



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

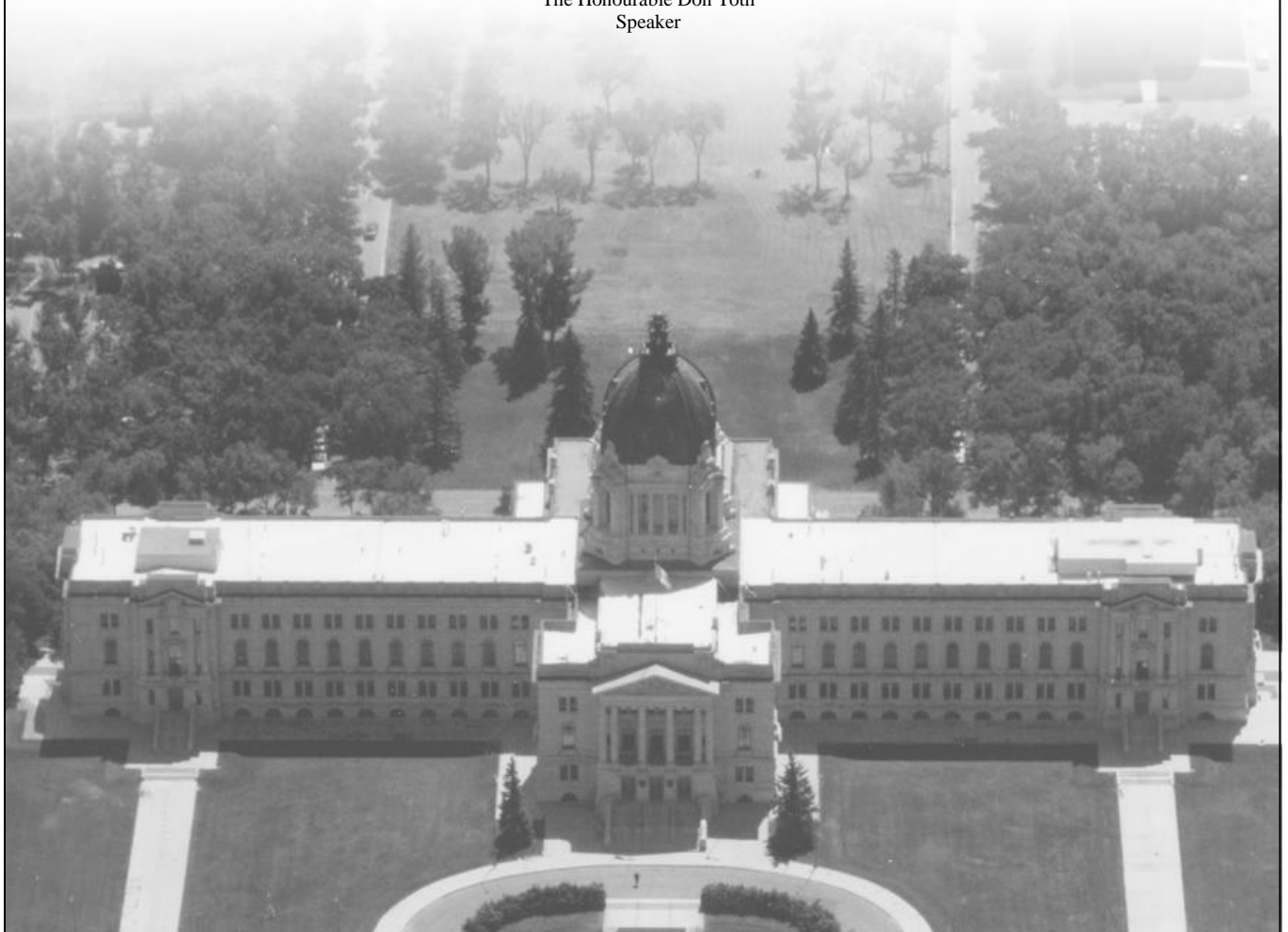
of the

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
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Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
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Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
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Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
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Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
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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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'm very pleased today to introduce 32 students from my hometown of Kelvington. They're in the west gallery. And with them today is their teacher, Jim Lissinna, and Kim Nichols. The grade 8 students are studying a unit that includes governance and citizenship, and every year I have the opportunity to talk to them at the legislature and then go back to the school and find out if they have further questions.

I look forward to having a chat with you later on. Welcome to your legislature. And I ask all my colleagues to help me welcome them to their Legislative Building.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce two people that are seated in your gallery: John Hyshka, who is the chief financial and operating officer for Phenomenome Discoveries, as well as Zeba Ahmad, who's the manager of corporate development for Phenomenome Discoveries Inc.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say just a quick word about the company. They really are at the leading edge, cutting edge of some discoveries as far as markers in blood that will show whether a person is predisposed to contract colorectal cancer, for example. This is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to thank on behalf of the government and the people of the province for the great work that Phenomenome does. And I think this company will be well known around the world very shortly for some of the work that it's doing right here in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to add my welcome to Zeba and John today, and thank you for coming. I had a brother-in-law die last year of rectal cancer, so I'm really very pleased to see that they will be leading discoveries to help men and others, men and women, defeat this disease. So welcome to the legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery, I would like to introduce some very special people in my life. Firstly my companion of 30 years and wife of almost 25 years, Leone. Beside her is my daughter's boyfriend, Brad

Tzupa from Yorkton, a SecurTek employee, and become a very close member of our family. And beside him is my daughter Katelin, who is trained as a care assistant, worked in travel for some time, but is going back into health care, taking her nursing in the fall. And she'll be coming to Regina to take that through SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and the U of R [University of Regina]. So I'd ask all members to welcome these three special people to this Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services, the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another friend in the gallery today. I have an opportunity to introduce to you, and to all the members, Kaitlyn Wilchynski, who works at the University of Regina, and with her is a student, Cathleen Ouyang, who also is in Regina. I had the opportunity last summer to work with Kaitlyn, and we worked on an FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] project. She did a tremendous amount of work and I want to publicly thank her for all the work she did for people who have the FAS [fetal alcohol syndrome] condition. Thank you very much.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of renters who are facing a combination of rising rents and extremely low vacancy rates in many communities. Mr. Speaker, it also recognizes that a majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island, and that the argument that the private market would deliver sufficient affordable housing in the absence of rent control has proven to be false. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protecting Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of citizens in Moose Jaw and Regina.

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 Saskatchewan's income gap between the rich and poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. We also know that citizens living in poverty have long identified affordable solutions. Recent national and provincial initiatives include the Saskatoon health disparities report and the Canada

Without Poverty, Dignity for All campaign. They all call for a comprehensive elimination strategy. 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.

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

And I do so present on behalf of the people signing this petition from Regina, Saskatoon, The Battlefords, and Melfort. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village in my constituency, and it's about the need for a new school for this growing neighbourhood:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Hampton Village is a rapidly growing community in Saskatoon with many young families; that Hampton Village residents pay a significant amount of taxes, including education property taxes; that children in Hampton Village deserve to be able to attend school in their own community instead of travelling to neighbouring communities to attend schools that are typically already reaching capacity.

We, in the prayer that follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to devote the necessary resources for the construction of an elementary school in Hampton Village so that children in this rapidly growing neighbourhood in Saskatoon can attend school in their own community.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition live in Hampton Village and are constituents of Saskatoon Massey Place. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling for community-based worker wage equity. Mr. Speaker, community-based organizations in Saskatchewan have traditionally been underpaid and many continue to earn poverty-level wages. Mr. Speaker, the CBO [community-based organization] workers care for and provide valuable services to some of our most vulnerable members of our society, and the low wages earned by the CBO workers result in high staff turnover and the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity has a negative impact on the quality of care clients receive:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan to

implement and act as quickly as possible a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government ministries, agencies, and offices.

I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today with petitions signed by residents of Saskatchewan concerned about the introduction of Bill 160 and the detrimental effect that it would have on human rights law in the province if indeed Bill 160 became law. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan withdraw Bill 160 from consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and hold extensive public consultations informed by a public policy paper, before any amendments to the Human Rights Code, the law that supersedes all others in our province, are even considered.

Today the petition is signed by residents of Regina and Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They reference the record that includes tabling of deficits at times of revenue highs, increasing debt over the past three years to the tune of \$1.3 billion, despite having unprecedented highs in revenues. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Estevan. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Purple Day for Epilepsy

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Purple Day for epilepsy is held each year on March 26th and is dedicated to raising awareness about epilepsy by reducing stigma and empowering individuals living with epilepsy to take action in

their communities. Epilepsy affects 300,000 in Canada and 50 million people worldwide, which is more than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and Parkinson's disease combined.

Despite its prevalence, epilepsy isn't well understood, and people with epilepsy continue to face social stigma and discrimination, Mr. Speaker. When people know more about different kinds of seizures and how to help someone having a seizure, they immediately become more receptive to seeing the person as just an ordinary individual. Purple Day reminds Canadians that people living with epilepsy need understanding and acceptance and deserve comprehensive care and access to innovative treatments to effectively manage their disorder. Purple Day increases awareness, reduces stigma, and empowers individuals living with epilepsy to take action in their communities.

Canadians are encouraged to learn more about epilepsy throughout the month of March, culminating with Purple Day on March 26th. Fifteen countries will be participating in the 2011 Purple Day activities, with participants around the world supporting epilepsy by wearing purple or getting involved in a Purple Day awareness or fundraising event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

The Saskatchewan Advantage

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday our government tabled a budget that is good for families, good for business, and good for the future of our province. *The Saskatchewan Advantage* 2011-12 budget is balanced, lower taxes for families, homeowners, farmers, and businesses, reduces the provincial debt, and improves government services.

Because of this budget, Saskatchewan families with dependent children will earn more tax-free income than anywhere else in Canada. A family of four can now make up to 45,550 before starting to pay provincial income tax because of increases to the basic and spousal exemption amounts and to the child tax credit.

We are cutting the small-business tax rate by more than half from 4.5 to 2 per cent, and education property taxes on farm land, residential and commercial property are being reduced by a further 55.6 million.

Lower taxes make life more affordable, put more money back in the economy, and create jobs. It is our government's fourth consecutive balanced budget and reduces the provincial debt by 325 million to 3.81 billion. With Saskatchewan's economy expected to lead the nation this year, our government's goal is to build on that momentum and assure that all Saskatchewan people share in the benefits.

Lower taxes, a better quality of life, balanced budget, reduced debt: that, Mr. Speaker, is the Saskatchewan advantage.

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

Social Workers Support Human Rights

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week we have marked . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I just ask members to allow the member from Saskatoon Centre . . . We won't take that off the clock. We will allow the 10 minutes. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week we have marked Social Work Week. It gives all social workers an opportunity to celebrate and share their social ideals and values. Their theme this year: Social Workers for Dignity and Inclusion: Upholding Human Rights.

It began on Monday at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] with a presentation on human rights by Ailsa Watkinson, a social work professor from the University of Regina sponsored by the Saskatoon Social Work Students' Society. In the same day, *The StarPhoenix* and the *Leader-Post* published a viewpoint of Ms. Watkinson, co-authored by Alex Neve of Amnesty International Canada, entitled, "Backward step in human rights." They write, and I quote:

Saskatchewan has a proud history of human rights.

. . . Under Premier Tommy Douglas in 1947, Saskatchewan became Canada's first province to adopt a bill of rights . . . It was a principled step forward, and all other Canadian provinces followed.

Saskatchewan is poised to again lead Canada when it comes to human rights. But this time it would be a sad step backward. Bill 160, the government's proposed changes to provincial human rights legislation needs urgently to be withdrawn.

They go on. I quote:

Systems for protecting human rights should be constantly improved . . . The changes were developed first and then taken to the people. That's the wrong order. When it involves human rights, people must come first.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, as we close out Social Work Week, I ask all members to join with me in recognizing the outstanding contribution social workers make in our communities by helping those who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances with an ethical human rights foundation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Population Growth

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More good news for our province. According to the latest figures released today by Stats Canada, Saskatchewan's population has hit an all-time

high of 1,052,050 as of January . . . [inaudible].

Our strong economy and great quality of life are attracting more and more people to Saskatchewan. More people are choosing to stay in Saskatchewan and more people from outside of our borders are discovering the Saskatchewan advantage. Saskatchewan grew by over 15,000 people in 2010. This was the fastest growth rate of any Western province and the second highest rate of any province in Canada.

Our strong population growth has become the new normal in the new Saskatchewan as this province has grown by nearly 45,000 people in the last three years. Mr. Speaker, that's the highest population growth in any three-year period since 1928 to 1931, 80 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen incredible growth in my own constituency. Warman, as an example, is one of the fastest growing communities in all of Canada. And just last year, Martensville became one of Saskatchewan's newest cities. And so as the NDP [New Democratic Party] continue to have its negative trajectory of doom and gloom in this time of boom, this side of the House asks them to take their head out of the sand and enjoy the success of this province.

Saskatchewan is moving forward and yesterday's budget will continue to help us move forward. Saskatchewan does have the advantage. It is the people who call this province home and, Mr. Speaker, there are more and more of them every day.

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

Sexual Assault Centre Celebrates 30 Years

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The Battlefords and Area Sexual Assault Centre just celebrated its 30th anniversary, and I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to all those who over the past 30 years have dealt with crisis and improved the quality of life for hundreds of women in northwest Saskatchewan.

Speaking at the anniversary dinner recently, the centre's first director and 30-year supporter, Peggy Westwood, said, "We've come a long way." And she documented the journey from working off a dining room table in February 1980 to owning their own facility, employing four full-time staff, and engaging eight phone volunteers by 2010.

Guest speaker at the anniversary dinner, Melissa McCormick, an Ontario woman who was a victim of a horrific kidnapping and sexual assault in the late 1970s and the author of the book, *The Queen's Daughter*, says the way society responds to victims of sexual assault has changed dramatically over the past 30 years but argues passionately that more needs to be done. She also praised the supporters of The Battlefords centre saying, and I quote, "Thank goodness for all those strong women who made this happen."

I call on all members to join me in congratulating The Battlefords and Area Sexual Assault Centre on their 30 years of service. And I ask all members of the legislature to dedicate themselves to supporting those who are helping women deal with sexual violence in their lives.

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

Dinner Supports Restorative Action Program

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House to announce that last night held the 14th annual Badge Shield Star Recognition Dinner to celebrate the unique contributions made to our province by the courageous men and women that provide these services.

The proceeds from the dinner enable the Rotary Club of Saskatoon to continue to support and grow the Rotary Restorative Action Program, also known as RAP. It is a unique program and a successful program that is currently operating at Mount Royal, Bedford Road, and E.D. Feehan collegiates.

Programs like this give our young people the tools to deal with their issues in a productive way. Young people mediate issues like violence and bullying. Our government has provided the Rotary Club with a grant of \$50,000 for this very important program.

Mr. Speaker, last night's dinner was the chance for the people of Saskatchewan to say thank you to the men and women who keep our communities safe. In turn, police, fire, and EMS [emergency medical services] each presented their own awards to citizens who volunteer and work in and with the community.

Mr. Speaker, these workers are an essential part of building a safer, healthier, and happier Saskatchewan. We thank all men and women who wear the badge, shield, and star. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Earth Hour

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, this Saturday is Earth Hour and it's clear that Canadians are engaged in environmental action. They are choosing hope for a clean energy future. This year's theme for Earth Hour is 60-plus, and it's only fair that Saskatchewan residents demand that the Sask Party government do its part as well. New Democrats will continue to fight on their behalf to make sure we bestow a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous Canada for future generations.

Earth Hour was launched in 2007 to raise awareness about action needed to combat dangerous climate change. Participation in Earth Hour has grown from just over 2 million in its first year to over 1 billion in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, the 60-plus theme encourages people to go beyond the goal of one hour of energy conservation and carry the movement beyond the day and into everyday life. We know that Canada is ranked last among the G8 countries on climate action as the Harper Conservative government has continued to lower the bar on greenhouse gas reduction.

Here in Saskatchewan, the Sask Party government has also shown their disregard for climate action, breaking their election promise to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage all citizens to use this weekend as an opportunity to make simple and effective changes to energy conservation in Saskatchewan. The overwhelming participation in this World Wildlife Federation initiative that began in 2007 is evidence that action on climate change is a must. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Security of Health Information

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Privacy Commissioner was called to a site on Albert Street, south Albert near a medical centre, to deal with thousands of medical files of individuals that were left in a dumpster or dumped in a dumpster. The Privacy Commissioner is becoming very, very frustrated with the government and the Minister of Health, and in a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] report he said, and I quote, “Dickson said he was especially concerned because he had recently published a lengthy report on the management of old medical records and provided recommendations for health care providers on how to safeguard patient files.”

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that thousands if not tens of thousands of files, family members who have their medical files released and dumped in a dumpster open to anyone to see, can the minister tell me, and the people of Saskatchewan more importantly, what has been done to implement the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I learned early last evening that there had been a breach of HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*]. There had been some files found in a dumpster, Mr. Speaker. Our government takes the issue of privacy and health records very seriously. This is absolutely unacceptable.

We know that someone who had the possession of those has breached the Act, Mr. Speaker, so we have asked the Privacy Commissioner, Gary Dickson, who has full powers of investigation, to do whatever he needs to do to find out how this has happened, Mr. Speaker, because it is absolutely unacceptable. He has the full co-operation of government, of the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker, to find out how this could happen, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, we want to deal with this issue, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we’re going to look at how we can strengthen the legislation or other policies so that this does not happen again.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time this has been raised here in the Assembly, nor is it the first time we’ve had this kind of infraction and the misguided approach to the disposal of health care records of individual and family members in the province of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan really believe that the minister and the government are responsible for protecting their health files. I know the minister will now try to remediate the damage done by the release of these thousands of medical records. But my question to the minister is this: what has the government done in light of the recommendations from the Privacy Commissioner, what has been done at this point to make sure this isn’t repeated as it has been time and time again under his administration?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, this government takes this breach very seriously. This has happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, but in the past dating back since HIPA was implemented under the former NDP government, Mr. Speaker. It was unacceptable under their government, Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable under our government.

I had a conference call this morning, earlier this morning, very early this morning, Mr. Speaker, with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as the Health ministry. And, Mr. Speaker, we’re looking at what can be done on this situation as far as after the Privacy Commissioner does his work. What are the legal actions that could be implemented, Mr. Speaker? Some can be implemented through the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker. Others may be through the Department of Justice because the legislation is there and a breach like this is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. I’ve also asked that group to quickly come up with further recommendations that will strengthen either possibly legislation or policy as we move forward.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it’s not for lack of recommendations. The Privacy Commissioner says that he has given to the minister recommendations that should be implemented to protect the records.

Mr. Speaker, last year at this time in this Assembly, we were debating the issue that the minister was recommending that health records should be released for fundraising purposes. Doesn’t he feel responsible for the fact that his own attitude and the attitude of the government about privacy as it relates to medical records, where he was suggesting they be released for fundraising purposes, isn’t part of the problem is the cavalier attitude of this minister about family health records? That’s the issue.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it’s a very long bow to try and stretch the fact that a patient’s name and address could be passed on to a foundation, compared to health records dumped in a dumpster, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely two different things completely. Mr. Speaker, our government, as I said, takes very seriously the privacy of people’s health information, Mr. Speaker. That’s why this government in this budget put \$2.4 million into furthering the electronic medical health records.

Mr. Speaker, currently we have about 33 per cent of our physicians, fee-for-service physicians using electronic medical records. And with this \$2.4 million in this year's budget, we're going to see that bounce up close to 50 per cent, which will help alleviate some of these situations well into the future.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The fact of the matter is that yesterday yet again the breach of health records and the filing, containment, and protection of family records as it relates to their health was broken, and this government has to accept responsibility. They have recommendations. We don't need any more studies, we need action. And that's the problem.

To the minister: can he guarantee that proper legislation will be brought before this Assembly in this session to allow for proper money for the Privacy Commissioner so he can do his work? They have to contact now thousands of families over the next few weeks. We need to have in place strong legislation that includes how the protocols work along with penalties when they're broken. Can the minister guarantee that that legislation will be forthcoming before this session adjourns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I had a conference call with the College of Physicians and Surgeons as well as the Saskatchewan Medical Association and the Ministry of Health and have asked them to come forward with recommendations that will strengthen the legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, the legislation is there, and there has been a breach of legislation as it exists right now. It isn't that the legislation isn't there. There has been a breach of it. We need to get to the bottom of that, make sure that we find out who that was, and proper penalties sanctioned against that individual, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable. The government doesn't accept it. The public doesn't accept it. Mr. Speaker, that's why the Privacy Commissioner has full rights of investigation. Once he's completed his investigation, Mr. Speaker, it'll be turned over to the proper sources, Mr. Speaker. And as we move forward, we're looking at how we can prevent this from happening into the future.

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

College Merger

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, in order for the Provincial Auditor to immediately look into the failed college merger mess, he needs instruction from elected members of this Assembly. The Minister of Advanced Education has been flip-flopping repeatedly on whether or not the government will agree to speed up this process.

Yesterday in a two-minute media interview, the minister gave two different answers. At the 23-second mark, he said he's not opposed to asking the auditor to speed up the investigation. But at the 1 minute 44 second mark, he said he would leave it to the

auditor to determine his own timeline. In a short two-minute interview, the minister had two opposite positions, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister stop his flip-flopping and agree that the auditor needs to look into this mess immediately?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, directly what we're doing is we've had initial conversations with the Provincial Auditor. Those conversations are going to continue, Mr. Speaker. And what we've said is we pledge to work co-operatively with the Provincial Auditor. We'll take advice from the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well isn't that a typical response, Mr. Speaker, from this minister on this file. On any occasion that this minister has the opportunity to cast the blame on someone else — not stand up, not take clear action, Mr. Speaker — he's more than happy to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I'm receiving many calls from the Humboldt area. These people are very frustrated by the way that the minister and the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Humboldt have handled this file. People keep bringing up a very suspicious fire that occurred at St. Peter's College this past fall. Many people believe that this fire was linked to the attempted takeover of Carlton Trail and involved destroying evidence of some sort. Whatever the case with the suspicious fire, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that questions have been swirling in the community for months. People want answers, and they are very worried about evidence being destroyed, especially in light of the fact that the acting president of the college is Glen Kobussen's nephew.

To the minister: how can he not recognize the urgent need for a forensic audit of this mess to commence right now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the proposal was submitted last June. Mr. Speaker, from there what we said is we would work with Meyers Norris Penny. They came forward with a report and recommendation, Mr. Speaker. Based on that, Mr. Speaker, we acted and said, no, the merger is not going to go forward, Mr. Speaker. Since then there have been a number of allegations. We continue to hear allegations today, Mr. Speaker.

There are actions being taken, Mr. Speaker. By all means, the administrator is on the ground, Mr. Speaker. Discussion and dialogue is under way, Mr. Speaker. Dialogue is under way with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. As well, Meyers Norris Penny is also on the ground. And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to be in touch with Justice on this.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to make sure that every, every cent is accounted for, Mr. Speaker, so that the students and

stakeholders and citizens of Saskatchewan can trust in the post-secondary educational system of this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, seven people have lost their jobs over this mess. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been wasted. There are serious concerns in the community about evidence being destroyed, especially in light of a suspicious fire a few months ago. And yet the government refuses to ask the auditor to investigate now, immediately. The minister has said to the media at least twice that he is not opposed to speeding up the process, but then once again we hear him flip-flopping and not taking a clear stand, Mr. Speaker.

My question is: who is opposed to getting to the bottom of this mess on this side? Is the minister opposed to getting to the bottom? Is it the member from Humboldt who is opposed to getting to the bottom? Is it the Premier who's opposed to getting to the bottom? Why is there a reluctance from members on that front bench and beyond to not begin a forensic audit immediately? Let's get on it. Come on.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 17th we came out with a clear decision based on recommendations from Meyers Norris and Penny. The recommendations were two-fold. First and foremost, not to let the merger proceed, and we acted on that. And, Mr. Speaker, I went to Humboldt and spoke to local stakeholders specifically.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there were other recommendations from Meyers Norris Penny, and those recommendations related to outstanding questions. Mr. Speaker, we approached Justice, Mr. Speaker. Justice then said what we would advise is to get Meyers Norris and Penny to go and investigate those questions and queries and concerns.

Mr. Speaker, since that time a number of other actions, including a letter . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Since that time, we have written to the Provincial Auditor pledging our full co-operation. We have engaged Meyers Norris and Penny. Mr. Speaker, we've also had an administrator, not simply appointed, but already under way with work on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, our priority is to ensure, our priority, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that post-secondary educational students know that they have among the best systems in the country, Mr. Speaker, and that taxpayers will be assured that those dollars are spent appropriately, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, when my colleague asked questions to the Minister of Advanced Education regarding the Carlton Trail and St. Peter's College merger, the minister seems to indicate at least two referrals, two sets of referrals to the Minister of Justice: one that inspired the ministry to ask for the Meyers Norris Penny report, and one for matters arising from the Meyers Norris Penny report.

To the Minister of Justice: has he received one or two or more referrals from the Minister of Advanced Education regarding the Carlton Trail merger? When did he receive them, and what matters were referred to him?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've just said and explained, Mr. Speaker, last June a proposal was submitted, mister proposal . As we had promised, Mr. Speaker, we undertook an independent review. That was done by Meyers Norris Penny, Mr. Speaker. That review concluded two key elements, Mr. Speaker, not to move forward . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, two key aspects of the report and recommendation, Mr. Speaker, two key aspects. First and foremost, not to move forward with the merger, Mr. Speaker. We respected that. Last week I went out to Humboldt. I informed the stakeholders of that.

There was a second component. There were questions that came up — only questions and allegations, Mr. Speaker. What we've then said, Mr. Speaker, is we have been in touch with Justice. Justice then recommended we get Meyers Norris Penny to go back out and actually investigate into these questions, Mr. Speaker. That work is under way.

In addition to that since then, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that the Provincial Auditor is now engaged, and we have pledged our full co-operation in this. Mr. Speaker, we're going to make sure those dollars are fully accounted for to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Membership in the Enterprise Club

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question again is for the Minister of Justice. When I asked yesterday about the tax credit Glen Kobussen received for his undisclosed and secret donation to the Enterprise Club, the Minister of Energy and Resources came nowhere near answering the question.

Perhaps he caught the wrong bus.

To the Minister of Justice: Mr. Kobussen appeared eligible in 2009 to receive a tax credit of \$558 on a \$1,000 undisclosed donation paid with public money to the Saskatchewan Party. Is this one of the matters that has been referred to the Minister of Justice by the Minister of Advanced Education?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, there was a cheque . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand from party officials that there was cheque cut in September for a 2010 membership donation which will be fully disclosed in our 2010 annual return as in normal course of business. Anything in excess of \$250 donations to the Sask Party has to be disclosed. They are done in regular, normal course as has always been the case and always will be the case under this government.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter when Mr. Kobussen gets his free toaster or his golf game with the Premier. The donation is made in the tax year 2009; it is to be disclosed in the tax year 2009. And there was an eligibility for a tax receipt for 2009, Mr. Speaker. And that matter raises matters of criminal nature, Mr. Speaker.

There appears to be a number of issues that are coming to a matter that are issues of a criminal nature. There are donations to a political party that are made with public dollars. There appears to be tax credits paid to an individual on at least one donation to a political party that was made with public dollars. And there are allegations of double charging for mileage, a 52-inch TV purchased by St. Peter's being unaccounted for, and a \$60,000 increase in Carlton Trail's operating grant going to St. Peter's without proper documentation.

In light of a donation to the governing party with public funds, the eligibility for a tax credit which is not yet accounted for, the involvement of a minister of the Crown in all these matters, will the matters referred to the Minister of Justice — whatever they were, Mr. Speaker, seems to be a secret — whatever those matters were referred to the Minister of Justice, will the Minister of Justice undertake today that they will be reviewed by outside Crown prosecutors?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this was a 2010 donation. It will be released in our 2010 annual return in normal course of business, is always the case. There's nothing untoward being done here as the member is suggesting.

And I would go on to add that there's only one party, there's only one party currently that has anything, any issues before the courts of this province. And that's this . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask members to come to order and allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — I would go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that that will go through the normal course of action over a period of time. All donations to the Sask Party have been fully disclosed, always have been, always will be, in normal course of business.

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

Provincial Budget

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, rather outrageous that a Minister of Justice has been prevented from taking the floor and speaking to allegations of this nature and to put the political minister up, Mr. Speaker.

But yesterday's budget, Mr. Speaker, missed the mark for Saskatchewan people. We have a time of unprecedented revenues here in this province, almost \$11 billion flowing to government coffers, but many Saskatchewan families, the backbone of this province, are left to struggle looking for housing, left out in the cold, Mr. Speaker, renters and homeowners.

Interesting priorities were revealed yesterday in yesterday's budget. We've got \$5 million going to off-sale retailers, \$1.7 million to housing, Mr. Speaker. At times of record revenues, why is this minister forcing Saskatchewan families to struggle rather than meaningfully investing in this province's dire housing situation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to present yesterday's budget. A budget of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — that's what this budget is. It is a budget for the people of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there have been many comments, there've been many comments from leaders right across this province who have looked at this budget and said it is a great budget. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote from Steve McLellan who's the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO [chief executive officer], and he says, "I'm a very happy man. I think this is a decent budget."

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote from CBC Radio this morning or actually yesterday. And it's Murray Mandryk who says this, and I quote:

You're paying down debt, you really are, to the tune of \$325 million. You're basically giving \$200 million in tax cuts that's going directly to the poorest of the poor and to everybody — of course, the working poor anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I will put this budget up in front of the people of Saskatchewan, and they will decide whether or not this is a great budget.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the rest of the quote from McLellan was, no long-term plan. Mr. Speaker, that was the rest of the quote from McLellan.

Not only, Mr. Speaker, has housing not been addressed, Mr. Speaker, but the Sask Party has put education in this province on the back burner. Educational assistants have been cut province wide. It has failed to provide an adequate, sustainable funding model that it promised. That promise broken.

The school boards called yesterday's budget status quo. The Teachers' Federation decried its lack of imagination and said, I quote, "Teachers have been left out of this budget." And it was confirmed yesterday, shamefully, that is correct as this faulty budget does not have a single cent for the settlement of the teachers' contract, who have been without a contract for the better part of a year. At this time of prosperity for this government, why is the minister failing education in this province?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, normally I would begin by talking about how the NDP failed, the NDP failed education for years, but I'm not going to, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to talk about the fact of what we have done since we have become government.

Mr. Speaker, in the first four years of our government, we have implemented over \$400 million into education capital, Mr. Speaker — 400 million. What's that allowed school boards to do, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I know the minister's voice carries well, but sometimes it gets difficult to hear the responses. The member from Athabasca will come to order and allow the minister to respond to the question. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, even for members from the two northern constituencies, we are building 38 major capital projects, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . 38. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, there's a new school being constructed in La Ronge right now, a new Churchill high school. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to announce nine additional major projects taking us to 38 projects, Mr. Speaker.

There will be need for more projects, absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The NDP left a horrible deficit infrastructure and we're going to catch up. It's going to take us a while to catch up, Mr. Speaker, because there are hundreds of projects in front of the Minister of Education. But we're going to tackle that because

this is a growing province. We have more people today, Mr. Speaker, 1,052,000 people in this province. And we're proud of it.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. If the members want extra questions, then the members will make sure that they're not interfering with the members responding. The member from Saskatoon Riversdale, are you questioning the . . . [inaudible] . . . of the Speaker? Order. Order. Once more. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Why is the member from Saskatoon Massey Place on his feet?

Mr. Broten: — To ask leave to move a motion under rule 59:

That this Assembly mandate the Provincial Auditor to immediately conduct a special investigation and forensic audit of the governance . . .

The Speaker: — One second. One second. The member from Saskatoon Massey Place is asking leave. I would ask the member to give us the purpose for his request for leave.

MOTION UNDER RULE 59

Audit of Colleges

Mr. Broten: — To ask leave to move a motion under rule 59 in light of comments that the minister has made stating that he's happy to speed up the process of the Provincial Auditor examining the mess at the college merger:

That this Assembly mandate the Provincial Auditor to immediately conduct a special investigation and forensic audit of the governance, financial management, and leadership of Carlton Trail Regional College and St. Peter's College for the period covering January 1st, 2009 to the present; direct the government to provide the auditor sufficient resources and authority to complete the investigation and audit and table a report with this Assembly no later than May 12, 2011; and further to accomplish these goals, empower the Provincial Auditor to extend his investigation to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, the office of the minister and to the minister himself, the member of the Legislative Assembly for Saskatoon Greystone.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has asked for leave and given us his arguments for his request for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave is not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY
(BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join back into budget debate here today. It's troubling, though, Mr. Speaker, to see a circumstance that we just witnessed here again with a very reasonable motion put forward to account for public dollars, Mr. Speaker, that have been placed at risk and that all reports show have been wasted, Mr. Speaker. Those are taxpayers' dollars that relate directly to the budget here, Mr. Speaker. And it's a shame to see the Sask Party government not be willing to shed a light by way of the independent auditor, Mr. Speaker, who . . . That's their role, Mr. Speaker.

And it speaks, Mr. Speaker, to a government that has a reputation of government waste, Mr. Speaker, and a reputation, Mr. Speaker, of not meeting the priorities of Saskatchewan people. And I think as individuals watch little displays such as that, where we may be talking about hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker, that have been wasted in a fashion that may have been corrupt, Mr. Speaker, I think it hits the heart of Saskatchewan people in a very unsettling way to realize that their tax dollars, their hard-earned tax dollars, are not being protected by their government, Mr. Speaker. So I commend the member from Massey Place for putting forward the motion, and I condemn the government for not supporting it, Mr. Speaker.

We had the opportunity to highlight some general comments yesterday with respect to a budget that truly misses the mark for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. The question that I posed was, a boom for whom, Mr. Speaker? And what we recognize that yes, it's a boom and prosperous times for government, Mr. Speaker, for this Sask Party government — more money in government coffers than ever before, Mr. Speaker, and that's been the case for this government throughout its record — but the fact, Mr. Speaker, is that this is in complete disconnect to the reality that Saskatchewan people and families are facing, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to cost of living increases that have directly burdened their quality of life, Mr. Speaker.

And we look at the massive increases to housing, both for homeowners but also for renters, Mr. Speaker, and not a plan, not sufficient resources, not a strategy in this budget to address those priorities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, on the topic of housing specifically, what we did see was \$1.7 million, Mr. Speaker, that is intended, I recognize, to, as they've referenced, to build 300 affordable housing units or rental housing units across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now that number sounds all right if you were just watching the debate, Mr. Speaker. But if you look at the thousands and thousands and thousands of housing units required to do something meaningful on housing, Mr. Speaker, it falls far, far short; it's entirely inadequate. And it

shows a huge display of misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker. Here we have a Sask Party Premier, Mr. Speaker, who's giving \$5 million to off-salers of beer, Mr. Speaker, but \$1.7 million to address the dire situation of housing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

That has a direct strain and impact on individuals all across this province, whether that be middle-class individuals, working-class people all across this province, Mr. Speaker, or whether that be young individuals just starting out, Mr. Speaker. And of course we recognize the other side of this Saskatchewan disadvantage, Mr. Speaker, is that it's marginalizing so many, Mr. Speaker, and pushing so many into the margins of our society.

And we can reference the numbers that don't speak to a positive side of a boom, Mr. Speaker. They speak to a darker side of a boom, and they speak to a government that fails. So when we look at this budget, Mr. Speaker, it not only misses the mark for Saskatchewan families, but it fails to provide the financial responsibility that Saskatchewan people expect and deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe that Saskatchewan people are of the most financial responsible individuals across Canada. They expect the same to be true with their tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. They've been incredibly disappointed with the display of this Sask Party government to date, Mr. Speaker, on this front, that has been provided unprecedented resources and unprecedented opportunity but has failed to advance our position, Mr. Speaker. And that's unfortunate, and it has consequences for future generations.

So we have a budget that fails people's priorities of Saskatchewan. We have a budget that fails to deliver the financial responsibility that it should, that's expected of a government, Mr. Speaker, and we see a budget that fails to plan and be ready for a bright future, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at the unprecedented opportunities that we've been provided from a fiscal perspective, these windfall revenues that this government's been blessed to manage, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that that opportunity has not been seized, Mr. Speaker. And we see a disappointing legacy of this government, one where, at a time where revenues have exceeded previous budgets by as many as 2 and 3 and \$4 billion a year, Mr. Speaker, what we don't see is an advance of the position of our province or an advance for the people of our province, Mr. Speaker, on those two very separate pieces, Mr. Speaker.

Specifically with respect to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, we in fact see a debt burden that's growing at twice the rate of the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker, highlighted by the chartered accountants, Mr. Speaker, that in fact here in Saskatchewan, troubling information that Saskatchewan people and families are forced to be taking on debt at a rate twice that of any other . . . of the rest of Canada, the national average, Mr. Speaker. And highlighted specifically to that, Mr. Speaker, that was a report from the chartered accountants.

A report from the certified general accountants, Mr. Speaker, highlights specifically in that report titled *A Survey of*

Household Attitudes to Debt and Consumption, Mr. Speaker, highlights that the primary driver of this increased debt here in Saskatchewan that's outstripping that of the national average by two times, Mr. Speaker, is day-to-day living expenses, Mr. Speaker, the very kind of items that we're talking about in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize the pressure of affordability on Saskatchewan households, and we recognize, Mr. Speaker, and in Saskatchewan, people recognize — and I hear it all of the time, Mr. Speaker — that while the government has more money than ever before, that's not the case for households across Saskatchewan. They're not in a better position than they were just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, despite this historic windfall of money that — public money, their money — that this government is managing, and in their case, the case of the Sask Party, mismanaging, Mr. Speaker.

So we saw a budget that entirely failed to address affordability for Saskatchewan people. It failed to provide fairness to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. We saw no response as it relates to housing to provide any sort of a meaningful address to the priorities of Saskatchewan people. And we continue to see Saskatchewan people burdened by one of the highest cost of living indexes and increases across the nation, Mr. Speaker. And it goes across the piece, whether it be a senior, Mr. Speaker, who's looking for . . . in transitioning to senior care that should be quality and dignified and also accessible and affordable, Mr. Speaker. But it also relates to those young students, Mr. Speaker, that are moving to the city and trying to rent a place and trying to access education, Mr. Speaker.

So whether we're talking the utilities, whether we're talking gas, whether we're talking food, whether we're talking child care, post-secondary, or senior care, what we're seeing is stress and burden for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And those are the highlights of sort of hitting everyday people across this province, and the great strain and pressure and quality of life for the middle class across Saskatchewan, working people across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

But on the other side of this, we see a very dark side of the boom, Mr. Speaker. And despite the four, you know, four years of record revenues for this government, what we see on that dark side of that boom, Mr. Speaker, is we see social assistance recipients skyrocketing, Mr. Speaker — more people than for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, and a trend that was on a nice decline, Mr. Speaker, that's been reversed. And now we see thousands of families back onto, and families that have never been there before, back onto a circumstance of receiving social assistance that have been displaced from the workplace, Mr. Speaker. Now that certainly doesn't speak to a prosperous Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to see massive increases to the caseload of those individuals receiving social assistance.

We can look specifically to other dark sides of this boom, Mr. Speaker, and we can look to food bank numbers across Saskatchewan. The minister from Social Services is weighing in on this discussion and choosing to heckle from her seat, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as she's failing to address and respond to the needs of Saskatchewan families. We see food banks specifically, Mr. Speaker, in one year alone, the increased usage of food banks up by 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And yet we have a Minister of Social Services that's content and willing to see her budget increase, one of the largest increases actually we see here this year, and primarily due to the cost of the higher number of individuals receiving social assistance in this province, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

We can look at the simply inadequate access to accessible and affordable housing, Mr. Speaker. And certainly this impacts all people across this province, but it particularly hits hard those individuals with lower incomes. And we see many people that in fact have been completely displaced from their home, Mr. Speaker, and circumstances of young people trying to raise a family, young mothers, young families that have nowhere to go, Mr. Speaker, and in fact are now of no fixed address, often bunking in with relatives or individuals who will offer up some goodwill for a period of time. But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is with the current planning and failure to plan of this government. They're not making headway towards a better time where they can access housing, whether that be rent and home ownership, Mr. Speaker. So we condemn the government on that front, Mr. Speaker.

And we look specifically as well at a time of prosperity for government here in this province, unprecedented revenues and an economy that's performing reasonably well by some indicators, Mr. Speaker, but then on the other side of that, a real hollow side of that economy, Mr. Speaker, and aspects that are not serving us well into the future.

We can highlight specifically the massive shedding of jobs as it relates to Aboriginal adults in this province, Mr. Speaker. In 2009 alone, Mr. Speaker, and I find this incredibly troubling, is that the year previous we had 60 per cent of Aboriginal adults employed in this province. The year following, through 2009, we had 50 per cent. And that's a statistic, Mr. Speaker, a fact that we shed a full 10 per cent of Aboriginal adults from the workplace, Mr. Speaker, one in seven Aboriginal workers losing their jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at the demographics of this province and also the proud legacy of First Nations and Métis people, Mr. Speaker, to not be advancing on these fronts at a time of historic opportunity and a time where an economy should be enabling this sort of circumstance to move forward, Mr. Speaker, is jeopardizing of our province's future — not just jeopardizing of the lost opportunities for these thousands and thousands of First Nations and Métis across our province, Mr. Speaker, but jeopardizing our actual economy, Mr. Speaker, jeopardizing us socially, jeopardizing how well we are as a province, Mr. Speaker.

And I know this was highlighted specifically by University of Saskatchewan professor of economics Eric Howe, who actually is a self-described fiscal conservative, who took the Sask Party to task directly for their failed policies on this front and directly attributed the policies of this government to the massive shedding of First Nations and Métis jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker. And he also highlighted specifically that that sort of activity and these sorts of numbers and this sort of lost ground, Mr. Speaker, will spell — if we can't correct it, Mr. Speaker — economic disaster for our province.

And if you look at the demographics, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly share the concern that Mr. Howe puts forward. And I think that when we look at our economy and we look at the opportunity, what we've failed to do is to capture this wonderful opportunity to advance the lot of First Nations and Métis people, the first people of this province, Mr. Speaker, who are ready and waiting and looking forward to entering the workforce, entering prosperity in this province, and doing well socially and economically, Mr. Speaker.

This speaks to a hollowing out of our economy, Mr. Speaker. This government touts global GDP [gross domestic product] numbers, and in fact those numbers themselves don't speak to a real proud record of this government. In fact it has been basically flat since 2008, Mr. Speaker. But what we do see is a real hollowing at that same period of time where thousands of individuals across this province can barely make ends meet, Mr. Speaker — very different than the wealth that government has, Mr. Speaker, of their tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. And there's a real disconnect between the two.

I find it absolutely ignorant and unacceptable that we have a Premier, Mr. Speaker, who continues to tout the number of working poor, those below the poverty line that, as he says, have come off the tax rolls. But he fails to explain to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, as he brags about it in an arrogant fashion, Mr. Speaker, is that many of these individuals may have just been bumped off the rolls and maybe been saved 5 or 6 or \$7, Mr. Speaker. And in many cases, even on the upper end of that threshold, we might be talking 100 or \$300, Mr. Speaker. And if we put that in context, that's \$10 a month, Mr. Speaker, \$25 a month in this budget here this year, Mr. Speaker.

And the Premier can smirk if he wishes, but what he should recognize, Mr. Speaker, is that individuals who have faced increases of rent in some ways of \$400 a year, Mr. Speaker, equate to about \$5,000 a year. And what's offered up as an adequate response from this Premier, from this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, is a \$10 cut in their taxes on a monthly basis, Mr. Speaker. And that simply doesn't cut it.

And we don't see the comprehensive plan to address . . . With all the other pressures that our economy and that our province is experiencing, Mr. Speaker, we don't see a comprehensive response on housing. We don't see a comprehensive response on child care. We don't see a piece that is there to ensure that seniors and baby boomers, Mr. Speaker, as they move along, are going to have the protection and dignity that they deserve as they move into their senior years, Mr. Speaker.

We see a government that has lived well beyond its means for the last few years, despite this opportunity with unprecedented revenues, and has failed to move the province forward in the sort of substantive way that we should, Mr. Speaker, and has failed to move forward the circumstance of households across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And as I say, unlike households across this province, this government has more money than ever before. I think that households across this province would absolutely adore to have the circumstance of this government where they've had an increase of, you know, revenues to the tune that this

government has. This budget here, representing an increase over the previous budget, revenues over the past budget of the NDP of 38 per cent in just four years, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan workers would appreciate those kinds of dollars.

But their circumstance has been one very different. What we see is we see individuals across this province, many of them in fixed incomes, Mr. Speaker, with incomes not increasing but costs outstripping that in a significant way. We see that same to be true for many of the working poor across this province. We see that for individuals working for minimum wage in many jobs, Mr. Speaker, that just simply can't get ahead. Mr. Speaker, we see a government that's unwilling to move that minimum wage forward and allow us to make some progress for those workers, for those families on those fronts, Mr. Speaker.

And then we see this whole cast of individuals, workers in our health care sectors, in education sectors, Mr. Speaker, that have been receiving contracts that are well below inflation, well below the increases to their cost of living, Mr. Speaker. And all of this is unfortunate.

When we do look at this budget, we certainly recognize the failure of meeting Saskatchewan people and families' priorities, but we also recognize the failed fiscal opportunity that's been provided to government, Mr. Speaker, a government that's been blessed with an unprecedented opportunity to move Saskatchewan forward but has failed to be able to seize that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Through this time of record revenues — as I've cited in some years, outstripping the previous budgets by 2 and 3 and \$4 billion — Mr. Speaker, what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is a government that has a shameful legacy, a legacy not of debt reduction but of actual debt increase, Mr. Speaker. Not a legacy of building a fund for the bright future of Saskatchewan and leaving Saskatchewan stronger as we move forward, but one that drains the equity and reserves we have here today, at a time when it has more money than ever before, Mr. Speaker, and simply not addressing the priorities of Saskatchewan families who are under more pressure than ever before.

So in all three measures there, Mr. Speaker, we see a government that hasn't been able to move us forward from a position of public debt, from a position of advancing the priorities of Saskatchewan families or a position of being able to make sure we're ready and strong for the future, building a fund to ensure a bright future, Mr. Speaker, something that Saskatchewan people expect out of their government at times of plenty, Mr. Speaker.

Here we have a government, Mr. Speaker, that's had record revenues over these past few years but in fact has run deficits and has also increased debt, Mr. Speaker. For the past three years, this is a government that's increased debt by more than \$1.3 billion, and this all comes at a consequence to Saskatchewan people, both now but also well into the future. And the shameful part about adding debt like this, Mr. Speaker, is that in many ways it's so short-sighted that it gets passed onto the next generation and the children of that generation, Mr. Speaker, to pay for the reckless legacy of this Sask Party

government at this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

So we see the opportunity to advance our lot and to ready us for the future, Mr. Speaker. We see a government that's put forward projections again this year that are rosier and beyond the recommendations of private sector forecasters, Mr. Speaker.

And from a budgeting perspective, Mr. Speaker, we would always advise caution on these fronts, Mr. Speaker, to plan prudently and responsibly, Mr. Speaker, something that this government's failed to do on so many fronts from the time it's come to power, Mr. Speaker — a government that's failed to project revenues and expenses and have been wildly off in many circumstances. A revenue line just a couple of years ago where the minister and the Premier didn't understand what was going on from a global perspective in one of our most important industries and also didn't understand their own royalty structure, Mr. Speaker, and in fact impacted Saskatchewan negatively by \$2 billion. They had planned for revenues of \$1.9 billion from one industry, Mr. Speaker, and ended up having to cut cheques back to the same very industry with taxpayers' money to the tune of a couple hundred million dollars, Mr. Speaker — an entire miss of well over 100 per cent and a real hit on Saskatchewan people.

But it hasn't just been revenue projections that this government's been off on as it relates to economic forecasts and realities, how we connect to the global economy, Mr. Speaker, and it's been to the detriment of Saskatchewan people. And that's where, when we see this government putting forward forecasts again this year that far exceed private sector averages, Mr. Speaker, we would caution that we err on the side of caution, Mr. Speaker.

We see them moving forward with this forecast despite the challenges that we see from an agricultural perspective across this province. We have a late thaw, Mr. Speaker, here this year. We have a lot of snowpack out there. We had a wet fall, incredibly wet summer, Mr. Speaker — 11 million acres of land was flooded, Mr. Speaker. And in fact going into the fall, that situation just never improved for many areas of the province. We have parts of the province where individuals couldn't even get into the fields to take feed off throughout the winter because of the water below the snowpack that continued to run, Mr. Speaker.

And here we are into a spring that's going to be an incredible challenge for producers who are both burdened by the circumstance of the water in their fields but also by the credit that they have incurred, Mr. Speaker, to try to ready themselves for another year, despite a real disaster last year for many, Mr. Speaker. So we would argue that we should stay on the side of caution as it relates to forecasts, economic forecasts, Mr. Speaker. And we see this government again being on the rosy side of that equation, Mr. Speaker. And when the government misses on these sorts of forecasts, Mr. Speaker, it's a miss for Saskatchewan people, and it directly impacts Saskatchewan people and comes at a consequence. And that's where we would urge this government to improve, Mr. Speaker.

We made comments yesterday with respect to the fact that this government still remains to comply with public sector accounting standards, Mr. Speaker. This is unfortunate because

it prevents Saskatchewan people from having the true picture of their finances. It prevents any sort of meaningful or thoughtful comparison to our jurisdictional neighbours and provinces across Canada, Mr. Speaker. And so we're very concerned that this government fails to comply and is in fact the only province that is out of line with accounting standards, Mr. Speaker, that are expected of governments. They failed to comply with the recommendation of the auditor on this front, Mr. Speaker, and have continually been brought to task by the chartered accountants across Canada and certainly within our province.

I would just highlight on page 7 of their Estimates, Mr. Speaker, that they actually make specific reference there that highlights that they comply with public sector accounting standards except for in the two circumstances that they highlight. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's non-compliance, and it's what the auditor speaks to. And it's about providing the transparency required of Saskatchewan people and about providing the true picture that Saskatchewan people rightfully deserve, Mr. Speaker. So we would continue to call for Saskatchewan to move forward on this front, provide transparency to Saskatchewan people, and to no longer be out of line with something that's expected of all jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

We would continue to highlight the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have a government that's outspent the historic revenues that it's been provided. And this sort of spending and lack of balance comes at consequences to Saskatchewan people — spending in this budget up 38.4 per cent up over the previous budget of just four years ago of our administration, Mr. Speaker. And this sort of circumstance where this government can't balance revenues and expenditures, Mr. Speaker, and where their runaway spending has outstripped the revenues that they've sought for the province, Mr. Speaker, puts us in that position where we're adding debt to this province.

[11:15]

And it's absolutely astonishing, Mr. Speaker, when you look back and start adding up some of the numbers over the past few years, a time of historic prosperity to this province where we've in fact drained from our reserves, specifically as it relates to the rainy day fund or growth and fiscal stabilization financial security fund, Mr. Speaker, we see that over the past few years, \$2 billion have been drained from that fund. Time of historic highs, a time of supposed boom times, Mr. Speaker, at a time of unprecedented prosperity for government — this government needs to draw on its rainy day fund. That's simply not sustainable, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't leave any sort of legacy or security for future generations, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't ensure the bright future that we should be providing.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that as governments experience non-renewable resource revenues that are massive windfalls, that a good part of those dollars should be dedicated for the future, Mr. Speaker, not there to be siphoned off by a government that can't manage its books, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen over the past few years. And this is where this government again has truly failed to move Saskatchewan forward in a significant way. It's burnt off the reserves and equity and rainy day funds that were in place and has failed to provide for the future, Mr. Speaker.

So we highlight the \$2 billion that this government has siphoned from the rainy day fund at a time of historic highs in revenues to cover off for its mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. But I'd also highlight the tap that's been on the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, specifically that over a three-year period, this government — a time of unprecedented highs in revenues — averaged a take from the Crowns of \$533 million a year, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely unsustainable, absolutely not fair, absolutely not appropriate, and absolutely not serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people now or into the future.

The direct consequence of draining all of this money from the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, is one of causing those Crown corporations to lever up in a fashion that goes beyond any sort of appropriate business model and passing the direct cost back to consumers and families and businesses now, Mr. Speaker, by way of increases to utilities. But it also puts Saskatchewan taxpayers on the hook for public debt, Mr. Speaker, that has to be paid for by a future generation, Mr. Speaker.

And I know this government kind of lives in the now and burns every dollar that it receives, Mr. Speaker, but it's truly failing those future generations, not only to not improve our lot financially now, and not only in failing the priorities of Saskatchewan people, but not leaving us in a fiscally improved circumstance when we've had this blessed opportunity, Mr. Speaker, by the beautiful resources and incredible entrepreneurs and exceptional workers of this province, that they've provided to this province. And we've seen a government that's failed to capture that opportunity, a government that's failed a vision and a plan and an ability to manage a prosperous Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And really this is what it comes down to, so this government can be prosperous; a few companies are prosperous. We'd like to see companies very prosperous, Mr. Speaker. But where we see that disconnect is the prosperity is simply not felt by Saskatchewan people, and that's where this government's been short-sighted and wrong.

We see a government that rejects the call of business leaders and economics leaders across Saskatchewan and across Canada, calling for an independent review of our potash royalty structure, Mr. Speaker, so that we can maximize the benefit for Saskatchewan people both now and well into the future, Mr. Speaker, making sure we can take care of priorities today, but investing that back to make sure that we're in improved circumstance tomorrow, putting away dollars for the future generations that provide the sort of security and bright futures that all deserve, Mr. Speaker. We don't see that happening, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to call for the fairness that Saskatchewan people deserve as it relates to their potash royalties, Mr. Speaker, and the investment that we should and could be making back into Saskatchewan people and communities and the legacy that we could be leaving for the people of the province who deserve to benefit from the prosperity that's occurring within our province.

Mr. Speaker, what we see in this budget, we see many, many aspects that are of concern. We've seen that highlighted as well by the very stakeholders that have weighed in. We've read a

concern that was highlighted in newspapers here today, Mr. Speaker, sort of addressing the living for the now and burning every dollar here today, Mr. Speaker, and leaving a burden of debt for future generations, Mr. Speaker. I highlight from the *Leader-Post*. I see concerns being highlighted in here specifically to the significant revenue stripping that's occurred from those Crown corporations — the equity stripping, I should say, Mr. Speaker — that's occurred, the consequences that that has for Saskatchewan people.

I recognize the major concerns that are being highlighted with the absolute meagre and non-response to the housing pressures in this province, Mr. Speaker. I recognize the concerns as it relates to the projections that are well beyond the private sector, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, sort of holding to form of this reckless government to be above private sector forecasters instead of recognizing that in our own backyard.

I believe we had a school class here today from Kelvington, Mr. Speaker. And those individuals up in that region, Mr. Speaker, are under one thick snowpack and a lot of stress, Mr. Speaker, because they were entirely saturated in the fall, Mr. Speaker. And we should know that information here in Saskatchewan better than, better than the private sector forecasters, yet we fail to heed the advice, not only of the private sector forecasters; we fail to heed the advice of and have the information of what we should in our own backyard, Mr. Speaker.

And I've also seen in the paper general concerns about the failure to move forward as it relates to debt in the out years, Mr. Speaker. No plan to reduce debt, and in fact you know that the total public debt over the past few years, from a government that's been blessed with exceptional opportunities on the revenue side of the equation, has failed to reduce debt, Mr. Speaker. But they've done the opposite. They've increased debt over the last three years, Mr. Speaker.

I've got other information here, I know, from, you know, *Sask Trends Monitor* that highlights just how unsustainable the management of our finances is and how dangerous the draws have been on the Crown corporations and the impact on Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And as I look further through the information, Mr. Speaker, I have an entire pack of concerns as it relates to cuts, Mr. Speaker. And I have pages and pages and pages of cuts in ministries across government, Mr. Speaker. And in the coming days and weeks, we're going to be meeting with stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be sitting in committees, and we're going to be understanding what these cuts are for Saskatchewan people.

Because all we hear from this government is political spin, Mr. Speaker. What we don't hear is a government that can be forthright and to explain the impact of their management. And we saw that in Health last year, Mr. Speaker, when this government had starved regions of their dollars and failed, both through committee and question period in this Assembly, to be forthright and straightforward about what the impact was going to be for Saskatchewan families.

And we've seen what that has come to be throughout this province. And many communities have certainly felt that impact through reduced services, Mr. Speaker, or cuts, specifically in long-term care and other areas, Mr. Speaker. We

would call on the government to be forthright about what these cuts are at this point in time and what the direct impact is for Saskatchewan people.

But at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I certainly am concerned with a budget that lacks vision, a budget that's built and language that's built about political spin, Mr. Speaker, and about communication that sounds nice but really fails to bring the meaningful response required to Saskatchewan people that are quite simply, are feeling great stresses as it relates to the affordability of life here in Saskatchewan, the quality of life, and what it costs to achieve that quality of life here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the expectations, and rightfully so, of the levels of medical services and health services across this province, Mr. Speaker.

So we reject this budget outright on its lack of response and failure to address the priorities of Saskatchewan people. But we reject it on another front as well: from a complete financial perspective of the further display of unsustainable budgets being put forward; again not moving our lot forward, Mr. Speaker; of not having responsible financial management, of failing to seize the beautiful opportunity that this government was blessed to have by way of Saskatchewan people, and that was to preside over an incredibly prosperous time; failing to move our position forward fiscally and in fact load debt to the people's books, Mr. Speaker.

So we see a government that's failed Saskatchewan people's priorities. We see a government that's failed us from a financial perspective, and we see a government as a result that lacks a vision and certainly lacks the plan for the future, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people deserve to live in a prosperous Saskatchewan. And in that prosperous Saskatchewan, they need to be a part of it where in fact they feel that same prosperity and the improvements to their way of life, their quality of life. And that's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

So at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I certainly won't be supporting this budget that fails Saskatchewan people. And I'm going to move an amendment to the motion that was put forward by the Finance minister yesterday and put forward an amendment, specifically:

That the motion be amended by removing all words following the word "Assembly" and adding:

condemns this government for a budget that ignores Saskatchewan people and families; and furthermore,

that this government no longer has the confidence of this Assembly and of the people of Saskatchewan because, despite a record level of revenue, this budget is doing nothing to help people and families deal with rising cost of housing, does nothing to implement rent control, does nothing to help struggling families deal with the growing cost of living. It does nothing to improve the province's education system. It fails to get a fair potash royalty deal for Saskatchewan people. And it is not telling Saskatchewan people that this government is actually increasing the province's debt.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, I so move.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the motion presented by Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member from Regina Coronation Park. Will the members take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour for me to rise in what is almost certain to be my last budget speech, but to follow such an eloquent response by the hon. member for Regina Rosemont, our opposition critic to Finance, and his very thoughtful, well laid out remarks and this very thoughtful amendment that really speaks to New Democrat values and speaks to what we feel should be and needs to be done with the resources, the vast resources that are under the control right now of the governing Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, we're witnessing in Saskatchewan a boom, but it's a boom for the government. It is a boom of revenue for the Government of Saskatchewan. And we are asking, a boom for whom? And what we mean by that is simply, this leaves aside seniors; it leaves aside persons with disabilities, Mr. Speaker. It's shameful. The only reference I've seen to persons with disabilities is nearly 6 million was cut from the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. One million dollars was cut from the seniors' income program; 800,000 was cut from the Saskatchewan employment supplement, 200,000 cut from income assistance community services, 400,000 cut from housing program delivery — and 300,000 of that is a result of salary reductions. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on, but that very short list that I've read early in my speech highlights what we mean when we say, a boom for whom?

Mr. Speaker, the government is very proud of the income tax break. And you know what? I thank you. At my level of income, I thank you for that. I will get some benefit, Mr. Speaker, but I'll tell you, the 60 residents of Huston Heights in Argyle Park, most of them will not see \$10 a month benefit from that income tax break. And I say, shame, because those very people that I have represented and continue to proudly represent, those very great people in Huston Heights are left behind yet again, Mr. Speaker, and it's a shame.

Many of the people in Huston Heights . . . And there's literally thousands across the province. I single out an area in my constituency, Huston Heights, because it's a place that I have always felt a special kinship with and have always enjoyed when I have the opportunity to go in and meet and talk with the residents one on one. But, Mr. Speaker, I've always felt that when we were in government, we didn't do enough to help give these people a leg up, a hand up, and certainly this budget by the Sask Party is even more dismal for them.

Many of the 60 people in Huston Heights, Mr. Speaker, are there because, as one of them recently said to me, life happens. Life happens, was her words. This relatively young woman had been training to be an RN [registered nurse] and had a four point grade average, and then disability happened. Life

happened, as she describes it. She was so looking forward to a pretty decent life, you know, with a good income, helping other people, with an ability to do lots of good in our Saskatchewan, in our province, and to raise a family, you know, to enjoy the things that most of us take for granted. And then life happened.

[11:30]

And now she has no ability to earn income on her own. She's receiving social service benefits. She's in subsidized housing and there's too much month at the end of the money, too much month at the end of the money, Mr. Speaker. The last two times I spoke to her, she wasn't certain if she was going to have groceries come the end of this month. Mr. Speaker, that's a tragedy. Life happened through no fault of her own. Life happened. And this is the situation with far too many people in our great province.

And yet there's a boom. For whom? A boom for whom? Certainly not for people with disabilities. Certainly not for seniors. Certainly not for renters, Mr. Speaker. We've seen rent go up nearly 40 per cent in the last three years in Regina and Saskatoon. I was speaking to someone from Weyburn and they've a similar situation. And I'm sure it's similar in every city in Saskatchewan where rents have just skyrocketed. And yet we have a government that refuses to introduce a new generation of rent controls, Mr. Speaker.

They're saying that rent controls stifle investment in housing. Well I'll tell you what stifles investment in housing — a \$1.7 million investment in low-cost housing in this budget, a total of \$1.7 million, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine? How is that going to put a dent into the housing situation? How is that going to help the people who cannot find reasonable accommodation at any reasonable price? Mr. Speaker, it just is not going to be helpful for those people, and I say that is a tragedy and a shame.

Mr. Speaker, Peter Gilmer of Regina — he's an advocate for housing and for affordable housing — says, and I quote from yesterday:

“We're in the midst of an economic boom and we have massive resource wealth,” said Gilmer. “We can afford to reinvest in terms of both income security programs and affordability when it comes to housing.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to fast forward to something that our Social Services critic, how he described the budget. And he described it in one word for those very people. The word is “embarrassing.” \$1.7 million for affordable housing in this budget, it's embarrassing, Mr. Speaker. A time when the provincial government has absolutely record revenue — \$10.8 billion this year, ten point eight, \$10.8 billion revenue — unprecedented revenue, and there's \$1.7 million for low-cost housing, for social housing.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance critic, the member for Regina Rosemont pointed out debt is going up. And this troubles me, having been here. By the time the election rolls around, I will have served 25 years as an MLA, assuming I'm still alive, and I have no reason to think I won't be. Mr. Speaker, the debt is going up according to the government's own book, the budget summary for '11-12. And I'm looking at page 61 where it

shows the public . . . well it shows the General Revenue Fund debt going down. And it shows the government business enterprise debt going up at a sharper rate, at a faster rate.

The public is responsible for all of this debt, Mr. Speaker. This is debt that, in government, New Democrats drove both down year after year after year after year. We drove the debt down in both of those areas year after year after year. We took Saskatchewan — thank you, Roy Romanow; thank you, Lorne Calvert — we took Saskatchewan from a junk bond record rating, junk bond rating where we couldn't invest Saskatchewan's public service pension fund into any Saskatchewan investment because we were rated as junk bond.

And there's laws that the federal government appropriately has that protect public pensions, that protect pension funds, not just public but pension funds. And they said, you can't invest in junk bonds because it's too risky. Today we have brought from junk bond to AA and in some cases AAA credit rating, Mr. Speaker — ratings that continue today, that continue today on the backs of huge, huge revenue, most of it or much of it coming from non-renewable resources, Mr. Speaker. Huge revenue enables the Sask Party to maintain its credit rating because the revenues, the revenues continue to expand as we get to \$100-and-above oil, as we get to record potash prices, Mr. Speaker, as we see the pressure ever upward on many of our resources. So it's a boom for the Saskatchewan government, but it is not a boom for people of low or no income. And if you are at low or no income, Mr. Speaker, a tax break doesn't mean much; a tax break on nothing is still nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we had a report released — what? — 10 days ago roughly that described Aboriginal employment in Saskatchewan as sharply down in the last two years, in the two years of the Sask Party government. Employment down, according to a university professor who did the study. Down at a time when we should be more inclusive, not exclusive.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where in this budget we have a reduction in First Nations and Métis Affairs from 10.43 million to 9.365, a loss of \$900,000. Treaty land entitlement loses 600,000. First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund drops from 3 million to 2.1. That's again another \$900,000 loss. Lands and consultation drops from 1.014 million to 959,000, a \$55,000 reduction. There's a \$23,000 loss to northern economic development year over year.

So at a time of boom, at a time of boom and at a time when the employment record is, I'll describe it as dismal, Mr. Speaker, because it's going so entirely in the wrong way, and we have a Sask Party government that is so blinded to tax cuts that they don't see the reality of how their decisions are affecting the people of Saskatchewan every day in so many ways, Mr. Speaker.

And in so many ways, there is much more that could be done. There is much that the Government of Saskatchewan has a responsibility to do. It certainly has the financial, the fiscal tools to be able to do it. It has its hand on the brake. We wish they'd take it off the brake and put their hand on the throttle, Mr. Speaker. It's a boom for wealthy maybe, maybe, certainly a boom for the provincial treasury, but it is a bust for low and no

income people. It is a bust for people with disabilities. It is a bust for seniors. It is a bust for the very people that the Government of Saskatchewan has the most responsibility for. It is a bust for Aboriginal people, Indian, and Métis individuals. It is a bust on all of those counts, Mr. Speaker.

And it's predicated on smoke and mirrors. This is the real sad part, is they're driving the total debt up at a time of unbelievable revenues. And yet the total debt of the province of Saskatchewan goes up according to their own numbers. And again, if debt goes up at a time of unprecedented revenue for the provincial government, what on earth would you folks do in a time of difficulty? What on earth would you do when things go south? When things go sour? What on earth would you do?

Mr. Speaker, this budget lets down the people of Saskatchewan in so many ways. It is silent, it is silent when it comes to potash royalty review that New Democrats have asked for. And I want to tell you part of why we've asked for it. I'll get to the money in a minute, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan enjoys roughly 40 per cent — some, you can argue up and down — of the potash. We have 40 per cent of the potash that is established, the reserves in the world. It is a low-cost producer because our grade of potash is very high, Mr. Speaker.

We have a situation where potash . . . There was an offer to take over a potash corporation that was in the \$36 billion range, and that was turned down by shareholders and, appropriately, they can do whatever they like. I'm not a shareholder in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. I didn't get a vote on it. So it's moot. It doesn't matter how I might have voted, Mr. Speaker, if I were a shareholder. The fact is, not a shareholder of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and for most years, that would have not served me well. But I'm not. But the shareholders, as is their legal right, turned down a \$36 billion offer. Why? Because in their financial interest, they said they're better to hold their shares, better to keep their ownership of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

It tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the potential earning of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan is huge, unbelievably huge. This is a potash corporation that in its previous iteration — the now Premier was part of the government that sold Potash Corporation — it was a Crown corporation. Sold it, and it became publicly shared. Previously all of the earnings would stay in Saskatchewan and could be used to pay for education, maybe a little bit for teachers' salary increases and pensions, maybe a little bit for people with disabilities, maybe a little bit for low-cost housing, maybe a little bit for seniors, maybe a little bit for education property tax relief, maybe a lot for health care. You know, Mr. Speaker, we had it all, and then they gave it away, gave it away. The people of Saskatchewan kept the debt and the new company kept the mines. We got the shaft. They got the mines. And the rest, as we say, is history.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, despite the clear value of potash and potash production, the royalty that is estimated for the coming year is \$381 million. This, out of a company where . . . Saskatchewan people have 40 per cent of the known potash in the world. We are bigger than the Saudi Arabia of oil when it comes to potash. With respect to oil, we are just over one-half of one per cent of

the total world production. With respect to potash, we're more than one-third of the total world production. We are bigger in potash, relative to the rest of the world, than Saudi Arabia is to oil.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can demand an appropriate result from our resource in the ground. We can demand more than 5 cents on every dollar of earnings that the potash corporations are making. We can get a fairer response for the people of Saskatchewan, and we can use and we would dedicate that money to renters, to people with disabilities, to teachers so they can get a fair contract offer instead of the contract negotiations breaking down.

Mr. Speaker, there is much that we would do, but first there's some low-hanging grapes, if I can describe it that way. And I can see the quotes now. We need a review just to make sure, just to make sure that Saskatchewan is in fact getting a fair potash royalty, that in fact we're not giving away a non-renewable resource too cheaply. We should get a fair tariff off of that potash.

Mr. Speaker, the one part of the budget that I absolutely am determined to cover too is Saskatchewan's public service. What a proud — once proud anyway — group of women and men. The public servants of Saskatchewan deliver programs day after day after day. They're put under increasing stress year over year over year. We have now technology, and I've seen it in action. I've seen civil servants that take their BlackBerry home, that work on their computers at home, work away from the office, Mr. Speaker. There's ever more demanded of civil servants, and they're not alone in this in our world.

Civil servants aren't alone in the increasing demands that are put on people. But the fact of the matter is that civil servants are, by and large, working harder and harder and harder and taking on more and more responsibilities, and an eight-hour workday is essentially a thing of the past for far too many of them. The demands of the workforce are growing exponentially and, at the same time, we are seeing a shrinkage — two hundred and seventy-three and a half full-time equivalent jobs, 273 jobs that are gone, Mr. Speaker, gone and eliminated from this budget. Now many of these full-time equivalents were people that were working. I know the government's fond of saying no layoffs. You don't have to lay off someone that you've put under a temporary contract. And government has long been famous for this, for putting people on temporary contract, and then at budget time just don't renew the contract or discontinue it at the end of a month.

Well whether a worker is working on a contract with an expectation that it would be renewed repeatedly, but it protects the numbers, whether they're working on that contract or whether they're working in the civil service proper, that is, with an absolute, with the certainty of a job, barring an inadequate performance at that job . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a huge number, 273 people now looking for work, now looking for work. People that a month ago or yesterday were working, and they know that they are right up against the end of their work time.

Most of the nature of Saskatchewan is that something like a third of the jobs in the civil service are in the capital city, in

Regina, and so the hurt will be disproportionately felt in Regina, in our great city. Mr. Speaker, I say it is a shame that this is going on with respect to our civil service. The drop in the civil service is the biggest in three years. In fact last year there was hiring, modest hiring, and this year it's roughly a two and a half per cent cut in the number of civil servants. And that is shown on page 24 of the very same budget summary document.

So much pain. There's a boom for the provincial government, but pain for Saskatchewan's public servants, pain for people with disabilities, pain for renters, pain for seniors, pain for low- and no-income earners, pain galore for the very people that the provincial government is responsible to help elevate their station in life, to help them do better, to inspire these people to do better. Mr. Speaker, this budget is, at best, for the Government of Saskatchewan and, at second best, it's for wealthy people, but it is a boom for those only. It is a bust for everyone in the lower income strata. It is a bust for people that have no other means to help themselves. I say shame on the government for that.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my honour to once again stand on behalf of my constituents, the great people of Regina Coronation Park, and I want to close by thanking them for the support they have shown me personally in so many ways for 25 years now, Mr. Speaker. I've had more support from the people of Coronation Park than anyone could possibly deserve, certainly far more than I deserve. But I am so grateful for that support. I have tried my best to honour that support and do what I can.

I've tried today to outline the wrong parts of this budget, and indeed there are many things that are wrong. There are things that are welcome at higher levels of income and even at medium levels of income, but for low- and no-income people, for those who have no means of helping themselves, this budget is a bust. So, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to second the motion from the honourable member for Regina Rosemont, that motion being that all words following the word "Assembly" and adding . . . pardon me, that we remove all the words following "Assembly" and adding:

condemns this government for a budget that ignores Saskatchewan people and families; and furthermore,

that this government no longer has the confidence of this Assembly and of the people of Saskatchewan because, despite a record level of revenue, this budget is doing nothing to help people and families deal with rising cost of housing. It does nothing to implement rent control. It does not help struggling families deal with the growing cost of living. It does nothing to improve the province's education system. It fails to get a fair potash royalty deal for Saskatchewan people, and it is not telling Saskatchewan people that this government is actually increasing the province's debt [and deficit].

Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to have seconded this amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to stand and address our government's budget and I want to

thank the Finance minister for asking me to second this budget. Having worked on Treasury Board with him this last year, it is an honour.

Working on Treasury Board is a lot of work. It's time consuming, but it's also very rewarding. And I would like to thank my colleagues on Treasury Board. We've had some very frank and full discussions over the last few months, and we don't always agree. But I think at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the good thing about our government and our party is that we can have those frank discussions. And I think the budget that was brought in yesterday by our Finance minister reflects the priorities of this government and the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the deputy minister at Finance, Karen Layng, and all of her staff. For as many hours as Treasury Board members put into this budget, they put in more. And we asked a lot of them and they delivered, and I want to thank them for their hard work.

And I would also like to thank my constituency assistant, Whitney Friesen, who isn't feeling very well right now. But considering the long hours that I was in Regina and not in the constituency, I want to thank him for keeping the office open and keeping things going in my absence.

Mr. Speaker, this budget continues a trend that we started in our very first budget. It's a budget that keeps our promises and is balanced. And, Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting the Finance critic from the opposition talking about this not being a balanced budget, which is absolutely an erroneous statement, and also talking about the financial auditing process and especially when it comes to summary financial statements. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where his information comes from, but I have in front of me, it's Public Accounts on the summary financial statements, a signed statement from the Provincial Auditor saying, and I quote, "I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards."

Mr. Speaker, so this is the very first budget, I understand, in our province where it is balanced on both the GRF [General Revenue Fund] basis and the summary financials. And again, Mr. Speaker, I think that the NDP have had such a hard time finding anything really wrong with this budget that they've resorted to making things up because it is absolutely not correct to say that this is not a balanced budget. It is balanced, Mr. Speaker, as I said, on both the GRF and summary financials. So I just wanted to clear that up at the very beginning.

There were some more interesting comments made by opposition members already today which . . . I will address some of those.

But, Mr. Speaker, I start off thanking my colleagues, and I do want to thank them for all of their hard work and also, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing the needs in my constituency. I know that when my dad was the MLA, it was one of the frustrations that he heard, that being a rural constituency that it was continuously overlooked by the NDP. It was also, Mr. Speaker, a constituency that the NDP never had any hope of winning. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think it's probably . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I believe the member from Regina Rosemont already had the opportunity to speak. I allow the member from Martensville to continue on with her speech.

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I know, as I was saying, when my dad was the MLA, there was an ongoing frustration that the constituency was always overlooked. It was not a good opportunity for, on the election side, for the NDP. In fact the NDP have never, ever, ever won the seat that I represent, Mr. Speaker. And I think politics might have come into play a little bit. The constituency has been overlooked.

And I have to say, when I went door knocking during the by-election process the beginning of 2007, there were a lot of things that people in my constituency wanted to see addressed. And those priorities, Mr. Speaker, I can say, in our first term in less than four years, we have addressed those concerns, Mr. Speaker.

We have a new water supply for Hepburn. Hepburn had been working on a well system. It wasn't healthy for those folks and was limiting the growth potential of their community and, Mr. Speaker, happy that we have been able to announce, in conjunction with the municipality and the federal government, over \$9 million for a water project for Hepburn.

Mr. Speaker, we also announced recently a new middle-years school for Warman. Again, the NDP had absolutely no vision for our province. They didn't believe that we could grow. They have this doom and gloom attitude, and again we saw that today.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say I woke up this morning in a pretty good mood. We had a good day yesterday, a good budget. And then sitting through the NDP's speeches, man, get me a tissue. I don't know what world they're living in, but it is a sad place. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the majority in this province agree with them. Because the people I've been meeting every day are pretty happy about being in this province, and as we've seen from the population numbers, there's more and more of them coming into this province every day. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of them are coming into my constituency. So I'm happy to see a new middle school for Warman.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we've had some pretty dire highways in my constituency, and I want to thank the Highways minister, past and present, for their work on plans to address those situations to ensure that the growing communities in my constituency have safe highways and highways that are going to be a good basis for them going into the future. With continued population growth and the economic growth in the RM [rural municipality] of Corman Park, we have to build for the future, Mr. Speaker, not just fill in a few potholes today, and I'm happy to say that our government is doing that.

[12:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's also important with our growing communities, especially in my constituency — as I said they

have some of the fastest growing communities in all of Canada — that we allow municipalities to plan themselves. As a provincial government, we have to plan but, Mr. Speaker, the municipalities have to have an opportunity to plan as well. And I was happy to see in this budget we have kept our promise for the revenue sharing one point of PST [provincial sales tax] to enable municipalities to have those revenues, that they can plan ahead and take care of some of the growth issues that they are facing.

And, Mr. Speaker, although I don't believe it was highlighted specifically in the Finance minister's budget speech yesterday, I do want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs for a new program. It's a pilot program through SIGI [Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative] which will allow communities to apply to borrow interest-free money, up to five years interest-free to address some of the recreational facility deficits that they have in their communities. And I know for the communities in my riding, that's a huge issue. So I would like to thank Municipal Affairs, the minister for his work on this again, Mr. Speaker, allowing municipalities to plan ahead and make sure that the folks in their constituencies have the facilities and infrastructure that their people deserve and expect with a growing province.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the NDP have this doom-and-gloom attitude which is really unfortunate. I think it's indicative their philosophy and mindset kind of trickled down a little bit when they were in government. And if you have leadership that's positive and has a vision for our province, the people are going to follow. They're going to feel good about themselves and the choices that they're making in living here.

And I know that the Finance minister alluded to this yesterday in his speech, and I want to bring it up again. There was a survey done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. The first question was asked in 2003 to their membership, and it asked, do you think that there's a bright future for young people in Saskatchewan? And, Mr. Speaker, in 2003, a full 83 per cent said no — 83 per cent of respondents said they didn't believe there was a bright future for young people in this province. Mr. Speaker, only 10 per cent said yes. That's really quite sad considering that our province has so very much to offer.

However, Mr. Speaker, things have turned around. In 2010 CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] asked exactly the same question. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what their response was? Eighty-four per cent said yes. It was a complete turnaround from seven years ago, Mr. Speaker. I think the change in this attitude is absolutely staggering. I think it goes to the amazing spirit of the people who live in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I also think it goes to the attitude of the government in place, that they know that their government is planning for the future, that we have a positive outlook about our province, and that we're willing to go out and promote our province to others, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen that in the attitudes of those who responded to the survey.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think our budget has some very important points. I'm not going to go through every single one of them. Obviously my other colleagues are going to be speaking as well

through the next few days, but I do want to highlight a few things that I think are important not just to communities that I represent, but to the people of this province on the whole.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to agriculture, it's one of the best budgets that our province has ever seen when it comes to agriculture. And again historically, the NDP have completely ignored that sector. We saw it during the last election when there was a discussion about property taxes and whose plan was best. The NDP actually didn't talk about agricultural property taxes when it comes to education at all. It wasn't mentioned. Their proposal would have done nothing to our agricultural sector. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that in our budget yesterday, we have fulfilled yet another promise, and agricultural producers will see an 80 per cent reduction in their education property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, we also have an increase to the health regions. And I think one of the very most important things that we have announced in our budget is the focus on children and youth at risk and I do want to . . . Although this is not a silo approach — governments tend to do that; they operate in silos and don't communicate — this really is a government-wide strategy. And I do want to give a shout out to our Minister of Social Services who was the driving force behind this, and I know, Mr. Speaker, this is a project that is very near and dear to her heart. And I want to say thank you to her for her willingness to help out those who need help in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very worthwhile venture. There is, I believe, \$34 million government-wide going into different initiatives.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just us who think this is a good idea. There's stakeholders who also are supportive of our government's initiatives. Chief Guy Lonechild said, and I quote, "This government has put its money where its mouth is. This is an opportunity for us to start doing much needed work to roll up our sleeves and start improving educational outcomes for First Nations people, including early childhood development, K to 12, and post-secondary education," Mr. Speaker.

And Robert Doucette who is the leader of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan — I was quite touched actually by his interview on the news yesterday, post budget, as I was not aware of his background — but he said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Raising a family is not a cheap thing and so by having those increases to resources for foster children and foster parents, I think, is a good day. Being a former foster child myself growing up in the system, I know it's really important to have these resources to ensure that Métis children are given the best opportunity to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, what better person to be able to judge whether or not these programs are going to be worthwhile than somebody who's been through the system himself. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Doucette for his leadership on this file and others. He is an amazing representative for the Métis people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, one other quote on part of the child and youth strategy that's being put forward by our government, Deb Davies, spokesperson for the Foster Families Association, said

and I quote, "The child and youth agenda tells me that this government is prioritizing our families, and that is where we need to be, focusing our efforts on strengthening families." And, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. That was the focus of this project when we went into it and when discussions began, is that we were going to strengthen families regardless of where they come from, what their social background is, what their ethnicity is, what their financial situation is. Mr. Speaker, our children deserve to have the absolute best start in life, and that is what we are going to be working towards with our stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned earlier some of the erroneous statements that were put forward by the NDP members, and I'm sure there'll be other interesting statements as they continue to speak on the budget. But I do want to address a few things.

When it comes to helping those who need a little bit of help, the member from Coronation Park said that we had completely abandoned those with disabilities. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if he's read our budgets or looked through what our ministries are doing or remembers what his government did not do on these issues, Mr. Speaker, but we inherited a list — 440 people with disabilities on a waiting list, just hanging out on a waiting list, looking for places to live and for programming. What did the NDP do for these people, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely nothing. They were content to have 440 people with disabilities waiting on a list with absolutely no help from their government at the time.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we thought that was absolutely unacceptable, and we made a promise a couple of years ago to address that situation. And, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, with the funding that's available through this budget, we will successfully take 85 per cent of those 440 people off of that list. And, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to getting all of them off of that list.

And, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to housing, they can pick and choose numbers from this page or that page, but I think you kind of have to look at it as a whole and what is our government doing when it comes to housing. And if you pick and choose, that's fine. I don't think it's the whole story, and I think the people of this province deserve to know what the actual story is on this. And I believe it was just a few weeks ago that we announced over \$30 million going towards affordable housing, Mr. Speaker, and I think the NDP should be reminding their folks of that as well, instead of just picking and choosing the numbers that they want to talk about.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about the tax breaks for Saskatchewan residents. We now have the highest threshold in all of Canada when it comes to personal income tax on provincial taxes. A family of four can now earn over \$45,000 without paying any provincial income tax, and I think that is astounding. I think that is a great start, especially for your young families who are starting out, that they can earn a combined income of \$45,550 before provincial income tax kicks in. And so again, Mr. Speaker, while the NDP are focusing on doom and gloom, I think the people of this province — families, working mothers, seniors — they're going to see that there is a savings when they do their taxes next year thanks to the initiatives brought in by our government.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, there's a lot of other issues that my colleagues are going to address. I do want to talk very briefly about funding towards universities. I think having an agenda that's based on innovation is key for our province. We are more than just a farming community. That's what so many people across this country view Saskatchewan as, and there's nothing wrong with that. We have a proud tradition of farming and agriculture in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are so much more than that, and we have amazing universities that are centres of excellence on different issues. And with this budget, there is additional funding going towards our universities. And I would like to quote from Brett Fairbairn, the U of S provost. He said, and I quote:

Across the country, we see other universities are suffering, but in Saskatchewan there are still positive investments. We're fortunate to be in a province that is still investing in post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say, and I quote, "The government is providing money so universities and colleges don't have to raise tuition just to balance the books." And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's important. When you look at what we're doing at the U of S with additional housing for students, having that housing on campus allows those renters to be pulled out of the regular rental market which frees up housing for non-students who are giving monies towards education for continued programming and keeping things affordable for our students, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's very important. It keeps our young people in Saskatchewan. They'll be educated in Saskatchewan, and I know that so many of them are going to be finding jobs in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, going back to the NDP and some of the errors, I've noticed that their recent ads talk about paying more and getting less. Again I don't know what province they're living in because if you ask yourself the question or ask your neighbour the question, are you better off now than you were four years ago? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families are better off. Our province is better off as a whole. Saskatchewan businesses are better off.

Mr. Speaker, this year 114,000 low-income earners will not be paying provincial income tax. I believe they are better off. This year Saskatchewan families will pay \$420 million less in income tax. I think those families are better off. This year property owners will pay \$165 million less in education property taxes. I think those folks are better off.

And, Mr. Speaker, so folks in Saskatchewan are paying less and they're getting more. They've seen the investments that we've made in education capital — I haven't even really got to that part of it yet — education capital, infrastructure, roads, hospitals, long-term care homes, and all the while they're paying less tax, Mr. Speaker, whether it's education property tax, whether it's income tax. They are paying less and getting more.

The one thing that they're getting less of, Mr. Speaker, is provincial debt, \$3 billion less than there was when we took office, Mr. Speaker. So I think, Mr. Speaker, like I said, if you ask folks in this province if they're better off than they were

four years ago, the answer is a resounding yes.

And, Mr. Speaker, in our new Saskatchewan we do have the advantage. We have the advantage of continued growth. We have the advantage of continued investment, and we have the advantage of continued revenues which we will continue to invest in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I am so very proud to be a part of this government. I'm thankful for being able to be a member on Treasury Board that worked to put this budget together with the input of stakeholders and my colleagues. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a resident of this province. We have a very bright future, and the difference between the NDP and our side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is that we actually believe that.

So again I'm happy to second this budget motion. I will be supporting my government's budget, and I will not be supporting the NDP amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today and enter into the budget debate. And I will, at the outset, tell you that I am going to be supporting the motion put forward and the budget put forward by our Hon. Minister of Finance. I will not be supporting the amendment that I think just came right out of the pinata, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it was very noticeable yesterday when we were sitting in the Chambers here listening to the Finance minister give his presentation and delivering probably the best budget that this province has ever, ever seen. And I couldn't help but notice, as I looked across the floor, and I saw 21 people that didn't agree with the budget, 21. There was 20 sitting in the benches, but there was one lady sitting behind, and I saw her shaking her head as the minister was giving the budget, and I was really wondering why she was shaking her head at such a good budget. Then I noticed she was wearing red, and I kind of put the two together, and I realized that that's why she was not supporting the budget.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, this budget is for the people of the province. This is just an outstanding budget. It's not just us that are saying that, except for those 20 people on the other side that are against it. There is some quotes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from today that would agree with what we are saying on this side of the House. For an example, well for one thing, it's a real balanced budget. Now it's very interesting that the Finance critic from the socialists would say that it's not, and even the other member that spoke and talking about it not being a balanced budget. But here again is a quote: "This is a real balanced budget. Even the auditor would agree with that."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's interesting that this is stated in the paper or on the radio, some of these quotes this morning, that everybody seems to want to believe this except for the 20 people sitting on that side of the House. That is a shame on their part, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do want to talk about a number of issues where we're going today and from where we came. We had 16 years of total neglect in rural Saskatchewan from the previous government, 16 years. We look at what we've done in the last three years as just amazing. From agriculture, as mentioned by the member from Martensville, we have put more into agriculture in the last three years than the NDP I think did in their whole 16 years.

Infrastructure, we inherited the largest infrastructure deficit in the province's history. And I really like to talk a little bit about the infrastructure deficit, which we are fixing. It's taking a long time to repair the damage created by the socialist government of 16 years. It's going to take us a while to repair all of that damage.

But I'll give you an example. One is in highways. Our highways were neglected so badly in rural Saskatchewan, and I can suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in my constituency, we had 16-year-old children that had never seen a paving machine, 16-year-old people that had never seen a paving machine in our constituency. That was just coincidental with 16 years of NDP government. Since we've formed government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$2.2 billion into highways, \$2.2 billion — a far cry from what we witnessed over the 16 years of NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot of rhetoric coming from the other side now on such things as rent control. I think the people of the province understand the damage that some of their pinata ideas would do to the province. The rent control will inhibit growth. There's no doubt about it. It would inhibit growth in housing and apartments. They don't get it over there. They just do not understand.

I was speaking to a group the other day, and I just posed a question to them. I said, if you were an owner of an apartment and you were restricted for applying any rent increases ever and your apartment started to deteriorate, what would you do? They say, well if we couldn't get any return on our investment, why would we even fix the apartment? And if they're not going to fix the apartment, then it deteriorates and deteriorates. I would ask members opposite to probably have a little look at East Hastings Street in Vancouver and look what that is. That was a rent control try, and now it's probably the slum of Vancouver. That's what rent controls do.

I also want to talk about the royalty structure that the other side is talking about doing a review of royalties. Again they do not get it. If you start tinkering with the royalty structures, how are you going to get people that want to come in to invest? And right now we're looking at 13 to \$14 billion in investment in this province. And if you start tinkering with the royalties, do you think any of that expansion in potash would take place? How about expansion in the oil industry? Do you think that would take place if their royalties were tinkered with?

Just as recent as this morning, look what happened in the North Sea. I wonder if members opposite looked at that, looking at tinkering with royalties in the North Sea and companies are pulling out. They're pulling out of oil exploration and production in the North Sea because of that. Is this what the socialists want? I would hope not. It would kill thousands and thousands of jobs should they ever, gosh forbid, ever get into a position where they would exercise that royalty restructure —

thousands and thousands of jobs. Do they care? They don't. They don't care about the people of the province. They care about their inner little sanctity of the NDP, and that's about all that they care for.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about education portion of property tax. This was stated that, this is the most regressive tax there is, and we will change it once we have the resources. You know who said that? That was the comedian, Tommy the . . . you know, and that was said in 1944. 1944, there was no adjustment to education portion of property tax until we formed government. Finally, finally we got that done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk a little bit about what this budget's done for my ministry. We made a promise. We made a promise that we were going to hire 120 new police officers for this province. We have 90 on board and 30 more coming in this budget. Promise made, promise kept. Even with . . . [inaudible] . . . that adds up to 120. I don't care how they add or subtract; that's still 120 police officers. It's a little bit different than . . . I think some of my colleagues would remember the promise about 200. That was back in 1999. Two elections later, they never did keep that promise, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We also fully implemented the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] national backup policy to ensure the safety of RCMP officers in communities by funding 29 RCMP positions for the backup policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have done so much within our corrections system to improve the corrections system. We inherited a huge mess, and we have gone about fixing that mess. And I could give you some examples. We've just instituted a non-contact visiting in our adult facilities. This may not seem much to anybody, but we figured it's reduced the drug trade in our institutions by 60 per cent by no-contact visiting. That is how a lot of the contraband was entering into our corrections centres, was through contact with people on visitations.

We've added security cameras. We've had upgrades in security for our corrections facilities. All of these changes, and there's numerous . . . We put institutional clothing in which also stopped the drug traffic and drug trade. All of these changes have been very, very well received by the employees of our corrections centres. It has really added to their safety.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about the provincial disaster assistance program. We know last year we were hit with some very serious disasters around the province. We inherited a PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] system that again did not work for the people. Did the people on the other side care? No. No. They didn't change it. They didn't change it one iota.

When we go back to looking at . . . I've heard some of them say, well we haven't had anything quite like last year. Well they're right; last year was a real exception. We go back to a place like Vanguard. Vanguard flooded in the year 2000. We had people that waited two years before they got one penny of money. Two years.

And I have in my notes here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a comment by the then minister, Andrew Thomson. And he said, well, well, we've had a person working on these claims for some time now. One person working on PDAP claims — one. And then he was extremely proud to say, and we've doubled it. Two people working on claims.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week we announced that we were adding 30 more to deal with the issues that we are from last year. So we will have over 50 people working on claims. A far cry from what those people over there did.

I also want to talk PDAP, about some of the other changes that we have made. We changed the deductible for private claims to 5 per cent. Under the NDP, it was at 20 per cent. Cap on claims, we've raised to 240,000. Under the NDP, it was 100,000. Business claims up to \$500,000; the NDP, 100,000. Depreciation rates on furnaces — and we know from our experience of flooding, and if you look at houses that are being flooded, most of the furnaces are in the basements — we had to look at depreciation rates. We had set a maximum of 35 per cent depreciation. The NDP, it was up to 60 per cent — totally unacceptable.

And I've talked about waiting times for claims. The terrible case was in Vanguard waiting excess of two years. The norm was 12 to 18 months to get a PDAP claim processed. We have lowered that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a goal of three months. Now there's extenuating circumstances, one might be a little bit longer than three months, but that's our goal from the time all of the paperwork is put in, is three months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about some things that are not in this budget. And this is probably why members opposite maybe are a little bit upset. For an example, there is nothing in this budget to deal with potatoes, not a word about potatoes in this budget. However, members opposite are well aware they squandered \$35 million on potatoes, \$35 million. There's none of that in this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And how about the geniuses of business on that side of the House. We did not have anything in this budget dealing with dot-coms. No, nothing in the budget on dot-coms. Nothing in the budget for Navigata. I wonder if that rings a bell? Navigata, I think it's up to about a \$70 million loss. That's how their business operated when they were in government. All of the other dot-coms, they really thought they knew better than the business people. Channel Lake, another loss. Guyana, another loss. These proponents of big business, and just threw money away, threw money away.

But now you look at some of the other stuff that's not in this budget. There was about \$800 million put into the Meadow Lake pulp mill, \$800 million lost because they thought they knew better. Well it might have been there to help out a sitting member. It kept Sonntag maybe elected for one election. But \$800 million, that's a big price to pay for getting somebody elected. And of course we know . . . Thank goodness we formed government, because they were going to try that in Prince Albert, a \$100 million, Prince Albert. Thank goodness we formed government and squashed that and saved the taxpayers of this province \$100 million.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear, we want this province to go forward. We really want it to go forward on a positive vein. They had some hare-brained ideas that were just hare-brained ideas. And I think of one like the ethanol plant in Belle Plaine — big fanfare, huge fanfare. What happened? What happened there? The square root of nothing.

And I think it's one of my favourites, the record of the NDP when they . . . In essence if you look at this, they had every person in this province playing bingo because they wanted to take over the whole bingo industry in this province. So, in essence, they lost \$8 million trying to run a bingo operation. So in essence, every member of this province has played bingo through the NDP — \$8 million to try and take over a bingo industry. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is unconscionable.

All of the losses that they have had under their watch totals well over \$1 billion, \$1 billion. And we hear some of the members get up and talk about, well there's money from here you could have used, money from there you could have used, and you should have put it into this.

[12:30]

What about the billion dollars they lost? Can you imagine what that would have done? And that's not in this year's dollars, that's in their year's dollars. So what would that amount to today? It would amount to a whole pile of money that was totally wasted by those members on that side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at this budget and I look at what it's doing for the people of this province — lowering taxes. The largest income tax cuts in the province's history come under this government, and I'm so proud to be part of this government for being able to do that.

Now let's just do a little bit of a comparison. To hear we're reducing taxes, what did . . . When the Leader of the Opposition was in government, do you realize he raised taxes, raised taxes 17 times — 17 times. And what are we doing? We're lowering taxes. What do the people of this province really think? They are definitely not going to want to see taxes go up. They want to see them go down.

Mr. Speaker, we start looking at our investment in health care, and we have invested a lot of money in health care. And what did those folks on the other side do when they were in government? They closed 52 rural hospitals — 52 rural hospitals. They totally gave up on rural Saskatchewan, take health care out of rural Saskatchewan, cancelled GRIP [gross revenue insurance program]. They ignored the farming community and ranching community for years. Finally we've got some hope back into our agricultural sector and our ranching sector not because of them, but because of what we have been doing, and thank goodness for that.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder what part of this budget members opposite are going to vote against. They'll probably vote against the whole thing. But can you imagine any one of them going to their constituency, standing up and saying, I voted against lower taxes. I would like to be there when they do that. I voted against having more money in health care. I really want to see that. I voted against having more police in this province.

I want to see that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this again I will repeat, is probably the best budget that this province has ever seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I am going to be very proud to support the budget, but I sure will not be supporting the pinata amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into this very important debate, the last budget of the term of this government, and we hope the very last one we see of the Sask Party with the kind of work they're doing here. I'm very proud of the work that we've been doing on this side just at the very beginning, to scratch away at some of the veneer of this budget and the disappointments that lie within this budget.

You know, this Premier often talked about hope, that he would focus on hope. But I've got to tell you, for the people in my riding, but when I phone around the province, people are really worried. And really, focus is around housing and those who find themselves right up against the wall. When they came or they thought this province at one time was an affordable province, and they're finding out that's not the case any more. Every day they have more expenses. And they see a government that lacks any vision, any vision at all, to tackle those issues — vision and commitment.

Before we get started though, I do want to say a couple of thanks as tradition is with a budget speech. To my own constituency assistant, Leslie Bennett, who's doing a fantastic job in the office. And we get a lot of calls, particularly around housing and social assistance, about issues that people are finding themselves in situations they hoped they would never find themselves in, and here they are today because of the lack of commitment, lack of government, that this government really shows. And so we have some real worries here when we take a look that if perchance this budget is passed, what this will mean for all people here in Saskatchewan. This is a real worry.

I want to just take a moment and recognize the two previous speakers from our side. Regina Rosemont, the MLA from Regina Rosemont, has done a wonderful job in terms of talking about the debt and how this is the last government that's using outdated methods in terms of calculating debt. It's a shame when we have a government that hangs on to the old-fashioned ways. We all know the better way to do it and we should be doing it.

And then as well, the member from Regina Coronation Park talked eloquently about royalties and how we should take a second look. When we're only getting a nickel on a dollar, this is a sad, sad situation, a sad, sad situation. We need to open this up. We understand just yesterday in the UK [United Kingdom] that they're talking about increasing royalties, and it's received by the resource companies as a fact of the matter of doing, when you're doing business — that when you have a stable government, that reviews are all on the board. So this is very important.

But I do want to talk about some of the issues of this government in terms of its last budget. And we're still waiting

to see . . . They're very proud of some of the promises they've kept in terms of the promises made on the election trail. But one that they still will not do is the all-party committee on children exploited through the sex trade. And we have not had an explanation of why they have cancelled that, why they have broken that promise, why has it fallen through the cracks. And we know that children are very important. And in a year that they are saying that they're going to put children first, centre place, the first thing they're going to do is break their promise upon an all-party committee. How ironic is that? The one promise they made about children in the last budget, in the last campaign, it's the first one that they've broke. Here we are and this is an opportunity they could have changed it, but they didn't.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to take a minute and talk about housing because clearly that's an issue that's number one and forefront on everyone's mind. And I think this is something we need to take some time to talk about.

Now sadly today, the *Leader-Post* and *The StarPhoenix*, when they listed the highlights of this budget, housing didn't even make the rank of a highlight. How is it this government cannot make housing a priority? When the papers looked at what were the priorities of this government, what did they see? A lot of other things, but housing did not make it on the list, did not even make it on the list.

The ordinary Joe and Jane citizen of Saskatchewan, they're looking at this budget and they say, you know what? It doesn't seem to be a priority of this government, not a priority of this government. The discount to the hoteliers made the list. That was a highlight. And I understand through the blogs and different Internet sources, that seems to be a priority, not housing. How is it? How is it this government can say on one hand it is and on the other hand it isn't?

And I know that the members opposite will say, well we've done some other things; we're doing other things and we're very proud of that. But 1.7 million, you know, I said to the papers and I said it was an embarrassment, and it truly is an embarrassment that in a province like this, a province like this, that we cannot do more for people who are left homeless, who are right up against the wall when it comes time to paying rent, exorbitant rent. They're being gouged. And this government can't even make it a priority.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is interesting. And I want to talk a bit about some of these things. You know, the government yesterday, the minister in his speech talked about how it was going to be 300 or 350 rental units that were going to be targeted through their \$1.5 million initiative — 300 or 350. In fact in this budget summary, it goes on and I'll quote because this is very important. I quote:

More will be done to address this important need:

In 2011-12, the Province will provide \$1.5 million to assist municipalities in their efforts to increase the supply of affordable rental housing in the province. This is expected to develop up to 300 [up to 300] rental units."

And I'll end the quote there.

Now much has been made about this little brochure that's floating around. Now it's not quite too little, everybody can see it, but I want to quote from it because it's very, very important. It says, and I quote:

We are investing in Affordable Housing

Up to \$1.5 million in up-front provincial incentives to apartment builders to offset the cost of education property tax on as many as 650 new units per year.

So how can it be 650 in here, and in here it's 300?

We know this is the Minister of Social Services who has a hard time with numbers, has a hard time with numbers — 300 in here; 650 in here. How does that work? Didn't anybody check the numbers over there . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh they yell out, it's expansion. They're looking . . . I mean so this really isn't the budget document? I have some real concerns because we have some real issues here. We have some real issues.

You know, as people from, MLAs, we struggle to make sure we're accurate and honest. In fact this government campaigned on being transparent and accountable. But they can't keep track of how many housing units they are making as a priority. Is it 300, 350? Is it 600, 650? We have some real issues with that. We have some real issues with that.

And, you know, here we have, and much has been made . . . In fact actually the speeches prior from the government side talked about the 30 or 34 million that was already announced about a month ago. We have some real concerns about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because 34 million divided by 100 communities, we do the math, I think that's \$340,000 a community. That's approximately one and a half units per community. Now clearly that's not feasible. Some will be a lot smaller with maybe some minor renovations, that type of thing, and some will be bigger.

But we have the Minister of Social Services, and she was on CBC last Friday, and I'll read from the transcripts, you know, when they're talking about . . . And I quote: "But I do know that things like 34 million were recently announced for affordable housing." She goes on to say, "There is about 100. There is over 100 in Regina and 60 in Saskatoon." So she's talking about units, so we know that 160 units between the two cities are going to eat up a big chunk of the 34 million. And the questions are, these are units that haven't been opened. And I think the broadcaster, the interviewer was trying to say, are they open right now? Are they new units or are they old units? What are they? Well again the minister was very vague, ummed and ahhed about this. She says, and I quote, "They've been under Sask Housing. We didn't have the funds to fix them up. They're still there structurally. On the outside they're ready to be rejuvenated or remodelled so the people can move in. So they must be closed right now, I assume." So we have some questions and we want to know which places is she talking about.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have some real concerns about this government as they move forward in terms of housing and their

commitment, you know, to housing because clearly 1.7 million . . . What a signal, what a signal to the people of Saskatchewan. This government is talking about a summit coming up in April, in mid-April and, you know, I'm thinking about that and I'm thinking that, okay, people are going to come to the summit and they're going to say, so what tools, what kind of resources do we have? What kind of resources does this government . . . What kind of resources will they be able to use?

And the minister's going to say, you know what? We've got \$1.7 million, \$1.7 million for 300 new units, 300 new units, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know, we know . . . In fact, these are her own words about the housing shortfall. This is what she said in that same interview last Friday, and I quote, "And we know we're going to need closer to 7,000." Seven thousand units by her own estimation, and she puts out 300 — 300. And we don't even know if it's for two years or three years, or is it just a one-year program. This is very sad indeed, and this is why I had to say to the media that this is an embarrassment for the people of Saskatchewan that a government would have the nerve to come forward with a housing program like this. This is absolutely shameful.

And so we demand more for our government, and we need to see more. And so what we need to see though, Mr. Speaker, is a comprehensive housing strategy. And this is the type of thing that we'll be debating this weekend at our policy convention. We're looking forward to it. We'll have hundreds of people there willing to talk about issues that matter to people in Saskatchewan, and of course housing's going to be front and centre.

[12:45]

And of course our strategy really focuses around three main areas that we're going to be talking about this weekend. One is affordable home ownership, making sure those people who want to own a home have that option in some way. We want to make sure that's front and centre.

The second thing really is about ending homelessness here in Saskatchewan. And this government did not even mention that yesterday, didn't even mention homelessness and those folks who have found themselves in very difficult spots where they don't even have a place to call home. Here we have a government that's fighting for photo ID [identification] to make sure that people are limited in their ability to vote, and yet they do nothing around homelessness. This is a shameful situation.

And of course the third thing that we think is very, very important is that whole issue around the rental market failure. And there really, truly has been a market failure when it comes to rental properties in Saskatchewan. You know, Mr. Speaker, we know we've lost at least 4,000 units, and the minister will say it's closer to 7,000 units in the rental market. I think that's what she's talking about. We need to pay real attention to this, real attention to this. And so what we're talking about on this side: some real options, some real options. We need to make sure there are strong incentives, strong incentives for the private market to want to enter in to building apartment buildings.

We think there's a real opportunity. We look at Winnipeg that had a record year last year in terms of rental apartment starts,

you know. And the Minister of Social Services, I'm glad she's chirping in because, you know, there are ways of making second generation rent control work. There are ways, and one of them is to make exemptions. And we can do that here in Saskatchewan. You can really have that discussion about making exemptions for new builds, for the mom and pop apartments, that type of thing. We can do that. We can build it for Saskatchewan. But her answer is, no way. Absolutely no way.

And we think it deserves a second look. Both the University of Winnipeg have recently issued a paper, January 31st — I'd be very happy to provide the folks opposite a copy of it — talking about rent controls and their role within the marketplace. Interestingly even the University of Calgary's done a paper about this, and they've talked on at length about how there can be solid incentives for the private marketplace. It can work, but we do need second generation rent controls, rent controls that work for the people, both landlords and tenants here in Saskatchewan. It's a reality, and it's something that can happen for sure.

You know when the Minister of Social Services joins in, she often, in her answers in question period, will talk about experts. She'd talk about economists who say that rent controls don't work.

And you know, I actually went back, and I did a little research on the people that she's quoting. And one of her favourite economists is James Buchanan, co-founder of public choice theory. And he's the one who won the Nobel Prize for economics, and anybody who wins the Nobel Prize clearly we should listen to, maybe not agree with but should listen to. But this is what he had to say when he was interviewed, and this is where this quote comes from that the minister often uses with the Frontier College in Winnipeg. Actually it was a conference in Montreal in the early 2000s that this happened . . . and was asking about rent control.

The other thing that James Buchanan said that should be on the hit list, minimum wage levels are another classic example of what economists universally oppose. So here you have . . . I wonder if this minister also is on the side of those who say minimum wage has to go. If she agrees with James Buchanan on rent controls, does she also agree with James Buchanan when it comes to minimum wage?

But this is a shocking answer that James Buchanan says. The Frontier people say, so how do you eliminate it? James Buchanan goes, well eventually people have to learn the economic argument the hard way. And, boy, in Saskatchewan are they learning the hard way from this government. They are learning the hard way from this government when it comes to housing policies.

Now the other one the minister she loves to quote is that what economists agree on. And they go on to say that 93 per cent of a ceiling on rent reduces quality and quantity of rental properties. Okay, well what else does this group agree on? They agree on ending agricultural subsidies. Does she agree with that? Does she agree with that? Eighty-five per cent of them say we should end agricultural subsidies. They interfere with the marketplace. They also go on to say of course the minimum wage, that

should be cut.

But here's one. This is a group that's been talking a lot about the dome and all of that. Here it is. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies for professional sport franchises. Eighty-five per cent of them agree that we should end subsidies to professional sport groups. Does she agree with that? Or is she picking and choosing?

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of concerns about the housing, and one — before I move and I leave housing — is what happened to Head Start? What happened to Head Start? I've got to tell you; last year at this time, there was a big announcement. The former minister of Social Services said, you wait, in a week or two we're going to have a big announcement about Head Start, affordable home ownership program. A year later, nothing. A year later, not a word, not a word. And this is their commitment to affordable home ownership? Wait a year?

An Hon. Member — They were going to build a domed stadium.

Mr. Forbes: — They were going to build a domed stadium instead. And then we heard about it again in the Throne Speech. We heard about it again in the Throne Speech. And what happened? We didn't hear a word again. The press release came out. We wait a couple of weeks, more details to follow. Not a word, not a word.

So here we have the same press release coming out for the third time, for the third time about Head Start and not a word. Will we hear something next week? Will we really . . .

An Hon. Member: — We're betting on four.

Mr. Forbes: — Betting on four. How many press releases will we get out of this Head Start program? We got three. Will we get four? Will it be five? I don't know. I don't know. It wasn't mentioned, I don't believe, ironically it wasn't mentioned in this document that talked about . . . Now what is the number? Is it 300 or 600? What is the real number? Head Start didn't make it into this document, so what is happening there? I don't know. I don't know.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have some real, real concerns about this budget, and I know people in my riding and people right across this province have some real concerns. There's so many things they started. And I would like to know when they had set this money aside — you know, and we were just talking about this — they'd set some money aside for the dome, where did that money go? People were hoping that money would go to something like homes, something like homes. That would be really something that I think would be very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on, I do want to say that I think this minister here . . . If there's anybody who should be an advocate for rent control, it should be this minister, this minister for sure. You know the rental housing supplement . . . And we're very proud that we started that program. And when we started that program, it was budgeted at 4 to \$6 million. And looking at the numbers, 2007-08 it was \$6 million allotted; to spend was 5.6 million. 2008-09 went to 7.1 but it actually spent 10.6 million. 2009-10 they actually spent 17.978, 17 million. Last year they

budgeted 22 million. We don't know where that's going. But this year, do you know how much we're spending on rental supplements? Thirty-one million, 31 million.

And I've asked this minister. I've said, you know I like this program. It's important for people who are up against the wall paying high rents. But do you know, yes, who's getting the money? Who is getting the money? Who's getting the \$31.6 million? When you think rental supplement's getting \$31.6 million, and their housing initiatives get 1.7, how does that work? And we don't know who's getting the 31 million.

Now the minister will say the tenants are getting it. Yes, the tenants are getting it for about two seconds because it goes right into the landlord's hands. But we don't know who the landlords are. We don't know who the landlords are. And this is a real, real issue, and something should be done. And the Minister of Social Services, when you have taxpayers' money of over \$31 million, this has to be addressed. This has to be addressed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know we're coming right up to one o'clock, and there's a couple of other comments I want to make. You know, when we talk about the cost of living, we know the price of food's going to go up next week. This morning on the news, Royal Bank says they're anticipating it's going to go up 8 per cent, and we've seen no increase in the basic allowance. I don't know what people are going to do. I don't know what they're going to do. We hear stories of people paying 70 per cent, 80 per cent of their income, their total, all their money on one item, one item: rent.

An Hon. Member: — But they're not going to pay tax.

Mr. Forbes: — They're not going to pay tax. They're not going to pay tax. I mean, I just don't know. I mean this is incredible. This is incredible what they've done to the poorest people in this province. And we have an opportunity when we have some choices to make, and what did they choose? What did they choose? We have some real concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the CBO sector that's being left stranded after the big, big CBO summits we've had in the last little while where there was Equal Justice for All, Welfare Rights, Tamara's House. We see a government that's abandoned the CBO sector, abandoned them. The CBO sector was very clear during the summits about how they needed support. They need support. They didn't have the capacity to do that kind of work. And yet we have a government that's turning to the CBO work area to do more and more of the government's work, and they're leaving them stranded. They're leaving stranded.

And when they can't do the job, they say . . . The government puts up their hands and walks away and said, you know, this group just doesn't have the tools to do the job. Well they knew they didn't have the tools to do their job. They knew years ago they didn't have the tools. They asked for help, and they were left abandoned. And these folks are doing the jobs, helping the people out who need the help the most in our communities, and they're just being abandoned.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we will be talking about that this week. We will be talking about it this weekend at our policy convention.

This is hugely important.

I just want to touch on the child welfare thing. I think that's an important issue, very important. We have called for an all-party committee. I just want to also highlight the irony here. We see budget lines within this ministry that constantly overspend. They constantly overspend. And we see other budget lines where they constantly under spend, they under spend. For example, in the child and family services for the last records we have, 2009, they made a big deal of spending \$158 million. They were going to spend \$158 million. That year they spent 130. Twenty-eight million dollars was left on the table. And so they're going to make a big deal about spending more money, but will they actually spend it?

And we know here we have a minister who again has a hard time with numbers. She'll argue with the auditor, loves arguing with the auditor, doesn't know how much the Linkin system cost, doesn't know. She thinks it still costs \$15 million. We know from Public Accounts it cost \$18 million. She likes to argue those numbers. Somehow she's got a better answer, and she doesn't mind taking it up with other folks.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have some real issues because when you are spending that kind of money and leaving that kind of money on the table for children who need the help, families who need the help, I have some real concerns. And that's why we're calling for more accountability, more accountability on this very important issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've got to say that we could do so much more in this province. We need to take a look at the royalty structures that we have in terms of potash and uranium. We need to do the right thing. It's people standing up for people in Saskatchewan. We don't see that Premier standing up for the people, especially the thousands of people they're leaving behind, the thousands of people.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment for sure. This budget does not work, does not give any advantage to the less fortunate, the ones that are being left behind in Saskatchewan, and I will be opposing the main budget. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Being near 1 o'clock, this Assembly will adjourn until Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Draude6881
McMorris.....6881
Junor6881
Ottenbreit6881

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Higgins6881
Forbes6881
Brotten6882
Iwanchuk6882
Quennell.....6882
Wotherspoon6882

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Purple Day for Epilepsy
Junor6882
The Saskatchewan Advantage
Brkich6883
Social Workers Support Human Rights
Forbes6883
Population Growth
Heppner6883
Sexual Assault Centre Celebrates 30 Years
Taylor.....6884
Dinner Supports Restorative Action Program
Schriemer6884
Earth Hour
Morin6884

QUESTION PERIOD

Security of Health Information
Lingenfelter6885
McMorris.....6885
College Merger
Brotten6886
Norris.....6886
Membership in the Enterprise Club
Quennell.....6887
Boyd6888
Provincial Budget
Wotherspoon6888
Krawetz.....6888

MOTION UNDER RULE 59

Audit of Colleges
Brotten6889

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Wotherspoon6890
Trew6895
Heppner6898
Huyghebaert.....6901
Forbes6904

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