



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

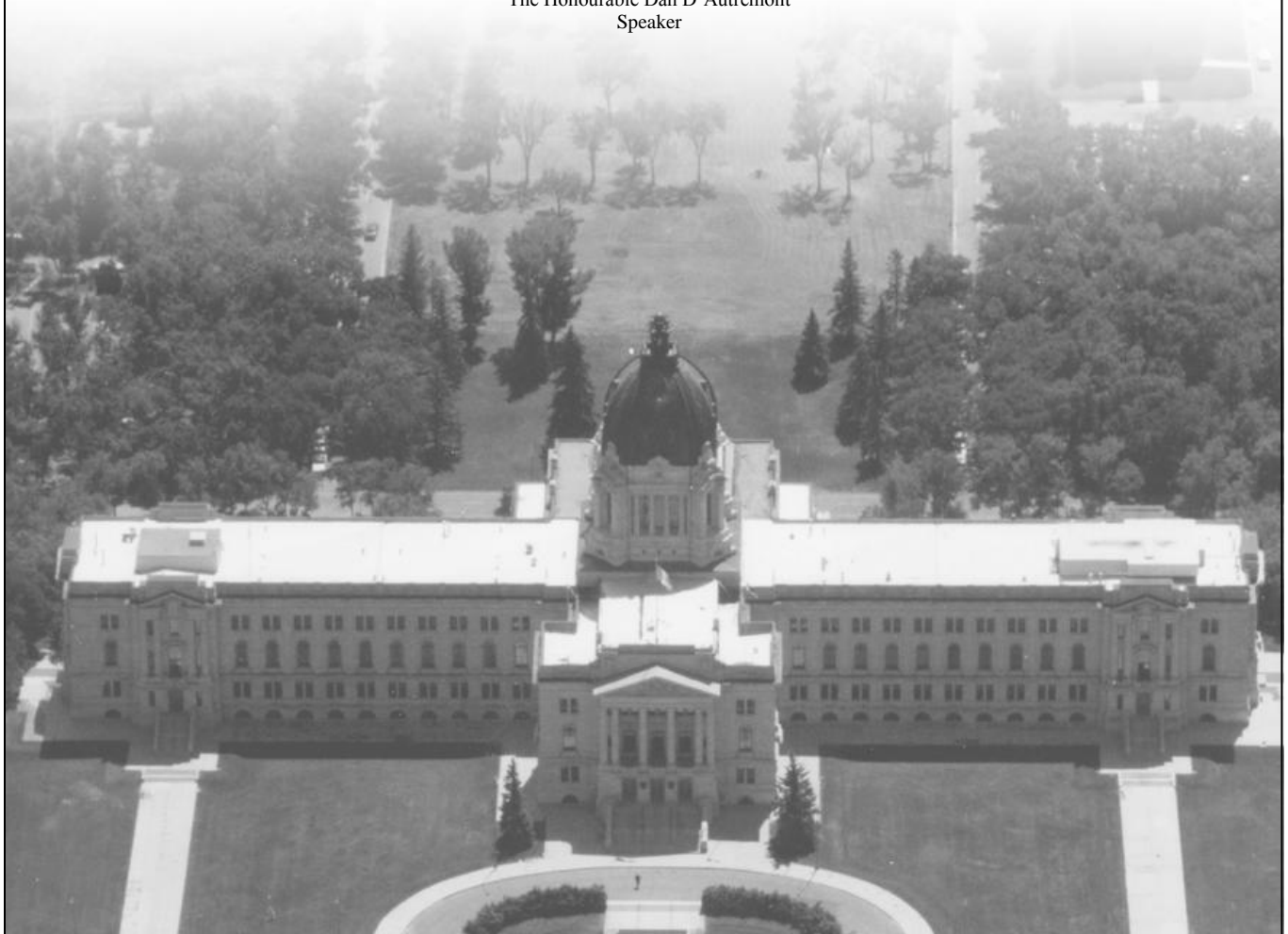
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I am excited to introduce two of the four school groups that are here today, two from Regina Douglas Park. First of all, a group of 23 grade 7 and 8's from St. Augustine School in Regina. Just a sidebar with that one, I attended grade 1 at St. Augustine School in 1951, Mr. Speaker. I'll let the students do the math. And 24 grade 7 and 8 students from Regina Douglas Park School, Mr. Speaker.

The students are here today to participate in the initiative of a day at the legislature, the Legislative Building, Mr. Speaker, as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of this great building. You know, Mr. Speaker, although it's a celebration and an anniversary, it's more than that for our students. It's an opportunity to experience the curriculum first-hand. It's a living curriculum. I applaud the initiative, and I welcome all of our students. And I ask all of the members of the Assembly to welcome the students, their teachers, and chaperones to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I may make one more introduction while I'm on the floor. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize and introduce Ms. Gwen Jacobson to the Assembly, a former colleague of mine and good friend who was instrumental in the formation of this program with her colleagues at the Capital Commission. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly, Gwen. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I am pleased to join in with introductions here today as it relates to the 100th year anniversary project for students here today. And I'm so pleased to welcome that bright group of students that are sitting right up here, Mr. Speaker, and this group of grade 8's are from St. Joan of Arc in Regina Rosemont. It's my pleasure to have these students join us here today. I'd like to also introduce their teachers, Ms. Kenny and Ms. Fischer.

It's a pleasure to have the students and the teachers here today for the proceedings, for the activity, for the interactions. I know there's opportunities to ask questions to members here today, and I look forward to our meeting here today at 2 o'clock. So I ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these bright students, these teachers and to be gracious with them and to answer their questions throughout the day for this very important project here today — an important celebration of the 100th year anniversary of our Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a school group that I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members, Mr. Speaker. They're from Balgonie, and I believe they're in the east gallery sitting up there. They are also in for a day in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, honouring the 100th anniversary of this magnificent building.

I believe they are going to be spending most of the day here, and I look forward to meeting with them at 2 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, where hopefully I can answer maybe more questions than I answered on the floor earlier in the day. So I'd like all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I would like to welcome a group of individuals seated in your gallery. And this is a group of seniors, Mr. Speaker, who have some concerns about issues in the province and work very hard on behalf of seniors throughout the year.

These are representatives from the Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees, representatives from the Saskatchewan Seniors Association, as well as representatives from the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism. So I would thank them for the work that they've done throughout their working careers in the province and the work that they continue to do. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature today, I'd like to introduce 14 students from the Eastend School, comprised of grade 11 and 12 participants this year. We have with them teachers, Marie Hanson and Shelley Morvik, and the fellow driving the bus is Terry Pommier from Shaunavon.

I want to acknowledge the fact that this is the 100th anniversary of this tremendous building. And I don't know if they're here specifically for that program, but this group of students come to the legislature virtually every year or every other year. And the teachers have been very faithful in making this pilgrimage. If they got up this morning, they were up very early. I see somebody nodding. That 395 kilometres from Eastend to this building is a long trip first thing in the morning. So I would ask all members to make them very warmly welcomed.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members in this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to welcome folks in the galleries here today who are with the film and television industry or work in the industry. They're here for the proceedings, to see question period and to watch the budget

vote which will have a very negative impact on their careers. These are folks who contribute to our economy and enhance our quality of life. And they should be supported by their government and not told that they don't contribute enough.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome everybody from the film and television industry who are impacted by this decision around the tax credit to your Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague from the opposition, I would like to welcome especially Holly Schick who is with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism. She's worked very hard to ensure that we're always brought up to date on issues that are of concern to seniors. I've had the opportunity to attend conferences and work closely with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism. So we appreciate all of the members here that are attending to observe the Legislative Assembly today. So thank you very much and welcome.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce a guest to this House: Aaron Nagy from Yorkton. And he's sitting in the west gallery, if you could give a wave there, Aaron. Aaron is the driving force behind Jimmy's law, Bill 601. It was his friend, Jimmy Ray Wiebe, who was shot last June. And he's worked very hard on this Bill. He's done a lot of work online getting thousands of signatures and really been pushing this to make sure people who work late-night hours are safe every night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Saskatoon in welcoming Aaron Nagy to this Assembly, a long-time resident of Yorkton. I've known him and his family for many, many years. He's well-known in the radio industry in Yorkton. And many wouldn't know, he's a newlywed and welcomed his lovely bride back to our city, brought her from Manitoba. So I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Aaron to his Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot two times and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders. But we know, Mr. Speaker, that from positive statistics that show that convenience store and gas station robberies are down by one-third since 1999 largely due to increased safety practices including two people working together on late-night shifts. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully

request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately enact Bill 601, Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late night hours.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Moose Jaw and Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions from people from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the management and accounting of our finances. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

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

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm standing today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to support the seniors' bill of rights:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that many Saskatchewan seniors live on fixed incomes and are victims of physical, emotional, and financial abuse; that Saskatchewan seniors have a right to social and economic security and a right to live free from poverty; that Saskatchewan seniors have a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to enact a Saskatchewan seniors' bill of rights, which would provide Saskatchewan seniors with social and economic security and protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of the reinstatement of the film employment tax credit. The petition mentions the reality that the film employment credit is in fact money in rather than money out for our province, the reality that this industry has leveraged every dollar in the province to turn around and bring \$6 into the province, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan continue to provide a tax incentive for film, video, and television employment to leverage investment, employment, and growth in the province's film, video, and television sector.

This petition is signed by residents of Regina and Humboldt and complements an online petition that was presented yesterday in part, actually more than 7,000 signatures to the minister's assistant yesterday. And that petition is still growing strong, going strong, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I so submit.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are a concern for our traditional trappers. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience be valued; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to trapping regulations and firearm use in consultation with traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Saskatoon Contacts

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize this year's Saskatchewan Midget AAA Hockey League championships, the Saskatoon Contacts.

The Contacts claimed the provincial title against the Prince Albert Mintos with a 2 to 1 victory at Schroh Arena last weekend. They finished at the top of the standings in the regular season and have appeared in the SMAAAHL [Saskatchewan Midget AAA Hockey League] provincial championship final the last three seasons.

The team is in Virden, Manitoba today to play in the Telus Cup

western regionals which are being held March 29th to April 1st. The winner will represent the west region at the 2012 Telus Cup in Leduc, Alberta. The top two teams face off in the championship game Sunday at 1 p.m.

I must admit, though, Mr. Speaker, I have a personal bias in my enthusiastic support for the Contacts — that would be my brother Marc is the head coach and my nephew Rourke plays on the team. But I think it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatoon Riversdale produces some fine hockey players, to which my constituents, the proud grandparents of players Dawson Leedahl and Rylan Parenteau, would also attest.

The Contacts also draw inspiration from another one of their leaders, Jim McIntyre. The former head coach and current governor of the team recently had open-heart surgery. He won't be attending games until he recovers. He was involved in one way or the other with the Contacts for over 30 years. They want to win it for Mr. Mac, says Head Coach Chartier.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the players, coaches, fans, and volunteers for the 2012 Saskatchewan Midget AAA Hockey League championship, the Saskatoon Contacts, and to wish them all well this weekend. Thank you.

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

#### Provincial Budget

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week we introduced the 2012-13 provincial budget and, Mr. Speaker, it is the only balanced budget in Canada. This budget makes important investments in Saskatchewan's future and our province is becoming the envy of our neighbours to the east. Tom Brodbeck of the *Winnipeg Sun* said, and I quote:

. . . our Prairie cousins to the immediate west are teaching us a hard lesson in Economics 101.

Saskatchewan Finance Minister Ken Krawetz tabled a balanced budget this week at a time when many provinces are complaining about how hard it is to stay in the black these days.

Not in Saskatchewan . . .

Mr. Speaker, while we are balancing our budget and ensuring a sustainable future, the NDP [New Democratic Party] continue to cling to their election platform with its promised spending increases of more than \$5 billion. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the opposition Finance critic for attempting to distance himself from this platform earlier, but it's a shame he was forced to recant.

Mr. Speaker, last fall the people of this province soundly rejected the NDP platform. They voted instead for a responsible approach. Mr. Speaker, we can clearly see that our provincial budget is sustainable, the only balanced budget in our country. Mr. Speaker, we are keeping the Saskatchewan advantage.

[10:15]

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

### Saskatoon Young Women's Christian Association Celebrates 100 Years

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past year was full of celebration at the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Saskatoon as they mark their 100th year of service in the Saskatoon community.

From a one-room cottage in the early 1900s to a facility today that serves in excess of 8,000 clients annually, they have grown and prospered. Donors, employees, and volunteers have been the backbone of the YWCA for 100 years. The past century have been marked with challenges, excitement, and opportunities. As they enter their second century, they are full of optimism and have launched a number of exciting new programs.

Mr. Speaker, the YWCA continues to provide important programming for girls and women in Saskatoon, including economic literacy programs, girls' education programs, and the YWCA encore, an eight-week breast cancer recovery program described by one of the participants as:

... [bringing] together a group of women with diverse stories who grew and healed a little [bit] every Tuesday afternoon. What the doctors and health specialists didn't tell us, we learned together and shared together at encore.

This is just one example of the YWCA's commitment to women, children, and families in our community. Many more stories and examples can be found in a publication from the anniversary committee that summarizes the past 100 years, an excellent tribute to the hard work and dedication that have grown the YWCA, without which hundreds of thousands of lives would be very different today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in celebrating the YWCA Saskatoon 100th year of service. And I hope many will continue to support the great work they do in our community. Thank you.

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

### Provincial Senior Men's Hockey Champions

**Mr. Brkich:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you may wonder why there hasn't been much mention about hockey these days. Well I can tell you why. First up we'll talk about the provincial senior men's D hockey champions, the Kenaston Blizzards. Secondly the provincial senior men's C champions are the Davidson Cyclones. And thirdly the provincial senior men's B champions are the Drake Canucks. Well you may wonder what they all have in common. Well they're all located in the constituency of champions, Arm River-Watrous. And the only reason we couldn't sweep the senior men's A championship is because we don't yet have a town large enough. But given the budgets we've passed and the growth in Arm River-Watrous, we'll soon have a team that I believe can sweep all four provincial titles.

And also I'd like to mention, Davidson won their league. Kenaston Blizzards are also in their league final against Rosetown, which I fully expect them to win. And also the

Davidson Huskies peewees also captured their title in the Moose Jaw minor tier III league.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me congratulating these teams and their victories and being provincial champions. And I want to remind everyone, when it comes to hockey, Arm River-Watrous rules.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

### Gairdner Wightman Award

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate an alumnus of the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Lorne Babiuk, on receiving the Gairdner Wightman Award for research and medical science, specifically for his many years of dedicated work in vaccine development.

Dr. Babiuk has an impressive academic background including having received three degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. He has spent much of his professional life at the university, having joined the faculty there in 1973. In 2007 Dr. Babiuk joined the University of Alberta. In addition to his duties as a researcher and supervisor of Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] candidates at both the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and the U of A [University of Alberta], he is a professor in the school of public health and the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Babiuk was a key figure in the development of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, commonly known as VIDO, in Saskatoon. VIDO has grown from an organization of just a few individuals to one that now has 170 researchers. Since officially opening in September, 2011, VIDO has developed seven vaccines, five of which are world firsts.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to once again join me in congratulating Dr. Babiuk on receiving this prestigious award and to thank him for his innovative work in the field of medical science.

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

### Fraud Prevention Month

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this House to announce that March is Fraud Prevention Month in Saskatchewan. Fraud is a concern for 93 per cent of Saskatchewan residents, according to statistics gathered by a TD Canada Trust poll.

There were many groups working together throughout this month to promote education and improve fraud enforcement. These initiatives of these groups was to focus on educating citizens regarding fraudulent activities and are occurring with increased regularity, and test the fraud prevention knowledge of Canadian citizens. It is encouraging to note that Saskatchewan residents use more care when conducting financial transactions and controlling their financial accounts compared to the national average.

Financial institutions use sophisticated monitoring and

detection tools and work in close contact with law enforcement to minimize fraud. However there is always room for more improvement. Some citizens will send their credit card numbers over an email or tell others their PIN [personal identification number] numbers, and some even carry their PIN number in their wallet. Criminals love these types of slip-ups, allowing them to clean out bank accounts of run up credit card charges.

I would like to thank these groups and take this opportunity to thank all the organizations working in our province to minimize the negative effects of fraud. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative

**Mr. Parent:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to bring your attention to our government's commitment to improving access to surgery. Timely surgical care is a high priority for our government. Our goal is to provide sooner, safer, smarter surgical care for patients. By 2014 we all want Saskatchewan patients to be able to have their surgery within three months and have a better experience through their surgical journey.

Mr. Speaker, our provincial budget is investing 60.5 million this year in the Saskatchewan surgical initiative over and above the health region's base funding. It will help them do 4,380 surgeries this year. That's 8,000 surgeries or 10 per cent more than in 2009-10, the year before the surgical initiative began.

Mr. Speaker, we are optimistic that we can reach our ambitious wait time goals. In the past few years, the number of longest waiting patients has shrunk dramatically. In fact, Mr. Speaker, since 2007 the number of patients waiting over 18 months is down 90 per cent. The number waiting over 12 months is down 79 per cent. I am proud to say the provincial wait-list is at its lowest level since 2004. Mr. Speaker, we're excited about that and confident we're gaining momentum. I thank our partners in the health regions who are making their great progress possible and helping us put patients first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Support for Seniors

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you want to assess the priorities of a government, you can look at its budget. And in this budget, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that seniors are not a priority. Seniors are being asked to pay a lot more in this budget. Prescription drug costs for seniors are going up considerably, Mr. Speaker. Ambulance trips for seniors are going up. Hygienic supplies for seniors living in long-term care facilities are going up, Mr. Speaker. On so many fronts, seniors are being asked to pay more.

The Sask Party has no problem asking seniors to pay millions more, but then at the same time they turn around, Mr. Speaker, and they're happy to spend millions on more politicians in the province. This does not sit well with the seniors that are here

today. It does not sit well with the seniors that I've spoken to in Saskatchewan.

My question to the minister: how can he explain the contradiction that he's asking seniors to pay more, Mr. Speaker, claiming poverty for seniors' programs, but then can turn around and spend millions more on politicians?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's question and the premise of his question is wrong. We've been through the piece on the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and he's completely wrong on his assertion.

Mr. Speaker, on the senior drug plan, Mr. Speaker, as I've answered earlier, it was a very tough decision. We looked at this program. We wanted to make sure it was sustainable well into the future. And, Mr. Speaker, the fee had not been increased for five years. It was 16 years of NDP government that did nothing for seniors, and on the 11th hour, just before the 2007 election, they brought this program in. We thought it was a good program. It's well received. We want to make it sustainable, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we've increased the deductible from 15 to 20. Even having said that, Mr. Speaker, we pay almost 70 per cent, we subsidize almost 70 per cent of drug costs for seniors. Mr. Speaker, the program is worth \$97 million to our Ministry of Health. We want to see this program continue because we know it's well received.

On the piece around the ambulance fee, Mr. Speaker, for 20 years that fee hadn't been increased. It's been increased from 250 to 275. Again a tough decision, but programs that aren't adjusted, Mr. Speaker, soon have to be cut if those adjustments aren't made.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about tough decisions. Well the decision facing the minister is either providing program support for seniors, as identified in my earlier question, or spending more, spending millions on politicians in the province. That is not a difficult decision, Mr. Speaker. That is a no-brainer. And the priority should be with the seniors of Saskatchewan.

I spoke with one couple, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon. They informed me that they have a number of health challenges as a couple. They're seniors. They said that for their household it means that the changes to the drug plan will mean that they pay over \$1,100 more per year. And many seniors are on multiple prescriptions, in the province. I welcome changes to the senior income plan, Mr. Speaker, but the problem is for most seniors that's being eaten up by a higher cost of living and now more expensive prescription drugs.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has millions for politicians, millions for their own self-interest, Mr. Speaker, while making seniors in this province pay more. That's simply not correct. My question to the minister: when he made this decision to increase the drug plan cost for seniors and the other costs as

well, did he speak with seniors and let them know? Did he hear from them how this would impact their quality of life here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll say that there have been a number of changes over the last four and a half years from the previous NDP government, starting with the senior income program, Mr. Speaker, that was implemented under the NDP and then not adjusted for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. In the first few years of our government, Mr. Speaker, we were able to double the senior income program, Mr. Speaker. In the upcoming years we're almost going to triple the senior income program, Mr. Speaker. In the last four years, Mr. Speaker, in the last four years, Mr. Speaker, the single senior who has an income of about \$25,000 has seen their income tax drop from \$1,000 down to 300. That's a saving of over \$700 a year, Mr. Speaker, under this government. Never would have seen under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked to seniors about this program. They love the program and they want to make sure it's sustainable, Mr. Speaker. Under those NDP, it never would have been.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, it is this minister, it is this government that is taking more from seniors in Saskatchewan. It is this minister, it is this government that is asking seniors to pay millions more in the province of Saskatchewan under his watch. Last week, Mr. Speaker, I referenced a recent piece in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* that highlighted that access to prescriptions has already been affected in Canada by cost. We know, Mr. Speaker, with the cost of prescription drugs for seniors going up 33 per cent, that this will have an effect.

Mr. Speaker, for ambulance trips in the province, seniors will be asked to pay more in order for the government to save \$675,000. For long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, seniors living in long-term care facilities are being asked to pay for hygienic supplies in order to save \$854,000. Yet at the same time, Mr. Speaker, they've got millions more for more politicians here in the province.

How does this sit with the minister? I know it does not sit well with Saskatchewan seniors. My question to the minister: how can he be willing to spend millions more on politicians here in the province, something that no one in Saskatchewan wants, and at the same time ask Saskatchewan seniors to pay more?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Let's be very clear, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for 16 years under the NDP government, they did nothing to subsidize senior drug costs until just before an election that they thought they were going to lose — they did lose, Mr. Speaker — and finally they started to cover them. We're going to make sure that program is sustainable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue about \$20 a month for senior care

homes, Mr. Speaker, most health regions in this province already charge that. Guess when that charge came in, Mr. Speaker? Those charges came in under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. The vast majority of seniors already pay that charge. What we're doing is equalizing it across the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure if he ever got a chance to govern again, he'd roll all that back. Oh, I'm sure he would, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they implemented it; we're equalizing it, Mr. Speaker. I know it's not the easiest for certain seniors, Mr. Speaker, but there are seniors that will actually see their costs decrease.

[10:30]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, it's unbelievable that this minister would say this decision is about fairness. The decision facing members opposite is this: they can spend millions more on politicians in the province or they can help seniors in a way that it is needed through an affordable prescription drug plan. That is the decision that members opposite are making. This is not about fairness. Well it is about fairness in the big issue, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite should do what is really fair and not be adding more politicians to the province.

Mr. Speaker, they're asking seniors to pay more for prescription drugs. They're asking seniors to pay more for ambulance trips. They're asking seniors to pay more for hygienic products in long-term care facilities. But they're happy, Mr. Speaker, to turn around and spend millions more on politicians. Seniors, Mr. Speaker, do not agree with this. Saskatchewan people do not agree with this. My question to the minister: will he go over to the Premier today and tell him that their priorities are all mixed up?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you the priorities of this government. The priorities of this government are reducing the surgical wait times, Mr. Speaker — the lowest number of people waiting for surgery since records were kept starting in 2004. That's a priority of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you the other priority of this government. Since 2007 we've seen an increase in cancer funding to the Cancer Agency by 76 per cent, reducing wait times. That's a priority of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you the priority of that government. They would tear up crop insurance contracts, Mr. Speaker, like they did in the '80s. He already said he'd take money from agriculture to support whatever other programs he wanted to do. He'd rip up revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, from municipalities.

That's the priorities of this government. We follow our commitments. We continue to follow our commitments, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan kind of like it.



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

### Support for the Film Industry

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In last year's debate about the budget less than a year ago, the minister was proud to take a different course than New Brunswick who had just cancelled its own tax credit for the film industry. The minister said:

The funding here has not been cancelled, Mr. Speaker. It has been maintained and [it] has been increased. They're [SMPIA — Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association] happy about that and we're pleased to see their reaction.

To the minister: why this extreme change of heart? Why did the Sask Party do a one-eighty on the film and television industry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the member's question, and we certainly welcome members from Saskatchewan's film community to their legislature today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a number of people have said they wanted to hear the *Winnipeg Sun* quote again, so we'll start with an abbreviated excerpt of that. You will remember the headline says, "Sask. kicking our butts with budget." And here's the text:

In Manitoba the NDP government has plunged taxpayers into a deep, structural deficit with no end in sight to the red ink our elected officials have us swimming in . . . So why are they doing so much better in Saskatchewan . . . The Saskatchewan government has maintained a level of discipline in its spending even during relatively good economic times.

"Even during relatively good economic times," Mr. Speaker. The article makes an important point. The best way to keep Saskatchewan's finances strong and avoid the debt and deficit problems other provinces are facing is to deliver balanced budgets. That's exactly what we're doing, and we believe we've made the right choice for Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a foolish week of spin and rhetoric from the Sask Party, but the Premier has an opportunity to put that behind him. With the budget vote today, it's the last chance he has to do the right thing. After seeing the negative impact of this decision, New Brunswick restored its film tax credit. And this wouldn't be the first Saskatchewan premier to admit he got something wrong in a budget. And you know, that's okay. We're all human. This is about being a leader and acknowledging that you've made a mistake that impacts thousands of people and has incredible negative impact on the province.

To the Premier: will the Premier step up, do the right thing, and reverse this decision on the tax credit?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, NewsTalk radio's John Gormley, well known to the Leader of the Opposition, has found an interesting counterpoint in the film employment tax credit discussion. He quotes filmmaker Gavin Polone, famous for the movie *Zombieland*, as follows:

I've received funding from the federal government of Canada; the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba; the states of Georgia, Louisiana, New York, and California; and New York city. I believe these subsidies, both in the US and abroad, need to stop. They're bad economics. I'm not against the credits because I'm a filmmaker. I'm against them because I'm a taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, we think he's right. That's why we're moving away from the old model of direct grants that reward companies whether they pay income tax in Saskatchewan or not, and it's why we're working with the film industry to find creative alternatives within our balanced budget framework.

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

### Protection for Night Shift Workers

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last night I, along with Aaron Nagy, toured Moose Jaw to see the level of protection offered to late-night shift employees, and we'll be continuing this tour out this spring. Now we've heard from the minister that we're going to have a meeting on this, and this is very welcome news indeed.

But, Mr. Speaker, other provinces have brought several safety precautions, through law, requiring that workers cannot be alone during late-night, early-morning hours. And if they are required to work, there must be protective barriers such as locked doors and protective glass. Last night we saw some of these protections. But other locations, it's still hit-and-miss in terms of safety.

To the minister: would he agree that through legislating one or more of these safety precautions, we can better protect our workers here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. I know it's something that he feels very passionately about and I think it's a concern that's shared by all members of the legislature. To the family of Jimmy Ray Wiebe and his friends and supporters, we'd like to thank them and commend them for the hard work that they've done in raising awareness of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the Assembly that the folks at OH & S [occupational health and safety] are doing some work and some research to determine what best practices are. We

appreciate that the motion being brought by the members opposite would require workers to be doubled up at late-night shifts is something that is not viable or particularly beneficial. We had an incident in Kyle a number of years ago where there were two workers in a convenience store. Both were shot and killed.

There are a number of other options that may be better: lighting, minimum amounts of cash, protective barriers, locking systems, appropriate security systems. Those are the type of things that OH & S is looking at, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And indeed the Kyle murders was indeed a tragic situation. But very positive stats show that convenience store and gas station robberies are down by a third since 1999, largely due to increased safety practices including two people working together. And last night, people who we talked to said it's the simplest answer or the best answer. However, armed robberies such as the ones that took place in Regina in January and in my own riding just earlier this month show that we still need to do more work. We must work to ensure that night shift workers are properly protected.

To the minister: would he agree that we must do more to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours? Has this government done enough?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the death of any worker in any of our workplaces in the province is something that's simply unacceptable, especially when the person is a young person. The fact that this took place is something that is just simply not acceptable in our province and it's something that this government takes very seriously.

The people at OH & S are working, trying to develop protocols and something they would recommend for best practices and best procedures. We will review those to determine whether those should be enshrined in legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that we would not want to see the death of this young man be in vain, and I'm sure that's not what his family and friends would want to see happen. They have raised something that is a legitimate concern and is a legitimate concern for all of us. We take it seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we will work with them and have ongoing consultations and do what is absolutely right to ensure the safety and security of people that are working in our province.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the answer. And I just want to recap that we've been doing a lot of work on this issue on behalf of Jimmy Ray Wiebe's family and his advocates because of that tragic death during a robbery while he was at work.

His friends have proposed the idea of Jimmy's law, which

would protect late-night gas and retail workers by ensuring that workers work in pairs or some kind of protection, i.e., the barrier. And this does seem to be a common sense solution. So I want to ask the minister: can he make a commitment today that we will have something before the House before the end of the session?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the member opposite and the members of the Assembly that people at OH & S are working on this. They take it seriously as well. The fact that this tragic death occurred is something that is simply not acceptable. They want to have something in place as soon as possible and as soon as practical.

They are going through a review process comparing what's taken place in other jurisdictions. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that some other jurisdictions have introduced this type of legislation and then backed away from it because (a) it wasn't workable and (b) it was an expense that ended up having the effect of closing late-night convenience stores, gasoline stations. We want to have what is the best practice that affords the most safety, and we will do it as expeditiously as we can, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

### Provincial Budget

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, budgets are only as strong as their foundations, and a strong foundation requires cautious and common sense resource revenue projections. This budget rests on what looks like an overly optimistic estimate, once again, on potash revenues jumping to \$705 million, an increase of 55 per cent or in fact \$250 million more than last year.

It was only three years ago, Mr. Speaker, that this government was wildly off on their estimates and sent the budget of the government off the rails, Mr. Speaker. How did the government arrive at this year's potash revenue projection? What is it based on, and how is it responsible?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget that we've presented, I think, is a very unique budget in that we have seen already five provincial budgets tabled. We're going to see a federal budget tabled this afternoon that has already indicated that it will be a deficit budget. And, Mr. Speaker, our expectations in some discussions with the remaining provinces is that this budget will be the only balanced budget in all of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know over the last week we've had a lot of discussions about where \$11.2 billion should be spent, whether there are priorities in one area or whether there are priorities in another area. Same thing, Mr. Speaker, the member's comments about the potash industry. Clearly we rely on input from the industry. We rely on that information to project what we believe will be a great outcome for the province of

Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this minister speaks about a budgetary balance, and it's nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Not only is the government putting the budget at risk with overly optimistic potash revenue projections; it's cheating the balance sheet by conveniently punting almost \$100 million of public debt onto the books of universities. Universities are going to have to borrow more at higher interest rates than the government can source financing at. It simply doesn't make sense. This is not only a wasteful approach but it costs students in tuition fee increases and program cuts.

Has the minister committed to covering both principal and interest? And can he explain how this wasteful, high-interest arrangement is in the best interest of the public and not just a blatant attempt to cheat his balance sheet?

**The Speaker:** — I would like to caution the member to choose his words much more carefully than he has been. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's clarify some of the information that is in this budget, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want the people of the province of Saskatchewan to understand that we present a very unique situation where we present a General Revenue Fund budget and we present the summary financial budget, Mr. Speaker. Every bit of information that the auditor has talked about in terms of a summary financial statement is contained in this document, Mr. Speaker. Every number's contained in this document.

Mr. Speaker, the member talks about potash. Isn't it interesting now that he talks about, oh, maybe the potash numbers are out a little bit. Mr. Speaker, just last week we have now had our sale to China of 500 000 tonnes, Mr. Speaker, with an option on an additional 200 000 tonnes at a price, Mr. Speaker, that is greater than the price that is projected in this budget. Mr. Speaker, let the member get his facts so he can respond to the people of Saskatchewan in an accurate fashion.

[10:45]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that's one sale, just one sale.

The government's decision to eliminate the film tax credit and try to sell it as savings to the province is nothing more than spin. The fact is this program has no budgetary impact and its impact on this alleged budgetary balance is presenting a phoney choice to the people of Saskatchewan.

By cutting the film tax credit, it's impacting an industry that drives investment in Saskatchewan, that impacts our economy, that drives activity in restaurants and lumberyards, in hotels, and certainly generates millions of dollars back into our economy. Why has this minister chosen to destroy an industry,

the young families it provides work for, and all of the benefits in millions it generates in our province? Be straight; it has nothing to do with the phoney budgetary balance.

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, you know, this document as well as the estimates are looked at by the Provincial Auditor. They have been for years, even when the NDP was in power, Mr. Speaker. And we present that information for everyone to see.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The member talks about the potash industry. We have had \$12 billion worth of investment in the potash industry by the existing players, never mind all of the other companies that are coming into this province, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing the benefits of that because of the royalty structure that the NDP put in place that allows those companies to use that initial investment as a writeoff, Mr. Speaker. And then we're going to project that there indeed is going to be more revenue.

Isn't it interesting, Mr. Speaker? The member opposite wouldn't say, oh well these numbers must be a little fake because the oil industry is projecting \$1.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, \$1.6 billion from the oil industry that that member says, oh no, well that's not accurate because this can't be happening in Saskatchewan. Well under the NDP, it didn't happen. It is now happening in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the federal government has off-loaded hundreds of millions of dollars onto the backs of Saskatchewan people. We've got a government failed to stand up for Saskatchewan people.

On one matter that's so significant, closing the Aboriginal education gap, we can see it as one of our greatest challenges but also one of our greatest opportunities. The benefits are in the billions. Well-respected U of S economist Eric Howe reports that Saskatchewan could reap \$90 billion in benefits through savings in health, justice, and social services and another \$80 billion in economic growth by closing the Aboriginal education outcome gap. Yet there's nothing in the budget of this government. And the federal underfunding of Aboriginal education is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the federal budget is coming down this afternoon, coming down today. What is the budgetary number we are expecting from the federal government to close this gap?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, clearly the member opposite is going to have to wait for the federal budget. I don't know what that number will be. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about what has happened in this province since we have become government, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the advances that have been made in health care, the fact that we are now spending \$60 million on

the surgical wait-list initiative to ensure that people aren't waiting for, in fact, years like they used to under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, we know that education is critical in this province, both in the advanced education side and the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] side. That is why we have invested literally hundreds of millions of dollars more than what the NDP did. Mr. Speaker, it has translated into great things. We know when we look at year over year, there are 5,900 more Aboriginal people working in the province of Saskatchewan because of skills training and the advancements, Mr. Speaker. There are 38 school projects under way, Mr. Speaker, to meet the challenges of ensuring that we replace the deficit infrastructure of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more to do, but I'm excited about the future of Saskatchewan, unlike the NDP who want to go backwards.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to introduce two ladies up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Theresa Maximnuk is a young lady that just started in my office up there, and we look forward to working with her into the future.

The other lady I'd like to acknowledge today, and I think everybody knows, is Deanne Marshall who, when I started as Ag minister, walked in the office at the same time pretty well as I did and has been there for the last four and a half years. And on behalf of the government and myself, I would like to thank her for all the good work she's done on behalf of the ag industry that's made many calls through our office. And to Deanne, I want to thank her on behalf of them. And tomorrow is her last day in our office. She's moving on to a different job tomorrow, so we just want to wish her well and thank her for all the good work she's done for us. Thank you.

### 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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the 2012-2013 budget. And I would like to start by saying that budgets are about choices. They're about choosing those things which are important to the community. We know we have \$11.2 billion that's being spent on behalf of the community and some choices have been made. Unfortunately a number of those choices impact people in the province in ways that send signals about the future of the province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation in our province where 28 per cent of the revenue that is being spent each year comes from non-renewable resource revenue.

So in this particular budget, on page 37 in the summary, it says that the revenue is forecast at 3.1 billion, an increase of 387.2 million. And that increase is the amount that we've just been hearing about as that relates to potash estimates. But, Mr. Speaker, I think the more fundamental question comes about the long-term future of this province. If you continue to build and do what you do on resource revenue that's one-time money, it flows through your system, and you make choices about how you do that. So, Mr. Speaker, we end up having to recognize that that is what happens in our province.

Now I raise that question because it appears that there have been a number of provisions which further facilitate the use of the non-renewable resources of the province — effectively mining products, you know, drilling for oil, exporting oil, all those kinds of things — which then are exported. And we know that Saskatchewan is the biggest exporter in Canada. But what we also recognize is that, for the long-term future of our province, we need to look at the provisions in this budget that relate to people; that relate to the long-term success of our young people and our middle-aged people and our senior people. Because that's where the future of this province lies — it's in what happens to the people.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm raising this point because there are a couple of areas that have caused a great deal of concern. The first area relates to the North of Saskatchewan and First Nations and Métis people. But let's just talk a little bit about the North.

So we know that this budget cuts the northern economic development fund by 30 per cent. We know that it cuts the northern industry and resource development by 9 per cent. The treaty land entitlement fund's cut. The First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund's cut. Métis Development Fund is cut. And the list goes on.

We know that in previous budgets they eliminated the Aboriginal employment development program, and it's been a long, slow process to get something to replace that. I raise this because we have very high unemployment with First Nations and Métis people within the province, and that particular resource has been identified by Eric Howe as an advantage we have in Saskatchewan relating to our people. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this budget fails to recognize that valuable resource.

Also, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the decisions around the film employment tax credit, we know that this relates to a young, vibrant industry which is attracting dollars to our province from all over the world. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the Premier totally understood what was being done here, and I don't think there was a proper choice made. There is a chance for the Premier to change this decision and fix this particular problem.

But, Mr. Speaker, it relates once again to supporting young, very, very entrepreneurial people who are, many of them, in small business, who spend money right across the whole economy. Small towns like this. The cities like it. Hotel industry, the lumber industry, transportation for sure, all of the food industry — they all appreciate the kind of activities there. So that's the economic side of that. But the more important side is the vision part, the long-term part of what telling our stories in a very direct and very professional way does for the feeling about this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk a lot about how proud we all are of this province, and I think it . . . [inaudible] . . . them. And I just heard the Finance minister say this, that the people on this side are not proud of this province. I don't think that anybody accepts that. And I think it's a very inappropriate thing to say even in the heat of an argument, because what we're all here for is to build the long-term future of this province. And when we go and attack the cultural industries, when we attack those industries which are supporting our vision of ourselves — they're kind of like mirrors that reflect back to us who we are — then we're attacking each other. We're attacking our family and our friends.

I think there's quite an interesting story from the Second World War. And I've specifically chosen this story because I've heard the Premier over the last two months quote Winston Churchill on a number of occasions. But there's a story during the Second World War when Winston Churchill was prime minister. And they needed money, obviously, for this very expensive war. So the finance minister came to him and said, well one area that we could cut is the support for arts. And Churchill's immediate response was, then what are we fighting for?

[11:00]

That's a fundamental question here. If you're spending this much money in Saskatchewan, building the future, and then you go and attack those things which make it a good place to live, a good place to do business, a good place to raise your family, why do you go and attack those things which we're all proud of?

And I defy anybody in this room to say that they haven't talked or explained *Corner Gas* and the humour in that place or, you know, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, or even some of the really kind of crazy, wild other movies that come out of Saskatchewan. Because no matter what the story is, whether it's *Hard Core Logo* or whether it's other places, you end up reflecting who we are and where we come from.

So, Mr. Speaker, this budget goes and makes a direct attack on that particular issue. And it's really frustrating because that attack was not part of their campaign. In fact if you look at the

2011 campaign document, the platform from that party, this is something that they have right in there as something they're going to support. So why would you then go and wreck it, which is I think the only way to describe it, just a few months later? So it doesn't make any sense.

And another thing that they didn't announce in their platform was adding three more politicians, which we know over the long term and in the short term is going to cost a lot of money. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think they made some bad choices on what they've done in that particular area.

And what's especially frustrating related to the film industry is that we have students working on undergraduate and graduate programs in the area of arts and filmmaking and all of the related aspects. We have people who've studied various aspects of the kinds of technical support you need for the film industry at all of our post-secondary institutions. And these people were counting on getting a job in what is a vibrant Saskatchewan industry, and that has been damaged. And I'm very surprised when I see the Minister of Advanced Education or the Minister of Culture defending their decision, when I deep down know that they know it's wrong. And they know it's wrong, but they're not doing anything about it.

So I say on that particular issue alone, it sends a signal to the whole community about where this government has gotten off track. And what I also would say, Mr. Speaker, is that they've made some choices around some of the attacks on seniors that are also difficult to understand. And they're symbols of some of these choices.

Now what we have been asking about since the election — and even in the election but now — is, well, there's a boom in Saskatchewan, but not everybody is feeling it. In fact I think there's a fair number of people are saying, well if everything's so good, why are these things happening to us?

But the seniors especially are being caught in a squeeze. And what we know when you make some choices around increasing the drug costs, you have ended up going after a certain segment of people who are on fixed income. And I think that there's another example of some choices that have been made, that have not necessarily been thought through. I don't think there's been a whole lot of consultation in that particular area.

Now any budget that is built includes resources and revenues for all kinds of good things. And that's why we're here in this legislature. And sometimes people wonder at why the opposition focuses in on some points in a budget that provides money for roads and schools and all of the health care needs and things that are there. Well part of why we will end up focusing on some very specific things is because we know how budgets are made. And we look at some of the choices that this government has made, and we think maybe that they need to reconsider what they've done. There's no great folly in having the Minister of Finance recommend to the cabinet and to the caucus, well maybe we should amend this budget before we finally pass it, and figure out how we can fix some of these things.

Now another aspect of the budget which is disconcerting for many within the civil service — but I think, more importantly,

many within all of the third-party agencies that are part of our province — is that there appear to be a number of difficult decisions that have been pushed out from government to school boards, to health regions, and to municipalities even, where decisions have to be made that are going to effectively be cuts.

And those kinds of cuts are even more insidious, more difficult because, for example, on school boards they have no ability to raise any revenue. They get a fixed amount of money and they don't have predictable, long-term money and they're stuck. And, Mr. Speaker, the numbers came out last week for school boards, but they're working very, very diligently to try to figure out, well what does it mean in our part of the province?

We see these as kind of hidden costs, or cuts that are much like time bombs that are going to go off in various communities. And so the question becomes, well will our school still be there? Or what's the size of the classroom? Which of the children in our neighbourhood are going to have to move away because their parents have lost their jobs? And it's those kind of questions that matter when we go back to our constituencies because people are concerned.

And, Mr. Speaker, some of the issues in the health budgets, even though there's an increase, do include some fairly tough choices that will be made in Prince Albert or North Battleford or Lloydminster or other parts of the province. And we need to be vigilant as an opposition to raise those questions as well. But practically it's a budget that has some very difficult news for quite a few people in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the really challenging issues in the budget relates to the fiscal framework and how this budget was put together. As somebody who has been part of that process for many years, it looked to me like what happened was that there was a basic number created on the expenditure side. And then everybody went back and tried to figure out, okay, well how can we get some more revenues or how can we adjust this so we can get that \$16 million positive number on the summary financial statements?

And, Mr. Speaker, you can see the places where creative ideas were used to have that number show up at the bottom. The most glaring one is the \$100 million to the university. That number alone gives the whole thing a deficit budget smell.

But in that case where we have a building project ongoing — the Academic Health Sciences building at U of S which has a \$70 million bill that's coming due this year — which if you would've followed, if we would've as a Government of Saskatchewan followed the way that all of the other parts of that building have been paid for, it would've been paid this year out of cash.

But the message went to the University of Saskatchewan, well we're changing our tune this year because we need to fix the bottom line on our budget. So you go and borrow that 70 million. It's just far enough away from what we're doing here that it will maybe not be as noticed as some other things. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we noticed. I'm sure the auditor will be commenting on this when it comes up later. I know that the university is noticing it. And guess who gets affected by it? Well it will be the students and the families of students at the

University of Saskatchewan.

But to add a further bit of frustration there, there's another 30 million which is for both the U of S and U of R [University of Regina], related to ongoing maintenance of the physical facilities on the campuses. An accounting practice was changed there to also push that one out, and, bingo, it gets you over the line and you've got a balanced budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we end up looking at how this has been done for the school boards, we know that they're doing the same kind of thing with the health regions. And so what we have is not a very clear picture of what the actual finances are. Now we know that in February of 1992 there was a special commission created to look at the debt that was on the books of Saskatchewan but was somehow spread out or pushed out. And, Mr. Speaker, I think Mr. Gass's report is one that the Finance officials, but more importantly the Premier, should be looking at to see where they have fallen back into some of the practices that ended up hiding debt.

And to give an example of how that happens is we know, slowly but surely, we're getting information about SaskPower's project up by North Battleford. And it's a power purchase agreement because it spreads out the cost of that agreement over 20, 25 years. Now we haven't ever seen the actual contract to know what the capital cost that's in that payment versus what's the actual cost for getting the electricity. But what we know is that it pushed some debt off the books of SaskPower onto a private company. And it's a practice that's used, I think as one accountant told me, it's often used by companies that are having trouble with their cash flow. And if you think about it, if you're running a deficit, which we've run the last three years after we do the reporting, you end up with that kind of a perspective.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. It didn't have to be this way, but the government has made some choices. And they've chosen more politicians over seniors, over families. And guess who's paying? I mean it's going to show up in the kinds of situations around school boards and the health regions, universities. And, Mr. Speaker, it'll be the families in our neighbourhood who are going to suffer. And I think common sense people in Saskatchewan don't like it when you're not clear about what you're doing and why you're doing it.

[11:15]

And so, Mr. Speaker, it'll translate into lost jobs, reduced civil service jobs which are right across the province. It will translate into bigger classrooms for, or bigger numbers, larger numbers of students in classrooms. It will transfer into some increases, we already know, on your taxes on your home, whether it's related to policing costs or some other areas.

2007 there was a resource boom in Saskatchewan. And basically that boom has continued, which is good for all of us, and we're proud of that. But unfortunately the boom could have been used to build better classrooms. It could have been used to allow all of our people to retire in dignity. It could have been used to make sure that the gap on education for First Nations and Métis kids and others who are poor in our province would be eliminated so that all of these valuable resources could be

used for our economy. It could have been used to bolster and enhance industries like the film industry or, I think, some of the other industries that are based on the intellectual capacities of our people so that we would continue to have a province in which we are even prouder than we are now.

Mr. Speaker, budgets are about choices. They're about opportunities for people, and they're about having an idea or a vision or a plan for where we want to go as a province. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, our concern are the common sense people of Saskatchewan who want a future that includes the best opportunities for the people of the province using the resources that we have to complement that. So, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, because of some of the choices made by the government in this budget, I will not be able to support the budget of the government. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure, it's an honour to be able to participate in the budget debate, Mr. Speaker.

Before I get into the text of my remarks for this morning, I do want to again thank the people of Swift Current for the chance that I have even to vote on the budget for the province of Saskatchewan. I want to thank them for their support in the last election. I want to touch a little bit on the last election, but I want to thank them for that support and for their ongoing advice and input to me as their MLA and in my other capacities, Mr. Speaker. I also want to acknowledge, as I try to do every time, the support of Tami, my wife, and our kids.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can say that — pretty safely, I think, on behalf of every member in the House, certainly every member on this side of the House — that just the chance to participate in this debate, a real and genuine debate about some of the specific measures in the budget, that it's not a bad thing at all, Mr. Speaker. But the chance to participate in it, to voice the concerns of constituents and people across the province, to work at least to try to give voice to those concerns and then a chance to vote on the budget is something that's not lost on any of us. And it's a great honour, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting, I think, that the fact that this budget comes obviously relatively close on the heels of a general election in the province of Saskatchewan, some would argue that even though later this day we'll vote on the Deputy Premier's budget — the budget that he's tabled — some would say that vote happened on the 7th of November, 2011, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to touch on that a little bit because much of that election campaign became a debate about the fiscal plan that each party was proposing for the future of the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I think that the ballot question, the ballot question very much became, on 7 November, 2011, a question of the fiscal health of the province of Saskatchewan. How best do we keep this province moving forward in leadership in the country? How best do we ensure that that plan to move the province forward is based on fiscal responsibility, based on fiscal probity?

Mr. Speaker, I remember that election very well. I know all

members in the House will. And I remember the specifics around that particular ballot question. I remember the debate that we were having right up until the 7th of November when people made their choice.

Mr. Speaker, in that election campaign, the New Democratic Party proposed a platform of \$5.5 billion. That was a choice they made. They had a number of different measures that they had in their budget. They really had promises for everyone. And they had spending commitments for all areas of government and a \$5.5 billion budget that, even with their plan to jack up taxes in the potash industry — which of course would have hurt the very expansions the Minister of Finance was referencing earlier in question period — even with their plan to do that and risk the economic development of the province, we would have had, had they been elected, massive deficits. We would be looking at a deficit budget today, and we would be voting on that had the New Democrats been successful in the election and had a chance to implement what they call their fiscal plan with its \$5.5 billion worth of promises that they were making with someone else's money.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to note that this is a germane question that we're dealing with in the legislature — the NDP's alternative to our budget. I'm going to focus on our budget a lot, but this is a debate about two visions and an alternative. Because if the New Democratic Party were concerned about deficits . . . And the Finance critic stands in his place day after day, even after his colleagues ask for the reinstatement of every reduction the government's made and ask for more spending and more spending, ironically enough the Finance critic often closes question period by standing up and speaking out against deficit budgets and speaking in favour of the importance of balanced budgets, mercifully free from any sense of irony, apparently.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it goes to credibility because I guess the honourable member, the Finance critic, could morph into a fiscal conservative, into a fiscal disciplinarian. He could do that with a great deal more credibility than he can today because all of the promises that were made by the New Democratic Party in the last campaign, \$5.5 billion worth of promises, are still on their website. The leader has gone. The leader's gone but the entire platform is still on the website. This is the policy of the New Democratic Party. And members opposite should take the opportunity for circumspection when they're talking about deficits or surpluses or balanced budgets when they weigh into this debate, especially considering the fact that they still stand for a \$5.5 billion platform that has a lot of promises for a lot of people but that would result and return this province into a historic deficit situation, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, on their website there's the game changer calculator you can actually find, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members in this House on both sides will know when they announced this game changer in the campaign, they said, come to our website and enter all of the spending promises we made and find out how much you save. And for the few souls that did that, they found out that not only does the NDP platform work, but the game-changing calculator didn't work either, Mr. Speaker. In fact some would point out that the only number that kept coming up on the game-changing calculator was something like 49 to 9, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as that party gets closer to choosing a new leader, maybe even the Finance critic himself, I would say this, Mr. Speaker. By the way, based on question period earlier today, if the Finance critic is planning on running for the leadership, he ought to stop letting his seatmate, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place, write his questions because I think he set him up in question period in his questions to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, though the election was about choices, that choice between a \$5.5 billion platform, promises for everything from the members opposite, versus the platform we ran on, the platform that was eventually successful on the election on the 7th of November, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we basically ran out of promises to make the Saskatchewan people with their own money by the end of the first week in the campaign because we took a different approach. We decided that there's too much uncertainty in the world today. There's too much going for Saskatchewan in that uncertain world today, based on a fiscally responsible plan, too much of that going to risk, to risk all of that with promises with the taxpayers' money that were not sustainable.

And so we campaigned on a much different platform, Mr. Speaker. We campaigned on promises that will help people with affordability. We campaigned on promises that will keep this province moving forward economically. We campaigned on promises that treat everybody in this province equally, whether they're in the North or the South or rural or urban, Mr. Speaker. And we campaigned again on commitments that we knew to be affordable.

And, Mr. Speaker, it ought to surprise no one that we have kept that promise in this budget. That when the Minister of Finance rose in his place last week and delivered the province's budget, he was able to list promise after promise after promise after promise that's already kept, months after the last election. And when it was all said and done, he was able to say to this Assembly, to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, notwithstanding some difficult choices we made in the interest of sustainability, in the interest of fiscal probity, notwithstanding those choices, he was able to say, Mr. Speaker, unlike any of his colleagues anywhere in the Dominion of Canada, that this budget is balanced now and through the entire year.

There were some difficult choices to make along the way to that balanced budget, and we've touched on them in this Assembly. We've had a debate about them. They've been raised in question period. They've been raised in social media, effectively, by both sides.

Those issues range, from the issue we talked about today . . . It took the NDP till the end of the second week of the budget debate really to get in a meaningful way to the drug plan issue for seniors, but they raised it today. And you heard the Minister of Health say, we took a difficult decision to increase the deductible for a drug plan that we support, that we want to see last forever, Mr. Speaker. We took the occasion to increase that deductible — that hadn't been increased since 2007 — in the interest of supporting seniors and children eligible for that drug plan in the long term so that we could avoid a situation that other provinces are facing today when some third party report

comes in and says, these programs are unsustainable. Never mind an adjustment, you've got to cut those programs, Mr. Speaker. That is the forward-looking part of some of these difficult decisions.

And, Mr. Speaker, we presented them also in context, these changes to the seniors' drug plan. We presented them alongside our promise, our commitment that we made in the campaign, kept in this budget, to triple the seniors' low-income assistance plan in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. In the first term of our government, we doubled not only the benefit for that plan, the budget for that assistance plan for low-income seniors, but we also doubled the number of seniors who are eligible for the program in the first place. And now we're going to triple it. And now we're going to provide extra support for those who need personal care home. And now we'll build long-term care beds in this province, the likes of which hasn't been seen in a generation, a generation presided over mostly by members opposite.

And in context, Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt, notwithstanding the sustainability changes that we made in the drug plan, there can be no doubt that there is more support today for seniors in our province, more respect manifest in the policies of the government. There has never been more respect, Mr. Speaker, than there is today, presented by this government, after four years and now heading into our second term.

Mr. Speaker, there's been some controversy as well around the issue of REDAs, regional economic development areas of the province. Their name changed to enterprise regions when we created Enterprise Saskatchewan, but these regions were created by the New Democratic Party. I know I was on the board of these REDAs [regional economic development authority] and, Mr. Speaker, there is good local economic development work that happens on these REDAs.

But, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, they are about regional and local economic development. And were the situation the same as it was under the NDP in terms of revenue sharing — in other words, were the issues around revenue sharing completely ignored in Saskatchewan today, as they were under the NDP, versus the near doubling that most municipalities have received in revenue sharing from this government — I guess someone, you know, people could credibly say, well you ought to continue to support that local economic development function, those budgets, and not leave it to localities and regions.

[11:30]

The bottom line though, Mr. Speaker, is we don't agree. We think, with the historic revenue sharing that exists in the province today, there is a real opportunity for us to turn over to localities and regions that function they perform. If they wish to continue with REDAs, they can fund them.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, there are countless communities of all sizes who have different ways of funding economic development. They've been doing it on their own even with a REDA program in place. My home community is one example, where the city of Swift Current, the ratepayers there have always funded their director of economic development. The one they have now is better than the one they had prior to 1999, Mr.



Speaker.

And we were in Estevan last night with the caucus Chair on our side of the House, and there the chamber of commerce is contracted by the community to deliver economic development and to deliver tourism development services. Here again you have communities that have been providing that investment, doing that important local economic development work, even with the REDA program in place. We just think it's time, as we look for savings, as we look to balance the budget, that we move out of that area for all the province so it's treated equally and that these things are delivered at a local level and a regional level.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, we want to do that so we can focus our own economic development strategy, our plans, on things that the provincial government should focus on, for example, like infrastructure improvements across this province. We're going to be hearing much more about that in the years ahead. Like for example, the innovation agenda of this province that looks beyond this generation and even the next in terms of building on a resource economy and building on our strengths in that resource economy in terms of innovation and sustainable energy and nuclear science, Mr. Speaker, and in agricultural science as well. That's a role for the provincial government in terms of economic development.

Mr. Speaker, we think the role of a provincial government is to, in terms of economic development, is also to engage with the other partners across the country and the rest of the world to tell the, I think, the most amazing economic and fiscal story, frankly, around the world so we can continue to attract investment to the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, with the help of our officials, with the help of our ministers, I can say — I believe this to be very true, Mr. Speaker — that I don't think there's been a government in recent history in the province that has made more progress in telling our story, in getting Saskatchewan's story known around the world, than our government. We think we ought to focus on that, and let localities focus on local economic development. So we made that decision.

Mr. Speaker, we also know there have been challenges around the film tax credit, the tax grant that exists in our province and right across the country and in over 40 states in the United States. Mr. Speaker, I'll deal with it, I'll deal with it quickly if I can. There's been a lot of very good debate about the issue in the province. This is an industry that's valued. This is an industry that attracts and trains very creative people who make, who do make Saskatchewan better. And this is an industry that in our province and across our country comes at a cost that's higher than almost any other industry in terms of the tax system.

The tax system in place today that we have that, yes, that we've supported, that was put in place in the late '90s, is a tax system that says to a company, if you come in and set up a shell production company — and many of the applications are precisely this — set up a shell company, a temporary company to do the production only, you can earn grant. You'll earn the tax credits, a grant up front, regardless of how much tax you pay in the province, regardless of where you're domiciled. Just based on that production's cost, here's the rate of subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen that tax credit not work very well in this province of late, not because we didn't have it — we did — but because other jurisdictions were enriching their tax credits. They were enriching these tax grants. They're doing so right across North America. It is a bidding war today. People in the film industry, we heard the minister comment, are noting as taxpayers that there's a bidding war happening.

And so it presents a choice. And you do do the evaluation. You see how much activity comes from the tax credit, how much of the spinoff activity comes from that. And you consider the cost. And you consider the future as well in terms of that cost, where the industry itself has told us, by the way, you've got not to just reinstate it, but, in the report that was done, if you're going to keep up with everyone else in the bidding war, it's another \$3.5 million with a taxpayers' subsidy to go to the industry.

And so we have to make a difficult choice and be the first one in the country to say, when it comes to that bidding war, we're not going to be in the bidding war anymore. We're happy to change the tax credit to a non-refundable tax credit that effectively reduces taxes paid in the province, not just on productions but from companies. We saw in that same report that the minister has referenced, that the critic has referenced, that there was a desire on the part of the industry to see it grow in the province more substantively, to see a focus on all of our policy on Saskatchewan companies.

Well a refundable tax credit can do that because it says to companies domiciled here, with roots here in the province, paying tax in the province, that you are going to get preferential treatment because we want your companies to grow here in Saskatchewan and for you to employ people in the industry. We've also said to them, the sound stage is yours if you like it, along with what would be our operating loss for a couple of years to capitalize that venture. Mr. Speaker, that is a reasonable approach from a government that says, we're out of the bidding war, but we'll look at other ways, creative ways perhaps, to sustain the industry.

I've heard the arguments say, well but there's all these spinoffs. Mr. Speaker, if we applied the logic that we've heard from members opposite and others — and it's an important debate; I happen to disagree with the position, and I'll say so now — if we applied the same logic that these tax grants are good because of the spinoffs that occur, we'd have them in every other industry. There would be an infinite amount of benefit.

And people say, well they're cost-neutral. If they're cost-neutral, and they create a 6 to 1 benefit in the economy, why aren't they applied to every other sector? People have said, well there's incentives in the potash industry. Well there may be if they do certain things like they expand in the province, but there's still a net tax paid to the people of this province for their resource. And by the way, it's sunsetted. That tax incentive ends by definition. And when it ends, they pay the highest royalties in the world, and billions of dollars have been invested and thousands of jobs have been created, and this subsidy or the tax incentive — a real credit, not a grant — ends.

I asked the industry when we met with them with the minister, when could we stop this tax credit, this grant thing? When is the industry going to be at the point where it doesn't need it

anymore? Because that's the difference between this and other tax measures. Never, they said, as long as someone else is in the bidding war. Mr. Speaker, the logic of, well you should do it because it's cost-neutral and there's spinoffs, it doesn't hold, Mr. Speaker. It simply doesn't hold. We've seen the numbers, and it doesn't hold, otherwise we'd apply it to every other single industry from restaurants to the service sector, to financial services, to agriculture, to manufacturing, to everything. Mr. Speaker, that argument we just fundamentally disagree with, and so we've made a difficult decision. And we're certainly willing to work with the industry.

Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue — and I want to talk about some of the specifics in the budget — the member, the critic yesterday asked a question. She said to us on this side of the House when she was referencing some comments by Paul Bronfman Jr. who is a billionaire in Toronto and has companies involved in the movie industry, her question was: what message does this decision to kill the tax credit send to people like Mr. Bronfman?

Well, Mr. Speaker, with great respect, I think there are some important messages in this budget for people, for certain people, and I'd like to share some of them with the members of the House today and the province. If you are in Saskatchewan, and you are tired of seeing loved ones languish on a waiting list in the birthplace of medicare — a waiting list that stretched beyond 18 months, that used to stretch beyond 18 months — if you're tired of those waiting lists, and if you support this government's surgical initiative that comes with a cost in this budget, if you are interested in a 90 per cent reduction in people waiting longer than 18 months for surgery, or a 79 per cent reduction in people waiting longer than a year for surgery, or a 40 per cent reduction in the people waiting six months for surgery, if you'd like to see that in this province, then our message is: this budget is for you.

If you have loved ones who suffer with diabetes and you'd like to see more help for them in a province that's prosperous and in a province that's growing, if you'd like to see \$2.5 million worth of increase in funding to reduce costs for those with diabetes by adding two forms of long-acting insulin to the drug plan and expanding the children's insulin pump program from age 17 to age 25, we have a message: this budget is for you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if you'd like to see more proactive health care like screening for certain cancers like colorectal cancer expanded to be province-wide so that we can deal with this disease before it's too late — and before, frankly, it's too expensive — you're going to look at \$4 million to expand colorectal cancer screening that is in this budget of new funding. And the message of that quite simply is: this budget is for you, Mr. Speaker.

If you want to see more funding for the Cancer Agency because of the good work they do, if you want to see the government finally turn around the lack of long-term care funding in this province that prevailed for 16 years under the NDP and see 13 homes continue and see more investment in personal care homes, then our message is: this budget's for you, Mr. Speaker.

If you're in North Battleford and you want to see less talk about

the Saskatchewan hospital and more action on that 100-year-old hospital, the message is: this budget's for you.

If you're in Moose Jaw and you want to see less talk about that hospital, the message is: this budget is for you. There's action on that hospital.

Mr. Speaker, if you recognize — maybe you've come new to the province, and you have a young family — and you recognize this is a great place, but boy, we need more child care spaces in Saskatchewan, there's 500 new spaces in this budget on our way to keep our promise for 2000. And the message from the Finance minister and from the MLAs on this side of the House is pretty simple. If you want that, our message is: this budget is for you.

Mr. Speaker, if you'd like to see some new schools built in a province that's growing, first time in a very, very long time, where the clamour has been not just for some block funding to fix schools — by the way, which didn't happen under members opposite, but took ministers on this side of the House to get done — over and above that block funding now, we're building new schools in the province of Saskatchewan. And we know there's catch-up to do and a lot more work to be done. And in this budget if you add them all up, the ones that are approved and will start construction and more new approvals, I think we're up over 20 brand new schools. If you add all of those things up in the province . . . The Minister of Finance is trying to do the calculation. I'm sure he'll send me a note. But I believe that's the case.

So our message to parents and to school boards who want some new schools in the province, because classrooms are full with the growing population: this budget is for you, too. If you want to see sustainable, affordable but important increases in advanced education and to the health regions and to the school boards, if you want us to continue to invest in innovation in the province, to grow that next economy, again the message is: this budget's for you.

If you're a billionaire businessman from Toronto or any other place, though, and you're looking for a grant before you make an investment, this budget is not for you, Mr. Speaker. If you want to work with government to find a better way to sustain any industry, including the film industry, though, we are prepared to work; we are ready to work with that industry to see what can be achieved together.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting the morning after the budget . . . And I'll conclude with this. The morning after the budget, I was watching one of the morning shows on local channels and I noticed that the official Opposition Leader was on TV. And he was commenting on the budget, and he was critical of certain things — and that's what debate's all about. He was critical of the film tax credit decision that the government made. Fair enough. The media . . . The reporter asked him though, the reporter, she said, okay, so if there's more money needed for filmmakers, where would the money come from?

Well, this is a quote, Mr. Speaker, "Well practically, there are a number of areas where they could have left money for films. And one of the things they could have done is look at some of the initiatives around agriculture, and look at some of the things

they've done for municipalities." Which things? Which things, Mr. Speaker? Which things that this government has done in agriculture or for municipalities? There's kind of a bit of a walk on that quote that the Leader of the Opposition's had. A potentially very divisive quote. Mr. Speaker, it bears repeating. Where would you find the money to give to the filmmakers? One of the things they could have done, he said, and I'm quoting, "is look at some of the initiatives around agriculture. And look at some of the things they've done for municipalities." How many years of downloading did municipalities face in this province under the NDP? Mr. Speaker, they did not act on the request for municipalities for revenue sharing.

[11:45]

One of the most fundamental tasks, I think, of a provincial government is to understand that the front line of economic development, that the front line of growth, that that order of government that's closest to the people are rural municipalities and urban municipalities. And when the province can afford it, when the province is gaining in revenue . . . And it was under their watch. I think when they walked away there was \$700 million in cash, by the way — not just an accounting entry. I think there was actual cash in that rainy day fund of the NDP. So they had money. What was happening for revenue sharing to municipalities so they could keep up with housing demands, so they could service more lots, so they could provide better public safety, so they could provide better water and sewer services in a growing province, so that they could ease the pressure on education tax in the rural municipalities? What was happening from that NDP government on that fundamental test of good provincial government? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

There were cuts, Mr. Speaker, that's what there were. And now when asked, well where would you get the money then if you don't like this cut, you don't like that change, where would it come from? We'll take it from the municipalities in the province of Saskatchewan, say the NDP. No they will not, because I know how the vote's going to turn out today, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly won't be on the side of the New Democrats. It'll be on the side of rural Saskatchewan, of farmers, and of municipalities in this province who ought not to be treated with that disrespect that they've received over the last week from the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen that movie before. This province lived through that movie before. And I've had people reference the fact that the province is growing now and asked the rhetorical question, well why didn't that happen before? Well we've been the first to say, look, it's not the government. It's not our government that takes credit for economic growth. Mr. Speaker, we've long believed — and it's been the *raison d'être* perhaps for this party — that government can get in the way of the potential of this great province and its people. That government, if it's short-sighted, if it chooses to be divisive and not realize the potential of agriculture, the potential of rural Saskatchewan, the importance of municipalities . . . If we have a government here that divides us, that cleaves us north and south, rural and urban, that is a barrier to growth and a barrier to this province reaching its full potential. We understand that on this side of the House. And after the 7th of November, you'd think that lesson would have been heard by members opposite. But it hasn't, Mr.

Speaker. It hasn't. Well the good news is this. The good news is this: that approach to dividing this province, that approach to frankly putting barriers in the way of this province reaching its full potential is restricted to nine members on that side of the House — the nimble nine.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we will take the tough decisions that we need to take to make sure that we can make a very special claim across this country and around the world. Mr. Speaker, we will take the message from this budget vote today to the rest of this country and to the rest of the world when we're travelling and promoting the province that there is one jurisdiction, there is one jurisdiction in Canada, there's one of very, very few jurisdictions that we know of anywhere in the world that have said in the season of deficits and spiralling debt, there's one province, one place that says no, here we're going to balance the budget. Today and tomorrow and the day after that, we're going to balance the budget because we know at the heart of the plan to keep this province must be fiscal responsibility, must be fiscal probity.

If we want to ensure we have sustainable programs for seniors in the future, it means we need to be fiscally responsible today. If we want to have an infrastructure program for our municipal partners in the future, it means we must be fiscally responsible today. If we want to continue to reduce taxes as we have over the last four years in the future, we've got to have fiscal responsibility today. If we want to continue to pay down the debt, 44 per cent lower and counting, we've got to be, in the future, we've got to be fiscally responsible today, Mr. Speaker. That is the resolve of the women and men on this side of the House. It's not subject to change. It's not negotiable. We'll take the decisions we have to take to preserve the Saskatchewan advantage and move this province forward. I'm opposed to the amendment, but I'm in favour of the Minister of Finance's budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It is my duty to remind members that the hon. member, Minister of Finance is about to exercise his right to close the debate and, after, all members will be precluded from speaking to this question. Therefore if any member wishes to speak, let him do so now.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to be able to close debate on this, my second budget and our government's first budget after the election of 2011. Mr. Speaker, the development of a budget requires many people, requires many contributions. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to just take a couple of moments, if I might, to express my appreciation.

First of all, to my family. I know I've introduced my spouse, Gail, in the legislature, but I want to extend to her my greatest appreciation, and also to my children. Both Bryce and Lindsay periodically do phone, and they phone with advice about what they see happening in Saskatchewan, whether it's in education or whether it might be in the natural resources area, with my daughter involved in a company that has now purchased a number of BP assets and is now based here in Saskatchewan and is looking forward to a long future in the province of Saskatchewan. And maybe someday, Mr. Speaker, her

company will see right to transfer her here as a manager or a leader here in this great province. So thank you to my family.

I do also want to extend my appreciation to the Premier. You know, immediately after the election of 2011, the Premier made it clear that the cabinet ministers were going to remain in place and that it was our responsibility to get to work. And I want to extend to him my appreciation for allowing me to serve as the Minister of Finance. And I want to also thank the Treasury Board members because, immediately after that declaration, Treasury Board members got to work. And we spent many, many days, many, many hours preparing the material that you see in this budget.

I also want to extend my appreciation to the officials, because there are many analysts and directors and individuals, not only within Finance but within every ministry, that review the material, review the programs, review the spending, review all of the things that government is involved with and decide whether or not those are the kinds of things that we should focus on. So I want to extend to all ministers and to all staff my appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to review, I'll call them, drafts of the budget with caucus, with all caucus members. And I want to extend to all of the other 48 members on this side of the House my appreciation for your input in ensuring that we were recognizing what was important, where we needed to ensure that spending could continue and that the programs that we had worked so hard, as a government, since 2007 to implement, that those programs could continue. And I want to express my appreciation to all of you. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, indeed this is a unique budget. As members on this side of the House who have spoken and the Premier spoke just recently about wrapping up all of the things that this budget contains, and he did that so well that the material that I'm going to talk about today is not going to be the specifics, because the Premier has mentioned many, many of the good things that are contained in this budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, he and all of my colleagues are right, and so are the many people that have commented in the media since this budget was delivered. This is a unique budget. Because we already have a number of provinces, as I indicated in my response this morning in question period. This is a balanced budget. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify for the people of Saskatchewan because many times people will ask, well, what do you mean by a General Revenue Fund budget? What do you mean by a summary financial budget? Because, you know, and the Premier asked this himself. And I've tried to, Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to supply the notes to make sure that the numbers are there because he understands this concept very well and knows a lot about this. But, you know, the numbers, Mr. Speaker, I have to occasionally provide him with a number. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a balanced budget on both instances. It is balanced on a summary and it is balanced on a General Revenue Fund — so far the only budget.

Mr. Speaker, and I want to encourage every individual in the province of Saskatchewan and outside who look at the documents of the budget. There are two documents, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we do it. We prepare a General

Revenue Fund budget and this is called the Estimates book, Mr. Speaker. And people can see what the Minister of Agriculture is spending. Every penny that the Minister of Agriculture is spending on all of the great programs of crop insurance and AgriInvest and AgriStability, they see that. And they will see what the Social Services minister is spending on each of her initiatives, and same thing with Advanced Education and all ministries. That is contained in this Estimates book, Mr. Speaker.

But also in this document, which is referred to as the budget summary, is — and for the benefit of the member opposite, the Finance critic — it is the summary financial statement, Mr. Speaker. It is right here. It is right here and it, on pages 82 and 83 and, Mr. Speaker, it lists. It lists all of the entities that make up the summary financials, Mr. Speaker.

There are many people, there are many people who don't know what is contained in the summary financial statements. So, Mr. Speaker, it's all contained right here. It indicates what is happening in the regional health authorities. It contains what is happening in the school boards and all of those instances. All of the Crown corporations are listed: the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, the Auto Fund, Workers' Compensation Board. Every one of those entities is listed here. It is reviewed by the Provincial Auditor. And it is indeed the summary financial statement.

So, Mr. Speaker, for all of the people in the province of Saskatchewan, I want them to clearly understand that we don't just do a General Revenue Fund budget. We do in fact do both, and I believe it is better for the people of the province to understand. Because they can understand what is being spent by every minister in each of their areas, but they also can see the entire provincial picture by looking at this document, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of mention already about the budget and how it relates to the election campaign of 2011. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to review this bright orange document, and you know, Mr. Speaker, when I looked at it, it changed. It changed almost every day. Because at one time it was a \$3 billion spend and then it was a \$4 billion spend and now it's about a \$5.5 billion spend. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? As the Premier indicated, this document is still on the NDP website. It is their direction, Mr. Speaker.

Even though the member from Rosemont stood in this Assembly, and he wasn't quite sure. And he went out in the rotunda, and he said, you know, I'm not sure about that revenue sharing with some other groups. I really don't think we should do that. I think we have to listen to the people because, you know, 49 to 9, 64 per cent of the vote for this side of the House said, we better, we better review that. Well, Mr. Speaker, within 24 hours, the member was out in the rotunda saying, whoops, I misspoke. I misspoke. We don't really have to listen to the people of Saskatchewan because we're going to continue to follow the \$5.5 billion spending spree, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, all you have to do is take a look at this document, which is the platform of the Saskatchewan Party. And you go to the last couple of pages, Mr. Speaker, where it identified what we anticipated for revenue not only for this year but the next

three, where we anticipated expenditures to go, Mr. Speaker. And we listed a number of promises, Mr. Speaker, promises that are going to cost about \$83 million and are included in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, the most important thing, the most important thing in this budget, in this platform estimate was that we said we were going to spend about \$11.2 billion on expenditure. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? The budget prepared, this document — exactly the same, Mr. Speaker, exactly the same. What we said we would do, we have done, Mr. Speaker. We have delivered a balanced budget for these people, for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

[12:00]

You know, Mr. Speaker, every speaker on this side of the House has had an opportunity to review all of the specifics of their ministries or, in the case of non-ministers, the opportunity to review the different initiatives and programs that are going to affect the people in their constituencies. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated all of the things that we have done, and there's a tremendous number of initiatives that we wanted to maintain. And it's so important, Mr. Speaker.

This government places health care and education, both advanced education and K to 12 education, as a priority. We understand the work that Social Services is doing in terms of ensuring that those people with disabilities have a great place to live in this province, and we're moving on those programs, Mr. Speaker.

We recognized, we recognized that in the housing area that indeed we are . . . that is a challenge of growth. There is a situation where we need to improve. And we have implemented a one-of-a-kind, a one-of-a-kind initiative to developers to ensure that we can move forward on the construction of low-rental accommodations, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that those things are going to happen. We know that with the rental construction initiative from last year — tremendous uptake from that area — and we know now, coupled with the initiative that we have outlined, it's going to continue to move that forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that we haven't spoken a lot about is the fact that this budget contains no tax increases, Mr. Speaker, no tax increases. You know, Mr. Speaker, years ago I can recall from my days on a school board when we worried about what a government was going to do because, of course, the government provided a grant to the school board. It was, you know, at times there were minus 4's and minus 2 per cent grant. And of course, for a school board to balance, it had to increase the mill rate, Mr. Speaker, increase the mill rate. Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that's changed. We changed that in terms of the government taking responsibility for the K to 12 system.

But, Mr. Speaker, there still is an education property tax. There still is a mill rate that is set, but it is set for the Government of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the mill rates for agricultural land, residential properties, commercial properties did not change this year, Mr. Speaker. They remained the same low rates, Mr. Speaker. 3.91 mills for agricultural land, Mr.

Speaker, 9.51 mills for residential properties continue to be there, Mr. Speaker. So we now have number of years where there has been no increase. And people on this side of the House . . . I don't know whether the members opposite have ever looked at their tax notices from seven, eight, nine years ago. There were tax notices that contained 22 mills of taxation for education — 22, Mr. Speaker. And today if you're in agriculture, your mill rate is 3.91, significantly lower, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things I think that must be mentioned is that the province of Saskatchewan has something called indexation where on January 1st we index everyone's exemptions including seniors, Mr. Speaker. We changed those exemptions to make sure that we remain competitive in this province. Mr. Speaker, we changed that by a rate of 2.8 per cent on January 1st. So that means, Mr. Speaker, well and I'm going to just choose the sector of seniors because there has been a lot of discussion about the \$5 fee and the ambulance fee, the additional ambulance fee. Mr. Speaker, over \$500 of income, if you are a senior who has a taxable income, over \$500 is now non-taxable. No tax is being paid because we changed the basic exemption. We changed the senior supplement, and we changed the age exemption, Mr. Speaker, by enhancing those by 2.8 per cent to ensure that they can manage with additional costs, Mr. Speaker.

So those are significant changes that we want to make sure that, you know, the people of this province understand that this government needs to work to ensure that the programs that we want to have. I have heard from many seniors. You know, I don't want to remain on a waiting list. I have a hip operation scheduled, and it was scheduled . . . You know, if you look at examples from years past, two or three years of a wait time. Mr. Speaker, people want that changed, and we're moving in that direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the people on this side of the House have very, my colleagues have very eloquently described the budget. The fact that this budget is one of a kind, that it is indeed a sustainable budget. It is a balanced budget on both the General Revenue Fund and the summary financial basis, Mr. Speaker. And I know that if the people take a look, good look at this budget, they will understand that this budget is going to ensure, is going to ensure that Saskatchewan remains number one in so many of the areas that we already are.

We know that the projection for next year as well as this year is that Saskatchewan will lead the economic growth of all of the provinces in the province of Saskatchewan. These are qualities and characteristics of a province, Mr. Speaker, that we don't want to reverse. We don't want to go back to the day when the population was declining. I love it, Mr. Speaker, when the fact that the population in 2011 increased by 17,000, Mr. Speaker, the last time that that number was exceeded, Mr. Speaker, is 1953. That was a long time ago, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the groundwork has been laid by this budget. We want to ensure that it is a sustainable plan, that it contains the spending that is necessary to move our programs forward, Mr. Speaker. And I am proud of this budget. And I will definitely be voting against the amendment and I will be supporting this budget.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the proposed amendment moved by the member for Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Centre:

That all the words after “that the Assembly” be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the budgetary policy of the Government of Saskatchewan because it fails to appropriately address the common sense priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour, please say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed, say nay.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Nay.

**The Speaker:** — The nays have it. The amendment fails. The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Hon. Minister of Finance, seconded by the Minister of Social Services:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour, say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed say nay.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Nay.

**The Speaker:** — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:08 until 12:09.]

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour, please rise.

[Yeas — 45]

Wall	Morgan	Bjornerud
Norris	Draude	Krawetz
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Toth	Bradshaw
Reiter	Duncan	Ross
McMillan	Harpauer	Harrison
Hickie	Hutchinson	Elhard
Hart	Tell	Parent
Brkich	Stewart	Ottenbreit

Weekes	Campeau	Heppner
Wilson	Michelson	Kirsch
Merriman	Doke	Makowsky
Jurgens	Steinley	Doherty
Lawrence	Tochor	Moe
Marchuk	Phillips	Docherty

**The Speaker:** — Those opposed, please rise.

[Nays — 9]

Nilson	Forbes	Belanger
Wotherspoon	Brotten	Chartier
Sproule	McCall	Vermette

**Clerk:** — Those in favour of the motion, 45; those opposed, 9.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:13.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Marchuk .....	875
Wotherspoon .....	875
McMorris .....	875
Brotten .....	875
Elhard .....	875
Chartier .....	875
Ross .....	876
Forbes .....	876
Ottenbreit .....	876
Bjornerud .....	884

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes .....	876
Wotherspoon .....	876
Brotten .....	876
Chartier .....	877
Vermette .....	877

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>Saskatoon Contacts</b>	
Chartier .....	877
<b>Provincial Budget</b>	
Heppner .....	877
<b>Saskatoon Young Women's Christian Association Celebrates 100 Years</b>	
Forbes .....	878
<b>Provincial Senior Men's Hockey Champions</b>	
Brkich .....	878
<b>Gairdner Wightman Award</b>	
Elhard .....	878
<b>Fraud Prevention Month</b>	
Ottenbreit .....	878
<b>Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative</b>	
Parent .....	879

#### QUESTION PERIOD

<b>Support for Seniors</b>	
Brotten .....	879
McMorris .....	879
<b>Support for the Film Industry</b>	
Chartier .....	881
Hutchinson .....	881
<b>Protection for Night Shift Workers</b>	
Forbes .....	881
Morgan .....	881
<b>Provincial Budget</b>	
Wotherspoon .....	882
Krawetz .....	882

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### SPECIAL ORDER

##### ADJOURNED DEBATES

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

Nilson .....	884
Wall .....	887
Krawetz .....	891
Recorded Division .....	894

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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