



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

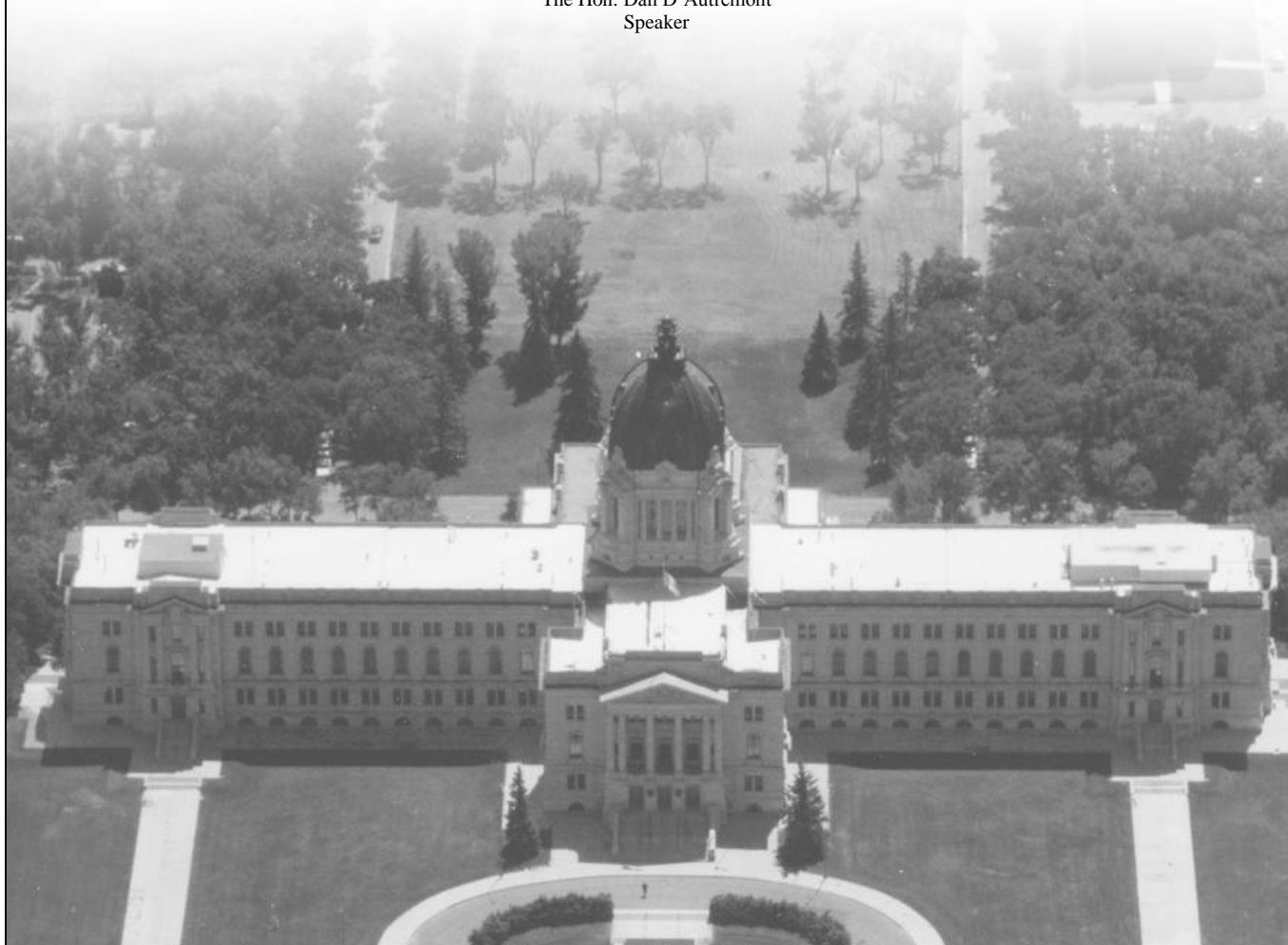
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. 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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, 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, Hon. 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, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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, Hon. 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, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. 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, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce, in the west gallery, a group of 15 grade 11 and 12 students from the social justice program at Campus Regina Public on 14th Avenue here in Regina.

Their chaperones, teachers, are Karen McIver, Ryan Wood. They teach this class. This is sort of a pioneer group. It's the first group that is going through this project, this pilot project that was once Cochrane High School. I mentioned it in my speech last night. And welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, please, everyone. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome the bright students from Campus Regina Public that are here today. And also a couple of exceptional teachers that are here with them today, Ms. Karen McIver, formerly of Trek School and Churchill River paddler extraordinaire; and also Mr. Ryan Wood, also known as Woody, formerly from Regina Public Schools' adult campus.

It's a pleasure to have these bright students with us today, and these exceptional educators. Let's provide a warm welcome to all. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery, Syed Rizvi and Afzaal Siddiqui, two individuals from Regina and active in the community. And they also have been active, Mr. Speaker, in the Coalition for a Fair SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program]. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the legislature today. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Chamber, I'd like to introduce some folks in the west gallery from the film industry here. They're here today again to illustrate to the government that they are still here. There are people who have remained, who want to stay here and are very optimistic that the government will put a program in place that works for the film and television industry here in Saskatchewan. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join with me in welcoming the folks from the film industry here today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know that British Columbia and other provinces have brought several safety precautions through law, including a requirement that workers cannot be alone during late-night, early-morning hours. And if they are required to work alone, there must be protective barriers such as locked doors and protective glass. 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 Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours.

I do so present. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to make education a top priority by establishing a long-term vision and plan, with resources, that is responsive to the opportunities and challenges in providing the best quality education and that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that recognizes the importance of educational excellence to the social and economic well-being of our province and students for today and for our future.

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

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the leadership and community of Wollaston Lake, that the Government of Saskatchewan stop turning their backs on the people from northern Saskatchewan and start investing in public highways in the North. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the construction on the road to Wollaston Lake which was started under the

previous NDP government has shown little to no progress and must be completed quickly.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people of Wollaston Lake. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on the possible telephone coverage. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To undertake as soon as possible to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nation, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; the Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation along with the community of Turnor Lake, including the neighbouring communities in each of those areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that signed this petition that I'm presenting today are primarily from Patuanak, but the petition is supported all throughout the land. And I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Campion College Alumni of Distinction Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, October 26th, I had the pleasure of bringing greetings to the 2012 Campion College Alumni of Distinction Awards dinner. Three outstanding Campion College alumni were honoured with the 2012 Alumni of Distinction Awards.

Dr. Blair Stonechild, an internationally recognized researcher in the field of indigenous studies and indigenous post-secondary education. Dr. Stonechild's work on land claims and higher education for First Nations has created many opportunities and led to greater awareness of these very important issues.

Mr. Kenneth McKay, a lawyer who served the Ministry of Justice for over 30 years. Throughout his career, Mr. McKay was appointed to various provincial and federal committees and investigative commissions and served as the director of public prosecution for a number of years.

And Dr. June Zimmer, a nationally recognized researcher and coach. Dr. Zimmer was recently named one to watch on the most influential women in sports and physical activities. In her personal and professional life, Dr. Zimmer has worked tirelessly to ensure that young girls in Saskatchewan have equal access to healthy, active opportunities. Her program of Girls in the Game is a great success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in

congratulating the recipients of the Campion Collegiate 2012 Alumni of Distinction Awards. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Grand Opening of Station 20 West

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 17th I joined my colleagues from Riversdale and Nutana, along with hundreds of others, to celebrate the much anticipated grand opening of Station 20 West Community Enterprise Centre. Station 20 West, initially a \$16 million project when planning started six years ago, had to be scaled back after the Sask Party government pulled \$8 million in funding in 2008. Since then the community has rallied to raise over \$6 million necessary to complete the project.

Mr. Speaker, there has not been a grocery store in this area of Saskatoon for more than a decade. In addition, only 44 per cent of the children under the age of two were immunized in the city's core neighbourhoods in 2006 compared to 91 per cent in the five most affluent neighbourhoods. Now thanks to the support of the community, Station 20 West houses a grocery store, cafe, gathering space, and a mothers' centre. Quint, CHEP [child hunger and education program] Good Food, KidsFirst, and the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] outreach centre offer help, housing, and food services.

Sheila Pocha, the Chair of Station 20 West, spoke about the potential within the walls of this very important building saying, and I quote:

We have an opportunity for growth and people to feel happy. They have something actually built that's new in their community and not used, not a pawn store. That's really wonderful to be part of.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members in this legislature to join with me today in celebrating the official grand opening of the Station 20 West Community Enterprise Centre. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a very special teacher in our province. Ms. Christine Danyluk of Canora, Saskatchewan was recently presented with the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in Early Childhood Education. She is one of only 10 Canadian educators to be presented with this award.

The Prime Minister's award, Mr. Speaker, honours educators of the highest calibre who are fundamental in supporting the growth of our young children. Chris was nominated for the award by her colleagues in the Good Spirit School Division. It's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that Chris's fellow educators recognize the outstanding contribution she makes to early childhood development.

Chris recently flew to Ottawa for three days of celebratory activities for the presentation of her award by Prime Minister

Stephen Harper. Mr. Harper acknowledged her innovation in the classroom and dedication to keeping students engaged in learning. She was also recognized for her continuous involvement with parents, families, and the greater Canora community.

I applaud Chris for the work she does in the Canora Junior Elementary School and for her dedication to Saskatchewan students. With such talented and committed educators working with our young people, the future of our province looks brighter than ever.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Christine Danyluk and in thanking all of the outstanding educators in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

India Canada Night

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to attend and support the annual India Night that was held on September 29th at the Conexus Arts Centre. As always, this event drew a large crowd and had a ton of support. This special night showcased traditional dancing, music, ethnic cuisine, and a fashion show and dance that my wife Stephanie and I participated in, dressed in traditional Indian attire. While Stephanie's Bollywood moves were impressive, my own were, well not so much, Mr. Speaker.

The India Canada Association is a multicultural leader that enriches and strengthens our province, reflecting our motto, "from many peoples strength." At this year's event, the ICA [India Canada Association] was proud to have the Deputy High Commissioner of India speak. She was both engaging and insightful as she spoke about building relationships between India and our province.

Over the years this exceptional event has been able to raise more than \$400,000 for community groups. This year's dinner alone raised over \$20,000 for the Kids Help Phone. India night is a unique and special event that allows its participants to explore and appreciate culture and our community.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to thank the India Canada Association of Saskatchewan, its leaders and members, and to specifically thank India Night Chair Ms. Renu Kapoor, the dedicated organizing committee, and the countless volunteers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds' demonstration team. The Snowbirds are comprised of Canadian Forces members, both regular and reserve force, who come from various military backgrounds and experience.

On Friday, October 19th, the Snowbirds wrapped up their 2012

season with a final demonstration in front of family, friends, and invited guests at their home base, 15 Wing in Moose Jaw.

The Snowbirds theme for 2012, We Stand On Guard For Thee, embodied the imperative that Canadian Forces remained about and ready for the defence of Canada, our allies, and North America at large. This season focused on the Canadian North and brought the Snowbirds as far as the Arctic Ocean for a performance touching every ocean in North America throughout their 2012 tour.

Mr. Speaker, each year the final performance of the Snowbirds is often bittersweet, as it is often the last show for a handful of pilots, technicians, and officers. Typically Snowbird pilots rotate out of the squadron after putting in two years of service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the Snowbirds on another successful season and to thank the outgoing members of the Snowbirds on their dedication and service to our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Women's History Month and International Day of the Girl

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to celebrate Women's History Month and the first International Day of the Girl held on October 11th.

Women's History Month is celebrated each year, and it provides an opportunity to recognize and appreciate how women have shaped our history and to acknowledge the important contributions women make in all facets of life.

The United Nations declared October 11th as the first International Day of the Girl to recognize the contributions of girls and young women as powerful voices of change. For the month of October, Saskatchewan's theme is Women and Girls Shaping Saskatchewan's Future, which recognizes the passion and energy that young women and girls bring to leadership roles in the classroom, the boardroom, and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, women have been making valuable contributions to Saskatchewan for many years, and women will continue to contribute to Saskatchewan's growth and prosperity for many years to come. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members of the Legislative Assembly to take time to reflect and appreciate how women have shaped our province's history. And I ask all members to join me in celebrating Women's History Month and the first International Day of the Girl. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Leadership Candidates' Position

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's NDP [New Democratic Party] leadership candidates have at least one thing in common: they refuse to stand up for Saskatchewan.

When asked by the media yesterday about whether they support their federal leader's Dutch disease attack on Western Canada's resource sector, one of the candidates said he supports Thomas Mulcair's position.

NDP leadership candidate Erin Weir told reporters he was in complete agreement with his federal leader's position that our resource sector is bad for Canada. At least we know where he stands, unlike two of his leadership rivals sitting in the Saskatchewan legislature. When reporters asked the members for Regina Rosemont and Saskatoon Massey Place whether they support Thomas Mulcair's Dutch disease diagnosis, they dodged reporters' questions with evasive language, refusing to answer with a simple yes or no if they agree with the federal leader.

I'm sure both members are familiar with Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of Canada, who called the Dutch disease argument a "scapegoat," "overly simplistic," and dead "wrong," and went on to say, "The strength of Canada's resource sector is a reflection of success, not a harbinger of failure."

Mr. Speaker, we still don't know where those two members stand on Mulcair's attacks against Saskatchewan's economy, but I'm sure these members now have something to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for the Film Industry

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the public was finally given the report on the cost and the benefit of the film industry in Saskatchewan that I raised in the Assembly yesterday. Let me read a quote: "What the report shows is that there is an economic benefit to the province of Saskatchewan from the film industry." Those aren't my words, Mr. Speaker. Those are the words of the minister yesterday in the rotunda. Will the minister admit his government made a huge mistake and reinstate the effective Saskatchewan film employment Saskatchewan tax credit?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard from the hon. member opposite everything from a conspiracy theory about the government sitting on a hidden report that I acknowledged was in existence, and I'd received a report and asked them to release it, Mr. Speaker. We also heard from the member opposite about numbers throwing around as to what the net cost would be to the taxpayer of the province, Mr. Speaker, completely inaccurate on that. I think the hon. member should take the opportunity to stand up and clarify her comments and clarify her remarks and give accurate information, Mr. Speaker, give accurate information with respect to the numbers that she was throwing around in the Assembly yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, what I said yesterday and I stand by

today, and this government has always said, any industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, provides an economic benefit towards the economy and our province. There's no question about that, Mr. Speaker. Any industry that receives preferential treatment with respect to a refundable tax credit would also provide economic benefit to this province, Mr. Speaker. There's no debate about that.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce doesn't mince words on the wrong-headed decision of the Sask Party government to cut the film tax credit. Steve McLellan, CEO [chief executive officer] of the chamber, said today in a release, "This decision affected real people and real businesses, whose commitment to growing the film sector was shattered as a lifeline to this industry was cut."

Mr. Speaker, the minister should stop defending his predecessors and his Premier's bad decision. Will the minister admit his government's decision was short-sighted, petty, and ideologically driven instead of one based on common sense and facts?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I would say to the hon. member is that we are embarked upon a consultation process with all of our creative industries in this province. A refundable employment tax credit that helps offset labour costs, Mr. Speaker, is not a sustainable program. The province of Alberta has moved away from a tax-based incentive program. The province of New Brunswick has moved away from a tax-based incentive program.

The film industry has said to government in the past that we needed to increase our incentives and engage in a bidding war with other provinces, Mr. Speaker, in order to keep the industry sustainable. There is no other creative industry in the province, Mr. Speaker, that enjoys the preferential treatment that the film community, the film industry enjoyed under a refundable tax credit, Mr. Speaker. It is bad public policy. The refundable employment tax credit is gone. We're working on a new model with all of our creative industries, Mr. Speaker, moving forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member of Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — What's bad public policy is cutting a program before you do any consultations.

Mr. Speaker, the study clearly lays out the economic argument in favour of the film tax credit. The study confirms that over its lifetime, for every dollar invested in the tax credit, it generated about six times the economic activity for the province. Six times, Mr. Speaker. Steve McLellan said today, "If you could get that kind of return on every dollar you spent, you probably would."

Everyone else agrees the former film tax credit worked for Saskatchewan businesses. Will the minister agree that the film tax credit was in fact good for Saskatchewan's economy?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we know about the . . . well we're not quite clear on all of the NDP positions. We know that the Finance critic has had three different positions on resource revenue sharing with First Nations, Mr. Speaker. What we do know is that the Leader of the Opposition, when given the opportunity to clarify his remarks about where he would find money to restore the refundable film employment tax credit, said he would cut agriculture funding and municipal revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. Those were his words.

The purported front-runner, the purported front-runner in the leadership campaign, Mr. Speaker, for the NDP, Mr. Erin Weir, the individual they turn to every single time to cost out . . . well where they did cost out their platform items, Mr. Speaker, the economist they turn to every single time has said he would restore the refundable employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker. At the same time, he would increase taxes on all small businesses in the province of Saskatchewan, a \$200 million tax grab including the film production companies, Mr. Speaker, who are small businesses in this province. Mr. Speaker, it's bad public policy. We're moving forward.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every day that the Sask Party government puts off fixing the mess it made by killing the film employment tax credit, skilled people are packing their bags. They're taking their kids out of schools. They're saying goodbye and taking their tax dollars and their talents elsewhere. It's heartbreaking, absolutely heartbreaking, to hear the stories of lifelong and long-time Saskatchewan residents leaving their province and feeling like the Sask Party government does not value their contributions.

Mr. Speaker, undoing the damage will take a long time but we want to keep creative, skilled people here, boost our economy, and heal Saskatchewan's now tarnished reputation on the world stage.

Will the minister commit today to immediately put in place a film program that aims to undo the damage the Sask Party government has caused to this industry and to our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a consultation process with all of the creative industries in this province. We've had great turnout at our meetings in Saskatoon and Regina. We've had 45 submissions submitted to government with ideas, Mr. Speaker, on how all of our creative industries can benefit from a support mechanism by government.

But as the hon. member raises, what are you going to do for the film industry, Mr. Speaker? We have been meeting with SMPIA [Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association]. SMPIA has been engaged in our consultation process, and SMPIA, Mr. Speaker, says it needs to meet sector requirements while not participating in what is seen as a bidding war. That's SMPIA's words, Mr. Speaker. It also says it cannot be a tax-related initiative, i.e., not refundable, Mr. Speaker.

We are sitting down with all of our creative ministries to develop good public policy, Mr. Speaker, and we will do that moving forward. Thank you very much.

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

Immigration Issues

Mr. Broten: — It's been six months since the Sask Party government pulled the rug out from under thousands of Saskatchewan families, families that moved here because of the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program. They moved here, they followed the rules, and they expected the Sask Party government to fulfill its commitments. That all changed when the Sask Party government decided to gut the family class of the SINP. However when the new minister was sworn in at the beginning of June, Mr. Speaker, he publicly stated that there would be a review of the change and that they would work to have a compromised position, middle ground, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister: why has he failed to deliver a compromise for Saskatchewan families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, people from around the world have moved to Saskatchewan to make their home here in our province. We welcome people from around the world to Saskatchewan.

The fact of the matter is immigration, though, is a federal matter, as the member opposite knows. Upon taking this role and responsibility, Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the people of Saskatchewan that we would indeed try to work with the federal government and work out a compromise on the situation. We made representation to the federal government, the body that has jurisdiction in this area, as the member opposite knows very well. And we made representation to them. The federal minister, Minister Kenney, said that he wasn't in favour of any changes with respect to this family class, and that they wouldn't be allowing any changes to be made.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister can try to hide behind the federal minister, Mr. Speaker, but he has clearly failed to deliver on his promise to find a middle ground for Saskatchewan families. Mr. Speaker, if he was not sincere in his efforts to actually find a compromise position for Saskatchewan families, he shouldn't have put out the false hope

to Saskatchewan families who are already feeling betrayed by the Sask Party's decision to gut the family class of the SINP.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I question how hard the minister actually worked to find a compromise, Mr. Speaker, for the families affected by this program. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, he was simply saying the right words hoping that the issue would blow over while he slow-walked the so-called review over the following months.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what does he have to say to the families, the families who feel betrayed by this Sask Party's original decision, the families who are confused by the vague call for a review that the minister made, the families, Mr. Speaker, that are now feeling angered at this minister's failure to deliver a compromise for Saskatchewan families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, we sat down and had a very good discussion with the members representing the coalition. We told them that we would take the position to the federal minister with respect to the family class in terms of addressing the concerns that they had put before us. We did exactly that. And unfortunately, to use the member's own, to use the member's own words, yes we failed. Yes, unfortunately we didn't get what we wanted with respect to this.

We went to them and put forward a position that was represented by the coalition, and indeed the federal minister said that they weren't willing to make any changes with respect to that. We are continuing to work with the members of the community in terms of their concerns in this area. We're looking at how we can accommodate them through the increasing cap that we have asked for from the federal government as well. And we'll continue to work with them as closely as we can.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan families affected by these changes are so concerned by the changes that they've formed a coalition called the Coalition for a Fair SINP. Mr. Speaker, these individuals have actually contacted the Ombudsman, an independent officer of the Legislature, to ask for his opinion, a report as to how they have been treated, whether or not it has been fair.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think these individuals have been treated fairly, and I think they deserve so much better. And I too look forward to the report from the Ombudsman on this issue.

My question to the minister, my question to the minister: is there any reason that the Saskatchewan family should believe the promise that he made earlier to find a compromise? Is there any hope left for them, or does he consider this a case closed?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — What we have said consistently, and the

member opposite I am sure knows this, that we would work as closely as we could with members of the immigrant community. We have said that all applications that have come in before May 1st would indeed be assessed under the previous category. So anybody that falls into that circumstance, that had made application, will be reviewed and eventually we will see resolution to their situation. And I think the member opposite knows very well that that is the case. We'll be again working with the federal government to see whether we can increase the cap in immigrants moving to Saskatchewan. We will be at the upcoming meetings of the ministers with respect to immigration. We'll be very much making that case on behalf of the people here in Saskatchewan.

In addition to that, we've had a meeting with the Ombudsman with respect to this, explained the situation. I think the Ombudsman was receptive, obviously, to the explanation that was provided at that time.

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

Low-Income People and Food Banks

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Food Banks Canada has released *HungerCount 2012*. The report shows that the Sask Party government has simply not made it a priority to address the hunger that still exists in our communities. Under the Sask Party government in a supposed time of plenty, more and more people are using our food banks. Since the Sask Party government took office, almost 7,000 more people a month go to our province's food banks. Mr. Speaker, that's a 38 per cent increase under this government's watch — 38 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: with all the resources we have in Saskatchewan, why is the food bank usage increasing under this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. We were looking at the numbers this morning when they came out, and we are working with the food bank to determine why the numbers reported for 2011 last year were different than the numbers of 2011 they talked about this year.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, there is still a 3.2 per cent decrease in the number from last year. And overall in Canada, there's a 2.4 per cent increase in food bank usage. So overall, Mr. Speaker, we know that there is work to be done, but we are very proud of the record that we have the lowest percentage of people living on low income in Western Canada, that Saskatchewan has the lowest percentage of seniors in low income, and unemployment in Saskatchewan is the lowest in Canada.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, a glaring failure of the Sask Party government is addressing the needs of

vulnerable and hungry children. Almost half of food bank users in our province are children. This is tied for highest in the country, Mr. Speaker. Children do not have a choice to live in a home with or without food. Parents need the opportunity to raise their families out of poverty. That is common sense. Clearly the province needs to do more to address the food insecurity of our most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why are there 12,000 children a month going to food banks in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — The issue of poverty and the number of people that are relying on government for help is something that we look at all the time. That's why I'm pleased that right now we have 33,000 more people working in Saskatchewan than we did under the NDP government, and there are 16,000 fewer children living in low-income families now than when under the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the work that we're doing along with the partners at the food bank has shown some difference because we've got programs and other companies that are working with us, like the Adult Centre for Employment Readiness and Training, First Years Child Care Inc., Regina Education and Action on Child Hunger. People go to the food bank for more than just food. They go for some of the opportunities to take so that they can be part of our economy. Mr. Speaker, we know that the number of low-income people has declined in our province and there's more work to be done.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem is serious. In the words of Food Banks Canada, "Hunger is toxic for those living through it."

It isn't only vulnerable children using our food banks. People who are working, Mr. Speaker, retired people and students make up more than one in five users of our province's food bank, Mr. Speaker. People who are working, those off work because of an injury or parental leave are another one in ten. In other words, Mr. Speaker, working and middle-class people are struggling to stretch their paycheques far enough to even pay for basic groceries.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will people with disabilities, working people, retirees, and students stop having to line up at food banks in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, when our government put forward our growth program policy last week, we talked about some of the initiatives that we had to ensure that people could be part of a growing economy. That's why we're proud of the fact that we have 4,000 new daycare spaces in the province, that we've increased minimum wage by 26 per cent, that we've made sure the people, a low-income family, a family saves more than \$2,600 a year compared to when they were under the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, low-income people are looking at us when it comes to more money for advanced education and job opportunities right across the province. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the work that we're doing to ensure that families are part of a growing economy.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

SaskTel and Congress on Information Technology

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's not news that the Saskatchewan Party government takes rural and northern people for granted. Under the Saskatchewan Party, rural and northern people are the last to receive any upgrades to their cell coverage and the last to get any rollouts of high-speed Internet. In fact, Mr. Speaker, 8,000 customers were going to have their high-speed wireless broadband Internet cut off until we pressed the Sask Party to do something about it, Mr. Speaker. We'll tackle some of those concerns another day, Mr. Speaker, ad nauseam.

However last week, Mr. Speaker, Montreal hosted the World Congress on Information Technology and SaskTel International was a platinum sponsor. My question to the minister of SaskTel: what did the Saskatchewan people get from this conference for the \$135,000 sponsorship from SaskTel International and our other Crowns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that the world of technology and especially cellphone technology and data usage is increasing exponentially in our province, Mr. Speaker, as it is around the world. Having said that, SaskTel is working with all its partners from around the world to look at how we can better serve not only people in our urban centres, but people throughout rural Saskatchewan.

We know that, Mr. Speaker, that there is Xplornet available. There is DSL [digital subscriber line] service, Mr. Speaker, that SaskTel has spread across this province through many of the urban communities. But there is still more work to do, Mr. Speaker. That's why SaskTel recently spent some time in China looking at what technology is there and what can be expanded and better serve rural Saskatchewan. And that's how you learn from other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

I think if we were to ever to go back to the NDP where they wanted to put walls up around this province, not look what other jurisdictions were doing, Mr. Speaker, we'd be way, way behind, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskTel is a leading company looking for technology to bring back to Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the problems that this government has a lot of difficulties with is how we keep information private or not. We know that SaskTel has been dealing with Huawei, which is a Chinese telecommunications company that has very serious security concerns expressed by three countries — those countries being

Australia, the US [United States] and of course our own federal government — about this company hacking into private information through their technology. And we know that the Premier has stood by his photo op in China with Huawei, a company that he has already married.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: did the \$135,000 buy us any tips on how to protect the private information of the Saskatchewan people and companies?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the security of our information is paramount. SaskTel has answered that question. The Premier has answered that question. There were some concerns, Mr. Speaker, that were raised by officials in the United States regarding Huawei. Mr. Speaker, it's been proven that really, especially for the equipment that we're using, Mr. Speaker, there is no concern there. But having said that, SaskTel continues to take that very, very serious.

Mr. Speaker, we need to learn from other jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions are leading on telecommunications. At times we need to learn from that, take some of that expertise, bring it back to Saskatchewan as well as, Mr. Speaker, sell some of our expertise as well, Mr. Speaker, at this international conference.

We have more work to do for sure in rural Saskatchewan, but I can tell you we're a far cry from where the NDP are, Mr. Speaker. The investment by SaskTel into rural Saskatchewan far outweighs any numbers that the NDP could ever put up.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll try this again. Mr. Speaker: over \$135,000 of taxpayers' money went to this conference. People want to know what was in it for us? What was in it for SaskTel? Surely, Mr. Speaker, our delegation received something more than just their conference books. Once again, hopefully SaskTel at least picked up some business opportunities because it does business in other countries.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the same minister said that the ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], another Crown corporation, must be sold rather than be allowed to compete in the international marketplace. I wonder if that's the same position he's forcing upon SaskTel. Again to the minister: did the people of Saskatchewan at least get a T-shirt or a goodie bag for the more than \$135,000 spent on this conference?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that SaskTel is a world leader in telecommunications and, Mr. Speaker, it's going to conferences like this to learn from world leaders, Mr. Speaker. It's not about the T-shirt, Mr. Speaker. That may impress the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, but SaskTel brings back information and technology that will help lead Saskatchewan into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you a little bit of what SaskTel has done for investing, not in conferences but right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in five years of our government, it's over \$1.4 billion. That's a 79 per cent increase over the five years under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. They cannot talk about investment into rural Saskatchewan, especially through SaskTel. Mr. Speaker, this government is standing behind rural Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister should have gone to the conference. Otherwise he would have missed out on the platinum opportunity to talk to three countries about doing business with Huawei. He would have missed out on the opportunities to market ISC internationally, as well as SaskTel. But he's confused on those two issues and those two companies. He could have found new ways to protect and expand wireless broadband service to rural customers and northern customers, Mr. Speaker. But on all three fronts, he failed, Mr. Speaker.

If the minister did not attend the conference, at least from his officials, did he receive a postcard so that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan would get something out of this platinum sponsorship of \$135,000, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to follow a question like that. Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that SaskTel is a world leader. I guess if it was up to the opposition they would never have SaskTel interface with any of the companies, Mr. Speaker, from around the world that are certainly leading edge as SaskTel is.

We have software that other countries are looking at. How you market that is by going to these conferences. If we ever go back to the old days of the NDP, Mr. Speaker, I guess they'd cut all that off, because certainly I'm sure we can look back under the NDP where SaskTel was looking at learning from other countries. Mr. Speaker, most of those questions are, Mr. Speaker, hardly warrant a response.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

11-and-Under Initiative

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about an important initiative that I had the pleasure to help announce this morning with my colleagues from the Regina Police Service and the Regina Public School Board.

The 11-and-under initiative aims to reduce the number of children who are 11 years old and younger from entering the criminal justice system or being referred to Social Services, and to help these children be successful in school.

This initiative provides a way to link children and families to a

variety of programs and services that will support their development, that will improve their future, provide a positive learning experience, and increase their involvement in the community.

As Minister of Social Services, I know the dangers of unhealthy behaviour all too well. I also know there are things that we can do to help prevent these behaviours from getting out of control, and this initiative is just one of them. Mr. Speaker, preventative efforts like this are vital. The under-11 initiative provides me with hope that we are making positive strides in this direction, and my ministry is proud to support this initiative by providing \$94,000 in annual funding.

[14:15]

We all have to work together to make sure that our children are safe and healthy. That's why the under-11 initiative is so very important. It provides a way to link children and families through a variety of programs and services that will support their development, improve their future, and provide positive learning experience. All these wonderful outcomes will be the result of collaborations between the police, the school boards, the community-based organizations, and human service agencies. Together we can identify the challenges that are facing each child and their family in order to respond to their specific needs.

In closing I want to thank all the partners involved in this extremely worthwhile initiative. Together we can make a real difference in the lives of our most valuable and yet our most vulnerable citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to provide the opposition's remarks. Thank you to the minister for sending over her ministerial statement a little bit earlier. I want to commend the government on the 11-and-under initiative. At any time that we invest in children, I would say that's a very good thing. The best way to ensure that people grow into healthy adults is to ensure that they have the best possible start in life and intervening early, I would agree, is the way to do things. But I also would . . . The minister here today said, "Together we can better identify the challenges facing children and their families in order to respond to their needs."

I would argue that we probably already know some of those challenges facing families. We heard about one of them today — hunger. We have 12,000 children in Saskatchewan using the food banks. I'd argue that housing is one of the challenges facing families that can help prevent children going into the justice system. And there are so many people here in Saskatchewan who are still struggling to have affordable and secure housing, Mr. Speaker. Employment and parents being employed is one of the issues around helping ensure that children have opportunities in life. And we right now, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, have an Aboriginal employment rate or First Nations off-reserve employment is over 20 per cent and Métis unemployment . . . Sorry. First Nations off-reserve unemployment is over 20 per cent and Métis unemployment is over 10 per cent.

So I think that we need to think about the under-11 initiative. As I said, I would commend the expenditures to help keep kids out of the criminal justice system, but I think we have to take it a step back and go even further and think about housing, food, employment — all those kinds of things. And I think that that's where the government needs to concentrate its efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 45 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure that Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Next sitting of the House.

Bill No. 46 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

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

Bill No. 47 — *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Environment that Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

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

Bill No. 48 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Environment that Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

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

Bill No. 49 — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Environment that Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, next sitting of the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Cox, seconded by Mr. Docherty, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Nilson.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak in support of the Speech from the Throne. But before I enter into a discussion on the Speech from the Throne, there are some very special people I would like to acknowledge.

The first one is my constituency assistant, Kelly Zazula. Kelly does an absolutely incredible job of ensuring that constituents' needs and wants are being met in a very timely but also in a very respectful fashion. And so I do appreciate all the hard work that she does on my behalf and on behalf of the residents of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

I would also like to thank my husband, Terry Ross, who's been very supportive of my seeking public office and in my role as the MLA for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

An Hon. Member: — He's a gem.

Ms. Ross: — Yes, he is a gem. He's just a good sounding board. You know, sometimes when we get caught up in the excitement of political life, he's got his feet firmly planted on the ground and has always such wonderful sage and very respectful advice to be able to share with me.

Another person I would like to acknowledge is my mother, Bertha Masurat. My mom is in her 90s and is of failing health, so I'm not sure how many more throne speeches she's going to have the opportunity to listen to. But you know, she's very encouraged and very optimistic of the plan that was set forward

by this Throne Speech entitled "Planning for Growth." And it was strong women such as my mother who really worked hard to build this province to ensure that women such as myself feel confident and are not afraid to take on anything. So it's strong farm women such as my mom who I think a lot of us can really acknowledge. She was very involved in the 4-H community, gave of her time to the church, so she's just been a pillar in the Springside-Yorkton community. So I really, I think it's important that I acknowledge the hard work that she has undertaken over these years.

Now this year is a very special year for people in Saskatchewan, well for across Canada, because this is the Diamond Jubilee Year of Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II. This year also, the marking of the Diamond Jubilee has also special significance for our family. My father-in-law, William Samuel Ross, marched as an Armed Forces gentleman in the coronation parade. So it's been kind of interesting when we sit around the family dinner table and the information came forward that in fact he marched in this parade, and so our family takes great pride in that.

But also this Diamond Jubilee, medals that were handed out to numerous residents from across Saskatchewan acknowledging the wonderful hard work and volunteerism that people in Saskatchewan are really known for. And I had the opportunity of putting forward a youth, name of Karen Dhaliwal.

Now Karen Dhaliwal is a young woman who has contributed to her cultural community extensively. Karen was not able to come and attend the awards ceremony. So in fact we were very lucky and I felt very honoured to attend temple at the Sikh Temple on a Sunday afternoon and, along with the Sikh community of Regina, we had a ceremony where Karen was presented her Diamond Jubilee Medal. And it was so moving to see not only her family, the Dhaliwal family which has just embraced me into their own family, but also the whole Sikh community was so gracious and so appreciative of coming out and performing the pinning on of the Diamond Jubilee Medal. Because events like that, they just don't happen very often. So to be able to participate in something like that I think was probably, well it was life changing for many of them.

To discuss the Throne Speech, there are so many issues that were brought forward in this "Planning for Growth." And I know the opportunity that I've had in travelling across the province and talking to women who have said to me and shared with me they just feel so optimistic, but also so proud of the Throne Speech that was brought forward, that there's so much in it for them.

The aspect of education. Moms and dads want to feel that when their children go to school that they are going to be able to receive the best quality education that we can provide. They also want to be confident that their children are going to be able to compete here in Saskatchewan, but also nationally and internationally. So the objectives that were set forward in the Throne Speech I think are just very positive because we are taking education very seriously because we know that if we don't have the best educated citizens and young people, we are going to be at a disadvantage. So the opportunities that we want to be able to ensure that our students have in the highest achievement, these are goals. These are not just lip service that

we're paying, but in fact these are goals that are being set out to ensure that our students are the best they can be.

My husband teaches at the university and he has shared with me some concerns of some of the students that maybe have entered into university that were maybe not as well equipped as they should be. Well we are addressing that. We are going to make sure that our students, whether they choose to continue their education after graduating grade 12, whether they choose to go to university or whether they choose to go to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] or enter into the workforce, that they have all the tools they need. And so I'm so proud and so pleased to be able to see that we are really addressing this. We're not just talking about it, we're doing it. And I think that's what people of Saskatchewan . . . People in Saskatchewan want to know that their government is a roll up your sleeves and get the job done kind of government. And that's exactly what we want to do.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to travel across the province as a member of the creative industry committee and this has been an enlightening but also a very rewarding opportunity for myself and the other members of this committee. We've had a chance to meet with all members, or as many members as wish to participate, of the arts and the cultural communities across the province. And they have shared with us their hopes, their dreams, and their ideas of how we can create the province of Saskatchewan, how we can shape it moving forward so that in fact all arts and cultures have a rightful place here in the province.

[14:30]

So it was wonderful to meet with so many new people. But the best part was the opportunity for myself to connect with so many of my friends that are artists and craftspersons within this province. Because I think that's the wonderful opportunity that I feel truly honoured to have been able to participate in that committee. And the report will be coming out after we sit down, finalize the information, put it together in a very good, working document that, again, is not just paying lip service, but in fact is going to be a report that will form future ideas and future policies, real policies that will create a much more inclusive province. So I do appreciate the opportunity for being able to participate in that committee.

One of the things I wanted to address in the Speech from the Throne, it's the newly created Water Security Agency. And this is a 25-year strategy. You know, we talk about our different resources that are so important to Saskatchewan, but water — water is life. And I think we all know that. We all acknowledge that. So to put together a long-term strategy that will ensure that high quality and sustainable water quality is going to be not just for personal use, but for the whole province, we have to ensure that with our growing population that in fact a resource such as water is there for everyone but also to be undertaken in a sustainable and a safe manner.

I had the opportunity of attending a demonstration project in my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley at Grand Coulee. And there was a new technology that was brought forward. It was clear water clarification. Now this is the kind of thing, the technology that Saskatchewan is known for. It's smart. It's

environmentally respectful but it also is very doable in this province. And this is the sort of thing that I think we can all champion in this province. And that's what the Throne Speech addresses. It addresses people in Saskatchewan who have what we would call a darn right good idea, that these ideas and this kind of technology is going to be looked at, and this is what Saskatchewan should be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, this document is a working document. It's called "Planning for Growth." I know we're all very proud of the increase in population and the increase of our industries within this province. But it has to be done in such a manner that everyone benefits. We're ensuring that in fact people of Saskatchewan will in fact benefit from our growth. And that is why the Premier has undertaken a plan called 2020, growth for Saskatchewan. This is the sort of thing that in fact sets this government apart from others to ensure that we are planning for the long range of this province, for the growth for the long term. This is not just a plan for four years or five years, but this in fact is a long-range plan. And that's how good policies are undertaken and that's how good governments are undertaken.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I am going to be . . . I am speaking in favour and will be voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne but will not be supporting the motion from the opposition members. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in the debate on the Throne Speech considering that, you know, we're celebrating the 100th celebration of this great building. It's an honour to be here speaking today on the Throne Speech.

You know, one of the main issues of this Throne Speech is dealing with infrastructure and growth, which we've been dealing with since we formed government. And one of the things I want to first as I go on, is, as you know, we've had all the elections, municipal elections, your school boards, your mayors, council of, reeves in rural and small and city towns. And as I listened to the major news, watching the major Saskatoon, Regina, P.A. [Prince Albert], Moose Jaw, the mayors and councils talk about their agenda, the candidates . . . Also reading about, in the rural papers, the elections that were going on and people that were running for office, and the main thing that they all talked about, almost the first thing when a reporter would ask them, you know, what's the biggest challenge facing a town, a RM [rural municipality], a city, is infrastructure and growth. So with that, you know, those are things that as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that we've been listening to. I've been hearing that a number of years, you know, and it's been interesting.

You know, in the previous census over half of Saskatchewan cities and more than 85 per cent of our towns decreased in population 10 years ago. Now that's what we were facing when I first got elected, you know. And now just looking at the stats in the last census, every city and nearly 80 per cent of the small towns saw their population increase during the most recent census period. So that's how much things have changed since I was first elected. That was . . . To me that's, you know, a major accomplishment. That is something as a politician that you

want to work with to help your province grow and your towns. Because I can remember when I was first elected in '99, one of the biggest challenges that the mayors were facing, and the RMs, was a loss of population, loss of tax revenue. And how do you deal with that?

Now when I meet with them it's, how do we adjust to the growth? And it's a good problem. I mean they're happy to move that because with growth, you know, becomes more revenue. There is challenges but they're good challenges. They're challenges that you look forward to facing. You know if we'd have kept in the decline, I don't know what would have happened over the many years if we'd have kept seeing that decline carry on. So you know, dealing with this Throne Speech, that is a priority of this government, as many things.

But part of it, most of it is dealing with infrastructure. Highways, we've doubled. In this year's budget alone, we've invested 581 million in Saskatchewan highways. Is that enough? No. I mean I have Highway 15 that needs work. But we're working to address that, knowing that we've had to increase our funding per year, every year in highways. When I look back through the '90s, the highway budgets were basically flat. They hardly ever grew. But under our tenure, they've grown every year because we know that that's something that we have to address. You know, that's part of the plan we set for growth, and part of the plan we're working on. We set, you know, a bold target of 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020.

I can remember when we were, shortly after we were elected . . . not elected. After shortly I was elected, we were talking about in opposition we would grow this province to a million. And I remember at that time there was the member from Wascana Plains said that, from the NDP side, said that was impossible like. And all we were doing was hoping or saying that we should grow at the national rate. That's what we were hoping in opposition, that the government would at least recognize at the time that you should grow towards at least the national rate. And she said, oh that wasn't possible.

Well now we're growing way more than that because we've taken the initiative. We've taken a dream, and that's a dream of this province and the people — to grow, to grow the province, to grow businesses, to make this, you know, one of the best places to live in the world. And it shows with the immigration that has been coming here and the workers that come here. We have the workforce which we've been working to increase. With that becomes the businesses that are looking here.

At one time you wouldn't have got the potash companies looking to invest, oil companies looking and with that, small manufacturing companies that are springing up all throughout the smaller towns and the major cities, you know. And that is, Mr. Speaker, is what a government should be working towards, is always working towards the betterment of people. And one of it is through growth because with it becomes money that you can improve services as health care which as you know has always been an important issue throughout Canada, throughout the world, you know, throughout Saskatchewan.

You know, as we work towards improving it, the doctor shortages are always one of the things we've been working at

and trying to improve throughout, you know, our . . . [inaudible]. You know, one of the ones was the air ambulance. That was a promise that we made, that we brought in. And with the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] that's . . . You know, in fact it was used in my constituency a couple of times already, you know, and I believe it saved a couple of lives. And that's, you know, that's important. That's something that the government should be working towards.

Another one that we did with, you know, with working towards how to get rural doctors in rural Saskatchewan or getting doctors to rural Saskatchewan, you know, there's 24 international medical graduates that have entered Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment. And you know, since the program began in 2011, we've had 37 foreign-trained family physicians have completed the assessment and right now more than 90 per cent are practising in rural or remote areas. That speaks to, you know, our government working in any way we can to improve the services out there throughout Saskatchewan because just bringing them doctors in isn't just for rural Saskatchewan and the northern. It also helps the cities. You know, those are the things that we're addressing in this Throne Speech and as we work forward, as we talk about as you plan for growth, I mean, you plan for the infrastructure growth. You also plan for medical, knowing that you're going to need that throughout the province as the province grows, the population grows, as the towns.

You know, another one is education. We've talked about education in this Throne Speech of how to improve that through training, which our businesses are asking for more skilled labour. You know, one time, that maybe 20, 30 years ago, there wasn't as much demand at that. Now every business minimum is grade 12 education to work in almost any business and usually higher up, part of post-secondary education. And those are things that we're working at to improve that, to improve the education chances and abilities for the graduates who are out there, more opportunities, providing more educational opportunities, and so that they can follow the higher paying jobs on the way up.

Those are discussed at length in this Throne Speech on education, health, growth, and infrastructure. And that is why, you know, this . . . But with growth there is also, you know, naturally challenges. But those are challenges that we are facing and also, I think, surpassing. You can show in our waiting list for surgeries. We've shrunken that. It's a challenge that we've stepped up and it's a daunting challenge to bring the waiting lists down, but we have.

And those are things in my office that are . . . the phone calls come about. You know, those are the improvements that the people see that out there. And they know that you're working towards improvements of improving their life. And it shows in the support that I guess I've received over the numerous elections that I've served, but also in the support for our Premier in polling and also shows the support for the government because they know that we're working towards planning for growth and long-range growth, and it's going to keep growing this province. And I want it to keep growing. And I know it's going to keep growing. The potential for this province is huge — our natural resources, agriculture. I don't have the statistics in front of me but I know how much exports

we've expanded every year and the markets that we're gaining, whether it be in the lentils, in the peas, in the cereal grains.

[14:45]

And another, you know, another thing that I've gotten in the agricultural end, a lot when I was going around, was the farmers that are . . . Cereal grain acres are up this year. And that, I don't know how many comments I've gotten, that they're so happy that they have the choice of being able to market a lot of their grain on their own. I've been told that by almost every practicing farmer out there. And I know I still hear from the other side that the farmers were mad the Wheat Board was taken. Oh they're not. If you're still saying that, you're way out of touch in rural Saskatchewan. What they like is a dual market. They have the opportunity, which they had this fall, and I know lots of farmers had the opportunity to move bulk amount of grain. Most years you've had to store it. A lot of them will tell you we had a good crop throughout Saskatchewan, our constituency, and throughout Saskatchewan especially on the cereal grains. There was wheat running anywhere from 50 to 60 bushels an acre; durum in that 70 bushel an acre range in areas.

And the storage is always a challenge. I mean a lot of times you've had to store it on the ground. And I knew a lot of farmers are moving that grain right now and basically getting the cheque up front, the money, but also not losing in grade and quality by it laying in the ground. Under the old days you had a quota system or you had so many tonnes to sell up to October and that was it. Didn't matter, that's all you could sell. Then they'd open it if you're lucky by January 1st, another 25 per cent. By March maybe they would kick it up to 75 per cent. Where now you have the option to move that grain early if you want all of it. Get it up off the ground. And there was, is if you drive in rural Saskatchewan, you will see many grain bags out there. And sure they're into the bags but they usually take a pretty good beating with, out our way, the raccoons, deer, mice. There is still quite a bit of spoilage if they stay in them bags. And that's an issue that a lot of farmers found after a year or two, that there was a lot of damage being done by wildlife, so they were trying to move that grain as fast as possible.

But those are, you know, some of the things we've addressed, not so much this from the Throne Speech in the end, but the agricultural end of it being out in rural Saskatchewan and the things that we've worked to. I mean one of the things we've listened to which I've got from my patrons of the PF [prairie farm] pastures that we're leasing to them, they said yes, you know, glad that you've listened to us and that you're looking at either selling it, if we so choose, but also looking at leasing it like we do. We lease Crown land to different ranchers over the years. There's different situations in the South or the North. And that's one of the things that I heard, and I think many MLAs heard too that, you know, provide us with a leasing option because sometimes sale just isn't possible, especially in the first year or two. And that's something that our government is listening to and is also working in that direction of willing to work with the patrons in that capacity of allowing them to lease.

You know, as we move forward, you know, we want to . . . The growth plan is to lead the country in high school graduation rates by 2020. I know the member that just talked to me before,

you know, talked about how important education is. And she's right. I mean education is the future as we move forward in this province and this country. Education, as I mentioned before — is with jobs and what the companies are asking — it's going to be more important as we move forward. So we need to be putting more emphasis on education which I believe we are. In fact I know we are, looking at the money we're putting into the education budget and the programs that we're bringing forward through the education program. Knowing that we want to make, you know, this a best place for kids that are going through the school system and for the graduation rate.

You know, but also one of the other things that I heard out there lots was always run a balanced budget. You know, it's nice to have which . . . make your priorities your infrastructure, your highways, your health, but do it in a balanced budget. Look at how you can cut costs. Look at just like the people out there that are talking to me, how they run their household budget or their farm budget or their business. You know, they run it the very best way they can, within a budget. And they expect the government to do that.

And that's one of the things we've addressed over the years was the debt in this province which was, I would say, a very high priority with a lot of people. And they want us to keep moving where we can on that deficit, but also to run a balanced budget within these programs. And within that, when you're on a balanced budget, I mean, you have to make some tough decisions. They understand that, as long as you're running in that, and the decisions that you've looked at when you make the harder decisions in government. And when you're in government there is harder decisions you have to make, you know, to keep the province growing in the context of money that is coming in. And, you know, people that I've talked to and that have phoned my office many times and I've talked to them at many events from . . . such as every MLA here, you know. You're out in the public all the time. And that is, you know, one of the bigger comments is that you're with a few balanced budgets not only in the country, possibly in the world, and under tough times. And running a huge debt like some places are is just going to catch up to them in future. I mean, you look at countries like Greece and Ireland, what have happened to them over the last number of years. And those are things that we don't want to happen here, you know. What people want is a steady future, a great place to live, great place to raise a family, a great place for their kids to raise a family and be able to get a job in the context of Saskatchewan.

I know we're looking at lowering the business rate to make us competitive, which we have to, with Alberta and Manitoba and the rest of the provinces. Because as things change, it's a lot easier now to move businesses from place to place or to go get a job in a different province or country. What you want is to be competitive with your surrounding neighbours, and those are things that we're addressing. As we know, if you want to keep growth going, you have to be competitive. If you're even running a small business, if you're not competitive with the guy down the street, you're eventually going to lose your business. So that's a practice that we also have as we move forward is knowing that we have to be competitive with the surrounding provinces, with even the surrounding States, if we want to compete for investment money and for growth and to keep the people that are working here.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there is, as I go through the Throne Speech, there is many good things. I mean we talked about the same thing. You know, more apprenticeship spaces and trying to eliminate the backlog of people who want to work but need to develop the basic skills. Those are things that I talk about. And working with First Nations and Métis to increase their role in the workforce, you know. So those are . . . as I looked through this Throne Speech, and I know that my time is limited, but I will just let you know that I will be supporting this Throne Speech and there's no way I can support the motion that is brought forward by the opposition. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with great pleasure to join in on the debate, Speech from the Throne, and make some comments I guess and opening comments.

First of all, I'd like to start out just with, of course, a thank you to the people back home, my CA [constituency assistant] who works in the office and does an excellent job of dealing with services that government is supposed to provide to our residents. And sometimes it works okay and sometimes that's fine and it works the way it's supposed to. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, sometimes those services do not serve the people in the way it should serve them, and we make sure that that happens with my office, and the CA does that. So I'd like to just again thank my family.

And, you know, time works interesting. The job that we have to do here and we're asked to do on behalf of the people we represent, and that can be in our constituency as well as in the rest of the province . . . And if I look at some of the different challenges that are facing many of the northern people, and in the Cumberland constituency I look at that, and you look at the Throne Speech . . . And it's interesting because I've heard so many different versions. The government has their versions. The opposition has their version of it, and the concerns that people are expressing to us as the opposition, and they're asking us to speak on their behalf because they truly don't believe the government's understanding the issues that are facing many in our province, many. This government doesn't understand. It doesn't consult with . . . It makes decisions. And when you have that process, people feel that they are not part of it. They don't feel like they get input into it. Those are the challenges and frustrations that people will have.

And I'll give you, I'm going to give you an example. Government wants to talk about spending, and they announce a large amount that they're spending on highways and they want to make comments of that about the roads that they're building. And unfortunately . . . Last week we had a group that was here — chief and council, community members, elders, a senator, PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] — bringing their concerns to this House because of the actions or the non-actions of the government, promises, commitments it made to the people of Wollaston Lake to give them an all-season road.

This government made the announcement in a press release in February of 2008. Today, today what happened? Well let me tell you what's happened. In that press release you see and it said, in the construction ending of that year, 2012, they would have an all-weather road. There's no road there. A few trees

were cut down. That's the commitment that this government gave to them in February 2008 and we see exactly where that is. So people are asking why. The chief and council came here asking the questions of this government.

So there's the frustration you have. If that's how you're going to treat people in our province, the leadership has to come here and fight, has to bring awareness. And they've tried to work, they've tried to work with the government. They did their part. They didn't want to raise a bunch of issues. They have tried to work, but unfortunately this is the way they were treated. They are not happy, and they won't go away. I've seen that from the leadership. They're not going to let this just slip away and get told the answers they got told, and their frustration. They were treated in a way . . . and they were given a promise, a commitment by the government. And it is a shame when you see a government treat a community and Saskatchewan people the way this government has treated them. It is truly a shame.

Now there are many challenges facing northern Saskatchewan and facing people in the Cumberland constituency. There are many challenges, whether it's housing, whether the roads. When you have a government who talks about — and I guess in their own Speech from the Throne, a document that they want to brag up — we look at what it's full of. And we've said this. It's full of, I guess, what would be some of the rehashed, recycled, reannounced . . . If you look at some of that stuff in there, some of them my colleagues have talked about six times. Twinning of a highway. How many times are there press releases? How many times the photo ops? Why don't they do a photo op on Wollaston Lake on the road that's for safety of a community? And they've talked about that. Their concern isn't always about the economics. There are economics. It's about community safety.

And you know, and the chief and the council in the community has dealt with loss of life because of the ice roads. And they came here to this House to deal with the government, to hear a concern. And it's shocking. It is. It's frustrating for them. I could see that. But they're going to continue to fight and work hard, and they're going to utilize more groups, more support, and I think they're getting that support. And they're not done with this. Government made the announcements, and they're not done. And they'll continue.

But that just shows one example of some of the comments that they want. And then the government talks about this additional funding for highways. I think one area, it's 50 million. Well why don't they use some of that for priority areas that the government's seen as a priority? Well here is a prime example of a priority. It should be the road to Wollaston Lake. The government should be utilizing those dollars to deal with that. But have they? Well let's hope that they will do the right thing. Let's hope the government does the right thing.

[15:00]

Now having said that, you know, we have a lot of areas. And we talk about education. We talk about unemployment. The government says its commitment to First Nations and Métis in training and education. We don't see a lot, to be honest. Why? If you see the unemployment rate on First Nations of 20 per cent, Métis, 10, when the rest of the province is doing well,

why is that? Why year after year are the numbers going up with First Nations when it comes to unemployment? And a government to stand here in this House and say in a document that they are moving forward, that they were helping. You know, it's a little late. The government needs to do the right thing and work with First Nations and the Métis to deal with this problem.

And the problem is from their own, I guess, programs that they've cut. The problem is, I guess, here dealing with us today because of the decisions that the government made without consulting First Nations, Métis, and other leaders. If they would've done that, they might've found workable solutions to deal with the problem of unemployment. So we see different areas.

Now I want to talk about trapping. Our trappers in northern Saskatchewan — and there's trappers in the province in the South — but the trappers in northern Saskatchewan, all they're asking from a government that has so much . . . It talks about the growth plan. It talks about all the different things it's going to do, but there are so many groups, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that aren't feeling the so-called growth plan, the advantage. You can put it out there and you can put out the press releases all you want, but when people are suffering, young people, and I think about some of the challenge we hear today, the ministerial statements today about working with at-risk youth. When we have our trappers apply, and they apply for funding to do a program to deal with youth, risk of our youth, and then we see that and our youth that are having challenges and need a little bit of guidance to take them on the trapline, they get told no by this government. We cannot give you any dollars, not one penny for that project. Even though it might keep young people out of jail, on the right path, the government says no to them. That goes to show you. You talk about a smart growth plan. You talk about what's fair. This isn't fair.

So we see those challenges. We see what the government has done in this budget. Has it addressed the commercial fishing? No. The industry in northern Saskatchewan, has it dealt with their issues? No. Has it turned their back on them? Totally. So there's not a lot of groups that are saying this is the best budget.

If you looked at the Throne Speech . . . Or I mean Throne Speech. If you look at what's been budgeted for different groups, and again I'll go back to the commercial fishermen. I can go back to the trappers. I'll go back to housing. And the government talks about their plan, their vision, and the growth. In northern Saskatchewan there are many challenges. There are many successes. People are doing well. Some of them work for the good companies, the mining industry. There are other industries that are hiring a lot of First Nations, Métis people, northern people. There are organizations, companies, private sector. Things are going well in some communities. But in some of the isolated communities, there are so many challenges.

Does this address some of the suicides, some of the addictions, the problems we're having in our province? No, it doesn't deal with them. It's time that this government take action. In this Speech from the Throne we see no action, and we're asking for action just like the people in Wollaston asked for action of our government on a road that was the government's commitment.

Action was needed. What has the government done? We'll follow that up soon, having said that. So if you don't have the action in this so-called Throne Speech . . . And the government wants to say this is the best thing for the people of the province. It doesn't deal with a lot of the issues, concerns, challenges that many low-income people are dealing with, middle class, small business. Yes, it does some things, but unfortunately more needs to be done.

You talk about a province that is the boom. You talk about all the different things, the challenges, but you have to also talk about successes. And we do have some of that in northern Saskatchewan. We have a lot of success in First Nations and Métis communities. We have some of the solutions. The government has to be willing to sit at the table and consult and listen to those solutions. There are many challenges, and this Throne Speech doesn't deal with a lot of that. And I ask, why is that?

If the government is so in tune with the communities, with the First Nations, with the Métis, with northern people, with all Saskatchewan residents, they would understand these issues and they would deal with them. And they're not. There are many challenges we see today in question period. We see the film industry. We see a lot of different things. What is interesting, governments make the decision of the day. We understand that. That's the way it is. But I say this to you as a government: when you start taking Saskatchewan people for advantage and you do not listen to them, you do not let them have their say — yes, you can do surveys and they can say, oh yes, doing really good — at the end of the day, the people will speak. And they'll take so much.

I think Saskatchewan people in general, First Nations, Métis, all Saskatchewan residents have a tolerance and they accept things for so long. And then they will send the message. So I'm telling this government, this Throne Speech, the things that you have not dealt with and you need to deal with as a government, you're not a new government anymore. You're a government with years and years that you've got to move your own policies. And we see some of the policies and the direction you're going. You may think that those directions are good for all of Saskatchewan, but when people tell you that your policies and the direction you're going are affecting them, then as a government listen to them. Hear what they're telling you.

Do you think people give you heart stories and you listen to some of the challenges they're facing, that they do this because they have nothing better to do? That they just want to criticize? These are stories and these are challenges that I hear in northern Saskatchewan, First Nations community and the Métis communities. There are many challenges.

You talk about education. You can't continue to say you support First Nations education when you look at the funding, the formula that the federal government, provincial government uses to fund students. First Nations, Métis, all Saskatchewan residents belong to have a quality education. First Nations should be treated and have the same opportunities as all Saskatchewan residents. That should be a fact and we should have more from our Premier, from the ministers, to talk to the government, federal government and say, no more. If they're not going to do it, we'll do all we can to make sure. But we

don't see that.

We see when government makes announcements, they're going to give more funding, someone jumps up and tries to get on the photo op. Oh it's good, or impress or make it look like good. But when not one penny of that money comes in, everyone's silent on it. So this Throne Speech doesn't deal with that. And it didn't, unfortunately, it didn't deal with the situation First Nations are dealing with when it comes to education, when it comes to training.

You know, you talk about all the different challenges and we talk about the bridge, and I'm going to say the bridge to Prince Albert to the leadership over there, to the community. Many are family members that live there, of mine, and I see northern Saskatchewan can use a second bridge. Yes, with the mining industry it's key. When you see the pileup that's gone on this summer and this year with the bridge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is too much.

This government has chosen priorities, and it isn't Prince Albert and area and the mining industry that utilizes those bridges in Prince Albert. So it's clear that the government has picked its priority. Well yes, there you go, winners and losers. And unfortunately P.A. is not the winner today. And P.A., for a second bridge I think they've done all they can. They've done a petition. They've done all . . . We've met with them. The previous mayor and council, we had a chance to meet with some of them and talk about some of the challenges they were feeling.

Well I think a fight needs to go on. P.A. needs to make ground. It's the third largest city in our province and they're not picked as a priority with a bridge when you see the conditions that are going on facing northern Saskatchewan. The lineups, 5 kilometres we've heard, it was unreal.

In a province that talks about the growth plan and all the other revenue and the different things that it talks about and it wants to, what you want to call balanced budget — only, only government with a balanced budget is what they're trying to tell the people in Canada. Well that's fine about record spending and all the different things. How does it affect Saskatchewan residents? And Prince Albert, the residents, northern Saskatchewan, the mining industry, having a second bridge. But unfortunately that was not the priority of this government in the Throne Speech.

So unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see many situations where this government has not dealt with some of the situations, the challenges that people in our province see as an issue, as a challenge. This government doesn't seem to want to consult, communicate when it comes to First Nations.

First Nations had an election. They've elected a new leader for their nation, you know. FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] has a new leader. Congratulations to Perry Bellegarde, new leader. Here's a chief and I think his commitment to his delegates, to the chiefs . . . I was at the assembly where he was elected in and listened to his speech. This man knows there's a lot of concerns that have to be addressed by both levels of government. And he's going to do all he can to make sure he deals with the issues of both levels of

government. So I wish him well. I wish them, that they can deal with some of the challenges that First Nations are facing on-reserve, off-reserve. So I wish them well with their organization, and we will do as an opposition all we can to assist them. And I sure hope the government will do all it can to deal with the concerns the First Nations have, whether it's housing, whether it's roads, education. There are so many challenges. It's the right thing to do.

You know, it's an interesting thing. And I know that they're going to push ahead, and I don't know some day if it ends up going into the courts. But First Nations truly that I have listened to, figure the resource revenue, they want what is rightfully theirs. And it may go to court. It may. It may go to court. And it may be ordered what's going to happen, and we'll see where that goes.

But I wish them well because they are trying to do better for everyone. They're not trying to say that they have the right to it. They want to share it. They want a partnership. They want to make sure it works that everyone's benefiting from resources that are in our province. They want to feel like they're a part of Saskatchewan. They don't want to be lesser than any other Saskatchewan resident. We have a right to deal with them in a fair way to make sure that their education, their health care, to make sure their housing — mould, the different challenges, overcrowding — we see the numbers coming out constantly. Well here's one way that we can address that. And I wish them well on that, on moving that item on their agenda that they will have forward. It'll be good.

I look at the new mayors and councils in northern Saskatchewan, Cumberland constituents that . . . I wish them well. Congratulations to those that are re-elected and for the new mayor and councils. We have an organization that represents the municipality of northern Saskatchewan, which is New North. And I think New North has some challenges to deal with, and I wish them well when they bring their issues to this government for the challenges that are facing northern people. And I wish them well, and I will be meeting with them, with the new executive, with the association, and I wish them well that they move their issues forward to the government. It's time that some of the infrastructure, the challenges of northern Saskatchewan get addressed in the Cumberland constituency.

Having said that, there have been many challenges. People have identified them. When a government has the opportunity to listen to the people — whether it's housing, whether it's our trappers, whether it's the First Nation leadership, whether it's our municipal leaders, whether it's our youth, our elders — in the northern communities, the First Nations, the Métis communities, we hear there's a lot of respect for our elders. They have a lot of wisdom and strength. And I see as they pass that down to the next generation, to my grandchildren who are First Nations, and I watch that pass off of their culture, the hope. There is so much hope and we have to remember that. There's hope.

[15:15]

But when you see the challenges that First Nations, Métis, northern people, and for that matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of Saskatchewan residents are feeling with the challenges of

addictions, suicide, mental health — more needs to be done. The government can't say, well it's not our problem. Yes, it is. You are the government. You are not just a new government. You've had years to deal with some of these issues. You have not.

On some of the files, you may have tried to do some areas or to improve things, I'll give you that. There's nothing wrong with that. It's important. But when you have all these other challenges, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the concerns that are facing people in this province, and I say this — the people of this province — the government has to do a better job. We in this House have to do a better job for all Saskatchewan people. We cannot take care of some, take care of the few chosen ones we want to. We must look after all Saskatchewan residents.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this so-called Speech from the Throne again does not deal with a lot of the issues that I've heard in my constituency that I have had people sharing with me. Yes, it may deal with some of the issues, but there's a lot of issues that still need to be addressed. This government has to do a better job for the people of our province. They expect no less and they should not expect any less from their government that they elect to look after all of us in this province.

Times, prosperity, the resource revenue coming in, it's amazing. This government is truly been blessed with resources coming in. Now make sure you don't leave people behind. And this Throne Speech leaves many people behind, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So of course I could go on, on talking on different issues. And you look at the mines and you look how challenged they are, and we hear some areas and we hear some of the areas where they're improving things — employment for our First Nations, Métis and northern people, and for that matter a lot of Saskatchewan people work in the mining industry. It's good.

The forestry sector, there's more work to be done. That's what they keep saying. It's interesting to watch that. When a government is unsure of themselves, and I watch how they answer some of the questions, when they're unsure they use that word, yes we know there's more work to be done. Very convenient word.

Well maybe it's time that this government know, know this: there's more action needed to be done by this government for the people of northern Saskatchewan and all of Saskatchewan that are not feeling they're being dealt with in this Speech from the Throne.

So I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got a chance to share some views, my thoughts on this. There are many issues and I, you know, would've like to bring up. I know we're limited to the time, but I hope the government, this government will do the right thing on some of the issues coming forward, that this government will have to deal with over the next while, the concerns that people will bring. This document, let's just hope, let's just hope that the government deals with some of the issues and deals with all Saskatchewan people fairly, with respect, not being a bully, and it doesn't matter how they vote. It shouldn't matter who they represent in this House. They should all be treated as Saskatchewan residents and treated with respect. And it's time to do the right thing. Thank you.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget. I will be supporting the amendment to the motion. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it gives me great pleasure, it gives me great pleasure to stand and speak to the Throne Speech. First off, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of Carrot River Valley for giving me the great privilege to be able to come into this wonderful place and represent them on behalf of the constituency of Carrot River Valley, this beautiful building on its 100th anniversary. It is really a pleasure and an experience to be here and I want to thank, from the bottom of my heart, all the constituents of Carrot River Valley.

I also would like to thank my CAs — Shelley, Cindy, and Charlene — because as everybody knows, the CAs do the major portion of the heavy lifting when we are away, and we are away lots. And like I said, in Carrot River Valley they probably carry more of their share of heavy lifting than what they need to, but that's a different story, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my wife, Terry, who stands behind me all the time and is very instrumental and believes that I am helping out the community. The fact is she stands behind me so well that when we're in session, I always come in on Sunday and she always has all my clothes packed on Saturday. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's great of her.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Chamber thinks that they have the best constituency, and I'm no exception. There's 58 of us in here and I'll tell you what: everybody thinks that their constituency is the best. But I want to tell you a few stories about Carrot River Valley constituency. You know about four years ago we had a person up there, Craig and Lorna MacDonald, won \$20 million on the 6/49. And, Mr. Speaker, everybody was asking them, you know, what they were going to do, where they were going to move, you know, maybe some exotic location, etc. And Craig flat out put it, look, this is the best place you could ever live, and he stayed right there. He was our volunteer fire chief then and he still is and still working hard in the community.

Another thing about Carrot River Valley: it also is experiencing growth. You know, under the NDP our logging industry was basically closed up. Well it's taken off now, Mr. Speaker. We have a new company, Edgewood Forest Products, who is operating the stud mill in Carrot River. Weyerhaeuser has reopened their plant over in Hudson Bay. We have a new Cumberland community college that was built in Nipawin under this administration. A new long-term care facility is being built in Tisdale with the new 20/80 split — that's 20 per cent of the money put up by the community, 80 per cent by the government. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was something that this government initiated to help out our seniors and our people that needed the long-term care facilities. In Carrot River we also have the Premier peat moss expansion is going on, building a brand new bog that is going to be good for 50 years. We are slated to have a new school being built in Hudson Bay.

These are all challenges of growth, Mr. Speaker. This is moving the province forward. Carrot River Valley is moving forward, and with that they do need help from the government. Now the government is giving them that help. That's why we have to have a plan for growth, Mr. Speaker.

This, Mr. Speaker, was a great Throne Speech. It's a new vision for the new Saskatchewan. The NDP don't like it of course because well, first off, they never experienced growth so they don't quite know how to handle this. From 1991 to 2007, Saskatchewan lost people.

Now the member from Athabasca tries to spin that the NDP are the creators of all this growth. Yet for 16 years when he sat on this side of the House, there was a decline. So I don't know how he's trying to spin that. The interim Opposition Leader goes even further. And I want to quote the October 17th *Globe and Mail* where the Opposition Leader, and I quote, said, "A document like this distracts everybody, and I think his [Wall's] popularity will stay up there as long as there's sort of a myth of a booming economy."

You know, Mr. Speaker, you can only stick your head in the sand or other places for so long. If the population is growing at the fastest rate in 90 years, if Standard and Poor's gives Saskatchewan a AAA rating, the highest rating there is, if our debt is going down, and all economists in the country are saying that Saskatchewan will lead or be second in economic growth in Canada for the foreseeable future then, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's a myth. You would think that the members opposite would embrace Saskatchewan growth, but no. Their federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, has called the growth in western Canada the Dutch disease. He doesn't want to see Saskatchewan moving forward, doesn't like the progression, and obviously doesn't like growth, Mr. Speaker.

We have heard not a peep out of the members opposite opposing their federal leader. Not from their current leader or any of the leadership candidates. I guess, Mr. Speaker, this is why they're so dead set against the Throne Speech that has a plan for growth. They just never did, never did. Remember Mr. Calvert's statements? We will always be a wee province, always in and out of equalization. Or Mr. Lautermilch's statement, when questioned on out-migration, said there'll be more here for the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to live in Saskatchewan. But more than that, I am proud to say that both our children are working in this province when, just a few short years ago under the NDP, they probably would've looked west for meaningful employment. This, Mr. Speaker, is what growth does.

But we need a plan. Mr. Speaker, the two NDP leadership contenders in this House criticize our plan saying there is nothing new, just a lot of rehashed ideas. But really, you have to look at those two and ask where your plan is.

We have a Finance critic from Regina Rosemont who can't even manage his own leadership campaign, spending twice as much as he's bringing in. And the member from Massey Place who feels the best way to fix the government is to have different camera angles in the Chamber. Mr. Speaker, do you really think the good people of Saskatchewan want these two as

leaders for this great province of ours?

Mr. Speaker, this is a good plan, a futuristic plan, a plan to move our province forward. I know many of the things I'm going to talk about have already been said, and far more eloquently than what I can, but here are a few points from the Throne Speech that I have picked out.

One, we have set a plan to have 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020. Mr. Speaker, with that comes challenges, challenges of infrastructure. That's why our government is committed to funding a minimum of 2.5 billion in infrastructure investments over the next three years on top, on top of the 5 billion that we've already spent for schools, highways, health care facilities, and municipal infrastructures.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan with this growth has a thriving housing sector with more than 8,000 housing starts forecast for this year, the most since 1979. Now one thing we've done is what we've given to the municipal governments is 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax] so they have funding to be able to help with this growth on this housing. Government initiatives will help add 12,600 new housing units between 2011 and 2016.

Mr. Speaker, we haven't forgotten rural Saskatchewan either. We are now the top agri-food exporting province with \$10 billion worth of exports in 2011, up 60 per cent since 2007. We want to see that increased to 15 billion by 2020. So consequently you have to do things to help this along.

[15:30]

This year's budget includes a record 20 million for agricultural research, an increase of more than 50 per cent since 2007. You also have to remember, in order to help our farmers out, what we have done is lowered the education portion of the tax on farm land which has made a big difference to all of the farmers out there and also made a big difference to the municipalities.

And in this year we actually plan on capital investment in Saskatchewan to pass \$20 billion. This is another thing, a record amount, nearly double the 2007 total. Mr. Speaker, this proves that the companies, all the companies that are coming in here and setting up in Saskatchewan put faith in this government, faith that they didn't have in the other people when they were in power. Saskatchewan's on track to surpass British Columbia to become the fourth largest exporting province.

When you travel, Mr. Speaker, it used to be people didn't even know where Saskatchewan was. I can remember in years past, back in my younger years when I travelled around and you said you were from Saskatchewan, and they had to ask you to say Saskatchewan a couple or three times because they couldn't quite understand what it meant. But, Mr. Speaker, now everybody knows where Saskatchewan is. And it doesn't matter, it's not just in Canada. You can even go well down into the States and people know where Saskatchewan is.

Our government will continue to undertake international trade missions and support our exporters and strengthen ties with other countries, doubling the value of Saskatchewan's exports

by 2020. Mr. Speaker, this is why we have a plan. Now I know that the people opposite, they sit back and they say well, there's nothing in this plan. They never had one because they didn't plan for growth. They planned for decline, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just mentioned we talked about education. I mentioned that the new school being built in Hudson Bay. And during the past five years this government has invested 3.5 billion in the province's post-secondary education. We want smart people in this province, we've got them. We want them to stay here. They take post-secondary education. We want them to stay here.

Now we also have the graduate retention program, and that helps them stay here. It provides tuition rebates for up to \$20,000 over seven years for post-secondary graduates who will stay in the province. Mr. Speaker, this is another way of having our province grow.

Mr. Speaker, on the health care end of it, now this is amazing because I am hearing this. Health has always been a number one issue in rural Saskatchewan and everybody knows that. This year though, when I talk to people about surgeries and whatnot, everybody is so amazed at how quickly they are getting in, how quickly they are being looked after, compared to just a few short years ago under the NDP.

Now people are running . . . I just talked to a woman over in Nipawin who had breast cancer and she was totally shocked. She was in within two weeks of her being diagnosed with breast cancer, being in, getting treatment. Since November of 2007, the number of patients waiting more than a year for surgery has been reduced 81 per cent — 81 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The number of patients waiting more than six months has been reduced 56 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that likes to set goals. By utilizing lean techniques and private sector delivery where it makes sense, our government is on track to meet its goal, and no patient will wait longer than three months for surgery in 2014.

Now I know the other side didn't like that and they kept on hollering about the privatization of health services. But I'll tell you, that person that needs the surgery, they don't care where they get it done, they just want to go out and get that done. And, Mr. Speaker, under this government, this is happening.

Mr. Speaker, we have also increased the doctors in Saskatchewan. We've increased the nurses in Saskatchewan. We've come up with some other good initiatives to be able to keep people within our training facilities. And by the way, we've increased the number of training spots for our physicians within this province.

But another way that we can keep them there, or keep those people within Saskatchewan after they graduate, is we will forgive up to \$120,000 in student loans for new doctors, and \$20,000 for new nurses and nurse practitioners who agree to practice in rural and remote and underserved communities for up to five years. Now we had the member from Cumberland just talking about how we weren't doing things for the North. There is a very good example how we are doing things for

northern Saskatchewan. The member from the North . . . or from Cumberland is talking. He says what are you doing, what are you doing? He obviously wasn't listening. I was just explaining it to him.

Mr. Speaker, I think that my time has basically run out, and so therefore I would like to let everybody know that I am going to be supporting the Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, I'd like to start off by thanking my wife, Leane, who is watching back in Saskatoon, for all her support over the last year. I very much appreciate that. My kids — Kassidy, Keely, Courtney, and Carter — thank you very much. I've missed a few hockey games, and a few dance recitals, but I appreciate them understanding why I'm down here in Regina.

I'd like to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland. They were absolutely fabulous to me over the last year. They took me in and they showed me exactly what some of their needs were. In our question of the summertime when our postcards went out, they wanted to talk to me about what was going on and what their issues were. So thank you to them.

I'd like to thank my campaign manager, Dan Wiks, who was the reason that I got here, elected in the legislature for Saskatoon Sutherland. Fabulous campaign manager, and his most difficult task was managing me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to thank Ron Hicks. Certainly Ron is a pillar within the Saskatoon Sutherland community. He has been the president of the constituency for 10 years and the main reason that we have some money in the bank and that we're able to run an effective campaign.

I'd also like to thank my constituency assistants, Danielle and Judy, for keeping me on track and keeping me hustling over the summertime. And I'd also like to thank my parents, Ted and Marie Merriman, back in Saskatoon watching this for all of their support that they've given me over the last few years.

I do have one last person to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is a good friend of mine named Sophie Foster. Sophie celebrated her 98th birthday yesterday up in Saskatoon, and I'm very proud to call her a friend, a confidante, and certainly a mentor. She sent me an email at this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 98 years old, from her iPad last week. So that tells you how in touch she's in with what's going on.

And I'd like to certainly thank the Premier and his supporting staff of the 48 MLAs that were elected last November. Most importantly we need to thank the larger team, the people of Saskatchewan who helped the Premier develop the growth plan for Saskatchewan that drove our mandate and formed the Speech from the Throne. This truly is a Saskatchewan team effort, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All areas of our province are thriving, Mr. Deputy Speaker — safe, culturally, and diverse communities. We see proof of this in the cities, towns, and villages throughout Saskatchewan. A

fine example of this is the town of Willow Bunch in the great constituency of Big Muddy-Weyburn . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and Wood River, yes, thank you. This is a prime example of . . . Sorry, my in-laws, Leo and Sylvia Durand have called Willow Bunch home for over 60 years and they are both third-generation Willow Bunch residents.

The town is rebuilding. New young families are coming in calling it home. And the Willow Bunch giant is still standing tall in front of the school, the old school. The playgrounds are full. The parks are busy. And of course the golf course is packed, and it has collected a few of my stray golf balls over the summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This rural Saskatchewan growth is a typical scene throughout our great province. The government is investing in this province for my children and for yours. The Throne Speech sets out the government's plan for the future of Saskatchewan. This is what the Leader of the Opposition had to say about Saskatchewan's growth plan in *The Globe and Mail* on October 17th, "A document like this distracts everybody, and I think his popularity will stay up there as long as there's sort of a myth of a booming economy."

A myth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a booming economy. Now on one side we have the federal leader, Mr. Mulcair, saying that we have Dutch disease in the West because of our booming economy. Now we have the Leader of the Opposition of our provincial NDP saying that the economy is a myth it's booming. I'm not quite sure what the federal and the provincial NDP are talking about. Maybe they should get together a little bit more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and talk about what's going on.

Here is the reality of what's happening in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Regina *Leader-Post* on October 10th, 2012: "Saskatchewan with its booming economy is . . . daily attracting Canadians and immigrants in search of a better quality of life." The *Gold Report* on October 26th said, ". . . few if any Canadian provinces are booming the way that Saskatchewan is." This month the Canadian Federation of Independent Business released a national report, *Communities in Boom: Canada's Top Entrepreneurial Cities*. The scores of Saskatchewan cities made up over half of the top 10. Saskatoon came in second, followed by Regina and Moose Jaw in third and fourth. Lloydminster came in fifth, and the colleagues up north in Prince Albert came in seventh. This is the reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's no myth here.

I had the opportunity to spend some time in the United States this past summer attending a conference as well as some training, and the US political leaders from both sides of the House are asking about Canada. And no, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're not asking about Alberta or Ontario or Quebec or BC [British Columbia]. They're talking about the potential opportunities that we have right here on our own backyard.

They are asking the simple question: what are you doing up there to be so successful? Simple answer: our North Star is, don't spend more than you have. An important component of our province's success is having a plan. We look back at when the NDP was in power: keep expectations low, and then don't deliver on those expectations. Blame anything and everything for their failures.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the members across the floor, what is your plan? What are they offering the people of Saskatchewan? All they do is seem to attack everything. The hon. members across the aisle are the ultimate armchair quarterbacks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, yelling at the TV screen, but not getting up off the couch to do anything. Well to quote John Gormley, what I'd like to call this is, the cave dwellers. C-A-V-E stands for citizens against virtually everything. Against growth, prosperity, and most all, against change, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The NDP record speaks for itself. Between July 1st, 1991 when they first took office and July 2007 when they left office there was no population growth. In fact our population decreased by 2,542 people. Since we took office in 2007 our province has experienced a population growth of almost 80,000 people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On average they lost 158 people a year. Since we took office, we're averaging a 16,000-person population growth year over year.

With growth comes increased needs. This Throne Speech responds to the need for more affordable housing. Between 2011 and 2016, 12,600 housing units will be built for low- and moderate-income families and individuals. This comes as a result of the stimulus program from this government.

[15:45]

On September 12th, I brought greetings on behalf of the Minister of Health at a new 18-bed Rawlco Radio surgical unit at St. Paul's Hospital. Our government was pleased to provide \$4.7 million for this project. Response from the Patient First Review were released in October 2009. Just over two and a half years ago the Saskatchewan surgical initiative was created by our government in response to the concerns raised by patients and health care providers. Because we have a plan in place to address these issues, we have seen great success in this initiative. The amount of time that patients are waiting for surgery has decreased significantly.

In Saskatchewan, 90 per cent of patients received surgery within the first six months and 78 per cent received the surgery within three months. By the end of March, the target is to achieve 100 per cent of patients receiving surgery within the first six months. Long-term goals is that by the end of 2014 all patients can receive surgery within three months. The opening of this unit is a prime example of how our government, working together with St. Paul's Hospital, the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, and the community in a partnership to improve surgical care for patients. I was very proud to be there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Once the program was finished, a reporter asked me if the goals were achievable. I referred to our government's 2007 election commitment of 800 new nurses. The media and the opposition at that time said, it's not realistic; it won't happen. We met and exceeded that goal but still there is doubt.

This Throne Speech highlights the need for continued fiscal responsibility. We have a proven record of fiscal responsibility. Our government tabled the only balanced budget in all of Canada this year. This is a stark contrast to the opposition member from Regina Rosemont, who is running for leadership.

It's said that this member is also the NDP Finance critic. He has started off his leadership by running a deficit over \$11,000 on a \$26,000 budget, a sign of things to come if he is elected their leader.

Years after crumbling roads, our government is addressing the legacy left to us by the NDP. Infrastructure spending is so important to our growing province. The Throne Speech announced increased infrastructure funding and a commitment to work with the municipalities to look at innovative ways to address their needs. The response from David Marit, president of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] is, he said, "SARM is eager to work with the province to move their plan forward to support economic growth in Saskatchewan."

Our government created the Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities or the SAID program. We listened to some of the most vulnerable people and members in our society and responded quickly. Individuals receiving SAID benefits had seen their monthly income increase by over \$200. This will be increased by another \$150 per month on average by 2015. This additional monthly income has helped people a great deal. We have also pledged to raise the senior income plan. By 2015 it will have tripled over the past six years. We are setting goals for now and in the future. And we still have the opposition saying we've set too many goals. Well I'd rather have more goals than no goals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The only goal I see from the NDP is from their federal leader, Thomas Mulcair. His goal is to kill the growth in the West with this claimed Dutch disease. And yet we hear nothing from the potential elected NDP MLAs with the exception of Erin Weir who stands squarely behind Mr. Mulcair in trying to kill the growth and cripple the West. They've said nothing about their federal counterpart's plan to crush our province, any growth to please eastern voters.

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the question. Is this their hidden agenda to crush our dreams and our potential to help their federal leader abandon the West? As an aspiring leader of this country, Mr. Mulcair is certainly not doing anything for national unity. To the NDP, will you stand up for your and my Saskatchewan neighbours?

In looking at the New Democratic Party provincial website, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was looking for their plan. I researched it, spent a half an hour on it. I certainly couldn't find a plan. The question that I had was within this, there was something else I couldn't find in there. It was the *Regina Manifesto*. To the people across the floor, I'd have to ask, the question is: where did it go? Our government's plan is the grow for Saskatchewan, vision 2020 and beyond. We are growing not for the sake of growth, but for all of the 1,079,958 people that call Saskatchewan home.

This growth plan is about responsibility, accountability, and optimism. It helps keep our province moving forward. We are ultimately accountable to our constituents — myself to the people of Saskatoon Sutherland, and our team to the citizens across Saskatchewan. This Throne Speech sets out hard, fast goals for the future. We can measure what's working and what isn't and we can adjust quickly.

The people of Saskatchewan are known for their optimism and hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Hope is what got me started on this journey to represent the good people of Saskatoon Sutherland. I would humbly ask one more time for the NDP to stand up for Saskatchewan. My hope is this province will be better for my children and some day — hopefully not too soon — my grandchildren. To quote Helen Keller, “Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” And a more modern quote from Jay-Z, “I believe excellence is being able to perform at a high level over and over.”

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government is achieving excellence. I have confidence in our Premier and our government. This Throne Speech is full of hope for the future of this province. On behalf of all of my constituents, I thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and that is why I do support the Speech from the Throne and do not support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bold, measurable, and achievable goals: this Speech from the Throne is a clear example of a government willing to lead.

As this second session of the twenty-seventh legislature gets going and as we near Remembrance Day, a day where we focus on remembering the many women and men that have died so that we are a free and democratic society, and as I complete my first year as a new MLA, my feelings are no less intense than they were on November 7th, 2011. I am humbled to walk, talk, and work as part of this legislature and in this Legislative Building that celebrates 100 years this year.

Thank you hardly seems enough. Yet I can think of no other words that indicate my thanks for the support given to me by my husband, Allan; my family; my Prince Albert team of Sharon, Brent, and Donna; and my executive of Alana, John, Gisele, Al, Sophie, Alex, Carol, Jim and many more people too numerous to mention.

As I take my seat for this session, my commitment continues, my commitment to be here on behalf of P.A. Northcote constituents to take your voice and make it heard at the table where real decisions are made.

Before I discuss this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will take a minute to describe this past year. The team of dedicated and spirited women and men that are part of my team back home in Prince Albert Northcote and right here in Regina welcomed a new MLA and kept my feet on the ground as I entered a whirlwind, a whirlwind of learning and activity. A new world of information thrown at me from all sides the way it was in university. Of thinking in broad strokes, just like being on a board, a really large board guiding Saskatchewan's future, and of being in a really large workplace with hundreds of offices in several locations, including two of my own, and just learning how everything works.

Then throw in a bit of politics. We — family, friends, and team — set a bold target and achieved it when we changed Prince

Albert Northcote into a Saskatchewan Party constituency after 25 years of NDP thinking.

You and I, your government, and indeed Saskatchewan has chosen a different path into the future. I listened and continue to listen to you, the people of Northcote. I took that voice and those ideas and added them to those of my MLA colleagues from all across Saskatchewan. Together, you, me, and your government set bold, measurable, and achievable targets.

Your voice and your ideas created the Saskatchewan plan for growth that you see reflected in this Throne Speech, a Throne Speech with bold targets that sets a commitment to ensuring growth continues because growth has been good for our province. This growth means a strong economy and more opportunity for our young people. It means more support for our seniors and lower taxes for families. This growth means that we, your government, are balancing the budget and can reduce the debt.

This government, your government, is willing to lead. We set two bold targets: to have 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020, and continued fiscal responsibility. Think about it. Five balanced budgets at a time when many provinces and indeed many countries are struggling with growing deficits and crushing debt. A balanced budget and paying down debt while keeping the economy strong and remembering those that need a hand up, in other words, a strong social conscience. We see that in this Throne Speech and in the Saskatchewan plan for growth.

Prince Albert Northcote, Prince Albert, and our province benefits. This summer, travelling through the constituency of Prince Albert Northcote and consulting with my constituents, I heard loud and clear that infrastructure is top of mind. Our government, your government, has invested more than \$5 billion in infrastructure to improve highways, schools, and health care facilities. Prince Albert Northcote and indeed Prince Albert welcomes the connection of the South to the North. Your government set as a priority the twinning of the No. 11 Highway into P.A.. Next, by partnering with industry, your government will fund half the cost of the final road to connect Highway 914 in the Athabasca Basin. Prince Albert Northcote is willing to be a leader and part of the solution for our future.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Prince Albert community mobilization partnership was in early stages of implementation. This year this community partnership that proactively identifies problems and gathers community agencies, health and education providers, and police to address issues before they become criminal matters, this partnership is being asked to mentor other communities in Saskatchewan and across Canada to begin their own community mobilization partnerships. Talk about leadership to help create vibrant, safe communities that we all so much want.

Last year Prince Albert was the launching point of artsVest, a partnership program with business for the arts. Canada's national association of business leaders who support the arts. These partnerships have generated \$1.17 million for the province's cultural economy in its first year in Saskatchewan. This year OSAC, the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, held its annual convention in Prince Albert. Your

government through the ministry of arts, culture and sport is investing 500,000 over two years in artsVest. What a shining example of how our government, your government, values arts, culture, and sport.

[16:00]

Many of my colleagues highlighted the various facets of this Throne Speech and how Saskatchewan people benefit. Prince Albert Northcote constituencies will see themselves and their goals reflected as well — from building the workforce in many ways such as working with First Nations and Métis organizations, to adding 300 more apprenticeship spaces. From innovation in nuclear medicine that extended the lives of millions of cancer patients, to research in food security and agriculture. From the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship to the Saskatchewan graduate retention program. From supporting Habitat for Humanity housing for those of moderate means, to improving the senior income supplement program. We see a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, an approach that keeps our economy strong and social conscience stronger.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend I helped celebrate our newest grandson's christening and visited with his older sister, our granddaughter. This reinforced my commitment to the future. It is for our families and our children's children and their children that your government sets policies and bold, measurable, achievable targets — these targets that you and I, as a team, are implementing. This plan for growth that turns vision into reality. That vision is to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live, to work, to play, and to raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne that was delivered on the occasion of the opening of the second session of the twenty-seventh legislature brings Saskatchewan closer to that reality. That is why I support the Throne Speech and I do not support the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we begin, I would like to thank my wife Sheila and my daughter Shanaya for their support over all these years.

It has been roughly one year since our government was graciously re-elected by the people of Saskatchewan. This last year has been humbling and rewarding for me, and I cannot thank my constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin enough for entrusting me with this job in this beautiful building.

In the last year, this province has grown by more than 22,000 people. This is the highest population growth that our province has experienced since 1921. The amount of people working in Saskatchewan has grown to an astounding 540,000 which is an all-time high.

Wait times have dropped even lower, and all of this has occurred while maintaining a balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan should be proud of what they have accomplished, especially when Saskatchewan is remaining atop the unemployment rankings.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is moving forward steadily and responsibly. Of course simply because we are in an advantageous position does not mean that we shouldn't strive to be more. While governing Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as referenced by our Premier, our colleagues in the opposition released 12 plans for growth, so to speak. After presenting these plans in 2000, the population dropped by 7,672 people. The opposition released another in 2001, and what do you think happened? Well the population dropped again by 2,816. And in 2005, the opposition released another growth booklet and again our population dropped by 3,752. Mr. Speaker, thank goodness the people of the province stopped them from printing any more booklets or there wouldn't be anyone left in Saskatchewan except for maybe the nimble nine across. Mr. Speaker, our Premier has not only made it a mission to make sure that our population continues to grow, but that our province is also a leader in many fields — agriculture, exports, and in health, to name a few.

With our growth plan having been announced in the past few weeks we now have a clear vision for Saskatchewan, the . . . [inaudible] . . . this year, next year, and for years ahead. With our abundance of natural resources and agriculture, it is of little surprise that Saskatchewan is on track to surpass British Columbia to become the fourth largest exporting province. We have developed trade relationships with Japan, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, and Hong Kong, among others. These trading partners are ensuring our province's growth will continue for years to come. Our government is committed to pursuing advantageous arrangements with these and other countries in order to sustain our economic . . . while advancing our goal of doubling the value of Saskatchewan exports by 2020. Brad Bly, a representative of Ag-West Bio and envoy from the company to the most recent trade mission to India, spoke very highly of the mission, stating:

India holds huge potential as a trading partner for Saskatchewan . . . Developing this relationship is mutually beneficial. It can accelerate existing trade and build a new market foundation for Saskatchewan research & technology.

These countries rely heavily on our agriculture products to feed their people. With the hard work of our farm and ranch families, Saskatchewan is now Canada's top agri-food exporting province.

In 2011, Mr. Speaker, our province exported more than \$10 million worth of grains and produce which is up 60 per cent since 2007. Our ranchers and farmers should be proud that they are helping keep our neighbours in other countries fed. There is still work to do, however, as we have set a goal to increase agriculture exports to \$15 billion by 2020. This a herculean task to be sure, but with the help of our hard-working farm families we can make this a reality.

In addition to the major exportation of agriculture and produce, we are committed to leading the nation in agri-food research. In our plan for growth, the Premier announced that we will continue to enhance Saskatchewan's reputation as an agricultural innovator by establishing the Global Institute for Food Security. This institute will help at the forefront of

agriculture research and will no doubt be bolstered by budgetary items similar to the record \$20 million for agriculture research included in this past year's budget cycle.

Another important area we are focused on is our highways. Over the last five years, Mr. Speaker, our government has improved over 7,500 kilometres of provincial highway and have invested more than \$3.1 billion into improving our roads. We are continuously looking ahead and understanding that highway maintenance should be an integral part of an infrastructure plan. That's why we have committed to funding a minimum of \$2.5 billion of infrastructure investment over the next three years. There is much work left to be done but we are positive that we can improve our highways significantly before the end of our term.

One aspect of highways is often overlooked before it is too late. Mr. Speaker, Ashley Dawn Richards's untimely death was as tragic as it was eye opening to the growing issue of drivers speeding through orange zones. Drivers' behaviour in construction zones is becoming increasingly worse, and sadly one's impatience to arrive at their destination one or two moments quicker ended another's life. Ben Diprose, boyfriend of Ashley Richards, said recently:

Something had to be done about this, people can't just keep on driving through construction zones like they have been and disobeying the laws and killing people.

Mr. Speaker, this is why our government is implementing stiffer speeding fines, photo radar in construction zones. No one wants to relive this tragedy again and we will do what it takes to stop it from reoccurring. I believe I speak for all members in this House when I implore drivers to slow down in the orange zone and be aware of your surroundings within it. Please be attentive and take care out there.

Our growth plan sets some fairly outstanding goals with regards to our economic growth. For Saskatchewan to achieve these goals, Mr. Speaker, we will require a large and capable workforce. For this reason Saskatchewan will require at least 60,000 more workers by 2020. With over 540,000 people working in Saskatchewan today, as well as the hard-working attitude this province holds dear, this goal, this goal should not be very difficult to reach.

Our government has facilitated this requirement of workers by investing \$3.5 billion in post-secondary education since first being elected in 2007. This funding includes more funding for programming to assist First Nations and Métis students. Often these students are regrettably slipping through the cracks, so our government will continue to work with First Nations and Métis organizations on ways to improve educational outcomes and increase employment.

This is in line with our commitment to pursuing strategies which will ensure Saskatchewan has the right workers at the right place at the right time. Over the last five years, Mr. Speaker, the number of apprentices registered in Saskatchewan has increased by 43 per cent. Additionally, there are now more than 35,000 training opportunities available to up-and-coming tradespeople in Saskatchewan. We will absolutely require more skilled tradespeople if we are to reach our prospective goals in

Saskatchewan, so we will be adding 300 more apprenticeship spaces and working to develop additional apprenticeship training opportunities for students in high school.

Providing these spaces for young people who are ready to enter school will be crucial for our budding workforce. If these workers can train in Saskatchewan, there is a much higher probability that they will live and work in Saskatchewan. Retaining our youth through education is something we take very seriously. On the topic of retention through education, Mr. Speaker, our government introduced the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship as well as the graduate retention program as measures to retain high school and post-secondary graduates. The Saskatchewan advantage scholarship provides high school grads with up to \$2,000 over four years to attend post-secondary in Saskatchewan, and the graduate retention program provides tuition rebates of up to \$20,000 over seven years to post-secondary grads who stay in the province.

This fall roughly 4,000 students received the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. These programs are helpful but we felt there could always be more done to help students through school. For this reason, this fall we are introducing legislation to create the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings. This grant will help families saving for their children's post-secondary education by providing \$250 per year, per child. This will ease the burden of a high tuition cost before school even begins for these children as costs rise for both students and their families.

Mr. Speaker, our government's goal is to have Saskatchewan lead the country in high school graduation rates by 2020. To this end, we are committed to ensuring parents that their children are succeeding in school. We will support schools as they prepare students for post-secondary studies through a new student achievement initiative. This initiative will see the introduction of assessments for every student from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Our goal for this initiative is for every school division to be consistently and transparently measuring and reporting all students' progress. These reports will help students understand what they should focus on and will give parents and teachers a window into what supports they can provide. These initiatives and programs all ensure that our youth will be knowledgeable, skilled, and less financially burdened as they exit school and enter into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is in education, employment, agriculture, or infrastructure, our government has a plan that will take us not simply to the end of the term but to the end of this decade and beyond. We have goals that are attainable so long as we are vigilant and prudent and work within our means. Our growth plan is a good one for Saskatchewan people and is good for the province as a whole. We are proud of how far we have come and are certain that we can go much further.

Thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and join in the debate today on the Throne

Speech. It's always an interesting time surveying the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what is said, what comes down from rhetoric to actual goals to specific measures, and what is of course left out there in the ether in terms of the Throne Speech.

I guess one thing that I do quite appreciate about the Throne Speech occasion, Mr. Speaker, is the opportunity it provides for members to get on the record to say thank you to the people in their lives, to say thank you to their constituents, and to say thank you in just a general sense. Because of course this is a tremendous privilege that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, to serve in this legislature. Certainly to sign the roll is a pretty momentous thing, and to realize that we're a very privileged few who have this opportunity to represent in the province of Saskatchewan. So certainly, Mr. Speaker, sign me up for that.

[16:15]

I'm very thankful to have the opportunity to represent the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, one of the most diverse, one of the most interesting, one of the most, I think, unique constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan — though again certainly every MLA has that opinion, I'm sure, of their constituency. But just in terms of sheer diversity, Mr. Speaker, in terms of ethnic backgrounds, in terms of occupations, in terms of income brackets, Elphinstone-Centre has got people from every walk of life and, you know, from pretty much every corner of the globe, and certainly folks from right around this province.

I want to say thank you to the people that work with me on a daily basis to ensure that the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre are served as best we can. It's a privilege to work with Colleen in the constituency office and to work with the folks in the caucus office here. And again we nine on this side, the 48 on that side, Mr. Speaker, one of the chief jobs that we have is to hold this government to account, and the sheer logistics of that is sometimes daunting, sometimes challenging. But never, never do we despair, and certainly we draw a lot of strength and a lot of encouragement from the folks that we work with, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly from the people, again in places like Regina Elphinstone-Centre, that, you know, be it door knocking or be it the sort of being out and about in the constituency or even in terms of travels throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, and working with the different stakeholders for different of the critic areas, one of the things you hear, different good points being made and they depend on Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition oftentimes to bring those points to the legislature, to have those concerns, have those questions raised of this government, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly we've heard from the members opposite that that is something they've been engaged in in the summer, and you know, that is as it should be. And I guess one of the things that we find interesting about that is, you know, today we had a very interesting tabling of a document. If you're going to be out genuinely consulting with people, genuinely listening, actually remembering, as Tommy Douglas said, you know, "You've got two ears and one mouth, and you should use them in that order," if you're going to give those things their due, Mr. Speaker . . . And I hear the member from Indian

Head-Milestone chirping from his seat and that's not uncommon, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps he'll have an opportunity to get up and talk about his portfolio and participate in this Throne Speech, and let us in on some of the special insights he's got for his new portfolios.

But one of the things, Mr. Speaker, is that if you're going to genuinely listen to people then the proof of course is in the pudding, and it's been claimed a number of times that this Throne Speech and the \$100-a-plate edition of it the week previous was based on consultation with the people of Saskatchewan. Yet today we find a very interesting circumstance, Mr. Speaker, where SaskFilm had put forward money in conjunction with the Sask Chamber of Commerce to do a study on the film employment tax credit. And it's, I think, symbolic of a larger tendency with this government in terms of how they make decisions, how they select evidence, and how they make decisions, Mr. Speaker.

And it reminds me of a friend of mine who's a public policy practitioner describing a tendency that I think is on display here is, you know, evidence-based decision making is a bit of a buzzword. And certainly we're all familiar with the scientific method or at least I would hope so, all of us having I think gone through grade 7 science and on, but the idea that you gather the facts and then you make a decision. And certainly my friend who's a public policy practitioner talked about the sort of antithesis of that or the sort of attempt that some people make to subvert that approach to things. And you can see it on display in different jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. But I think you saw a great case today of opinion-based evidence making, and in terms of what we've heard from the Minister of Culture, for example, in terms of the importance of getting out and doing these consultations with the cultural sector and getting the creative industry's report on tap and ready to go. And how they can do these things with a straight face, Mr. Speaker, is beyond me because a very important segment of the creative industry sector in this province, of course, is the film sector.

And what we saw with this government over the past year is I think very much an approach to policy decision making where it's not so much about the evidence. It's not so much about gathering the facts to make a well-informed decision. It's about knowing your ideology and then jamming reality into it to make it fit, you know, regardless of the facts and the damage to them.

And certainly again today, we had the report come out from the chamber of commerce — usually a body that has a lot of laudatory things to say about this government — come out with some very strong and very harsh critique of this government when it came to, you know, what the facts were with the film industry in that 6 to 1 return on investment and how the decision was made.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, is . . . You know, is that the whole of the Throne Speech? Or is that the whole of the record of the government? Or is that, you know, the sum total of things that we could bring forward for critique or discussion? It's not. But I think what this represents is a very worrisome tendency on the part of this government to, you know, pick and select the evidence and jam it into their world view and, you know, to heck with the consequences.

And you know, the great things that are being said about the growth in this province, you know, we on this side, we welcome growth. We celebrate growth. But we also ask, growth? To what end? And growth to . . . Is it just for a precious few or is it for the great many? And do you grow from the bottom up or is it just, again, the lucky few that benefit from growth? And so it's not just a question of growth, Mr. Speaker. It's a question of what kind of growth you have and how that benefits the great many and not just a lucky few.

And again we've heard, you know, sort of a, I think, unfortunate rendering of the history of this province and the sort of description of what's happened over the last few years. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I was part of the previous government. We weren't perfect. There were things that we did that perhaps in hindsight I would disagree with. But it's part of a collective decision-making process and you do the best you can with the information that presents in the circumstance. And you do your best to try and forecast what's over that horizon.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, as much as there are things that, you know, do I have regrets? Absolutely, I have certain regrets over some of the things that happened. But are there, on balance, so many things that I'm proud of? To have been part of that government and the difference that it made in the communities and the lives of Saskatchewan families; and the way that in 2005 we became a have province; in the way that those men and women who had come before me in that government having been elected in 2001, Mr. Speaker, the way that some of those folks had to confront the kind of debt and deficit catastrophe that this province faced in 1991, and the terrible decisions that a lot of those folks had to make, yet the way that they brought this province back from the brink of bankruptcy to a place where we could become a have province; and instead of being a Canadian basket case, being a Canadian leader in different segments of the economy and society — am I proud of having been part of that government, and am I proud of the people that made those tough decisions? You bet I am.

And do I think it's enough to throw stones and to say, you know, the one side says everything's all bad, and the other side says everything's all good, and people shake their heads and become even less engaged in the political process. I don't think we're well served in that, but that is the coin of the realm in this debate in this House, Mr. Speaker. And it's particularly so for a lot of the folks that were elected in the last election, for the observation of one person in this Chamber. You know, the kind of boasting and self-congratulation that goes on on that side in terms of, you know, there's never anything bad done on the watch of the members opposite compared to what's happened previous, or ever, or in any other jurisdiction — you know, it defies belief, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess one of the things, you know . . . Friday we had folks in from the North, from Wollaston Lake where a road is not just mere infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. It's not just an economic lifeline. It's a matter of life and death. It's a huge impact on their quality of life and with often very tragic consequences, Mr. Speaker. And you know, this is a government that in 2008 put out the press release, and I might add parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, they put it out before a by-election that was to take place in the North. They put it out before a by-election saying that that road would be fixed and

finished in 2012. And then, of course, the seasons changed. Maybe it was that they didn't win the by-election and they wanted to punish the people of Cumberland for voting NDP. Maybe that was part of the consideration. I don't know. But one of the things I do know for sure, Mr. Speaker, is that it took those folks coming from all the way from Wollaston to this legislature to say, you know, can you give us a straight answer? This is a matter of life and death for our community. This is hugely important. You said that it was going to be done by the end of 2012. Well here we are. So where's the road? And of course we got the, you know, the usual sort of tap dance from the members opposite, which is sad and which doesn't find its way into the kind of self-congratulatory sermons that we receive from the members opposite.

I think about in Regina Elphinstone-Centre, Mr. Speaker, the situation around Scott Collegiate and what is commonly known as the North Central Shared Facility and what started out as a joint project between the school board, the Regina Public School Board, and the Regina Health District in terms of providing a much needed revitalized Scott Collegiate for the inner city of Regina and what kind of difference that could make in the lives of students, and the fact that that was no. 2 on the province-wide capital list in the summer of 2007.

The appropriate planning dollars had been forwarded to it by our government. It was a going concern, Mr. Speaker. And since then we've seen different announcements from this government on it. But these five years later, Mr. Speaker, do we see any concrete action on the revitalization of Scott Collegiate? We do not.

There's another school a stone's throw from there, an elementary school, Mr. Speaker, Herchmer, which in fact was torn down on the watch of the members opposite. And you know, there's the ongoing question about, will they combine Wascana with that and the population in the different regions that are affected there. And you know, it's still an open question. But what is undeniable is that Wascana has had questions raised about it by the school board in terms of the health of the facility, and you have an empty field where Herchmer used to stand.

And again, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things I think about when it comes to the streams of self-congratulations you get in an occasion like the Throne Speech from the members opposite. I think about the fact that, you know, not a few times we've heard members opposite congratulate themselves on the increases made to the seniors' income plan. And that's fine, Mr. Speaker, but you don't hear a darn thing about the increases that have been made to the clawback and the cost for prescription drugs for seniors. And the thing is in the last speech, Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, the amount of money that this government put aside for the increase to the seniors' income plan was one, and then three times that was going to be clawed back from the seniors' prescription drug plan increase.

So again, Mr. Speaker, how reality sizes up along with what is happening in terms of the way members opposite present things is oftentimes difficult to sort out.

[16:30]

There are so many things that I could talk about in this speech, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the critic areas alone. What's gone on with the First Nations and Métis Relations on the watch of this government is quite frankly a bit shocking. You know, in the term that these members opposite have been in power, we've seen First Nations and Métis Relations go from a stand-alone ministry with different program offerings to have their full-time employee, full-time equivalent employee complement cut by a third, Mr. Speaker, going from 99 to 66 and the attendant sort of decrease in service represented by that and being folded into the Department of Government Relations. You know, it's moving it backwards in terms of a decade of what had been progress, in terms of having a better window on the government in terms of First Nations and Métis Relations in this province.

And when you look at things like what's happened with the off-reserve First Nations employment numbers in this province, Mr. Speaker, where it's increased from roughly 14 per cent or just under 14 per cent in 2007, the last months of 2007, to 21.3 per cent on the watch of these members opposite, in this time of what should be great breakthrough in terms of First Nations in this case, coming into the mainstream of economic life in this province. This is a government that would do well to look long and hard in the mirror and think about what are the things that they're doing wrong and what are the things that they needed to do better on. And what is the great potential of this province? What is the great opportunity of this province and how can that, how can that be realized for not just a few or not just, you know, not just a certain segment of society, but to really change the game for people that have been on the outside for far too long.

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what's happening with the First Nations employment and education task force and how that's going to hopefully affect life for not just First Nations but Métis as well, we think that in and of itself is a good thing. We think that the chair, Gary Merasty, task force members Rita Bouvier and Don Hoiu are individuals that have great credentials. And we wish them well in their endeavour, but this is a task force that was, you know, again in the difference between where this government is long on the announcements and short on the follow-through. It was announced in spring of 2011. It was supposed to be up and running the fall of 2011. Well that took until the spring of 2012. And whereas that work of the committee should've been finished by now, well you know, we await an interim report for it to have impact by the end of this year. Yet critical goals are attached to the work of that committee. And as the members opposite say, well you know, we'll wait and see. And we'll, you know, we'll look forward to the report of the committee.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. It's not good enough, you know, if all things were more or less equal. But when you look at that in a context where First Nations unemployment has increased by nearly a third under the watch of the members opposite in a time of what should be great breakthrough. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty hard to take.

There are a number of issues where I think of . . . I have the privilege of representing Pasqua Hospital. And Pasqua Hospital, General Hospital, in the last year, Mr. Speaker, have experienced severe overcrowding. I think about the impact that has in the way that hallway medicine is being practised in my

constituency, and how that is unfair for the people that expect that good quality health care to be there for them and have the right to expect that, Mr. Speaker. And if it's going to be really about patient-centred health care, then why, why do we have this great precedent with hallway medicine? I think about the way that the government needs to pull up its socks there.

I think about the critical infrastructure needs of this province and the way that things like the bridge from Prince Albert, you know, the gateway to the North, how that has languished under the watch of these members and how that situation has gotten worse.

I think about, again, the economic lifelines like the road to Wollaston as was, I think rather powerfully brought to the attention of this Chamber by my colleague from Cumberland last week, and how these are the issues that we're going to keep bringing up. Another critical piece of infrastructure, and you know, infrastructure's just a word unless it's actually the roof over your head or the street that you're on, Mr. Speaker. You know, what's happened in housing in this province and the way that housing shortages and the way that dramatically increasing rents impact the bottom line, and again there's some good measures brought forward by this government, but what happens with the taking on the other hand in terms of that increased cost of living? And how do people make amends and, well we know how they make up the difference, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things about the watch of this government over the past four years, the hunger count at the food bank, is that the hunger count has increased to the order of 38 per cent. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's taken somewhat of a drop over the last year, and we're thankful for that. But we know that that also takes place against a backdrop of a government that refuses to bring into being any kind of an anti-poverty strategy. And in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, when certain members opposite were not backbenchers in that caucus, they talked about the need for an anti-poverty strategy. And the way that that . . . The lack of that is drawn into pretty bold relief when the hunger count from the food banks comes into the public domain. And again, Mr. Speaker, I've heard a speech from one of those members that said one thing when they weren't in the backbenches, but it wasn't anywhere in that speech today, Mr. Speaker.

So again, you know, I love this province, Mr. Speaker. I had the great fortune to be up in the North this summer, out on the Churchill River. I had the great fortune to be down at the homesteads, you know, the home quarter that my dad was born and raised on this summer out by Montmartre. It was lush and green. And the member from Moosomin was talking about the privilege he had of joining constituents that had celebrated their 125th anniversary on their farm, Mr. Speaker.

And my cousins, you know, a quarter section over. They're going to be celebrating, this year to come, their 130th anniversary of the first quarter that was taken up by McCalls in Saskatchewan. And in terms of the way that this province has been good to my family and to the kind of dreams that have been realized, I know first-hand the kind of hope and optimism that so many share when they come to this province. And again, Mr. Speaker, if we can't hold up our end of the bargain on things like the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, I

think again about, you know, those McCalls that came in 1883. And as fine Scots, I think they may have even been Tories back at that time, Mr. Speaker. But they were also thoughtful people, so they wound up CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] and then NDP.

But you know, the way that dreams were realized and also the kind of challenges and hardship that they faced throughout, things like the Great Depression and then seeing relatives go to war and the fact that my great uncle Roy McCall, his name is on that cenotaph in Montreal, and the way that we're proud of that record of service that our family had. But we grieve that loss as well. And as some members have said, Mr. Speaker, it's not hard to think about those things at this time when we wear our poppies and we remember, lest we forget.

And again, Mr. Speaker, these are the things that went into the making of a wonderful life, a life not without challenge, not without hard work, not without struggle, but a life that was realized here in Saskatchewan for my forebears and for the generations to come.

And with that great fortune, Mr. Speaker, I'm always reminded of the Biblical imperative that to whom much is given, much is expected. And I guess that's where I'll wrap up my remarks, Mr. Speaker. And we are so fortunate here in Saskatchewan. We've been given so much, and there has been much made of these great opportunities that are there in front of us. But on too many critical files for the future of this province and for the day-to-day reality of people in all sorts of corners of this great Saskatchewan of ours that are not enjoying that prosperity. You know, it's interesting to hear some of the language from the Throne Speech where they say a society is judged by what we do for the least among us. And you know, I agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess the thing is if you're relying on a cheering bunch of staff writers in the caucus office to do that judgment for you, of course it'll come up rosy every time. But you know, if members are really out there on the streets and out there talking to people around this province, they'll know that there is, with this growth, there are also challenges and that those challenges for a government that pledged to be ready for growth, challenges that have gone unmet, and the kind of hardship that that realizes for people that should be doing better, as we can all do better in this Saskatchewan of ours.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll return to whence I came. I'm thankful to my family for putting up with me. I'm thankful for friends and for constituents for their support and for their counsel, some of it hard to hear sometimes, Mr. Speaker, but all of it well-meant and well-appreciated. Mr. Speaker doesn't know what the heck I'm talking about there. It's interesting. But anyway, it's a privilege to stand in this House. But for this Throne Speech, I'll not be voting for the Throne Speech. I will be voting for the opposition amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this honourable Assembly and to enter the debate on the Throne Speech.

And I would like to begin by stating what a privilege it is to represent the people of the Estevan constituency. And as everyone in this Chamber knows, or should know, Estevan is a very diverse constituency. We have agriculture. We have a lot of oil and gas and coal and, you know, small business. And of course we have energy with the Boundary dam power station and the Shand power station. And, Mr. Speaker, that area of the province is really booming, and I stress — especially to the members opposite — that, you know, the boom is real and not a myth as their leader would suggest.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. And I have two adult children and four grandchildren, Beau, Bailee, Shelby, and Tristan. And, Mr. Speaker, my family, like every other MLA's family, has paid hugely for us being here through personal sacrifices, functions that we can't attend with our family, and just not being home.

And you know, sometimes it only seems like yesterday when I was first elected, but it was in 1999. And I can remember in that 1999 election when my oldest grandson, Beau, was four years old at that time and he would go to town with his grandpa, Mr. Speaker. And of course he'd see all the campaign pictures all over the place. And he, you know, would always say, papa, how come grandma's picture is all over the place? He just couldn't grasp it. And Beau is in grade 12 now and he will be graduating from the Estevan Comprehensive School next spring and going into . . . He's chosen a career in the military and I'm very proud of that. And he, I might add, he's also very politically astute and thinks very much like his grandmother when it comes to politics. I'm really proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my constituency assistants. Full-time is Rosalie Story, and my casual girl is Wilma Bjorndalen. They do a great job for me and the constituents, and I thank them for that. We all know that they are our eyes and ears in the constituency. And you know, people often . . . they decide, you know, how their MLA is by the way their constituency assistant treats them. And I really want to thank Rosalie and Wilma for treating my constituents with courtesy and professionalism and respect. So thank you to those girls. And, Mr. Speaker, I also of course have to thank the Premier for his leadership, and my other family seated around me, my colleagues. I am so lucky. I work with the best of group of men and women that anyone could ever wish to work for, and I thank them for that.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne delivered last week in this Chamber is a continuance of the growth plan that the Premier had outlined the week before that. And other than those nine members seated on the other side of this Chamber, I have heard only positive remarks. For example, Jim Puffalt who is the city manager for the city of Estevan, said in last week's edition of *The Mercury* that they are pleased with our plan. They are happy we have infrastructure in our focus.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to add an example of municipal revenue sharing. The total percentage increase from 2007 for the city of Estevan was 137 per cent. That's from \$885,879 to two million, ninety-six dollars, three hundred and twenty-one dollars. The total funds allocated were \$8,806,550. And, Mr.

Speaker, that is just one example of revenue sharing in this province. Any other person on this side could get up and share a very similar example for their constituency.

Mr. Speaker, from July '07 to July of 2012, our population has increased by nearly 80,000 people. In the last year the population increased by more than 22,000 people, and this is the most growth in any year since 1921. Mr. Speaker, this increase is because people want to come to Saskatchewan now, a province where the government is forward-thinking instead of backward thinking, the backward mentality of those people across. Mr. Speaker, a government that targets growth rather than plans for decline, a government that is optimistic rather than gloom, doom, the sky is falling. That's the pessimism we hear from those members on the other side. This is a government that has raised the bar and will not settle for mediocrity.

Mr. Speaker, Helen Keller once said, "There is only one thing worse than being blind and that is being able to see but having no vision," and that is so true.

Mr. Speaker, this government has set a bold target regarding population: 1.2 million people living in this province by 2020. And again, Mr. Speaker, I remember when a former member of the NDP — they were sitting on the government side at that time, and she represented I believe it was Regina Wascana Plains, Doreen Hamilton — she said that when we are talking about growth above the national average, she said it was more wishful thinking than statistically possible. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? If you plan to succeed, you will; but if you plan to fail, you also will. And that was the NDP's thinking then and it's the NDP's thinking now.

Mr. Speaker, this government has committed a minimum of \$2.5 billion to infrastructure investments over the next three years. Forecasts are that there are more than 8,000 housing starts for this year. That's the most since 1979. Government initiatives will help add 12,600 new housing units between 2011 and 2016. Mr. Speaker, a trip out to my constituency will provide evidence that this boom is real and not the myth that the NDP claim.

During the past five years, this government has invested \$3.5 million in our province's post-secondary education. This government has committed to support schools as they prepare students for post-secondary studies through a new student achievement initiative which will see introduction of provincial assessments for each student enrolled in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12]. We will also introduce legislation to create the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings. And, Mr. Speaker, this will all be done within a balanced budget.

And while I'm speaking of balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the comments made by the member from Regina Rosemont last night when he gave his speech. And he spoke of revenue assumptions, the values of Saskatchewan people, and he actually preached quite a sermon on responsible financing and deficit financing, often referring to the buy now, pay later plan. Mr. Speaker, when that member mentioned the buy now, pay later plan I immediately recalled the NDP election platform from 2011, a platform that made promises of over \$5 billion. Now talk about spend now, pay later. Mr.

Speaker, if the taxpayers of this province would've bought into that plan, they would've been paying for it for the rest of their lives and for generations to come.

And I also noticed, Mr. Speaker, that same member, the member from Regina Rosemont, and of course he is the NDP Finance critic, which is kind of scary, and he's a leadership candidate, and he's running a deficit in his own campaign . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. And he's even, you know, he's even given himself, you know, a pretty nice donation and he's still running a deficit of over \$11,000. And those figures were taken from the NDP website. And who knows? His deficit may have grown because that was from a while ago. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, one of his fellow leadership candidates has referred to that member's policy as a wish list with no indication of how much it would cost or how it would be paid for. And again he is the Finance critic.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, then we have the leadership candidate from Saskatoon Massey Place whose biggest concern are the camera angles in this Chamber, and I think if he moves just a little bit to the right it will all be better. And I don't mean just a physical move. So you know, but I could imagine I'm speaking to pretty much deaf ears on that one.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent record amounts on infrastructure and health care. We have STARS running out of Regina and more recently Saskatoon, and you know STARS has made numerous visits to my constituency. And I can remember when we were debating bringing in STARS, in this Chamber, and the members opposite were on about the cost, the cost. And you know and I said at time, it's okay if you're living in Regina or Saskatoon or Moose Jaw, but not everyone in this province does. And when there's a life-and-death situation out there, how do you put a price tag on a life? And STARS is so important to this province and I have never spoken to one person in my constituency that isn't so thankful that that program is in effect.

Mr. Speaker, we have shortened the surgical wait-lists and, you know, we know there's more to do regarding doctor retention and we have taken the initiatives to work on that. This fall 24 international medical graduates will be entered into the Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment, and in the upcoming year it will go to 90 international medical graduates. And you know we are aware, as I said, of the need for more physicians and keeping the doctors here and have taken initiatives to work with that.

More than 1 200 kilometres of highways have been rebuilt in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker — \$581 million was invested and a recent commitment of another \$50 million. Again, Mr. Speaker, there is so much to do out there. The NDP when they were in power . . . 16 years of neglect, abandonment, and devastation. And I mean we have so many highways that need to be fixed and you know what, I mean we would love to do it all right now, but it is just financially impossible to do that. And you know and it is . . . We will get to doing that.

Mr. Speaker, something very near and dear to my heart is agriculture. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, I am a grain producer. I've kind of rented out some of my farm, but you know, what I'm a farm girl at heart and the closest thing I've

ever . . . the closest I've ever been to living in a city is this, my place here in Regina that I live in just part-time. And I love the farm life. It's great. And, Mr. Speaker, just thanks to the hard work of a lot of farm families and ranchers out there, Saskatchewan is now the top agri-food exporting province with more than \$10 billion worth of exports in 2011. And, Mr. Speaker, that's up 60 per cent since 2007. And this year's budget included a record \$20 million for agriculture research, an increase of more than 50 per cent since 2007. And I'm happy to see that this government will focus on value-added processing and irrigation.

Mr. Speaker, you know it has never made sense that we in this province, the farmers, grow the best quality durum in the world. We send it out to be processed and packaged and then it's returned to our store shelves and we buy it as pasta. And that has just never made sense to me. And I think if we can work towards adding value to any of our products, I think that is a great thing.

But, Mr. Speaker, speaking of agriculture, I would like to thank the former Agriculture minister, the member from Melville-Saltcoats, for his leadership on the Ag file. He was a strong voice for Saskatchewan and had a strong voice when representing the needs of this province. And saying that, Mr. Speaker, I will also say that I know the present Minister of Agriculture, the member from Thunder Creek who is an active farmer and rancher himself, will very capably continue to represent the province at the Agriculture table, and I guess that is already a proven point, Mr. Speaker, as he's been very vocal when it comes to defending the interests of Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but remember when I sat in opposition and the NDP was government — and God forbid that ever happen again. But I can remember the Agriculture ministers, I mean they never had any experience on the farm. You'd just shake your head because, you know, they'd try to get these agreements with the federal government and the federal government would agree to them, and this was, I think it was CFIP [Canadian farm income program] or one of those joint programs, federal-provincial programs. And so they'd get the . . . The federal government would say, yes, okay. That makes sense. And so then the provincial government, they'd back off because, you know, we still can't fund it. They left farmers hanging year in and year out and I guess, Mr. Speaker, with policies like they had, it's no wonder that there aren't any rural members over there and probably won't be for some time.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we've had many people that tell us, you know, give third party support for this plan. I mean Peter MacKinnon, Marilyn Braun-Pollon, Erin Weir, Murray Mandryk, Sandi Urban-Hall, Don Atchison, there's many, many people that have given us third party support, and I think that is absolutely great.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are many issues, other issues I would like to discuss but my allocated time is running out. But I would like to say again what an honour it is to serve in this legislature with this Premier and the great group of many men and women that are my colleagues. And I am so proud to be part of this team and, Mr. Speaker, I am also proud to support the Throne Speech which was seconded by my colleague and

friend, the member from Battleford, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed till 7 p.m. this evening.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Makowsky	1647
Wotherspoon	1647
Broten	1647
Chartier	1647

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	1647
Wotherspoon	1647
Vermette	1647
Belanger	1648

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Campion College Alumni of Distinction Awards

Ross	1648
------------	------

Grand Opening of Station 20 West

Forbes	1648
--------------	------

Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Krawetz	1648
---------------	------

India Canada Night

Wotherspoon	1649
-------------------	------

Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds

Lawrence	1649
----------------	------

Women's History Month and International Day of the Girl

Jurgens	1649
---------------	------

Leadership Candidates' Position

Hickie	1649
--------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Support for the Film Industry

Chartier	1650
Doherty	1650

Immigration Issues

Broten	1651
Boyd	1651

Low-Income People and Food Banks

Chartier	1652
Draude	1652

SaskTel and Congress on Information Technology

Belanger	1653
McMorris	1653

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

11-and-Under Initiative

Draude	1654
Chartier	1655

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 45 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*

McMorris	1655
----------------	------

Bill No. 46 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*

Krawetz	1655
---------------	------

Bill No. 47 — *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*

Cheveldayoff	1656
--------------------	------

Bill No. 48 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*

Cheveldayoff	1656
--------------------	------

Bill No. 49 — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*

Cheveldayoff	1656
--------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Ross	1656
Brkich	1658
Vermette	1660
Bradshaw	1664
Merriman	1666

Jurgens	1668
Parent	1669
McCall	1670
Eagles	1674

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk

Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan

Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General