



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

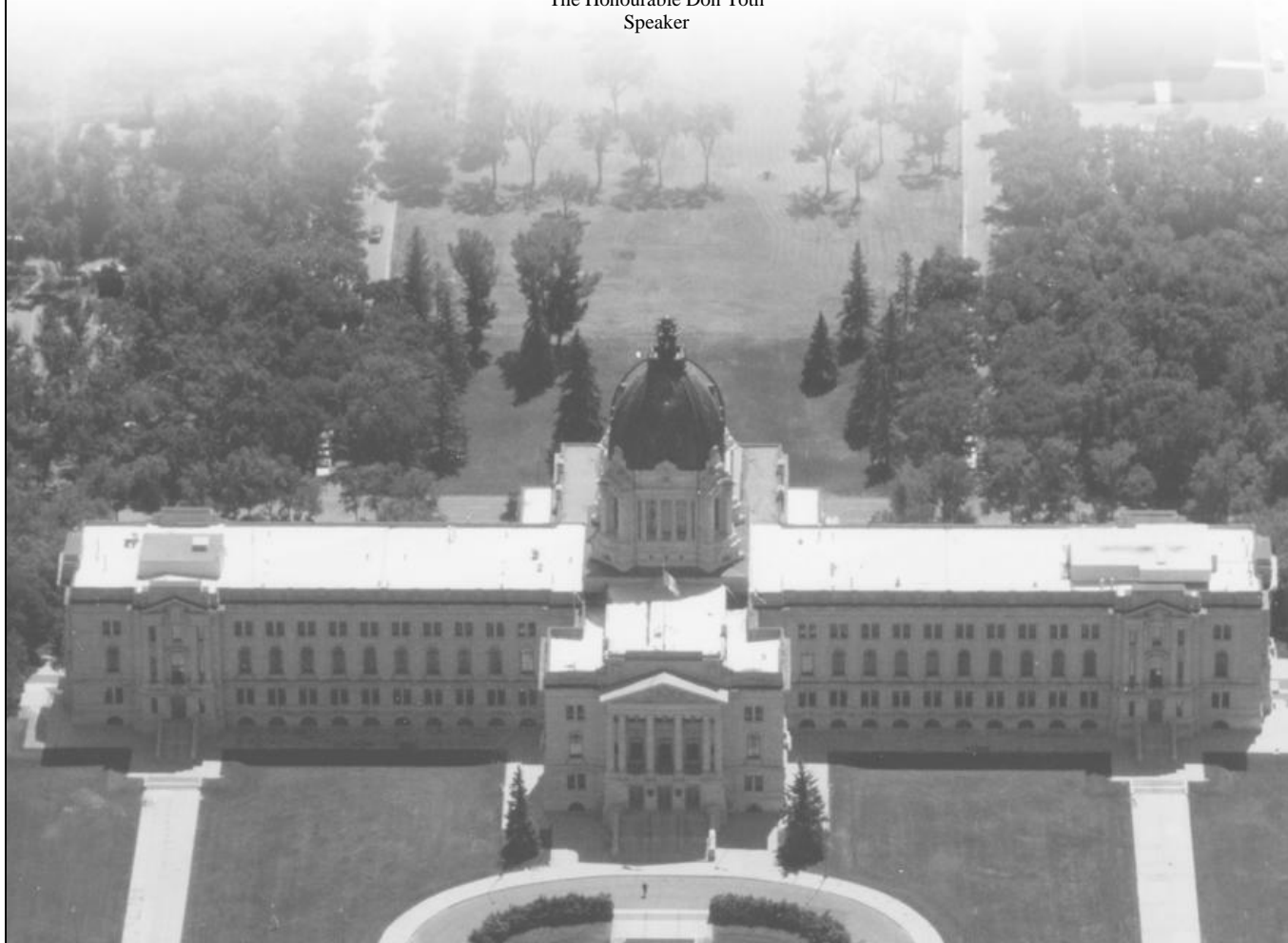
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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, 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, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. 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
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. 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, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, 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
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you through all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Katie Turnbull. Is Katie up there? Oh, there she is. Katie is a third-year nursing student through the U of R [University of Regina] and the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Katie is also a Saskatchewan Roughrider cheerleader. And I do understand, Katie, that you had suffered an injury this past game, and we're hoping for a speedy recovery so that you'll be at the playoff game this coming Sunday. Anyway I ask all members to join me in welcoming Katie Turnbull to our Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the young man that's with Katie today, who happens to be a very distinguished member of our Saskatchewan community, the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Ryan Bater.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in recognizing the Leader of the Liberal Party. As everyone knows of course, the passing of a long-standing Liberal member; the flags are flying at half-mast. And I'm sure that Ryan and other Liberals across the province will recognize the loss of a great person. And I'd like to also add to the member's comments a welcome to your legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, two guests in your gallery today. Frances Wach is the executive director of the Saskatchewan SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] and Tim Wiens, Chair of the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan. And they are here today in support of new legislation I'll be introducing regarding the animal health and welfare. So I would ask everyone to welcome them to their legislature and thank them very much for their support.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways, the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to introduce some visitors from Medicine Hat. They're in your gallery, Mr.

Speaker. They are Candace and Derek Paton and their daughter Ashley. Just give us a wave, folks. Candace is the sister to my chief of staff. They're here, going to take in question period today, Mr. Speaker. And I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the quality of our highways and the steady deterioration that they're experiencing, as well as the safety factor that this all causes. And the prayer, Mr. Speaker, is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1 in order to improve the safety for Saskatchewan's motoring public.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks from Fort Qu'Appelle; Balcarres; and Lipton, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of the people in Wawota and area who are opposed to the closure of the five beds in Wawota Deer View Lodge. They feel it's unsafe and unfair that families are separated in their last years of their lives. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop the closure of these beds.

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

This is many more signatures to add to the hundreds that I submitted last week. And these are from Kipling, Kennedy, Arcola, Manor, Windthorst, Wawota, Wapella, and Moosomin. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. We know that the freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. And unfortunately Saskatchewan's income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in our

province live in deepening poverty. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

Mr. Speaker, these folks come from Regina, Saskatoon, Melfort, Tisdale, and Nipawin.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for university students in Saskatchewan, a petition that calls on the Sask Party government to expand the graduate retention program. The prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition with respect to the future of Saskatchewan's potash resource because Saskatchewan has a 1,000-year supply of the world's highest quality potash and that the people of Saskatchewan are the owners of this strategic resource and deserve to receive the maximum benefit for its development, processing, mining, and sale. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Saskatchewan Party government to publicly demand the following terms and conditions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan of any foreign bidder bidding to take over PCS: to ensure people receive the maximum net benefit, a golden share and preferred shares so that the public participates in both the corporation's future decision making and its profitability; public guarantees on a strengthened head office presence; support for Canpotex and long-term targets for potash production and employment; Saskatchewan representation on the board of directors; public agreements to ensure no loss of royalties; and public commitments to meet world-class standards of corporate social responsibility; and an independent potash review commission with the power to monitor and enforce all of these terms and conditions.

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

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by good folks from

Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of occupational health and safety. Mr. Speaker, the true cost of human suffering or loss of human life cannot be measured in dollars and cents, and the government allows the fines levied against companies for violations of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* to be treated as tax deductible expenses. And the government therefore continues to allow companies to treat such violations and fines levied for them as the regular cost of doing business. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to amend the laws so companies will not be allowed to get a tax deduction for fines levied against them under *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations, and to remove the existing cap on fines levied against such companies.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Coronach, Grandora, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again here today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They reference the fiscal trend line, which is negative, the fact that we're into two years of deficit. And in fact we have billions of dollars of debt growth piling up underneath the Sask Party, projected in their own documents, Mr. Speaker — page 62 from their budget summary of this year. I reference that for folks at home. 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.

Mr. Speaker, now these petitions today are signed by good folks of Saskatoon and Prince Albert. I so submit.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Massey Place on his feet?

Mr. Broten: — With leave to introduce guests, please.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members for leave. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members in the Assembly, two individuals that have joined us for the proceedings today: Menno and Annabelle Martens from the city of Swift Current. Menno is a retired educator from Swift Current, and they are very active in Bridgeway Community Church and good friends of my in-laws. So I welcome them to the Assembly today.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Tribute to Davey Steuart

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Davey Steuart, a man who gave more than five decades of his life to serving the people of Saskatchewan.

Davey Steuart was a son of Moose Jaw. And he began his career in the public service at the civic level in Prince Albert where he was elected city councillor and later served two terms as mayor, becoming as well the president of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]. He entered the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, after a by-election in 1962, and when the Liberal Party formed government in 1964, he became the minister of Health. This was the first of several portfolios, Mr. Speaker, that he would carry on in. He was later minister of Natural Resources, deputy premier, as well as minister of Finance.

And his great wit and humour were well-known. And he delivered the black Friday budget in 1968, a difficult budget which he nevertheless delivered with his trademark sense of humour, and saying, and I quote, "This is probably the first time in history of a legislature that a provincial treasurer delivered the budget not from his desk, but from under his desk."

In opposition after 1971, Mr. Speaker, he eventually won the leadership of his party, carrying the Liberal banner into the election of 1975. And though unsuccessful, he went on to serve the people of Saskatchewan in the Senate until 1991.

Mr. Speaker, whether in the council chamber in Prince Albert or in this Assembly or in the Senate in Ottawa, the people of Saskatchewan had in Davey Steuart a man committed to working for them and dedicated and with a good sense of humour.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of all members of the House to offer condolences on the passing of former Liberal leader, Davey Steuart, who passed away last Friday at the age of 94. Steuart had an accomplished

career as a public servant. He served as councillor and mayor of Prince Albert, and president of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association before being elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1962. He held several major cabinet portfolios including Health, Finance and deputy premier in the government of Premier Ross Thatcher.

Steuart later became Liberal leader and Leader of the Opposition before being appointed to the Senate. He remained a senator until his retirement in 1991. Mr. Steuart is being remembered as one who saw the great economic potential of Saskatchewan. Wascana MP [Member of Parliament] Ralph Goodale recalls Steuart as one of those trying to prime the pump to create a potash industry in Saskatchewan in the first place. Former Progressive Conservative MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Jack Klein described Steuart as a great Canadian. Described by some as the bantam rooster of Saskatchewan politics, there was never any doubt that Saskatchewan came first with him, and he was always ready to fight for the interests of his province.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Davey Steuart has left his mark on this province, and for that we are grateful for his five decades of service to the people of Saskatchewan. In remembrance of his service, the flags at the legislature will fly at half-mast until his funeral. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[13:45]

Battlefords Interval House Celebrates 30th Anniversary

Mr. Taylor: — If there was one message that the more than 250 people attending the 30th anniversary dinner for Battlefords Interval House took away it was, "Do not stay quiet. Please speak up." I bring that message here to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly today to remind us all that everyone needs to take the issue of domestic violence seriously.

It was most appropriate that the Battlefords Interval House chose the sister of domestic violence and murder victim Nicole Brown Simpson, Tanya Brown, as their guest speaker. It was also most appropriate they chose October 18th, known as Persons Day, the day that women in Canada were recognized as persons under the law.

Interval House is a transition house that first and foremost provides a safe refuge for women fleeing domestic violence. In addition to safe accommodations, Interval House also provides support, counselling, referral, and advocacy services and assistance in finding temporary or transitional housing. Utilization of its services has remained constant during the past 30 years, with approximately 100 families per year finding shelter within its walls.

There is no good reason for domestic violence to occur, but most people are surprised to learn just how often it occurs. And all too often when it occurs, we least expect it. Transition houses like Interval House in The Battlefords save lives. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Battlefords Interval House for 30 years of service.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Veterans' Week

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the province of Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada, people of this great nation will join together from November 5th to 11th to celebrate Veterans' Week. During this week many commemorative ceremonies will take place across Saskatchewan to recognize the achievements of our veterans and to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

As our Canadian Forces members return home from missions around the world, we must celebrate the commitment made by servicemen and women and their families. This year Canadians are being asked to take the remembrance challenge. The challenge is to transform remembrance from something you not only feel, but to something you also do.

Some of the many ways to show that we remember and honour our veterans include pinning a poppy above our hearts, attending a local Remembrance Day ceremony. Talk to a friend or relative who has just returned from serving in Afghanistan or other areas of conflict. Listen to veterans talk about their military experiences. Participate in any number of social networking sites readily available. But most importantly, we must vow to never forget.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the men and women of Canadian Forces, both past and present, we recognize your achievements and honour your sacrifice. God bless the men and women of our Armed Forces. Thank you.

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

National Adoption Awareness Month

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November is National Adoption Awareness Month. It's an opportunity to recognize adoptive families in Saskatchewan who have opened both their hearts and homes to children in need of a family.

Adoption provides a child with permanence and security, and all children need roots and a feeling that they belong to a family. This feeling of belonging affects a child's sense of self-worth. It helps to determine how children see themselves in relation to others and their communities. In Canada, over 30,000 children in foster care wait for adoption, and the numbers are equally too high here in Saskatchewan. More importantly, children's lives are positively changed forever when caring people commit to meeting their needs and accepting the rewards and challenges of parenting.

With the common goals of educating the community about adoption issues, promoting adoption of children in foster care, and raising awareness about adoption in general, groups throughout Canada hold adoption-focused conferences, symposiums, and events. These are all opportunities to educate ourselves and others about adoption and about issues surrounding adoption. And with a little advance planning, our efforts can work wonders. Even one family for one child is a success.

Mr. Speaker, Adoption Awareness Month fittingly brings much-needed attention to the children waiting for permanent, loving homes, as well as it celebrates families formed by adoption — a very worthwhile objective indeed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Public Service

Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Public Service was established in 2003 by the former Department of Government Relations and Public Service Commission. These awards recognize members of Saskatchewan's public service — individuals, groups, or teams who have made outstanding on-the-job contributions to the government and the citizens of the province.

In total, 797 employees, individuals, and teams have been honoured. There are three categories of awards: quality service, innovation, and leadership. The recipients were presented with their awards by the Premier on November 4th, here in Regina.

There were five team awards given out last Thursday. The Battleford's domestic violence treatment options court; the on-unit programming, courage to change field study; and the vaccine management team won Innovation Awards. The 2010 Saskatchewan Olympic pavilion team and the soldier settlement negotiations team were given Leadership Awards.

I would like all MLAs to join me in congratulating all of the hard-working teams and the individuals who were nominated for these awards. And once again, congratulations to all the winners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Resource Revenues

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier doesn't understand our provincial finances, particularly for potash. This Premier forged ahead with an out-of-line budget assumption and, with his pattern of unsustainable spending, launched us into massive deficit, a damaging pattern that is continued with the tabling of the second straight deficit budget from this Premier.

The Premier has once again put his lack of understanding of our resource revenues on central stage as he entered the debate about ownership of PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.]. The Premier underpinned his argument against the BHP takeover based on the loss of revenues, approximately \$2 billion, that would be the result of BHP deducting its expenses to build a new mine off of its profits. The fact remains this deduction occurs regardless of whether or not PCS was or is taken over. It just changes the timing: relatively soon, as would be the case with the takeover; or simply down the road when BHP brings a new mine into production.

It should also be pointed out that if PCS, Agrium or Mosaic began construction of a new mine tomorrow, the exact same

loss of revenues would occur — a result of deduction as in the takeover, the very same result. The Premier's flawed argument displays one thing — this Premier doesn't understand the finances of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, it makes crystal clear that this Premier is not in a position to maximize the benefit from our resources, and not able to manage and ensure a prosperous Saskatchewan.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for Agricultural Producers

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the minister will know that this summer has been devastating for many farm families, and one of the glaring omissions in the Throne Speech was any mention or suggestion of new money for farm families who are hard-pressed because of the flooding and frost that occurred during the crop year. And while I know members of the community who received the \$12 an acre from the provincial government appreciate that, they're saying that it just isn't enough to see them through the winter season and into seeding next spring.

Can the minister inform the Assembly whether there's an active process in place for the provincial government and the federal government to come forward with a meaningful payment for farmers facing the worst flooding and frost this province has seen in a long, long time?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Leader of the Opposition. It's been a very frustrating year for producers right across the province of Saskatchewan, probably one of the wettest years that we've ever had in the history of the province where the total province has been wet.

Mr. Speaker, that was one of the reasons we brought forward, in conjunction with the federal government, in dealing with the federal government, a \$360 million excess moisture program to try and help producers right across this province — something that probably we've never had in the history of the province, a program that large, Mr. Speaker.

Ahead of that, though, what may seem as somewhat odd that we had also done a drought payment for west central Saskatchewan to the tune of about \$20 million for producers, where last year they didn't have no feed or no pasture for a large majority of the summer out there.

So we have been out there helping producers. We have toured the area. A number of my colleagues and I have toured the area on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, and dealt with, talked with producers right across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the minister indicates that there was a drought payment made to certain parts of the northwest area of the province. I know the people in Consul and the southwest area were urging the minister to come forward and include the southwest area in that payment as well, and I hope that is under consideration.

But my question to the minister goes back to the need for a payment, and I quote from *The Western Producer* where the minister says, and I quote: "This might be a good time to see just how well AgriStability is going to work. If it doesn't work this year, it'll never work."

I wonder if the minister can explain to farmers how long he will be studying whether or not AgStability works. Most farmers know — in fact I would expect 99 per cent know — it doesn't work. When will the minister put forward an idea of getting \$100 per acre for those farmers' unseeded, flooded acres in the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know how the programs work very well. He was one of the people at the table when some of these programs were designed, Mr. Speaker. So if there are shortfalls, and there may well be . . . We know a number of producers, Mr. Speaker, across the province that are not happy, totally happy with the AgriStability program. That's one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, on an ongoing basis we've been asking the federal government to make changes to the AgriStability program. The livestock sector is a really good example, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the member had gone to the table without leaving meetings and walking out on them and helped design the program adequately, and even going back to '91, don't cut programs like the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program . . . Mr. Speaker, producers across this province remember very well the Leader of the Opposition and some of the cuts he made to farm programs right across the province and, Mr. Speaker, cut funding to every producer in the province of programs that they relied on at that time.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that was left out of the \$12-an-acre program announced by the minister is the area of beef producers in the Northeast and the flooded area of the province. Many of them are asking why the minister and the government has not provided a payment for beef producers.

And my question to the minister is this: is there active consideration of a payment being made to the beef producers in the flooded area of the province to help them see their way through winter and not have to sell off their breeding stock, so they're in a position to make a living growing cattle in this province going forward?

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

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll just remind the Leader of the Opposition, in the

three short years that we've been in government, some of the programs that we've brought forward for producers, and I noticed the Leader of the Opposition . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd ask the opposition members to allow the minister to respond to the Leader of the Opposition's question.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — I guess, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Leader of the Opposition certainly doesn't want to be reminded of is the relief for education tax on farm land right across this province. It was an ask that the farmers and ranchers in this province had asked the previous NDP government for many, many years, to deal with that problem and the high taxes they were paying.

Mr. Speaker, we've dealt to that to some degree. We're going to make more changes to that program but give relief to producers right across the province. Whether you're in the Northeast, the Southwest, or any part of this province, when you go to pay your education tax this fall, it'll be far less than it was under the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, we also last year brought in a \$71 million program for cattle and hogs right across the province. Mr. Speaker, we brought in a water program for producers right across this province — something that they never had before — to help them in the case of drought or ongoing when they want to drill wells or dig dugouts. Mr. Speaker, I believe we've done a number of things for producers in the three years that we've been in power.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister follows along the line of the producer groups who are calling on the Government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to co-operate in a \$150-per-head payment being made to beef producers this winter, along with \$40 an acre to reseed grassland that was flooded out during this summer's extreme flooding that went on. In fact, Greg Marshall, the president of APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] is quoted as saying, "But across Saskatchewan and many parts of Manitoba, the moisture levels are so unusual that livestock producers will have a bleak feed situation this winter."

Can the minister now indicate whether or not the \$150-per-head payment will be made this winter and whether \$40 per acre to reseed grass that was flooded out, will that be available to farmers and ranchers in the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that we're working with our federal colleagues on this issue. We're also talking to Manitoba, Alberta, and BC [British Columbia], for that matter. Some of them had somewhat the same situations over there, although I believe Manitoba's had flooding for going on four years in

some areas, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of programs we've helped livestock producers over the last couple of years. The 100 per cent wildlife damage compensation program, something that producers have asked for, for many years — never received under the previous government — and we've brought that forward. Mr. Speaker, the livestock predation compensation program where livestock, no matter what the livestock are out there, are killed by predators, we're compensating producers for that, Mr. Speaker. And especially in the Northeast that'll help those producers. Whether it's coyotes or wolves or whatever the situation is, we will compensate producers — something they'd asked for, for many years, never received under the previous government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we're doing a number of things for producers. Can we do more? We're in negotiations with the federal government at the present time, working with our neighbouring provinces. And if the Leader of the Opposition just stays tuned, we will probably have an announcement in the next few days.

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

Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's time for PotashCorp to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan. So I want to know what formal, binding, signed commitments has the Premier received to ensure that PCS will live up to its pledge to Saskatchewan.

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated last week to the member in exactly the same question, that we have already had occasion to have some discussions with Potash Corporation. We'll be continuing to hold those discussions. The Minister of Justice is looking at the various options that are available for us.

I would remind the member opposite that there's a 30-day period here where we have to be mindful of the situation as well. BHP still has opportunity to ask for a further review of this from the federal government, so we'll be working most diligently with Potash Corporation, and more importantly the people of Saskatchewan, to ensure that the commitments that PotashCorp has made are lived up to.

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

Mr. Furber: — The 30-day window is important, Mr. Speaker, because it offers the government here a chance to raise the bar for BHP. It's an important time for Saskatchewan certainly, but it's clear that they have no plan.

Mr. Speaker, the PotashCorp's pledge is vague on several points. What detailed information can the Premier provide regarding binding, signed commitments on head office

relocation, Aboriginal employment targets, and enhanced access to the best in medical care and other elements of the pledge so that the people of Saskatchewan know that the Premier is willing to stand up for them to the Potash Corp to give us a better deal on our resource?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I'm understanding the member's question correctly, I think he may have misread it a little bit. He said about raising the bar for BHP. Well it's actually they're raising the bar for PotashCorp, I think is what he was trying to get at. But we'll certainly be continuing to have discussions with the PotashCorp officials. They have made representations to us that they believe are good pledges to the people of Saskatchewan. We certainly agree with them.

We are looking at a number of different things that we could have discussions with PotashCorp about, and we'll be certainly making sure that the interests of Saskatchewan remain paramount in those discussions.

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

Mr. Furber: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that he doesn't understand that when you raise the bar for PotashCorp, you also raise the bar for BHP to have a net benefit for Saskatchewan people. It's the big problem. He doesn't understand the file; it's too complex for him.

Mr. Speaker, vague assurances and verbal understandings are not enough. The Premier has had weeks to prepare for this contingency, and PotashCorp has had weeks to put the meat on the bones of its pledge.

So let's start with point one. What head office functions will be relocated to Saskatoon? Will they include corporate finance, corporate development, R & D [research and development], national and international sales including Canpotex, human resources, and officers and staff managing external potash investments in Jordan, Israel, and New Brunswick? And when will the Premier give us the details and tell us what formal, binding, and signed commitments he's received on this issue so that he can prove to Saskatchewan people that he's willing to stand up for them on this issue?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite that many, if not all, of those functions that the member speaks about are positions that we would be prepared to take a look at as a government. We have indicated that we are having discussions with PotashCorp with respect to that. Those discussions will continue. We believe that this is a very important thing.

And I would just remind the member opposite that when it comes to standing up for Saskatchewan, it was the Premier of this province that laid out the most compelling case that you

could put before the people of our province and before Canada, before the federal government that resulted . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — The most compelling case that could be put before the people of Saskatchewan and Canada and the federal government. It resulted in an overwhelming no with respect to this deal from the federal government. We are extremely pleased at that outcome, and I believe the people of Saskatchewan are. And the evidence is very clear. All you have to do is look at the recent polling over the weekend, and it's clear that the people of Saskatchewan, in overwhelming numbers, support the Premier of this province.

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

Out-of-Province Medical Care

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the minister and the government has failed to put the patient first. A man the Provincial Ombudsman refers to as Christopher was experiencing loss of vision, migraine headaches, and low blood pressure. He saw three specialists in Saskatchewan who were unable to help him. Out of desperation he went out of the country where it was determined he had a brain tumour. Christopher had surgery to remove that tumour, and now the minister is refusing to pay the costs of that surgery.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister choosing to deny Christopher coverage for a diagnosis and surgery he was unable to get in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The situation that the member opposite referred to, I won't get into the particulars. But what I will say is that this case has been in front of the Ministry of Health. Through the policies through the Ministry of Health, it was not funded. Since that time, the Ombudsman has had a look at this particular case, which I won't comment on directly.

But, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like there were some issues around communication, around clarity of policy, clarification of the policy that was in place, Mr. Speaker. I have committed, after seeing the Ombudsman's report and the recommendations put forward by the Ombudsman, that we will review this case once more.

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

Ms. Junor: — In 2008 the minister said he would review those internal policies about how to deal with out-of-country or out-of-province funding. It's 2010. How long is it going to take?

Do people have to come to the legislature to get their issues brought to this minister? I mean the Ombudsman was pretty

clear. He said:

The Ministry knew that Christopher was not at home when they responded to him at his home address. The Ministry has an obligation to let Christopher know what his options were so he could assess his financial risk and make an informed decision. It did not do so . . . that, to us tipped the balance in favour of saying “Look, these are special circumstances and you should pay.”

That’s not a big decision; a big review doesn’t have to happen. The minister has had this at least a week and still nothing.

One of the Sask Party’s election promises was to create a health ombudsman office, and it was again in the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what good is it to create a health ombudsman if the minister just disregards the Ombudsman’s recommendations?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, the Ombudsman has looked at this case as he looked at a couple of other cases. He’s made recommendations that would definitely help patients into the future.

Mr. Speaker, on the other two cases, we are accepting those recommendations. We feel those recommendations are sound recommendations that we can move on. On the third case, on out-of-province, we are going to review that one because we do feel that perhaps by the reference of the Ombudsman that perhaps the information wasn’t clarified properly.

Mr. Speaker, but what I will say is we did make a commitment to have a health care ombudsman in this province. The Speech from the Throne identified it again. Another promise made; another promise kept.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, one of the first things the minister, one of the first things the minister did when he came to government was to pay the out-of-country medical expenses for the Bonderud family. Both Mr. Bonderud and Christopher went out of the country for surgery because they couldn’t get treatment in Saskatchewan for life-threatening issues.

The one glaring difference is that Christopher didn’t appear in Sask Party election ads. Is that the minister’s new criteria for getting out-of-country medical expenses covered? You have to appear in a Sask Party election ad. Does Christopher have to wait till November of 2011, the election, to get his money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that every situation and every case is different. There’s nuances to every case, Mr. Speaker. But what I will say on the Bonderud case, Mr. Speaker, that government turned their backs on those people — absolutely turned their backs on those people.

The Ombudsman looked into it and said it was absolutely

justified. We made the payment before the Ombudsman recommended it. But the Ombudsman went on to further recommend that that absolutely should have been paid, that there was negligence on that former government’s hands, Mr. Speaker, that they should have never got to that point. It should have been covered by that government.

Mr. Speaker, in this situation that the Ombudsman is referencing, we are certainly taking a look at it because we think there are some issues there around the case that may need clarification. We’re taking the Ombudsman’s recommendations very, very seriously.

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

Support for Flood Victims

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Families and business owners and producers across the province are still reeling with the after-effects of this summer’s floods. Mr. Speaker, these families are waiting for help. They’re calling upon their government to provide the necessary and needed financing immediately, Mr. Speaker. Some four months after the flooding, many, many families have still not heard from their government.

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, this has been a devastating summer for so many people within the province. And our intent is to have these people covered as quickly as possible, with money as soon as possible and responding to their needs.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that when we formed government, we inherited a program for the disaster assistance in this province that was extremely, extremely flawed. And we have, we have changed that program, Mr. Speaker. We’ve worked on the program since the first year when we changed some of the program. We’ve been working on it continuously. We’ve been working . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I’m having difficulty hearing the minister trying to respond to the question from the member from Regina Dewdney. Allow the minister to complete his response.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — We’ve been working with the people of the province that have been experiencing these disasters, Mr. Speaker. We’ve done a number of changes to the program. At the request of a mayor, we had money in the hands of people within 24 hours after being requested. So, Mr. Speaker, we have been working very, very hard on this program, and we have done very well for the people of this province who’ve experienced disasters.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The government is failing families, business owners, and producers across our province, Mr. Speaker. Many, many families today are facing significant financial hardship as a result of this summer's flooding. In the communities of Maple Creek, Yorkton, North Battleford, on First Nations, and on farms across this province, Mr. Speaker, people are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, they have no furnaces in their homes. They are in cases, many cases, waiting for government inspectors to say whether or not their home is inhabitable, Mr. Speaker. Winter is here, Mr. Speaker. What is the government going to do to help those families immediately deal with their housing needs?

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, once again, we're working with the families that are experiencing these difficult times and working very, very closely with the people from all of the areas that people have been affected.

But what I really want to be able to tell the House and the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, is what we've done to this program. When we inherited this program — I'll give you an example — private claimants were required to pay 20 per cent of the deductible, 20 per cent. We've reduced that to 5 per cent. That's thanks to the people of the province that said that was an error.

Mr. Speaker, we had caps on claims. Private claims, the cap under the previous administration was \$100,000. Mr. Speaker, this doesn't bode well to the times of today. In late 2007, we changed that to 160,000. Most recently we changed that — private claims — to \$240,000, Mr. Speaker, which is very responsive to the people and the needs of the people of this province.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's rhetoric is cold comfort to any of the families across the province that today cannot live in their homes because there's mould, Mr. Speaker. That they don't have a furnace; they have no ability to heat it. They don't know if it's structurally sound because they're still waiting for government inspectors. Mr. Speaker, these families have waited months and months, Mr. Speaker. And the government did provide a \$3,000 advance payment, but only after the Leader of the Opposition challenged him to do so in the community of Maple Creek, Mr. Speaker.

What can the minister tell those families today that need immediate cash injection to put a new furnace in their home, get their home ready so they can inhabit it for this winter?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's very interesting coming from members opposite because, as I

was explaining, what we've done to this disaster assistance program that we inherited from members opposite. He talked about furnaces for an example, Mr. Speaker. They had a depreciation rate of 60 per cent on furnaces under the old program, 60 per cent, and we've reduced that to 35 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about furnaces and we've dealt with individual cases day after day where people now in Maple Creek . . . Every person there that had a furnace issue has received money.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting with the NDP [New Democratic Party] talk about waiting for money. Do you know what the average wait time was for any money to get out under the old program, any money? Twelve to 18 months — 12 to 18 months.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there's members opposite have talked about, well we didn't have disasters to this degree in the earlier days. People in Vanguard waited in excess of two years to get any money under the old program — two years, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can think it's funny. The minister can make his comments and laugh about this issue. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue to thousands of Saskatchewan families who have had their lives turned upside down, who today can't resume living in their own homes, some of which have had to move from the community of Maple Creek to others, individuals whose homes have been totally destroyed. And they're being offered . . . They're condemned. They're being offered a fraction of the value of their homes, Mr. Speaker.

These are life changing, negative events for people, Mr. Speaker, and it is absolutely . . . [inaudible] . . . that the minister would laugh, that he would laugh, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister today say that he will immediately move to provide more money to needing families today, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's pretty disheartening when you hear the member opposite talk about people laughing. The only person I saw laughing in this whole interlude was the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on about how much we've done, we've done for the people of this province in the short period of time. We've reduced the depreciation rate on tangible properties. For an example, Mr. Speaker, we listened to the people of the province when they talked about drywall. Under the old administration, the old rules, drywall was depreciated up to 50 per cent. And people came to us and said, why would you depreciate drywall up to that level? I'd say, well that was the old program. We have changed that, Mr. Speaker. We've changed it totally.

We've put more structural engineers in. And the member talks about people that are waiting. In some cases, if a house has been totally damaged by flood, that you need a structural engineer to come in and assess it before anybody can move back in or put any money into it. We have hired more structural engineers, Mr. Speaker, and we're very happy the way we're going with the whole PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] program.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 148 — *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has moved that Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered again? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Junor: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Eastview has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery is Arden Fiala who is a board member of SaskFEAT [Saskatchewan Families for Effective Autism Treatment] and a parent of an autistic child. She is following the proceedings regarding the autism Bill which will be given first reading this week, and has come to talk to us again about the lack of autism services in the province and how that affects her and her family. So I would like all of us to welcome Arden to the Assembly today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1 through 35.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 1 through 35 are tabled.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Gantfoer, seconded by Mr. Wyant, and the amendment moved by Mr. Broten.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of Thursday, I had just began giving my response to the Throne Speech so I'm just going to do a little bit of a recap here.

And I spoke of my constituency and how proud I am of it. We have Boundary dam power station, the Shand power station. I mentioned the Spectra event centre that is now under construction. I also mentioned the Energy Training Institute that's under construction there.

But one thing I did forget to mention, Mr. Speaker, was that Estevan Web Printing, and they have captured the contract for printing the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, prairie region. So that includes all of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. And Estevan Web Printing has invested in excess of \$10.2 million in a new community press that stretches over 120 feet in the company's refurbished plant located in Estevan. And, Mr. Speaker, the printing at this plant is completed by 11:30 each evening. And the trucks heading to Manitoba and Saskatchewan destinations depart in the wee hours of the morning so that the newspapers can hit the streets in the early hour of the morning. And Estevan Web Printing is also responsible for the printing of 41 weekly newspapers and 10 monthly publications. So I did want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to, at this time, thank my family for all their support: my son, Terry; my daughter, Trisha; my grandchildren, Beau, Bailee, Shelby, and Tristan. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, my family's just been through a very difficult time, and it's probably the most difficult that I, as a grandparent, will ever have to endure. But with the love and support of family, my colleagues, and friends, we will continue to heal, as hard as that process is, and all the while thanking God for the time we had with Brooke — 14 short years. But our lives are indeed richer because of her, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like, at this time, to thank my constituency assistant, Rosalie Story, and also my part-time assistant, Wilma Bjorndalen. Mr. Speaker, we all rely an awful lot on our CAs [constituency assistant], and I am so thankful for Rosalie and Wilma for their loyalty and dedication to me and their work on behalf of all the constituents of Estevan. I would also like to thank my executive president, Bernie, and all the members of my executive who work tirelessly for that association.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the Boundary dam power station and the Shand power station in my constituency. And in August, the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, and I had the privilege of touring both of those power stations as well as the Sherritt mines. And we were able to go on one of the draglines that was absolutely huge, and the boom is over 300 feet long and the bucket, I think they said, like a basement could be dug with maybe one and a little bit of a scoop. So it was absolutely huge and just most enjoyable. But I would like to thank Mike Zeleny, Kevin Scobie, Kevin Guillemin, and the management of Sherritt Coal for making that tour possible.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very excited and proud to be part of the Saskatchewan Party government under the leadership of our Premier, the member from Swift Current. And under our government, we have paid down the provincial debt by almost 40 per cent. And that is something that every person in this province takes a great deal of pride in.

This government has taken action and continues to take action regarding the education portion of property tax, and that is a commitment we made to the people of this province while campaigning in 2007 to be implemented during our mandate. And the promise in this Throne Speech means that the education property tax will see a reduction of an average of 80 per cent on agricultural land and a huge reduction to other landowners as well, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that means a lot to every property owner in this province.

And this is an issue that Tommy Douglas used to speak about. And in fact for years the NDP often spoke of it, although they did nothing about it. But it was our Saskatchewan Party government that made this happen.

And, Mr. Speaker, our government will also fulfill its promise to fully implement the new revenue-sharing formula based on one point of the PST [provincial sales tax], something municipal governments have been waiting for for a long, long time.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the population, between January of 2008 and January of 2010, our province experienced its fastest growth in almost 80 years. Our population is over 1,045,600 — the highest in the history of our province. And, Mr. Speaker, our province is so inviting that even the Leader of the Opposition came back to it under a Sask Party government. And they continue to come back. The economy here is booming and people just can't wait to come back, and not only from other parts of this country, but from all parts of the world they're coming to it.

Mr. Speaker, our highways were sorely neglected by the NDP when they were in government. All of rural Saskatchewan was actually neglected. But in the year 2000 rural residents were forced to fix their own highway, and the current NDP leader mused that more farmers should volunteer to fix roads. In the first three years of our Sask Party government, highways and infrastructure budgets have been the three largest in the history of our province.

A couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I was at an anniversary celebration, and a gentleman came up to me and asked me to

extend a thank you to the Minister of Highways and to our entire government for work done on the highways where he lives. He said the roads have been in a sad state of disrepair for a long, long time, and he was so pleased that something was finally being done.

And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I find it very ironic that they have been, since they have been in opposition, the NDP have filed many petitions regarding highways. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the very first petition filed this session was regarding highways. Ironic because the NDP did absolutely nothing regarding the infrastructure of this province when they were in government. In fact, the Canadian Automobile Association and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation named certain Saskatchewan highways the worst in Canada when the NDP were in government.

Mr. Speaker, I was also very happy with the leadership our government has shown regarding the MS [multiple sclerosis] liberation treatments. Several people I have spoken to in my constituency have expressed their appreciation regarding this, and it's certainly not limited to the people in my constituency.

When I was out in Swift Current recently, I spoke to a gentleman from Calgary. And he told me his daughter, who lives in Ontario, had MS, and she had just returned from Europe where she had the liberation treatment and was making such progress. And, Mr. Speaker, that gentleman had tears in his eyes when he expressed how happy he was for what the government of Saskatchewan was doing, stepping forward and showing true leadership.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, the weekend following the Throne Speech, I was reading the October 29th issue of *Lifestyles*. And that's a paper published in Estevan that comes out every Friday. And there was an article titled "Government releases Throne Speech" in there. And the member from Regina Rosemont actually did an interview with a reporter from that paper. And in that article the member from Rosemont claims that he has spoken to, and I'll quote, "... to many people who are concerned about the lack of rural doctors and the funding formula for health care facilities that requires communities to raise 35 per cent of a project's cost before it can move forward."

Number one, Mr. Speaker, while I'm aware of the doctor shortage, the NDP cannot claim that this had just happened. While they were in power, they closed 52 rural hospitals as well as the Plains hospital. And the members over there know that that Plains hospital was built for the people of rural Saskatchewan. So again, Mr. Speaker, they absolutely abandoned rural Saskatchewan, and for that member to pretend this just happened is something that is just simply not true.

And number two, Mr. Speaker, regarding the funding formula for health care facilities. Yes, the communities are required to raise 35 per cent of a project's cost. But that is exactly the same amount they were required to raise when the NDP were in power. So the member from Regina Rosemont should maybe do a little research into how his government acted.

And another interesting comment that same member made, that

member from Regina Rosemont, was this, and I will quote again: “This year’s Throne Speech will take Saskatchewan down roads forged by this government and previous Conservative governments.” Now by the sounds of that statement, Mr. Speaker, you would think that the . . . Well it sounds like they’re aligning the Saskatchewan Party with the Conservatives.

And I find that very interesting because when the Leader of the Conservatives, Mr. Rick Swenson, was in this Chamber a week ago on Thursday, he entered through the NDP opposition’s door. He sat behind the bar on the NDP side. And, Mr. Speaker, get this: he was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, the NDP. So I ask, who is aligning with whom?

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to express how happy I was to see the plan to expand the emergency medical services by bringing in STARS [shock trauma air rescue service], the helicopter-based shock trauma and rescue society. I have been interested in this program for a long time. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, when I was out in Calgary this summer, I toured this facility along with the member from Thunder Creek and his wife, Linda, and also Heather Chisholm, the wife of the member from Turtleford-Cut Knife. And, Mr. Speaker, both Linda and Heather are nurses. And what we all saw out there was an amazing program that has a role to play in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think of the industries in my constituency, the Boundary dam power station, Shand . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Other members will have the opportunity to enter the debate. I’d ask the members to allow the member from Estevan to have the opportunity to share her thoughts without interference. The member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just speaking about how proud I am that we are expanding the emergency helicopter services by bringing STARS into our province. And I can’t help but think about the industries in my constituency — the Boundary dam power station, the Shand power station, the mines, the oil fields, and agriculture — and, Mr. Speaker, if, God forbid, a tragedy happened, how this could be the difference of life and death when time is of an essence. And I would also like to express my appreciation to the member of Melfort for the good work he is doing on that file.

Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday was a wonderful day for Saskatchewan and for Canada. And I would just like to say how proud I am of the leadership shown by the Premier and this government regarding the potash industry. And, Mr. Speaker, they say that a good leader is one who has the ability to make tough decisions, so I guess that makes my Premier a great leader.

And, Mr. Speaker, we remember last Wednesday immediately after the announcement was made, the Premier asked for leave to get up in this Assembly and to make statements regarding that, and the NDP denied him that right. And so the next day, the next day they allowed him to get up and speak, and they were gracious in doing that. And of course, then the Leader of

the Opposition got up too. And I was absolutely stunned by the comments from the Leader of the Opposition.

Their response to this potash deal was that nationalization and increasing royalties, not only for the potash industry but for the oil industry. That is their answer to this. And, Mr. Speaker, I know the people of my constituency are very, very concerned about that. But you know what? I guess maybe given where he is in the polls, he doesn’t figure he has anything to lose. And if he can . . .

An Hon. Member: — He can afford to lose a few points.

Ms. Eagles: — He really can’t afford to lose any points. But you know, I don’t know, maybe there’s an audience he was trying to appeal to; I can’t imagine who.

Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, I just want to take time now to pay tribute to our war veterans. Remembrance Day is this Thursday, and our appreciation and gratitude to these gentlemen and women should not be limited to November 11th. We should be so thankful every day of the year for the sacrifice they have made, a sacrifice that has allowed me to get up and make the comments that I have this afternoon, because without what they did for our country, that wouldn’t be possible.

So I do want to take this opportunity to thank them. And all those who are serving in the armed forces today, I say, thank you and God bless you all. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Melfort. I will not support the amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose, the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it’s a pleasure for me to rise today in this House and join in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. The first issue I want to discuss today, Mr. Speaker, is potash, what happened last week. Mr. Speaker, the province was watching; the country was watching; indeed the entire world was watching. And Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to serve under this Premier. Mr. Speaker, he clearly, emphatically, and eloquently made the case for the Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, the federal government listened. He did an amazing job. He makes me proud to be a Sask Party MLA and have him as my leader. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, he makes me proud to be a citizen of this great province and have him for our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues have done, I want to congratulate our newest colleague in this Assembly, the MLA from Saskatoon Northwest. Mr. Speaker, he is going to be a tremendous MLA. He has a great background, successful in his career, very popular city councillor, and now a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to help out a little bit during the by-election, and just a few things popped into my head. First of all, what a tremendous campaign team he had. They ran a phenomenal organization. And secondly, Mr. Speaker, I was door knocking, and it became abundantly clear to me very early as I was out knocking on doors just how well known and how highly regarded this member is. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to

having the opportunity of working with him for many, many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, during the Throne Speech debate, MLAs typically acknowledge family, friends, supporters who have helped them. And I have a lot of people that I need to thank. To start with, the good people of the Rosetown-Elrose constituency. Mr. Speaker, I am so honoured and privileged to serve them in their legislature. This has been just the experience of a lifetime for me, and I will be forever indebted to them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the support that my family has given me in the past. My wife Bonnie, my mother Elizabeth Reiter in Unity, my sister Laura and her husband, Eldon Schwab, in Wilkie. And my brother Ken Reiter and his wife Debbie and my nephews Jeremy and Justin who live in Lloydminster.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoke about my nephews in this Assembly before and, you know, like all families, I guess not everything's perfect. We do have some dark side to the family, I guess. Both my nephews are Edmonton Eskimo fans. And Mr. Speaker, I've been working on that. But I just want to share with you, the game on the weekend I was texting an awful lot with my nephew Jeremy as the game was going on. But for some reason as it neared the end, I think his battery in his BlackBerry must have went dead, Mr. Speaker. But I'll continue to work on that. We'll convert them yet.

I'd also like to mention my uncle, Arnold Schultz in Unity. I've also mentioned him in this Assembly before, and I know he watches the proceedings here with a great deal of interest, and I just want to mention him and hope he's doing well.

And also my Aunt Jean, Jean Cooper. She also takes a great interest in politics. And I just saw her the other day to celebrate her birthday with her. It was great to see her, and I want to acknowledge her today.

My constituency executive, Mr. Speaker. They do a great deal of work for me throughout the year. I just want to express my appreciation to them. Too numerous to mention by name, but I do want to mention two people in particular, Doug and Polly Orth. They're good friends of mine from Rosetown. They are just . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont keeps talking from his seat. I'm not sure what's happening there.

He seems a little grumpy these days. I don't know what's on his mind. He's been that way ever since he decided to verbally spar with the Deputy Premier first question period. He didn't fare too well, Mr. Speaker. I would have assumed he would have known better than to attempt that, and he's been a little grumpy ever since. And he looks different, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure. He looks different than the billboards. I'm not sure what it is. Maybe a new tie. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway I was mentioning two people from my constituency executive, Mr. Speaker, Doug and Polly Orth. They've been just fantastic people, great supporters. They're always first to help out with constituency events. I go back to the election, and Polly did a great deal of work in the campaign office and Doug door knocked with me virtually every day of the campaign.

The reason I'm singling those two people out, Mr. Speaker, is because they're going to be moving. Not too far away; we'll still stay close. But a bit of a sad day for me mentioning that, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to mention I've just been truly blessed to have them as friends.

Also want to mention staff, Mr. Speaker, my constituency assistant in Rosetown, Kathie Parry, and my staff in the office here: Jason Wall, my chief of staff; my ministerial assistants, Ashley Anderson and Jarret Coells; and Karalee Croissant, our admin person. Karalee sadly will be leaving us soon. She's moving on to bigger and better things, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy for her, I'm sad for me, and I truly appreciate all the good work that she's done.

Mr. Speaker, just a few highlights of the last few months of constituency events that I've had the opportunity to take part in. Mr. Speaker, just a few highlights, as I said. Rosetown fall festival just recently, on October the 9th. We had a fantastic weekend. The organizing committee was headed up by a gentleman from Rosetown named Hugh Lees who does just a great deal of work in our community, and we're just very lucky to have him. We had a great weekend, including, on October the 9th, if you can imagine, a parade. And it turned out the weather was absolutely beautiful, Mr. Speaker.

In fact I was texting with the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, the Minister of Environment, and he sent me a text saying, who would have a parade in October in Saskatchewan? But, Mr. Speaker, our organizing committee took the risk and it paid off big time. It was just an absolutely beautiful event, great turnout, and they did a tremendous job.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few months I also had the opportunity to attend trade fairs in a couple of other communities in my constituency, in Beechy and Lucky Lake. And it's always good to get out to those events, have an opportunity to speak to many of our constituents. Those were terrific.

Also an event that was kind of near and dear to my heart, 100th anniversary in Fiske, the hamlet of Fiske, which is in the RM [rural municipality] of Pleasant Valley, the former employer of mine, the RM I worked for, for many years. Mr. Speaker, it was a great weekend, great supporters. I took part in the parade. They had a pancake breakfast. People of that community, I can't say enough for. They are just tremendous people, great community people. And they put on a great show.

Hundredth anniversaries — there was a number of those around the constituency this year. And one of them was the RM of Marriott — again my employer that I worked for, for many years. They had an event out at the RM shop at the hamlet of Marriott and it was attended by a lot of people. And it was just a great event and I want to acknowledge them.

Also the RM of Harris, the neighbouring municipality, had a 100th anniversary this summer. And the administrator there is a good friend of mine, Jim Angus, who's also my co-campaign Chair and our constituency vice-president — does a great deal of work and I want to acknowledge him.

[14:45]

I'm also looking forward to another 100th anniversary still to come in December in the RM of St. Andrews, with offices also in Rosetown. I have a number of friends on that council and I look forward to that as well.

Mr. Speaker, probably the highlight of the last few months of constituency events is, I go back to May, I believe it was, and I had the opportunity to tour my constituency with the Premier. It was a fantastic day, Mr. Speaker. It was a whirlwind tour. We got out to as many communities as we could. We went to Beechy, where we had a meeting with community leaders. We were in Lucky Lake, where we met with the town and RM councils. We went to Outlook, where we also met with the town council and some community leaders, had lunch with them. Had a great hour or so in the Outlook school. The Premier spoke to the students there and was very well received, Mr. Speaker. He's so popular.

Interesting story happened that day I have to tell you about, was when the Premier was done speaking and was done with the question-and-answer, the kids didn't let him go. They surrounded him and started asking him for his autograph. So he was signing things for them. And one little boy came up and handed him a pen and asked him if he'd sign his shirt. And the Premier looked and kind of chuckled and the little boy was wearing a pretty nice new shirt. And he said, I don't think your mom would like that; I think I'd better sign something else. So he signed a business card and gave it to him.

The next little girl came up and she had her running shoe off, her sneaker, and asked him if he'd sign that. So he kind of laughed, autographed the running shoe, and that started it, the tidal wave. There was a lineup of kids getting their sneakers autographed by the Premier. And I don't mind telling you, Mr. Speaker, I don't mind riding the Premier's coattails. I even autographed a few sneakers myself after he was done. Mr. Speaker, it was a great day.

Mr. Speaker, it was not that long ago that Saskatchewan was considered a have-not province. We typically trailed almost all the other provinces in most major economic indicators. Under the NDP, thousands of our young people left the province each and every year in search of opportunity. My, how things have changed. Now Saskatchewan is a have province.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent my entire life in Saskatchewan, and I've never seen such optimism. There's now over 16,000 more people that have come to Saskatchewan within the past year to live, to work, and to raise their families. Saskatchewan's population has now grown by more than 50,000 people since 2007. And as a province, we are now at or near the top of almost every major economic category in the country, Mr. Speaker.

We lead all provinces in population growth at 1.6 per cent annually. There's now 6,300 more people working in the province than a year ago. And that number will continue to rise as Saskatchewan has an unemployment rate of 5.7 per cent, second lowest amongst the provinces.

Not only are there more people working in Saskatchewan, but they're making more money as well. The average wages paid to workers across Saskatchewan is up 5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, all

this translates into Saskatchewan jumping from eighth place to second place in the Fraser Institute's ranking of best performing labour markets.

Mr. Speaker, things are improving in Saskatchewan. An example, Mr. Speaker: the value of building permits issued throughout Saskatchewan in the month of August alone totalled \$176 million. That's an increase of sixteen and a half per cent.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's population's on the rise, average wages are on the rise, and development is on the rise. And this positive trend will continue as RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] projects Saskatchewan's real gross domestic product to grow by 6.3 per cent in the coming year. Saskatchewan is now on a new road. In just three short years, our government, with the help of the Saskatchewan people, has been able to accomplish so much in what seems like such a short period of time.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago we made a number of promises to the people of Saskatchewan, and we're determined to keep those promises. We've reduced surgical wait time for hip and knee replacements by 71 per cent. We've now passed our goal of hiring 800 new nurses. With 830 new nurses now working in the province, that's another promise kept, Mr. Speaker. We've committed \$200 million in funding to the development of a new children's hospital. That's another promise kept, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand here and be a part of a government that's willing to take the road less travelled.

Throughout my constituency, there are many people affected by MS, some of whom are my family and close friends. Mr. Speaker, I want to mention one person in particular, a good friend of mine from Rosetown, Watson McGregor. He's travelled out of country twice now for liberation treatment. And I just want him to know how much I admire his courage as he continues his battle.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of MS, not only in Canada but in the world. Our government's \$5 million commitment to fund clinical trials of the liberation treatment is a road less travelled. I have no idea what the travels will reveal, but I do know that the large number of MS patients in Saskatchewan deserve the answers.

Our government believes that Saskatchewan should be a leader among provinces. Our government is doing things differently. Mr. Speaker, our government believes that more money belongs in the pockets of Saskatchewan people. And that's why we committed to reducing the education portion of property tax. Since 2008, our government will have reduced the education portion of property tax by an average of 20 per cent, and for agriculture land, it's 80 per cent. I had the good fortune to play a role in the property tax changes as legislative secretary to the Deputy Premier, who did just a great job.

Mr. Speaker, past governments promised but wouldn't follow through. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the former premier of the province as leader of the members opposite, I can remember in years when I was on the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] board, he attended the SARM convention and it was a hot topic, Mr. Speaker.

And I can still remember the speech he gave when he told the

crowd that when it came to education tax on property, the status quo is not on. Mr. Speaker, I was there. We were excited. We expected changes. A year later, Mr. Speaker, he came, spoke again, and what did he tell us? The status quo is not on. He told us the same thing again, Mr. Speaker, and what happened? Absolutely nothing. Mr. Speaker, our government addressed the issue. That's another promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes in making life more affordable for Saskatchewan citizens. That's why we committed to the largest single-year income tax reduction in the province's history. Mr. Speaker, those are just a few examples how we're moving Saskatchewan forward on the new road.

Mr. Speaker, now I just want to take a few minutes and discuss some of the things that are going within the ministry I'm responsible for, Highways and Infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, I had a very nice day on Friday. I was out in the community of Lancer for the announcement and the official ribbon cutting of Highway No. 32, along with my friend and colleague, the member from Cypress Hills. Mr. Speaker, it was a great event. Those people are so excited to have a highway to drive on. It's going to do great things in that area, not only for public safety, but also for economic development, Mr. Speaker. It was just a tremendous day.

Mr. Speaker, I recently, just a few weeks ago, had the opportunity to be in Halifax for a meeting of transportation ministers from across the country. And it amazed me how, outside of the meetings, just chatting with people from all over the country, how so many people when they heard we were from Saskatchewan made comments about how well Saskatchewan's doing, how things have been booming the last few years. It's great to hear, Mr. Speaker. People across the country are recognizing what's happening in our province.

I had the opportunity at that meeting to make the case for flexibility and infrastructure projects that might be delayed because of weather. I was pleased to hear Minister Strahl speak to that. And I also had the opportunity to raise and speak about the New West Partnership which, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues from across the country are also extremely interested in it and are watching.

During the election campaign, we promised to spend \$1.8 billion on highways during our first four-year term. Mr. Speaker, we are now in our third year, and we're already at \$1.7 billion. Mr. Speaker, we will far exceed that promise. The three largest single highways and infrastructure budgets in the history of this province are the first three budgets under this government. Mr. Speaker, we far exceeded any previous budgets by the members opposite. That's allowed us to tender a huge amount of construction. Work on 1129 kilometres of construction was tendered in the past year and, Mr. Speaker, almost 800 kilometres of maintenance and safety improvements were also completed.

Mr. Speaker, under the administration of the members opposite, highways crumbled and deteriorated until we were the laughing stock of the country. Mr. Speaker, under the NDP government, people had to slow down for potholes; under a Sask Party government, people are slowing down for construction. Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot, but we still have a long way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to touch on what was a difficult summer weather-wise. We saw Highway 1 west of Maple Creek washout due to unprecedented rainfall. I had the opportunity within hours of that to tour with the Premier and the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. And I'm very pleased with the response from our ministry employees and outside contractors who acted quickly to deal with this.

I'd like to read a quote from Al Rosseker, Mr. Speaker. He's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association. And his quote, Mr. Speaker, is:

The Saskatchewan Trucking Association commends the highways ministry and the leadership shown in resolving a major disruption of truck traffic on what can readily be described as a crucial economic corridor in western Canada. The ministry's proactive planning and communications approach contributed greatly to resolving a situation that had effectively shut down long-combination vehicular traffic.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly appreciate Al's comments.

Mr. Speaker, economic development is a priority of this government and I also have the privilege of being Minister Responsible for the Global Transportation Hub. Mr. Speaker, under the administration of the members opposite, as I mentioned earlier, thousands of youth left each and every year. They moved to Alberta mostly because there were no jobs here. Now people are moving back. And initiatives such as the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] are helping.

The GTH will have an initial impact of 3 to 400 jobs in the winter of 2010-11 alone. And it has the potential to create up to 1,500 more jobs by 2014. Mr. Speaker, this isn't hypothetical. It's real and it's tangible. Hundreds of people were hired at a job fair just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has always had this amazing potential, Mr. Speaker, we're beginning to live up to it. Our government wants to make a better Saskatchewan today, tomorrow, and for future generations. That's why we've chosen to take the path less travelled. That's why we're fully committed to moving Saskatchewan forward on the new road. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I am not supporting the amendment, but I am very proud to support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on this year's Throne Speech debate and bring some levity to the House here today, Mr. Speaker, bring some honesty, and bring the real circumstances that are affecting Saskatchewan people.

We hear about the new road that the Minister of Highways believes to be on. But, Mr. Speaker, we think he's in the ditch, Mr. Speaker. We think that that Minister of Highways is in the ditch. And I know, I believe I just looked in *The Estevan Mercury* here this week, and in fact there's huge concern for that Minister of Highways as it relates to Highway 39. And

quite simply what they're looking for is they're looking for a plan of action. And they're sick and tired of the rhetoric coming from that government on that front, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to enter into this debate honourably and in a process that allows me to make mention of the very special people in my life, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank my wife Stephanie for all the love and support that she provides to our household, Mr. Speaker, the advice. And she's very wise and astute, Mr. Speaker, and even provides some exceptional advice on the files and the important issues that matter to Saskatchewan people on a daily basis. Of course, she's a middle years school teacher, Mr. Speaker, works incredibly hard. I say hello to her students and to her here today, and I wish her well, Mr. Speaker.

I thank our broader families as well. And I know each and every one of us are always . . . appreciate the opportunity to do that, everyone of us in this Assembly. It's those friends and family that are so close to us that provide us the foundations that have provided us these opportunities and the solid footing to speak on these issues, but also the support, Mr. Speaker, within our lives. And our families, both on my wife's side of the family and my side of the family, are fully engaged and supportive. And we're blessed and lucky for that, Mr. Speaker. And I think of the special little nephews I have on both sides, both of my sisters. They make our lives pretty special, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd just like to give a quick message to my grandmother at home today, Mr. Speaker, who's got a new set of knees, Mr. Speaker, who has got some spring back in her step, and I know will be looking forward to spring to plant her garden. And I wish her well. And in thinking about my grandmother there, certainly in the year of Remembrance Day, or the time of Remembrance Day, I think of my grandfather who's passed away many years ago, but who served with Regina Rifles of course in World War II, Mr. Speaker, and did so honourably. Great memories there, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Donna From, Mr. Speaker, for the support that she provides to our constituents, Mr. Speaker. And I know on a daily basis we have so many different types of issues that are engaged within, in that office, individuals who are looking to right an injustice or looking for some resolution to some challenges within their life. And Donna From provides just such exceptional support to those individuals and is such a strong liaison between myself and the constituents. And we work together as a very strong team, I'd like to believe, Mr. Speaker. And it's been my honour to work with somebody who's so committed to doing the work for the public for all the right reasons, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

I would like to thank my constituents, Mr. Speaker. We have got a very special constituency and very special constituents, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank them for their involvement both in the democratic process, in the number of phone calls and emails and meetings that they engage with myself as their member on, Mr. Speaker, the number of invitations to join them in what's important to them in our communities, Mr. Speaker, and as well for the community leadership that they provide, Mr. Speaker, within our community.

I think of those leaders within our community associations, those individuals that are working so hard to better our communities, whether that be the refurbishment of parks within our area — one specifically in McNab, Mr. Speaker, who have just done a wonderful job of planting trees and taking back a park that had been somewhat abandoned for a period of time, Mr. Speaker — and it's their leadership that makes our community something so very special.

Leadership on the front of constituents who have graffiti removal programs, Mr. Speaker, that in fact make our community have the feel, Mr. Speaker, that it's taken care of. And it is. One that sets out from the very moment that you enter within it that individuals care about the area for which they live. They care about the way that it looks. They also care about the individuals within it, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to think about the number of individuals who are leaders as coaches as it relates to recreation and culture and arts within our constituency, Mr. Speaker, who simply enrich the lives of so many in our community. And that's not just what we think of when we think of children, we also think of seniors, Mr. Speaker, and the amount of enrichment that these individuals provide our community and my constituents.

When we look at, even broader, some of the interfaith community — the church community within our constituency — I want to thank those leaders for the betterment of our community. And I certainly want to thank the schools and the teachers and the parent leaders that involve themselves in education of students, Mr. Speaker. It's a special, special group of individuals who come together in our schools and make the lives better for our youngest generation and the future of this province.

I would like to specifically thank my executive, Mr. Speaker, a very special group of men and women, leaders within our community, and for the very special events that we're able to conduct within Rosemont, Mr. Speaker, whether that be outreach to make sure we're understanding the issues in a very significant way, or the work on the policy development side, Mr. Speaker. But further to that is well, we have a team that really enjoys doing work as it relates to bringing together the community in a very enjoyable kind of a fashion.

We just recently had the Rosemont pie festival, Mr. Speaker. The pies were fantastic. I couldn't even pick a winner, Mr. Speaker, but I did endeavour to eat almost every one of the pies that were there, Mr. Speaker, and just a special opportunity. Further to that, we generally go out and we've had, certainly had our summer barbecue and all these regular activities that just simply bring good people together, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the issues that matter to them, Mr. Speaker. And that's where I am able to bring that message back to this legislature.

I would like to welcome the newest member of this legislature, the new member for Saskatoon Northwest. I was going to then say his name, and I know I can't do that. But he and his family are certainly respected leaders within our province. And I know I got out on the doorsteps a couple of times as well, Mr. Speaker, during his by-election. And I know I heard quite often that in fact constituents felt they had a strong candidate in the candidate that's been elected here and the new MLA. And I

want to wish him well. I know he'll take his responsibilities with the kind of sincerity that one must. And I know he'll endeavour to provide the greatest level of service and honesty on behalf of his constituents. And I welcome him to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on to some of the more broad-ranging pieces and specifically within the Throne Speech, I'd like to mention two specific aspects that are important to my constituency that I would be remiss not to mention and advocate for, and I know we've been continuing to do that.

But specifically, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] museum within my constituency, Mr. Speaker, is a national treasure. A beautiful architectural marvel, Mr. Speaker, but it goes much further than that. It highlights the red serge in all of its glory and pride, and rightful pride, Mr. Speaker, both nationally and within our province certainly, but internationally, Mr. Speaker. And we are failing to support this very important institution.

In fact, it's a shame and it sometimes is common when we see this kind of failing, Mr. Speaker. But we see a beautiful building get built, and then we don't have the subsequent support to make sure that it is able to flourish the way that it should. And we're going to continue to advocate as we have in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as New Democrats, and I certainly will as the constituency MLA, to make sure that we can make sure that this institution, this museum is on as solid a footing as it should be.

It's really too bad that it actually hasn't been designated a national museum. And we're going to have to look at all those avenues. I ask, actually, for co-operation of all members within this Assembly to make sure that the RCMP museum is on the footing it should be, solid footing, and being able to highlight the red serge and the history of the RCMP to our world and to our province, its great history in the manner that it should. And it's a shame right now that it's struggling for funding.

On a secondary piece, within Regina Rosemont something that's very, very important and a place that I've many, many friends and those that stay connected to our discussions here, Mr. Speaker, is the Pioneer Village, Mr. Speaker, a seniors care facility within Rosemont. This facility is transferred over into the Health Ministry, Mr. Speaker. And the reality is, that there's wonderful people in this institution. There's wonderful people that are cared for in this institution. There's wonderful leadership within this institution.

But we need to make sure that the infrastructure needs within that facility are taken care of. And making sure that our seniors that come from all across the province . . . It's not a matter of providing senior care for those in Regina Rosemont. This is a facility that provides senior care, Mr. Speaker, for people from your constituency and the member from Melville and the member from Meadow Lake — from all across the province — that come and spend their last years, Mr. Speaker, in this place. We need to make sure we're supporting that facility in every way we can and supporting the lives of those seniors, those residents, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say a word, Mr. Speaker. One of the very significant, ongoing activities of the official opposition lead by our leader, Mr. Speaker, is a province-wide outreach. And across the province in communities large and small, urban and rural, Mr. Speaker, we as the official opposition of Saskatchewan have endeavoured to make sure that the pulse of Saskatchewan people is listened to, to make sure that their needs have been identified, and that in fact resolutions and mechanisms to resolve those problems are sought, Mr. Speaker.

On an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker, we bring those issues that we're bringing out of those meetings with incredible people across this province to both this Chamber but also through news release and advocating on their behalf. And, Mr. Speaker, we see many, many challenges that aren't being addressed by this government. But the time that we spend criss-crossing this province — whether you're holding meetings in RM offices or out on the farm gate in some capacity or with local businesses all across the province or with municipalities and their leaders from towns and villages and cities to working people, Mr. Speaker, right across the piece, to seniors and health care — it's a great responsibility when you are provided the opportunity to speak for these individuals.

And certainly here today it's my opportunity to bring that message to this Assembly, and I'm proud to do so, Mr. Speaker. And as I do so, I think of the many, many meetings that we're holding on an ongoing basis, sort of in a sleeves-rolled-up fashion that we conduct ourselves in as the opposition New Democrats.

And we go into corners, Mr. Speaker. We don't care whether it's . . . When individuals call to meet with us, we don't care whether or not it's a conservative Sask Party member, as such, down in Estevan that holds that seat or whether it's someone of any other party. We head down and hold those meetings. And it's very important because actually what we understand, Mr. Speaker, is that many of the MLAs opposite, in fact in those Sask Party conservative ridings, in fact are no longer meeting with constituents who have a desire to have their issues heard.

And I don't want to pigeonhole every last member into that category, Mr. Speaker, but more often than not the calls that I have coming into my office, Mr. Speaker, begin with the fact that they had made contact with one of their members and that after week after week after week — and in many cases months, and in some cases over a year, Mr. Speaker — that they can't get a return call. And it's not as though it's just made one contact, Mr. Speaker, it's many, many attempts to do that.

So as we've been out across the province meeting with individuals and RMs and community leaders, what we're hearing as most critical to our province right now and as failings of the Saskatchewan Party government, this Sask Party government, is in health care, Mr. Speaker.

And this government rode into office with simple promises on this. Straightforward commitments, Mr. Speaker, something they've failed to deliver on, Mr. Speaker. And it's caused no end of grief for members opposite, nor should it, Mr. Speaker, because members of various communities across Saskatchewan took those members at their word. When they said they were going to fix the rural doctor shortage, Mr. Speaker, they

believed them. And they gave them that opportunity to go out and set a plan and to do that, Mr. Speaker.

What we see is a government in fact though — the Sask Party government — that has failed rural health care across Saskatchewan. We see a government that has gone backwards as it relates to rural doctor shortages. In fact we see circumstances across this province that are exacerbated, Mr. Speaker. Specifically, I regularly conduct meetings throughout the Southeast, Mr. Speaker, and I know now we see regular, regular bidding wars, Mr. Speaker, that are now going on within this province.

And we see municipalities that are now having to take that local tax dollar, Mr. Speaker, to provide the very service as it relates to a doctor or medical services within their community, Mr. Speaker. And this isn't their responsibility. Now they'll do it because they care about their community. They'll do it because they know they can affect some change, Mr. Speaker. But that's the responsibility of the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. That's the responsibility of this Sask Party Premier who has failed rural Saskatchewan on this front, Mr. Speaker.

And now we see in fact sort of a unique circumstance of double taxation, Mr. Speaker, where municipalities are taxing their citizens and bidding with other communities and outbidding other communities and in conflict with other communities, Mr. Speaker, to bid on services that should simply be taken care of by the provincial government. Mr. Speaker, and that's too bad.

We see surgical wait times, Mr. Speaker. We don't see the kind of advance on this front that we should be, Mr. Speaker. We see individuals languishing on wait-lists, Mr. Speaker. We know in the Premier's own riding the numbers have and the wait times have dramatically increased, Mr. Speaker.

This isn't the kind of leadership that Saskatchewan people thought they were getting when they elected the slick-talking member from Swift Current who offered them great promise on that front, Mr. Speaker. What they see are broken promises. Broken promises, Mr. Speaker. And what they're learning is that you can't trust, Mr. Speaker, many of the commitments made by this government. You can't trust the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

When we look across this community, we see long-term health, Mr. Speaker. There might not be anything more important to many individuals, certainly not any more important when you're getting to a point when you're planning for your family, to be looking at long-term health care, Mr. Speaker. This Sask Party government announced 13 rural projects back just a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker. All those projects now have been put on the shelf, Mr. Speaker, because of a government that let its finances hit the ditch. Mr. Speaker, put themselves into deficit, and in fact then told the health regions to spend the money that they had transferred for those health care facilities on operational expenses because they had mismanaged the finances.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people shouldn't be the ones to pay the cost, pay the price for this Premier's and this Sask Party mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. Yet they're the ones that are bearing that burden.

And those 13 facilities, Mr. Speaker, what we recognize that the contribution at the local level is still 35 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And I raise this today, and the member from Estevan addressed this today in the Chamber here, Mr. Speaker. Now the problem with the 35 per cent local contribution, Mr. Speaker, is, one, many of these communities have already met that level. They've worked incredibly hard — held bake sales, community projects — to get that money in place. But then they had their money transfer from the province, which is now . . . basically it's been clawed back or deferred or punted as a result of the financial mismanagement. Other communities that are still working incredibly hard to raise that money, Mr. Speaker — and we're talking about millions of dollars for communities like Radville and Kipling and Redvers, Mr. Speaker — these aren't small dollars, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

Yet but at the same time as we see that going on, Mr. Speaker, we see a one-off sweetheart deal go on in Saskatoon where \$27 million is being one-time secured to one institution, one facility in Saskatoon. This facility has jumped ahead of the queue, Mr. Speaker, of all of those other 13 facilities, Mr. Speaker. And guess, Mr. Speaker, guess how much that facility in Saskatoon had to fundraise locally. You would expect that it would be 35 per cent because that's the norm across Saskatchewan. That's what they're asking the community of Radville to do. That's what they're asking the community of Redvers to do. That's what they're asking the community of Kipling to do, Mr. Speaker.

But guess how much this Sask Party government asked this project to be provided by locally. The answer, Mr. Speaker? Zero. Zero. So we see a project in Saskatoon that jumps the queue ahead of all of these other projects that have been punted and put on the shelf, Mr. Speaker, and in fact they've ripped up the formula for what a local community has to put onto the table.

But not for those rural projects, Mr. Speaker, that are still out there working hard. Likely this weekend here coming up, long weekend, many people will be coming home, and they'll likely be holding many of their bake sales and many of the charities and projects to bring those dollars together.

And I go down and I meet down there at the Marian Health Centre down in Radville, and I see that facility and the need of that upgrade and the community leadership that has put that community in a position to be able to finally upgrade that project. And it doesn't sit well, Mr. Speaker, with those community leaders when they see this kind of treatment, a sweetheart deal that jumps the queue in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to take this government to task for what we see as inequitable and unfair treatment, Mr. Speaker.

Across the piece, Mr. Speaker, long-term care is a concern. And I am going to spend a little bit more time in a circumstance in Wawota, specifically, where we see both the terrible math and financial mismanagement of the Wall government — my apologies, the Sask Party government — in action, Mr. Speaker, with the cuts to five beds in Wawota, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to spend some time speaking to that. But I never want to miss the point to speak for those fine community leaders within Wawota

who are fighting, Mr. Speaker, for the livelihood of their communities and for the most common sense use of those beds, Mr. Speaker, that are now sitting empty in their space to be utilized for those community members. Mr. Speaker, a facility that has a wait-list, Mr. Speaker, a wait-list, yet they're cutting those and going to build sweetheart deals in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

So we talk about health care and then we talk about the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. And this is where there's a huge disconnect, Mr. Speaker, with the out-of-touch Premier for the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people; Saskatchewan people that are working and trying to build their lives in Saskatchewan and that are getting hit on every side by the growing costs of living.

And I see young people. I see the Pages that are sitting in here today, Mr. Speaker, and I think of the lives that they have before them here as they try to find housing for themselves and navigate and move forward into the world ahead of them here; as they're paying tuition, I suspect, Mr. Speaker; as they're looking at home ownership. And there is a huge barrier and burden that has been placed on this generation, Mr. Speaker, by the Saskatchewan Party. A young group of people who are going to be the leaders in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And housing is a concern across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I know many of the members from the Sask Party shout across, well, housing isn't a problem in my constituency, is what they offer. Many of the members from the Sask Party say that housing costs are not a problem in their areas.

What I know from meetings across Saskatchewan — whether I'm in North Battleford through Carlyle to Weyburn, right across the piece — whether it's rent or whether it's housing on the house purchase side, Mr. Speaker, there's very big barriers and huge stress placed on families and young people and seniors, Mr. Speaker, and a huge pressure on the middle class, Mr. Speaker. A huge pressure.

I hear the member from Lloydminster shouting out from his seat suggesting that there's no problem with housing affordability in Lloydminster. Mr. Speaker, I suspect, I suspect, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Is that, is that what I suspect? Is that what you're trying to offer?

What I would offer to the member from Lloydminster, now a minister, Mr. Speaker, is that he needs to understand the priorities of Saskatchewan people and certainly his constituents, Mr. Speaker. Housing, Mr. Speaker, is a huge burden for families and for the many, Mr. Speaker. And for a member to arrogantly dismiss it as the out-of-touch Premier, Mr. Speaker, does, is disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

When we look across the piece we see the increases that we've seen in utilities, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years that compound with housing, Mr. Speaker, as a result there the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The minister who's now heckling from Lloydminster is the Minister from the Crowns. If he goes back and now goes and looks at his files, what he's going to recognize is that huge equity has been stripped out of his Crown corporations unrightfully, Mr. Speaker, and irresponsibly. And now he's got a challenge, Mr. Speaker, and the only way he has

to deal with it is to go back to the consumer, Mr. Speaker.

And he should be shamed, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation, to oversee that kind of gutting and stripping of equity, Mr. Speaker. And something that's passed a direct consequence to Saskatchewan people, businesses, and communities, whether or not they're trying to heat their business, heat their home, or trying to heat their community rink, Mr. Speaker. And we see it in electricity. We see it in natural gas. Saskatchewan people have been hit hard by the Sask Party's financial mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. And it's a real burden for Saskatchewan people.

We see the challenges as it relates to post-secondary and tuition increases exacerbated by Sask Party financial mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. Instead of taking a historic financial opportunity and advancing the quality of life in Saskatchewan, we see a government that's relentless on . . . in fact causing challenges to the many, Mr. Speaker.

And we see this across cost of living. And specifically, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention elements of senior care, Mr. Speaker, and many individuals on fixed incomes that are now seeing extra costs as a result of this government — an out-of-touch Premier with the Sask Party and a government that can't manage its finances — are being handed extra costs, Mr. Speaker, and that's unfortunate.

I have a whole piece, of course, that I want to spend and look at the state of our finances, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to come back to that, but of course finances are something that we hear about all across this province of huge concern to Saskatchewan people. And Saskatchewan people, quite simply, Mr. Speaker, just can't figure out how this government has squandered such a historic opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Revenues higher than ever before, historic highs in revenues, Mr. Speaker. Billions of dollars of surplus handed to this government as they took office, and an economy that was furnishing record levels of revenues each of those years, Mr. Speaker, to this government. A historic opportunity in the billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. And what do we see for it, Mr. Speaker? Well not much, because we see the price of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, and misplaced priorities.

We need to be very aware. We hear regularly, and it would be wrong not to bring it to this Assembly, but we are very concerned as we hear community and individuals and businesses raising concerns about the privatization going on under this government, whether that be within the Crown corporations, within health care. What they're standing up and saying is they know that it's not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. They know that it's not going to allow us to have the kind of quality of life and achieve the kind of circumstance that we're hoping to as a province, bettering ourselves, bettering our proud province as we move forward, Mr. Speaker. And it's too bad to see that agenda being advanced so rapidly under this government, Mr. Speaker.

And then we see a government that's relentless on their attacks on working people — on working people, Mr. Speaker. The Premier that once said he was going to go to war with the working people of this province, Mr. Speaker, and we see that this is one of the promises that, shamefully, this Premier has fulfilled, Mr. Speaker, that he's kept. And when you go to war

with the working people, Mr. Speaker, those that toil and labour and build your economy, Mr. Speaker, it causes huge harm, both to those families, Mr. Speaker, but also to our economy.

And it doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker. When you go to war with working people, taking money out of the economy, impacting unionized workers and non-unionized workers and of course small business, Mr. Speaker, who lose a dollar that would be otherwise potentially put into their operation, Mr. Speaker, taken out, we see huge concern.

So when that Premier, out of touch, as we say, with Saskatchewan people and what is really going to build a modern, thriving economy, Mr. Speaker, go to war with working people, we say that that's an absolute shame, Mr. Speaker. We're going to fight him on that one tooth and nail in every corner we go. And this is a message we'll bring to every community no matter where we are, Mr. Speaker, because it's one that has to be heard. And it's something that we're hearing from individuals all across this province and many, many, many working people in members opposite's seats that are going to be speaking out and acting out, Mr. Speaker, to stand up for their quality of life.

We see a government that has been non-responsive as it relates to flooding crises that have hit our province here this summer, Mr. Speaker. And I know it was an absolute natural disaster that no one can contemplate, Mr. Speaker, when we're looking at the circumstances in Maple Creek or in Yorkton or in Carlyle or in North Battleford. All across the piece are cities, Mr. Speaker . . . The damage that was done this summer isn't something that you expect or can plan to forecast, Mr. Speaker, but you have to be ready to respond to the needs of Saskatchewan people.

I want to say to the resilient leaders in each of those respective communities, fantastic work on the work that they've done here this summer to come together and rally together in a way that only Saskatchewan people can do, Mr. Speaker, to repair and rehabilitate their communities.

I hear members heckling, Mr. Speaker. I can't make out quite what they're saying but what they do need to listen to, Mr. Speaker, is that these inadequate response that this government provided communities this summer . . . And many families in communities are still feeling the effects, are impacted and are displaced, Mr. Speaker. It's something that's of shame, Mr. Speaker.

And I know communities like Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, that rallied together, and I know we were out there on the ground right after the disaster and making sure that community needs were advocated for. And I want to just say that the local level — the mayor, James Wilson, his committee there, his fire chief, his team, Mr. Speaker — did just a fantastic job in rallying together and responding to the needs of Saskatchewan people. It's unfortunate that the city and the volunteers and the individuals in Yorkton and in all the other affected communities didn't have a willing and dynamic partner at the table in the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. But just as Saskatchewan people do, Mr. Speaker, they rallied together and they put together their communities and homes as best they can.

Now this is far from over though, Mr. Speaker. And as

highlighted from the member from Regina Dewdney here today, we have many families that still don't have furnaces, that have mould throughout their house, Mr. Speaker. That is absolutely inadequate when we think of the young children and seniors that are in these circumstances. Something that we simply shouldn't tolerate — not a single one of us — that is now imposed upon individuals, Mr. Speaker. Many individuals that are displaced from their homes without housing as we come around, if you can think of it, Mr. Speaker, to the winter season. I believe it's supposed to be minus two on Wednesday and snow, Mr. Speaker, and I believe this is just the start. And here we have a government that has failed Saskatchewan people in communities in such a massive way.

But I do want to say to all the volunteers that came together across this province and community leaders to deal with a circumstance, in spite of the lack of response from the provincial government to assist their communities, I just want to say, job well done on their behalf, Mr. Speaker. I was absolutely impressed when I was able to join the Yorkton emergency response team in their new facility, Mr. Speaker, just after the flood, and sit in on the meetings and watch these individuals do what they could with the resources that they had, Mr. Speaker. And a resourceful bunch they were and committed to their community, Mr. Speaker.

We see failure to address agricultural needs across this province, Mr. Speaker. We see that as the inadequate support for flooded land and for unseeded land, Mr. Speaker. We hear the member from Kindersley heckling here, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure what he's saying, Mr. Speaker. But what I know is that individuals across Saskatchewan in the agricultural community need a response beyond what they've received, Mr. Speaker. We've been advocating for \$100 an acre for unseeded land or flooded land all the way through the summer, Mr. Speaker, dragging that Agriculture minister every step of the way to get what we can out of him, Mr. Speaker, and asking him to make his voice heard with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. To date, we've seen nothing but weak response from that Agriculture minister and absolutely nothing from this Premier, Mr. Speaker, who's out of touch with Saskatchewan people.

We noticed that the one day the Premier pulled on a pair of blue jeans and headed out to Yorkton area here with the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, but they didn't even provide the courtesy, Mr. Speaker, to be accountable to the public and to either eat, meet with the public, or to answer questions of the media, Mr. Speaker. That's how out of touch, Mr. Speaker, this Premier and this Prime Minister in this circumstance, as it relates to the agricultural response, Mr. Speaker, have been. And that's unfortunate.

And where we are, we're in a provincial Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I simply call on that Premier to make sure the case is made federally, and it hasn't been to date, Mr. Speaker.

We also see those needs on the side of the livestock producers. We heard today specifically again, the leader of the Saskatchewan New Democrats, the official opposition, called for the adequate support needed — \$150 a head to beef producers, Mr. Speaker, and as well a program for grassland

seeding, Mr. Speaker, that's been devastated as it relates to weather, Mr. Speaker.

So on these two circumstances, these aren't things that you plan for. You don't forecast weather in the sense of knowing that you're going to be devastated with tornado or by flooding. But what you have the responsibility as a Premier or as a government to do is to respond to the people of your province, regardless of the circumstance that you're dealt. And the inadequate and slow response that's been offered up by this Sask Party government has been shameful and disappointing, Mr. Speaker, and we need to provide both those communities, those families, but also the agricultural producers the support that they require, Mr. Speaker.

We see many challenges as it relates to employment. And part of the challenge is that this Sask Party government, all they seem to want to do is trumpet any positive piece they can out of any glimmer of positive statistic and try to cheerlead that back to the Saskatchewan public. But, Mr. Speaker, that is tough to do when many individuals in this province are actually without work or in fact underemployed, Mr. Speaker. And the numbers speak for themselves.

[15:30]

There's a massive increase in individuals that are looking for work, that are out of work right now, Mr. Speaker. We also see a major shift, Mr. Speaker, from full-time work to part-time work and in fact casual work, Mr. Speaker. And we have to get our heads around this sometimes as we sit in this Assembly. But when we're talking about individuals working two or three jobs, Mr. Speaker, and some of those jobs being casual — meaning that they can't even count on the dollars that they are bringing in on that front, Mr. Speaker — this is a circumstance that has some problematic employment trends, Mr. Speaker. And we see an out-of-touch Premier that is more wanting and more willing to simply trumpet anything he can and to spin anything he can to paint employment in a positive light in Saskatchewan.

What we need is real leadership on this file, Mr. Speaker, to identify where we might have some strengths, but then to be able to identify that we have this huge group of people that's growing, Mr. Speaker, that's growing, that are coming into this province and not able to find work, Mr. Speaker.

And it gets to my other point, is that we need to look at the circumstance of social assistance right now, Mr. Speaker, and we need to look at those numbers. Because the Premier likes to talk about people coming into the province, Mr. Speaker, but he doesn't talk very often about the skyrocketing social assistance caseloads in this province, Mr. Speaker — more people that can't find employment and in fact are having to rely on the public purse, Mr. Speaker, to get by. And this seems to say that we need some real leadership on this front, Mr. Speaker, and not what we've seen to date.

As we see the circumstance in housing, Mr. Speaker, we simply, we need to have strong policies on this front. We see the huge pressures that folks are dealing with in rent and it's — whether you're in Kindersley, I know, I look to the member from Kindersley; I know that rent is a huge pressure in his community — but across Saskatchewan. And I know some

members of this Assembly from the Sask Party like to pretend that somehow housing isn't a problem, Mr. Speaker. And we need to make sure that at the very . . . priority of this government is that we're looking out for the needs of housing within our province, Mr. Speaker.

So those are a few comments I've had, Mr. Speaker, within each of those areas. But I do want to speak a little bit more to a couple of other circumstances. And I see the member . . . I guess I can't speak of a member's presence within an Assembly or not in the Assembly. But I will mention that we have a very unfortunate circumstance that's gone on in Wawota, Mr. Speaker, something that amazingly we haven't seen any resolution to, Mr. Speaker. And that would be when this government went and cut five beds from Deer View Lodge in Wawota, Mr. Speaker. And this has caused a great concern within this community, Mr. Speaker, and great outcry.

And what doesn't make any sense about this, Mr. Speaker — and I look to members opposite — is that at the same time as they're cutting five beds in Deer View Lodge in Wawota, they're spending \$27 million in Saskatoon to jump the queue of all the other rural projects that have been shelved, and to do so in a way that doesn't expect that community to put any sort of a community portion forward, Mr. Speaker.

It's inequitable. It's unfair. But it's also terrible math, Mr. Speaker. And we know that this government is renowned for their terrible math, Mr. Speaker, launching us back into debt and deficit, miscalculations on revenue forecast, Mr. Speaker. Anyways this group is renowned on this front.

But terrible math in the sense that you have beds open in Wawota; you have a waiting list for those beds, Mr. Speaker, and then you cut them. And they're going to go and build those beds now in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, to the tune of many hundreds of thousands of dollars per bed, Mr. Speaker — per bed — maybe 200 to \$300,000 per bed, Mr. Speaker. Well you've got beds, Mr. Speaker, in one of these regions, and we simply need to leave them open. Now they've been closed by this government in a irresponsible, foolish cut, Mr. Speaker. They need to be reopened. And we've been calling for that from the moment that they've been cut, Mr. Speaker.

Now I just want to highlight some of the words that the community is saying about these cuts. Just as I look here, "Wawota residents voice frustrations," Mr. Speaker. Of course this is from the *Moosomin World-Spectator*, Mr. Speaker. You'd be familiar with this fine newspaper. And we see some of the comments here of people. Now this is as it relates to the actual meeting, Mr. Speaker, and the headline was "Wawota residents voice frustration." The secondary headline was "No resolution at Wawota meeting." Now this was a meeting where they expected action, and rightfully so, of their elected government, Mr. Speaker. That would be the members of the legislature for that region, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier of this province, the Sask Party Premier, Mr. Speaker.

But they found no resolution at the Wawota meeting and I know . . . I just have a line here says, "The province blamed" is the title, and I quote, "Province blamed. Don Dean says he believes the provincial government is underfunding health districts." In his quote, "the province is short changing the health districts,"

he said. It goes on, "There's a lot of lying around the whole issue."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to go back to this again because this is a community that's frustrated and angry and trying to get resolution to something that should simply be able to require leadership of an MLA within the region, Mr. Speaker, or the Premier. And what this individual offers in the Moosomin *Spectator* on August 2nd, obviously frustrated in trying to lead within his community, he states, "There's been a lot of lying around the whole issue."

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a problem. This is a problem, Mr. Speaker, and we need resolution. Here in this region itself where the member for Cannington's actually tried to pass the buck to the health region, Mr. Speaker, which he hasn't been successful in doing so. There's actually been two individuals, senior leaders within that health region dismissed, Mr. Speaker. Those are the individuals who were a part, along with the MLA for the region, and of course the Premier and the Finance minister who cut the budget, for cutting those beds, Mr. Speaker. And you would think that if there was an opportunity to fix those beds and to bring those back into operation, it would have been once they ended up terminating two senior leaders in their health region. Yet we see no leadership from the members opposite.

I'll continue on here with frustrations in July 12th. Now this hasn't been something that just arose and that we're looking for leadership today. This is something that's been ongoing, and we were looking for leadership in July, Mr. Speaker, but we're still looking for leadership today. So we would welcome the announcement that those beds are going to be reopened.

From July 12th in the Moosomin *World-Spectator*, "Wawota beds now closed." That's the headline. Now what's important about that headline, Mr. Speaker, and it says "Wawota beds now closed." The reason that's important is because the Health minister who just last week revealed that he didn't know that the beds were actually closed. Now this is a problem because many of the RMs in the area as well, the Save Our Beds committee and many individuals had been writing the Health minister all summer long, trying to meet with the Health minister, Mr. Speaker, to have their voices heard. And they were dismissed every step of the way by that MLA opposite, the member from Cannington, Mr. Speaker. They have been dismissed all the way along by the Health minister, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier.

And that member, the member, the House Leader from the Sask Party, did such a poor job of standing up, Mr. Speaker, for these residents that his own Health minister didn't even know that the beds were cut. But I'll verify for the Health minister here today, and the member from Cannington who I believe knows the beds have been cut: July 12, Wawota beds now closed, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll move along here, Mr. Speaker, and the community on July 12, "Wawota is still fighting bed closures." So, Mr. Speaker, here we have Saskatchewan people that are standing up and fighting a government that can't manage its finances and are asking Saskatchewan communities to pay for their own mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, their misplaced priorities, at the same time as a sweetheart deal in Saskatoon, \$27 million, is

allowed to advance, Mr. Speaker. This is something that does not sit well with residents. Residents who I might say, Mr. Speaker, who are saying on July 26th from the *Spectator* — this is the headline — "Wawota senior worried about husband's health," Mr. Speaker. It goes on to talk about the huge concerns, Mr. Speaker, and the impact of changes at that stage of the game, Mr. Speaker, on those seniors and the impact on the families, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to go on with the article here, Mr. Speaker, on July 12, where it highlights where Wawota residents are standing up and fighting for fairness, Mr. Speaker, fighting for something that doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, and something that only reflects the terrible math of the Sask Party, a government that came to office with more revenues than ever before and has now put itself into debt and deficit and is causing Saskatchewan people to pay the price for their mismanagement.

I'll quote here from the *Spectator*:

Two people Easton says he is not counting on for any help are Cannington MLA Dan D'Autremont and Moosomin MLA Don Toth.

"The local MLAs have been very frustrating," he said. "They don't seem to be giving any effort to move forward for us."

And I'm still quoting from the article here:

He singled out D'Autremont, whose riding includes Wawota, for criticism. "The man is very unintelligent," he said. "In our opinion, people should not re-elect the man. He refuses to return our phone calls. He won't do anything for us. He doesn't deserve to be our MLA."

Now, Mr. Speaker, these aren't individuals that are looking for something ridiculous of any sort, Mr. Speaker. They're looking for the beds that they had within their community, the quality of life that they've grown accustomed to, the hard work that they've done, whether they were homesteading for many years as families, Mr. Speaker, to have those services provided . . .

Now the member from Cannington is shouting across the floor here, Mr. Speaker, instead of informing the Health minister that the beds are actually closed and then sitting down with him and the Premier, Mr. Speaker, to see how they can't get these beds opened back up, Mr. Speaker, which would be the common sense thing to do. Instead he'd rather let a project in Saskatoon, at \$27 million, jump the queue. And it cost him 2 to \$300,000 a bed when he has beds that are operational, efficient, in his own community with a wait-list, Mr. Speaker, and with individuals and loved ones that count on those, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to go back that quote one more time.

He singled out D'Autremont, whose riding includes Wawota, for criticism. "The man is very unintelligent," he said. "In our opinion, people should not re-elect the man. He refuses to return our phone calls. He won't do anything for us. He doesn't deserve to be our MLA."

He doesn't deserve to be our MLA. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We've met with these individuals. I know that the Health critic has been down there, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been down there, Mr. Speaker. I know that I've certainly been down there, Mr. Speaker. And these individuals are certainly not partisan individuals of any sort. At least they're not partisan supporters of the New Democrats, I can tell you that.

What they are is common sense, hard-working people that are looking for decisions to be made in their communities out of their best interests — the public good, Mr. Speaker. And yet they have the MLA that won't even return the phone call.

And now we learn last week in this Assembly that that MLA, Mr. Speaker, and MLAs from the region, had not even informed the Premier and the Health minister, Mr. Speaker, on something that could have been nipped in the bud and fixed from day one with very little commitment as it relates to money, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to spend more, as I said, to build beds elsewhere, than keep the ones open that we have that are the most efficient beds in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now this is just highlighting Wawota. We see the circumstances with the hospital in Leader. We see emergency services in Neilburg, Mr. Speaker. We see the fighting within many communities where they're using the municipal taxpayers' dollars, increasing those property taxes, Mr. Speaker, so that they can provide services that that government will not provide, something that that government should be providing, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to move on a little bit further here with this same article. This is what the member from Cannington, I guess, had to say: "Which do they want, highways or health care?" Highways or health care, Mr. Speaker.

In a prosperous Saskatchewan, with a new, historic opportunity of unprecedented revenues, Mr. Speaker, we have an MLA who goes in and instead of actually mentioning to the Premier the circumstance in his riding, instead of kicking the door down of the Premier or the Health minister as an MLA should, standing up for the public good in his riding, he sits quiet, doesn't say boo. Not a word to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, or to the Health minister. And instead, Mr. Speaker, he wants to go back and say, well what do you want? You have to choose — highways or health care.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people, and in that region, they want both. They want both and they want a logical plan and a responsible plan to achieve both, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh and now the member is heckling from his seat that some of the members of the committee should run against him and . . . I mean that's not what this is about, Mr. Speaker. This is about providing the people of Wawota with the services that they count on and that they deserve, Mr. Speaker. That being said, there's other ways to make these decisions, and it is a democratic process. And I would fully expect that he'll have a hot contest with that as part of the platform, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've been hearing a lot about potash lately, Mr. Speaker, rightfully so. It's a resource that's fundamental to

our prosperity as a province into the future, Mr. Speaker, and we've had this discussion go on as a province.

Now we're happy at this point in time to see the decision to not allow BHP to take over this critical strategic resource, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see the Premier go and take a position of a social democratic . . . I might say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a strategic resource that we need to maintain control of. But it's not very credible, his position. That being said, we stand shoulder to shoulder to make sure we had our voice heard, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

But here we have an individual who is engaged in what's been described as a tawdry shakedown, Mr. Speaker, that might compare to the kind of behaviours that go on in many Third World countries, Mr. Speaker. This is our Premier that was engaged in these discussions, Mr. Speaker, then looking for a very short-term, very short-sighted \$1 billion, we understand, Mr. Speaker, so that he would sign off and approve the takeover, Mr. Speaker. Then only a day later when he didn't get his way and when businesses said to him, well this isn't how you do it, then he comes out as the great protector, Mr. Speaker. And we're glad that he ended up calling for the federal government to say no. But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is it's simply not credible.

Here you have a Premier who was right there in the stage when this critical resource was being privatized, Mr. Speaker, sold off, sold off by the Grant Devine administration and for . . . As I understand, the Premier worked directly with that ministry of privatization, Mr. Speaker, and now he's supposed to be the great protector. Now, Mr. Speaker, what we saw with the Crown resource that we did have was the ability to be one of the wealthiest jurisdictions, if not the wealthiest jurisdiction in North America, had we not gone down that route of privatization.

When we think of the opportunities that we could be fulfilling as a province right now, not out of the pocket, not out of the pockets of the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, not out of the pockets of people in Wawota or individuals fighting over doctors, Mr. Speaker, and pooling together dollars in Arcola, but these services being provided in a top-notch fashion in health care and in child care, Mr. Speaker, as the wealthiest jurisdiction in North America. But that was squandered, that opportunity back just a few short years ago when the current Premier, Mr. Speaker, was fully involved in the privatization of this resource.

Now as we move forward, there needs to be a critical discussion, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to fully engage in here and make sure that we're getting the maximum benefit for Saskatchewan people as it relates to our resources, and certainly potash being one of those, Mr. Speaker, and how those should be managed, Mr. Speaker. And what we see the problem out of this government, Mr. Speaker — and we saw it as they came to office with billions of dollars of surplus, more revenues flowing than ever before — is that even when they're provided all these record circumstances of surplus and billions of dollars in revenues, they find a way to put themselves back into debt and deficit.

But it's not them that are in debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker. They're putting us as a province, each and every individual and business and community across Saskatchewan, that have been launched back into debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker. And that's unfortunate.

I would like to take just a moment here to highlight some of the circumstances as it relates to our finances, Mr. Speaker. We hear often as we go across this province the people of this province and business leaders speak out and say, well this government was provided billions of dollars, and where has that gone? And it's a very difficult activity to engage and figure out how this government that came in with billions of dollars of surplus — over \$2 billion — booming revenues, Mr. Speaker, unprecedented revenues furnished to government, could find themselves a way to launch us back into debt and deficit. And it causes people huge concern.

Mr. Speaker, I know . . . or Deputy Speaker, I recognize here in the budget summary, Mr. Speaker, page 62 of the 2010-11 budget, that debt under this government, the Sask Party government and this out-of-touch Premier, is in fact projected to rise by 55 per cent or \$4.2 billion over the next four years, Mr. Speaker.

Now this is simply deferring taxes for down the road. It's a cost to Saskatchewan people and it's unsustainable, Mr. Speaker. This at a time where we have more revenues than ever before, Mr. Speaker, a time where, if we look back and just move it back and look at where we were in 2007, 2008 when the torch of managing the people's resources was passed to this government, the budget at that point in time was \$7.8 billion. In fact this government has a 28 per cent increase in revenues flowing to government this year over what it did just a few years ago.

How you outspend that, Mr. Speaker, is basically unexplainable, and it's disgraceful, Mr. Speaker. The most reckless fiscal government across Canada, in many ways, Mr. Speaker, that has been blessed and lucky to have the revenues that they have at this point in time. Increase in spending by 32 per cent, Mr. Speaker, actually outstripped the massive increases in revenues. And I know what Saskatchewan people are starting to do is, they call it opportunity squandered, Mr. Speaker. They talk about the rightful prosperity of our resource-rich province — and we are one resource-rich province — and they look at the revenues and they look at the opportunities that are being squandered, Mr. Speaker.

When we look over the last three years, is this a government that's done something incredibly bold, Mr. Speaker? Well certainly not — certainly not. Yet it was provided an opportunity that no government before in this province had the opportunity to do.

In fact, if I even just do the math and I go back and I look at the Sask Party election platform that they put forward in 2007, had this government simply kept its own spending promises, Mr. Speaker — what I mean by that is they put out a spending chart and costed all their promises they had made to Saskatchewan people, and they had forecast what they needed to spend in each of those years — had this government simply kept that promise to Saskatchewan people, we'd be in massive surplus.

And now the question would be, to what tune? Because what we know is we're into our second year of deficit. Well to the tune, Mr. Speaker, that we would have accumulated over 7 billion in surplus had they only kept their promise. Now, Mr. Speaker, did you get that? They would be in an accumulated surplus position of \$7 billion had they only kept their promise.

Now of course, they didn't keep their promise. They ripped up that promise that (a) put out spending projections and their commitments there. They ripped that up. They ripped up fiscal responsibility. They increased spending by 32 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I know it's categorized as reckless, unsustainable, runaway — those are all fair statements, Mr. Speaker — but they blew a historic opportunity. And instead of having \$7 billion for which to do something incredibly bold, Mr. Speaker, we see ourselves back into our second year of deficit, which is almost unfathomable when you look at these circumstances.

And when you think about \$7 billion, and I know . . . I think I saw a couple of the members gulp over there when I gave that number, \$7 billion squandered. I saw them gulp because it's such a large sum. We could have simply, had it become the priority, and I'm not saying that this necessarily was where all of the dollars should have gone, but had they wanted to, they could have eliminated all of the GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt, Mr. Speaker, in this province. They could have eliminated it. That means 400 to \$500 million of debt servicing costs, Mr. Speaker, could have been eliminated.

I see one member back there that's fully engaged in this right now. Just to dial back the discussion again here, what we're talking about here is had the Sask Party simply kept the spending promises that they put forward in their platform. Instead, they ripped that up. They instituted a reckless, unsustainable spending program, Mr. Speaker. They've spent all that money and have put us back into our second year of deficit, Mr. Speaker, and are increasing debt by the billions of dollars. This is a hugely unfortunate circumstance.

We talked about the shameful Minister of Crown Investments Corporation that had all of his equity stripped out of those Crown corporations. Now Saskatchewan people are paying the price for that, Mr. Speaker, through their costs of heating and through their power and energy, Mr. Speaker, and all of our Crown services that now only have one other way to retrieve those dollars, and that's through the consumer, Mr. Speaker. And we see a government that's been in and out with the rainy day fund and in years that have been in unprecedented highs. Simply a reckless, irresponsible government.

And I know that institutions across Saskatchewan are identifying this. Certainly business leaders are identifying it. And it's a shameful position for this province to occupy. But I know that the Fraser Institute has recently done some rankings and some evaluation, Mr. Speaker. You'll know that the Fraser Institute, Mr. Speaker, certainly is probably a right-of-centre organization, Mr. Speaker. And they're not willing to offer any mercy to this reckless government, Mr. Speaker. In fact what they've said is that this government, as it relates to reckless, irresponsible spending, is at the bottom of the heap, Mr. Speaker, with provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker. And this is a ranking of the premiers.

Now we know what's happened to those other two premiers and to both of those jurisdictions that couldn't get their finances in order and that were irresponsible and reckless spenders, Mr. Speaker — that those two premiers have been ousted. Ousted, Mr. Speaker. And we're not sure if that's a bit of foreshadowing for here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

But I know Saskatchewan people don't tolerate a government that's reckless with their dollars. Because that's not how Saskatchewan people operate, whether you're on the farm, whether you're in your business, whether you're a public servant, or whether you're operating your own family, you make sure that you're planning towards tomorrow. And you expect your government to be at least as responsible as you have to be, Mr. Speaker.

And when we see the debt mounting out of the irresponsible management of this government, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that simply defers taxes to another generation, Mr. Speaker. Not fair, Mr. Speaker. Not fair. And it's not the kind of Saskatchewan or prosperous Saskatchewan that we should be proud to be talking about, Mr. Speaker.

We see a government in fact that has no ability, and a Premier, no ability to manage a prosperous Saskatchewan, no ability to put that vision forward. Certainly not to have the plan. He might go out and give some pumped-up speeches, Mr. Speaker, but has no ability to have that vision or the plan or the ability to manage that prosperity, Mr. Speaker — something that New Democrats are proud, waiting, and ready to do, Mr. Speaker, and something that our history shows a huge strength with as it relates to economic development and fiscal stewardship, Mr. Speaker. And that's something at the very root of it that Saskatchewan people care about in a large, large way, Mr. Speaker.

So we talked about the reckless burn rate on equity. We talked about the squandered opportunity — billions of dollars — Mr. Speaker, by this Sask Party government. And it all costs Saskatchewan people.

I wouldn't mind just referencing a couple of the quotes that we have from the media, some of the leaders across this province, on this file, some of the third party validators or voices of concern. And I can go to a few of them here. And this goes back to when we launched into debt and deficit with the reckless spending and irresponsible budget projections. This is from the *Leader-Post* on August 26th, 2009:

This happens to be the biggest government miscalculation since . . . Finance Minister Gary's Lane 1986 budget.

Why on earth formulate a budget on such unpredictable numbers? Well, perhaps the first thing we need to do is get past that idiotic spin that no one could see this coming and that it was perfectly reasonable to assume we would get \$1.926 billion in potash revenue . . .

So if Wall wants to avoid any more such Devine comparisons in the future, here's one alternative: Just stop budgeting like Devine did.

We see a government that has presided over a major contraction

in our economy, which is disappointing, Mr. Speaker. This is taking money out of the pockets of entrepreneurs across this province. It's individuals spending less, Mr. Speaker. It's simply taking out the trade and the volume and the activity within our economy. And I know on September 5th, 2009 in the *Leader-Post*, the business columnist states, "The provincial economy has gone to hell in a handcart. Not only that, but the province's fiscal situation has deteriorated dramatically."

And then we saw that. We saw it last year when we saw a contraction now that I believe has been corrected to 4 per cent, Mr. Speaker, that was 6.3 per cent as earlier reported. But 4 per cent contraction in our economy, Mr. Speaker, that is a massive backward step, Mr. Speaker, within this economy, and it's disappointing. Now we're working simply to make back gains that we've lost under this Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

I know I can highlight a comment or two here from Eric Howe, the professor of economics at the U of S, and I quote:

I'm disappointed by all of this. I don't accept at all that there is a problem here, in terms of there not being enough money.

[It goes on] . . . Brad Wall government came in to . . . inherited an extremely positive, extremely solid fiscal position.

[It goes on] If I violate my own budget constraints it costs me and it costs my family. When they violate their budget constraints it doesn't cost them, it costs us.

Mr. Speaker, which means that we all end up paying for this kind of mismanagement. It goes on:

. . . the Wall government, we have a similar kind of thing in that they came into essentially solid, inherited such a fiscally solid position that I think they felt they could buy anything they wanted with our money.

It goes on and talks about who pays for this, Mr. Speaker, this mismanagement that we see on this squandered opportunity under the Sask Party. In terms of the economic cost, the economic costs are straightforward. We are the ones who are going to pay. There's no one else, so the cost will end up coming out of our standard of living, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to highlight a column, Mr. Speaker, on June 8th, 2010, in our *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker. It goes on here and it says:

The debt graph presented by Wall's strategists in their propaganda was at best misleading and at worst downright deceitful for trying to pass off general revenue fund debt as being the same thing as overall Saskatchewan debt, which is again on the rise [Mr. Speaker].

So this is from June 8th, 2010, Mr. Speaker. And just to highlight the pieces there again, the lines here quoting from that article is that it's the propaganda . . . I'll just read the quote:

The debt graph presented by Wall's strategists in their

propaganda was at best misleading and at worst downright deceitful for trying to pass off general revenue fund debt as the same thing as overall Saskatchewan debt, which is again on the rise.

This was June 8th in the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker.

Causes huge concern for Saskatchewan people. And something that I've had many, many, many meetings in all the parts of this province to talk about, where we've sat down with industry leaders and financial leaders and community leaders, Mr. Speaker, who know how to read a balance sheet — farm leaders, Mr. Speaker — who have sat down and have seen this unprecedented fiscal opportunity squandered by this government. And they're disappointed, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to have something to say about it.

[16:00]

We'll go on with another comment here. And I'll quote:

The disadvantage Premier Brad Wall's government has is that unlike the other right-of-centre governments, there is no automatic assumption that its strength lies with fiscal management . . . the Wall government will forever be haunted by its damning lineage to Grant Devine's Progressive Conservatives of the 1980s who ran one of the most fiscally incompetent governments in Canadian history [Mr. Speaker].

And then as I said, the other comment we had was if . . . from one of the commentators was, if you want to stop the comparisons to Devine, just stop acting like him, Mr. Speaker. Just stop acting like him. Just stop budgeting like him, Mr. Speaker.

So we see, Mr. Speaker, opportunities being squandered across this province. We see a historic financial opportunity where all Saskatchewan people have participated in building, Mr. Speaker, to generate and furnish those revenues to our public purse, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen nothing bold, nothing historic, nothing significant done with that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Instead, we've seen the opposite. We've seen a government launch an unsustainable spending pattern that has put us back into debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker. We're awaiting right now the mid-year report, Mr. Speaker. And we know that going into the year, we had a 600-and-some million dollar deficit, Mr. Speaker. We'd expect to see massive improvements on that, Mr. Speaker, because simply maintaining what we . . . This general fiscal direction is not healthy. It's a trend line that is damaging to the future prosperity of Saskatchewan people, our communities, and our livelihoods here, Mr. Speaker.

And what Saskatchewan people seem to be telling me more often than not, and everywhere I'm going, is that we need a government to provide that kind of leadership. And what we have with this current Premier is a populist, Mr. Speaker, who simply polls and chases the smell of the day, Mr. Speaker. And what we need is real leadership that addresses the needs of Saskatchewan communities and people.

We see the middle class, Mr. Speaker, under this government, getting hammered as we've talked about, whether that is how we pay for the recreation that enriches the lives of our children, Mr. Speaker, or as we look at the cost of tuition, the cost of senior care, the cost of utilities, and the cost of housing. We need to advance as a province and advance the quality of life for all, Mr. Speaker, and we're on a reckless track with this government.

Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that at this point in time you would understand that I won't be supporting the Throne Speech and that I'll be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition. We're going to continue to keep our sleeves rolled up as an opposition, continuing to meet all across this province, Mr. Speaker, in communities — whether they're held by the Sask Party or the New Democrats or . . . of course there's nobody else, Mr. Speaker — but because the stories and the circumstances that we're able to advance and advocate for Saskatchewan people are just far too important. Circumstances like in Wawota, Mr. Speaker, where the MLA won't take any accountability and had every opportunity to correct that situation, Mr. Speaker, who didn't even inform the Health minister and the Premier that these cuts were going on, Mr. Speaker, when you had a community that was irate and looking for action. And a very simple thing to fix, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're going in the wrong direction under the Sask Party. The Saskatchewan New Democrats have a vision, have a plan, and the ability to manage a prosperous Saskatchewan. We're committed to doing so. Today I'll be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One thing I'll note before getting into the body of my remarks is that during that entire incoherent and incomprehensible rant from the member opposite, there's one thing you didn't hear him talking about, Mr. Speaker, and that was his leader. Not one reference to the Leader of the Opposition. And you know, it might not be a huge surprise why he didn't refer to his leader or make any positive comments about his leader, considering his leader is the choice of premier of 17 per cent of the people of this province.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, actually that member would have a higher approval rating to be premier of this province, maybe. Maybe that might have even factored into his decision not to mention the Leader of the Opposition during that speech.

I know the member opposite. He's one of the talented young members over there, unlike the member for Northcote. But the member from Coronation Park probably has his eye on the main prize I suspect, Mr. Speaker, and for that reason didn't reference his leader once. And we'll get into a little bit more about the massive unpopularity, the catastrophic leadership for that party provided by the Leader of the Opposition.

First though, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank . . . I want to do some thank yous. My family, firstly my wife, Alaina, who's been a great support to me over the years, supported me through now six nomination processes, three general election campaigns,

going into our fourth general election campaign in Meadow Lake this coming up November, Mr. Speaker. So I want to thank her.

My son, MacGregor, who's now nearly two, going into his first campaign. He's been to a number of political events, although mom and I tell him that he can do anything he wants when he grows up, but not be a politician. So we'll see how that pans out. Alaina is due as well in February with our second. We're still discussing names yet and we'll see how that turns out, but it's something I'm very much looking forward to.

Thank my constituency assistant, Sharlene Beaulieu, who does a great job for me working in the Meadow Lake constituency, one of those wonderful CAs. And I know members from both sides of the floor have wonderful people that work for us and work with us. Sharlene is one of those people that knows everybody in northwest Saskatchewan and does a fantastic job and is a great ambassador for me when I have to be down here in Regina.

I thank my parents as well, Tom and Lorna, both of whom live in Meadow Lake. My dad, a 37-year civil servant, just retired as a director with the Environment ministry. My mom's a small-business owner in Meadow Lake. Again, two people that I think know everybody in northern Saskatchewan, which again is a testament to the dedication they've had to our community in Meadow Lake over the years. My sister Jennifer who's an executive with Coca-Cola; my brother Jordan who's an electrical engineer with Telus in Edmonton — I thank them for their support over the years.

I know my grandfather will be on watching TV. He's an avid watcher of the legislature. He figures that we're doing pretty good these days, Mr. Speaker. He's nearly 90, a third-generation resident of Saskatchewan. Still kind of putzes around out on the homestead, our family's homestead near Quill Lake. He was down here for one of our sessions last session, and I took him to the Premier's office and he got to sit in the Premier's chair, and he thought was quite the experience.

I also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Northwest, the newest member of this House, who's a lawyer, which I appreciate having another lawyer here in caucus despite the ridicule that we get from the member for Cannington. It is good to have Gord — or sorry, the member for Saskatoon Northwest — joining us here in Regina. And I know he's going to make an incredible contribution to this Assembly, to this government on behalf of his constituents in Saskatoon Northwest.

I wanted to talk a bit about what's going on in Meadow Lake right now, Mr. Speaker. We, I think, are experiencing some of the best times in the history of our city which we became only two years ago. One of the proudest days I know I've ever had in public life, to stand with the Premier and sign the official declaration making Meadow Lake Saskatchewan's 14th city. A great day. A wonderful summer day. It was something that I know people back home are still very, very proud of, that our community, in only 50 years, has grown to be a city here in our wonderful province.

Some of the exciting things happening. I think if you were to go

to Meadow Lake these days, it almost looks like a construction zone, the entire city. Private sector home construction at near all-time highs, only over the last two years would be rivalling what's going on in terms of that. That and we have a new courthouse, which I thank the Minister of Justice for moving forward with, something that's a real centrepiece for our city. We're going to be doing the official opening in only a couple of weeks, which is going to be again, a wonderful, a wonderful event for our city and something I very much look forward to.

We were able to move forward on municipal infrastructure projects. And I thank the former minister of Municipal Affairs, the current minister. And I had some input as well during my time as minister. A great deal of municipal infrastructure projects moving forward, a record amount of municipal infrastructure projects moving forward in northwest Saskatchewan. Whether it be a water treatment in Dorintosh, in Goodsoil, Meadow Lake, Loon Lake, there's a tremendous amount of activity on that front.

We have a new spray park actually in Meadow Lake which we were able forward with under the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program. We did the official opening this summer, which I know my son's going to be very much enjoying next summer, Mr. Speaker, along with young people from right around town.

We have a brand new student housing complex that's going to be opening in the near future that was funded by the Minister of Social Services; partly by my ministry at Enterprise Saskatchewan; Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; as well as contributions from the federal government and the city. A wonderful project. Going to be housing over 40 families that are attending Northlands College which is, again, just an incredibly positive development for the city of Meadow Lake.

In terms of highways, I know only three, four years ago all you heard about was how terrible the highways were in northwest Saskatchewan. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, today all you hear about is how great the highways are in northwest Saskatchewan.

We have Highway 3 . . . I just actually got an email from a gentleman from Livelong complimenting the government on the complete repair of Highway 3, which previously had broken pavement signs littered along its length between Turtleford and Glaslyn.

Highway 4, which has been a massive project — about 60 kilometres completely, completely repaved. Something that actually shocked people, how quickly this project was able to move forward with. And I thank the Minister of Highways from that.

Highway 55 west of Meadow Lake near Goodsoil had been a goat trail ripped up for years and years despite my predecessor having been a Highways minister. He never could get the job done on Highway 55 or Highway 26. Within three short years of our government being elected to office, those highways have all been repaired, Mr. Speaker, and it's been a great benefit for northwest Saskatchewan. As we know, there's increasing economic activity.

The forestry industry is moving forward in a . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, to raise a point of order.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank the hon. member for Meadow Lake for allowing this interruption, but it's his very speech that I'm referring to.

In it, he started saying that the member for Coronation Park had not referenced my leader. I checked *Hansard* and, for nearly half a page, I've reflected at great length about the leader. And I spoke to the hon. member for Regina Rosemont who was also named by the member from Meadow Lake not referencing the leader in his speech, and he did so repeatedly.

I refer you, sir, to page 5724 of *Hansard*. and I'll just quote one sentence that I said, "Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier shut out an expert in the Leader of the Opposition, shut out an expert . . ." Clearly I'm speaking highly of my leader, the Leader of the Opposition. I am proud to do so today. I was proud to do so then, and I know I'll be proud to do so well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is, the member is directly misquoting myself, saying I didn't reference the Leader of the Opposition, my leader. And he did exactly the same thing with respect to the member of Rosemont. I'm wondering how much else in his speech is patently not true.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly what the member opposite is raising is not a point of order. It's a matter of debate in the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly there has been many references to comments in *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, over the years, which have been interpreted by members on either side of the House. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: — I've listened to both arguments, not having viewed *Hansard*, but I will agree that there is many — this is not a point of order — that there is a lot of give-and-take on speeches on that. And with that, I will not rule a point of order. I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would admit that I misspoke in terms of the riding. I was referring to the speech of the member previous from Rosemont who shouted from his seat that he actually did mention his leader.

He said twice, Mr. Speaker, in an hour-long speech, which again reinforces the point I made about why wouldn't he be talking about his leader who right now . . . I know in Meadow Lake, I was back home over the weekend, Mr. Speaker, and down on coffee row. And they actually came up with a new

name for the Leader of the Opposition. They were calling him captain 17 per cent, which obviously is a reference to the approval rating that that member has, which has to be seen as one of the most catastrophic stints of leadership in the history of the province.

[16:15]

He's the most unpopular Leader of the Opposition of any in the entire country. He is leading . . . And I think members opposite should be worried about this, Mr. Speaker. And I suspect that behind the scenes, they are very worried about this, that there's some conversations going on amongst members opposite that maybe this thing isn't going quite the direction we thought it was going to be going in.

They have, as I indicated, a leader who has lurched from catastrophe to catastrophe, Mr. Speaker, telling them all the while that he had a plan, that he was the guy that was going to win. And where are they . . . He was going to win the by-election in Saskatoon Northwest. He was telling his own caucus that, Mr. Speaker, that they were really close. The numbers were close. Seven points or so, he was telling his caucus members. And what happened, Mr. Speaker? They lost by 30. They lost by 30 points, which is exactly how far behind this government they are today.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, if, say, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow had been successful in her leadership campaign, I can assure you that they would be higher than 17 per cent right now, and their leader wouldn't be a laughingstock on coffee row in Meadow Lake.

But, you know, they made their decision, Mr. Speaker. They had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . As the Minister of Energy said, the leader's in Kamsack looking for a potash mine right now. So I suspect he's going to have a difficult time finding one because there isn't one there.

But, you know, again we reference potash. Under the leadership of this Premier, Mr. Speaker, we had a tremendous win for the province of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan last week.

A former deputy premier of this province, not of my party, a former deputy premier of this province phoned me subsequent to the decision and said that there's going to be three names in the lexicon of Western leaders when it comes to standing up for their province on resource issues. And the three names that that former deputy premier, not of my party, referenced were John Diefenbaker, Peter Lougheed, and the Premier. And that's, you know, I think that speaks to the non-partisan nature, the fact that this was an issue that cut across parties.

And we do appreciate the support that the members opposite gave. Even though their position shifted about six times during the course of two months, they did support our motion to send a clear message to Ottawa to speak with one voice in terms of the position of this legislature on potash.

And I also wanted to, I also wanted to thank our 13 Conservative MPs from this province, Mr. Speaker, a number of whom are my former colleagues who I served with in

parliament who really did — despite having some very real constraints imposed on them by the Canada investment Act in terms of their public comments — I can tell you, work very, very hard for this province behind the scenes and making clear the views of their constituents in fighting for the people of this province. And I think we're going to have the opportunity to have some of them in the legislature here this week, and we can extend that thank you in a more formal sense.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they were working very hard on behalf of the people of this province. The Minister of Energy and I met with them a number of times, and we're in constant communication with them. I particularly would like to thank one of my best friends, Andrew Scheer, who's the MP for Regina Qu'Appelle, who worked hard on this, along with Tom Lukiwski and the other Saskatchewan MPs as well, who all worked hard and advocated on our behalf.

In terms of the reference I made earlier to captain 17 over there, Mr. Speaker, it really is . . . And I think that the members over there who — the more veteran members I can certainly tell, from how they've been sitting in their seats over the course of the last week or so — know very clearly that the Leader of the Opposition is leading them into oblivion.

And I'm sure, I'm sure it must be demoralizing. You know, a proud party, and I mean it's a party with a very proud history. Every leader up until this point had become premier of Saskatchewan. It's clear that's not going to happen with the current Leader of the Opposition. It does have to be demoralizing for those members. And even now, looking across the floor, Mr. Speaker, I can tell that they're very aware that their current leader is not doing them any favours. And I'm sure they're hearing about it back in their ridings as well.

Like I said, I was on coffee row in Meadow Lake over the course of the weekend. And in public life, it's one thing when people are criticizing you, and you're going to get that no matter what party you're in or what decision you make, but it's quite another thing when they're laughing at you. And that's the point that the Leader of the Opposition has found himself in. His tactics, his tactics have been counterproductive.

Here I'll actually read a quote from Murray Mandryk's column in the *Leader-Post* on Saturday:

Two years of being caught up in petty bickering with his enemies, both real and imaginary, and of his tiresome dogma has put off voters. His no-holds-barred-attack approach and the nastiness he seems to have mentored in his younger Opposition MLAs has created a visceral negative reaction — especially when contrasted to Wall's very evident likability.

And I can suspect which opposition younger members that Mr. Mandryk was referring to. I think it was the member for Rosemont and the member for Northcote, P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote. And as a bit of friendly advice, what I would pass along to those members, is you might want to re-evaluate the tactics you're taking. Do you really, you know, are you really going to keep doing what your leader is demanding of you, which is to stand up and launch vicious attacks day after day in this legislature? Again as Mandryk says, Murray Mandryk says

that this is the reason you're at 17 per cent. These type of antics, both in the legislature and outside of the legislature, particularly when compared to the statesman-like behaviour of our Premier, Mr. Speaker.

I know you go out there. And I know that they do know this, even if they won't admit it publicly, that the Premier's done a good job. The Premier is liked from one end of this province to the other, even amongst those that don't necessarily vote for us or don't necessarily support us electorally. Nobody's buying the nonsense that they're putting out there about our Premier. People can take the measure of leaders, whether that be through the news or whether that be in person. And people have taken the measure of our leader, and they've taken the measure of their leader. And that's why our Premier is the most popular Premier in the entire country. And that's why their leader is the most unpopular Leader of the Opposition in the entire country.

The member for Rosemont is shaking his head. But all he did . . . he stood up for an hour and ranted and raved. He's still shaking his head. Well I mean, you know, the facts are the facts. And that member's not doing himself any favours either. Like I said, I think that member has talent. I think that member has a future in Saskatchewan politics. And he's not doing himself any favours by being the attack dog for the Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: — I think the voters are going to give him timeout.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Voters could very well give him a timeout in the next election, and his conduct in this Assembly is going to be part of that. The Leader of the Opposition, what does he do on last Wednesday? He flies to Ottawa — purely for political reasons — to meet with Jack Layton, the leader of the NDP. He admitted it was to plot election strategy. He wasn't there to advocate for the province in terms of the decision that would be coming later that day. He went there to gain personal political advantage.

And what do we see happened? We have the decision, which is one of the best days of this province has ever had, and the Leader of the Opposition looks like he just lost his dog on national television, standing behind Jack Layton, kind of ducking in and out of the camera shot, embarrassing himself, embarrassing that party. He doesn't speak for us. That's the one thing we were happy about is that the . . . Kady O'Malley from CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] thought he was a backbencher she'd never seen before, who's a veteran Ottawa journalist. I mean he embarrassed himself.

One piece of advice I'd offer to the Leader of the Opposition is that centre mike in the foyer of the House of Commons, the centre mike in the foyer of the House of Commons is a tight angle. It's a tight angle, so you need to make sure that you're really right behind the leader. And I can only imagine the microphone between Jack Layton and the Leader of the Opposition, that little fight for who got to go to first to the microphone. That would've been something to witness. Obviously Jack Layton won that fight though. And the Leader of the Opposition had to kind of duck in and out of the camera shot.

So again he embarrassed himself. He embarrassed that party with a long and proud history. His members are embarrassing themselves in this legislature on a daily basis. And I think that if I were to give them any friendly advice, Mr. Speaker, it would be to sit down and have a very serious discussion about how they're conducting themselves is working because clearly, with the people of this province, it's not working.

The people of this province appreciate the leadership of our Premier who goes about his business in a statesmanlike way, who conducts himself like a premier. And obviously the Leader of the Opposition isn't conducting himself in that fashion.

Again another Murray Mandryk quote, "Lingenfelter is doing major damage to the NDP brand." Judging by the looks on the members opposite, they know that's very, very much the case, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Mandryk actually says the worst-case scenario for the government is if the Leader of the Opposition retires. When people are writing that, long-time observers of politics in this province are writing that the worst thing that can happen for the government is the Leader of the Opposition quits, you haven't had a very good day.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know these things are going on. The Leader of the Opposition is lurching from catastrophe to catastrophe. Members opposite are desperately trying to talk down the economy when everybody out there knows that the economy's stronger than it's ever been. I can tell you in Meadow Lake people are sure very cognizant of the fact that we have the strongest economy that we've ever had.

Just again from the poll that was in the paper on the weekend, who's the best party for encouraging economic growth? Who's the best party? Sask Party, 70; NDP, 20. That's a pretty significant number. Ensuring taxes are low: Sask Party, 64; NDP, 26. Advancing agriculture . . . I heard the Leader of the Opposition raise an agriculture question in QP [question period] today for, I think, only the second time since he's been the leader. Who do the people trust to advance agriculture? Sask Party, 61; NDP, 27. Again the people of this province are comfortable with the leadership of our Premier. The Premier's approval rating, 55; disapprove 19. The Leader of the Opposition's approval rating, 10. Ten.

You know, any one of those members, whether it be the member for Rosemont, whether it be the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, whether it be the member from Fairview, The Battlefords — maybe not Northcote, but any of those other members — if they were the leader, I guarantee they'd have a higher than a 10-point approval rating. It doesn't take much. The Leader of the Opposition running at 20, 30 points behind the NDP brand, again, as Mr. Mandryk said, "doing irreparable damage to the NDP brand".

So, Mr. Speaker, obviously it wasn't, wasn't a good week for the NDP. It was a fantastic week for the province of Saskatchewan — as I said, one of the most historic weeks that we've ever had. A former deputy premier, not of my party, saying the three people that are going to be remembered for defending Western Canada resource wealth: John Diefenbaker, Peter Lougheed, and the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously won't be supporting the amendment. I

will be supporting the motion, and I encourage all the members to do so.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to once again stand before you in reply to the Speech from the Throne. And I'd like to express my gratitude to all the people that helped me get here, the people from the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers. And I'd also like to welcome and congratulate our newest member from Saskatoon Northwest. Congratulations.

Now I would be amiss if I did not talk about my staff at home in the office of constituency of Sask Rivers. Marcus Abrametz is my full-time and he's been with me for three years now, and then Cora Malenfant. And I'd also like to welcome our newest part of the team, Joan Strube. Now their services are invaluable and I'm very, very grateful for them. They treat the constituents very well, and I'm proud of their work and the dedication to the people of this province and in particular Sask Rivers constituency.

Now the services of the legislature staff are also greatly appreciated because they treat me very kindly. They're helpful in many ways, from finding a snowbrush, to Ray at the front desk, trying to teach me Afrikaans. Ray heard that my future son-in-law is South African, and every morning he faithfully teaches me "good morning," and when I leave he teaches me "good night."

And because this is November, I'd like to acknowledge all the war veterans. I had a very nice visit with one war veteran selling poppies in the mall and he was 92 years old. He told me a lot of stories and they were very interesting. So I'd just like to acknowledge the war veterans.

Now hello to my dear dad who is 82. He is trying to retire, but like most of Saskatchewanians, they love to work, and that's what got this province to where it is. So he's trying to retire at 82. Now I also need to put on the record a deep thanks to my husband, Doug, for keeping the home fires burning and watching over our four grown children and two young grandsons. Now I'm not as active on the farm since I entered politics, but I did enjoy the hands-on of combining and working with the cattle, and I enjoyed the work in teaching our children a good work ethic. So I'm very happy to have had that part of my life.

Now over the summer, our newest addition was born. Reid Douglas Wilson, a 3-month-old, chubby, little fellow — very cute. And our daughter, Brigitt, became engaged to a fine young man, Chris. So there's just more people in my family to love, more people to love.

[16:30]

So thank you to the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers. And I cannot help but recall the great guidance, encouragement, and affection that I've received from special people in one of the most diverse and beautiful constituencies. There's lots of resorts and tourist spots, pristine lakes, friendly people. And I want to

thank them for helping us travel a new road for our province. It has helped make all the difference. It's a road marked by growth, strength, and optimism. Without strong support and appreciation, it would make this journey almost impossible.

And journeys go at their own speed. In my other life, I was a snowmobile racer on the oval track in cross-country. And as the members from Carrot River Valley and Rosthern-Shellbrook and Yorkton can attest to, it was an adrenaline rush. We all enjoyed racing.

An Hon. Member: — Did you win?

Ms. Wilson: — And it was very competitive. And yes, I did win a lot of races. I was very good.

An Hon. Member: — Including an election race.

Ms. Wilson: — That's true. However as our journey progresses, we realize we must go at a different pace with checks and cautions and recommendations and life experiences to balance and fulfill our life as we should. I have found politics to be like that — slow and steady, fulfilling the quality of life for all people in this province.

And we have the capacity to make this the best generation in the history of Saskatchewan. If we do our duty, if we meet our responsibilities head-on and fulfill our obligations to the citizens of Saskatchewan, whether it's in local towns or farming communities, then this generation of young people is going to have the best that Saskatchewan has to offer. Saskatchewan has been blessed with rich resources, and one of the resources — the most important one — is our people.

With Saskatchewan resolve and a strong vision, our province has begun down the road less travelled with optimism and strength. Our strong economy has enabled our government to respond in times of need this summer in the wake of devastating flooding and excess moisture while still keeping the budget on track.

Our government was also able to announce significant improvements to the provincial disaster assistance program so that it's more responsive and provides better compensation to those affected by the disasters. The final result was \$360 million made available to those hit hard by flooded croplands. It's estimated that this year's agriculture budget could be the largest in Saskatchewan history.

The many farmers I've spoken to in Sask Rivers have spoken praise about our government and our Premier and all our cabinet ministers for the work we are doing to improve farm programs for producers and are thankful for initiatives like the largest education tax rebate in the history of the province and the continued implementation of phase 2 of the education tax reduction plan. Many farmers and landowners in the eight RM councils in my area told me this was a long overdue initiative. The people of Saskatchewan had to wait far too long for some changes.

And this summer our government committed to funding clinical trials of the liberation procedure for those affected by multiple sclerosis. Saskatchewan has the highest rate of MS in all of

Canada, and I believe our province should and can take a leadership role in this regard. The Saskatchewan Rivers constituency has a very high MS rate, around Albertville, Spruce Home, and Henribourg. And we at home look forward to and deserve the best answers that science can provide. Our government is committing 5 million to fund MS liberation clinical trials. And I've had several people call me at home from my area, very happy to see that our government cares. This is another example of our government taking an active role on Saskatchewan's new road.

Now in recent weeks, the news of BHP Billiton's takeover has been flooding our media outlets. Our government has made it known that no matter who owns the mine, the resource of potash belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. Our government, with the best interests of the citizens for Saskatchewan, will be guiding us, will guide our actions and deliberations on this most important resource and issue.

Our population increased by the most since 1953. There are 16,498 more newcomers calling Saskatchewan home. And many of these families I have had the chance to meet. I am the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, so I'm able to visit with a lot of these newcomers. And visiting with the new immigrants helped increase my awareness of how fortunate we are to call Saskatchewan home. These wonderful, diverse families will help our workforce expand and grow while creating a more dynamic and cosmopolitan province going forward into the future, another example of how our great province is heading down a new road.

Mr. Speaker, a new road also means improvements and repairs to Saskatchewan highways. And this has been long, long overdue. I have travelled many miles in my constituency. And I'm so proud of our government and the direction it is going.

My home constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers has and will continue to benefit from the work being done by our government within the Highways file. There has been an additional 793 kilometres of safety improvements completed by the ministry as of the end of this summer. In the first three years since we took office, we've committed 1.7 billion to Saskatchewan highways. Our government will exceed the commitment we made during the last election campaign to invest 1.8 billion in our province's highway system in our first term. Mr. Speaker, there's still more work to be done, but our government will continue to work to upgrade our highways and make Saskatchewan roads safer for everyone throughout the province.

Along with safer highways, our government is moving forward to ensure a higher quality of life in Saskatchewan and continue to make our province a great place to live and raise our families.

Mr. Speaker, as we travel down Saskatchewan's new road, our government is committed to improving educational outcomes for our First Nations and Métis leaders. A strategy was created to fit the needs of these students, enabling them to participate in all the great opportunities that Saskatchewan's future prosperity will bring.

The Big River First Nation in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency will now be home to the centre of excellence, a

new project to be constructed, and will serve as a central location for the incubation of small businesses and offer skill development and job training. I had the pleasure of being out there and announcing it on behalf of the minister, and the chief and council were very, very appreciative of it. This facility will help strengthen economic opportunities and help create a better future for young people in that community.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations are also part of our government's new and innovative approach to development of Saskatchewan's forests under a new forestry management agreement. Industry partners will co-operate together to manage the forest in an environmentally sustainable manner.

I wish to sincerely thank all of the people of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers once again for the great opportunity they have given me. I am honoured to be able to travel down Saskatchewan's new road with my colleagues under the leadership of our Premier, and I am humbled by the opportunity to make a difference. I am proud and able to assist my constituents by representing them here in the legislature.

I wish to extend best wishes to each one of you in this Assembly, and lastly, I look forward to continuing to work hard and achieving more successes for the people of Saskatchewan. I know that the best is still ahead for our great province, and I support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be able to enter into the debate, and I'll be making a number of comments on the Throne Speech. But before I get into that, I'd just, as most of the members have done, I too as well want to make some comments about my constituents in Saskatoon Fairview and thank them for their support, Mr. Speaker, thank you also for their welcome on the doorstep, and thank you for their welcome into their homes and into their lives.

Mr. Speaker, we also have in the Saskatoon Fairview constituency a number of . . . as people mentioned. We also have one thing that I'm very proud of, the new two high schools, Mr. Speaker, with the . . . What we have is the Shaw Centre, a world-class swimming pool in between the two high schools in our constituency, which has been . . . Just tremendous things have been happening here. World-class events coming to the city of Saskatoon and that's right in the constituency.

And the two high schools, the Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas, situated there with a lot of green space, playgrounds or football fields and everything for the students, along with all the other elementary schools, Mr. Speaker. And also a good number of times you get to go to the schools and to meet with the teachers and the support staff and all those and to see all the good work that they're doing.

And also, Mr. Speaker, a good number of the immigrants who've come to Saskatoon end up in Saskatoon Fairview and area. And if you go to the schools, they hold what we hold in Saskatoon Folkfest. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to go there and witness. And I would think it matches Folkfest on

some given nights, when you see all the people from all around the world come there. And it is, as somebody said, a miniature UN [United Nations]. And that is something that I'm very proud of, that Saskatoon Fairview's home to a good number of these people.

I would also like to mention, and I think as everybody else does, the work that my constituency assistant does, Tracy Goodheart. Tracy is a dedicated and committed individual, Mr. Speaker, and provides an excellent service to the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview. I know I'm totally unbiased when I say that she is definitely the best constituency assistant in the province. And I know Tracy is hard at work and not watching this so, you know, I'll have to send her the *Hansard* to show her the words that I have said.

Mr. Speaker, this summer a very special event occurred in my life. I got married to a very wonderful and beautiful woman, Ann Riley, who has now, is determined to take my name, and, Mr. Speaker, is finding out the different types of pronunciations you can have on Iwanchuk, when she goes shopping; and that has been her experience. But I want to thank her and her daughter Jaclyn for the support that they give me so that I can be here representing people. I guess she had her eyes wide open when she walked into this and understood quite clearly what the demands are of the position. And to her a big thank you.

Mr. Speaker, also we added a son-in-law into our family this summer. My daughter got married. I also want to acknowledge my other daughter has got engaged. And they're talking 2012, Mr. Speaker, so it's definitely keeping this father busy. Also a prize for me is my grandson, Drake, who'll be celebrating his fourth birthday come November, I don't want to miss him.

What we also gain is some wonderful and amazing people. I've gained in-laws, Bill and Iris Riley. They're amazing and wonderful people. Amazing in their, Mr. Speaker, amazing in their support and how they've welcomed me into their family.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, I cannot forget my number one fan. And that is my mother who watches in North Battleford a lot of times the goings on here and gives me advice, and sometimes advice that I might not want, but advice nonetheless, Mr. Speaker. And so it is.

[16:45]

Before I start my comments, I'd like to welcome to the legislature the member from Northwest who ran an excellent campaign. And I welcome him to the legislature and I wish him the best here. Mr. Speaker, obviously I didn't work hard enough and convince all those voters that they shouldn't vote for him, but as it turned out, we accept the decisions of the voters of Northwest. And I welcome that member to this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, in entering into the debate on the Speech from the Throne, I see that even, I guess my . . . The one thing I would say about this is even the quote from Robert Frost would not save this, Mr. Speaker, because of the lack of vision. And I'll be getting into that lack of vision because when I read this and looked at it, it certainly seemed to be there was a disconnect in terms of the people of this province, and it contained perhaps a

lot of re-announcements.

Now one of the things that just came up the other day, Mr. Speaker, was the Conference Board of Canada because I heard the member from Rosetown talking, going on about the economics of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business took a barometer of business confidence in Saskatchewan and found that the small-business people or the business people in the province were placing us seventh across the country, Mr. Speaker, seventh across the country in that. And they were clear that it was in the spring of 2007 that there was the most confidence in this province. So they can try and paint the things that are going on in the province and talk about Robert Frost and his poetry, but the facts are that we are now seventh.

The other fact is, is that they hide and say that there is no deficit. There is a deficit, and they are adding \$4.2 billion to the provincial debt by 2014. And, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that that is a 55 per cent increase in the debt. And as they say, the chickens are going to come home to roost on that. Because now when people are . . . There are needs, which I'll be talking about, in this province. Those needs, they are unable to meet them because in fact of the mismanaged finances. And they can hide behind that, but people will see through that, Mr. Speaker, because people in Saskatchewan understand finances. And when they finally see that, there will be, I'm sure that that's not going to be a good day for that government.

Now again, just like last year again here, they predicted the economy would grow by 2.1 per cent, and it actually shrank by 6.3, Mr. Speaker. So people are feeling these things in the economy and, Mr. Speaker, that is not something that you can hide from because that is when people start reacting to that.

I mentioned that when I go on a doorstep, people are saying that everything is fine. And they are. I mean I can tell in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, when there's new half-tons or whatever with the small-business names on them. And there are homes come up for sale, and a month or less later, they're sold. That's my constituency. I gauge that. That's economic activity there because things are going well. And so, so they are.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are clouds on the horizon. And some of those clouds, in terms of the economics of this province and the needs of people, are not being addressed. And those are piling up. And they're piling up, but they're still . . . Acknowledge that people are still hopeful that they can work things out with this government. But, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't look very good.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this summer I had an opportunity with our Health critic to tour the province. We went on this tour, and we talked about, talked to a lot of working people, talked to health care providers, talked to RM councils — whoever, Mr. Speaker, would talk to us. It was amazing how these people welcomed us.

And there were many stories of what occurred, and I won't bore you with those. But I think what I would like to talk about here, because what's important here is they would like to know not the personal stories and the connections we made, but they will like to know that we carried their message here to the legislature. So it will be important to me to get this on record.

For example, Mr. Speaker, we sat in a . . . I start my story in Big River, a wonderful community situated . . . We were in a café overlooking Cowan Lake right after we toured that health care facility — an amazing, amazing facility, Mr. Speaker. We walked in. It's built. There was a lot of . . . almost a dome kind of ceiling effect in there, so it was very, very nice for a health centre.

But what were the local . . . When we got there, what was happening? They were getting rid of a nurse. There was a doctor shortage. And we talked to the local people who met with us in the café there, and walked from one group of people to the next. And they were angry. They were completely angry and saying that they had been let down, and we had to do something. And they were going to run against this government.

And the people from across can take some comfort in the way that they're governing. Or as the member from over there was saying earlier that, well let him run against me, you know. Let him run against me and that kind of attitude. That's going to come back because those things . . . People read about that.

And in fact I guess perhaps I should be happy about that because there's nothing better than that for us to get candidates — good candidates, quality candidates — to run in those areas because they are so frustrated with the lack of action. There's lack of action because there's lack of money. And I noticed the Minister of Finance was not necessarily looking as chipper these days as he might be, because he knows what he's sitting on.

Now there are problems, recruitment problems. Those were promises here. We can have our exchanges in the legislature here, but at the end of the day people want to see what is happening. Because, Mr. Speaker, you know, I know after being there that this is central to those communities. They know if they lose that doctor, they know if there's no doctor, that people will start moving out. They look at that, and that is sort of a barometer much like the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] had a barometer of how the community's going to do. Is it going to grow? What's happening? All of these things.

It was amazing for me to find this out, Mr. Speaker, to know how much the communities pull together. People said things like, you know, well just tell us and we'll all come to the Legislative Building on an issue like health care. And so there is a simmering issue. They shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security that everything is fine because it's not. Because they're waiting to see what's going to happen. And the Minister of Finance is sitting there knowing that he's got a problem, a huge problem, because he has no money.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can talk about Meadow Lake, doctor shortages in Meadow Lake. And we have the member from Meadow Lake saying, all is fine. Not enough special care aides in Meadow Lake. They can't find special care aides in Meadow Lake. Unity — the workers are short-staffed there, been working short-staffed. Lab techs' hours are cut.

And again, in each of these places people who we sat down to explained to us what these cuts meant. They weren't telling us trying to be destructive, Mr. Speaker. They were concerned.

They were concerned about their health care because they're concerned in those communities . . . People know each other. They're concerned about their parents. They're concerned about their family members. That's who they were concerned about, and that was important to them.

Neilburg. I'm sure this story has been told. Went to a huge meeting in Neilburg with the town. An ambulance service that would cost \$50,000. All around they have oil, and an ambulance service is being cut. People are offering solutions that, well we'll put up some money to do this. But, Mr. Speaker, that's not what people want to hear because what they want to hear is, how do you get to the oil patch? There are regulations around occupational health and safety.

And it's downloading. Mr. Speaker. This is nothing other than downloading by this government, of downloading and having Saskatchewan residents pay twice. They're paying twice.

And I'll tell you, driving back to Saskatoon late one night after hearing a number of these stories, and an ambulance and a police car passed us — the member from Eastview and I — and passed us, and we talked about seven minutes response time to get to a situation that required that ambulance. And there was a fire truck. So in Saskatoon we have seven minutes, but people in Neilburg were going over half an hour. It's going to now be 38 minutes to do that, to get out there and to do that.

So in these communities, people are talking about leaving. And these people are disappointed. That disappointment will turn to anger because nothing is being done, Mr. Speaker. Nothing is being done, and people think life will go on, but it isn't. There's a simmering out in rural Saskatchewan that's going to overflow. And it's going to overflow, and it's going to surprise these people.

Yorkton. Numerous bed closures going on as I speak today. The other day I heard there's 80 more layoffs in Yorkton and bed closures. People are doing that.

Perhaps they're not reacting and saying that, but people have a way in rural Saskatchewan of taking this in, and they remember. They remember what is being done to them. And, Mr. Speaker, they might forgive, but they won't forget when this happens.

So how long will they put up with that? We went into a number of places. I think I was probably . . . I've never seen so much water in rural Saskatchewan in terms of where we went. And somebody asked me, where's the epicentre of this thing? And I think I was there. I think I was at the epicentre of that in rural Saskatchewan in a place in northeast Saskatchewan.

And I've never seen anything like that, because we were there and it was raining again. And I remember walking into that hospital and asking the person that was behind there, was the government giving enough money. And she kind of bent, and this was really to me, Mr. Speaker, she kind of put her head down and like, you know, kind of nodded a little bit and then not. Because they're supporting . . . This was their promise. This was their great promise that the Saskatchewan Party was going to represent them after so-called, so many years of being not looked after by the NDP. But this person, in her eyes was

hurt, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of hurt in that person's eyes. And no doubt when she went home, they were discussing this, because never before had people not seeded in some of these areas.

And I think I overheard somebody from, I don't know if it was Kindersley or up in Kerrobert, where they said that never before had they seen something like this since 1954, 1954 where somebody said I've never, you know — and I of course, I haven't followed up on that — that people had seen so much rain in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this was all after sitting and talking. And sometimes people would be lined up. I would be sitting inside the coffee room. I'd be sitting there talking and we were taking them in shifts to come in. And everybody was talking about the financial mismanagement. Now they might deny that, and say that didn't happen or everything else that did, but it did. It's occurring. And people understood that.

And the other thing people understood right across the piece was when they first brought out the essential services legislation. They brought out that legislation and it was passed because the spin doctors over there could pass that by because it was all about, it wasn't safe for people to . . . That's what it was about; it was about safety and these bad, these bad unions.

But people got a two and half year on-the-job training about what essential services was. And you could walk in there now and you could go into the dietary, you could go into the labs, you could go on the housekeeping, and you know what? Everybody could tell you what essential services was. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an education that the unions couldn't do, that we couldn't do, because it was this government that educated them on what essential services.

And they know now who the essential services, and they know now what it's like to bargain under there and right across the piece, whether it was Hudson Bay, it was Melfort, whether it was Coronach, all over the place. Or whether it was Kindersley. They all know what essential services means now so when you talk about that, they're going to be able to say to this government that, this is what is wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, we don't have to make emotional pleas or emotional speeches now, Mr. Speaker. That rural Saskatchewan understands.

So as we drove by, for example, the oil wells around Kerrobert, and then went in and looked at the facility there — some of the 13 that we visited that were on the list — there were there, Mr. Speaker, were the drawings on the walls. All these people who had talked about, Mr. Speaker, all these people who had talked about the fundraising that they did, the fundraising that people have to do in these small communities, it's amazing, Mr. Speaker. What an eye-opener for me to go to all those places and to see the fundraising and the commitment to community, the commitment to community that these people had in fundraising.

And then to hear the story of this Amicus deal and now that's in here about some new funding that they did. And they went over all of that. They sat there, Mr. Speaker, grimacing. I mean, you

could see, no we can't believe that this is actually it. And now I find the arrogance of putting something like that in the Throne Speech and suggesting that this is the way that this will go amazing that somebody, the brain trust over there, decided that this now should be flaunted and go into the Throne Speech.

But I guess it's there, so I gladly welcome that part in there because I can point to that, that this wasn't something that I was going around saying this. Here it is; it's right here.

So we have on-the-job training about essential services.

Now they're flaunting the new deal which, if you go to Kerrobert, Mr. Speaker, if you go to Shellbrook and you walk through those places, if you walk through any number of those other places — the member from Rosemont mentioned a few of them — and you see why we need this, Mr. Speaker. You see why, when you go downstairs in some of those places and you see the crawl spaces you have to get into, you know why these people are on.

And what do we have? We have a financial problem in terms of what is happening here in the province. And so what would we do with this, Mr. Speaker?

The Minister of Finance is not looking good these days. He's not looking good; he's not looking happy. He's got things . . .

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

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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