



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

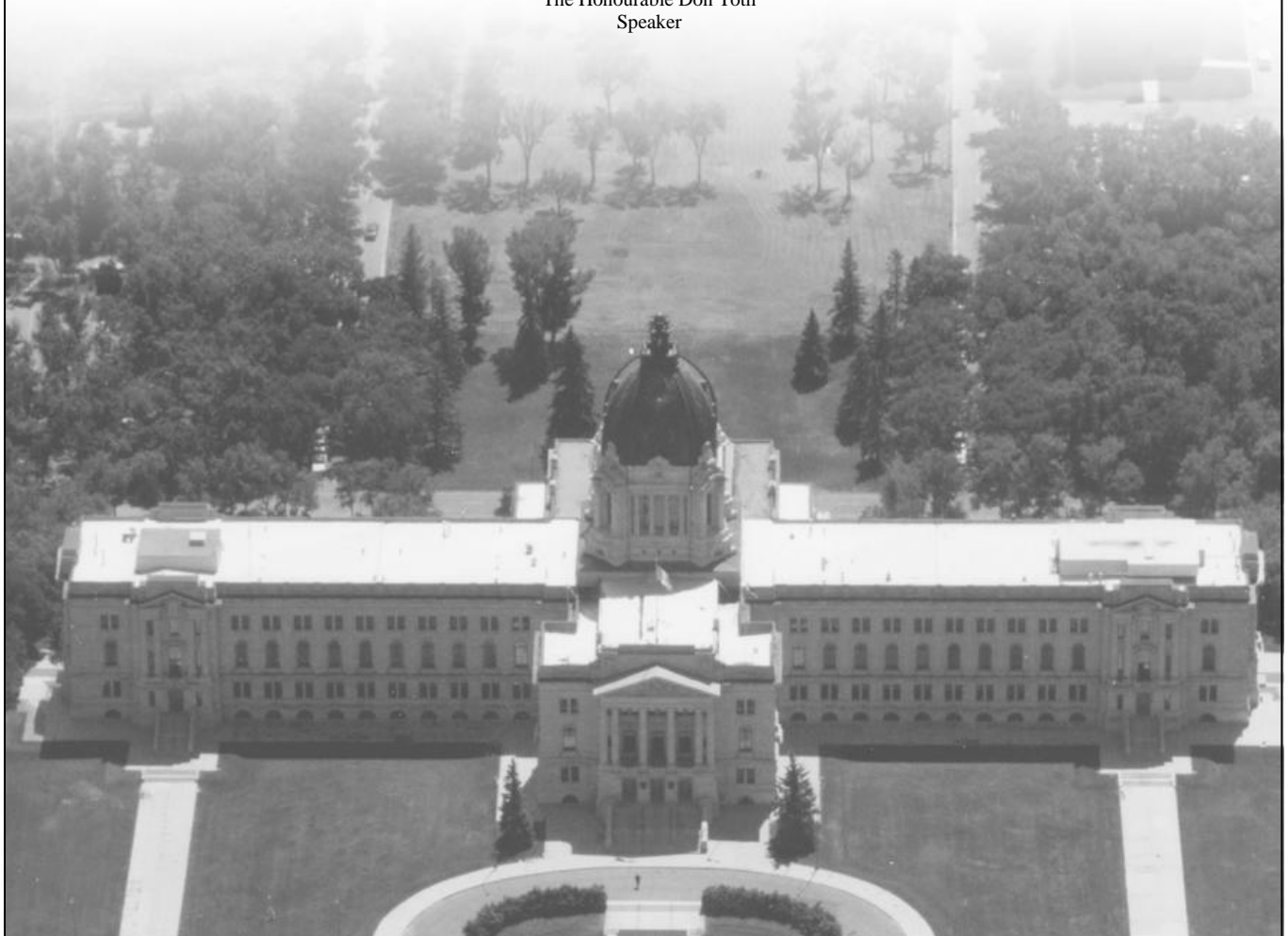
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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 member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to announce and welcome Mr. Ken Hughes to the Legislative Assembly. Ken is sitting in your gallery. Mr. Hughes is the former Member of Parliament for the constituency of Macleod in Alberta, and so our proceedings in the Assembly may bring back some fond parliamentary memories for him.

Ken is from Alberta, but make no doubt about it, he is a friend in Saskatchewan. Ken is the founder and president of Alpine Insurance and Financial brokerage in Alberta. Ken has a wealth of knowledge in governance, business, international affairs. He is an enthusiastic volunteer in Calgary for charities and the Calgary Stampede.

But Ken has also been helpful to Enterprise Saskatchewan in our meetings with the Midwest Research Institute. He can tell you more about microbial enhanced oil recovery than anybody I know. He's also been very helpful in assisting Alberta companies with which to expand and come to Saskatchewan. We've had some success in that area. So, Mr. Speaker, through you I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Ken Hughes to the Saskatchewan legislature today.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce some very special guests here today to the legislature, some members of the film and television community, the arts community here in Regina, that's where we are. If everybody would just give a wave when I say your name, that would be great. I'd like to introduce Ian Toews. He is the producer and director of *Landscape as Muse*, a Gemini award-winning production. Sandra Birdsell, author here and her book *The Russländer* was a finalist for the Giller Prize.

Director/writer, Rob King; Andrew Gordon, the president of IATSE [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees] 295; Jan Nowina-Zarzycki, president of Novina Motion Pictures. Lori Kuffner, the producer of *Drug Class* which the minister has talked quite highly of.

We have Jeannie Mah, Bob Ivanochko, Bernie Hernando and Levi Carlton, who are filmmakers. And I think we were expecting Layton Burton and Mark Wihak but I'm not sure if they've arrived yet. So, welcome to your legislature.

Please join me in welcoming the guests to our legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for

Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member opposite in welcoming our guests from the film and television industry to the gallery. Mr. Speaker, some of them I have met on previous occasions, others I have not. Certainly we look forward to, in the coming days and weeks, working with the industry as we look to move it forward, Mr. Speaker. And I again want to ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition of our highways. This particular petition applies to Highway 310, which has deteriorated to the point where it's now a potential safety hazard for the residents who have to drive on this highway each and every day. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 310 that the people of Saskatchewan need.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Ituna, Goodeve, Kelliher, and Lestock, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to present a petition that was put together by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition. This petition is in support of the implementation of the Saskatchewan scholarship fund. That would be the scholarship fund promised by the Sask Party in the 2007 provincial election. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement the promised Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

Mr. Speaker, today's signators are from Moose Jaw and Liberty. I so present.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present a petition in support of maintaining educational assistants in the province of Saskatchewan. Members will know that in November of 2009 the Ministry of Education published a

document that revealed significant reductions in the number of educational assistants in the province. And the prayer reads as follows:

Cause the government to provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the support they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina. I so present.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition today about the proposed harmonized sales tax. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan stand firmly opposed to the Sask Party government's stated intent to pursue the implementation of a harmonized sales tax and thereby increase the taxes which Saskatchewan people pay on a range of items including agricultural products, books, children's clothing, children's footwear, dentures, electricity, food and drink, hearing aids, medical devices, newspapers, optical appliances, and orthopedic appliances;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to recognize the hardship it would cause to the people of Saskatchewan if the government implemented a harmonized sales tax;

And in so doing to cause the provincial government to refrain from handing over taxing authority to the federal government.

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

And this is signed by petitioners from Vanscoy and Sedley.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for renters from unreasonable rent increases. And we know that many renters in Saskatchewan are facing a combination of rising rents and low vacancy rates in many communities, and we've seen some as high as more than \$200 or even higher, month over month. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protect Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from the city of Saskatoon.

I do so present. Thank you very much.

**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. With a waiting list of almost one full year for our seniors, that is unacceptable. 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 new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It 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 that has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition, a petition in support of affordable undergraduate tuition and a call on the Sask Party government to have their actions match their rhetoric. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement a long-term tuition management strategy in which tuition is increased by an average of 2 per cent or the most recent increase to the consumer price index.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to again present a petition in support of the expansion of the graduate retention program. The petition is signed by residents of Saskatchewan because the Saskatchewan Party government amended their retention program to specifically exclude students who graduated from post-secondary institutions outside of Saskatchewan and master's and Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] graduates. And 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. students.

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

Mr. Speaker, the three pages of signatures are from folks in Regina, Saskatoon, and Emerald Park. I so present.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on Sask Party's lack of action with respect to climate change:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

To cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, acknowledge and recognize that climate change is occurring and the impacts of climate change are escalating and worsening;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to undertake immediate actions to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, actions which will serve to protect Saskatchewan people from the significant costs to our economy, global security, and the quality of life which climate change threatens to bring about, and to also protect Saskatchewan people from longer and more frequent droughts, reduced river flows as the glaciers which feed our rivers shrink, erratic rainfall with more frequent and more serious flooding, and loss of at least the southern part of Saskatchewan's valuable boreal forest which is treasured by so many in our province;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, begin the process of creating a meaningful, significant, comprehensive, and broad-based strategy including enacting substantial and meaningful legislation and substantial and meaningful regulations, to meet the commitment solemnly pledged repeatedly in October and November of 2007 during the last provincial election by the Premier, the current member from Swift Current, who at the time of the last provincial election when he made this serious and significant commitment was serving as the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to reduce our province's greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent from the levels of greenhouse gas emissions which our province produced in the year 2007 and to meet said 32 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the year of Our Lord 2020, 10 years from now or one short decade away;

And in so doing, to cause the Premier to instruct his Minister of Environment, the current member from Martensville, to recognize the importance of honouring the Premier's solemnly pledged commitment and to set about the important task of developing a substantial and meaningful plan to seek a reduction of our province's levels of greenhouse gas emissions, rather than continuing to evade all responsibility in her duties to actually address this critically important issue which will directly affect our province's economy and the quality of life for all of our residents;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, reject the intensity-based reduction targets which the provincial Sask Party government has shamefully followed the federal Conservative government in adopting, in favour of absolute reduction targets, and to immediately enact said absolute reduction targets, and to immediately enact said

absolute reduction targets in the new management and reduction of greenhouse gases Act;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, reverse its ill-advised decision to cut all funding to the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative and to recognize that the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative is a valuable and much-needed organization in that it generates practical options to help Saskatchewan adapt to current and future impacts of climate change and fosters the development of new professionals in the emerging science of climate change impacts and adaptation;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, restore the full amount of funding which it recently cut to the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Creighton, Air Ronge, and La Ronge. I so present.

[13:45]

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan must recognize the value of all health care providers by having a commitment to adequate funding and the installation of good-faith bargaining in the provincial collective bargaining process. And the Saskatchewan government with its heavy-handed essential services legislation is making a mockery, Mr. Speaker, of the collective bargaining process in this province. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to negotiating a fair and just collective bargaining agreement with health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the petition is signed by residents in North Battleford, Battleford, and Meota. I so present.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan in respect to this government's disregard and disrespect for constitutional, legal, and human rights. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and the equality rights of all Saskatchewan couples, and to withdraw the reference to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal that would allow marriage commissioners to opt out of their legal obligation to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Prince Albert and Saskatoon. And I so submit.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive deficit budgets and they're expecting action on this front. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens of Saskatoon, Regina, and Weyburn. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition again today in support of the Saskatchewan film and television industry. This speaks to the fact that the industry, the Sask Party government has let the industry languish for two years and has recently kicked it to the curb with the closing of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to make changes to the film employment tax credit that will allow the Saskatchewan film industry to be more competitive with other provinces, to reverse its decision to shut down the Saskatchewan Communications Network, and to work with the industry to reverse the decline in film production.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the good residents of Moose Jaw, Liberty. That's it for today. I so present.

#### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

##### Ruling on a Point of Order

**The Speaker:** — Before statements by members, I have a statement in response to the point of order that was raised yesterday.

Yesterday I undertook to review the *Hansard* record in response to a point of order raised by the Government House Leader about comments made by the member for Regina Walsh Acres

in a member's statement. I reviewed the verbatim and I am prepared to rule on the matter.

At the outset I want members to know that I have serious concerns about the tenor of debate in recent weeks and what looks like a trend away from the principle of fair comment. My concern goes beyond the point of order raised yesterday. I think it is necessary to take a few moments to remind members about a few basic principles that seem to be forgotten from time to time.

First of all, members need go no further than our own rules that states members shall not use "offensive, provocative and threatening language." And also that members shall not make "personal charge or accusation against a Member." These rules should be familiar to members.

In addition the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, 2009, at pages 604 and 605 states, and I quote:

Since one of the basic principles of procedure in the House is that proceedings be conducted in terms of a free and civil discourse, Members are less apt to engage in direct heated exchanges and personal attacks when their comments are directed to the Chair rather than to another Member. If a Member directs remarks toward another Member and not the Speaker, he or she will be called to order and may be asked to rephrase the remarks.

I think members also realize that these basic principles are a reflection of our long-standing practices which Speakers have expressed time and again over the years. On April the 23rd, 1991, Speaker Tusa stated that reasonable comment did not include personal accusations, and members should treat each other with respect within the dignity and decorum of the House.

On March the 5th, 1993, Speaker Rolfes ruled that innuendo and personal reflections create disorder and that insinuations about other members, whether made in jest or not, is inappropriate. On December the 29th, 1996, Speaker Hagel, stated that personal attacks result in escalation and retaliation which become increasingly personal. He implored members to engage in forceful and spirited debate without having to resort to such venues.

On May the 12th, 2000, Speaker Osika ruled out of order a series of statements made in debate that attempted to connect certain members with criminal convictions. Speaker Osika went on to say provocations of offensive personal attacks exceed the bounds of fair debate. On March 23rd, 2001, he ruled out of order comments that alleged that a group of members, as part of a political party, were involved in illegal election acts.

On May the 10th, Speaker Kowalsky made this statement, which I shall quote:

... freedom of speech is considered fundamentally necessary under our democratic system. This privilege exists to allow members to perform legitimate functions in the legislature. This privilege also confers a grave responsibility to those who are protected by it.

Members must bear in mind the possible effects of certain

statements. It is not a legitimate function for members in debate to question directly or indirectly the integrity or motives of members individually or collectively.

All of these statements, made by many Speakers over a long period of time, demonstrate the principle that proceedings of the Assembly are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all members.

Recently certain members seem to have forgotten about this principle. This principle has been lost, despite recent rulings which I have called upon all members for their co-operation in addressing unparliamentary language and order and decorum. Despite my rulings and requests, the ugly personal attacks, innuendos, and insinuations continue. We had instances of this again yesterday. The member from Regina Walsh Acres in a member's statement made comments about the private affairs of the member for Kindersley. She also stated that the Premier had to have been involved in theft. I find these comments to be out of order.

If what I have said about the principles of fair comment in this place is not enough, I will cite what previous Speakers have said about similar comments. On March the 18th, 1999, Speaker Hagel stated the following:

... I notice his reference to the use of the word steal. And I think the hon. minister will recognize that it's improper to be using that word in debate to refer to the motives of other hon. members, and I'll ask him to withdraw that remark and continue his debate.

Similarly, Kowalsky brought a member to order on June 16, 2003 for using the word stole.

The member for Cannington who raised the point of order was also out of order yesterday for the comments he made in his member's statement. The member for Cannington also reflected on the character of the Leader of the Opposition.

Besides the principles I have outlined earlier in this ruling, I also want to point out Beauchesne's paragraph 486(1) makes it clear that members are not to reflect on the private character of another member. As previous Speakers have pointed out, personal attacks and innuendos have no place in the proceedings of this Assembly. The comments are hurtful and only create disorder and retaliation. I ask members not to make the period for members' statements also a series of attacks ads. I ask you to not bring personal attacks and offensive opinions into this Chamber.

I now call on the member for Cannington and the member for Regina Walsh Acres to rise, withdraw, and apologize for their unparliamentary remarks. I recognize the member from Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw those remarks and apologize.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to withdraw the

comments and apologize.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### CJWW Loses Familiar Voice

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, starting tomorrow the radio airwaves in Saskatchewan will not be the same. Many in our province will miss the voice familiar to all who listened to Saskatchewan's most listened to radio station, CJWW in Saskatoon. Steve Shannon has been a broadcaster and stand-up comedian for 30 years.

He has been involved in emceeding hundreds of community events including 25 years of announcing the Remembrance Day service in Saskatoon. He has an enthusiastic way with words and heartfelt connection to people that is truly unique. Steve received the B'nai Brith "We're Proud of You Award" in 2009, and his contribution as a volunteer to our province was acknowledged with the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal in 2005.

Today Steve is moving away from his broadcasting career to assume the position of CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation. He will have several months to shadow current CEO Randy Kershaw, and on July 1st the transition will be complete. Steve is no stranger to the foundation, having spent one decade on the volunteer board of directors.

Steve is a fabulous mimic, as many in this Chamber will know. His dead-on impressions of famous people such as the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker have audiences laughing every time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you and all my colleagues in the Assembly to join me today in congratulating Steve Shannon on his extensive broadcasting career and wishing him great success in the next chapter of his life.

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

### Saskatchewan Communications Network

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, TV in Saskatchewan won't be the same tomorrow either.

I would like to congratulate SCN on its nomination at the recent Saskatchewan Tourism Awards. The Saskatchewan Communications Network was nominated under the Corporate Partner of the Year category for the anthology video series titled *15 Minutes of Fame*. And what did they get for their recent achievements, Mr. Speaker? They got axed by the Sask Party government in last week's budget.

I know the Sask Party is in trouble with their math skills, but you think they should understand the financial benefit that SCN provides to the province. In 2007 SCN spent \$1.6 million on a broadcast licence which multiplied tenfold into a staggering \$17

million in production. Even over the last two years, with the Sask Party trying to drive the film industry to dust, SCN still managed to help leverage \$3.3 million of out-of-province dollars into the provincial film industry last year.

And, Mr. Speaker, even the Premier sees the value of SCN. He filmed a recent ad supporting Local TV Matters campaign, and he says, "Our life is much richer because we have local television."

Once again, we cannot trust what this government says. They pledge their support for local television, but in the next breath they completely cut SCN and the local services that it provides. Mr. Speaker, if this is how the government treats those who put Saskatchewan on the international and national stage and bring millions of dollars into the province, I'd hate to see how they treat those who do more modest and still important work.

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

### Support for Project Hero

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In today's *Leader-Post* there's a letter to the editor from two professors at the U of R [University of Regina] opposed to Project Hero. Mr. Speaker, these professors repeat their opposition to the project. They say that Project Hero glorifies war. I assume they think the same of the Scholarship of Honour, an initiative of this government supported by both sides of this Assembly. They also go on to say that Canada's military efforts in Afghanistan represent Canadian imperialism.

Mr. Speaker, is it imperialism when Canadian soldiers help to open schools for young girls? Is it imperialism when Canadian soldiers bring water to impoverished communities? Is it imperialism when Canadian soldiers rid Afghanistan of terrorist training camps that are a danger to all people in our country?

Of course it isn't, Mr. Speaker, especially when those soldiers will leave when the job is done. Mr. Speaker, it is a ridiculous statement to equate the service of these men and women to Canadian imperialism. By the grace of God and the continued courage of our young women and men in uniform, there will always be heroes in the Canadian military. We should honour them, Mr. Speaker. And I would hope members on both sides of the House will stand in support of those heroes and against the position of these professors.

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

### Student and Kids Centre

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, SAKs, the Student and Kids Centre located at Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon, is a non-profit organization funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada. The centre opened in 1994 to support student parents attending Nutana Collegiate. The SAKs Centre is open to all student parents as a drop-in centre where students can go for coffee and chat with staff.

The centre offers support groups on parenting, healthy relationships, literacy for families, and healthy cooking. The

centre also provides counselling, support, information, and referrals to other community services. SAKs directs students to agencies providing services for health, shelter, legal information, social services, First Nations and Métis culture, government services, post-secondary education, and employment training.

[14:00]

SAKs is also committed to broadening a connection to the larger community by partnering with other agencies to offer greater opportunities for student parents. SAKs success is measured by the success of the parents benefiting from these programs. Two project coordinators include Lise Kossick-Kouri and Kristine Divall. Board members include teachers at Nutana and professionals from the surrounding community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Nutana Collegiate and the SAKs Centre for the positive and dynamic work done with student parents, enabling them to continue their education and build stronger lives for themselves and their children, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate them for 16 years of successful work.

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

### Statistics for Weekly Earnings

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It must really irk the members opposite to hear good news about the province of Saskatchewan, even though business owners, workers, and those looking for work continue to see this province as a place to be. Day after day the tired, old NDP [New Democratic Party] has to manufacture reasons to tear Saskatchewan down.

Today's latest numbers from Stats Canada showed that the average weekly earnings were up 4.1 per cent over last year for the month of January. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the average weekly earnings for Saskatchewan rose to \$828.24. We also have the second highest provincial increase when it comes to average weekly earnings.

What this shows, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of Saskatchewan are moving forward. But this number reveals another thing, Mr. Speaker. This significant increase in the average weekly earnings show that the tired, old NDP is detached from the reality here in Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, pretty soon the term NDP will become just another synonym for the words tired and old.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the good people of this province for their hard work in moving Saskatchewan forward. These numbers are a reflection of their commendable work ethic and industrial spirit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Regina Food Bank Opens Village Market Grocery Store

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to profile the Regina Food Bank's new Village Market, a small grocery store that caters to food bank clientele. It offers core



grocery and household products at a significantly reduced price. Our NDP leader and MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], including myself, had a chance to tour this facility just before Christmas. It is indeed an impressive facility.

The Village Market was sparked by an idea from food bank CEO Wayne Hellquist, who recognizes the increasing need for food security in Regina. It was from this idea that Hellquist, Steve Compton, and the staff and board of the food bank set out to make this vision a reality in our city. The concept is the first of its kind in Canada and North America. It is noted that food bank hampers do not always supply a well-rounded diet, often missing core grocery items. Hellquist states, “This is not a hand-out for people. It provides dignity for people being able to shop for their own food . . .”

The market is made possible by partnership with commercial grocers and support from corporate donors. This market serves another proud example of Saskatchewan people coming together with common sense and ingenuity to serve our community. I believe that this market will become a model for other communities across North America. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to recognize and thank the leadership from Regina’s food bank for pioneering this innovative program and to thank all of its donors and partners for their support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Protecting the Wild Ponies of the Bronson Forest

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Horse Federation nominated our Lloydminster MLA for an award that recognizes his efforts to protect the wild ponies of the Bronson Forest:

“Tim contacted us personally, and we were immediately impressed by his initiative and genuine enthusiasm and interest in the welfare of Saskatchewan’s wild ponies. It is important to simply raise awareness on the plight of these animals and his accomplishments greatly surpassed that goal,” said Mae Smith, executive director of the Saskatchewan Horse Federation. “Our province can hopefully enjoy these beautiful ponies for many generations because of Mr. McMillan’s efforts and that is extraordinary.”

During the 2009 fall session of the legislature, Bill 606, *An Act to protect the Wild Ponies of the Bronson Forest* was passed. The member from Lloydminster was responsible for the introduction of the Bill.

The member from Lloydminster was presented the Equine Welfare Award which recognizes a person who has taken an active role in effectively conveying equine welfare issues and raising awareness for the general public and the agri-food industry. He was presented with the award at the Saskatchewan Horse Federation’s annual convention on March 13th.

Today there are only 37 ponies left in the Bronson Forest. Through the efforts of many dedicated people, we hope that they will be around for generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Film Industry Issues

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, today hundreds of people rallied to say thank you to SCN but not goodbye. They can’t believe this government would shut down a public broadcaster that spent more than 70 per cent of its annual programming budget buying Saskatchewan-made content and triggered millions, millions of dollars in investment from out of this province. A post at the SCN Matters group on Facebook, more than 3,600 members and growing, describes the impact on the film industry: “Closing SCN is like cutting the roots of the tree and still expecting it to grow.”

To the minister: why is this government cutting the roots from underneath the Saskatchewan film industry?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member that there is support still in place for the film and television industry in this province in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, we are providing the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker. That hasn’t changed. Budget will be provided towards SaskFilm, Mr. Speaker. That hasn’t changed. Mr. Speaker, obviously the sound stage still exists in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker, and the operation of that is not going to change, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly appreciate the amount of number of people that have expressed their thanks to SCN and to the employees of SCN. I join with them in thanking those employees that have worked for SCN over the last 20 years, who have served this province. But I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the member is not correct when . . . Mr. Speaker, the member is not fully aware of what is in the budget because support does still exist in the province of Saskatchewan when it comes to the film and television industry.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the problem with the film employment tax credit is that it didn’t change.

Mr. Speaker, Ian Toews operates 291 Film Company here in Regina and is the producer and director of the Gemini award-winning SCN program *Landscape as Muse*, among others. SCN invested about \$327,000 since 2004 to buy programming from Ian’s company. That investment generated more than three times that amount, more than \$1.1 million in out-of-province investments — new dollars.

Ian’s here today, and he wants to know why this government is shutting down a broadcaster that has brought so many investment dollars into Saskatchewan’s economy and created

millions in spinoffs for local businesses. To the minister: why is this government chasing film industry jobs and investment out of the province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty rich to hear, from the NDP, talk about chasing people out of this province because when they were government 35,000 people left the province of Saskatchewan. Under this government, 30,000 people have come to Saskatchewan over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, as we were . . . [inaudible] . . . to formulate our budget, we wanted to make sure that we're using taxpayers' dollars in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, in the 20 years that SCN has existed, the number of broadcast channels has exploded, Mr. Speaker. Twenty years ago SCN was one of maybe 20 or 30 channels available. Today it numbers in the hundreds, Mr. Speaker, and that doesn't include the fact that people get their programming and their news through other sources like the Internet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be working with the industry. Ministry officials have met with SaskFilm already today, Mr. Speaker. We're meeting with SMPA [Saskatchewan Motion Picture Association] tomorrow. There's going to be a working group brought together next month, Mr. Speaker, as we look to move the industry forward.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — This is the problem, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, decisions get made before they talk to people in the industry. And speaking of chasing people out of the province, we're okay . . . We want to retain people unless they're film people?

Mr. Speaker, SCN has given many young Saskatchewan filmmakers their start. I've been inundated with email and phone calls from film students who see no future in this province without SCN — inundated with phone calls and emails. One wrote:

A few years ago I was excited to know that I was part of something greater than myself — a rising film industry in Canada that was making a name for itself. Now my government has abandoned me and other artists like me.

Another wrote:

Personally I love Saskatchewan and was planning to pursue a career here. Why am I, a resident that has just put \$40,000 into education in Saskatchewan, not important to the government?

To the minister: why is this government driving young filmmakers out of the province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, again I will remind the member that support remains in place in this budget in terms of funding to SaskFilm through the film employment tax credit and with the sound stage here in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, obviously we are working . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask members to allow, give the minister the same opportunity as the member had to place the question, so those interested in hearing the answer can hear it. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly one of the things that we are looking at is what happens with the CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] licence that had been granted to SCN. I can tell the members opposite that there is a process that's going to be beginning very shortly where we will look to see what interested parties there are that have an interest in the licence, Mr. Speaker. We're working with the CRTC, Mr. Speaker.

The member will know that Saskatchewan is one of only four other provinces that did have a public . . . do have an educational broadcaster, Mr. Speaker. But there is the experience of another province, Mr. Speaker, that did have an educational broadcaster that moved on into the private sector, Mr. Speaker, and it still exists to this day.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last SCN annual report indicated that 16 per cent of Saskatchewan people watch SCN, not 4 per cent — 16 per cent. And those viewers are upset. Carol from Avonlea phoned my office and talked about the work SCN has done on drug awareness.

The minister himself praised *Drug Class* just not very long ago, an award-winning show about substance abuse which many people credit for helping to turn their lives around. He described it as an exceptional show, powerful and poignant, and a valuable resource for students, parents, and teachers. That's what this minister said just a few months ago at the SCN premiere for *Drug Class*. To the minister: what changed your mind?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, when we were formulating our budget, we needed to look at how government is using taxpayers' dollars in the most efficient and effective manner, Mr. Speaker. Certainly a number of programs that have aired on SCN, we certainly hope that those will find other broadcasters, Mr. Speaker. We are working with all of the production companies, that we have existing contracts through SCN, to ensure that we honour all of those existing contracts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be working, as we have in the past, we're going to be working with the industry to move it

forward, Mr. Speaker, in a time that has seen a number of other jurisdictions across North America see productions reduced. It is a cyclical industry, Mr. Speaker. Right now we are in one of those periods, but we look to move the industry forward, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Chiropractic Services

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow — after 38 years of coverage — the Sask Party government will delist chiropractic care. As a result, 125,000 patients per year will be paying hundreds of dollars in chiropractic care fees. Mr. Speaker, there's still time for the minister to see the error in his ways.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he admit this is not a well-thought-out plan, reverse his decision to delist chiropractic care, and stop punishing the Saskatchewan people for his government's fiscal mismanagement?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we've had this discussion many times on this floor and debated the subject. Mr. Speaker, we are moving in the direction that many other provinces have. In fact we're doing better than most provinces.

There are many other provinces to the east of us, not including Manitoba, that do not cover chiropractic service at all. We are joining in with British Columbia and Alberta that are covering for low-income, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba remains the only province that are covering chiropractic service to the limit of 12. Mr. Speaker, that is the decision that our government has made.

I find it absolutely curious, though, because today she's arguing why don't we fund a private provider in a public system, Mr. Speaker? How does that work, when yesterday all they could complain about is putting private providers into a public system?

[14:15]

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, in January a deal was reached with the chiropractors. A joint press release was written in which the minister said, and I quote, "I'm pleased that we've reached a deal." Then the minister refused to sign the deal. Mr. Speaker, I have a March 25th letter written from the president of the Chiropractors' Association to the minister that says, "You [meaning the minister] have made a mockery of the collective bargaining process."

Mr. Speaker, what message is this sending to any group or organization who bargain with the government? How does anyone trust this government and that Premier in future negotiations?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, that it would not be prudent for any government to move forward and sign a contract that they couldn't fund. Mr. Speaker, we were not about to sign a contract that we couldn't fund because what we would have had is a signature on the bottom of a contract that would've had to have been ripped up.

Do you remember that, Mr. Speaker? I remember a GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] contract that thousands of producers signed with that government and had it ripped up in front of their faces, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — I can't believe this minister can stand in his place and talk about prudent. If we're talking about what's prudent, they have no leg to stand on — last year's budget, this year's budget, absolutely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, from the time the minister announced the delisting of the . . . The implementation date was one week, seven days. Chiropractors today don't know if they can refer patients for X-rays or to a specialist. That's absurd. Mr. Speaker, chiropractors have agreements for services with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], and private insurance companies that end tomorrow and have to be renegotiated. Well we understand what he knows about negotiation, so perhaps he missed this.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario allowed a 6-month transition period, and Alberta allowed a 3-month transition period. Will the minister at the very least move the implementation date to July 1st to allow for a smoother transition?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, this question was asked a number of days ago regarding referral. The only thing that has changed, Mr. Speaker, is our government is no longer subsidizing a portion of the visits. If chiropractors referred in the past, they will be able to continue to refer into the future, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't change.

What changes is the portion of subsidization that our government covers, Mr. Speaker. And it's interesting. Some of the cases we've seen come forward, the one just recently in the media, the person was at the chiropractor about 130 times. There isn't a province or state in the country that would cover that many visits, Mr. Speaker. We will cover, what we will cover . . . 12 visits, Mr. Speaker, for low-income as in Alberta and 10 in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, that is a new low in this House, to bring a patient's name and circumstance into this debate. He referenced who was mentioned when . . . I mean this is not very hard to find the . . . [inaudible] . . . Anyway, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow chiropractic patients will be forced to seek care from emergency rooms, general practitioners, and specialists because they can't afford the treatment. This off-loading onto the health

system will increase wait times and add extra costs. This is typical Sask Party math. Save a dollar; pay three.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has chosen to disregard any assertion that delisting chiropractic care will cost the government more than it saves. Will the minister today, Mr. Speaker, have the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council conduct a study to determine the actual human and financial impact and financial . . . the costs of delisting chiropractic care tomorrow?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I've said from the outset, this budget that was introduced last week is a record budget. Every province in Canada is seeing increases. We were able to bring a budget in that sees spending less this year than we saw last year, Mr. Speaker, it's something we should be very proud of. The unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, is we have to go through line by line on every expenditure and make difficult decisions. This was not an easy decision for our government, to no longer subsidize chiropractic services. I have said from the outset that there is no question about the efficacy of their services, Mr. Speaker. That is not the issue whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, but difficult decisions have to be made.

This decision has been made in every other province, Mr. Speaker, reducing the amount of subsidy and in many provinces — nine provinces and territories — where the subsidy has been completely eliminated, Mr. Speaker. We are following along with the provinces to the West, British Columbia and Alberta.

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

### Health Care Provision

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, instead of investing funds in the Regina ambulatory care centre, the minister has decided to invest in the private system. The Sask Party's surgical initiative plan talks about, and I quote, "Ensuring that shorter wait times can be sustained into the future." Can the minister enlighten the House and advise us how he's going to sustain shorter wait times into the future when he has chosen not to invest in the publicly owned infrastructure, and is it all going to be done through the private system?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly . . . I think the editorial in today's *Leader-Post* explains it very, very well. And I'm just going to quote from that editorial, and it says, "So a pair of small private clinics, whose services, significantly, would be covered by the provincial health . . . dollars [Mr. Speaker], would hardly amount to privatizing the vast health-care system . . ."

Mr. Speaker, what they're trying to . . . they're trying to frame it that we're privatizing the health care system. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we are doing is ensuring quicker time, quicker, shorter wait times, Mr. Speaker, for people in this province. But that's exactly what they've asked for for the Patient First Review. It's unfortunate that they're letting their ideology get in the way of some very good decisions.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, on Monday the minister announced part of his plan . . . is to quote, "Making better use of acute care beds through timelier patient transitions to long term [care] beds." Now last year, the Sask Party broke its promise to fund 13 long-term care facilities that were not creating new capacity but were replacing existing beds.

So to the minister, we want to understand his new plan. How does this work? He's going to move people into long-term care beds when he's not building any new capacity, and in fact he's cancelled 13 long-term care facilities.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all, let's make sure that the members opposite understand that there are 13 long-term care facilities that are going to be built in this province. Those 13 long-term care facilities will replace aging facilities that quite unfortunately, through many, many years of neglect under the NDP government . . . they failed to get it done . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, there are 13 facilities around the province that will be built. Mr. Speaker, once the community has their share in place, once the scoping has been completed, those facilities will move forward. They are much needed facilities. And unfortunately you don't have to go too far in our province to see neglect from 16 years of NDP government, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's in education, whether it's in health care, we are moving on it, Mr. Speaker. As soon as the communities are ready and their funds are in place, we'll be there.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, they sure are moving on it because they've reduced 115 long-term care beds in the province of Saskatchewan since coming to government. They've eliminated them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy only gets worse because one of the first things the Sask Party did was cut the dental sealant program for schoolchildren in core neighbourhoods. Now the minister is trying to tell us the government is "working to improve children's oral health in populations at risk." Now does anyone know what's going on over there?

To the minister: how can he cut the dental sealant program and improve children's oral health?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly children's oral health was identified in the surgical care initiative. As we move

forward, as a preventative measure, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at how we can best do that because certainly the prevention of oral disease in the outset certainly saves money in the long term, and we are moving in that direction, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are making many steps. First of all, it's funny that they would only . . . for the longest time look at third-party delivery instead of looking at the whole surgical care initiative, which quite frankly is selling very well throughout the province.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister's plan also provides an additional 2,500 MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] and CT [computerized tomography] scans through the private system. And so I guess to the minister: can the minister enlighten the House and the population on where are these new private MRI and CT scanners going to be located and how much is this going to cost the public system?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I feel I have to stand and at the start of each question, answer for me, from her question . . . is I have to correct the misinformation that is being spread by that member. Number one, that there are going to be 25 more CT-MRI scans. They're not all going to be done in the private system that that member mentioned. There is capacity that we can work on within the public system. We're already doing that. We've made great strides in the two and a half years, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, there is private delivery of health care services from British Columbia to Quebec and probably past into the Maritimes — I haven't looked into that — but there is private delivery across Canada both on diagnostics and on surgical care, Mr. Speaker. We're the outlier, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure we're there for patients as we move forward.

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

#### Selection of a Chief Electoral Officer

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has rejected the candidate chosen by a bipartisan committee for the position of Chief Electoral Officer and has not provided a reason. By doing this, a *StarPhoenix* article says, “. . . the unmistakable impression is created that the only reason the Saskatchewan Party would refuse his appointment would be an effort to gerrymander the electoral boundaries or to subvert the electoral process by stacking the office.”

Is the Premier today less excited about his fixed election date and more excited about a date for a fixed election?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like the member opposite and the members of the House to know that I contacted yourself earlier this week with a request that you initiate a

meeting of the Board of Internal Economy so that we can attempt to move this process on.

Mr. Speaker, I had indicated earlier in the House that the selection of the Chief Electoral Officer is not a decision made by one individual, one committee, or one party. It is not a committee decision. It is not a Board of Internal Economy decision, Mr. Speaker. It is not an opposition decision. It is not a government members' decision. It is not a media decision. It is a choice of all of the members in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I read section 4(3) of the Act earlier, and I will read it again: “The Chief Electoral Officer shall be appointed by resolution of the Assembly.” Mr. Speaker, it does not say anything in there that there shall be a committee or a process in there that will subvert that meaning of that section, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, the selection is a selection of the Legislative Assembly which has been appropriated by the Premier of the province. Will the Premier make it absolutely clear why he will not accept the candidate chosen by the bipartisan committee for the position of Chief Electoral Officer? And if not, will he agree to call a public inquiry into this matter?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members opposite to focus and to direct their mind on the specific issues that are in the legislation. Mr. Speaker, for greater clarity, I will refer them to section 4.3 of the Act, which talks about the appointment of an interim officer. That one says that when the Chief Electoral Officer has resigned or is ill or is otherwise unable to, then the Board of Internal Economy appoint.

Mr. Speaker, that is a fundamentally different section than 4(3) which talks about a resolution of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, they are two different processes. And the process that we are under now, Mr. Speaker, is the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer. It is imperative that the Chief Electoral Officer enjoy the confidence of all members of the Assembly, not just the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that this particular officer enjoyed the confidence of the Minister of Justice until he was told, until he was told to withdraw his recommendation, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite will also know, Mr. Speaker, that their actions have devastated the morale and the national reputation of our elections office. Will the Premier withdraw his veto and restore credibility to the electoral office in Saskatchewan?

[14:30]

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I am one member of the Board of Internal Economy as is the member from Regina Dewdney. We each represent our respective caucuses. We take information back and forth. We share the information with our caucuses. Recommendations come forward.

What we want to have, Mr. Speaker, is a process that we can bring the name of a proposed candidate to this House and have that candidate pass, either unanimously or with as many people as is possible, Mr. Speaker. There is no reason in the world that we should be having this kind of debate that embarrasses any one, particular individual, Mr. Speaker. This is a system that should be fair, apolitical, impartial, and those members should realize it, Mr. Speaker. And they should accept it and work towards finding that resolution.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member for Cannington on his feet?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I ask the member from Cannington to state his point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from *Hansard* yesterday, page 4579, I would like to quote the Leader of the Official Opposition and he said, and I quote, and I quote, “people could care less whether it was privatized, referring to medicare.” Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was talking about the Minister of Health. On page 4580 he said as well, and I quote the Leader of the Official Opposition, “I want to quote from the minister when he said, people could care less whether it was privatized, referring to medicare.”

I would now like to quote what the Minister of Health actually said. And I quote, “When a person is put into an ambulance here in Regina or Saskatoon, they could care less whether it was private.” Period, Mr. Speaker. The word privatize was never used. Clearly the member from Regina Douglas Park was editorializing, Mr. Speaker, not quoting. Quotes need to be accurate not editorial comment. I would ask that the Leader of the Official Opposition withdraw that remark and apologize for misleading the House.

**The Speaker:** — First of all let me say this, and then I'll recognize the member if he wants to respond.

As I was listening, it seems to me that the point being raised by the Government House Leader is more a point of debate and a point of difference and misunderstanding in the Assembly. And I really do not feel that the point that the Government House Leader at this time is really a point of order. It's a point that could be raised in debate between members of the Assembly.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1098 through 1136.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 1098 through 1136 are tabled.

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Yates.]

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm coming close to the end of my remarks, but I do want to put something on the public record.

Last night the Minister of Education launched quite an attack on the Education critic for the opposition, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, which is myself. Fair enough, Mr. Speaker, fair enough — he can say what he has to say about Education capital. He can say what he has to say about infant child daycare in the province of Saskatchewan.

But the one issue that I think the minister was not being totally honest and forthright on was a letter that he read parts of, that I had sent to him, into the public record. Now the minister is correct. I sent a letter to him on February 11, 2010. And I indicated in that letter that I was contacted by a citizen, and I was asked to bring a number of issues to his attention. I indicated in this letter on several occasions that I understood from the citizen . . . and I went on and on. I said I'd been told by the citizen, and at the end I said . . . and I want to put this into the public record:

There are many other issues that have been brought to my attention regarding governance in the City of Humboldt. This city does not have its own ward and this is seen as a significant problem. I would appreciate [and I'm quoting from the letter, I would appreciate] your response to these few issues I have been asked to raise with you. I would appreciate an opportunity to have a further discussion with you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I thought, as an elected member of the opposition, I had every right to send a letter to the Minister of Education on behalf of someone who had written me. I don't know this person. This is a person that lives in the city of Humboldt. And I indicated to that person that I would write the minister on their behalf, and I did. I asked a series of questions. I asked for clarification on behalf of that citizen who I do not know.

And what did the minister do? He took my letter and he said

that I had insulted teachers, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to put it into the public record. The minister and I can have a debate about school capital. The minister and I can have a debate about question period. But when I send a letter to a minister of the Crown on behalf of a citizen, I don't expect that minister to misrepresent, misrepresent what I have written in a letter on behalf of the citizen. When I'm asking questions and clarification on behalf of that citizen, I presume that the minister will not take that letter out of context which he did.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there has to be some honour here. We can have debates about who said what. But when you send a letter on behalf of a citizen, I don't expect that letter to be read into the record in the Assembly out of context. And I would really appreciate the minister . . . If we're going to, as MLAs in the opposition, to write letters on behalf of constituents, I would urge the government not to read into the record a letter and not read the whole letter so that people can understand the context within which that letter was sent.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, the respect that I showed the minister at the end of the letter . . . when I said:

I would appreciate your response to these few issues I've been asked to raise with you. I would appreciate an opportunity to have a further discussion with you.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is a teacher . . . was, was a teacher, no longer belongs to the profession. I am a teacher. And I would think that when we're at least corresponding with each other, we could at least be respectful which I think I have tried to be with that minister.

And I didn't expect, Mr. Speaker . . . I expected the school capital question, and yes, he could give me heck about that. He can give me heck about the questions I ask in the House about infant child daycare. But I would urge the minister to show grace, show grace in this Assembly when a member of the opposition writes him a respectful letter on behalf of a citizen — who I do not know — seeking clarification on behalf of that citizen. I would expect the minister to show some grace and not read parts of the letter into the record but not all of the letter into the record.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be some honour, and there has to be some class. And I would hope — it may not take place in this forum — but I would hope that when a member of the opposition or any member of the legislature writes a letter to the minister that it wouldn't be read into the record only bits and pieces but not the whole letter with the whole context, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have put my remarks on the public record. I obviously have great difficulty with this budget, great difficulty. I think this budget is a dishonest budget. It is quite clear that not only are we going to have a 660-odd million dollar deficit — the second deficit since this government came to office — but they've moved a lot of that deficit off budget, really, onto health boards. We'll see what the real deficit will be at mid-year, I suppose, or next year. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that we left them with \$2.3 billion in cash. They have essentially spent it all, and we still have a debt, a deficit last two years of over \$1.2 billion.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would take my place and I would thank the members for listening to what I have to say on this budget. And I can tell you that I will in fact be supporting the amendment to the budget.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the budget debate, Mr. Speaker, as it is every year, as it has been for me as the MLA for Swift Current, whether I've sat on that side of the House or this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, I am mindful today of those I serve in Swift Current, those constituents who first sent me to this place in September of 1999, and I want to just say for the record, put on the record my gratitude to them for the chance to serve, for the chance to represent them here in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to, on the occasion of this budget speech, as I do in any address in reply to a Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, is put on the record my gratitude for all of those who help me carry out the duties I have, both as the MLA and the other job I'm honoured to have, Mr. Speaker. Those who are a part of this team, the women and men that make up this caucus, at the top of that list, Mr. Speaker, and others who, on the staff side, who do a great service to the province. And most importantly, to my family, Mr. Speaker, back home in Swift Current — to Tami and Megan and Colter and Faith for their constant support and encouragement — and I just want to again state for the record how grateful I am to them for the chance to serve in this way.

We have had a change in our constituency office here recently as a constituency assistant that has worked in our office in Swift Current for some time has now joined the staff here in the legislature and is helping people with their health care files in the able Minister of Health's office, Mr. Speaker. And so back home in Swift Current — maybe watching on TV, but probably not because she'll be working on casework for constituents — is Nola Smith who I want to welcome to our team and thank her as well for the service she provides to the constituents in Swift Current.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there has been much debate in this Assembly and around the province about this particular budget and the decisions the government has taken. There's been some debate obviously in this Assembly about the nature of the budget, whether it is balanced and whether there is a surplus or whether there is not a surplus, Mr. Speaker. And you know it's very interesting because on the very first day of the budget debate, I guess, when the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to stand in his place and give the reply to the budget, the first reply to the government with respect to the budget . . . And by the way, by the way, it was a unique budget day, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

As I recall . . . I haven't been around that long, but people like the member for Cannington, well they have been around a little longer, and I've asked him, Mr. Speaker, this question. We can't remember a day, we can't remember a budget day in the province of Saskatchewan where the Finance critic, who has to do all the work over on that side . . . and we know something about that on this side of the House. We've had very able Finance critics: the current Deputy Premier, the current Minister

of Enterprise. They were all Finance critics. And we know the amount of work that goes into that in advance of the budget to make the opposition's case to hold the government accountable. We know the amount of work that goes into the budget during the lockdown when the opposition members get that particular budget document, and we know the amount of work the Finance critic does.

You know in this case, the member for Regina . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Rosemont.

[14:45]

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Regina Rosemont. The member for Regina Rosemont's done a lot of work. We don't agree with the things necessarily that he has said. But no one can doubt his passion, no one can doubt the fact that he has taken his job as the Finance critic very seriously on behalf of the opposition.

And here he was on budget day, his chance to make the case for the opposition to hold the government accountable. And for the first time that I could ever remember or even the much more veteran member for Cannington can ever remember, the Leader of the Opposition stood in his place and did all of the work on budget day, did the scrum, did all the press conference, and then stood up in his place when the galleries are filled to make his case for the opposition. Mr. Speaker, I thought it was strange. I thought it was strange.

We understand on this side of the House, when it comes to building a budget, we understand the importance of teamwork. We understand that the Minister of Finance . . . We were in opposition. The critic for Finance has a lot of work to do in advance of the budget and on budget day and thereafter.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is a special day for either the critic or the minister — in our case, our minister — to be able to stand up and deliver a budget for the province of Saskatchewan. And we know, Mr. Speaker — on this side of the House anyway; I can't speak for that Leader of the Opposition opposite obviously — but we know on this side of the House the importance of teamwork and the importance of our Minister of Finance to stand in his place on budget day and deliver what I think are, and what the national media I think are referring to if only indirectly, as the strongest set of financial sheets of any province in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Speaker. But on that day when the Opposition Leader took his place to talk about the NDP's position with respect to this budget, he referred to our green sheet.

A green sheet is the summary that comes and has come with most budgets for some period of time. In fact it's a tradition that dates back to the previous administration. The previous NDP government used to issue a green sheet. And it's not a prop. It's what I'm going to read from, Mr. Speaker. But I happen to have it and this is actually the shade that it comes in and it has always come in, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the Opposition Leader tried to paint this picture of the budget as being, well not balanced. And he quoted some things from this particular green sheet in our budget, some numbers that showed the summary deficit surplus at about, in

our — this is actually from an earlier budget — but well south of 600 million on a summary basis. He showed the summary deficit, did the Leader of the Opposition, and then he highlighted the fact that revenues and expenditures were, there was a difference between revenues and expenditures in our budget of about \$190 million or so. And so then, he went to great lengths to say that the government was not then presenting the budget as balanced because of what was evidence on the green sheet he was quoting from, Mr. Speaker.

Well I've got a green sheet here from 2007 and 2008. And here's what's on that green sheet in wording that is almost identical to what we saw from the previous administration, from the NDP when they presented their budget.

Here is the NDP budget 2007-2008. It says right at the top, General . . . Well, and the member for Rosemont will want to hear this. It says at the top of the sheet, General Revenue Fund in surplus for the 14th consecutive year. But when you look down, Mr. Speaker, when you look down at the numbers, you see that there's actually an operating deficit, that revenues are below expenditures by over \$500 million. Not \$190 million to be taken from the cash account, from the savings account, but a half a billion dollars, the NDP said in their budget, they would take, they would take from their savings account, which by the way finally had cash in it.

Because people in this Assembly will remember and people watching will remember, that it wasn't very long ago, under the NDP, where they had this savings account with no actual cash in it, Mr. Speaker. In fact it was a debt instrument. It was a line of credit. So as you took more from the savings account, the debt of the province actually went up. And we've worked hard, by the way, to reduce the debt of the province we've inherited from members opposite. We reduced the GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt by 40 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this is the NDP budget now that they said was a balanced budget. Members opposite said it was a balanced budget. And they highlight the fact that revenues were going to be short of expenditures by 500 million and that the summary deficit was \$700 million, Mr. Speaker. But that was a balanced budget.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, some enterprising people have looked through some *Hansard* and found what members opposite said about that budget in '07 and '08. The same members that are talking about the fact that the budget we presented isn't balanced, they make the case it's not balanced, and we've all heard the debate.

The same members, in fact the member that just stood up, the member that was just involved in debate, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, in the budget debate, the last NDP budget debate said, on their budget which had a \$500 million operating deficit and a \$700 million summary financial deficit, she said, "Now the . . ." And here's what, and we'll be very clear about this, this is the member for Nutana, 2007, on the NDP budget that had a massive half billion dollar deficit they were going to cover with the savings account said, "Now the final thing I want to say to the members opposite is this. We've now had 14 consecutive balanced budgets." That's what she said. That's what she said.



What did . . . Well I just can hear the member for Regina Dewdney is always interested in getting into the debate. What did he say during the budget debate of 2007? We're always interested to read his speeches, Mr. Speaker. Just a year ago, for example, I remember the member for Regina Dewdney giving some very, very articulate and compelling speeches on the importance of civil servants — and I assume politicians that work for the government — who are retired, not coming back and earning their salary while they're collecting a pension. I remember that speech, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday though, apparently he forgot about that speech. Apparently he can't really have that position any more because I think his boss, his boss might call him up a little bit short if he were to go make that case.

But here's what he said about the budget in 2007. Remember what I said, Mr. Speaker: the last NDP budget was to be balanced by a withdrawal from the savings account, the very same, the very same initiative that this government is enacting, Mr. Speaker, although to a much lesser extent — half a billion versus 190 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member for Dewdney says, what were the NDP like, I think is what he said. Here is what he said, here is what he said about that budget:

I'm not going to question the experts who say this [is a balanced budget]. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that, combined with 16 straight credit rating upgrades, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it speaks for itself.

That's what he said.

Mr. Speaker, the current member for Regina Coronation Park, Coronation Park, he said this in response in the House. I'm not sure. You know sometimes when you quote the member for Regina Coronation Park, you have to make sure you take it all in context. Otherwise, it's difficult to understand. But here's what he said: "Premier, we've got money, we've got cash, we can pay cash for some things. They say deficit. What nonsense, Mr. Speaker. What absolute nonsense."

Here's what the member for North Battleford said, Mr. Speaker, on that same budget with respect to running a big operating deficit. The member for North Battleford said this — this is telling. "Take a look back to the 1980s . . ." he said. And that surprises me, that a NDP member would want to look back the '80s.

I think those who watch the NDP's convention — and we had some folks over watching the convention here just this last weekend — I think they counted about 19 references to the government of the 1980s and to that decade in the Leader of the Opposition's speech. And he exited the stage to "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey, which actually isn't even the '80s. I think that's the late 1970s. So it's a theme that we're used to.

But here's what the member for Battleford said. He said:

Take a look back to the 1980s and the government of Grant Devine where, Madam Deputy Speaker, they didn't have surplus accounts to draw from as we do in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Madam Deputy Speaker, to ensure that all programs are able to be funded, Madam Deputy Speaker, and have balanced budgets.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP agreed in 2007 that you could use cash in the bank, in your savings account as revenue and balance the budget, Mr. Speaker, if they believed that in 2007, they ought to vote for this budget, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, this is what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of highlights in this budget of course, and I'd like to touch on some of them if I can. I want to say that this government has began at the top in terms of restraint. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you and I would tell members of this Assembly, that when it comes to government advertising, we've cut it in half — from 16 million to \$8.5 million, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to government travel, it's down 15 per cent — \$45 million under the NDP; we're down to \$38.2 million even though the costs of travel are actually up. That's a decrease of 15 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, ministerial travel in the last year of that administration, '06-07, the last full year . . . The amount we have cut in ministerial travel — 38 per cent. Which is no small feat, Mr. Speaker, because in this caucus we're proud to have members in the cabinet and otherwise who are from urban Saskatchewan, many in Regina, and many of course from rural Saskatchewan in the cabinet of the province for the first time in a very, very long time. And so distance to travel arguably is going to be a little bit longer, and yet we've actually cut back the amount of travel from the NDP days when they spent almost \$1 million, at 975,000 in '06-07. We're down last year 603,000. That's a net reduction of 38 per cent, and it's coming down.

Mr. Speaker, as regards Executive Council, well that's the office of the Premier, as you know. Executive Council in this budget cuts the budget, reduces the budget by 3 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We've started from the very, very top.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to political staff, we have fewer cabinet ministers to begin with than the NDP had in their dying days. But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that even with those, with the smaller cabinet today under a Saskatchewan Party government there are 30 fewer political staff — 17 per cent less political staff than the NDP. Overall monthly salaries for the Sask Party government are \$158,000 less or 15.1 per cent less in terms of the staff of this building than the NDP. So we're working very hard, Mr. Speaker, to start at the very, very top.

There are a number of things in this budget that I would like to address. I know that a number of other members want to join in the debate, and so I'm going to focus on just a few of them. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to focus on infrastructure, on capital, and then a little bit later on, I'd like to focus on the wait times initiative that the Minister of Health has announced more formally earlier this week but that was funded in the provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to infrastructure, let me just say this: I believe any fair assessment of the budget of the Saskatchewan Party government since the election in 2007, any fair assessment will show you that no government in the history of the province has invested more in our highways and in our health care facilities and in our educational facilities and in municipal infrastructure and in rural roads. No other government has invested like this government has.

That trend continues with a third . . . Even in this time of restraint, even with an overall reduction in the expenditures of government — which is pretty unheard of in this day and age, whether you're in North America or around the world — even in that context, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the third largest capital budget in the history of the province and the second largest Highways budget in Saskatchewan history as well, Mr. Speaker. And yet there is more work to be done.

The reason that there is more work to be done, Mr. Speaker, is that members opposite sat on these benches for 16 years. And, Mr. Speaker, well beyond the time of fiscal austerity and the program that was implemented in those years, well beyond that timeline, Mr. Speaker, there was opportunity. There was ample opportunity for that side of the House to pay more than lip service to the infrastructure needs of this province, whether it was in the city or especially in rural Saskatchewan.

This government surveyed the massive infrastructure deficit gap we inherited after the '07 election. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, we had a sense, I think intuitively we knew that the deficit was huge. The CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] would value the deficit in highway infrastructure alone at \$1 billion. They said there was a \$1 billion gap in terms of highway spending in this province in the highways infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, that gap lays at the feet of members opposite. That gap lays at the feet of the Leader of the Opposition who sat on these benches. And when rural Saskatchewan sent him walking, when rural Saskatchewan issued their severance papers to the member now for Regina Douglas Park, he slipped into Regina. There was a nomination situation there in Elphinstone — no surprise frankly, Mr. Speaker — but he slipped out of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Part of the reason he got that pink slip, part of the reason his message isn't resonating there today is that the people of rural Saskatchewan understand with clarity that the infrastructure deficit we have in this province that we are digging our way out of, that we are paving over in this province, is the result of ignoring the problem. That's what we saw from members opposite for years and years and years.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we signal with our first two budgets and we signal it with this budget, even in a time of restraint, that that has changed for good in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there have been, there have been so many projects that we could point to that have been funded in our first two budgets and that will be funded in this budget. For those who drive down College Avenue and see the piles there for the Academic Health Sciences facility there — now not just press releases about it, but actual construction happening, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

For those who heard the good news from city council in Saskatoon about the construction of one of the largest traffic projects in the history of the province, made possible by our partnership with the federal government, by \$100 million from the province, and by the city of Saskatoon, that construction will be under way and be a constant reminder of this government's commitment to infrastructure.

Or whether it's the global, or whether it's the global transportation hub in this community, Mr. Speaker — maybe the single most important economic development-related infrastructure project in Western Canada, certainly in the province of Saskatchewan — funded by the government in a significant way, both through our Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative and also through grants, also through the support that we've given to the global transportation hub.

Mr. Speaker, there is evidence all over this province, whether it's highways that are finally paved, finally done, Mr. Speaker. We've got great news in Leader. We were able to give some great news in Leader earlier this week on Monday when we met there with the community leaders and with those who own the Sand Hills terminal there, the producers that own it. Their question of course was, is Highway 32 going to get done this year? Because we've been working at it, working very hard. The member for Cypress Hills worked hard on it on opposition. His pleas fell on deaf ears from the NDP. He became the Highways minister. It was obviously an important economic project. It continued under the current Highways minister, Mr. Speaker.

And we're able to tell the people in Leader that there is no need, the NDP are not in power anymore so there's no need to put together those calendars that featured, that featured volunteers in various stages of undress. Because that project, in the restraint budget, is going to get done this year, Mr. Speaker. Finally it's going to get done.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if members opposite drive up Highway 32 very often, if they have cause to. But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, when they drive up that highway, and when they used to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member for Regina Dewdney's saying he has been up the road. I wonder when he drove up that road. I know he's got relatives down in the Southwest. I wonder if he drove up that road, Mr. Speaker, when he sat in the cabinet.

When he sat in the cabinet of the NDP government, did he report back, Mr. Speaker, to the cabinet and to his caucus about the number of pumpjacks he'd see on either side of Highway 32? Did he report back about the gas that's being developed there, the compressor stations? Did he report back to his cabinet, say, you know what, Mr. Speaker, we are getting a lot of money out of that area of the province. That highway's pretty key for us to keep that development going, to keep those royalties coming in so we can support health care and education and social services. I don't think he did tell the cabinet that, Mr. Speaker. Or if he did, like so many other things when it comes to the member for Dewdney, his colleagues ignored him. Because nothing happened, Mr. Speaker. Nothing happened.

Our government takes a different view. And we know there is work to be done, Mr. Speaker, because the NDP left us such a huge highways infrastructure gap. But our position is decidedly different, and it is reflected in this budget. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that the natural resources of this province are in rural Saskatchewan. That's where you'll find them.

We understand, Mr. Speaker, we understand, Mr. Speaker, that that's where the potash is, that's where the oil and gas is. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that that's where, in northern

Saskatchewan, that's where the uranium mines are. That's where half of the arable acres in Canada are, Mr. Speaker.

And so, unlike the New Democrats, you can't simply cash the cheques that are coming in, the tax revenues and the royalties that are coming in from rural Saskatchewan. You've got to put something back. You've got to invest in their infrastructure. You've got to respond to their health care needs. You've got to fix the schools. And we went through a renovation of a school in Maple Creek. We went and toured the old Maple Creek Hospital that this government's going to replace, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the manifestation of a government's understanding that you've got to invest back in rural Saskatchewan in order for us to continue to grow as a province, just as we must invest in urban Saskatchewan, and just as we have invested in urban Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, these capital investments, especially as it relates to highways, are very much a part of the budget that we are debating today. I think the member from Regina Lakeview, who was the Health minister, just said from his feet a very interesting question, in the budget debate. He said, what about Preeceville? There was a hospital that's been needed in Preeceville for a very long time.

And I'm glad the member that represents Preeceville is not here because I'd have a very hard time keeping him in his seat at this point because that member would raise the issue of the Preeceville hospital with that minister and any other Health ministers that existed over on the other side.

And what did we see, Mr. Speaker, in lieu of actually doing something about the Preeceville hospital? Count them, seven press releases. Well, the member for Lakeview is saying, get your facts right. I'll tell you what. When it comes to collating, and fact collecting and accuracy, I will take the word of the Deputy Premier, the member for Canora, over that member any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

Seven press releases. They issued seven press releases and no hospital. We took a different approach. We took a different approach. Rather than issue the press releases about a new hospital, here's a novel idea, we thought we would build the hospital, Mr. Speaker.

Rather than issue press releases about the Academic Health Sciences Centre in Saskatoon, we thought we'd start building the Academic Health Sciences Centre. Rather, Mr. Speaker, rather than issuing press releases about the need for infrastructure improvements in Saskatoon for a new bridge, we thought we'd start building the bridge in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and that's under way. And the same is true for the global transportation hub. The same is true for the massive amounts of investments we've made in Regina, for the Humboldt hospital, Mr. Speaker, for the school that we did tour in Maple Creek, for the new hospital that's coming to that community as well, to Oxbow's hospital. The list is long, Mr. Speaker.

Members opposite, members opposite were good at generating a lot of press releases. The member for Nutana is now chirping from her seat. She also got into the spirit of issuing press

releases.

You know, we take a different approach. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? I think that's why, I think that's why the people of the province of Saskatchewan, I think it's why the people of the province of Saskatchewan in poll after poll after poll say, we like the approach of actually doing stuff rather than the NDP approach of just talking about stuff, Mr. Speaker. And we see it in survey after survey.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when the budget was tabled, prior to the budget being tabled, when the third quarter report was issued for the province, our opposition talked about the need for cutbacks, for restraint. That was the Finance critic. I think he quite rightly pointed out, look, the government needs to reduce spending. That's what the member said. That's what the member for Regina Rosemont said. And I've got quotes here.

He said in *Hansard*, he said, there is spending that the province can't afford if it's not taken under, if something's not done.

Here's another quote from the Finance critic from March 2nd, 2010 in a NDP news release.

With the next provincial budget only weeks away, we need a clear signal from this government that it has a plan to get out of deficit and a detailed plan to reign in its . . . spending.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the member to vote for the budget because that is exactly, exactly what we've done, Mr. Speaker.

But we could see why, we could see why when it came to the budget, we could see why he got sat down on budget day, why he got benched unfortunately on budget day, notwithstanding his good advice. The reason that happened is because the Leader of the Opposition didn't agree. The Leader of the Opposition's advocacy to this government is that we just spend, just keep spending. Here's what he said to *The Sheaf*. He said, well this a *Sheaf* article and I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker, "The Saskatchewan Party is in belt tightening mode on the . . ."

[Interjections]

Well here it is, there it is, the member from Nutana is asking for the whole article. Well I could read the whole article actually. It's all pretty good because it highlights the fact that the Leader of the Opposition never got the Finance critic's memo about what we should be doing in the budget.

The Saskatchewan Party is in belt tightening mode [it says in this article] on the 2010-2011 budget, but with resource revenues steadily improving [steadily improving] from last year's figure, opposition leader Dwain [and I'm quoting, opposition leader Dwain] Lingenfelter says, it's no time to cut services.

He said this, and I quote:

The price of oil is up 20 per cent from where it was last year . . . We also expect that revenues from potash will be back somewhere in the area of \$400 million in the coming year.

He went on to just talk about the need for the government to avoid cutbacks, to avoid restraint. That's what the Leader of the Opposition said, Mr. Speaker, in advance of the debate.

Now since then, since then because the wind started blowing a different direction, for politically expedient reasons, he's changed his tune a little bit. And he's a little bit more in line with his Finance critic, although his Finance critic has not been able to get on his feet much in question period, post the budget, maybe because he's not been allowed to, maybe because his advice was pretty sound, maybe because he'd be more comfortable with our position of restraint rather than his leader's position of spending, Mr. Speaker. That well may be the case.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . There's many other parts to the budget, Mr. Speaker, that I could talk about. But I just want to finish with the discussion, if I can, about the budget's component with respect to the surgical wait times initiative in the province. I think it's the most important part of the budget. There is \$10 million in cash for a specific surgical wait times initiative, Mr. Speaker. You will know that our government has said . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the hon. member for Lakeview has just said it won't work. It won't work. You can't set a goal for wait times. You can't say, look, we're going to guarantee people a wait time of no longer than three months within a four-year period. You can't do it.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? I think I've heard that before. I think I heard it from the former minister of Health who was asked by SUN, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, and by our party in opposition, why don't you at least give us a target for nurse recruitment and retention? I remember what he said. It sounded just like what the member for Lakeview just said. Well we don't want to set targets, he said, Mr. Speaker, because we probably won't make them. He said it, Mr. Speaker. They say, well he couldn't have said that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Her seatmate just said it again in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, well, I mean, the member for Nutana may hate that he said it, but it doesn't change the fact that he said it. And if she doesn't believe that the member for The Battlefords said it when he was Health minister, she should at least be listening to the person sitting right beside her, the member from Regina Lakeview, who said it won't work.

Mr. Speaker, they also said it wouldn't work when we set a target to recruit and retain, well, to add 800 nurses to the province of Saskatchewan. Members opposite said it won't work. That's what they said. Can't do it. Mr. Speaker, we are 18 months away from an election, and at the halfway point, Mr. Speaker, it was pretty clear that we were well beyond halfway towards achieving our target, Mr. Speaker. And you know, I think that the people of the province appreciate the fact that targets were set and that targets are kept. And we're going to do the same thing when it comes to wait times, Mr. Speaker.

And we saw a glimpse of the debate might come, although the NDP opposition stayed 100 miles, or tried to stay 100 miles away from the debate their leader tried to get into yesterday on the issue of the surgical wait times. Because, Mr. Speaker, the debate that's about to ensue is going to be very interesting in the province of Saskatchewan. It's going to test the old NDP

paradigm, the old NDP vision of Saskatchewan, of health care, and really of the province in general.

Their vision of the province is a have-not province. Their vision of the province is as a place that can't even keep up to the national average in population growth. And their vision of the province, their vision of a province whose only vehicle to deliver better health care, even though we have a private-public mix today that came from their members opposite, their vision of course is that any expansion, any improvement in health care must never include private components, Mr. Speaker. That's the vision.

In this particular initiative, Mr. Speaker, the surgical wait times initiative, the minister announced the details of it earlier this week. And it's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to using facilities to a greater extent around the province — including in places like North Battleford and Swift Current, Weyburn, wherever there's an operating theatre that we can use, Mr. Speaker — in addition to giving patients more flexibility to determine which specialist may be available, some common sense there, Mr. Speaker, and in addition to the notion that we are also going to perhaps engage private sector partners to deal with this huge, this huge bulge, this surge that we have to deal with in terms of wait times, Mr. Speaker, all we get from the members opposite is ideology.

They kind of were running away from it a bit today, and I think I know why, Mr. Speaker. I think they realize that they are so off base with the people of the province. I think they realize that even though they've been now two years-plus in the wilderness after getting beat in the last election, they are as out of touch with Saskatchewan people as ever they were.

Because you know, Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House, we travel the province as well. I'm sure members do as well. I don't think they're listening. We hear from people of all walks of life, from all walks of life, Mr. Speaker, in all sectors of our economy.

People who engage in the debate about wait times, for example, Mr. Speaker, say this: if you can make it part of the public system, universally accessible and single-payer paid — one payer, the Government of Saskatchewan — if you can make it part of that then we are not so worried about who holds the scalpel, whether they work for the government or whether they work for themselves. We just would like the surgery.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, those of us who have neighbours who are just a few houses down who've lost their business, their business, waiting for orthopedic surgery, waiting for an operation on their back, I can assure members opposite as long as it's a single-payer system, as long as nobody can jump the queue — and that is what we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker — they don't much care whether the clinic is one that the ministry is dealing with now or whether it's the status quo. They would just like to have some pain relief, Mr. Speaker. They'd like not to lose their business.

I think we're going to hear a lot more about this issue that's highlighted in the budget, Mr. Speaker, in the months to come.

And I think it will highlight . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Nutana is still talking from her seat, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be very, very interesting to see what that member from Nutana has to say to the people of the province of Saskatchewan — loquacious as she is from her seat — what she might say to the people of the province of Saskatchewan when she says to them, I'm sorry, we can't engage a private clinic. We're not going to do that because it says right here in the manifesto that we can't, because it says right here in the ideology that we can't allow you to go to that clinic even though it's a part of the universally funded medicare, even though that there's a single payer. Well the member's laughing, Mr. Speaker, because that is what they're saying. When the people of this province want health care and timely surgery, the NDP want to give them ideology. We will take that debate any place, any time, anywhere, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are excellent initiatives happening within the Health, excellent initiatives happening within the Health ministry, part of the reason why CIHI [Canadian Institute of Health Information] reported last week that wait times are actually down in the province, notwithstanding the information that's coming from the benches opposite.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of innovations that are also coming within the Health ministry that . . . I want to salute the front-line workers who are part of this process, who are a part of bringing lean techniques to the health care system. And I want to acknowledge the deputy minister and the senior team over in the Ministry of Health because they're leading by example. And these same lean techniques, Mr. Speaker, that they are implementing in Health are now being looked at in other ministries and are going to inform, also, actions in ministries and executive government and also in the Crown corporations as we seek to shrink the size of government.

And I'll close on that note, Mr. Speaker. One of the well-debated points in the budget is the fact that the plan of the Government of Saskatchewan is that we would reduce the government by 15 per cent over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to do that through managing the vacancies that come about as a result of retirements.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP we saw a lot of, you know, we saw a lot of expansion in government. Since I was first elected in '99, which isn't that long ago, the expenditure in government's doubled and the rate of growth in the public service has far outstripped the rate of growth in the population that they serve. Mr. Speaker, that's just the fact of the matter.

Our government's saying it's time for government to live within its means. Our government is saying, look, we have so much going for us economically in the country right now. We need to do whatever we can to preserve that position, to preserve a leadership position within the country. We need to make sure that government's growth, the growth of the government itself, doesn't threaten the growth agenda that's paying off so well for the province of Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, as we enter the last few hours, as we enter the last few hours of the budget debate today and tomorrow, there's going to be more focus on the specific numbers in the budget. But do you know what people in Saskatchewan are thinking

about actually, Mr. Speaker? People in the province are thinking that this is a great place to be at an absolutely, at a great time, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about the province of Saskatchewan.

Imagine this, Mr. Speaker. They're surveying the province of Saskatchewan, are those that we work for, those that we serve, and they're thinking when they have a moment perhaps that we just came through the worst international recession since the Great Depression. And it was in that recession . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member for Dewdney's helping me out. He's helping me out. Mr. Speaker, during that international recession, Saskatchewan set the job creation record for our province, Mr. Speaker. That's what happened. I don't know. Does the member for Dewdney have any other . . . He wants to offer more assistance. I can give him some more information.

During that recession, the international recession, we set the population record for the province of Saskatchewan and now we've since added to it, Mr. Speaker. During that international recession, we maintained debt reduction. We maintain historic tax cuts, which frankly helped, I think, help us through that international recession, Mr. Speaker. And this pains the members opposite greatly. Because you know what, Mr. Speaker? Their short-term, expedient, political interests are well served if Saskatchewan's not doing as well as it is. That's the truth of the matter. That's why last fall they were actually saying, Mr. Speaker, unbelievably, members opposite were actually saying that our economy was in a free fall. That's a quote from *Hansard* from the Leader of the Opposition.

When the people of the province would look to this Assembly, the members on both sides of the aisle, to provide confidence in the economy of the province of Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Opposition said our economy is in a free fall, months after we set the job creation record for the province, a month before we set the population record for the province, Mr. Speaker. And MLA after MLA on that side of the House has characterized the economy of this province at such an amazing time as this as a bust. Mr. Speaker, nobody believes that.

There is this huge gap between the NDP's view of the province and the government's view of the province, Mr. Speaker. It manifests itself economically. They're talking about state-owned potash companies again. They're talking about state-owned oil companies again, Mr. Speaker. They're talking about increasing royalty rates, Mr. Speaker. They're talking about taking this province back to a time that we want to get away from as fast as we can, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to health care they have an ideology that says, if it's not in the public system, we can't partner with the private sector even though that partnership exists.

It's true in file after file of government. They want to go back to the way it always was in the 1970s or some other decade, Mr. Speaker. The people of this province aren't interested. They like the new Saskatchewan that leads the country. They like this place that's a have province. They like the province that can afford to invest in infrastructure, fix highways, and add relocatable classrooms as we're announcing today. They like a new Saskatchewan that can invest in an innovation agenda, that it can invest in our post-secondary institutions, that can

welcome young people back to the province like we have never seen, Mr. Speaker. They want that kind of Saskatchewan, and this budget sets the stage for that new Saskatchewan to continue its momentum. So I'll be voting against the amendment and I'll be voting in favour of the budget.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure for the Finance critic to engage in debate within this Assembly. It's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to enter the debate on behalf of this opposition and on behalf of the good folks of Regina Rosemont. I'm not going to spend much time here today with introductions and thank yous and all those kind of things because we've got to get to the matter at hand here, and that's the devastating budget that's been put forward. I would like to certainly recognize my lovely, beautiful, intelligent wife and all that she does within our life together.

What I find interesting though, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier is up speaking today. Now, Mr. Speaker, this isn't tradition. And in fact it would be unprecedented, I believe, for the Premier to be speaking on the second last day of budget debate. I thought he was supposed to be the closer, Mr. Speaker. I thought he was supposed to be the closer, and just to lead into a short little message from the Finance minister. But what do we expect, Mr. Speaker? Well what do we see? We see the Premier pop up like a gopher out of its hole in spring at a time least expected, and to stand up here with an empty hall and half-empty benches to speak to the budget. And when he speaks to the budget, Mr. Speaker, he provides more attention to the members opposite and individual stories, and tries to sort of play games with members opposite than focusing at the task at hand, Mr. Speaker. And I can understand why the Premier might be hiding and might be trying to pop up today, on a day least expected to provide his presentation.

Because the fact, Mr. Speaker, is this is no budget to be proud of at all, Mr. Speaker. It should bring huge embarrassment to the government of the day and that Premier, Mr. Speaker. At a time of unprecedented revenues in this province we see a government that's accruing, that's growing the debt in huge ways by the billions of dollars in the past two years alone, Mr. Speaker, contrary, contrary, Mr. Speaker, to the billboards that they spend big money to try to trick and pretend to the rest of the public.

And that gets to the crux of the argument that has been driven home by every last speaker of the opposition, is that this is a dishonest budget. It's a budget that can't be trusted from a Premier and a government that cannot be trusted with managing the finances of this province.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I'd ask members to be mindful of how they choose their words given the statement that I made this afternoon to elevate and lift up the debate. Thank you. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And while I will not be making a personal statement I will say unequivocally that the people of this province do not trust this

government and this Premier to manage the finances of this province. That comment is fair game and it's bang on when you look at the facts.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, as well to see the Premier hop up at a time in debate when he's not supposed to. He's supposed to be sort of lining things up tomorrow for a big rah-rah-rah out the door if this was a half-decent budget, which it's not. So he stands up here today.

And I also suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier stands up here today because of his lack of ability to manage himself, lack of ability to manage himself. What I point to, Mr. Speaker, is budget day. We've got a packed Assembly with a good 300 New Democrats in this crowd and a good couple hundred of Saskatchewan's . . . the finest of Saskatchewan business in this Assembly. And what does the Premier do, Mr. Speaker? What does he do? He loses control in a childish fit, Mr. Speaker, and attacks a personal member of the opposition in a classless, childish affair, Mr. Speaker. It's unprecedented.

And I know we had the opportunity to speak with many, many leaders from across Saskatchewan within our party over the weekend, and it was stated and restated. It was restated by many of the business people in the halls, outside in the rotunda, that they had never seen such a display where a Premier lost all composure, could not control himself, and went on a personal attack on a member of this Assembly and couldn't focus on the miserable, embarrassing budget that he had tabled that very day.

So the opposition is going to stand opposed to the budget that's put forward. We don't trust it. We believe it's dishonest. We don't believe it puts the facts on the table. This is a government that doesn't just have a Premier that can't control himself from his seat though, Mr. Speaker, or from his feet, we also see a government that can't control itself as it relates to following through with its commitments.

I reference back to the last election. They put forward a budget document to Saskatchewan people. This is what we do during an election — we put forward the road map and what we're going to offer up to Saskatchewan people, and people vote on it. And then they expect you to follow through, Mr. Speaker. What we know is after promise after promise has been broken by this government, as it relates to health care, as it relates to cost of living, as it relates to privatization within our Crown corporations and health care itself, Mr. Speaker, the trust is broken.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party can pretend all it wants that the NDP is out of touch with what's going on in this province, but nothing is further from the truth. We can go into any corner of this province with our head held high and have strong discussion, raise the points and the matters of the day in any constituency in this province. For the Premier to pretend otherwise, that rural Saskatchewan loves the Premier, is not true. Not true.

The fact is that people across this province are expecting a Premier and this government to advance on the important fronts of health care, the rural doctor shortage that we are experiencing, the huge, huge wait for surgery in this province that, in the Premier's own riding, that wait-list has grown by 90

per cent. This is what the people of the province expect the government to focus on, Mr. Speaker, they expect the Premier to focus on. And they're sick of his spin. They're sick of his rhetoric. They're sick of his empty promises that ring hollow, that get broken. They're sick of hearing that Premier say I'm sorry; I'm sorry I broke that promise; I'm sorry I did that. What they want is someone who's a man of their word or a woman of their word, Mr. Speaker.

When I look back at that election platform, among many things that have been broken, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the finances specifically. And I look at a spending promise of this government, and basically what they put before the people was something they had no intention on following through with.

[15:30]

If I can reference the page here, Mr. Speaker, we see the forecast for revenues and expenditures and spending of this government, the spending program. And they pretended in this document here to be a government that was going to be able to manage the finances. This is what they've said in this document. What have we seen since then, Mr. Speaker? Well we've seen unsustainable, runaway spending implemented by this government — 32 per cent over two years. So at the time where we have record revenues, more money than ever before, this government outspends itself. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, and devastating to the future opportunities in this province.

But back to the promise. What I'll take you to, Mr. Speaker, and this went into every single mailbox in Saskatchewan, I believe. People opened it up; they read it. And there's a trust then that's created with those who vote for a document that outlies what that government's going to do. And what does this document say, Mr. Speaker? Where are the broken promises?

Well it points specifically to the very poignant criticism that this opposition has had from day one, and that's that their spending program has been unsustainable. What they promised the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that in 2009-10 — that was last year, Mr. Speaker, or last budgetary cycle — that they would spend \$8.9 billion. Well what did this government spend? Well over 10 billion. And then people ask, well where's the \$1 billion deficit? Well it's right there, Mr. Speaker. Simple math, not Sask Party math, but just straight math, real calculators, computers, the facts.

When we look at this year here, 2010-2011, what was the spending promise of this government? The spending, the expenses — \$9.09 billion, Mr. Speaker. What do we see? Again, over \$10 billion. What's the difference of those two things, Mr. Speaker? Well it's a \$1 billion deficit, and that's why we stand today opposed to this reckless budget. That's why we stand today opposed to seeing a government that's running a deficit that they put on a . . . their own balance sheet says it's 622 million. That we know is understated in a huge way.

We stand opposed to a government that at a time of record revenues, record revenues, is growing the debt in this province. So we have concerns, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I hear one of the members shout out just about, going out to have some meetings in rural Saskatchewan. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing that I enjoy more than

spending time meeting in coffee shops across this province, meeting in Legion halls, meeting across this province in seniors' centres, all sorts of locations, as do many, many members across this opposition.

The reason we need to do this, Mr. Speaker, is that we are a government-in-waiting. We've got 18 short months, and it's incredibly important that we're out there tending to these grounds on the many, many issues that are being overlooked with constituents that are being taken for granted, Mr. Speaker.

And if any of those members, if any one of those members think that they're so precious to their constituents that they take for granted and break the promises of, I dare them, I dare them to join us on a little tour of rural Saskatchewan. And I dare them to hit the same podiums, to have the same coffee shops. And I welcome that.

[Interjections]

And I hear one of the members opposite and I welcome that, one of the members from Cannington. And I look forward to it. And I look forward, next week, to taking him up on this right now, and I look forward to going down and having a meeting in any community in his constituency. Any one. Because what I know about the member from Cannington, Mr. Speaker, is he was nominated again here recently, to the dismay of most in his constituency. Or it was an AGM [annual general meeting], he hasn't made that decision yet. He couldn't find a nominator maybe, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, is that he had about a dozen people in his meeting, his AGM, his big annual meeting — about a dozen people. But guess how many people were standing outside with placards. At least as many. At least a dozen, 15 health care workers in his own riding who were protesting the fact that they can't get a fair contract from that government, the fact that their representative won't stand up for them.

And I only seek out the member from Cannington because he shouts from his seat. What I wish he would do is speak at the cabinet table. But he's not there. Right. But I wish he'd speak with one of the cabinet ministers or at the caucus table because the fact is what we have going on in the Southeast is really problematic and really worrying. When we look down there and we recognize that Arcola, Carlyle, Redvers, Oxbow, Coronach, and Estevan are under huge strain, particularly as it relates to health care and the doctor shortage, and the pressure that puts on Estevan and the residents all within that area, and no solutions.

We have a member from Cannington, Mr. Speaker, who stands up at a town hall meeting about a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker. And under pressure about why he couldn't get nurses into his community, very different message than when he was in opposition when he simply had simple answers for everything, he ducked. He weaved, he hid. And then what did he do, Mr. Speaker? Well he got angry. He got angry. And he threw the gauntlet down to the community and he challenged them. What are they going to do? What are they going to do? And if they're not going to do it for themselves, then someone else is going to do it and they're going to lose out.

Mr. Speaker, this points to the very different role for government that this side of the House believes in. We believe that government has a responsibility to the people of the province, to their constituents as it relates to matters such as health care. Maybe nothing — nothing larger, Mr. Speaker. And I know it was a big stressful evening for that member . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He says no, it wasn't a big stressful night. It was no big deal when 150 people were jammed into a hall and ripped him and ripped him and ripped him and ripped him and asked for solutions. It was no big deal, is what he says here today.

Now I don't know which one is more offending, Mr. Speaker: to be able to say that was stressful, or to say that that was no big deal. Either way I think it's a shame, and I know that Cannington residents deserve better than that, Mr. Speaker.

So we see the dishonest billboards across this province, and Saskatchewan people laugh at it and get regular emails about it saying, how can they say this? And, you know, it's a bit of a chuckle, and you know it's a rallying point, where really people say it's a matter of desperation, a government that knows that the wheels have come off the cart, that they've lost their way.

And, Mr. Speaker, I recognize in the seats opposite that the robust support for one another, the cockiness, the confidence that was there two years ago is completely deflated. And I recognize why and I'm glad to see that humbleness, although we don't hear it in their speeches yet. That should be there soon too, Mr. Speaker, but they are a dejected bunch, Mr. Speaker, and rightfully so, because the mistakes of this government and the choices of this government are taking this province in the wrong direction.

At a time where we can be rightfully proud of an economy put into full swing by the people of this province, by the resources within our ground, and the good policies of New Democrat government, to see those revenues flowing into coffers and to see at this very time billions of dollars of debt growth, and to see the Premier's mug actually up on these billboards that are dishonest, not true, Mr. Speaker, is a real break in the trust with the people of this province.

It's a risk, I think, that's a big mistake for that party. But I'm not here to give them political advice, because I believe that the day, which is coming now and that people are recognizing, that when the Premier speaks, when the Premier speaks and we hear his voice on these expensive radio ads and billboards, that you can't believe what's actually being said, that's a huge problem. And our word is only as good, we're only trusted as good as our word is and how we follow through with that. It's a bond of trust that's been broken with Saskatchewan people.

And I will say, Mr. Speaker, and I know we're strong in the city in raising the issues that are galvanizing Saskatchewan against this mismanaged government, but I know, Mr. Speaker, maybe not as pronounced as the change that's going on in rural Saskatchewan. When you have municipalities paying up to \$800,000 a year in additional pay to try to take care of their health care needs, that's a provincial responsibility, Mr. Speaker. Provincial responsibility, and off-loading of all sorts of responsibilities onto municipal government.

So I point to something that should always be important to any government, or when you're judging finance, and that would be the debt to equity ratio of a government, Mr. Speaker. And what do we note here? We note that a trend has been reversed. It's not a positive reversal, Mr. Speaker. What we knew is that we were on a decade-long betterment of our debt to GDP [gross domestic product] ratio, something that puts us in good stead with the bankers who loan us money, with the ability to lend our own dollar and basically put ourselves onto the world and international and global stage in a very proud fashion.

We see the debt to equity ratios going backwards. I'll cite the numbers, Mr. Speaker, from their own budget document, page 63 in 2009. And just to refresh, Mr. Speaker, this is right after the Sask Party took office and were left with windfalls of money from the New Democrats and a booming economy for which they could apply to things such as debt and different priorities.

We, at that point in time, 2009, had a debt to equity ratio of 11.9 per cent. Now that's an enviable position, and it was a continued trend of reducing that debt to equity ratio. That's a goal for any government, to be reducing debt, Mr. Speaker, to be not spending unsustainably and not be adding debt to your province and not to be doing it faster than the growth within your economy.

But that trend has reversed, Mr. Speaker. Business people across this province are concerned by this. Students across this province are concerned by this. Those needing health care, all of us, should be concerned by this. What we see in 2011 is that we now see a debt to equity ratio of 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So from 11.9 per cent, it's increased to 15 per cent. That's after a decade of reducing that number, of reducing debt, Mr. Speaker. Anyone who manages a business, a farm, or a household knows that this is going in the wrong direction.

Which is why we get to the fact that we say this is a budget that can't be trusted from a Premier and a government that can't be trusted with managing the finances of this province. And we expect at this very time, we expected this government to be able to get its spending under control. They couldn't do it, Mr. Speaker. They haven't been able to do that. They still tabled a deficit. We expected, Mr. Speaker, that we would see some leadership by example because, Mr. Speaker, at a time where you see a bit of constraint and poor choices as they are, people are paying for the mismanagement at this point in time.

But we see, Mr. Speaker, not the inner circle of the Premier, not the inner circle of the member from Kindersley — really the rest of the caucus and cabinet don't matter because there's only two that make decisions over there anyways, Mr. Speaker — but the inner circle, Mr. Speaker, of the Sask Party has not been hurt at all. No reduction in the size of the cabinet. No reduction in the Premier's pay. No reduction in the ministers' pay. We see that in Alberta; we see that in Manitoba. We call that leading by example.

No reduction, Mr. Speaker, in the number of communication staff that are paid millions in this province by this government to spin and sell and photo op their way through politics. That's shameful, Mr. Speaker. We see no cuts — not a single cut, Mr. Speaker — in the ministerial staff, the political staff, political



staff of this government.

These are the same very staff that receive 100 per cent increases, a double in salaries, once this government took office. And they brought in their hacks and flacks and friends and paid them twice what the New Democrats were paying, Mr. Speaker. Not a single reduction. Yet they're going to lay off people across this province. They're going to issue 100 terminations at this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to go out and make those kinds of tough decisions, you'd better be prepared to lead by example, Mr. Speaker. And it's despicable to see this government think that they can be at the trough with their friends, themselves, and with their cronies getting all sorts of contracts, Mr. Speaker, while we see cuts across the board for common people — my constituents, your constituents, constituents across the way, every single one of us, Mr. Speaker.

And we see cuts, Mr. Speaker, that are problematic; we see broken examples. So it's not just a government that's not leading by example. We see a government that's off-loading its own responsibilities and making other levels of government do their dirty work.

They sign an agreement with great fanfare, Mr. Speaker, an agreement with municipalities to provide 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax]. They chose that, Mr. Speaker, 1 per cent because it's not impacted by the volatility and resource revenues, Mr. Speaker. So they choose 1 per cent of the PST, they lock that into agreement. They walk out hand in hand with municipalities that provides them with a little bit more control over the revenues that they have.

Municipalities then are able to go about and plan for the kind of growth that they're experiencing, to be able to lay out the kind of infrastructure that they need, and they take on borrowing, Mr. Speaker. All of this costs money. Now the very purpose, the logic of using the PST was that there's not volatility in the same way with PST as there is with resource revenue. So we fast-forward, Mr. Speaker, many, many photo ops, Premier all fluffed-up, pompommed out, Mr. Speaker. Six months later, we see a different message.

What we see, Mr. Speaker, we see a ripped up agreement, a ripped up agreement with municipalities left in the dust, having to do the dirty work for this government. Now the logic of course was that this was not tied to resource revenues. So the Premier takes the stage in front of municipalities and says, well, we screwed up. We screwed up. We really mismanaged our resource revenues; therefore we have to break this promise. Well it doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. That was the very protection that was supposed to be built into that agreement. They break that agreement.

[15:45]

Now we get to the consequence of that, Mr. Speaker. Well the consequence is that every single member in this Assembly and all of our constituents from across this province are likely to see major tax hikes this year as a result of this budget, this broken promise, and the financial mismanagement of this government

— major tax hikes in Saskatoon and Estevan and Weyburn and Moose Jaw. What does he say, the Premier? Well he says I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Just get ready for another photo op. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable to off-load that kind of responsibilities to municipalities and make those mayors, those councils, those RM [rural municipality] reeves do the dirty work of that Premier right there who's mismanaged our finances in our province.

As a Regina MLA, I want to speak specifically — and quickly because I don't want to occupy too much time within this Assembly — but I want to speak to the shameful treatment of the film industry and of SCN. This is something that's not only important to the culture within our province, but it's important to our economy. And it's incredibly important to the provincial economy but also Regina. We think it's shameful to see a government go about their ways in ham-handed ways cutting things that in fact assist our province in big ways, Mr. Speaker. And he's attacked some of the most creative and young individuals in this province, and again I think that's a huge political mistake as well, Mr. Speaker. But from a very economic argument, big mistake.

And I can't believe the members from Regina — sitting in the back here right now, disinterested in what's going on as usual, Mr. Speaker — wouldn't have had a backbone to stand up or sit up at that caucus table and say we won't tolerate that, Mr. Speaker. Where was the member from Regina South on this front, Mr. Speaker, or the other members that are here? Shameful, Mr. Speaker.

And I speak specifically to another economic and social institution within our province, that being our proud First Nations University, Mr. Speaker, no debate from this side of the House. You bet we'll fix the accounting and the governance. That's what governments are there to do, to work with institutions. But I tell you. What that institution means to the future of Saskatchewan — to the economy, to our social well-being, to our quality of life — is fundamental. To see the irresponsible, the irresponsible treatment of this file, and to now see an institution that has been basically put on life support by this government and their actions is devastating, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to stand opposed. We're going to stand up for that First Nations University. And we expect that the minister responsible and the Premier exercise any kind of strength they might have at the federal table. We know it's not much. But if they can focus on one project, that's one we'd prioritize right now, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize the terrible math of the Sask Party. We talk about it regularly, the fact that they can't — in times of record revenues, more money than ever before, historic highs — balance their books. And in fact they're growing our debt. But we see that Sask Party math in many of the decisions that are made, not being able to understand the economic impact of their decisions, Mr. Speaker.

One such . . . and I've pointed out the film industry, and I've pointed out First Nations University, but I'll also point out chiropractic care in this province, Mr. Speaker. This is a short-sighted decision, Mr. Speaker, that affects 125,000 patients or more within this province. This is a subsidy that's

now being removed from government. Twelve dollars, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be pushed onto the other costs of health care — to doctors, the cost of seeing a doctor, to a specialist. It's going to bottleneck surgical wait-lists, Mr. Speaker. This is the same kind of short-sighted, Sask Party math that we see in other areas: cut one dollar and spend three more somewhere else, Mr. Speaker. Cut one dollar in chiropractic care and bottleneck your system somewhere else, Mr. Speaker. This is not the way to go, Mr. Speaker.

We need to be looking at more holistic ways of making sure that our society is healthier and more well . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member opposite from Rosetown speaks out here right now and offers some sort of a statement here. I would probably assume, not hearing it, that it wouldn't have made much sense.

What I would ask him to do is to speak up at his cabinet table. And I'd ask him to address the issues of health care — specifically the rural doctor shortage, specifically, which by the way has grown by 50 per cent — the vacancies in this province by 50 per cent under this government, under the Sask Party, under this Premier, Mr. Speaker. And we also see at the same very time, Mr. Speaker, we see the surgical wait-lists getting longer. We hear all sorts of plans getting trotted out by the member from Indian Head-Milestone, but it's the same empty plan, Mr. Speaker, and we don't trust these promises, Mr. Speaker, because the fact is they were elected to fix this from day one, Mr. Speaker, and the plan has gone sideways. In fact it's gone backwards. In the Premier's own riding alone, surgical wait-lists have grown — this is fact, Mr. Speaker — by 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's fact. These are the issues that need to be addressed.

This budget does nothing to address one of the biggest issues in this province, being cost of living. That's wreaking havoc on the well-being of families and individuals, urban and rural, Mr. Speaker, about their ability to access post-secondary and improve their lives and improve Saskatchewan as a whole — a better tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. This government goes backwards. And we see no address, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, this budget that can't be trusted from a government that can't be trusted and a Premier that can't be trusted governing the finances of this province, Mr. Speaker. We see no improvement in the financial disarray and the financial mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. And I know it's embarrassing because I look at them and they're dejected and they're deflated, Mr. Speaker, and I would be too. But how did you get here and when are you going to fix it? Where is your plan, Mr. Speaker?

At a time of record revenues flowing into government, record revenues, more money than government has ever had before in the large measure, this government is running a deficit and a deficit, Mr. Speaker, that's understated, that's understated in a large way. They've understated the deficit, Mr. Speaker, by not including certain parts in this budget. So they say our deficit is 622 million. Well first of all that's unacceptable.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, it's much larger than that — closer to \$1 billion, if not over \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker, when you factor in the costs that they slid off the balance sheet, Mr. Speaker, some of which have simply been off-loaded onto Treasury Board and onto Crown entities, Mr. Speaker. Trickery

with the balance sheet, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess I'd reference to the academic from Greystone to go back and reference the Gass Commission, Mr. Speaker, of 1992. You'd find this document incredibly relevant once again. And it would be hugely worthwhile for you to read this document and realize that it has new application with the kind of accounting practices of your own government here, Mr. Speaker, at a time, Mr. Speaker, where you're changing accounting practices for political self-interest and expediency. Mr. Speaker, I would ask and remind that member to go back and review that report, to then explain and ask his colleagues and question his colleagues, why are we returning to the accounting of Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker?

We see it in a phony and artificial spending. You know, it's . . . [inaudible] . . . last year, Mr. Speaker, that the revenue estimates of this government were artificial and they were . . . \$3 billion is what the Minister from Energy and Resources said we were going to receive from potash. Well, boy, he was wrong. He didn't understand that he took advance payments in the size that he did. He didn't understand the capital expenditure deduction that companies are allowed to make, that depreciate that deduction at 120 per cent, thus reducing the profit, the profit's tax you pay to government. He didn't understand any of those things, Mr. Speaker, so he overrode the Finance minister and Finance officials, and he had the Premier with them. And we saw an unprecedented era that has hurt Saskatchewan people dearly, Mr. Speaker.

But this year, it's not the revenue estimates that we're as concerned with, Mr. Speaker, although the Canadian dollar might be pegged a little low when we're looking at all the recommendations that come out around close to parity. What this year we're worried about, Mr. Speaker, is the phony spending estimates put forward. They put forward a plan that they say includes constraint. We don't buy it. The expenditures are artificial, Mr. Speaker. They don't include in health care any ability to settle a health care contract. They don't have any dollars to assist surgical wait times. They don't have any money for the rural doctor shortage and the doctor shortage across Saskatchewan. They don't have any money for the utility costs that health regions are going to see increased as a result of this government's mismanagement.

And as a result, health regions in this province are going to grow unprecedented deficits, offloading debt from their own balance sheets in accounting trickery onto other entities, Mr. Speaker. This is shameful. We see it in Education, an Education minister who says he's going to go and bargain but not in good faith, Mr. Speaker, because he has not a single dime or dollar for any of the local level agreements or the provincial teachers' contract.

**An Hon. Member:** — Or he could bargain with the chiropractors.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Right, or he could just bargain like he did with the chiropractors, bargain with them for a year, settle a contract, have it ratified, do the news release. And then stall it right there and say, oh yes, no, that was all in jest. Whoops. We did it wrong. We're going to rip that up, Mr. Speaker. Just trust us, Mr. Speaker. Just trust us. And that's what this government

always says; just trust us. But the fact is that people don't.

We see it in forest fires — a cut, you know, betting on good weather. And I hope that the forest fires come in low, Mr. Speaker. I sure hope they do because our northern forests are a gem, Mr. Speaker, and the people that live there need their safety. But we see those cut in a large way.

We see a capital amortization policy that's instituted for one reason. Not because it's consistent with some level of public sector accounting standards, because it serves the political self-interests of a government that has mismanaged their balance sheet. We see offloading onto all different government entities that should be rightfully out of operational spending, Mr. Speaker. And all it is, is accounting trickery.

So what we know is, when we see all these accounting tricks, is that the deficit of 622 million in conjunction with the different spending . . . And we're going to find more, Mr. Speaker, because we haven't really dug into it in the way that we need to. Committee will provide that although I could see these guys try to hide from coming forward with that kind of accountability and transparency. But we'll see, Mr. Speaker.

But what we know is that this deficit that right now they state is 622 is phony. We know the expenditures are phony. They're much higher, as is the deficit, as is the debt growth in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Speaking directly to the actual debt growth in this province, Mr. Speaker, I refer to the green sheet. I noticed in 2009 after the NDP left \$2.3 billion in a booming economy, Mr. Speaker, they had a debt at that point of just under \$8 billion — \$7.966 billion. What do we see now, just two years later, at a time of record revenues flowing into this government's coffers? Well we see that debt going up. We talked about the debt to equity ratio. But further, Mr. Speaker, we see the real number growing to \$9.192 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Now . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Right, oh yes, no, they've the billboards of course that we know aren't true, Mr. Speaker. We talked about those billboards that aren't true, Mr. Speaker. But that's about the only thing you can expect from this government, Mr. Speaker, is that when these members are out trouncing around the province and putting forward all sorts of advertising is that what they put forward isn't true, Mr. Speaker.

Now it took me a second to do the math on what the actual government debt is, and the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is because they've actually removed a line. And you'll wonder what line they used here. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm all for eliminating debt. I'm all for that. To do that though, you need to place money there.

What this government's done is they've whited it out. They've simply erased it from the balance sheet. This government, at a time where every level of government at every single jurisdiction is being pressed for more accountability and more transparency, removes the total debt reporting line from their budget. They no longer include guaranteed debt in their definition of total debt. Just do what's good for you, hey guys? Just do what's good for you to serve your own political interest.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are smarter than this. They have math skills much beyond that of the Sask Party, and they'll see through this. But New Democrats will reverse this. Trust me, Mr. Speaker. In 18 short months, you'll see total debt reported again, the kind of transparency and accountability Saskatchewan people deserve when dealing with accounting, Mr. Speaker, and the money that they have.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few things in public sector accounting that a government should do when they change accounting practice. And I'll reference from the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants website, public standard accounting, specifically PS 2120, Mr. Speaker, 18, I quote:

For each change in an accounting policy in the current period, the following information should be disclosed:

- (a) a description of the change;
- (b) the effect of the change on the financial statements of the current period; and
- (c) the reason for the change.

And this comes from September 1997 from the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. Those are the three expectations when you change accounting policies. And how many of those three expectations do you think this government included in there?

**An Hon. Member:** — Zero.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And the member from Coronation Park is right — zero. They didn't include one of those, Mr. Speaker. And I know the auditor will likely be weighing in on this. Certainly the opposition will be in coming weeks.

But they haven't even followed the accounting standards that are laid out from an international governance perspective, Mr. Speaker. A province that's going in the wrong direction under a Premier and a government that you can't trust with the finances of our province, that you can't trust with the health care of our province, that you can't trust with the cost of living in this province, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

We've seen a budget that is full of cuts and financial trickery. We know that it's a dishonest document that's put before us. It's something that we stand hugely opposed to. We've seen a reckless fiscal record since this government has come to office. And we see a government right now that, in their own forecast . . . And we don't like when this government forecasts because they usually miss the mark. We hope they would on this one. We hope they balance the books next year. Optimism's not there. But, Mr. Speaker, we see a government that's now content putting out their own plan to the people of Saskatchewan that will table another deficit budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. Saskatchewan people expect more. They deserve more, Mr. Speaker. And, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I think it's . . . we've quoted many times Eric Howe, economics professor from the University of Saskatchewan, who calls himself a fiscal conservative who's scolded this government repeatedly for its lack of spending constraint, for its

runaway spending. And what he states, Mr. Speaker — I don't have his exact quote so I'll paraphrase — is that the costs of such mismanagement are straightforward. There's no one in between the government and who it affects other than you and I. And it affects each and every one of us, all of our constituents.

We expect more, Mr. Speaker. We stand opposed to this budget, this reckless budget of dishonesty. And I'm proud today to stand up and stand up on behalf of the opposition, the people of this province who are being failed with the management of this Sask Party, and I stand opposed to the budget and I support the amendment put forward by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House today to speak in support of the budget motion. Mr. Speaker, I think I'm like a lot of MLAs. I like to go home on the weekend and probably don't admit it to a lot of people but I do like to watch the reruns of question period.

Last weekend I came home, turned on the TV and started putting away my things and thought, well it's a little bit raucous and perhaps the language is a little rougher than usual. And then I thought, well perhaps I had a question period from another channel that was being played on CPAC [Cable Public Affairs Channel] and then I was listening some more, and I was wondering who Ricky, Randy, and Bubbles were. And then I realized, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I had a completely different program. But I was amazed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at how much that show sounded exactly like the opposition members during question period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, usually at this time the members, when they speak to the budget speech, will usually thank people that they've had dealings with during the past number of months and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to do that. I would like to thank the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast for re-nominating me to be their Saskatchewan Party candidate in the next election. I value their wisdom and candour and input. I enjoy travelling around in my constituency. I frequently come across people that I don't know that will come up and say we're doing a good job and wanting to endorse or give their support to the government. I value that. And sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they come with criticism — some more friendly than other — and we value it how and whatever form it is given.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to thank my colleagues on this side of the House. The MLAs that I serve with are some of the finest women and men that I've had the pleasure of knowing in my life and I enjoy and value working with them on a daily basis. I would also like to thank the people that we work with in the Assembly — the Pages, the House staff, the building maintenance people, the security, the people that work in the cafeteria. These are some of the people that all members come in contact with and are often people that are not appreciated as well as they should. So I would like to ask all members when they see these people to thank them for their good and continuing hard work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to thank my constituency executive who work very hard and are able to make my work as an MLA very easy — my president, Peter Voldend; my secretary, Marie Koop; our treasurer, Al Johnston, who has sort of been the treasurer for life. He has been there as long as I have and does a very good job. The past president who's now gone on to be president of the Saskatchewan Party, Gary Meschishnick. People like Earl Priddle, Pat and Jim Humeny who are always available and always doing hard work. I have very good staff in my Saskatoon office, Gordon Rutten and Laine Goertz. I also have wonderful staff to work with in Regina — my chief of staff, Denise Batters; the assistants that work in my office, Jean Watts, Michelle Chyz, Judy Langford, and Lara Zaluski who have been wonderful to work with, very hard working, very competent, professional people.

I would also like to thank my wife, Sandy, for her support. It's difficult for MLAs when they're away from home as much as they are and it's important that they have the support of their family and I want to thank Sandy for being there and being supportive.

I usually at this time comment on the health of my mother. My mother is now nearly 90 years old and watches question period and watches television on a regular basis. She often has some comments. The other day I stopped by to see her and she said, I saw you on TV the other night. And I said, oh, did I know what I was talking about? And she said, and I quote, "Oh, I just press mute." Mr. Deputy Speaker, she did at that point smile and say, "I didn't really press mute. I really listened to what you had to say." And then she said, "and I wish you wouldn't be so hard on Frank Quennell." In any event, Mr. Speaker, I say that as a direct quote from my mother and . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I'll just remind the member that he's not to address the other members by their name. By their constituency.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the point and will respect that. And I will also respect my mother's admonition as to how I treat other members in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency is growing and continues to grow. I've got the area of Rosewood which is now rapidly filling in and over the last year or two I've had huge growth in the area of Stonebridge. And I know that after the next election there will be redistribution, and I've been out door knocking in most of these areas. And I suspect that after redistribution this constituency could easily be broken up into three or four ridings that would be willing to elect a Saskatchewan Party member, because, as large as it is right now, there's huge support there for the Saskatchewan Party.

Right across and through part of the constituency will be the new south bridge. I'm pleased that the province has provided nearly \$100 million for that project. We've had good support from the federal government and from our mayor, Don Atchison, who has been extremely gracious, and I want to thank him and recognize him. His wife Mardele has faced some significant health issues in the past few months. Hopefully the worst is past. And I would like to ask that all members would keep Mardele in their thoughts and prayers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spend about half my time in Regina during session, and in spite of the friendly rivalry between our cities, Regina is a beautiful city. And the people here should take a great deal of pride in their city. It's a wonderful city. It's beautiful in the summer. If I had any suggestions for the people in Regina it would be they might want to elect a few more Saskatchewan Party MLAs. And come November of 2011 they will have that opportunity and I expect they will probably avail themselves of that opportunity.

One thing though that Regina does very well is produce great police chiefs. I've gotten to know and appreciate the hard work of Troy Hagen. He has worked well and has done a very good job of reducing crime in the city of Regina. He should be commended and recognized for that. We thank him for his continuing hard work.

One of the former officers in Regina was Clive Weighill, who is now the police chief in Saskatoon. He has moved to Saskatoon. He is one of the police chiefs that has almost become legendary throughout Western Canada. He has connected well with the members. He has connected with the community. He has made reduction of speeding and safe driving one of . . . and an increase in safe driving a mission.

There's a significant difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in how people drive between our two cities. In Regina, if you are stopped at a light and you are behind somebody, you wait for the light to turn green. And it's almost a contest to see who can wait the longest when the people are in front of you and you sit there and scratch your head and wonder what's going to happen. In Saskatoon, there is a fundamentally different approach. People wait, count down the light, and then streak across there as if they were on a drag strip. So the police chief has got his work cut out for him, and I want to wish him every success in doing that. I'd like to urge all people as they drive in our provinces and in our cities to slow down, pay attention, and make sure that they use their hands-free device.

While talking about police, I would like to recognize and thank the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers. These are a wonderful group of women and men who work very hard to ensure the safety and security of all of the residents of our province. I have gone to people like Bernie Eiswirth, Stan Goertzen, and Evan Bray for advice and direction. I value and appreciate their input.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make some specific comments on the budget. The overall budget shows an infrastructure budget of some \$632 million. That brings capital investment to almost \$3 billion in the life of this government. There is a nearly 30 per cent increase in funding for municipal infrastructure, \$177 million budgeted this year, \$161.6 million for approximately 470 kilometres of highway construction for the rural highway strategy. Work on that project, completed, will see 600 kilometres of highway resurfaced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be \$16.6 million for the Saskatchewan Research Council to continue its current research and development projects; \$391.2 million will go to universities, federated and affiliated colleges, including increases of \$16.3 million to help minimize growth in tuition costs.

This budget will maintain over \$100 million in funding for labour force development programs. It will have some \$7.9 million to post-secondary institutions for the continuation of health care training seats. There will be \$3.5 million to continue the physician recruitment strategy and agency. \$6.6 million will be included to continue medical education system enhancements. This is such things as physician training seat expansion, postgraduate, and international residency seats.

I am incredibly proud of this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. \$123 million increase, which is a 5 per cent increase, to regional health authorities to provide base funding of \$2.6 billion to maintain and improve delivery of health care services to Saskatchewan people. \$10.5 million to begin the process of reducing surgical wait-lists and wait times. There will be \$7 million spent this year for a patient-first initiatives fund to support the health system in adopting a patient- and family-centred care approach. \$109.3 million, which is a \$10 million increase, 10.1 per cent, to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This is for funding for drugs and medical supplies as well as operating costs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be \$2.6 million in new funding to address increased cardiac care volumes, including expansion of electrophysiology services in Saskatchewan. As well there will be a pilot project for autism services which will be some \$2.5 million. The people that have got somebody with autism spectrum disorder in their family are greatly appreciative of this initiative.

Within my ministry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a 1 per cent increase to community-based organization that carry out important work with victims of crime and others. There will be efficiencies achieved by making Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission an independent agency. Stage one of a computer system that will link police, courts, and corrections . . . [inaudible] . . . to streamline offender files and more efficiency in managing programs, that will start and will be likely completed this year, at least phase 1 of it. There will be an automated case management and filing system and an automated trial scheduling pilot project in Saskatoon Provincial Court. In co-operation with Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, we are continuing to expand video conferencing facilities to young offenders facilities and Court of Queen's Bench locations.

We will later this year add 30 new police officers which will bring the total police officers added since we formed government to 90. This is 90 of the 120 that was committed by this government, by the Saskatchewan Party before it formed government. We are well on the way to fulfilling this important election commitment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am also responsible for SaskTel. This year I'm pleased to state that SaskTel will invest \$239 million in its Saskatchewan network in 2010. Residential and business customers in communities across the province can expect improved and expanded SaskTel services as a result of this major capital investment.

[16:15]

The expansion will bring SaskTel's network up to date and will

allow for 3G compatible devices such as the iPhone to be used on our network. That is something that will happen later this year, Mr. Speaker.

SaskTel will reach 100 per cent high-speed Internet coverage in 2010 following the launch of high-speed Internet service from private sector partners RfNow and YourLink in some 15 communities. In 2010 SaskTel will invest \$17 million to expand and improve its existing wireless network including the addition of new digital cellular sites across the province scheduled to be completed in 2011.

This year SaskTel will invest \$31 million to expand rural broadband. This includes upgrading the rural backbone infrastructure to provide an enhanced transport network that will upgrade basic high-speed Internet from one and a half megabits per second to 5 megabits per second for download speed. This will take place in this year, 2010, in over 200 communities.

SaskTel is continuing to expand cellular service into rural areas under the three-year rural infrastructure program. There will be 55 new digital cellular sites that will be added over the three-year life of this program. The result will be that 98 per cent of the population will have cellular coverage by the end of 2011.

In Saskatoon, my hometown, the budget establishes Innovation Saskatchewan with a base budget of \$1.3 million; \$480,000 of this funding will go to TRILabs in Saskatoon to support the work they do in telecommunications research.

The InterVac facility in Saskatoon provides capacity for animal and human disease research on current and emerging infectious diseases. Funding is being provided to InterVac through the Innovation and Science Fund. The province's total multi-year commitment is \$57.1 million, which is approximately 40 per cent of the total cost. This is a \$3.8 million increase that will also go in addition to that to the Irene and Leslie Dubé Centre for Mental Health.

And I think I mentioned earlier but would mention again, it's probably something that cannot be mentioned often enough, is the \$100 million that is going for the new south bridge in Saskatoon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that bridge was tendered, tenders were awarded just this last week, so we will see construction started this year. That will be a major link between east and west side Saskatoon and will provide great access and will make our city a lot easier to get around, and will form a bridge between the east and west side communities, where there's often seen as a rift or a difference between the two of them. This will allow people to access cultural recreational facilities, allow access to the farmers' market. Things will be . . . It will make our city more one sense of a better and more closer knit community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just conclude by sort of a brief comment about where I think the members opposite are at. I have sat and I've listened to them and I think we see a new leader over there, a new leader that's trying to struggle with his own personal/political identity. He's tried different methods of doing this or doing that to try and relate to the people. And I think what he's trying to do is perhaps emulate some of the

American pop politicians that we see on TV.

And I wasn't exactly sure of who he was trying to . . . and I know it's changed periodically. I know that he was making a lot of statements that seemed to not be really in touch with reality, but very vigorously, very vociferous in how he's making those statements. And I looked at him. And when you look at him, you don't really make the connection. But when you stop and you look away and you just listen, you know, you are hearing the voice of Rod Blagojevich.

Now the member opposite, the leader, does not have the hair, but certainly the voice and the projection. And you know, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not that the leader opposite is willing to take advice from me, but he may want to find a little better role model, perhaps not worry so much on focusing on the hair, but something a little bit different, something a little bit more, one that would have something that he may want to emulate.

I watch some of the other members over there. And I sense — sort of in with this you betcha slogan that are over there — I swear that some of the members over there are going to show up with some new rectangular glasses saying, you betcha, maverick, and going along with the Sarah Palin look. Now I guess if that's the direction they wish to go, I leave it to the members opposite to decide what they wish to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am going to do and what I'm proud to be doing is, I will be supporting the budget. I will not be supporting the amendment. What I would like to urge the members opposite to do, when they have their opportunity to speak to the budget, would be to say specifically, these are the items in the budget that I support; these are the items that I do not, so they very specifically should put their position on record.

It's one thing, I've heard some of the members stand up and go on a general rant, but what I'd like to encourage them to do is state specifically what in the budget they don't agree. Do they not agree with increasing funding for health care? Do they not agree with infrastructure? What are the things on there that they don't agree with and what are the things specifically that they do agree with?

And I challenge them to put their comments very specifically and precisely on the record, especially the things in that budget that they do not agree with. It's not enough to do a general rant. We're in the legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite know full well that they have to be held to account by the people that brought them here. So they should be able to go back to their electors when the next election is called and say, this is what I voted for, this is what I voted against.

There are a lot of things in this budget the members opposite should be supporting. And if they're not, they should have the courage to stand up and say, I'm not voting for increased health care. I don't want more hospital beds. They should be willing to say that. And they should be willing to put their careers and their credibility on the line, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. And I would like to indicate once again, I will be supporting the budget motion and

will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very pleased today to stand up and enter into the debate on the budget. Before I actually start into the remarks that I had thought I was going to give, I want to talk about what I have just heard from the Premier, because I'm already getting emails talking about the absolutely disgusting performance.

The budget speech which people would expect to have given by the Premier should include maybe some of his themes, like balanced and forward-thinking and all that. People are saying he was extremely red in the face and basically didn't have anything to comment on his vision for the budget. He was commenting on our budget speeches, our history . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Nothing. I'm not talking about what I heard. I'm talking about what emails I'm already getting and so are my colleagues. So I mean people are watching. If we think we're living in a vacuum here, we're not. People are actually watching this.

And people that watched the Premier on budget day have a temper tantrum basically in this Assembly when there was 500 people in the building and in the galleries and how many more at home watching, it was disgraceful. And if I was a caucus member of the Sask Party, I'd be embarrassed by that. And so many people are talking about that. In fact, the Premier, unprecedented, had to apologize, apologize to the House. So I mean, everybody in the province knows now that the Premier is childish and talks like he has temper tantrums whenever. He needs a time out. And I think the people in November of 2011 will give him one.

And I'm happy to actually talk today, and I know my colleagues have covered the budget in great detail, many times from their critic area of perspective and on the global basis. Because I'm the Health critic and there is so much to talk about in Health, I think I'm going to try and keep my remarks basically to Health, other than the fact that the words balanced, forward-looking and responsible have replaced what was last year's buzzwords which were, transparent and accountable. Obviously those are gone because this is not a transparent budget. It's not accountable to anybody, and I can understand why they'd want to take those out because they certainly couldn't live up to them last year.

This budget is about trust. I've heard it called deceit in deficit. And the people . . . the place I can see it the most deceitful that is tied to deficit and debt is in the health districts. If anybody thinks that the health districts can survive with the services that we expect on a 3 per cent increase, are truly living in a bubble and dreaming in Technicolor. It's not going to happen. It is not going to happen.

So what are we going to have when the health districts have to look at their programs? They've been told . . . right now Saskatoon has a \$14 million deficit. Regina has a \$7 million deficit. They were told to cut more money out of their health budget. How? When you cut your health budget, you cut programs. You cannot just do it in the air like some of the

mathletes over there think it can be done.

We're talking about actually starving the health districts so they are going to have to cut programs. They're going to have to cut services. And then people will say, well if you have to put some of the services into the private sector, I guess that's all the choice we have. That is the danger of how this budget is constructed. And this ideology of the Sask Party government will affect people. It isn't about the ideology of privatization. It's about the ideology of trust and accountability and being straightforward and upfront.

I don't think people liked to be taken for fools and I don't think they like to be fooled. And if you're trying to get privatization in because that's your ideology, well go ahead and try. Go ahead and try, but at least be upfront about it. Don't take the money from the health districts.

They have got . . . In the budget book, there's a projection in 2010-11 of \$76 million of a deficit. The forecast in '09-10 was 136.9. The estimated was they were going to have a surplus. Well oops, they're now running deficits. And if you give them 3 per cent, 127 million was what we heard the numbers . . . We were told in a budget briefing that \$100 million of that 127 is going to salaries for nurses. That leaves \$27 million for 13 health districts to deliver programs.

With the increased costs in electricity, and utilization increased costs, any other health providers increase in salary, how on earth are they going to do it? This is not going to happen. It's not going to happen. And this is why I think it is so deceitful because you're trying to say this is a balanced budget. You've off-loaded this debt and this deficit onto the health districts. Let them run the deficit. Who's going to pay for that? The taxpayer will pay for it. It is a public debt, and to say anything else is simply not true.

And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people are starting to think, well okay, I don't have a choice. I can't get my knees done because I can't get it done in the public system fast enough. Why not? Because we don't fund the private system accordingly. And I heard the member from Southeast talk about we would be against, will we be against increasing hospital beds? Where's that going to happen with no money? Children's hospital's been cancelled. That's not going to happen. Long-term care beds, not going to happen. So there's nothing in there that we should support.

If they wanted to build more facilities and increase beds, let's hear it. We haven't heard it in this budget. There is nothing that speaks to what will happen to improve the health system. And if people think that this budget will do it with 3 per cent, they're going to be sadly disappointed. And this is political suicide which . . . You know, the Sask Party obviously is going to gamble that people will buy this. I don't think so. I don't think Saskatchewan people are that gullible. They're not going to buy it.

And it's interesting that we now have 25,000 health care workers. They deliver the services. They look after my dad in Sherbrooke. They're not some unionized thug. They look after my dad in Sherbrooke and I see them all the time, what they do for my dad. And I think they deserve a fair contract and I think

they deserve respect. And they're not getting it. They are not getting it. Where's the money for those contracts? Twenty-five thousand health care workers — that might cost a penny or two to give them a contract. And they're also going to get retroactive pay because it's been two years since they've had one.

And everybody is looking at what happened with the chiropractors. This has set the bar for bargaining on the floor. There is no honour in bargaining anymore with this government. Nobody believes it. If you can bargain for a year and come to an agreement and take it out and ratify it with your members, come back and the minister says, oh sorry, no it's not going to happen — that is bargaining in bad faith. And any worker in this province who knows about contracts and knows about working and knows about bargaining understands that.

And I know, I know the Premier has said we're going to war with labour. Well you really would have to ask yourself, why? Why would you do that? Why would you talk about undermining the economy, undermining the growth of the province, by going to war with the people who work here? Why would you think that that would get you anything? It might've been a cute clip on Gormley, but it certainly does not go anywhere in the public and in the real world.

Twenty-five thousand health care workers without a contract. Nothing in the budget to accommodate that. Nothing in the health budget. So health districts are supposed to get that money from where? Increasing their debt? Increasing their deficit and increasing their debt. That's the only option they're going to have.

[16:30]

If you think that laying anybody off is going to work, well how are the services going to improve? How are you going to do . . . All the things you talked about in the *Sooner, Safer, Smarter* is going to be later, very dangerous, and dumber. I mean none of that is going to happen. They're good buzz words.

But you have to have money and you have to have the will to make it happen. There is no money. There's no money for the patient-first the commissioner talked about. He said we need an electronic health record. Well they took the money away from the electronic health record, from SHIN [Saskatchewan Health Information Network]. It's taken money away from there. How is that meeting what the commissioner said?

They talked about increasing the acute care beds that long-term care people are in, moving people out of those acute care beds in hospitals in our bigger cities and moving them into long-term care beds. Where? There's already 115 long-term care beds in the system than there was two years ago. That's the Sask Party record — 115 long-term care beds less. So you promise to move people, long-term care people out of acute care beds and put them into long-term care faster? How?

That's no plan. You can talk all you want, and the minister can dance around in his seat and get redder and redder and tell me that I should know. Well that's the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do know. That's the problem. And that's why he's so mad. He's gone from curious a few months ago when he said,

why didn't I get a question? He's gone from curious to furious.

And he's done nothing in between. I mean his answers are absolutely ludicrous. And the people watching are commenting. And it's really a mistake to think that what we do in this legislature and in front of these cameras goes unnoticed. There is nothing that goes unnoticed. Somebody sees it and somebody talks about it on email and Twitter and all the social networking — it just goes like wildfire through the province.

I have never in all my time I've been here, in the various portfolios I've had, had as many doctors phoning me and emailing me about what's wrong. I've never seen that. It didn't take but a few days after the minister announced his physician recruitment strategy to have emails starting to pour in from doctors who are saying, this isn't going to work. And they're gathering up more. I've never seen that before. I've got media calling me from small towns and asking me to comment. I've not seen that before.

So if anybody thinks that they are representing rural Saskatchewan by what they're doing, rural Saskatchewan's phoning us. And they're asking us, what do you think about this? And they're printing it and they're broadcasting it. Because what we're saying, people understand and they think it's true. They saw last year's budget and they're not going to be burned twice. And there's nobody that can sell balanced, forward-thinking, and what's the other word? I don't know. That can't sell either. There's nothing, there's nothing that can sell in this. It's not too catchy. Put up a billboard. I don't think it'll even sell then.

And it's interesting that what we first saw when we came into opposition was a whole province intimidated. There were organizations who were afraid to talk. They were afraid to come forward because they felt threatened by the Sask Party. And that has not gone away that they are afraid. But you know what? They're not afraid to come forward any more. They are coming forward in droves. There are so many people coming forward and saying to us in all of our critic areas, I don't like this. This is what's happening to me, and I'm not going to take it any more. They see that this is not the government they thought they were getting.

All the promises in '07, the Premier can stand up and tick off the ones that he's kept. Well he has let down many people by the ones he hasn't kept — big ones. The children's hospital, gone. The long-term care facilities, gone. The municipal tax sharing, gone. The school boards, left on their own. God knows what they're going to do. They don't have money for teachers either.

How is this going to work? Somebody was making up this budget in a bubble, not understanding what it means. It isn't going . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's the third one, thank you — responsible. Well I think most people are thinking it's fairly irresponsible. There is nothing in it that . . . I have heard nobody say to me, that's really, those are good words. Those are good words. I think I like that.

This budget can't be sold. It's dying a quick death. Almost a week has gone by since we've heard it. It's dead out there. It's dead out there. I can't believe the people who are calling, the



people who are asking for our opinion, for our help. I'm just so surprised actually that people have . . .

First of all I was really, really disappointed they were so intimidated, but I can see this in this House. I've been here for 12 years and the people that are saying, oh, don't say that to our Premier, oh, don't say that to the member from such-and-such a place because you're hurting his feelings. I sat here for 12 years listening to the absolute hostile, vicious comments from many of those members over there. So to forget that, I don't think so. And to whine and go waah, waah, waah, now my feelings are hurt — that doesn't work. You could dish it out, but you cannot take it. You can't take it. You are waah, waah, waahing all the time.

And I don't know how many times the Premier has apologized. He has a record for someone who has to apologize. The things that are on his record are absolutely atrocious. Someone who would think that that is Premier-like, and that's how someone that we've supposedly elected as a province, we want to show this to be who we think is a good leader? I don't think we're going to be fooled much longer. The shine is coming off big time. The shine is coming off.

And I think when we see temper tantrums like we saw on budget day, we see the Premier's speech today when he had a major opportunity to talk about what this budget meant for his vision and forward . . . whatever he was talking about. Where did it go? It went into personal attacks on the members over here, regurgitating our speeches and trying to tear them apart and think it was funny. And actually, you know what? I don't think most people think he's funny anymore either. Most people have said to me they've been at events where his jokes are the same as the one they heard last time. So he's basically, you know, a mile wide and an inch deep, and that's starting to be shown quite clearly.

We're starting to hear it all over. So people that think we're . . . people like me who are stuck in, say, Eastview in Saskatoon — and I only represent an urban riding; I don't hear stuff from rural Saskatchewan — well stay tuned, because rural newspapers are calling me. We're going out to rural places and I've been out there to many of them. And they want us to come and they want to tell us their stories because they don't believe the people over there are representing them. They do not. And it's only taken two years. So I don't think anybody should get comfortable in those seats over there because they're not going to be in there very long.

I think the people of Saskatchewan have seen now the second budget where they've been abysmally disappointed. Last year, well, sorry we made a mistake on potash revenue projections. Big oops. Not that people didn't warn them. I saw Harry Van Mulligen sitting next to me telling the members opposite, I mean that is ridiculous. And we were pooh-poohed and mocked and mocked. And now who's got the last laugh? Although no one's laughing because it hurt all of us. It hurts the whole province. And the economy is perking along really nicely. It is perking. So as long as the Sask Party isn't there for more than four years, we're going to just be fine.

But the Sask Party, I think people have really lost their trust. They've certainly lost any amusement, and they don't believe

anything they're hearing any more. They're extremely skeptical.

And you've made people very . . . I don't know how the business community views this. This is something the business community would think is a good idea, to have a budget like this where the debt and the deficit are being slid under into the health districts, into the school boards? What are we going to do with this money?

I've got seniors coming into my office telling me they can't turn on their power because they can't afford it. They can't buy dentures. They can't buy new glasses. They're starting to think about selling their gravesites. Come on. I mean we've got to do . . . And there's not a thing in here about seniors except decreasing their income — not a thing. And the minister told a group of seniors that came to visit him . . . Because there's nothing on the website either of the Sask Party about seniors. That's disappeared. There's nobody paying attention to seniors. Well you know what? Seniors vote. Seniors vote. And they are not happy.

And they're coming and saying, I'm not taking my medication. I'm cutting the pill in four and taking it every, you know, a quarter every day instead of one a day. And they're not taking them, sometimes not at all. They're not turning on their stoves to cook because they can't afford the electricity. I mean . . . And the seniors' rec centres that used to be places where seniors could go and meet in their small communities — and these are small communities where seniors gathered to have games and have dances and have conversation and actually keep themselves busy and out in the community — they can't afford to keep them open because they can't afford the utilities. There's no help. There's no recognition. Seniors are totally ignored. The minister told seniors' groups who came to visit him, I've been busy. I've been busy.

So it's interesting to see that there is not even, there's not even a minister responsible for seniors. And seniors see that. They see that they're not, I mean, they're not even recognized or notified or noticed. Their issues are . . . They're on fixed income. Seniors are not the rich people in the province. Sure there's some who have lots of money, but there's so many more who are coming into our offices talking about their rent increases, their drug costs, their utility costs. They can't afford to live here. How is that fair? How is that fair and responsible? We're looking at a whole group of people who are disadvantaged and have nothing in the budget for them.

I'm also the critic for women's issues. This is a whole other thing. There is nobody in that government that even knows anything about the status of women. When they're called, nobody answers. People say if they call and ask for the status of women something . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — What happens?

**Ms. Junor:** — Nothing. I'm sorry, I don't know who that is. I don't know. What is the status of women? What is the status of women, was the answer. I'm sorry, I don't know that. Is there a minister responsible? I don't know that. That's the government answering the phone, which is a whole other thing when people are calling us in our constituency offices saying nobody

answers the phone over there. There's all these high-priced political people supposed to be in the ministers' offices. And the phone rings and rings and rings and nobody answers.

So they're coming to us and saying, I've gone to my MLA's office. It isn't even open. It's never even open, so I'm calling you to ask you what you can do for me. How is this representing the people of Saskatchewan? How is this representing your constituents, when you don't even answer your phone? There's hundreds of people telling us that, so it's not just an isolated incidence. This is a culture of this government. You don't want to talk to people. You want to intimidate them to be quiet and not bring up their issues, just take it. Because somehow you have the God-given right to govern, and the rest of us are garbage. And people are not going to take that. They aren't going to take it.

The Sask Party has totally underestimated the people of Saskatchewan. They will not take it. They will not be fooled by another budget that's just totally going to take us into debt. It isn't fair, balanced, straightforward, forward-thinking, whatever. None of the above. It certainly lost the words transparent and accountable a long time ago. Nobody buys it, and nobody's bought this one. And I can see by the faces of the members opposite they don't buy it either. They're looking extremely uncomfortable. They came to this legislature in government pretty darn cocky, extremely cocky, arrogant. They were rude, obnoxious. Now there's nothing. There's . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would caution the member when talking about other members not to use unparliamentary language. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — I was talking rude and arrogant, so I'm not sure if you could tell me, Mr. Speaker, which ones of those are not parliamentarian.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — First of all, member not to question the Speaker. You were talking about members with them words.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll try to use better words. I know that the Speaker has ruled that we can certainly use "simply not true," so I do think that people understand that these members, the members of the Sask Party, what they're saying to people is simply not true. When they talk about all the things that they're doing and giving and all the good things in the budget, they're not true. They're not true. There's things in this budget that . . . People are going to really suffer. And my colleagues have pointed many of that out, many of those things out.

And when I talked about some of the things that other of my colleagues have talked about, I also want to talk about some of the plans that have been announced. The physician recruitment was announced in May of '09, '09, a year ago. The strategy was announced in '09. Then the plan was announced in 2010. So it's no small wonder that the stakeholders, like the doctors who are emailing and phoning me, are a little bit leery that anything will actually happen.

There's all kinds of plans have been announced, but nothing has happened. Nothing has happened. Big announcement about, oh, we support the children's hospital. Not going to happen. Oh

we're going to build long-term care. Not going to happen. And here's a new one. We're going to have an isotope reactor here. Well no, we're not. We're not going to have it. This special relationship with the federal government is non-existent. We have seen nothing that this government can get out of the Harper government. I don't know if they return phone calls, if they take meetings, but obviously nothing is coming to Saskatchewan from them. So that's another promise or another big, grand idea that's bit the dust. We're not going to see anything from that either.

[16:45]

So I think the people of Saskatchewan are pretty clear. Seniors, pretty clear nothing there for them. Women are starting to take notice that nobody's paying attention. Taking away the work of the violence centre for women that have been abused, that's noticed. Those things are noticed. And if you try to sell something to cover it up, people don't . . . They're not interested in having smoke blown up their nose. They understand what this means. People are looking at this and saying, well you fooled us last year, but you're not going to fool us again.

And I don't think anybody is . . . I can see by the faces of the members opposite that nobody's actually too excited about their budget because I haven't heard any excitement from the Premier. All he brought up was what we've said, criticizing that. He had the opportunity to be the leader, to tell people how exciting this was. He didn't. Obviously he doesn't think so, so I guess I can understand why his colleagues in caucus don't feel that way either. Nobody's excited. I can mostly see pretty darn dismal-looking faces when we talk about . . . And I'm sorry if that's unparliamentary. But it wasn't personal. It was expressions over there are not exactly happy.

And I think one of the things I really, really want to talk about is that we are not helping rural Saskatchewan, the doctors in rural Saskatchewan. The SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention talked about health being one of the big issues. I was there to hear that, and I understand that, and I know that doctors in rural Saskatchewan are a huge issue. And nothing's going to help that. The doctors who are emailing me are saying this isn't going to work. This strategy isn't going to work. In fact they said it was being put, the strategy was put together by people who don't even know what they're talking about.

So it's not going to, it's not going to help rural Saskatchewan, and the members opposite are supposed to be the ones elected to represent rural Saskatchewan, even if some of them have only driven by a farm. That's still the message to SARM, that we're the people that represent you, the farmers. Well my grandfather was a farmer, and I was there on his farm a lot of times. So it's not that we're too far removed from that lifestyle and that culture. And I think it's quite insulting.

And I understand that when you talk about rural issues . . . I listened to one of the members talk about Rural Women's Month and talk about women as caregivers and volunteers, missed the whole point of women's contribution to the economy in rural Saskatchewan. How many of those 25,000 health care workers work in rural Saskatchewan and contribute

to the economy and the growth of their communities? And they're sitting without a contract and feeling totally disrespected. How many of them are farmers' wives? How many of them live in small towns and basically maybe support their farm?

We're totally disregarding that aspect in thinking that somehow these 25,000 workers are union thugs. And some just . . . The disparaging remarks against unions is quite, actually disturbing. People that are involved in unions are workers like you and I. They're workers like you and I. And I've been a union leader. I understand this. I understand who I represented. And I understand who they were. And I don't see that at all. I don't know if any of the people opposite have ever even talked to a union member with any intent to understand what they do.

And like I said, my dad is looked after by a union member at his nursing home. I see what they do. This is not a person who's a union thug. That's what I get, the feeling that all the members opposite think of unions as the big, bad thugs.

And these are people who do the work of this province. They do the work that delivers the services for you and I. They're men and women. And many of them women. Eighty per cent of those 25,000 health care workers are women. And what is this saying to women? They're getting the message. They understand what it's saying to them. We don't respect you. We don't respect your work, and we certainly have no intentions of actually honouring your work or honouring you.

We don't even have a member, a minister who is taking the Status of Women seriously, so why would we? I was recently at a meeting in Quebec or with the MLA from Quebec, and she found out that the minister here responsible for the Status of Women was a man. She was appalled, absolutely appalled that this would happen. And it's even more appalling when we find out that no one knows there's a minister responsible for the Status of Women, let alone that it's one of the male members.

People don't even . . . I mean, there's no mention of women. There's no mention of seniors, and there's people out there who are noticing that. It's just, it's not . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — It's Rob.

**Ms. Junor:** — Yes. In case you didn't know, it's the Minister of Advanced Education, Learning, Labour and whatever else is attached to that.

But I think that some of the things that we've seen that are in the health cuts are really going to be coming back to my critic area because I think what's going to be significant in this budget and over this budget year is the amazing damage that's going to be done to our health care services by this budget. And the districts are going to feel it, and you and I are going to feel it in our services. And anybody who tries to colour it over or gloss it over by saying this is a balanced budget, that health districts got all this money and are going to do so well, it's not going to happen. It's not true. And we're all going to suffer from it.

And I think the people that see it and when they see it — it's not going to be too long before they notice it — they're not

going to put up with it anymore, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that the message in two years is going to be, we're done with you. So I simply am not going to . . . I'm going to support the amendment, but I will not be supporting the budget. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now our government has presented a balanced, forward-looking, responsible budget. And this was achieved through a combination of reduced spending, caution on revenue projections, and a commitment to living within our means. Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan want all of us to live within our means. Reductions have been realized in 14 ministries, and there'll be a lowering of debt service costs this year. And as a result, our government is paying down debt by more than 2.6 billion in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the restraint measure, the government has embarked on a process to reduce the size and the cost of government operation. This is a balanced, forward-looking approach. It's a responsible approach, Mr. Deputy Speaker. While this reduction from the record-high levels of infrastructure spending in the previous years, it is still the third-largest capital spending budget in Saskatchewan's history. And this will bring our government's total capital investments to nearly 3 billion in three years.

Our government's expense levels are reduced by 1.2 per cent while protecting important programs, protecting core services in health, social services, education, and other priority areas across the government. Government debt will not rise. The growth and financial security projection is to have a year-end balance of \$110 million. We will move Saskatchewan forward by training our future workforce through labour force development programs and supporting our post-secondary institutions to minimize tuition cost increases.

Mr. Speaker, we have shown responsible leadership by continuing our effort to improve the daily lives of Saskatchewan people, including society's most vulnerable people. The Saskatchewan economy remains strong through the worst global recession. And with the recovery now under way, there is plenty of reason for optimism. All the independent forecasters say Saskatchewan will be one of the economic leaders in Canada in 2010 and 2011.

Saskatchewan's economy is strong, and this budget will give our province the solid, fiscal foundation it needs to stay strong. Our social services will continue to make significant investments on behalf of Saskatchewan people in need with commitments to affordable housing and child and family services. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that cares. This is a government that is balanced, forward-looking, and responsible.

There will be a new Headstart home program implemented to help eligible families own their own home. Mr. Speaker, this is a commitment to especially young families who maybe need a bit of a helping hand to be able to afford their own home here in Saskatchewan. Available, affordable housing is key to building better lives in Saskatchewan. People will choose to stay in

Saskatchewan. We will end up developing stronger, stable communities throughout the province of Saskatchewan. The Headstart on Home program will help families in need realize their dream, their dream of owning their own home. And this program is expected to create a minimum of a thousand new, affordable home ownership opportunities, and this is for the lower to moderate income home buyers over the next five years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, improving the lives of children in care remains a priority for our government, and we will continue the work that we have already begun to strengthen our child welfare system. The Ministry of Social Services is receiving 30.2 million to offset caseload and cost increase in the Saskatchewan assistance program and the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, and transitional employment allowances.

Mr. Speaker, this is balanced. This is forward and this is responsible. This is a part of our government's resolve to maintain core services while ensuring fiscal responsibility. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring the best use of public funds while helping citizens build better lives for themselves through economic independence, strong families, and active involvement in the labour market and within their communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 2010-2011 provincial budget provides 556 million in operation funds for Saskatchewan's post-secondary institution. Now this is an overall increase of 5 per cent over the last year. Now our budget ensures that the post-secondary system is innovative, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the learners of the Saskatchewan market. We have taken several steps to enhance student support to ensure that education remains and is affordable. And the budget provides 97.7 million in support for students through student loans, grants, bursaries, and provincial training allowances, and also the graduate retention program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what does this mean? This means we are a responsible government. We have worked hard to help students meet their financial challenges. On average almost two-thirds of every provincial dollar given to students is non-repayable. Now this is helping students through the responsible management of our expenditures and strategic investment in key services, and our economy will continue to be strong.

The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to invest in pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to 12 education in a balanced, sustainable way to ensure the province achieves affordable growth, moving forward. And we do realize we have a group of young children that are going to be coming into our schools, so we do have to take that into consideration. Our government has worked very hard to fund education because we understand the essential role it plays in our government's future and the province's future, important in preparing all of our young people for success.

And this year the government is investing 17.2 million for school capital. And this brings its three-year total to a record of 328 million invested in the province's K to 12 infrastructure. This budget also provides 2 million for the 235 additional child care spaces and 18 new pre-kindergarten programs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very good indication that we have a growing

province and that we are listening. We are paying attention. This is a responsible government.

In the past two and a half years, the government has advanced 28 major school capital projects, and this includes six recently announced school projects to address the most critical space issues in the province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is wonderful when we have space issues because that means we have a growing population. Now this is also coupled by close to 400 additional smaller . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time of adjournment having been reached, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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President of the Executive Council

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Minister of Agriculture  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Crop Insurance Corporation

**Hon. Bill Boyd**  
Minister of Energy and Resources  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated  
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Government Insurance  
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

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Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

**Hon. Rod Gantfoer**  
Minister of Finance

**Hon. Donna Harpauer**  
Minister of Social Services

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison**  
Minister of Municipal Affairs

**Hon. Nancy Heppner**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Water Corporation

**Hon. Bill Hutchinson**  
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations  
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Gaming Corporation

**Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert**  
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

**Hon. Ken Krawetz**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Education

**Hon. Don McMorris**  
Minister of Health

**Hon. Don Morgan**  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Telecommunications

**Hon. Rob Norris**  
Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour  
Minister Responsible for Immigration  
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan  
Workers' Compensation Board

**Hon. Jim Reiter**  
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Transportation Company

**Hon. Christine Tell**  
Minister of Government Services  
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan  
Liquor and Gaming Authority  
Minister Responsible for the Capital Commission