



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

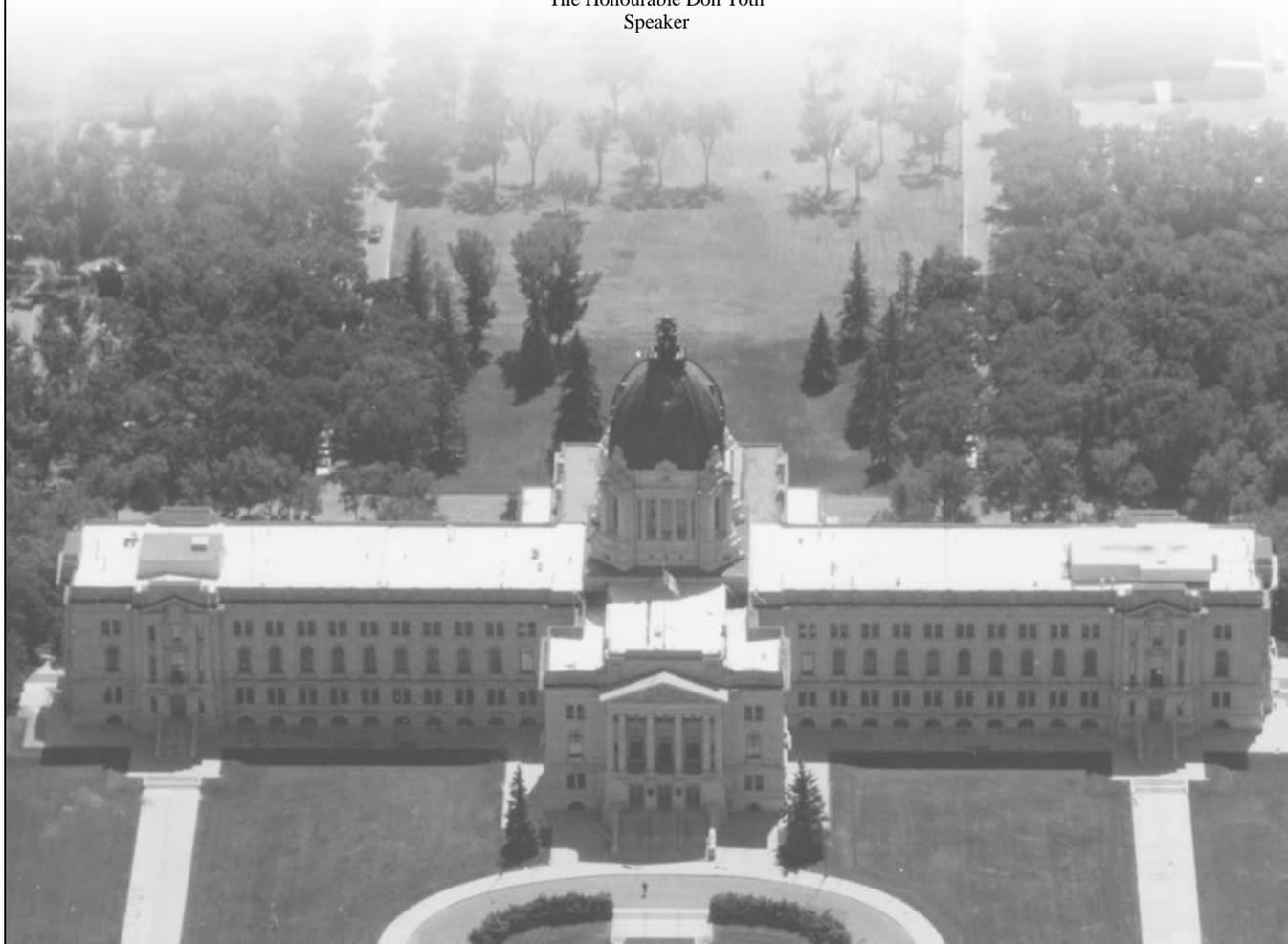
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

<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
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (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
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, 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
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 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce a group of very special guests in our gallery today. It's a pleasure to introduce Major Brad Hrycyna. Major Hrycyna is originally from Swift Current. He assumed command of the Moose Jaw Saskatchewan Dragoons in 2003. The Saskatchewan Dragoons is a unit of the Canadian Forces Primary Reserve.

Also with us is Lieutenant Commander Corey Thiemann, the commanding officer of HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Queen* here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, Major Hrycyna and Lieutenant Commander Thiemann are joined today by a group of Saskatchewan reservists. I would ask that all reservists please stand so that we can recognize you today.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting reservists who serve our country within the borders of our province and of course those who are deployed for service outside our province and outside our country. We join everyone in Saskatchewan who's proud of the sacrifice and the commitment demonstrated by reservists and by members of the regular forces as well.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of our province and, if I may, on behalf of the families of members serving in Afghanistan and around the world, I would like to express our appreciation and our gratitude for the work done by reservists. And I invite all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome these reservists in their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a number of Saskatchewan health care providers here to observe question period. They are represented by the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union president, Bob Bymoen, Service Employees International Union West, Barbara Cape, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Health Care Council president, Gord Campbell.

These health care providers are some of the more than 25,000 health care workers currently involved in lengthy contract negotiations. These vital health care workers include special care aids, licensed practical nurses, food service workers, laundry, housekeeping, and activity personnel, maintenance, administrative, clerical, therapeutic, and recreational workers, and medical technologists and technicians. These health care

workers are critical to ensuring that high quality of health care is delivered to Saskatchewan hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care programs and facilities each and every day.

I urge all members of the Assembly to welcome these important health care providers to the Chamber today and thank each and every one of them for the service they provide to our province. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, it is also my pleasure on behalf of the government to join the members opposite in welcoming the members from the health care providers to their honourable Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to have these health care workers with us today. We look forward to the next opportunity to ensure that the labour relations environment continues to be conducive to collaboration and co-operation, Mr. Speaker.

Would you join me, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming these individuals to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the House and my colleagues, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce in the west gallery five young people that are currently involved in the United Food and Commercial Workers youth internship program. I had an opportunity to meet with them today. And they're in Saskatchewan spending some time looking at the work being done in municipal elections and learning the value of being committed and active in your communities. And I was very pleased to meet with them this morning and had an opportunity to spend an hour or so discussing a number of issues.

So I'd like the Assembly to welcome Enver Harbans from Toronto — give us a wave — Brad Keith from Red Deer, Jamie Skinner from Halifax, Kevin Bacon from Hamilton, and Loreto Gutierrez from Winnipeg. I'd like my colleagues to please welcome these young people from across Canada and encourage them in community service and being active and the benefits that it pays. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Before we move to presenting petitions, I'd just like to also welcome the guests to your Chamber today, but just to remind the guests that you're not to participate in any of the debate from here on in with clapping or in whatever form. We appreciate your acknowledgement of the rules of the Chamber.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services in the province of Saskatchewan and that the Government of Saskatchewan ought to recognize the essential

role of all health care providers as valued members of the health care team, and that such promotion can only be achieved through the commitment of adequate funding and the installation of good faith in the provincial collective bargaining process.

And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

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

Mr. Speaker, I present on behalf of residents of a variety of communities, Swift Current included, but also on behalf of citizens right across the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present today a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the workers in the community-based organizations right across this province have traditionally been underpaid, and many continue to earn poverty level wages. And we know this results in high turnover in this sector, and this affects many people who are at their place of work. I'd like to read the prayer today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks today I am presenting on behalf come from Melville, Weyburn, Saskatoon, and Regina. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of long-term care beds in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

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

Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan students. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are students here in Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety, due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake and Prince Albert. I so present.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today in support of the withdrawal of Bill 80. Mr. Speaker, we know that the building trades unions have a proud history of union certification and that the construction industry at present, the present Act has provided a stable environment for labour relations. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its ill-conceived Bill 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009*, which dismantles the proud history of the building trades in this province, creates instability in the labour market, and impacts the quality of training required of workers before entering the workforce.

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

The petition is signed by residents of Grandora, Martensville, Hepburn, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to

rise and present a petition to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It's from residents of The Battlefords who note that area apartments have been given notice of rent increases of about 40 per cent. Most of the residents feel this is outrageous and suggest it's time to bring back rent controls. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords, and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are all from residents of The Battlefords. I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of their finances, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

And these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are signed by concerned citizens of Regina. Thank you.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Proclamation of Health Care Provider Week

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, the unions, SEIU [Service Employees International Union], CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], and SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] have been asking the Sask Party government to proclaim October 25th to November 1st as health care provider week, but their request has been delayed and ignored. But, Mr. Speaker, there are 25,000 very good reasons for this request to be granted — the 25,000 health care providers in our province.

These workers are the people on the front line in our health care system who work tirelessly to ensure that the residents of our province receive quality medical care. They include dietary, housekeeping, laundry, clerical, and maintenance staff, medical technologists and technicians, licensed practical nurses, special

care aids, therapeutic and recreation workers.

They are our family members, our neighbours, and our fellow citizens. The public services that they provide improve the quality of life and strengthen our communities. Many of these workers are here with us today rallying with their co-workers, calling attention to the Sask Party government's frustrating and insulting progress at the bargaining table. The government is not recognizing the important role that our health care providers play in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue that must be addressed, and I call on the Sask Party government to take immediate action in the recognition of these 25,000 employees and the pivotal work that they do in our health care system by proclaiming this week — October 25th to November 1st — as health care provider week. Thank you.

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

#### Safe and Secure Blood Supply

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Speaker, Ann and Dick Wood have spent many hours working to bring awareness in Regina and around the province to the important issue of bleeding disorders.

Mr. Speaker, during the '80s and '90s, thousands of Canadians contracted hepatitis C and HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] from blood transfusions and other tainted blood products. This was the worst health disaster in Canadian history. It's 16 years since Justice Horace Krever was appointed to head the inquiry into this tragedy. Lessons learned from the tainted blood tragedy are bitter memory for many, and we should never forget what happened to those who received the tainted blood.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, Hemophilia Saskatchewan and the Canadian Hemophilia Society are committed to ensuring that Canada's blood remains safe and secure.

Tomorrow an evergreen tree will be dedicated to the memory of those who died because they received contaminated blood products. The ceremony will take place at 11:30 a.m. across from the Legislative Building. Also a plaque will be presented to the CBS (Canadian Blood Services), Hemophilia Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage every member of the legislature to come and participate in this ceremony. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Mental Illness Awareness Week

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was only appropriate that people from across Saskatchewan gathered in The Battlefords on October the 4th to begin the celebration and awareness building that is Mental Illness Week in Canada. They gathered in The Battlefords to tell the people of Saskatchewan that this province's only assessment and long-term residential facility for people suffering from significant mental illness is in very poor repair. And despite promises and claims of support

from the Saskatchewan Party government, it still has not begun construction of the replacement of this nearly 100-year-old structure.

Celeste Bridgeman has a brother that has lived in Saskatchewan Hospital for 35 years. She is the president of the family council and represents family members of other residents in this old facility. She says that people with physical, not mental, illnesses would never be sent to such a place that today is in such poor condition that it is affecting the patients' self-esteem and sense of worth.

Mental health advocates, psychiatric nurses, family members, community leaders, including municipal councillors, attended this rally to tell the provincial Sask Party government to get the shovels in the ground, provide for a new beginning to those whose only world has become or will be the building and grounds of Saskatchewan Hospital. This is a provincial facility. It serves the people of Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan are saying, get at it, get it done, and start respecting those who need it the most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Before I recognize the next speaker, just to ask members to give the member on their feet the opportunity to speak and to be heard. It's difficult, especially for those in the gallery, to even hear what's being said at times. Respect would be appreciated. The member from Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member from Estevan.

#### Autism Awareness Month

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. October is Autism Awareness Month in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, autism spectrum disorder affects individuals from all backgrounds. It affects their families, their friends, and their caregivers. It is estimated the prevalence rates for autism spectrum disorder are now 1 in 150. That means there are approximately 1,820 individuals under the age of 19 in Saskatchewan living with an ASD [autism spectrum disorder].

Last fall our government announced the framework and action plan for autism spectrum disorders in Saskatchewan. Developed in consultation with stakeholders, parents, and care providers, it will promote more individualized and coordinated responses to ASD services. Our government provides \$3 million in annualized funding for intervention and support. This is in addition to the supports provided by the Ministries of Education and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, health regions are hiring additional staff to deal with this priority issue. Our government will ensure any future plans to implement service improvements will continue to involve the important perspective of parents and service providers.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the important work of everyone involved in this field and by everyone affected by autism spectrum disorder. By working together, we will improve the lives of individuals and their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Persons Day

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week was the 80th anniversary of Persons Day. October 18th, 1929 was the day where women were recognized as persons under the law. Canadian women born before 1929 were considered by law to be non-persons. In fact, British common law states that they were persons in the matter of pains and penalties but not in the matter of rights and privileges.

Emily Murphy wanted to become Canada's first female senator. And between 1917 and 1927, five governments indicated their support for such an appointment but said that their hands were tied because only qualified persons could be appointed and that definition did not include women. Two prime ministers promised to change the law, but did not.

Judge Emily Murphy invited four outstanding women to her home in Edmonton in August of 1927. They were Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Irene Parby, and Nellie McClung. Together they became known as the Famous Five.

The women campaigned tirelessly for the rights of women to vote and serve as elected officials at all levels of government. As well, they advocated for the creation of libraries, travelling health clinics, distance education, mothers' allowances, equal citizenship of mothers and fathers, prison reform, and many other initiatives that we cherish today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in honouring this very special day.

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

#### 2009 Achievement in Business Excellence Awards

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards was established 26 years ago to celebrate the achievements of private sector business in Saskatchewan. Each year the awards highlight excellence and leadership in business.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some amazing businesses in our province. This year was the first time ABEX recognized innovation in the area of health. The health award is given to a business that demonstrates excellence in the provision of health services, medical technology, or the creation of products or services used by the health medical sector. Mr. Speaker, this award was given to TinyEYE Therapy Services which created a telehealth application that enables a speech-language pathologist to treat patients in locations around the world.

The Business of the Year Award was given to Wally Mah, president of North Ridge Development Corporation. North Ridge Development continually practises a common sense, down-to-earth attitude where the customer comes first and satisfaction to the customer is the goal.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is home to exciting and innovative businesses. The 2009 ABEX Awards highlights the incredible determination and entrepreneurial spirit of our Saskatchewan. Please join me in congratulating all ABEX contestants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month which presents an opportunity to empower both men and women to learn about breast cancer and health, as well as pay tribute to past victims of the disease.

Breast cancer is a term used to refer to a malignant tumour that has developed from cells in the breast. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency expects one in nine Saskatchewan women will develop breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. Moreover, older women are statistically more likely to develop breast cancer.

Breast cancer is also not exclusive to women. Men can also be diagnosed and die from the disease. Indeed it is estimated that 1 per cent of all breast cancer cases, or 50 men in Canada, will die from the disease in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, my husband, Jeff, and 12-year-old daughter, Morgan, and I once again had the privilege of participating in the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation's Run for the Cure, sponsored by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

Nationwide, the 18th annual Run for the Cure remains the largest single-day, volunteer-led event in Canada in support of breast cancer. Regina had over 2,100 participants and raised over \$433,000. Nationally 170,000 Canadians in over 56 communities raised approximately \$26 million. Mr. Speaker, I run to pay tribute to my mother, Marianne Grobmeier, who died of breast cancer only a few years ago.

To maintain breast health, one needs to know the changes to look for, have regular clinical exams and, when eligible or recommended, have regular screening mammograms.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those involved with providing care, support, and education regarding this disease.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Staffing in Health Care Facilities

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Swift Current, the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in June this year, the Premier would have received written evidence of more than 1,300 separate occasions on which Saskatchewan health care facilities — that's our hospitals and nursing homes — had staffing levels below that at which the employers themselves had described as essential for the protection of

public safety under your government's essential service legislation.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is this: when the Premier received this clear written evidence that our health care facilities across the province were working at less than safe staffing levels, what did you do and what action did he and his government take?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for the opportunity to speak about the value and significance . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak about the significance of essential service legislation. It's meant to ensure that during winter storms, our highways get plowed. It's meant to ensure that cancer treatment's available, Mr. Speaker. It's meant to help ensure that health care is accessible to people. As we saw, Mr. Speaker, during the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina strike, hundreds of people per day were being turned away, Mr. Speaker, from valuable health care.

What we wanted to ensure is that Saskatchewan join the rest of the country and have essential service legislation in place, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the people of this province had legislation that protected them. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier because the minister obviously missed the point of the question. The question isn't dealing with the Bill, or the essential services Bill. The issue here is written evidence of more than 1,300 separate occasions on which the health care facilities in our province were operating below, below that that the employers themselves describe as essential — 1,300 occasions.

I'm not talking about essential services; I'm talking about 1,300 occasions when the Premier received clear and written evidence of this kind of situation where the welfare of our citizens were at stake. I ask to the Premier: what did you do about it and what action was taken?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. This government didn't wait for this notification about what's going on with respect to health care in the province of Saskatchewan. The people of this province have known for a very, very long time that the issue of human resources in health care, the issue of recruitment and retention of front-line workers, the issue of training doctors in this province and of increasing residencies in this province has been around for a very, very long time, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, under the auspices and under the regime of those members . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, under the auspices of those members opposite. And so this government took immediate action to deal with some of the more particular glaring absences of adequate health care workers, including the need for nurses in the province. We set a bold goal of 800 nurses for the province of Saskatchewan — over 570 already within two years, Mr. Speaker. We are building long-term care facilities in this province. We're improving cancer care in this province. And we will now move to guarantee wait times of no greater than three months, Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the Throne Speech. We'll do that with the proper resources for health care.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier refuses to answer the question about the 1,300 clear indications of unsafe levels of care in our hospitals and nursing homes. But I want to quote from the letter that the Minister of Health wrote back, and I quote, "I do not have the clinical experience to know what interests should be collectively bargained or what health services should be on essential service list."

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: while the minister may not have the clinical experience, does he have the common sense to understand that when you've got 1,300 cases where you have unsafe numbers of staff, that he should do something? And what did he do? And did he investigate those cases?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us, if we have the occasion to go into any of our health care facilities around the province, we see the great work that all health care professionals do — whether it's the doctors, the nurses, dietary — all the health care providers that work together in a very complex system, Mr. Speaker, and provide excellent care throughout the province, from corner to corner, from border to border in this province, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, we inherited an issue regarding human resources that isn't going to be fixed overnight and it won't be fixed in the first year or two years. But what the people of Saskatchewan have a guarantee of from this government is that, first of all, we'll acknowledge there is a problem — unlike the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

So we'd asked the former minister of Health from North Battleford what he thought about all the hospital closures around the province because there's not enough doctors. He said, that's just not unusual, Mr. Speaker. Answers like that are unacceptable.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the history lesson from the minister, but my question again is to the

Premier. Mr. Premier, you refused to answer the question of what you did when you received written evidence of unsafe staffing levels 1,300 times. Mr. Premier, other than sit on your hands, what did you do? I want to ask through the Speaker to the Premier: what did you do with those 1,300 requests for the written evidence of unsafe staffing levels? What did you do?

**The Speaker:** — Before I recognize the Premier, I just want to remind all members, including government members, that it applies both ... [inaudible] ... asking the question or responding, if we want our guests to be able to hear what the response is. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will apologize if I bore the opposition leader with a bit of a history lesson. He hasn't been here for the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, and so I think it's time that he's been brought up to speed.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 17 years, Mr. Speaker, there was no psychiatric nursing program in this province. Mr. Speaker, we have changed that in the first two years and have 40 new participants registering and going through the psychiatric nurses program, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are expanding the seats in the College of Medicine, we're expanding the residency seats, we've expanded the registered nursing seats, LPNs [licensed practical nurse], Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're going a long ways in dealing with the human resources shortage that we've inherited from a former government.

Now I will admit that it can't be done overnight. It's going to take some time, Mr. Speaker, but first you've got to address the issue by acknowledging that there is a problem, something that that former government never would do — would never acknowledge that there was a problem, Mr. Speaker. We're moving in the right direction.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, both ministers and the Premier seem to be in this group abdication of duty but at least the Minister of Advanced Ed sent a letter back to some of the employees on July 13th. And I want to quote from the letter, and it says:

I appreciate you taking the time to articulate your concerns on the staffing levels in the various facilities throughout the Province. I would note, though, that the staffing decisions made at the local level are not a contravention of the Public Service Essential Services Act as there has not been a work stoppage!

So, Mr. Speaker, it seems that no one did anything with the information that was provided to them and the minister's colleague has actually made the point. So I have a question for the Minister of Health. Will he confirm that his government doesn't care about whether health care staffing levels are safe or not on a day-to-day basis, they only care about trampling the rights of workers?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying

that I think people in Saskatchewan, people on this side of the Legislative Assembly, certainly know that the most important person within the health care system is the patient themselves, Mr. Speaker. And that is why we contracted a Patient First Review that looks at the whole system to see what is needed from a patient's perspective, Mr. Speaker.

Now I realize that there are issues from facility to facility at times where we don't have enough health care professionals. We're certainly working on it, Mr. Speaker.

But I can tell you, we're far further ahead dealing with patient care and safety by addressing the issue, unlike the former government that had the nerve to close 52 hospitals in this province, Mr. Speaker. How many people did those hospitals employ? Unfortunately after the closure, they looked for jobs in other places — oh, like Alberta.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty tough to give patient-first care if you don't have staff to do it with. So, Mr. Speaker, the minister obviously has ignored the letter that was sent to him and the information, so we'll give him an example.

So one of the more recent examples of unsafe staffing levels that has come to our attention is the lab and radiology department at the Wakaw Hospital. The employer has said that to maintain a safe level of health care during a work stoppage, all lab and X-ray technologists employed there are deemed essential. But on eight separate occasions this summer and fall when there was vacations or leaves taken, what happened at the Wakaw Hospital? Well they just closed down the lab, Mr. Speaker. That's all they did.

So my question is to the minister: how can these workers be designated essential during a possible labour dispute, but not essential for the rest of the year?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I answered in my previous answers is that absolutely the health and well-being of people throughout the province, in all corners of the province, is of the utmost importance. Unfortunately we don't have the full complement of health care professionals that we need, and that is why we're addressing the issues, Mr. Speaker, with recruitment and retention grants, Mr. Speaker. We are addressing it with bursary programs, Mr. Speaker. We are working to try and get out of a deficit that was left by the previous government. To think that this is a . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we are working to try and attract as many people. And I guess the nice part is, we see an influx of people into this province like we have never seen before in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. And many of them will be working in the health care field. Mr. Speaker, what was happening for many years — and we're feeling the effects of it — is out-migration for year after year after year under an NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a current Minister of Health who had all the answers when he was in opposition. And two years into their term of government and billions of dollars to invest in the system, and the minister is still using old excuses. I mean over and over and over again. He hasn't done anything. But, Mr. Speaker, lab and X-ray technologists at the Wakaw Hospital report to us that on 46 days during the past five months, the Wakaw Hospital lab and radiology department worked with staffing levels below what the employer said was the minimum to protect public safety.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is important for the people of Wakaw. To the minister: when will he do what a minister of Health is supposed to do and protect the public from unsafe staffing levels 365 days of the year?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is more or less implying that we haven't done anything over the last two years, and nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased the number of medical seats . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well they say we haven't. I would honestly believe that if they were still in government, we would still be at 60 medical training seats in the city of Saskatoon — totally unacceptable.

It's decisions that that former government made that puts us in the position that we are in today that we're trying to dig out of by increasing the number of medical seats, by increasing the number of residency seats, by increasing the number of registered nursing seats, by increasing the number of psychiatric nursing seats, Mr. Speaker, as well as starting an occupational therapy program in Saskatchewan which was never done under the former government, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible] . . . training your own, Mr. Speaker, which they failed to do, and we're digging out of, Mr. Speaker. We can continue to try and attract from around the world, which we are doing very well, Mr. Speaker, but some of the solution starts at home and that's what we're doing.

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

#### Contract Negotiations for Health Care Workers

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — [Inaudible] . . . an answer out of the minister as to the questions for the people in Wakaw, but I also

have a question for the Minister of Health. And I want to remind the minister that the employers' association has said at the bargaining table numerous times that it gets its marching orders from the Premier and the cabinet. In addition to an insulting wage offer that is less than the cost of living, the employers' association, at the government's direction, has demanded a series of concessions from these 25,000 health care workers.

One, Mr. Speaker, that is particularly odious would see disabled workers lose their right to re-employment. So a health care worker who is injured on the job and goes on disability would be terminated if they do not fully recover within three years, Mr. Speaker, three years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how that proposal displays respect for injured workers and gives them a renewed sense of dignity.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly we know that negotiations are being conducted right now between the service provider unions and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations.

The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations was set up under the former government. It was a negotiating tool for the former government — at least I think it was. Now if any of those former cabinet ministers interjected themselves into those negotiations, it would be very interesting to hear that because the negotiator for the former government was SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations], as it is with us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said something about cost of living. Well this year, right now, Mr. Speaker, from September to September, the cost-of-living allowance increase in Saskatchewan is at point two per cent, Mr. Speaker. Not that I'm going to get into the negotiations, but I do believe that the SAHO initial offer was much greater than that.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, today at the legislature we have hundreds of health care workers who are wondering why the Sask Party government has failed to treat them with the same dignity and respect that they have provided to other health care workers on the health care team.

Can the minister explain, Mr. Speaker, how his government thinks that a wage offer of nine and a quarter per cent over four years is anything more than an insult when it's compared to the 35 per cent increase offered to other health care workers just last year? What does this disrespect say to the rest of the team?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said from the outset, all of our health care providers are absolutely important to have the system work correctly, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, I will not get into the negotiations between SAHO and the service

providers.

Mr. Speaker, what is most important is that we have competitive wages, and we attract and retain the health care professionals that we have right now, Mr. Speaker. I would think that if you looked at the rest of the provinces across the Dominion who are struggling deeply with . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I was just saying that if you look at the rest of the provinces across the Dominion that are struggling mightily with their finances, Mr. Speaker, we're in a very good position in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

An offer was made by SAHO. I believe it was the initial offer. I would call on both parties to get back and to come to some common agreement as to what the final contract will look like, Mr. Speaker. But I will tell you that people are looking at Saskatchewan with envy right now.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — They won't be looking at us with envy for very much longer if we don't have health care workers who have a contract. We're looking at a pandemic. What's going to happen to our health care team? What's the message that this government's giving to people that need to work together to help deal with the issues that face the health care system? The wage offer that the minister's government approved for these 25,000 health care workers is one-quarter the increase provided to nurses just last year.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: is his government not creating two classes of workers within the health care system by proposing such a disparity? Is it the government's contention that these 25,000 health care workers are somehow only one-quarter as important as the other health care workers on the team? How does this keep our health care team working together, and how on earth does that make us competitive?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I have said from the outset that all health care providers are absolutely important, Mr. Speaker. And you know, it's interesting to hear the doom and gloom come from the other side. She's saying, how will people be attracted to the province? Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see under their mandate and their mantra and their philosophy when people left the province for better opportunities — some went to Alberta; some went to other provinces because the grass looked an awful lot greener on the other side of the fence.

Mr. Speaker, that's not the way it is now, as people are coming back to Saskatchewan. We want to provide fair and competitive wages, competitive wages across Western Canada. That's what we need to do.

[14:15]

Now the member opposite is talking about the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. There's no secret to that. It was the fact that they had fallen so far behind under the previous government, and quite frankly maybe even under her leadership as the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, that some ground had to be made up, Mr. Speaker. We want our wages to be competitive across western Canada, and SAHO is working to do that.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister needs to hear how the government's decision to treat certain health care workers as second-class citizens is hurting the health care system. In the words, Mr. Speaker, in the words of Annette Kinaken, a special care aid from The Battlefords:

They make you feel like you're not wanted. So if I'm not wanted as a health care worker and I'm not providing a worthwhile service, what do they think of our seniors and our residents or sick people that are in the hospital?

Mr. Speaker, what does the minister have to say to Annette Kinaken?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, what I would say to Annette, as I would say to all health care providers: they're extremely important to have the system work. It doesn't matter whether it's from the physician or to the nurse or whether it's dietary or physiotherapy — every health care professional, to make a very complex system work, are important. Absolutely they are.

But, Mr. Speaker, we go through negotiations every two years, three years, and four years, depending on the length of the contract, and at those times emotions are certainly heightened as we try and hammer out an agreement and try and find some common ground. That is done between the service provider unions and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, Mr. Speaker. I am very confident that an agreement can be struck, that we'll find some common ground that respects all of our health care workers across this province.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Minister of Health. This minister needs to hear again how this government's unfair treatment of these health care workers is hurting the health care system.

In the words of Rose Isbister, an LPN from Prince Albert who is on disability leave:

You just know that they have no respect for you at all. You have no value to them. I never could understand that.

Can the minister please explain the government's actions to Rose Isbister?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To Rose and all the health care providers throughout the province, whether they work in special care homes, whether they work in acute care settings, whether they work in public health, each and every part of that health care chain is extremely important, Mr. Speaker.

Whether it's in the long-term care facilities that we're working to try and rebuild after many years of neglect, 13 new long-term care facilities . . . Because it's people's homes; that's what this is, Mr. Speaker, and we're trying to improve on that.

Mr. Speaker, we're working through the public health, and right now H1N1 is certainly dominating their workplace. And we're ensuring that we have the proper complement of health care professionals there.

But you can see that each piece of the health care chain is important. Any one piece taken out causes problems, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell you that from our government of Saskatchewan, we dearly value all health care providers. We want to see these negotiations come to a conclusion as quickly as anyone.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, I want this government to know how damaging your approach has been to the health care system. In the words of Debbie Hubick, a lab services worker from Weyburn:

I think the current offer is insulting to us. You can't expect to recruit and retain staff. You can't expect to make health care a desirable place to work.

Can the minister explain the government's actions to Debbie Hubick, and why he just explained that there is either a chain or a hierarchy depending upon which question he's asking at any given moment?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, once again, you know, we're in the middle of negotiations, absolutely, between the health care providers and the employer, the SAHO. And those negotiations can be very difficult at times.

I remember standing in this House a couple of years ago, or a year and a half ago, answering questions regarding negotiations with other unions and health care employers that were very tense at the time. And an agreement was struck. I would say that I would call all parties back together and continue to work on a negotiation that allows for a competitive wage across Western Canada.

I was heartened to see recently a group of nurses in, for example, Alberta that weren't very happy with their government and when asked, where would they go, where would be the best place in Canada to go, they said Saskatchewan.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Lottery Proceeds Distribution Agreement

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to tell members about the new and unprecedented five-year agreement for the distribution of lottery proceeds.

Last Friday I had the pleasure of signing the agreement along with representatives of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. Those representatives were Dale Holmes, president of Sask Sport, Randy Kinnee, president of Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, and Peter England, president of SaskCulture. And I also had the pleasure of addressing delegates this past weekend at the SaskCulture and SPRA [Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association] annual conferences to bring this outstanding news to their attention.

Mr. Speaker, our lottery-funded system supports 1,200 organizations and more than 12,000 community groups across the province. Through them more than 600,000 Saskatchewan people take part in sport, culture, and recreation activities.

Mr. Speaker, the new agreement, a five-year agreement, the first agreement of its kind in the 35-year history of our lottery system, runs until March 31st, 2014, and directs more lottery revenues going into sport, culture, and recreation into every corner of our great province. These new measures will provide stable funding so organizations can plan for the longer term rather than project by project. An overall increase in funding will help to address inflationary and operating pressures which in turn will allow for increased investment in programming.

Mr. Speaker, we've also enhanced accountability and oversight measures to the benefit of all Saskatchewan residents.

The Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund is administered through Sask Sport Inc., Sask Culture Inc., and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association. This lottery system will fund . . . sport, culture, and recreation is indeed the envy of every province and will be all the more so now with the new agreement.

Mr. Speaker, with the new lottery agreement in place and the active family benefit that this government announced in December 2008, we expect that more Saskatchewan citizens, in particular our young children, our young people will be able to participate in sport, culture, and recreational programming across the province. And I'd like to thank the members of each of these groups for the work that they do to foster culture, sport, and recreation in our communities.

The thousand of volunteers within the 12,000 groups are truly the backbone of the entire lottery-funded system that delivers excellent programming throughout Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this agreement is another example of how partnerships strengthened by this government enhance our way of life and make Saskatchewan a great place to make a living and an even better place to make a life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today on behalf of the official opposition just to make a few brief comments. And I want to thank the minister for providing me today with a copy of his statement just before the House.

As the minister noted, Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association and their member organizations do important work on behalf of Saskatchewan communities. They help Saskatchewan people to live more active, more fulfilling lives, and contribute to the fact that our province is such a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

Anything that provides these organizations with additional resources and promises to help more people participate in sport, cultural, and recreational programming is good news. On the face of it, this announcement seems promising. However with these kinds of announcements, the devil is always in the details. I will be consulting widely with these organizations in the coming weeks and months to see whether or not this new agreement delivers everything that the minister promises.

And I can't help but remember that this government is the government that increased camping fees in provincial parks. This is the government that wants to spend more than \$7 million in taxpayers' money on a vanity pavilion at the Vancouver Olympics. And this is the government that announced its plans to fully examine the future of Blackstrap Provincial Park — most recently on October 16th — but so far all they've done is close down the ski hill.

And this is the government that touts its active families benefit as evidence of its support for recreational opportunities for families. But just over a week ago, they announced that this uptake on the program was going to be 10 per cent less than previously budgeted. And I don't know anyone, Mr. Speaker, who can now afford to put their kids in hockey or dance lessons now who wasn't able to do so before.

So the jury is still out on this government's commitment to sport, recreation, and cultural opportunities for Saskatchewan families. But the opposition is hopeful that this new five-year lottery agreement will deliver everything the government and the minister promises.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I request leave to make a statement with respect to the reserve forces in Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. The minister may proceed.

## STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

## Proclamation of Reserve Forces Day

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased and honoured to see so many of our reservists in the gallery here today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to say that I'm very proud that for the first time in our province's history a premier has named a Member of the Legislative Assembly as the military liaison for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there are only three other provinces in the country that have designated one of their members to do this most worthy position. Also, Mr. Speaker, I feel incredibly honoured and blessed to be appointed as Saskatchewan's first military liaison and to be able to represent our province in this way.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons Canada is the best country in the world is because of those who are ever willing to protect and defend the freedom of our citizens. And that is why in April of this year the Government of Saskatchewan recognized the courage and sacrifice of Saskatchewan's military personnel by displaying tribute decals on all government vehicles. The Support Our Troops decals were designed specifically for the provincial government, incorporating the symbolic yellow ribbon with green from the Saskatchewan flag, the Saskatchewan coat of arms, and a red maple leaf.

And that is also why, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan created the Scholarship of Honour. This scholarship is available to returning soldiers and to the spouse and children of permanently disabled or fallen soldiers. Since announcing the scholarship in March of this year, 11 have been awarded and more will be awarded in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, one of the important groups that works so hard to protect and defend our way of life is the reserve forces. Since 1855, our reserve forces have worked to defend Canada and contribute to international peace and security. Reservists increase not only the quality but the quantity of our military forces. They are everyday citizens who voluntarily devote their time to military service.

Internationally, reservists have served on Canadian Forces missions in the Middle East, Cypress, Bosnia, Haiti, Africa, and Afghanistan. At home, reservists have responded to shorter term domestic emergencies such as floods, forest fires, and they have assisted with search and rescue missions and relief operations.

In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we have eight reserve force units. Five are located in Regina, two in Saskatoon, and one in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, approximately 700 reservists train and serve in these units, some of whom are here today in the gallery.

These reservists represent a long tradition of dedication and excellence. They specialize in the fields of artillery, medical, support services, infantry, armoured reconnaissance, and communications and signals. And they have demonstrated the skill, professionalism, and teamwork befitting of their reputation and importance to our nation's defence.

As we heard last week in the Throne Speech, over 20 Saskatchewan reservists were preparing for a duty of Afghanistan while the members of this Assembly were preparing to return to this session. I was very pleased and honoured to be part of the ceremony that said farewell and bid the troops a safe journey and a safe return that was held at the RUSI, the Regina United Services Institute a week ago.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude for the contributions of Saskatchewan reservists who serve our country. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to announce — in order to further express our gratitude and to recognize the contributions of those that selflessly protect the ideals and freedoms we all enjoy here in our province and our country — the Premier will sign a proclamation designating today, October the 26th, as Reserve Forces Day in Saskatchewan immediately following these proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to take a moment today to reflect on the dedication and commitment of our reservists and I invite them to join the Premier later in the Legislative Library to proclaim Reserve Forces Day in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for providing a statement, a copy of a statement earlier this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, we should take every opportunity we can to thank the men and women who wear the uniform of the Armed Forces on behalf of all of us. Mr. Speaker, many men and women in this country give of themselves day in and day out to make sure that Canada is the great country that it is. And at every opportunity, we should all stand and give our appreciation to those very brave men and women throughout our country and around the world who are working to make Saskatchewan and Canada the great place it is to live.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister as well in special recognition of our reservists and their role in making Canada a safe place to live, making our province a better place for each and every one of us on a daily basis. And, Mr. Speaker, we in the official opposition join with the minister in congratulating the men and women of our reserve forces and thanking them for the services they provide on behalf of all of us, and many times facing very difficult situations, facing dangerous situations, and doing it on behalf of all of us.

We'd also like to thank their families because their families also give a great deal in allowing them to undertake their duties and protecting people around the world and helping make this world a better place. It's not only the reservists themselves or the men and women of our Armed Forces, but their families, their children make sacrifices. They don't have their mom and dad with them when they need their mom and dad home sometimes. They don't have that brother or sister when they need that support. They don't have that husband or wife when they need that person to lean on most.

So we in the official opposition join with the minister in thanking the members of the reserve today that are with us, and in the proclamation of today as reservist day. Thank you.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Hon. Mr. McMorris, seconded by Ms. Ross, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Lingenfelter.]

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure to begin my remarks on Thursday of last week when we first entered into the debate on the Speech from the Throne. And I'm very pleased to be able to continue those today.

But there is a couple things, just to recap from last Thursday, Mr. Speaker. I sat down and had a look through the actual Speech from the Throne. I'd done a bit of a rough tally when I was sitting, first in the Assembly listening to the speech and then sat down actually to make sure I had things right and that I'd actually been listening to the way things were laid out. And it gets down to there are about 52 — well over 50 anyway — old initiatives that are talked about quite glowingly in the Speech from the Throne and about 14 or 15 new ones.

And I'm being rather, I think, lenient and generous in saying 14 or 15 new ones because, Mr. Speaker, if we look at things that the government and government members have spoken about and announced at other various times . . . But I thought I'd be generous with this because after all a Speech from the Throne really is to look ahead to the year ahead and beyond, Mr. Speaker, about the government's vision for the province, what they plan on doing, and the direction that we plan on going.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have to say, after only two years in government, they seem to be spending an awful lot of time looking in the rear-view mirror and enjoying some past successes.

Now I guess governing is easy when you've got billions of dollars in the bank. And the Premier made the comment on Thursday that he was quite pleased with having \$800 million in the rainy day account, but he forgot to tell us that it was well up over 2 billion within the last year. So 800 million could be a stretch to say that that's going to do this government in the rainy day fund until the end of their term, which is a short two years away.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's not all that rosy. And like I say, this government seems to be spending an inordinate amount of time looking backwards instead of looking towards a future for the province and putting forward a vision for the province. They've blown the money and now they have to start making some difficult decisions and putting in place some actual priorities. And I have to say, they don't seem up for the challenge at this

point in time.

There was a number of areas that I think the Speech from the Throne was extremely short on. There isn't a lot of issues, or hardly anything that we could find, that really spoke to the people's priorities across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I, like many of my colleagues, we were across the province going in smaller tours in certain areas, spending time in our constituencies, having an opportunity to sit down and speak to constituents and listen to their concerns.

And there really isn't a lot in this Throne Speech that addresses or even speaks to or acknowledges the rising cost of living that we heard from many of our constituents is a problem and is getting to be a growing concern right across the province. Many people are having trouble making ends meet.

We just have to look at the cost of housing, the cost of rent increasing substantially over this past year. Utility rates, the government has put forward utility rate increases right across the board. And we should be expecting more soon with our car insurance continuing to rise — just one more area where the costs are going to increase again. Camping fees, I mean, really put a dint in some people's holidays, not being able to spend the time camping and enjoy Saskatchewan's parks. And also for seniors and many other families, the cost of prescription drugs.

And I think overall when you look at the announcements that have been on a regular basis about the inflation rate here in the province of Saskatchewan, that our province now has the distinction of being the province with the highest inflation right across the country. So that's not good, and it's not good for addressing the issues that people have.

There wasn't any commitment in the Speech from the Throne about overcrowded foster homes or the recruitment of more foster families.

And the distressing part is, Mr. Speaker, is that this government, they will touch on something once and then figure it's over and done with for the next four years. And every time there's a question, the response from whatever department, the minister stands up and said, oh well we did this back when we were first elected.

Well that's two years ago. Situation changes. Circumstance for families changes. Communities have changed. The needs have changed. And these are issues that need to be addressed on a continual basis, not just once every four years or worse, Mr. Speaker.

And a growing concern across the province truly is the number of unemployed, and the minister keeps pointing to the fact that actual job numbers have gone up. But what we have to realize and what the minister needs to realize is that they also count part-time jobs as a job, so we are looking at unemployment rates rising.

It's pretty difficult to live on unemployment insurance if you have ever tried it. Sorry, I'm calling it by its old title. It should be referred to as employment insurance. But it's pretty meagre to sustain a family on employment insurance rates, and we're seeing the numbers continue to grow across the province. And

all you had to do was listen to the news over the weekend, Mr. Speaker, and we heard more bad news for potash workers and for workers in Saskatoon that work at the Case New Holland factory.

And the minister can stand up and in kind of rebuttal or response to that he'll say, well we've got the highest number of people working in the province. Well whoop-de-do, Mr. Speaker. That's cold comfort for the families that are trying to live on employment insurance and looking for new jobs after they have been somewhere for a number of years.

Sears call centre, I mean we've seen a number of the people that were out of work after being there 12, 16 years. It's pretty difficult to replace jobs in current economic condition the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, there's also been some really bad choices and some misplaced priorities in this budget, the past budget, and we're seeing the effects of that, I believe, in this Throne Speech. The Premier said the other day they made a mistake on the potash. Well oops, that's 20 per cent of our budget that was relying on potash, so we will see what happens out of these budget adjustments that have to be made.

And of course the silliest thing ever was now we're blaming it on the budget process. It's not that they've got rid of a lot of the senior civil servants who had the experience in this area. It's not that they may have taken the advice from the wrong people, or it's not that they may have adjusted the advice they took and thought they knew better and made their own projections. But now they're claiming that we need a new budgetary process, that somehow that is going to fix this, and that it's never going to happen again.

So I guess if you can't take the blame . . . Now isn't that what the Minister of Health just stood up and said in the question period? He said well at least if they have made a mistake, they'll stand up and take the blame for it or they'll admit it or . . . Well now all of a sudden it's the budget process that screwed up 20 per cent of the revenue from the budget projections that we're all going to be seeing cutbacks from and delays in some pretty major health projects.

So that's a real problem. And I guess you can blame the process if you like, but we'll just have to keep tabs on them when the budget comes down next spring and have a look at the numbers. And when the mid-term financial report comes out this fall . . . Actually the mid-term financial report should be out this November, so we'll see what the actual numbers are.

I know the Leader of the Opposition was up asking questions the other day. And the Premier and minister of industry — sorry I can't remember the rest of the title — and also the House Leader were having a big chuckle when the Leader of the Opposition stated the fact that potash revenues had dropped 69 per cent. And they all busted out laughing like it was a big joke. And actually they said, well, ho, ho, ho, it's not 69. We wish it was 69. It's considerably higher. And someone says, well it's up to 95 per cent now. Well it's not really funny, not when . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — The deficit's going to be even bigger.

**Ms. Higgins:** — That's right. We're going to end up in a deficit for sure, and we are going to see some changes in the debt of the province. And I mean it has all kinds of financial implications right across the board, so there's a number of areas that are of concern.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other areas that we could address in this, and I know many of my colleagues are anxious to get up and make comments.

But I just have to comment on the musical choices at the end of the Speech from the Throne, all very good songs . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, they were. They were very good songs. But I almost wonder if there wasn't a message in there for the government. Because when you look at the words from those songs, "The Man in the Mirror":

I see the kids in the street  
With not enough to eat  
Who am I to be blind  
Pretending not to see their needs

A summer's disregard  
A broken bottle top  
And a one man's soul  
They follow each other  
On the wind ya' know  
'Cause they got nowhere to go  
That's why I want you to know.

And then it goes into the chorus. Kids on the street, poverty, homelessness — these are issues that Saskatchewan people are dealing with, Mr. Speaker. And there are many, many other lines in the song.

And I know the first song that they sang was "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." And that also has a number of options when we look at this Throne Speech and look at the options that are open to the government.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be an interesting fall to see where the mid-term report comes down on the financial situation of the province, and hopefully it was some poor revenue projections, not just poor management by this government. But, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly will support the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, and I look forward to the vote being held.

[14:45]

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today to be able to respond to the Speech from the Throne. As I look at the front page of the Speech from the Throne, it says, the third session. Mr. Speaker, it seems like only yesterday that we were elected to be the Government of Saskatchewan and have the opportunity to present speeches from the throne to this legislature.

I know it's only been two years, that it has been two years, but it seems to have gone very fast, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, gone very fast because we've had so many things to do. We've had

so many initiatives to drive forward and, Mr. Speaker, I will get into talking about some of them.

But there was so many problems left by the members opposite when they were the government that it has been an action-packed, work-filled two years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to get a small handle on the problems that they left for the people of Saskatchewan has taken us two years, Mr. Speaker. But we are starting to get a handle on them, Mr. Speaker. We have new programs and new initiatives that are coming forward to deal with them, Mr. Speaker.

But before I get into those, I would like to talk a little bit about my constituency of Cannington, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to represent the people of Cannington in this legislature, and I would thank the people there for having had the opportunity to represent them for the last 18 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite are all about doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, about the sky is falling . . . We hear the members opposite always talking about how the sky is falling. It's the Finance critic, the member from Regina . . . I can't think of the name of his . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Rosemont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Regina Rosemont that is always concerned about the disaster that is the finances of the province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have one of the best if not the best budgetary systems in Canada and indeed, Mr. Speaker, the world. We have the financing in place, Mr. Speaker, the finances to support this province.

And yes, there is an issue with potash, Mr. Speaker. The issue is, Mr. Speaker, that the prices have dropped from their historic record, Mr. Speaker, of over \$1,000 a tonne. But, Mr. Speaker, they continue to be three times what they were in 2005. The price in 2005 was roughly \$125 a tonne. Now they're estimating because it's fluid right now. It hasn't been completely settled. But the contracts seem to be coming in at between 4 and \$500, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, all we are awaiting, Mr. Speaker, is some sales. And that will be happening because around the world there were reasonable crops. Mr. Speaker, people, when reasonable crops are harvested, they need to put fertilizer on the soil, and they will be purchasing potash, Mr. Speaker.

However unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, potash is not mined in my constituency. But we have other resources, Mr. Speaker, in the Cannington constituency. Agriculture is probably one of the largest employers in my constituency, and while we don't need to use potash, we certainly do use other fertilizer products, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we had an excellent crop in our area this year. There is a challenge in getting, in some of the areas, in getting the crop off — particularly flax is still out there. But even though everyone would wish to have their flax in the bin, it's not unusual that we would be harvesting flax in late October or November, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do know that in a number of the other areas of the province it's more of a challenge to harvest a crop this year because of the inclement weather.

The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow was talking about camping, Mr. Speaker, and fewer people were going camping according to her. According to the minister, that's not the case. But it was a cold summer, Mr. Speaker. It was a cold summer.

Mr. Speaker, the people . . . The minister, the former minister . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, the member opposite wants to correct me in referring to the individual as a minister. Former minister, Mr. Speaker. I'm giving the member the benefit of her long history in the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the current minister, Mr. Speaker, says that there was the largest number of people utilizing the parks this summer, even though it was a cold summer, Mr. Speaker. And that in part was the reason why the harvest is late this year.

Mr. Speaker, the other segment of the economy that is very prevalent in Cannington is the oil industry, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the oil industry in Cannington is doing very well. It did slow down for a short period of time, but the drilling is renewed. And what it also allowed, that short slowdown period, was for the service industries to catch up and get the work that they had in the system completed.

They are still very busy, Mr. Speaker. I was talking with some of them over the weekend, and they have all their employees working, Mr. Speaker. They're keeping up with the current projects. But as I drive back and forth to the constituency I see many rigs working just from the highway, Mr. Speaker, and there's lots of other areas that I can't see from the highway as I drive home, Mr. Speaker. So there are lots of rigs working throughout the area, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and the good part of it is, at least for Cannington, is that a good number of those rigs are situated and their homes and their employees' homes are in the Cannington constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well my colleague says some of them are from Weyburn. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are a few of them from Weyburn — employees and rigs. The Leader of the Opposition was concerned.

Mr. Speaker, the other part though is that there's many new businesses going up in the Cannington constituency to service this growth in the oil industry. You drive 33 Highway. You drive 13 Highway. You drive 18 Highway, Mr. Speaker. In every one of those communities you will see large new buildings going up to service the oil industry, Mr. Speaker. So we're having a construction boom throughout the Southeast, the same as we have a boom in residential, Mr. Speaker. Many, many of the communities are not on their first subdivision, new subdivision, but they're on their second new subdivision.

And this is something that hasn't happened, Mr. Speaker, in this province for a good many years. There was no growth like that when the former members were government. It's been many, many years, Mr. Speaker, since there has been growth in our constituency. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually looking forward to the next census and redistribution because every time in the past my constituency has got larger and larger and larger. If we were to have that census and redistribution today, Mr. Speaker, my constituency would be shrinking, Mr. Speaker, because there are more and more people living there — shrinking in a geographic sense, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the new members, the Leader of the Opposition and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, on their election. I wish them well in the House. Certainly the Leader of the Official Opposition is an experienced member, has spent many years here in the past. The new member from Saskatoon Riversdale, I would like to welcome her especially, Mr. Speaker, because this is a new experience for her and I am sure she will do very well.

The candidates who opposed those two new members for the Saskatchewan Party did a very good job in the campaign, and I would like to congratulate them as well for well run campaigns, Mr. Speaker. I know they ran a very good campaign, and I would suggest that they also frightened the members opposite somewhat, and made them get out there and do perhaps a little more work than they had expected to have to do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, some of the issues that the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow was saying that we were ignoring, Mr. Speaker, in fact, if she thinks we're ignoring them, she has her head in the sand.

Mr. Speaker, health plays a prominent role in this Speech from the Throne. And that is certainly an issue, Mr. Speaker, that we have been concentrating on. Mr. Speaker, there are many initiatives taking place. And fact is the Minister of Health, my seatmate, has set targets, Mr. Speaker, targets — something the members opposite absolutely refused to do. And fact is the former minister of Health I believe it was, said, well if we set targets, we might not make them, so you can't set targets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is prepared to set targets, and to set ambitious targets, Mr. Speaker, in reducing waiting lists down in four years to no more than 90 days, Mr. Speaker — no more than 90 days.

But yet, Mr. Speaker, over the years in opposition, I don't know how many people I had from Saskatchewan that contacted me because they were on a waiting list for a year, two years, three years. And fact is, I remember one individual, Mr. Speaker, from the community of Carlyle who was a good supporter of the members opposite who, in a rink full of people, talked to me about how long it was taking to get knee surgery. This individual had been on the waiting list for over three years to get knee surgery done, and she was disgusted with it. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, the individual, as I walked away after talking to her, waited until I got about 20 feet away and hollered so everybody could hear, I'll be supporting you in the next election. She had abandoned the NDP because of the lack of health care and health care concerns that were being demonstrated by the members opposite.

**An Hon. Member:** — Have you talked to her in the last year?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes, actually I have talked to her in the last year. And she has had her surgery; and she still supports me . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you. And she does realize that we have made changes, that we are moving ahead, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've increased the number of training seats for doctors, almost double the number of seats, Mr. Speaker, from 60 to 120. Mr. Speaker, we've doubled the number — not doubled, Mr. Speaker. We're moving the number of training seats for nurses, I believe, up to 700-

and-some. This was from a low under the NDP when they were in government of 160 — 160.

But I can understand why, Mr. Speaker, the NDP would have had such low expectations or such low needs for recruiting and retaining and training medical staff because they believed and supported the fact of shrinking Saskatchewan. One of the former ministers who's no longer in the House said the more that leave, the more there is left for the rest of us. I guess that would have included the Leader of the Opposition. When he left for Alberta, that meant there was more for Eldon Lautermilch, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite continued to ignore health care. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what happened with long-term care . . . The member from Cumberland raises the issue about long-term care. Well, Mr. Speaker, his government was the government for 16 years, his party, and didn't build the La Ronge long-term care, Mr. Speaker. And fact is through the '70s, the NDP froze construction of long-term care. Through the '90s, they didn't build any long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP during their times as government ignores seniors. They talk a lot about it, Mr. Speaker, but given the opportunity to do something about it, they ignore the issue.

Today the former minister of Health from North Battleford stands up with a petition calling for this government to build a new long-term, new Battleford health centre, Mr. Speaker, provincial centre. And yet one of the other members stands up in her speech and says, but we left you over \$2 billion. Well, Mr. Speaker, if they left over \$2 billion in the bank, why did the minister, the former minister of Health not build the Battleford health centre, Mr. Speaker? Why was that? Why was that?

He didn't build the facility in his own constituency, the provincial hospital there. He didn't build the long-term care facility in La Ronge. Mr. Speaker, he didn't build facilities anywhere. And yet they claim to have all this money in the bank. They want to claim poverty when it comes time to fixing health care, but yet they want to claim a largesse of money many other times, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition on Thursday during question period was commenting across the aisle, be fair; be fair. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member from Regina Douglas Park who's the Leader of the Official Opposition about something he said many years ago during a debate about Rafferty-Alameda in this House and the fact that the dams had filled up with water, and yet the government of the day, the NDP, continued to talk about the dams would never fill.

The member from Regina Douglas Park, the current Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker, this is what he said to the former premier, Grant Devine: whoever said it was going to be fair? That's what his comment was, Mr. Speaker, to the former premier. Whoever said it was going to be fair? You know, and I can understand if he doesn't recall that. That was a heckle across the floor.

You know, but, Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps the former leader of the NDP, Mr. Calvert, after hearing some of the commentary this past week, might think about fairness, about how fair was it that the current leader of the NDP was giving advice to Mr. Calvert's opponents on how to defeat him. You know, Mr. Calvert and his former supporters in caucus and his former supporters out in the party may have been having an "Et tu, Brute?" moment last week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can certainly understand why the members opposite in the NDP party don't believe in the death penalty for treason because, Mr. Speaker, the actions of the current leader of the NDP might be considered treasonous in some quarters, Mr. Speaker, when you're talking about trying to defeat their own leader, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, I think, need to give some thought and consideration to how their current leader dealt with their former leader in the past. How did he respect him, how did he deal with him, and why was he trying to get rid of him while he was the leader, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from The Battlefords on his feet?

**Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, to ask for relevancy.

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Members are well aware of the fact that over the years the Throne Speech has a broad interpretation. In fact the motion brought forward and then the amendment certainly allowed for broad interpretation in regards to the opportunity to speak. And while I take the member from The Battlefords' words under advisement, I just want to acknowledge the fact that members have the ability to comment in regards to all of the debate in the Throne Speech. So I recognize the member from Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, over the past number of years, there have been members of this House who have been challenged legally, you might say. And, Mr. Speaker, from time to time there have been members of the Assembly that have been investigated for various and sundry reasons.

Well, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there's only currently one member in that situation today. That is the member from Regina Douglas Park, Mr. Speaker, whose involvement in his leadership race membership scandal, Mr. Speaker, is being investigated by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems that approximately 1,000 memberships showed up at the NDP party, with small denomination bills, but were not necessarily signed by the people whose name was on them.

So, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to talking about what a person recalls or doesn't recall, Mr. Speaker, it seems to be an ongoing theme with the member opposite. You know, the members opposite talk about how much money is available and how much money isn't available. They keep asking, where did the money go, Mr. Speaker. You know, the members on this side of

the House asked the same question, Mr. Speaker. We asked, where did the money go when they were government?

You know, I recollect an issue around Channel Lake, Mr. Speaker, which lost over \$10 million, Mr. Speaker — over \$10 million in Channel Lake. The president of SaskPower was removed because of that, Mr. Speaker. But it seems that in this loss and then the subsequent sale of Channel Lake, there was \$5 million disappeared; \$5 million just disappeared into thin air while they were government, Mr. Speaker. And in fact is, it was the Leader of the Official Opposition who was the minister in charge of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] at the time who was responsible, Mr. Speaker, for those sales.

Mr. Speaker, \$5 million just up and disappeared into thin air, and it didn't even seem to be particularly bothersome for the members opposite. And fact is, it didn't look like they even put much of an effort into trying to find that money.

And something else I recall, Mr. Speaker, was about that same time, just a little bit after that, I was walking up to the front of the legislature one day and a former member from the NDP was walking up to the steps at the same time — Walter Jess. And the evening before we had both been out to the . . . later the official opposition house, his house north of Regina. He had invited all the members of the legislature to come to his house for a barbecue. So we went out because he had a brand new place. We wanted to have a look at it.

And we're walking up to the front of the House — the legislature — Mr. Speaker, and Walter Jess says to me, you know if you or I had a house like that in our constituency, we couldn't get elected. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, I agreed with him because that 7,000 square foot mansion would have certainly caught the attention of all of my voters. He was saying it would have caught the attention of all of his voters in Redberry. But it seemed that for the Leader of the Official Opposition who represented Regina Elphinstone — one of the poorest ridings in the province — having a 7,000 square foot mansion wasn't a problem, Mr. Speaker. But I'm not sure if he recalls that particular barbecue, Mr. Speaker, or the fact that we had the opportunity to visit out there.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other issues that are taking place across the province scene is about education, Mr. Speaker. Education is an important component to our . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, it would be nice if the member from Regina Walsh Acres would actually listen to what I have to say and perhaps gain some knowledge and understanding of what happened in the past . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member is aware of the fact that they're not to draw other members into the debate. All members will have an opportunity to debate at some point in time. I recognize the member from Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, education is very important to this province so I'm very pleased to be able to thank the Minister of Education and the Government of Saskatchewan for building a new school at

Oxbow.

It's been on the books, the B-1s have been there for a dozen years, and finally we had a Minister of Education who recognized the need. We're combining three schools into one, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly going to be a benefit to a community that's growing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank again the people of Cannington for their support, for allowing me to represent them in this constituency. I believe this Speech from the Throne provides a framework and a way forward that's going to be very, very beneficial to both the people and the province of Saskatchewan. I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's once again my privilege to rise and speak in support of the Speech from the Throne. In keeping with the practice here, I will be making some comments about my constituency, some thanks to people, and offering some personal comments.

I would, Mr. Speaker, like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast for their continuing support. My constituency continues to see rapid growth in a number of areas — in particular, Mr. Speaker, in the area of Stonebridge. I am very pleased that my nephew Curtis Morgan and his wife Cara and their new baby have chosen to take up residence in my constituency. And while I hope that my election support is never that close that I need one or two votes, it's always good to know that there's one or two or three that you can count on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize my constituency assistant Rita Flaman Jarrett, who continues to grieve for her son who passed away unexpectedly last December. She's on extended leave and probably will be for some continuing time, so I would ask all members to keep her in their prayers.

I also would like to recognize the fill-in that I have in the office, Gordon Rутten. He has done fill-in work in a number of different constituencies and is now going to be acclaimed as the mayor of Martensville. When he learned that he was going to be acclaimed as the mayor of Martensville, he came into the office and informed me of that. I asked him whether it would be mandatory that I call him your worship. He thought about it for a minute and he said, does that mean that I have to call you minister? And I said, well probably. And he said, well then we won't be doing any of that. I respect his informal manner and appreciate his continuing good work.

He is assisted by Laine Goertz, who is a student in the legislature during the summer and she's a university student in Saskatoon, and I want to thank her for her contribution.

I would also ask members to keep Denise Batters, my chief of staff, who lost her husband under very tragic circumstances earlier this year, and would ask all members to keep her in their thoughts and prayers.

In my office here I'm very ably assisted by Lara, Michelle, Judy, and Jean who do very good work, and I thank them for that and hope to see it continue for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, over the summer months Saskatoon lost two of its finest citizens, Helen and Garth Swan, long-time residents and good citizens, owners of United Cab. These two people worked in elections going back to the first election of the Right Honourable Ray Hnatyshyn. These people came and worked for me in both the 2003 and 2000 election. They put up signs, answered phones, and worked tirelessly in spite of the fact that both of them were well into their 70s. They wanted nothing more, they wanted no other thanks and recognition other than peace, order, and good government. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something that this government intends to give their memory, that memory.

I would like to offer my sympathy to their daughter Laurie Suppes and her husband Scott, and their stepson Robert Crichton, good people who have sustained a significant loss by losing both parents within a matter of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I comment as well, very briefly, on the municipal election and would like to urge all members to get out and exercise their franchise. Saskatoon is currently under the direction of Mayor Don Atchison, a very hard-working individual, somebody that I cross paths with several times a week at social events, and somebody that is doing very hard work and doing a lot of benefit for the city of Saskatoon.

In my constituency there was an acclamation for city councillor Tiffany Paulsen, and my neighbour Kevin Waugh is the Saskatoon public school board ward trustee. So I thank them for their continuing good work. And I'm pleased that they don't have to go through an election but want to ensure that everybody is aware that the election is this week and want to ask them, all members, to get out and vote.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not comment on the by-elections held this last few weeks in Regina Douglas Park and in Riversdale. In the Douglas Park election, the Sask Party candidate was Kathleen Peterson, a good, hard-working individual — a lawyer, and I forgive her for that. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Peterson was a very good candidate, very hard-working and has indicated that she plans to run again. So I would like to urge the member from Regina Douglas Park to keep an eye over his shoulder because there is somebody else that is going to be watching him to make sure that he holds himself accountable.

[15:15]

Similarly in Saskatoon Riversdale, the Sask Party was represented by Corey O'Soup, a hard-working teacher that went out and lives in the area, very committed. And to the new member from Saskatoon Riversdale, I would like to urge her as well to keep an eye over her shoulder because there's somebody there that will be holding her accountable.

I would like to welcome both the new members from Saskatoon Riversdale and Regina Douglas Park to the legislature and look forward to working with them in their role as opposition members, and hope that the role as opposition members continues for an extended period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the outgoing MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for those constituencies and recognize their contributions to the province. Harry Van Mulligen was a long-time MLA, worked hard, and I enjoyed his dry wit. Mr. Speaker, the former Premier Lorne Calvert was also a long-time member of the legislature, was somebody that I crossed paths with many times in the city of Saskatoon at various civic events. And while our political differences were very deep, I have to recognize his hard work and thank him for his contributions to the province.

Mr. Speaker, on a more personal note, my mother-in-law Mildred Simpson continues to reside in Rosetown. And as I'd indicated in the spring, she is now dating a retired lawyer, Morley Aseltine. I forgive my mother-in-law for involving other lawyers in our family.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asked by some of the other members whether this is a good speech and I want to assure the members on both sides of the House that this is not merely a good speech, this is an excellent speech. And I continue to do it.

I would like to conclude my personal remarks by thanking my wife Sandy for standing by me through a number of elections and election campaigns. Mr. Speaker, during the first election when I ran, we had a large billboard put up in Saskatoon. I went out . . . And it's a little unnerving when you see your face on a billboard 25 feet high. We stood at the foot of the billboard and looked up at it. My wife Sandy looked first at the billboard and looked over at me, then looked back and forth, and then turned to me and said, do you suppose they could airbrush your real face like that?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in a somewhat different position from a year ago. When I made my reply to the Speech from the Throne last year, this was still a fairly new government still putting its election platform into action. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are at the mid-point of our mandate and I think we can look over the accomplishments of the past two years with a sense of satisfaction. This government has kept over 100 election promises and is moving forward to fulfill the rest of our commitments. We are 70 per cent of the way towards our goal of recruiting 800 new nurses over four years. The final report of the patient-first review has been received and we are moving forward with its recommendations. We are taking a bold initiative to reduce surgical wait times and clear the backlog.

Our province's debt has been reduced by nearly 40 per cent. Mr. Speaker, this is truly an accomplishment. These are challenging times but this government is meeting the challenge with prudence and fairness and careful planning. Saskatchewan is not immune from the economic downturn in Canada and around the world, but we are managing far better than many jurisdictions. We are growing and still managing to post the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Speaking for one of my portfolios, Justice, we continue our commitment to making Saskatchewan a safer place to live. Our goal to add 120 police officers in the province over four years is on track, and we are increasing courts and prosecution capacity to deal with the increased number of arrests. We are working throughout the province and with our colleagues across Western

Canada to fight drug trafficking and gang crime. Our crime statistics are steadily improving and I think we must recognize the efforts of our police services, prosecutors, judiciary, and the many people who work in crime-prevention programs, either as employees or volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, the causes of crime are complex and will not be resolved overnight and with one single approach. However, we are seeing declines in both the crime rate and the severity of crimes. Since forming government we have created the northern gang and drug enforcement unit to address these issues in the North of the province. We have expanded the safer communities and neighbourhoods program to reduce illegal activity. We have put 60 more police officers on the street and hired three more prosecutors to handle the increased caseload. We have made substantial investments in new and expanded courthouse facilities.

We are working with our colleagues across the country, and particularly in Western Canada, to address common issues. One of these is ending the practice of giving people in remand custody double credit for time served. Mr. Speaker, today we commend the federal government for passing and proclaiming this legislation which will end this outdated practice. And we, along with our western counterparts, have made representations to the Senate on this legislation.

We would like to highlight some of the legislation that our government intends to introduce. There has already been a fair amount of publicity around our plan to ban the use of hand-held devices while driving. I must confess, Mr. Speaker, my own BlackBerry use is at the high end of the scale. My staff have been known to call it the crack berry which gives you some idea of my attachment to this device. With the drive between Regina and my constituency of Saskatoon, it is tempting to make a few calls on the road. But I have invested in a Bluetooth earpiece, and I will do my part to make Saskatchewan's highways safer. I encourage all drivers to do the same without waiting for the legislation to come in force.

Our government intends to introduce legislation to regulate ticket sales in the province. Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it clear that we have no intention of interfering with the free and open marketplace or to tell event venues and promoters how to run their businesses. We do want to prevent individuals who may make . . . who have tickets they can't use, we want to prevent individuals who have tickets they can't use from selling them and recouping their money. We do not want to see people lose money on that. We simply want to make sure that customers have a fair chance to buy event tickets when they are released for sale.

We will also introduce legislation to prevent members who are profession from disciplinary proceedings by merely resigning. Mr. Speaker, we have dozens of professions in Saskatchewan and the organizations that govern these professions all have disciplinary proceedings. Their purpose is to protect the public and the reputation of their professions.

Mr. Speaker, when a person is accused of professional misconduct and resigns to avoid the disciplinary process, several problems are created, the first being that the issue is never resolved. In other words, the air is never cleared. Mr.

Speaker, many people will remember the recent case of a judge who resigned before disciplinary proceedings were taken. There have been other cases in recent years where a person in a position of trust has resigned rather than face professional discipline. And most importantly, it is important for the person to move on to another jurisdiction with what looks like a clean resumé. Particularly in the case of professions such as teaching and health care, this is an alarming prospect.

Some of these people have resigned for a sincere reason such as to spare their loved ones embarrassment. But the privilege of belonging to a profession means upholding the standards of that profession. Where a person falls short of those standards, they should be willing to shoulder the consequences. This legislation will ensure that they do so.

Mr. Speaker, speaking from my other portfolio, SaskTel, I'm pleased to report that the rural infrastructure program that will expand cellphone and Internet coverage across the province is on tap. This is an ambitious three-year program, Mr. Speaker. SaskTel's staff will be working very hard to meet its deadlines. It is a major investment in infrastructure but we need to make these type of investments to move our province forward.

I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, that we have done a number of things over the last year in SaskTel to ensure greater transparency, greater accountability with bookkeeping processes and practices. We have taken significant steps to ensure that we have done everything that we possibly can to expand infrastructure, and understand full well that good Internet and good bandwidth is imperative for the rapid growth and continuing growth of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end by saying that our government's Throne Speech sets out a plan for maintaining our balance and momentum and for moving our province forward. Saskatchewan has come a long way in two years. We're one of Canada's most notable success stories and, Mr. Speaker, we intend to continue. I will be voting against the amendment and in favour of the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to encourage the members opposite to reflect on the content of that speech and to consider supporting it and show their support for the people of Saskatchewan. I would also like to encourage them, Mr. Speaker, that when they speak to the Throne Speech that they address the individual items in that Throne Speech and I'd like them to address whether or not they support those individual items. I would like to give them the opportunity, when they rise from their seat to comment on the Speech from the Throne, to say whether or not they're in favour of reduced wait times, whether or not they're in favour of paying down the debt. I would like them to comment individually on each of the aspects of the Throne Speech. And I would like to give them the opportunity to support those items.

If they do not vote for the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like them to stand in their place and comment favourably on the items that they do support. If they disagree with things, let them speak specifically to what they disagree with and why. Let them say that they do not disagree with reducing wait times. Let them say why they don't disagree with that. Let them talk about what's wrong with reducing wait times.

Mr. Speaker, I can imagine nothing better than to have everybody in this House vote in favour of a Speech from the Throne that will continue to reduce debt, that will continue to promote and move our province forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter into the debate on the Throne Speech, but before starting my remarks on the Throne Speech I would like to congratulate our two new members of the legislature. First, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale who I've come to know as a tireless worker and an advocate on behalf of her constituents, and I welcome her to this legislature and I know she will do a fine job in the future.

I also would like to comment on our leader, the member from Regina Douglas Park, who is also the second member that we elected and who brings not only experience, enthusiasm, and energy but also wisdom and a vision which our province so desperately needs during this time of budgetary problems and constraints.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out what is obvious, that there are now two New Democrat members here in the legislature but, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important to look at here is what occurred. And that is that after the recent victory in 2007 by the Saskatchewan Party and all their bravado about how popular they are, they were still unable to make any inroads in these two by-elections. Now unlike . . . Mr. Speaker, if they would listen, if they would listen perhaps they will learn something here. They'll learn something here if they just listen, if they just listen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, unlike Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, unlike Nova Scotia where the victorious NDP party recently took a seat from the Conservatives in the by-election, a seat which they never held and, Mr. Speaker, this was immediately right after the election. Now some members in this House will also remember what happened in the 1982 election in P.A. [Prince Albert]. Now there the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker — and some members here will remember — they won that first by-election after winning the election.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is good news for the New Democrats here, Mr. Speaker, because what this says is we won two clear majorities in the recent two by-elections. And let's not forget the Cumberland; let's not forget the Cumberland constituency, Mr. Speaker.

So what this says is that the NDP have won the last three by-elections in the province of Saskatchewan and I think this is good news for our New Democrats in Saskatchewan. Now before proceeding further I'd also like to acknowledge the former member from Douglas Park, Harry Van Mulligen, and his time spent here in the legislature, Mr. Speaker. We miss him and I wish him all the best in his future.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my constituency assistant, Tracy Goodheart, for the work that she does for the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview and for the support and organization she provides to me. As we all know and I'm sure every member has

said, that we cannot always be in our constituencies and it's so important to have someone like Tracy in my office. I would also like to thank, Mr. Speaker, the constituency executive who work and assist in the constituency in making the constituency a better place for all to live. And particularly I'd like to thank Ben Medernach, Arnold Zazula, Lily Olson, Jason McLeod, Blair West, and Doug and Danita Hingston.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the official opening of the Shaw Centre, which is located in the Saskatoon Fairview constituency. And this is, Mr. Speaker, a great example of local governments — both school board, municipal, and provincial government — working together, Mr. Speaker, working together to create, getting together to achieve this world-class swimming facility.

Mr. Speaker, the Shaw Centre will be a place for swimmers from Canada and the United States and, no doubt, the world will come to compete. And, Mr. Speaker, you probably heard me commenting on the Shaw Centre before, but just to further say that this swimming complex will have a stainless steel bottom. And, Mr. Speaker, this will allow swimmers from all over North America, and no doubt the world, to come to improve their times.

And, Mr. Speaker, this of course was all put in place by the former government. Mr. Speaker, the Shaw Centre also sits between two high schools, and it is an example of a community working together.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the importance of our support system at our workplace. And we all take personal pleasure in our accomplishments, but truly this cannot occur without our base being there for us — our family.

Ann Riley, my partner, whose selfless support and contributions brighten not only my day but my life; my daughters Tasha, Jerry and Austin; daughter Alecia, Dave, Robin Drake; Ann's daughter Jaelyn are all there for me so I can make my contribution to Saskatchewan; and finally, Mr. Speaker, my mother who, whenever she is not interrupted by friends or relatives, watches the legislative channel and offers advice, solicited and unsolicited. I thank all of my family for this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech the government claims to be moving forward but it truly doesn't seem that way if you're a resident of Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has blown the biggest surplus in Saskatchewan history — 2.3 billion. And the rainy day fund — a fund to be used in times of trouble — is simply, Mr. Speaker, a shadow of its former self.

And now, Mr. Speaker, that they have to balance the books, that they have to balance the books, Mr. Speaker, and sadly, you know — they talk about balancing the books — and where are they coming to, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, it was sad to read in the paper in Saskatoon that in fact they were coming to Saskatoon to balance the books.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is a growing city, a city growing on the foundations set some time ago — the economic and social

foundations. And it is unfortunate, as I have said, that we had to read in a local newspaper that the academic science building and the children hospital receive funding cuts, Mr. Speaker. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. After continually talking about funding to these projects, they announce it in the paper, as we looked in the paper, looked in the paper, and there it was.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Eastview talks about the day after the sod . . . But let me tell you, this is interesting. As I would say, to add salt to the wound, the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and the member from Saskatoon Greystone, he was at a sod-turning of the academic health science building only a week prior to the announcement of the cuts, calling it a “key element in meeting the government's goal of providing patient-centered services.”

**An Hon. Member:** — Isn't that something?

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member from North Battleford said, isn't that something. And Mr. Speaker, this is what he called it. He called it a “key element in meeting the government's goal of providing patient-centered services.” And we see from these members, talking about what they've accomplished in two years, what have they accomplished, Mr. Speaker? What have they accomplished here other than sod-turning and then cutting, Mr. Speaker, cutting funding to the very things that they are turning sod for? I'm not sure if that minister is so out of touch or if somebody forgot to send him an email on what was happening.

Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. So I can tell you that we were all taken aback in Saskatoon. And I think perhaps this whole issue in the thoughts of Saskatoon, I think these thoughts are best summarized in a press release by the member from Saskatoon Eastview. And I would like to put that into the record here, Mr. Speaker, because I think that this is very good. And referring to the minister and his sod-turning and being there and all that, she said:

Was [the minister] . . . so incompetent as to not know that his own government was about to cut funding . . . or was he so arrogant as to think Saskatoon people wouldn't notice?

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is amazing. This is amazing. And I think in speaking to people on the street and in the coffee shops, this is what, after telling them that, to those that hadn't read the front page news, they couldn't believe it. And, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of shaking of heads over this issue as to why Saskatoon would be treated.

Now all of this comes about, Mr. Speaker, the amount and percentage that this turns out in the amounts of cuts, they were balancing the books on the backs of Saskatoon to the tune of 54 per cent — 54 per cent of those cuts are coming right out of the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And how could you miss it? There it was on the front page, Mr. Speaker. It made the front page of *The StarPhoenix*. We all read about it. We all talked about it.

And you're right, maybe the feeling was, how could the government do this? What have we done? But maybe they don't like Saskatoon. Now the Minister of Finance might think that

this is funny but, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't comical to the people of Saskatoon to have heard and listened to those members opposite continually in chorus say how they're going to move ahead on these projects.

And now what? And now where are we at, Mr. Speaker? We can only shake our heads along with the rest of the people in our city. And, Mr. Speaker, but despite that, despite that, Saskatoon, Saskatoon residents will move ahead and move ahead, but they will consider next time when they listen to those members and they listen to their promises that they make, that they will take them for what they are worth, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the former NDP left the Sask Party government a huge surplus which they have now spent. They have now spent and now they're coming to Saskatoon to take it back. There is no vision. You know, all we've heard so far is about, it's only two years. Well we are getting it right; here's what we're going to do. There's a lot of re-announcements, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard in the Throne Speech — no vision in the Throne Speech, no direction, and where are we coming?

I'll tell you what is happening, Mr. Speaker, other than the 54 per cent cut to Saskatoon to balance the books, to balance the books on the backs of the city of Saskatoon. Now there's also, Mr. Speaker, they also, the government says they've turned the province around. They've turned the province around. Two oh seven, we've heard, or two oh eight are some of the best years in the history of Saskatchewan, and now they've turned it around.

Mr. Speaker, they say that, and at the same time when faced with criticism, they say, well we haven't been here long enough for things to take effect. Now you can't have it both ways. You either turned it around, or things haven't had time to work. Mr. Speaker, I think the reality is, is that the factors or the strategies were put in by the former New Democrats and now we're bearing the fruits of that until, Mr. Speaker, they spent the surplus.

So, Mr. Speaker, just some of the facts that were recently mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition were housing starts are down by 50 per cent. Now how is that turning it around? Again, the potash, the miscalculations around the potash and now they hide. It truly is, Mr. Speaker, something to amaze when we watch this.

Mr. Speaker, we hear the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour talk about the numbers. Every day there's some new numbers that he grabs onto, every month. But, Mr. Speaker, we've lost 10,000 jobs last month, 10,000 full-time jobs. And Saskatoon, let alone taking the 54 per cent hit in cuts, just lost 300 workers at the Case New Holland plant. And more potash . . . Every time we open the newspaper there's more potash layoffs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those kinds of numbers and that kind of . . . When you take that much money out of the economy, there will be things that we will have to consider. There will be problems in the future here, Mr. Speaker. And yet all we hear from the other side is that we are turning the province around; things are better than they used to be. Mr. Speaker, they were handed a silver platter and it's getting tarnished, and it's getting tarnished

quickly.

Mr. Speaker, along with that, along with what the minister of advanced employment and education also talks about, how about the numbers of people who are now collecting employment insurance? Fourteen thousand people, 14,000 people are now collecting. And yet, and yet they have turned the province around. What must those people think when they turn on their TV sets, when they turn on their radios, when they read the newspapers and hear what this government is peddling? The province is fine. The province is shining. The province is turned around. And they are sitting at home collecting employment insurance, sitting at home collecting employment insurance. And, Mr. Speaker, I haven't gotten to the rising costs of rent and some of the other and the utilities and SGI . . . those things that, to these members, obviously don't mean very much.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I've heard today talking about somehow that there's these new targets and that they're going after new targets . . . And they promised to reduce surgical waiting lists and recruit doctors over the next two years. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's only two years. In fact, it isn't two years, but we've heard this song and dance before. They announced a surgical waiting list. That's all they've been talking about, a surgical waiting list. They've been talking about recruiting doctors. Well where is it? The Health minister today couldn't answer any questions. The Health minister couldn't answer any questions.

We had the advanced employment and education minister writing a letter back with something that was simply a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker, simply a no-brainer. I'm not sure where the thinking that that was . . . He obviously wrote that one himself. I think he wrote that one himself. Normally he's up there and he reads what's written, but I think he wrote that one himself. So I think he's going to have to wear that one into the future.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, when we go through that one, I'm sure the people went away shaking . . . well not shaking their heads. I'm sure they're out there bent over in laughter. I'm sure they are, because when you have a closer look at what was said there . . . and I equate this same thing. Mr. Speaker, how many times can you say you're going to reduce surgical waiting lists? How many times are you going to say you're going to recruit doctors? We want to see, we want to see the results, Mr. Speaker. They talk about targets, well we want to see results. And the targets should be prior, prior to the next election — not after, Mr. Speaker — prior to the next election. Because that's another two years that'll pass. And what will they say? Nothing happened. It's only two years. I wait another two years after the next election, and we'll tell you what's happening.

Now how about that, Mr. Speaker. Could you actually imagine that that was actually put down in writing? I mean imagine — we haven't done anything for two years. Give us another two years and they'll say nothing happened. Now wait till after the election, another two years, and then we'll do that.

Mr. Speaker, people like that probably could go out but I don't think they'd be successful in trying to sell, sell some products. Wait two years. Wait another two years and then we can say it's

only been two years. And you know what? We'll wait another two years after the next election. The people of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan are not going to buy that. They're simply going to see through that. It doesn't take very much. I think we've already seen through this. And in fact what's unbelievable is they actually put this in writing. They put it in writing. And this is . . . They call the vision of the Throne Speech. And one of the main points, one of the points that they . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you, yes. One of the main points of the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, is it really all about the two years? They used the money they got from the NDP. They rode on the structural changes we made to the economy. And they think they can fool everyone by taking credit and saying they created a new Saskatchewan, created a new Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they used the hard-earned dollars for the media spin. But I don't think any media spin on this one is going to save them this time. I don't think this media spin is going to do this. They're cutting and they're cutting and they're saying the cuts don't really matter. Well I'll tell you — the front page on *The StarPhoenix* and what the people were talking about, about the 54 per cent of the budget that came out of Saskatoon — I think it matters. I think it matters a lot. I think these cuts matter. And they sit there smiling.

Now ask the people in Saskatoon associated with St. Mary's school project in Saskatoon, if the scaled-back project doesn't matter. Go ahead and ask them. In fact I would go out and I'd say to them, you know, they say it doesn't matter. They say it's only two years, and just wait to see what we're going to do in the next two years. Just wait. You know? And then if that doesn't . . . If we get there, then we'll wait until after the election in two years, and we'll tell you again what we're going to do.

And why are these folks picking on the most vulnerable? Why did they cut Station 20? Why did they cut Station 20? What does that say about a government when they do that to the most vulnerable? And then they cut back and scale back the project. And again, again the Premier was out there saying what a great project this is, how much they're giving back to the community. And where did it go, Mr. Speaker? What happened?

[15:45]

Well I'll tell you what happened over there. We have a new member from Saskatoon Riversdale sitting on this side of the House, sitting on this side. And the best, and the best they can do, the best they can do to make themselves happy is say it was a strong NDP seat.

Well let me tell you, you're on the way down. Mr. Speaker, that government, they're on the way down. That's where they're going. Three by-election victories on this side, Mr. Speaker. Three by-elections, three by-elections. And it's 3-0, 3-0, Mr. Speaker. In any kind of sport that means trouble. That means trouble — 3-0.

Mr. Speaker, this government does not care about people having trouble making ends meet. People are struggling, Mr. Speaker. People are struggling, and they smile. They've lost three by-elections, and they smile. They're about the only ones

in this province that don't know what's going on. They quote statistics except they forget about the 10,000 lost jobs. They forget about the 14,000 people on employment insurance, but they'll quote some statistics. They'll pull something out and then they'll make themselves feel happy over there.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what about the people struggling? What about the rising rents? How about the rising utilities? And maybe they don't feel it. Maybe they are all cushioned from this. Maybe they're all not listening because, Mr. Speaker, they lost Riversdale, they lost Douglas Park, they lost in Cumberland. But that doesn't matter to them.

Mr. Speaker, what about the things, what about the nuts and bolts, what about the things that matter to people in Saskatoon? What about the things that matter to people across this province? Rising rent, rising utilities, rising car insurance, rising camp . . . Mr. Speaker, increase in camping fees — increase in camping fees to the families that need to go and want to experience the great outdoors in Saskatchewan — rising camping fees, and, Mr. Speaker, finally, the costly prescription drugs.

And they do nothing about that. They post statistics that are really irrelevant and they talk about two years, what we're going to do in two years. And wait, if we didn't do it in two years because this happened, just give us another two years to the election; we'll tell you this didn't happen.

But in fact we've got plans to go beyond 2011, and because, just in case we haven't done anything in four years, we can say again, well in two more years, just wait and see what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker. And they expect the people of this province to buy into that. Well, I don't think they're going to, Mr. Speaker.

Now if things weren't bad enough, in terms of rising costs we have the highest rate of inflation in Canada, Mr. Speaker — the highest rate of inflation. And that seems to go over their heads as well, over their heads as if it doesn't matter. We're cutting and the Premier's talking about domed stadiums, nuclear reactors. An idea a day, Mr. Speaker, an idea a day. And then once it doesn't work, well we won't talk about that anymore. That's all gone.

But you know, the insurance rates that are rising, Mr. Speaker, the rise in camping fees and the cost of prescription drugs, those are the things that the people in my constituency, door to door, that they're telling and that they're talking about. That's what they're talking about. They have their families, Mr. Speaker, and they have to get by on a month-to-month basis. And these costs are rising, and the budget is gone and there's no money going out there. And they're asking, what happened, Mr. Speaker? And all we get is the flavour of the week or flavour of the day. And where are we going with this?

And, Mr. Speaker, who of us here, who of us here would not want a domed stadium for Saskatchewan? Who wouldn't want that? I would want that too. But, Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of rushing headlong into something without the proper discussions that gets us into trouble. And maybe they don't think that that's good, but we spent a lot of time digging out of a debt that was left by those members across. And now they're back at it again,

Mr. Speaker. They're back at it again and people are coming and saying, what's happening? What's happening? Mr. Speaker, people are busy with their lives, but they're coming and now they're saying, 54 per cent cut in Saskatoon, and what's happened? What's happening?

Mr. Speaker, governing is not an easy job. But to ignore, Mr. Speaker, to ignore like that government did all the signs, all the economic signs, warnings from the opposition, Mr. Speaker — all you have to do is check back to the speeches last year — warning from the opposition experts about projections, Mr. Speaker. What was that? What was that when they were told that their 2 per cent plus growth was out of line? Well they scoffed at that just like they're scoffing right now. They did the same thing, Mr. Speaker. They said let's just wait two years and we'll tell you, we'll tell you what we're going to do. But what do we find now? Well oh, well now we sit in a little, you know that . . . Wait for two years, we're going to do this and here's our new vision in the Throne Speech. And yet there's nothing in there, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing in there, but wait two years.

Mr. Speaker, this government, I think what is coming through is this government's, the lack of experience — lack of experience on budgetary items and their lack of experience in governing, Mr. Speaker. And there are dark clouds gathering. There are dark clouds gathering and we can see those, and we again are trying to tell them there are dark clouds gathering, Mr. Speaker, but again they're not listening. And we hear, in two years we'll tell you. We'll tell you what's going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, governing — they have to understand that it's hard work. Tough decisions and things are not built in a day. You can't have an idea a day, Mr. Speaker, and run a province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the opposition members will ever admit this, but we were witness to a tremendous speech here given by the new Opposition Leader. And, Mr. Speaker, maybe the members . . . this is right up their alley because they're denying everything else. But certainly, they're in denial as to how they spend the money. They're in denial as to where the money came from, and they're certainly in denial that their budget forecast was a complete mess.

And they're certainly in denial . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member says they were wrong. The member says they were wrong. Yes, the member says he was wrong. He was wrong. Just give us another two years, and you'll sit there again and say wrong. Yes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, maybe we just work two more years, and then we'll see if we can get it right. We'll see if we can get it right. Well we're telling you there's dark clouds on the horizon. We're telling you that things are not going good, that there's an art to governing, that there is an art to governing and that they should take heed of those . . .

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech is certainly without vision, a vision for a growing province. And, Mr. Speaker, again I mention our leader. He gave a speech the other day. And, Mr. Speaker, for those that were listening . . . And everybody is talking about that speech, Mr. Speaker, because it was a speech about vision, Mr. Speaker. It was a speech about vision, a wonderful speech. And it was a speech about vision and you

could tell. And I see that the member from Regina South is agreeing with me, and I thank him for that, yes.

Mr. Speaker, you have to, as the Opposition Leader said, have all things in order, particularly strong unions. And I want to just comment briefly on that because from the experience earlier on today in the legislature . . . is that we truly see that these folks are no friends of labour, no friends of labour whatsoever. And I think that they, if it was up to them, they would have no labour laws.

And that's what would make them happy because that would be the free market system which they secretly believe in, Mr. Speaker. But it comes out every once in a while, comes out every once in a while. They don't want to admit it because they'd have to say, oh we're in favour of the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They'd have to say they're in favour of the Crowns. They sneak around, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that they would like to see the unions destroyed, decimated in this province. And to what effect? Because they don't understand. They don't understand collective bargaining. They don't understand rights. They don't understand respecting the workers of this province because they think they created the wealth, because they say that every time: well we created the wealth. In the last two years, we turned the province around. We turned the province around, and you don't need the people that work. All you need is no unions and that's solved.

And then, Mr. Speaker, you know, there's a history with them on this. Remember the great one, unions are job killers? You know, unions are job killers. If you think that, if you hold those beliefs, why not just put them out there. And I think they do. They sneak something out in legislation and attempt to destroy unions. But why don't they just say it, just say it, you know, and then let the people judge as to what your position is?

Now I can't remember the last time that a minister of Labour was not at the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention. I can't remember when that happened. But I think, when I asked, that was happening in the '80s, and I think we know who that might have been. And isn't it interesting? Isn't it interesting that we might very well be back, back — they call that the future — back to the future here, Mr. Speaker.

Job killers, legislation, war on workers — I mean how many more things do we need here to do that? In fact the Minister of Labour called the Opposition Leader's speech, or in talking about how you build a good economy, as 19th century thinking. Can you imagine that — 19th century thinking?

I think it's him that doesn't understand, and I think everybody knows that that minister does not understand anything about collective bargaining. He has no idea in terms of constitutional things and what that means, how collective bargaining fits with the economy, and where we're going. Mr. Speaker, it's a sad, sad day. It can be quite comical but in fact the damage that he is foisting on workers in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this government and this minister simply do not understand that Saskatchewan got to where it was in 2007 and 2008 with the laws, with strong labour

laws in this province. They got there with that. And the argument simply that somehow we have to do away with these laws and then all of a sudden things will be a bit better, the sun will shine in Saskatchewan, we just have too strong labour laws. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker, what that means to those people when they hear that — residents of Saskatchewan who work in this province, work in the health care system as we saw here today, provide the services — when the Premier, when the Premier of this province utters things like that, let alone things like too much red tape and all the rest of it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that labour and the work of working people contributes to this province . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, I would just say to that minister that he should quit listening to the spin. Maybe today I think we saw him on his own there, but he has to quit that and quit reading what is written for him.

**An Hon. Member:** — Saying what you think.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Yes, say what he thinks and let the people of this province decide. Mr. Speaker, I would like to end with this because I think . . . People, it's a question of trust, a question of trust that in two years, just give us two years . . . Mr. Speaker, what we heard from the Premier and the Minister of Health was, prior to the election, that they wouldn't need essential services. They wouldn't need essential services. They sat down, and they told the people who were involved in that they wouldn't need essential services. After the election, they brought in essential services.

What would happen, Mr. Speaker, if they went to any other sector in the economy and said to them, we're going to not do this, and a week later they did that? What reaction would they expect from that sector, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, and I was speaking to someone the day after the Throne Speech, and they told them that labour was not mentioned in the Throne Speech. This person told me that unfortunately their fears were not subsided, as the working families well know the history of this government when it comes to labour relations and promises.

Mr. Speaker, I just talked about the Minister of Health and the Premier changing their minds the day after the election. Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder. It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Labour is uninvited to a labour convention. Mr. Speaker, this lack of direction, this lack of vision contained in the Throne Speech, and the continual attack on working families in this province leaves me no choice but to say that I'll be voting for the amendment and against the Throne Speech. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard):** — I recognize the member from Wood River.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's definitely my pleasure to enter into the debate on the Throne Speech. And it's especially warming to follow the previous speaker because listening to his speech, it just left me with the impression of an army of pompous ideas moving over the landscape in search of an idea. So it's very, very nice to be able to follow somebody like that.

[16:00]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, first I'd like to talk a little bit about my constituency and thank my constituents again for all of their support and backing for me to be here again for another session. We have a very diverse constituency of Wood River. I'd like to thank my CAs [constituency assistant] that work for me down there, in Assiniboia and in Glentworth, and also my constituency executive who do an awful lot of work because there's times when I don't get home all as often as we would like to.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency is expanding. It's expanding in a different way than under the NDP. It was expanding under the NDP because people were moving out of the province so the constituency actually got bigger and bigger, to the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that other than the two constituencies of the high North, Wood River is now the largest constituency in this province. That is thanks in total to the policies of the socialists on the other side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we now see growth in our constituency. We see jobs created in our constituency, the constituency of Wood River. We see people moving back. We see other people moving back from Alberta that have some opportunities here in this province. We have houses in our small towns that are filled now. Rather than the vacant signs and the for sale signs on, they're being filled.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's another item that I'd like to talk about, is in the last two years since we've been government, we've even seen progress in the road structure down there. We have 16-year-old young men and women in my constituency that for 16 years never saw a paving machine. They had no idea what a paving machine was for 16 years. And now they're very, very surprised and happy to see a paving machine in our constituency. And I'm very, very proud to say that Highway 13 now is one of the best roads in southern Saskatchewan, and that has been completed in this last summer. So I'm very, very pleased to see that.

This year has been a trying time as we know in the weather. We've had issues with a cold spring, crops being put in late, hay crops not being what they have been in the past. But the results, the results have been pretty positive. With our policies of this government, we've got a pretty positive attitude throughout my constituency and, I must add, throughout the province. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of that is to say that we've got a very, very positive constituency of Wood River. I think there's 4 or 5 per cent maybe that aren't happy, but we know who those 4 or 5 per cent are.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to talk a little bit about the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. We get asked through rhetoric from the now Leader of the Opposition about where did the money go, and I'm going to come back to that a few times, a few times today in my talk I'm going to revisit that.

But in Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, I would like to advise members opposite that we have 60 new police officers on the streets, making our communities safer. That's where some of the money went. Northern communities can feel safer knowing that there's now a northern drug and gang enforcement unit in place to focus on offences in the North. That's where

some of the money went. Witnesses in Saskatchewan can now feel safe to appear in court because of our new witness protection legislation. That's where some of the money went.

We funded much expansion, needed expansion to our safer communities and neighbourhoods program, the SCAN program which will allow Saskatchewan citizens to take back their neighbourhoods and help reduce illegal activities. That's where some of the money went. Millions of dollars have been spent on safety and security upgrades to our secure correctional facilities. That's where some of the money went.

Now I do want to make a slight comparison. When I say slight, I'm doing it a little bit tongue and cheek, because I want to talk about infrastructure in Corrections and Public Safety under the record of the previous administration. And I would like them to . . . 2002 the NDP denied, denied funding of 1.125 million for the design of the RPCC [Regina Provincial Correctional Centre] replacement project; they denied it.

In 2002-2003, while inmate counts were increasing, the only capital spending in corrections facilities that year was spent on — what? — a \$30,000 tractor, a \$30,000 tractor on infrastructure for Corrections and Public Safety and Policing. And I am going to revisit that \$30,000 tractor.

In 2003-2004, NDP denied, denied security enhancements at the SCC [Saskatoon Correctional Centre] for a second perimeter fence and an upgraded control room and video surveillance equipment. They denied that. Why would they deny that? 2004-2005, the NDP denied the same security enhancements at Saskatoon Correctional Centre. In 2005-2006, the NDP denied the same security enhancements again at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there seems to be a bit of a process there with them in denial, total denial.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have started work on a brand new remand centre in Saskatoon which will help increase bed space in our currently overcrowded facilities. That is where the money is going. The construction of a new radio telecommunications network that will allow users more accessibility and better communications — that is where the money is going. Over the past year, the crime rate in Saskatchewan fell by 4 per cent, and the crime severity rates fell by 5 per cent. That is where the money was going.

Now I think more of the question back to members opposite is, what out of this would have they cut? What would have they not done? We know what they wouldn't do because they denied so much in the past. What would they take out of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What would any one of them stand up here and say, we would not have done that. I would like to see them go outside and tell the public what they would have cut out of this particular budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, again I would like to just reiterate a little bit about what the NDP have done or didn't do in the past. Is there any of us on this side of the House that remember their 1999 and 2003 election promises to hire 200 police officers? And what did they do? They didn't do it. They did not get around to it.

Over the past decade ending in 2006, crime in Saskatchewan increased by a whopping 17 per cent, while on a national basis it dropped by 11 per cent. Now can anybody on that side of the House explain to me why national crime rates were dropping during that decade, that decade, and here they went up by 17 per cent? There is something missing. Maybe the lack of the 200 police officers had something to do with that.

They ignored infrastructure, security, and overcrowding problems for years at the correctional facilities. It was ignored. I just explained that what they denied. And they left a gap in the federal witness protection program between the federal, and there was nothing in the province, and we've fixed that problem also by introducing our witness protection program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about gang issues. And gang issues is something that we're all, we're all very, very much aware of. And we wish to put efforts toward curbing the gang and drug issues in this province. And it's kind of a shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we had the member from Saskatoon Nutana a few years ago that said gangs are not a problem; that's the Saskatchewan Party fear mongering — fear mongering. Now who knows the . . . Fear mongering, fear mongering. It was the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Now we have 43 positions funded by the province dedicated to addressing organized and street gangs.

[Interjections]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard):** — Order. Members, I didn't believe I'd be put to the test quite this early in my career. I couldn't hear the conversation behind the dais, let alone what was going on out here. So would you please pay attention to the rules of the House and give the member an opportunity to speak. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can definitely understand their vocal position when they did nothing for so many years, and they're finding out now what's being done. If I was them, I would be totally embarrassed also. And so when they're totally embarrassed, all they can do is holler because they have no plan, no idea whatsoever. So they do it by being more vocal in the Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again some initiatives that we're working on within my ministry is working with the RCMP and the Saskatchewan association of police chiefs to develop a long-term provincial policing strategy that clearly identifies the current and emerging needs of local police services and guides the provincial government's support for crime fighting initiatives in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on about what our ministry is doing. Some of that I will save. Suffice to say we are moving forward, and we listen to what goes from the other side, and they're being grumpy and moving backwards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to now just go into the Throne Speech and address some of the Throne Speech. And I can understand a little bit why members opposite are grumpy. This province grew by 16,000 people, grew by 16,000 people. And under their watch, we lost thousands and thousands of people. I can see that's why they are grumpy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the debt has been reduced by \$2.7 billion or nearly 40 per cent. What do they have against reducing the debt? Everybody in this province except maybe 20 members and a few odd of their other close-knit group are in favour of the debt reduction, and here we have 20 members plus a few that are against it. I just can't see why they are against debt reduction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we move to health care. I have it on good authority that the salt water sheik of Shaunavon was in cabinet when that group closed 52 rural hospitals plus the Plains — 52 rural hospitals. And here we have the now leader of the NDP coming back and saying we want to connect with rural Saskatchewan. I know in my area it's very difficult for a socialist to connect in rural Saskatchewan strictly because of all the stuff they've closed there. They closed hospitals. They've closed schools. They've pulled railroads. Gosh almighty, when they were in government, it was back like it was the turn of the century. We're about at the same level as we were in 1905.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know time is going to run out, but I do want to talk about agriculture. I want to talk a little bit about agriculture. I have a very agrarian base in my constituency, and I want to have people hear what the NDP record was. Off-loading costs to rural Saskatchewan. They cut the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program. And I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition was part of that when they cut the GRIP program — and very surprisingly because he touts to be a big agriculture producer — but cutting the GRIP program. From 2001-2006, they increased crop insurance premiums and decreased coverage. That is really connecting with rural Saskatchewan, let me tell you. In 2003 they closed 22 rural service centres — 22. Now that is connecting with rural Saskatchewan. I don't know how they will ever live that one down. 2003 to 2005, they did not and would not fully fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization program].

I also would like to address that my constituency was drought-plagued in certain areas for five years, and what did they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Let me tell you what they did.

**An Hon. Member:** — Nothing.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — That's exactly what they did — absolutely nothing.

Now I would like to advise members what we have done in this government. We have the AgriStability administration move to Saskatchewan. Currently it costs \$15 million for the feds to administer. Why would people on that side of the House be against this? Moving jobs to Saskatchewan, and yet I heard comments the other day, oh well this is not a big deal.

[16:15]

The southwest drought, we talked about it. The Minister of Agriculture really did yeoman's work in getting the farm and ranch water infrastructure program established. This was a saviour for some of the people — the ranchers and farmers — in the southwest of this province. Contrary to what I just talked about, what did the NDP do? We moved forward; they would do absolutely nothing. The gopher rebate program — that was something that they wouldn't even consider, wouldn't even

consider it. What did we do? We got it done. AgriStability is now fully funded, the hog program, included the hog program. Hog and cattle loans as requested by the industry, we did. Extension services, we did.

And how about, how about the education portion of property tax? That's one that people on that side of the House, I think since Tommy the comic talked about that that this was a good initiative in 1944, and he did not do it then, and it hasn't been done until now. A Sask Party government brought the education portion of property tax under control. We have increased revenue sharing to the RMs [rural municipality].

So all that said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problem in my constituency or around this province comparing the dismal performance of members opposite when they were in government compared to what we in fact are doing today with our government. Are we going forward? I believe we are. I believe we're really going forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I want to turn my attention just quickly to the member from Douglas Park's speech. He had talked quite a bit about not an awful lot, but I haven't heard Tommy's name mentioned so much for quite a while, so here we are looking backwards again. We've got members opposite that are just continually, continually looking backwards. I thought when the previous member from Douglas Park left this House we wouldn't hear about the '80s quite as much. Well it must be something within the genes of the NDP members from Douglas Park because now we're right back to the '80s again. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I personally don't have a problem with that because they are going back and back, and it's not doing them any good. It sure is helping us. But I will be going back a little bit. I'm going to go back to the '90s before I am done speaking here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I know, I know the Leader of the Opposition talked about, he had toured the province. The question we had on this side of the House sitting around where we were is, I wonder what province he really toured because some of his comments sure didn't come from constituencies like mine, unless what he had done is done the plant again — take a car and put it out in front of you and have them greet you when you get off of the bus. And then they can say, oh this is what we're doing. That would be the only way that he could come up with some comments like he had in his speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really want to talk on an item about where the money went because in the Leader of the Opposition's speech, he kind of got zeroed in by a comment that was made across the floor. And the comment is not in *Hansard*, but his reply is, his reply. And I do remember hearing the comment that went across the floor. He was talking about mistakes. He was talking about mistakes. And some wise individual from this side of the House said, how about SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]? Was that a mistake? And here is the answer:

Yes, that's right. It was a mistake, and we paid for it. And we paid for it . . . Yes. No. And we did too. And we did too. And we did too.

Well that is the first time I have ever heard a socialist say

they've made a mistake.

So I have some questions for the Leader of the Opposition. I have a number of questions for the Leader of the Opposition. Was *tapedinto.com* a mistake? And where did the money go — \$6.7 million? Was *Persona* a mistake — \$9.4 million? And where did the money go? Was *Navigata* a mistake — \$90 million? Where did that money go? *Retx.com*, \$26 million, was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *Craig Wireless*, \$10 million, was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *NST*, \$16 million, was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *Clickabid*, that was only 1.9 million. Was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *Soft Tracks*, 2.2 million. Was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *Ag Dealer*, 8.9 million loss. Was that a mistake? And where did the money go? *SPUDCO* we've talked about, and the member admitted that was a mistake.

Now I want to go back. I talked briefly about the corrections system, and the only infrastructure spent one year was for a tractor. I'm wondering if the tractor was Corrections and Public Safety's contribution to *SPUDCO* because Corrections and Public Safety, I'm not sure what they'd use a tractor for except with the infrastructure deficit that was left, they might use the bucket to cover the hole in the fence, so there'd be no more escapes. That's the only reason I could see a tractor in Corrections and Public Safety at that time, so I'm wondering if that was hand-off to *SPUDCO*.

I think the Leader of the Opposition was around when *Channel Lake* lost \$15 million. And I would ask him outright if that was a mistake? And where did the money go? Was *Guyana* a mistake for \$2 million? And where did the money go? Was *Coachman* a mistake? Sixteen million dollar loss. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, everybody knows my all-time favourite; was *mega bingo* a mistake? Eight million dollar loss, where did the money go? Eight million dollar loss, was that a mistake?

And we know that *ISC* [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], *ISC* had \$100 million-plus spent, is that a mistake? And where did the money go? And how about, how about the pulp mill? Eight hundred million dollars, was that a mistake? And where did the money go?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can see there's an awful lot of issues that the member tried to bring forward. But let me tell you, those men and women on that side of the House have nothing, nothing to be very proud of because out of all of those items that I just listed is over \$1 billion — \$1 billion. And I would ask anyone on that side of the House if they're very proud of that, if they can stand up and say, yes it was not a mistake. And we've only heard from one person on that side of the House that has ever admitted that one item was a mistake. I would like to see somebody from that side of the House get up and say these were all a mistake. And I don't see anybody really moving to get up.

Mr. Speaker, there's an awful lot of other areas we could cover. When we talk about some items of the Throne Speech, when we talk about tourism, parks, we are moving forward. We are moving forward in our parks, electrifying sites.

And I always like to remind members opposite, when I have the

opportunity, about their movement in the parks industry when they tried to shorten summer. Do we all remember when they tried to shorten summer? And the infamous wiener roast tax, do we remember the wiener roast tax? I believe that really identified the NDP government when they put on a wiener roast tax. I think the people of the province were just so upset . . .

[Interjections]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard):** — Members, I hope you show as much enthusiasm for your own speeches as you're showing for this one, but you'll get your turn sooner or later. So if we may continue, I would give the floor to the member from Wood River.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate that. I think I may have touched a couple of nerves on that side of the House. That's very strange for me to be able to do that, but maybe I said something today that they didn't really believe in or didn't really like. But it's nice to see a bit of a response from members opposite. And it actually makes me feel quite good because I enjoy being able to respond to some of their insidious comments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing — I see my time is slowly, slowly running out, but I would like to just close by talking a little bit about what we talked to today. We gave tribute today to our reservists, and I'm very pleased and honoured that we included that in our Throne Speech because we are the best country in the world, and we are because it's largely due to our military forces who, over a century or so, have put their lives on the line to defend our rights to be able to do what we do today. And as I mentioned earlier, I was very pleased to be part of a send-off to our troops going to Afghanistan. And it's very heartwarming and touching to see some of our young troops that are going over for the fifth time.

And I know we have people in this province that are against the war. That is not for us to decide, but we need to support our troops to the nth degree. And so when we debate in the House issues around the military, it doesn't come down to what their job is. They will do the job they are asked to do by the federal government. Our job here is to support our troops and give them all the support that they need.

I am very, very pleased — and I don't think we can over announce it — that we have 11 Scholarships of Honour that have been awarded, and there will be more to come. And I think this is just a tremendous thing that we have done from this government through the Minister of AEEL [Advanced Education, Employment and Labour]. The Premier was very, very supportive. And in fact it might have even been his idea. But I'm very pleased to say that our scholarship award has been finalized, and we have 11 recipients and more to come.

I just want to close again by saying how pleased and proud I am of not only our reservists, but all of our forces that are doing so much to defend our rights and freedoms in this country that we sometimes forget. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm for the task, great humility, a heart pumping with sincerity and a full measure of gratitude, that I rise in my place to deliver which will be my third address and reply to the Speech from the Throne. My feelings of enthusiasm are kindled by the tremendous, advantaged position we find ourselves in here in our Saskatchewan. My sincerity is engendered by my steadfast belief in the correctness of the policies, the priorities, in the correctness of the policies and the decisions and the sound judgement of our cabinet and our Premier.

My gratitude is built on a foundation of support from the people of Saskatoon Northwest who have expressed their continued faith in my ability to represent them, the support of my tireless constituency office staff who work so many long hours addressing the needs and concerns of our constituents back in Saskatoon, plus the support of the many, many people who work behind the scenes in our caucus office here at the Saskatchewan legislature.

My humility is born of the self-awareness that comes from knowing that you are simply unworthy of the tremendous faith and tireless support that others have invested in you. I'm sure members on both sides of the Assembly would wholeheartedly agree with the proposition that I have much to be humbled about.

I am reminded of the former British prime minister, Winston Churchill, who dined in 1896 with the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. Writing later, Churchill said, "I realize that I . . . [must] be on my best behaviour — punctual, subdued, reserved — in short, display all the qualities with which I am least endowed." Today I will attempt to follow in Sir Winston Churchill's footsteps and demonstrate to members an example of my best behaviour. I will endeavour to be subdued, reserved, punctual whilst expressing my thoughts on the important matters on hand.

[16:30]

I need to talk just a little bit about an English lesson between disingenuous and ingenuous. It seemed to me some time ago that the Leader of the Opposition had some difficulty on the John Gormley show understanding the difference between the two, so I would like to just bring to his attention what is disingenuous.

The NDP oppose nuclear power, and I'm quoting from Jason Warick's Saskatchewan News Network, September 2009: "He [Lingenfelter] said a proposal by private company Bruce Power to build a reactor in the province is a bad idea." But disingenuous really means that in October 2005 he said, quoted by James Wood in *The StarPhoenix*, 2005: "Lingenfelter recently called for the provincial government to start encouraging the private sector to build a nuclear power plant . . ." Now that is disingenuous.

Ingenuous is, quoted by Murray Mandryk this past September 25, 2009: "Lingenfelter further blasted Wall . . . as a 'pretender' who has never run a successful business . . ." That is disingenuous when you have the Leader of the Opposition from a party that looks at . . . The leader of their parties . . . Tommy Douglas was a preacher. Allan Blakeney was a civil servant.

Roy Romanow was a lawyer. Lorne Calvert was a preacher. And of course the current leader was a border guard.

The difference between disingenuous and ingenuous, Murray Mandryk reported in the *Leader-Post*, October 26, 2005: "If [the first CCF Premier] Tommy Douglas were here, it would be exactly what he would be doing' said Lingenfelter", campaigning for a nuclear plant. Today he says the opposite; that's disingenuous. CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news, November 9th, 2005, quoting Mr. Lingenfelter: "The opportunity is big. The only question is can we reach out and grab it? . . . It's got to do with what's best for the economy and the environment at this moment," in regards to the nuclear file. That was the statement then. Now his statement is disingenuous.

I would like to quote from CBC Radio Saskatchewan, May 8th, 2008. He said:

But what I would like to say is congratulations to my friend and former colleague, Bill Boyd, for stepping up and making positive statements about the importance of this industry for our province because it is really, really a huge opportunity, not only for the province but for Canada and for North America because nuclear will continue to be a huge part of the global solution to our energy problems.

Quoting Murray Lyons, quoting Lingenfelter, "Lingenfelter urges debate on nuclear power. Province to consider export possibilities, former cabinet minister says."

Former NDP cabinet heavyweight Dwain Lingenfelter says the case for nuclear power generation in Saskatchewan is greater now than when he delivered a major speech on the subject in Saskatoon more than two years ago."

The difference between disingenuous and ingenuous. Well let's see, disingenuous. The Leader of the Opposition was the minister behind Channel Lake, which saw the taxpayers lose over \$15 million. That's disingenuous. He was involved with the \$25 million loss in the SPUDCO. He was the minister of Economic Development when the AECL [Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.] closed the Saskatoon office doors in 1996. He defended the government in taking over the potash industry in Saskatchewan.

And I won't go on to speak about the Shaunavon general election in 1982. In fact I think I will. Quoting Murray Mandryk, *Leader-Post*, May 30th, 2009: "Lingenfelter: a political brawler":

At issue is how amateurish this membership padding truly was. The old Link simply wouldn't have gotten caught, theorize long-time NDP insiders, who recall how he won the Shaunavon riding during the 1982 Grant Devine sweep because of a right-wing split with the Western Canada Concept candidate who, unbeknownst to most at the time, was a Lingenfelter friend.

It is no wonder, quite frankly, when Neil Scott in the *Leader-Post*, March 24, 1988, said "Lingenfelter denied Wednesday that he bought party memberships for people so

they would be eligible to vote at the nomination meeting.” Quite frankly, I find that behaviour all disingenuous, and it points out to the ingenuous reality of an RCMP investigation of vote buying that is currently being held against the member.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Honour spoke at the privileged position Saskatchewan now finds itself in. We are, quite frankly, the envy of all other Canadian jurisdictions. We truly are like Einstein’s bicycle, maintaining our balance and moving forward. Like other jurisdictions around the globe, we have felt the effects of the economic downturn of course. However compared to those other jurisdictions, we have weathered the storm very well.

We are well placed to take advantage of the coming economic recovery as it begins to take hold. Our population is growing at its fastest rate in 50 years. Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatoon — the city I represent — has the lowest rate of unemployment of any urban city in the country. Here in Regina, we have the second-lowest rate of unemployment in Canada.

Major economic forecasts are predicting great things for our future. RBC’s [Royal Bank of Canada] latest provincial outlook states that the growth in Saskatchewan economy will reach 3.6 per cent in 2010, the highest rate in the country. The Conference Board of Canada is in full accord. It’s predicting a 3.5 per cent growth in Saskatchewan’s economy for 2010. Because of the sound judgment and fiscal probity demonstrated by our Minister of Finance, the Dominion Bond Rating Service has upgraded Saskatchewan’s credit rating, a move that will further strengthen our economy and lower the cost of borrowing on world markets. We have received this bond rating upgrade in large measure because of the continuing commitment to debt reduction demonstrated by our Premier and our Minister of Finance. And I salute them for their steadfast commitment.

Saskatchewan debt has fallen by 40 per cent since we have taken office, and this accomplishment is even more remarkable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you consider that this government has been able to do in two short years the largest, single tax income cut in Saskatchewan’s history, education property tax relief in the excess of \$150 million this year, 80,000 low-income Saskatchewan people taken right off the tax polls.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you’re quite aware of my background, having been born a product of rape in an abandoned building, brought up in poverty in the inner city, I am focused, as an MLA, on the issues that affect those further left behind, those further left behind by the pretend socialist opposition. Let me say further what we have done in our government. It’s currently working with four Métis and seven First Nation housing providers for the delivery of over 120 units in 12 communities. Coming from a Cree mother, I think this is important that for the first time in our province we are beginning to deal with the issue of Métis and First Nation people.

We have provided 2.3 million forgivable loan to the Prince Albert Community Housing Society to provide seniors’ housing for Métis in Prince Albert. Our government has provided 12 million for the renovation of Milton Heights in Regina, providing rental units for moderate-income seniors. In January 2009, our government doubled the benefit under the seniors’

income plan, the first increase since 1992. Our government has provided a \$15 million grant to the University of Saskatchewan to provide a 400-unit student housing project on campus.

In May 2009, construction started on a large family student project in La Ronge. Our government has provided a one-time \$1 million grant for Habitat for Humanity, a Christian charity in Saskatchewan for 20 affordable housing units across the province. We have earmarked 8 million for affordable rental housing in the Pleasant Hill community.

Support under the Saskatchewan assistance program and transitional employment allowance in February, it will increase again in October, and to keep pace with the average rental markets in this province. Assistance for families and children and peoples with disabilities has increased this month in October 2009. The supplement covers 30 per cent of the average market rent for families and up to 40 per cent with people with disabilities.

Since November 2007, our government has made \$38 million in enhancements to income support programs. We are the first jurisdiction in the country to index social assistance shelter rates. In the Throne Speech, our government promised to re-establish a separate addictions agency. We provided close to \$3 million in annual funding to support families with substance abuse issues. Support for these families include transitional and respite housing for young people and adults, day programming, in-home support services, cultural activities, and community detox programs.

Just over \$6 million in capital funds and over 1 million in operational funds have been provided to support the development of a 45-bed integrated detoxification facility in Regina. We are providing over \$3 million to build and operate six youth stabilization beds in the Calder Centre in Saskatoon, and work will be completed in April of next year. Our government has provided over \$5 million to build and operate a youth treatment centre in Prince Albert that will open in the winter of 2010.

When the pretend socialists led this country — this province and our country — with child poverty and child addiction rates, child prostitution rates, they mouthed in disingenuous rhetoric what they were doing about it as a pretend socialist party. We’re actually doing something about it.

We have the highest family base income tax exemptions in the country, meaning that you earn more in Saskatchewan before paying taxes than in any other province or territory in Canada. In two short years in government, more than 500 low-income housing units have been opened in our province. Five hundred and thirty new units are under construction right now. Another 621 low-income units are in the development and staging programs. The combined federal and provincial investment for the building of new affordable housing and renovations existing over the next two years stands at \$61 million. Mr. Speaker, that is something to be proud of.

In two short years, we have increased income support for seniors and made more seniors eligible for that support. My caucus colleague, the member for Humboldt who also serves with distinction as the Minister of Social Services, has

significantly increased the level of support offered under the Saskatchewan assistance plan. Under that previous government, a family of four living in Regina and in Saskatoon would have received \$980 a month. Now that same family under our government is receiving \$1,108 a month.

Because of the efforts of the hon. member from Humboldt, those receiving money under the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement have seen substantial increase in their benefits. In Regina and Saskatoon, it's gone up 91 per cent; in Estevan, 120 per cent; in Moose Jaw, 81 per cent.

And what about support for child care, Mr. Speaker? In the past two years, this government has increased the number of licensed child care spaces by 31 per cent. They have funded 2,700 new licensed child care spaces. And by the end of March 2010, the number of funded child care spaces will total 11,400 — yet another accomplishment that we can be truly proud of.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to highlight even more evidence of Saskatchewan's privileged place in Canada's economic position. A few short days ago, the second annual *Financial Post* Canadian Federation of Independent Business's survey of top business-friendly cities was released. The survey evaluates cities across the country on three key measures: tax and regulatory policies, the concentration of business start-ups plus the overall level of optimism, and, perhaps more importantly, the level of success of actual small-business owners. Five of the top 10 centres in Canada are located in this province. Prince Albert placed 10th. Regina took eighth. Lloydminster ranked fifth. Moose Jaw placed fourth. And the number one city, the best place for business in Canada — Saskatoon, the city I call home.

I need to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under that previous government we slipped to 96th place on those rankings. Oh dear, now that's disingenuous.

And why is it that while others have suffered so grievously within our country, why is that Saskatchewan, its peoples, its economy has shown such remarkable resilience? Part of the reason is — as the Premier often alludes in his speeches — is simply this. Saskatchewan has in Biblical proportions the resources that the world wants and needs — our potash, our uranium, our barley, our peas, our lentils, our mustard seed. These things keep our economy moving. They keep Saskatchewan families working. They put food on our table and allow this government to provide the quality services they have grown to expect by this government.

Part of the resilience seen in Saskatchewan in the past few months can be traced back to an attitude, an attitude that came with the election of a new government. Gordon Ashdown, the owner Can-West Agencies Ltd. in Saskatoon — it's a wholesale distribution company — Mr. Ashdown was quoted in several national newspapers about why Saskatchewan did so well in the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] survey I alluded to earlier. He said, "Just the business-friendly environment has made a huge difference in Saskatchewan."

It is a simple change in outlook that imbued Saskatchewan with the added measure of resilience during this tough economic times. Can we — say — simply will ourselves to doing better

just through changing our outlook and attitude? Some might be sceptical. The other side is sceptical. They are disingenuous about the attitude of the new Saskatchewan.

But I read a very interesting article in the September 13, 2009, edition of *The New York Times* Sunday magazine, and I will conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a few observations from that very important magazine article. It seems that happiness is in fact contagious. Two scientists named Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler used respected scientific data to make some remarkable new discoveries. The data is found in the famous Framingham heart survey. That study tracked about 15,000 people and their children for decades. The study was instrumental in helping doctors understand the root causes of heart disease.

However they were after something totally different and they found it. They used the survey results to establish a solid scientific basis for a theory that has been talked about for quite a while. The theory is that good behaviours like quitting smoking, losing weight, and being happy pass from friend to friend in a way very similar to a contagious virus. The September article states that there is much evidence to support the proposition that good health is also a product of your sheer proximity to other healthy people. The reason people are happy comes from having daily exposure to small moments of contagious happiness.

So, Mr. Speaker, I need you and the members of this Assembly to ponder the virtual cycle we are developing in our province. We have changed our attitude over the last few years, and that has allowed us to be more prosperous. With more prosperity comes increasing happiness and with that comes more prosperity. There are truly no limits to what we can accomplish now, Mr. Speaker. And given this, can you disagree with what our Premier so often notes? Is there absolutely any place in the world you'd rather be than right here in Saskatchewan? And I say no, especially under this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to speak . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a pleasure to speak this afternoon in terms of responding to the Throne Speech that was delivered last week.

It is a privilege to represent, all of us feel that, when we come back to the House — because we have been elected in elections, and of course I'll talk a minute about the by-elections but — it is a special privilege and we represent all the folks in our ridings. And I have to tell you . . . And of course our code of ethics talks about how we represent the people of Saskatchewan, and that's a very important thing to remember as we move forward.

My riding of Saskatoon Centre is a diverse riding. It has some of the wealthiest folks in the province of course in some of the condos and some of the houses we have. Of course some of the poorest people who live in the core communities and we have the challenges that we wrestle with and this government is faced with. And so when we come here to hear the Throne Speech, it is very, very important for us.

And I note that the member from Cannington mentioned earlier today that he couldn't believe it was the third Throne Speech they had delivered and how time is moving so quickly. And of course from our side and from far too many people in this province, time is moving way too slow especially with the type of leadership that's exhibited by this government.

I want to take a moment and just talk about the two new members we have on our side of the House. Of course we were victorious in the by-elections, and the people worked very hard. I can tell you the member from Riversdale worked tirelessly over the last several months to make sure she won that riding, and she comes from a strong, strong family who believes in social democracy, and this is a place where we need to talk about those issues. This is very, very important.

And I also want to talk about our leader, the new member from Regina Douglas Park, and I am delighted and very happy to be part of his team. He brings true leadership, true experience to this House. He knows what it takes to get the job done and done well, and that's what we really need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a minute to talk about the new cabinet ministers that we have. We have, I think there are five new cabinet ministers, and I'm looking forward to hearing them on their feet. We've heard one and I'll talk a minute about the new minister, the member from Wood Mountain, but I do want to say that I am looking forward to it.

Unfortunately we didn't hear the minister from Culture, Youth and Recreation talk about the Vancouver Olympic Games. I think that was a missed opportunity. These ministers need to get on their feet right away and show what they're made of and this is really, really important. It's all about being accountable.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if many people know this but, you know, one of the things I was looking for was, I was looking at the Minister of Culture's website. I wanted to see his mandate letter to see if it's changed. And I don't know if that minister knows his mandate letter's not there, so we don't know what his responsibilities are. In fact when I look around to see, the other new ministers, if their mandate letters are there, and they're not there. So I don't know if the new ministers have mandates or what they're all about. But I know in the old ministers, they do have mandate letters, and I'll talk a little bit about that later.

I do want to just relate one interesting story that happened on Saturday actually. It was an interesting time. The member from Wood Mountain and I and several members were at the . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I was there.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, the member from Cannington was there as well and talking about the things that government's have done

for the reservists. And I do want to take a minute and say that today's a good day for the reservists, and it was a good thing the government recognized.

But it was an interesting thing that happened, the general — General Walker I believe — recognized the legislation that was passed to protect jobs for reservists. That was passed about two years ago. In fact I remember, I remember a phone call I made to . . . At that time, I made a phone call to the leader of the opposition then, the now Premier. In fact I remember that phone call and I remember the guy. I remember it was on the direction of the premier that I should phone the leader of the opposition at his constituency office in Swift Current to see what we could do together.

And you know, we did talk about that, and talked about how we could work together to make this a better piece of legislation for the reservists. And it was a good thing. And I think even the member from Weyburn will recognize this because the member came out of his, reservist came out of his riding. That was really a big push for this legislation.

So here we have an opportunity, I think, that sometimes we can put ideology aside and do the right thing. And there was an opportunity for us to do the right thing. Phone calls did happen back and forth those weeks, and things happened fairly quickly. And so I think I'd just like to put that on the record, that I have made a phone call to the member of Swift Current. And I feel pretty proud of that and I'm not getting into too much trouble about that.

But you know, I want to say — and I probably will talk a little bit later after 7 o'clock — about this Throne Speech, about the Throne Speech and this idea of moving forward.

And you know, I remember the member from Swift Current, the Premier, last year talking about his affection for cartoons. He has this thing. He really likes to watch cartoons, and many of us do. And I think that this frame, this title, "Moving Forward" is very interesting. When I think about this, I get this image of the Road Runner, right? And all you see is this Road Runner, and then you see a cloud of dust. And you don't know, which way did they go? Did they go forward or did they go backward? All you know is they're gone.

And I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, all I feel is that the money is gone. There was a huge mistake. Something is missing in this picture when they say moving forward. What ever happened? And so when they try to frame this as a positive thing, I have some real concerns.

And of course there's not much new in this speech. And many people have talked about it. In fact *The StarPhoenix* has talked about it. And what is there is not there for working people. It represents ideology, bad choices, misplaced priorities, and real missed opportunities. And I'll talk more about it later — real missed opportunities.

But this is what *The StarPhoenix* said, October 22nd. It says "Throne speech," and I quote, "Throne Speech sets the stage to repeat history":

For a party still so relatively new at the task, the

government's speech from the throne spends an inordinate amount of attention looking back.

And everybody knows that this speech has not much substance, not really talking about moving forward — looking back. And in fact I know the Deputy Leader talked about the lack. Some 50 items and only 15 items are new items there.

I want to talk just for a minute about the needle exchange. And here's a quote from *The StarPhoenix*. *The StarPhoenix* in the same editorial said, and I quote:

A government proposal to change Saskatchewan's needle exchange program is also bound to draw friction, principally because it is wrong-headed and could ultimately lead to disaster. To be sure, a needle exchange that simply provides an endless supply of free needles is flawed.

If the government is serious about tackling this health issue, it would be far better to follow the peer reviewed literature and push for safe injection sites, such as the one in Vancouver that has a proven track record, than to bend to those who believe reducing free needles will reduce abuse.

Clearly the government is working from ideology and not from evidence. And we will support evidence-based procedures.

**The Speaker:** — Being now 5 p.m., this Assembly will recess until 7 p.m. this evening.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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