage, if your premiums are going

up and coverage are going down, who would want to stay in it?

Do you remember that they closed 22 rural service centres? And I think we all on this side of the House remember how it was very difficult to get CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] monies committed by the then NDP government. Every year they'd wait and wait and wait and wait, and then possibly at the end of the year, at the last moment, they would fund CAIS. That's just not acceptable to the producers out in our rural areas.

So I'd like to go over what we have done since we've been government on this side of the House. And our Minister of Agriculture instituted a crop insurance review. That has been done. Promise made, promise kept. And you know, we are moving the administration of this program back to Saskatchewan. Currently — and this is unbelievable — currently there's \$15 million that goes to the feds for the administration of this fund. And members that are now sitting on that side of the House did not want to bring that administration into Saskatchewan. I have no idea why they didn't want to. Well gosh forbid, it might have created a few jobs in the province and brought a few forward-thinking people to this province, and maybe that's why they didn't want to do it.

I would also like to talk about the farm and ranch water infrastructure program. We listen to the people. Now from the southwest of this province we have been in a drought condition for a period of time. And so we have gone out and listened to the people of this province and in the Southwest specifically. The water program, 6 million was announced in May. And this was to cover emergency projects, community wells, and on-farm projects. And also the ministry worked with the federal government to get an additional \$9 million for this program.

Now let's compare that to what the NDP government did when it was in power. All it did was fight with the feds. Well you sure don't get some money from them if you're going to fight and be antagonistic with them. So there's a whole new attitude change with the relationship between the province and the federal government, and thank goodness it's a good attitude change.

Even the water infrastructure program, even as recently as October, enhancements were announced to the program where on-farm funding was increased from 50 to 65 per cent, community wells from 66 to 85 per cent, power installation to \$30,000, and the province will cover dugouts up to 65 per cent.

So that being said, there is a whole pile that we have done to help our producers in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And as I see the time coming close, I would like to also talk a minute about the tribute that was paid in the Throne Speech to our fallen comrades, and I think with my particular background it's very touching to myself. And again, I would just like to read from the Throne Speech:

And thank you to Sergeant Prescott Shipway, Corporal Dustin Wasden, and Master Corporal Josh Roberts, all of whom made the supreme sacrifice this past year while serving our country in Afghanistan.

[And we will be honouring] returning soldiers as well as

the sons and daughters of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

This will take the form of a scholarship for post-secondary education.

I think it was a very touching tribute to our fallen comrades.

On that note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's pretty obvious that I will not be supporting the amendment, but I am very proudly supporting the Speech from the Throne.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Wood River has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Motion carried. I recognize the House Leader.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The House Leader has made a motion that the House now stand adjourned until Monday at 1:30. Is that motion agreed to?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. The House now stands until 1:30 p.m. on Monday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:59.]

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
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**Hon. Bill Boyd**  
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