



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

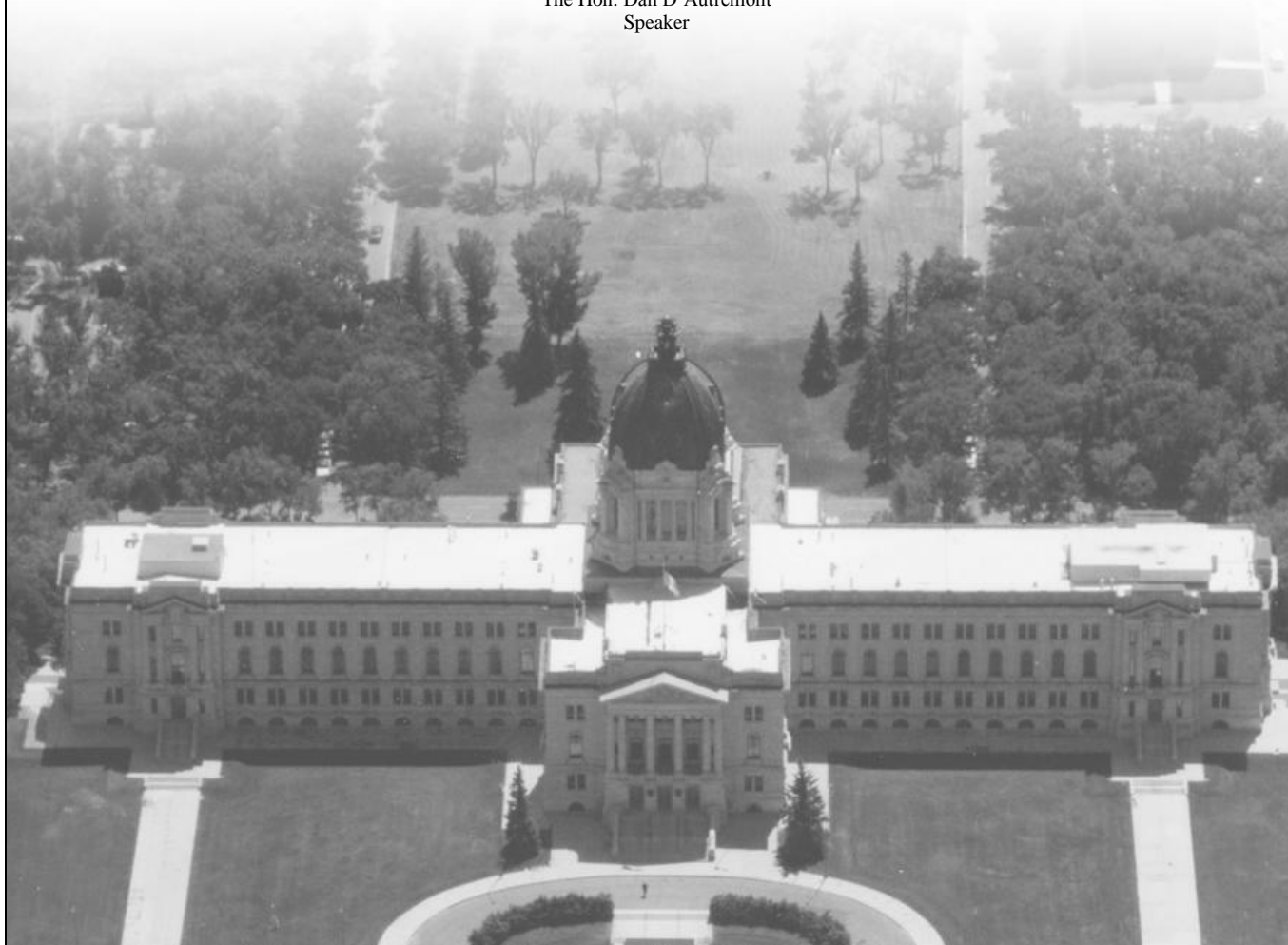
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The 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, Hon. 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 Cypress Hills.

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a very special guest and to extend our welcome to His Excellency Leslie Gatan, the ambassador of the Philippines to Canada, to the province of Saskatchewan and to our Legislative Building this afternoon.

I'd also like to take a moment and welcome Ms. Junever Mahilum-West, Philippine consul general located in Toronto; and Mr. Eric Tamayo, the minister and consul for economic affairs who has joined His Excellency today. Also with them are two people who probably don't need an introduction but who do such good work on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Norma Morrow is the senior protocol officer and Renata Bereziuk is the international officer with Intergovernmental Affairs.

While in the province, Ambassador Gatan will meet with representatives from the government, the business community, and the Filipino community. Mr. Speaker, our province has a strong economic relationship with the Philippines, particularly in the areas of potash and agricultural exports, but it is our province's close bond with their people that has become the defining aspect of our relationship. Today Saskatchewan welcomes more immigrants from the Philippines than any other country in the world. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the last three years over 9,600 men, women, and children from the Philippines have come to call Saskatchewan home.

I'm very happy to say that the Filipino community in this province is one that is strong, is vibrant and growing. Mr. Speaker, these families have arrived in Saskatchewan and have brought with them their expertise, their ideas, their skills, and their way of life, and in doing so are now helping our province overcome a severe labour shortage.

Mr. Speaker, this government looks forward to continuing to strengthen the social, the economic, and cultural ties between our two jurisdictions in the months and years ahead. I would ask all members of this House to join me in welcoming Ambassador Gatan and his delegation to Saskatchewan's

legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Ambassador Gatan and the delegation from the embassy. It's wonderful to have you here today. And it's true that the country of the Philippines has made a huge contribution to Saskatchewan over the decades and especially in the recent years, Mr. Speaker, with the number of individuals working in health care, working in the trades, working in business. And they've made a huge contribution to our province.

And I know from my interaction with many constituents who are Filipino, some of the hardest working people I've ever met with the hugest hearts as well, and I know that's true for the culture of the country as well. So I want to join with the government in welcoming the ambassador here today and wish him all the best in the discussions that will be taking place. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a formal introduction to make, but just before I do, I want to add my words of welcome to the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cypress Hills to His Excellency Ambassador Gatan from the Philippines.

Mr. Speaker, I had the good pleasure of attending the Philippines Christmas party in Swift Current, which over the last number of years — that's my hometown — has turned out to be the best Christmas party in our community. And we too are blessed, as the Leader of the Opposition has referenced, to have a very strong and dynamic Filipino community in Swift Current and in the southwest corner of our province.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, three very distinguished members of the Saskatchewan Business Council. Mr. Speaker, members will know that this council is formed by a number of representative business groups that try to provide counsel to government and opposition parties with respect to policy.

And joining us today, Mr. Speaker, is the regional vice-president with the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses], no stranger to the House, Marilyn Braun-Pollon has joined us. Her organization, her regional representation is 5,000 women and men in business, small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, Dwayne Marling has joined us as well. He's the regional vice-president of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. I knew he was going to be here, Mr. Speaker, because I read it on Twitter. I'm sure, much to the disappointment of the member for Riversdale, I was looking on my iPad this morning, and I noted that he was coming here today to the House. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that they represent 2,000 restaurateurs in the province.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Greg Trew is a representative with the North Saskatoon Business Association, a dynamic business group in our province and in the City of Bridges representing 800 businesses, Mr. Speaker. We thank these individuals for the work they do to ensure that we are building a business environment that welcomes new investment and frankly makes it possible for wealth creators to do just that, to create jobs for Saskatchewan families. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to the Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to join with the Premier and welcome the business leaders that have joined us here today. Ms. Marilyn Braun-Pollon, thank you so much for the work you do and the advocacy you've provided. We always appreciate the meetings that we have. Mr. Marling, thank you for being here today. As well Mr. Trew, we always look forward to open discussions and your advocacy, and you sharing the interests of your members with us as an opposition here in Saskatchewan.

Thank you to all of your members for the role they play in building out a strong economy in our province and the important role that fulfills to all Saskatchewan people. So I join with the Premier in welcoming these business leaders here today. Thank you.

And maybe while on my feet, I also noticed that we have two internationally acclaimed artists that have joined us here today. This would be Mr. Rod and Denyse, and Mrs. Denyse Simair from just outside of Prince Albert. And they're, as I say, internationally acclaimed crystalline porcelain artists. And in fact had the chance to get to know the two of them a few years back; really enjoyed the discussion, learned a little bit more about their art. And in fact I believe they're headed over to Spain very shortly to share their product with the world. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Simair here today as well.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I am pleased to introduce a group of students sitting in your gallery today. They're second-year business marketing students from SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] Palliser in Moose Jaw. In attendance today are Dustin Rushinko, Jess Chenard, Manny Schellenberg, Aly Bell, Josh Zimmer, Matthew Dagert, Courtney Senkow, Rene Hellings, Zach Eberle, Emily Weekes, Sarah Rotheisler, Dillon Wallin, and Megan Trenowth. With them are Chantelle Flanagan-Moore, facility member who worked with the students on the project; and Morai Forer, program head, business division of SIAST.

Mr. Speaker, these students developed a campaign that sold lunches to raise money for local schoolchildren. Through this campaign they were able to raise \$10,000. My colleague from Moose Jaw will have more to say in a member's statement, so I would like to ask all members to help me welcome them to their legislature today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the group of business students from Palliser SIAST Campus, coming from all over the province, I understand. Great work on the fundraiser. Keep that up, and the Finance minister will be dogging your every step, I'm sure. But it's good to see you here today in your Legislative Assembly, and please keep up that great work. So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to the students from SIAST Palliser to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce three registered dietitians seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, these accomplished women work hard for dietitians and as dietitians. We have Roseann Nasser, a research dietitian who has served in so many roles I won't start mentioning them; Lana Moore, registrar for the Saskatchewan Dietitians Association; and Tammy Ives, regional executive director for Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northwest Ontario for Dietitians of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members of this Assembly to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 20 grade 12 students from the Langenburg High School, accompanied by their teachers, Fallon Prince and Shawna Kentel.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker — and thanks to the Finance minister on budget day — that I realized the grade 12 students may not be able to take advantage of this, but I know their teachers hopefully will, a new K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] school in Langenburg. Much appreciated out there. So I'd ask all members to welcome them here to their legislature today.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to present a petition on cellphone coverage, Mr. Speaker. And the petition reads as follows:

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; Buffalo River First Nations, 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 and the adjoining community of Turnor Lake, including the neighbouring communities in

each of those areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Dillon, and the number, I have almost 200 signatures on this particular petition, Mr. Speaker. And the most amazing thing about this petition is we're getting support from all throughout the province. And again, as I mentioned at the outset of this particular petition, it is signed by people primarily from Dillon. And I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And we know since the Act was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interest of due diligence. We know there is no labour relations crisis to fix and no necessity to rush this omnibus bill through that will likely govern workplace relationships for decades to come. If the bill does become law in this province, working people, particularly young workers, immigrant workers, and other vulnerable workers will suffer from a hasty watering down of our current labour standards which set the mandatory minimums for all Saskatchewan workers. I would 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 not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May, and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### New Transition House in Melfort

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to rise in the House today to recognize that our government's budget provides support for the victims of domestic violence through the opening of the first new transition house in Saskatchewan since 1989 to be located in Melfort.

The Angel's Lighthouse will provide a 16-space residential crisis service for women and their accompanying children fleeing interpersonal violence and abuse and will provide crisis services for 23 communities in the northeast region of our province.

Our government is providing \$150,000 for project development costs, start-up costs, staffing, training, and preparations for full-service operations. Capital costs will be shared by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the federal government, and the local community, with Sask Housing putting in \$500,000.

This transition house will be operated by North East Outreach Services, which provide services throughout northeastern Saskatchewan including Tisdale and Nipawin and as far as the Manitoba border. The organization's services includes awareness programs, referrals to other agencies, and a 24-hour crisis support line taking calls from numerous communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in recognizing this important project in Melfort which will greatly assist women and children fleeing interpersonal violence and abuse. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

#### Breaking the Silence Conference

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about an event I attended over the weekend, the 16th annual Breaking the Silence conference. Organized out of the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, Breaking the Silence is Canada's longest running anti-homophobia conference and tackles a wide range of issues including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, queer, questioning, and intersex community. This year's theme was Removing Homophobia from the Locker Room and Beyond, tackling homophobia, transphobia, and inclusiveness in sports.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Calgary Stampeder running back Jon Cornish. Jon Cornish's mother came out just after he completed college, and he has been a strong ally ever since. In 2012 Jon Cornish was named CFL's [Canadian Football League] most outstanding Canadian and was runner-up for the most outstanding player. He also, notably, came forward in support of his mother, an Anglican priest who is happily married to another woman.

Speaking of his personal experience, Cornish said, and I quote:

Football locker rooms have been allowed to sort of stay the way they've been for a long time. And there's a lot of change happening of late, and I think locker rooms will slowly but surely accommodate that change.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join with me in congratulating the organizers of Breaking the Silence Conference and thank Jon Cornish and his family for courageously speaking out in support of inclusive communities and locker rooms. Thank you.

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

#### Supporting Habitat for Humanity

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to rise in the House today and talk about a key ceremony for Habitat for Humanity that the Minister of Social Services and I were able to attend earlier this morning.

Mr. Speaker, owning a home is a dream that many of us share. It represents security, a sense of belonging, and a place where

we can become proud, connected members of a community. However, some families need help to achieve this dream. That is where Habitat for Humanity steps in, by mobilizing volunteers and partners to build affordable homes for low-income families.

Mr. Speaker, we share Habitat's vision and are proud to contribute \$50,000 towards each Habitat for Humanity home. In fact, since 2009 our government has dedicated a total of 4.5 million in funding for Habitat for Humanity affiliates and chapters in Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, Nipawin, Humboldt. Together we've built 90 homes across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we're not stopping there. With the 2013-14 budget, our government committed an additional 2 million to help Habitat build 40 more homes for Saskatchewan. Each Habitat partner family has to do their share of work by contributing at least 500 hours to build their home or other Habitat homes. But all this hard work is worthwhile once you can say to each family, welcome home.

Mr. Speaker, our government is grateful to have such a strong relationship with Habitat for Humanity. Their whole family is fantastic to work with. And we are looking forward to many more builds together, which will provide homes for families in the communities across our province. Thank you.

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

#### **Northern Trappers Convention**

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of participating in the opening ceremonies at the annual Northern Trappers convention held in Prince Albert. It was very gratifying to see the level of support from First Nations and Métis organizations such as FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Prince Albert Grand Council, and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Financial support for the conference was also provided by Cameco, Areva, and Northern Lights Casino.

Dr. Rose Roberts provided a presentation based on her research conducted for the Prince Albert Grand Council. Her presentation demonstrated that the chronic diseases common in northern communities can be greatly reduced by including activities and diets that are part of the traditional lifestyle of living off the land, including trapping. The two day convention had many other highlights, Mr. Speaker, including stories from our elders and youth, skinning technique demonstrations, trapping industry display booth, fur sales and marketing discussions. There were also discussions on current legislation and regulations which impact the fur industry.

During the convention, a memorandum of understanding was signed by representatives from the Prince Albert Grand Council, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative. The understanding is that the organizations will collaborate on issues of common concern.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to take a more active role in supporting traditional economies such as trapping. They are

such an important part of the cultural lifestyle of our northern residents.

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

#### **Students Fundraise for Hunger in Moose Jaw**

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask this Assembly to join me in congratulating a group of SIAST Palliser campus students that are in your gallery today. As part of their business marketing program, these students were challenged to use an innovative approach to learn and practise the fundamental skills of retail management.

They decided to make a difference by creating a product to earn funds for a charitable cause. They developed a project called Happy Christmas to All, and to All A Good Lunch and sold Christmas lunch packages to raise money for the local schoolchildren. These lunch packages were bought by Moose Jaw businesses and SIAST faculty, staff, and students. They also presented the idea to Moose Jaw businesses, including Blue Whale Financial and Babich Farms who together ended up donating \$1,800 into the fundraising project.

Mr. Speaker, through their campaign these students raised \$10,000. This money will provide lunches for 300 students in Moose Jaw for six weeks. The money raised was presented to Hunger in Moose Jaw which serves students in the Moose Jaw community through the lunch programs.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in commending these students for developing this genius program, raising money for the less fortunate in our community. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

#### **Recognizing and Thanking Highway Workers**

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This winter has been one of endless snowstorms resulting in record snowfall levels and creating the worst driving conditions our province has seen in many years. Mr. Speaker, this is why I am pleased to rise in this Assembly today to offer my most sincere appreciation to our province's phenomenal highway workers.

Their dedication and hard work has been vital in ensuring our safety as we travel across Saskatchewan highways this winter. Last weekend marked one of the worst storms this season, with wicked 70-kilometre per hour winds ripping across the Prairies, piling up large drifts on several highways throughout the province, and resulting in many road closures.

And as they have done so diligently throughout the winter, our highway employees worked around the clock, with equipment operators putting forth their best efforts to clear blocked roads, and the hotline staff consistently providing updates on highway conditions and working tirelessly to respond to the extremely high volume of calls and online inquiries. The hotline has received 520,000 calls since opening in November and has had 3.1 million hits to its website as of last Friday.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing and thanking our highway employees for their endless work for this winter season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Position on Uranium Development

**Mr. Hickie:** — Mr. Speaker, last week the NDP [New Democratic Party] Finance critic went out and bought a new pair of tap shoes. Apparently he gave them to the NDP leader who is now using them to tap dance around the position on uranium development.

In last week's budget, our government introduced a new uranium royalty structure that will attract new investment in uranium mines and more jobs for First Nations people in the North.

On Thursday the NDP leader was asked three times whether he supports these changes. He wouldn't say. He said something about the triple bottom line again, but he wouldn't take a position on whether he supports these changes and the new opportunities they will create in the North.

But the northern leaders know where they stand. The mayor of Pinehouse gives this budget a thumbs up, particularly the changes to the uranium royalty structure. The CEO [chief executive officer] of Athabasca Basin authority says, these changes will lead to new mines and expansions. Dave McIlmoyl runs Northern Resource Trucking which is 70 per cent Aboriginal owned. He said the changes are the boost his industry needs. "It means more jobs, more training, more infrastructure for the North, and that's what the North needs."

More jobs, more training, more infrastructure in the North — it's what the North needs. Everyone seems to understand that except the Leader of the NDP. Where does he stand? Does he support or oppose uranium development and the new opportunities it will create for First Nations people and the others in the North? Mr. Speaker, I think we're about to find out.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Support for Health Care

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday in question period we looked at how the Sask Party government shortchanges education in the province and how it's not in the best interests of our kids. The Premier deflected those questions, Mr. Speaker, and refused to admit that this budget does not do enough for students in the classroom.

Among the groups critical of the budget, Mr. Speaker, have been school boards because what they've seen are difficult decisions about cuts being downloaded and offloaded to them by the Sask Party government. This is not unlike the situation with health regions here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who are being asked to find \$54 million in so-called efficiencies in

their already tight budgets. The Saskatoon Health Region has admitted that they will be looking for changes to the clinical services, and clinical services directly affect patients.

My question to the Premier: how can he justify forcing health regions to cut \$54 million when they are already in such dire straits?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. You know, what is prescribed in the budget in terms of encouragement for our regions to find further efficiencies is nothing new. Our government has been working with regions through the processes known as lean and other efficiencies to find savings for the region, Mr. Speaker.

In the case of the management of the blood inventory, we've applied lean techniques to that — saved \$10 million. In the case of the design of the new children's hospital that this side of the House is going to get done, Mr. Speaker, we've saved millions of dollars. The same is true in Moose Jaw. The same is true in terms of absence management within the workforce in health care. These things are delivering results.

And when they do, Mr. Speaker, what are we able to do? Well we're able to add another \$10 million to the surgical wait times initiative, something the Leader of the Opposition opposes. That reduces wait times for surgeries, Mr. Speaker. It means we can pilot new home care initiatives in the budget. It means we can invest more with the Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker. You bet we're asking the regions to find efficiencies. We're going to put the patient first. We're going to use those efficiencies to shorten wait times and improve health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, when the health region is talking about looking at clinical services, that has a direct effect on patient care. Mr. Speaker, many of the things that have occurred already have found savings, Mr. Speaker, in the budget. But now the directive to find other efficiencies has patients worried that clinical services will in fact be, will be affected.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have to take note of where the two largest health regions, Saskatoon and Regina, are at right now with respect to their budgets. Saskatoon has a \$24 million deficit going into the new year, and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has a \$25 million deficit.

To the Premier: given that significant cuts have already occurred and given that health regions are starting the year in the red, why is he stubbornly insisting that health regions must now find \$54 million?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, in this budget there is an increase of \$131.8 million to RHAs, to regional health authorities in the province. Mr. Speaker, additionally I could point out to the hon. member that over the last five years, this government has increased funding to the RHAs by 46 per cent.

All the while we have been encouraging efficiencies. All the while we've been using lean to find those savings within the Health ministry so that we can apply those savings to the front line so that we can do things like the surgical wait times initiative.

In this budget, with the additional \$10 million that we're putting towards the surgical wait times initiative, we're now at \$70 million total year in and year out to reduce wait times. We're using private clinics, something the Leader of the Opposition said he would not do. That approach is getting better results — shorter wait times for Saskatchewan people. He needs to be able to stand up in his place and say, does he support the surgical wait time initiative in the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, here's a quote from the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region from March 21st in *The StarPhoenix*: "She admits lean solutions won't be enough, and says the region will now embark on a process to review all of its clinical services to 'see what changes, if any, are made.'" Mr. Speaker, this issue of finding additional cuts in the health region totalling \$54 million has patients, has families, has health care providers worried.

Even the Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker, is a victim of the Sask Party government's stubborn insistence on more health care cuts. Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan want the best possible health care when it comes to cancer treatment, as they ought to. Yet the Sask Party government is specifically including the Cancer Agency in its demand for \$54 million in so-called efficiencies in health care. My question to the Premier: what specific cuts does he suggest that the Cancer Agency make in order to live within the government's budget?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, since this party took over the government of Saskatchewan, the Cancer Agency has received 90 per cent more funding, Mr. Speaker. In this particular budget they received 12 million more dollars.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting the hon. member is saying there are no more efficiencies to be gained in the health care system because in his leadership campaign, in the policy development that he offered to the NDP, he said one of the points in health care is what? More efficiency be built into the public health care system. He says our focus needs to be on establishing a more efficient system that is centred around the patients, Mr. Speaker.

When he was running for the leadership, that's what he said. When he's confronted with the record of this side of the House, which is precisely that, he's suddenly against it, Mr. Speaker. We've seen it on Keystone. We've seen it on uranium. He should find one position at least, and stick to it, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the health care system should obviously be efficient, and we should be more efficient. But the concern is, Mr. Speaker, health regions have been embarked on that process. And by the CEO's own admission of the Saskatoon Health Region, she says that they will now have to look at clinical care, Mr. Speaker.

That's why families are worried, Mr. Speaker, because it's our loved ones that need health care, the best possible health care. That's why providers of health care, health care workers, Mr. Speaker, are concerned because they know that this will have an effect on their patients. It can have an effect on morale in the workplace and on job safety if the Sask Party stubbornly plows ahead, Mr. Speaker, with the decision to find \$54 million of cuts within the health regions and the Cancer Agency.

My question to the Premier: he's the one; it's his budget directing these additional \$54 million of cuts within health care, so he must have some ideas for the health region on where these cuts ought to occur. What specific cuts would he like to see in the health regions, Mr. Speaker, and can he guarantee that patient care will not be compromised?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, when the member who just asked the question was running for the NDP leadership, he said there were efficiencies to be gained. That's what he said. It's in his policy document. He said there were efficiencies to be gained in the interest of better serving the patients.

Mr. Speaker, what we're asking the health regions to do, on top of receiving more funding, Mr. Speaker, we're asking them on a \$3 billion budget to continue to find \$50 million worth of efficiencies, as they've been able to do it.

Mr. Speaker, again that member, when he was running for the leadership just a few weeks ago, said there are absolutely efficiencies to be had and the money should be directed to the patient. Mr. Speaker, in light of his line of questioning today, the question for him is, what's changed?

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

### Public-Private Partnerships

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Last week's budget charted a dramatic shifting course towards privatization in our province. The Sask Party government wants to use a more costly approach of P3 [public-private partnership] privatization for new schools and hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government already went down this path a few years ago when they spent \$1 million on its P3 secretariat. The old failed P3 secretariat spent \$1 million to come to the conclusion that P3 privatization was not a good approach for our province, yet it seems now they're going to double down on that very approach, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to building new schools and hospitals, why is the Sask Party repackaging and pushing forward with a more costly plan, a plan that even they had ruled



out just a few years ago after spending \$1 million?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskBuilds has been working in the province for the last 20 or 25 weeks, Mr. Speaker. Not a long life cycle but absolutely it's part of SaskBuilds's mandate to look into the possibility of P3s in the province, Mr. Speaker, to make up for the infrastructure deficit certainly left by the NDP.

We know that P3s are operating right now in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia, and New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker. There are many different designs of P3s. There is a P3 that could be a design, build. There could be one that's design, build, maintain. There's one that could design, build, and operate. We want to look at the best options, Mr. Speaker, and the best examples from many of these provinces that have seen real efficiencies, Mr. Speaker, real efficiencies to the infrastructure pressures they've had. Mr. Speaker, it's not an ideology thing for us, Mr. Speaker, like it is them. It's getting the best value for our Saskatchewan taxpayers.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of ideology. And it's that very stubborn approach that we see of that government, that ideological approach, that pursuit — to only listen to proponents but to not listen to the evidence, Mr. Speaker — that is the concern.

The private sector financing schemes, P3, are much more costly to taxpayers. The government should be focused with the challenges and opportunities on getting the best bang for our dollar, best value for our dollar. And simply, P3 privatization schemes are more costly. In a report in *Alberta Construction Magazine*, it's pointed out that P3s push smaller companies out of the tendering process. The head of a well-established paving company had this to say, "When you make it difficult for small contractors, you remove competition which benefits taxpayers."

Mr. Speaker, why would the Sask Party push forward with P3 privatized schools and hospitals, a short-sighted, wasteful, more costly scheme, instead of the most affordable, effective plan over the long run for Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, those questions really are quite bizarre coming from the opposition. We really don't know where they stand. Like obviously they're dead set against P3s because in NDP world, P3s are more costly. That's what the member said, and I think he's going to have to stand by those words.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, last week the federal government released the report on public-private partnerships. The NDP federally released their own report, and I want to quote directly from the NDP's report: the P3 model can enable greater value for money for some infrastructure projects, Mr. Speaker, where

it provides quality, value-added benefits and ensures maximum transparency and integrity in this process, Mr. Speaker. That's where the federal government is, Mr. Speaker. We have no idea how the NDP ever land on any of their positions here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I always like how they put all the effort into all the spin, Mr. Speaker. I wish they'd spend more time by getting value for dollar on Saskatchewan people. This is a government that's paying for this budget with credit, complete with high interest. It's a short-sighted approach of buy now and pay much more later, Mr. Speaker, for the infrastructure that our growing province needs. It's about kicking responsibility down the road.

And when it comes to the North Battleford hospital, it's a broken promise. The province committed to a public hospital with public dollars, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier told the *Battlefords Daily News* the planning funding was there and the \$100 million of public capital would follow. Mr. Speaker, why did that government break its promise to the people of North Battleford, and why won't they come clean with the full cost of their plan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the people of North Battleford would be very interested that the NDP would not entertain a P3 project. Mr. Speaker, they'll have the longest, the oldest hospital in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The provincial hospital would never be built under the NDP. They talked about it for many, many years but they did absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's really interesting that the NDP not only talked about P3s before, but they were acting on P3s, Mr. Speaker, under CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]. They sent a delegation out two or three times to Partnerships BC under the NDP, NDP officials, to look at the benefits. In fact I've got a letter here, Mr. Speaker. Let me quote from the letter. This is what they wanted to learn from Partnerships BC. And this is Partnerships BC saying about the Saskatchewan officials, "They are interested in the possible application of P3 models for schools, hospitals, and utility corps [Mr. Speaker, such as Power and SaskTel]." It's hypocritical for the opposition to say we should never do it when they did the very same thing.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, under New Democrats, our hospitals, our schools, our highways were public. The shift, to be clear, is under that Premier and that minister, Mr. Speaker.

Study after study has concluded with a negative view of P3s, the privatized schemes — that they're fraught with more risk, that they're more costly, that they forfeit control of assets that are invaluable to the public. Even the IMF, the International

Monetary Fund, has concerns with these private schemes as it improperly excludes debt and the full cost of liability from the government's balance sheet.

Now we know this government already reports its finances improperly, using two sets of books instead of one set of books, something that the auditor has called misleading and wrong. But now it seems this government wants to set up a third set of books, a tricky set of books, to hide the P3 debt that they're adding, Mr. Speaker, through this costly scheme. Mr. Speaker, why is the government choosing costly budgetary tricks instead of transparency and the best plan to build the infrastructure Saskatchewan needs?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we are going to look at P3s, absolutely, for the infrastructure deficit. I can understand why the opposition is a little reluctant around P3s, Mr. Speaker. In fact I can remember sitting on those benches for eight long years, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were on this side and they talked about, they touted a P3, Mr. Speaker, back in those days. They had a private partner, Mr. Speaker, and the government was investing in potatoes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you what happens in a P3 under the NDP — \$30 million lost for the taxpayer with an investment of the private partner of \$153, Mr. Speaker. No wonder they're so scared about P3s. We would never enter into a P3 like those members opposite did.

**The Speaker:** — I'd just like to remind the members to put their comments and questions through the Chair, please. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

### IPAC-CO2

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, for over a year we've been asking questions about the IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO<sub>2</sub>] affair of this government. Over the course of the last month, as more troubling information has been exposed, we've asked more questions. But it's been like pulling teeth to get answers.

Last week the minister and Premier once again refused to support our call to the Provincial Auditor to investigate the audit, the whole file, to get the straight answers for the public. On Friday a further story broke that the Provincial Auditor is indeed looking at some of the files, but it seems she's doing so on her own doing, along with the university. Can the minister confirm when she learned of the auditor's investigation?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — On budget day, the president of the university, the University of Regina, and I had a brief conversation. She was very concerned of the damage that this whole topic and the fact that the opposition keeps raising this without any additional information is quite damaging to the university. She suggested that perhaps that they would take the

position of getting the Provincial Auditor to look into it. I don't think it's been formally announced that they're going to do so.

But as the member opposite knows, there was a forensic audit done, and the forensic audit identified that the issues that happened, happened while under management of the University of Regina because members of the University of Regina did not follow their processes. So I encouraged the president of the university to do whatever she needs to do in order to keep the good reputation of that institution.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, if anyone's putting reputations at risk, it's a government that's denying accountability and answers on provincial dollars that are involved in files with very valid questions. And to pretend somehow that an audit's been done with the full scope of the review that we've requested is something that the minister should clearly know isn't the case.

It's a culture of secrecy that we see on this file, and we have millions of taxpayers' dollars that are involved in the IPAC affair. And Saskatchewan people deserve to know how much taxpayers' money has been wasted in the handshake deals, conflicts of interests from IPAC to CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.], or any other deal. We've called for the Provincial Auditor to be brought in at the Public Accounts Committee. Those motions have twice been denied by that government. We've continued to make that call, and that government's continued to fail to support those calls. The auditor's now investigating part of the file. We need to make sure we support her to do a full investigation.

Will the Premier commit today that he and his members will not hold up any further motions at the Public Accounts Committee to ensure a full forensic audit and investigation with access to all files by the Provincial Auditor into the IPAC affair and all related conflicts?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows — he's read the report, or I would hope that he's read it — Meyers Norris and Penny did a forensic audit of the relationship between IPAC while under management of the U of R [University of Regina]. That's when the problems were identified. Going forward, once IPAC was incorporated, it has had clean audits and those audits are done by KPMG. Mr. Speaker, the member knows that as well. He likes to spin this tale of someone personally benefiting; however, the forensic audit did not. In fact it specifically said no one at the U of R personally benefited from the contract.

He will not identify who it is he is accusing. He has been asked to provide information, but he hasn't done that as well. He just keeps spinning a tale and a smoke and . . . I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, what more we can do. He has a forensic audit. He has the evaluation of the assets. He has the KPMG clean audits that are going forward, Mr. Speaker. What the university needs to do, we encourage them to do.

[14:15]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister highlights as a course for accountability all these reports that leaked information that has come to light through being exposed through investigation, and none of her own doing to make sure that accountability and answer was in place. In fact that's the same very minister who once claimed there was value for money, value for money that's been described as waste by the new CEO of IPAC. That's how she put it.

The minister once said, in fact she referenced a contract, and she did so 52 times in two committee meetings when there was no contract in place, Mr. Speaker, something we learned later. That minister has also pointed fingers. We see that here today. Even though she had three of seven Sask Party government board members from the get-go, who I would hope would've briefed the minister long ago, and when it came time to investigate . . .

**The Speaker:** — Will the member please get to the question.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And when the Sask Party, when it came around time to investigate, they denied the motions being put forward, limiting the scope of accountability. Why won't the Sask Party government come clean and reveal all the deals and all the truth in its IPAC affair?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I have to say the member opposite just doesn't end making stuff up as it serves his purpose because I have extensively read what was said in committee, and I didn't say what he said that I said. What I did say was, IPAC, the organization, has the assets. The assets have some value. They are doing what they were supposed to be doing. They were not sold at a garage sale. They were not garbage. It does have a value. However, a premium price was paid. We acknowledge that, Mr. Speaker. So it has a value. It wasn't flushed. There were three funding partners — the province of Saskatchewan, the federal government, and Royal Dutch Shell.

Mr. Speaker, in the forensic audit report it repeatedly says, repeatedly says that this was under the management of the U of R while they had control of the funds.

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

### Potential Spring Flooding

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've made it clear that as the opposition we will support decisions by the government that make sense and speak out on those that do not. When it comes to spring flood preparation, we're pleased to see the minister's preparations with the Water Security Agency and his counterparts in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, we support assisting communities with preparing for what could be a disastrous spring flood. But given the work the agency has done assessing the snowpack and the potential for flooding, we question why the government has not budgeted properly for provincial disaster assistance. The budget contains 198 million for crop insurance and 60 million for wildfires — things that just make sense to prepare for — but they've allocated very little for emergency disaster assistance.

To the minister: why are the true costs of flood damage relief left out of last week's budget?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're very concerned about the potential for spring flooding. Over the last three years, through the Water Security Agency, over \$25 million has been spent for flood mitigation projects, over 500 projects in total. Mr. Speaker, there's also been consultations held with municipalities all around the province on this.

Mr. Speaker, specifically to the member's opposite question, I'm sure she was listening intently to an outstanding budget speech from the Minister of Finance. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll quote. In part, he said, dollars under . . . This is under the Growth And Financial Security Fund, Mr. Speaker. It says, “. . . will not be allocated to any specific projects until the impact of the potential spring melt . . . is known. This money will be available to cover flooding costs if necessary.”

Mr. Speaker, that's been the intent all along, Mr. Speaker. The budgeting process that we followed for flooding, because you never know when a disaster is going to hit, Mr. Speaker, is not inconsistent with what the members opposite did when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. There will be dollars available and the people of this province can rest assured that this . . .

**The Speaker:** — Next question. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 2011 the province faced unparalleled flooding in communities around the province. People's whole way of life was turned upside down from the damage. We know how much work people and their neighbours went through to pump basements and clean up the mess. In 2011 the costs were significant.

By third quarter of last year's books, the province reported \$360 million spent on flood damage. And surely the Sask Party government has five-year averages for what the costs of flood relief will be. Surely they could spell out what they're planning to do for people so that if and when the spring melt brings flooding, people know the government will support the cleanup efforts.

Mr. Speaker, why does the Sask Party's flooding strategy not include a full upfront costing for the people to know that the government's support will be there for them?

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

Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in the previous question, the process for budgeting for PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] is not unlike the process followed by the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to talk about PDAP and about what we have done, not only has this government entertained over 500 permanent projects for flood mitigation in the last three years, Mr. Speaker, over \$25 million; we've also made a great deal of improvements to the whole program compared to the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased the advance payment from 40 per cent to 60 per cent under this government. We've increased the deductible . . . or, sorry, we've lowered the deductible for personal claimants. Under the members opposite it was 20 per cent; under this government, 5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, the list of improvements goes on and on.

Mr. Speaker, there will be money available, as explained in the budget speech. And, Mr. Speaker, the important thing to remember, unlike the members opposite, the people of this province can count on them to be there to assist them in the event of any natural disaster.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Please state your point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. In the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation's previous comments, she indicated that the member, the Deputy Opposition Leader, was making stuff up, and that is not parliamentary language, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would submit that this is a case of facts under dispute between members, and it should be found accordingly.

**The Speaker:** — I did not hear the comments myself. I will review the transcripts to see what was said and bring back a decision. I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I do remember what was said. I probably did say that he, in his preamble, made stuff up. I withdraw and apologize.

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to thank the member for that and therefore there will be no decision to be made.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013***

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Health has moved that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — I request leave to deal with all stages of the bill immediately, and at the conclusion of proceedings on Bill No. 88, the Assembly resume in its present place on the order paper.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to carry on all processes on the movement of this bill and to revert back to presenting reports by standing and special committee and routine proceedings. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013***

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of the medical care insurance amendment Act, 2013. These amendments were necessary following the federal government amendments to the *Canada Health Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to the *Canada Health Act* indicate that as of April 1st, 2013 the province will begin to provide basic health coverage to Royal Canadian Mounted Police regular members. Currently the federal government provides this coverage. Before permitting the coverage, Saskatchewan must establish the statutory authority to do so by amending *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act*.

Mr. Speaker, after this change, RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] regular members will no longer need to fill out paper forms when obtaining physician or hospital services. They will receive the same basic health coverage and experience the same health services as all Saskatchewan residents. The federal government and the Government of Saskatchewan are working together to ensure a customer-focused approach to achieve efficient, quality care for patients.

Mr. Speaker, the change will also result in less financial

reporting and fewer payment processes required between the provincial government and the federal government. In addition it helps health service providers to eliminate different billing systems for RCMP regular members. About 1,500 RCMP regular members will benefit from this change.

Mr. Speaker, overall this change means removing paperwork for RCMP regular members when obtaining basic health services and more streamlined and simplified administration and billing processes. This, Mr. Speaker, is another example of how we are putting the patient first.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act*, 2013. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to make a few remarks about this piece of legislation. And I would like to thank the minister for an earlier conversation we had about this piece of legislation as an important piece of legislation that affects the medical care of RCMP officers here in the province.

It's important, Mr. Speaker, of course to have the necessary care provided for RCMP officers, recognizing the huge contribution that they make to the safety of all people here in the province. It's my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that this is a change with respect to the legislation that was brought down by the federal government and will mean increased expenses for the province with respect to payment of medical care for RCMP officers.

So while in no way, Mr. Speaker, would the opposition be looking at preventing or slowing down the care for medical for RCMP officers here in Saskatchewan, I do want to go on the record, Mr. Speaker, and state some concerns about the unilateral nature of the decision by the federal government, the decision being rolled up into an omnibus bill. And also, Mr. Speaker, this occurred without the proper discussion with the province but that it will mean additional dollars that the province will have to spend in this case.

So, Mr. Speaker, I recognize the situation that the provincial ministry has been put in by the federal Conservatives. I think it should have been done in a different way with respect to information provided to the province. And it's also important, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that, as I understand it, this is an increased expense for the provincial ministry. But that being said, Mr. Speaker, we're not interested in holding up this piece of legislation. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act* be now read a

second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — I designate that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act* be committed to the Committee of the Whole and the said bill be considered in Committee of the Whole immediately.

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to Committee of the Whole. I do now leave the Chair for the House to go in to Committee of the Whole.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY

##### Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013*

##### Clause 1

**The Chair:** — The item of business before the committee is Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act*. Clause 1, short title. Is clause 1 agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

##### Clause 2

**The Chair:** — Seeing no member wishing to ask any questions of the minister, we'll proceed to . . . I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have one question for the minister. What is the expected or predicted expense that this would mean for the provincial ministry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Committee Chair. Based on roughly 1,500 members that will be added to the provincial system, based on what that expense would cost us, if that was just 1,500 citizens coming to the province, we estimate about between \$750,000 and a million dollars a year.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

**Mr. Broten:** — I thank the minister for the response. We're usually talking in committee room 8, not in the Chamber on issues such as this. One other question. When did the ministry become aware that this legislation was required in order to be compliant with the federal legislation?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the member for the question. The information was contained in the budget bill of last year. There have been a number of discussions between the federal government and the provincial government over the course of last summer into early last fall. And so we've known about this for approximately a year.

**The Chair:** — Seeing no other members wishing to ask questions of the minister, clause 2, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 2 agreed to.]

[Clauses 3 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act*.

I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee report the bill without amendment.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 88 without amendment. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for a leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Speaker and Chair of committees.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act* without amendment.

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

I recognize the Minister of Health.

### THIRD READINGS

#### **Bill No. 88 — *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013***

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 88, *The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the committee sit again? Mr. Chair of Committees . . . I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — At the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Assembly will now refer to routine proceedings, presenting reports by standing and special committees.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 213 through 227.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Deputy Whip has tabled answers to questions 213 to 227 inclusive.

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

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

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

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

**Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be able to resume this address in support of this balanced budget.

To reiterate some of the initial points that I was making, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just put on the record a quote from Steve McLellan, the CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, who said, regarding the budget that was tabled last week, "We are overall very, very pleased, quite frankly. We are still one of the only provinces in the country that have a balanced budget, and we can't forget about the significance of that."

The importance of having a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, reflects and reinforces that Saskatchewan, for the first time in its history, has achieved an AAA credit rating, while other jurisdictions across North America and around the world continue to struggle with some of the outcomes from the global financial crisis of a few years ago. What we see, Mr. Speaker, in this budget is a continued focus on prudent, practical steps and initiatives embedded within the document to ensure that we continue on this path of sustained growth.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do is just highlight a few aspects of my initial comments and then I'll continue with the points I was putting forward. I think what we can say, Mr. Speaker, and we can see from a variety of indicators, that Saskatchewan's growth continues to have significant momentum, whether we're talking about our population, now at more than 1.089 million, Mr. Speaker, the highest in the history of the province, whether we think about the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 3.8 per cent or any number of other indicators that have been captured very ably in their both provocative and contemplative work, *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change In Canadian Politics, Business, and Culture and What It Means for Our Future* by Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson. They say this of the province of Saskatchewan: "The province has reversed years of population decline and is growing again, robustly."

They continue by saying . . . That's on page 95. On page 96 they say, and I quote, "Saskatchewan used to share with Manitoba a sense that it was in the midst of a long period of decline . . ." Page 96, Mr. Speaker, they go on to say, "Although both provinces are doing better, Saskatchewan is doing much better . . ."

As I have said previously, there are a number of explanations. Some would put an emphasis on the continued exploration and the breadth of our natural resources. And we know how significant those resources are to our capacity today, but also to the very bright future of our province. Others will speak about, and put an emphasis on, the evolution of our global markets, especially in Asia.

And you could see today from His Excellency, the ambassador from the Philippines who was here joining us in this Assembly, that we continue to build those relationships, both commercial and trade relationships but also, importantly, people-to-people relationships. So whether we're talking about China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, or others, just to name a few, we know the significance of the evolution of these markets.

Others would put an emphasis, and rightfully so, on the character and quality of Saskatchewan people, that is, the track record of adding value to and sharing opportunities with people here at home and around the world, that it reflects our very best futures, that is, our sense of community of which there can be absolutely no doubt. To these and other explanations for the growth that's under way, Mr. Speaker, I would add, and I certainly wouldn't be alone in saying that we also know there's a significant role for public policy, that is, government and governance matters, that the state can facilitate or inhibit growth, and it can help to shape the results, the benefits, if you will, and where those benefits flow.

Mr. Speaker, what we see from Dr. Greg Poelzer, Sr. in a recent article in the respected journal of *Policy Options*, he offers a characterization of the nature of Saskatchewan's contemporary growth. And this is quite simply, "Although more supportive of the private enterprise than the New Democratic Party, the Saskatchewan Party is guided by a strong attachment to community and socially responsible development." And I think that's really important, Mr. Speaker, and we see that commitment reflected within this balanced budget.

The significance of this orientation, that is, being very closely connected to grassroots communities right across the province, was established very well, Mr. Speaker, in initiatives leading up to the budget. We can think about, over the course of the last year or so, a number of initiatives to ensure that we were connecting with and hearing from, listening to and consulting with people right across the province. Those acts of consultation occurring across the province, being led by members of this caucus and the Premier, helped to produce the Saskatchewan plan for growth, vision 2020 and beyond. And we understand the foundation that this provided for those at the treasury board, those at the cabinet table, and those within caucus. It provided a very solid foundation for the deliberations in behind the budget-making process.

In fact Dr. Michael Atkinson, the executive director and professor at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, a school of public policy shared jointly between the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, highlights the connection between the 2020 document and our budget. That is to say, in a recent *StarPhoenix* article he notes that ". . . the government's plan for growth, which was released in the fall, is likely [to be and I quote] a "blueprint" for any budget initiatives and that the budget will be "completely consistent" with the growth plan."

Mr. Speaker, this is profoundly important because within the *Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*, we see that a key public policy question is addressed — the question being, what is the purpose of our prosperity? To which the document quotes, "The purpose of growth is to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people." Mr. Speaker, this is profoundly important again because it helps to define and characterize the type of budget that we see.

Mr. Speaker, I'll continue to highlight some of the features where I think important investments have been made that are helping to assist with not simply the growth agenda of the province but also ensuring that the benefits of the growth are being shared with people right across the province.

[14:45]

Importantly the foundational piece for the budget and for the growth document was, and I quote, “Ensuring fiscal responsibility through balanced budgets, lower debt and smaller, more effective government.” This essentially serves as a fulcrum upon which our document that is our *2020 and Beyond* document as well as the budget rests. And that’s the significance of when we hear third parties like Mr. Steve McLellan, the CEO, expressing that indeed it is a balanced budget. He has confidence in this balanced budget, and that provides us an opportunity to then look at the other investments that are being made within the budget.

I’ve highlighted a number of areas, and we know the budget is significant. But when we think about — and it was a point that was raised today during question period — when we think about the \$11.9 million increase, \$11.9 million increase to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency for now a total that would be more than \$150 million, we know the significance of those dollars for Saskatchewan families. And, Mr. Speaker, that’s significant support for work that is absolutely vital, and we know that touches so many people’s lives.

We also see, Mr. Speaker — and in fact it was highlighted in *The Star Phoenix* today and I would like to reiterate — the \$800,000 increase in operating support for women’s shelters across the province, including a new transition house in Melfort. And, Mr. Speaker, if I could, I’d like to quote a little bit from today’s *StarPhoenix*. The article is entitled “Melfort women’s shelter receives funding.” And the article’s written by Charlene Tebbutt from *The StarPhoenix*, and I’ll just highlight just a few quotes.

What caught my attention was a commentary being offered by Sergeant Darren Wouters from the RCMP. And the staff sergeant offered this: he said and I quote, “I think it’s a pretty important service to have in the community.” Mr. Speaker, you can tell there is a degree of understatement here. But what’s important within the story is that we learn that the RCMP routinely, and I quote, “. . . routinely deal with domestic violence situations in the northeast area.” And we see with a, again, degree of understatement the RCMP weighing in on the significance of this kind of investment.

And to Louise Schweitzer, the executive director for North East Outreach and Support Services, we offer our congratulations, and our appreciation to the ministers of Social Services and to Justice that worked with their officials and other grassroots individuals as well as importantly the local MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. And we know how important his voice was in this. He’s highlighted here within *The StarPhoenix* on this initiative that will obviously benefit that region but also has benefits accruing to other transition houses right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to continue to highlight some of the other areas that have seen significant investments. If I could, I’d like to highlight the new dollars. And I’ll quote here another article out of *The StarPhoenix*, and it was covered by *The Leader-Post*, that is, Creative Saskatchewan’s \$6.5 million, with a \$5 million increase from what it received in February for transition and start-up costs. And the funding is divided among

music, film, digital media, visual arts, crafts, publishing, and the performing arts. And we can think about the work that the minister has done here to engage stakeholders, a broad range of stakeholders right across the province in this endeavour.

A question that has certainly come up that has emerged out of that article from last week relates to the response from the official opposition. And there are some questions about the opposition’s response, I think it’s fair to say. And I want to quote this. Regarding the new funds — the quote is from the critic from the NDP — it “. . . is not going to stimulate film production here in Saskatchewan . . . [then there are ellipses] It does nothing for the economy, and that’s the bottom line,” she said.”

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity during these deliberations, during this budget debate, for us to actually get some clarification from the members opposite, most specifically from the critic, to get a better sense of what she meant with this, I would say, conclusion. And it’s an unfortunate conclusion because it’s one thing potentially to offer criticism or commentary, maybe even scepticism on those dollars, and that’s part of a healthy discussion. But essentially to draw a conclusion and to, I would say, really kind of close the door on the artists and those that will be contributing to our creative industries, to close the door and just simply say, “. . . It does nothing for the economy, and that’s the bottom line,” Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that’s a far different approach than the members opposite have used.

The members opposite have used in their analysis on issues regarding Keystone and I anticipate on uranium, they’ve used a triple bottom line. They’ve said they’re going to take a kind of a holistic approach. But on this we don’t see that same spirit of inquiry, of investigation, of curiosity. No, we just simply have here a comment: “. . . It does nothing for the economy, and that’s the bottom line.” That seems to be a far different kind of analysis than what we’ve seen the Leader of the Official Opposition talking about as well as others.

And so I hope there is an opportunity for some clarification because we’re actually very optimistic here on this side of the aisle about the benefits that will accrue not simply to the provincial economy but in fact to the arts community, to our creative industries, and to individual artists in their endeavours as a result of this kind of enhanced support and investment. So I hope there’s an opportunity for us to hear more clearly about why the critic, the NDP critic drew such a stark conclusion, and maybe it’s an opportunity for her to offer a more detailed explanation on that.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this kind of new investment which is significant for our arts community, we have a number of other investments relating directly to the quality of life across the province, and I’ll continue to highlight those.

One of the areas that I wanted to reiterate because there is certainly, within Saskatoon Greystone — and again it’s always a privilege to be able to stand up and speak on behalf of the people of Saskatoon Greystone — we see a \$100,000 investment to provide access to online talking books for people with perceptual disabilities. This is very, very significant, Mr. Speaker. This is meant to reach directly to those individuals that



may need some additional support. Certainly it's an important step, and we want to receive the feedback about the difference that these dollars make in helping to promote opportunities to access these talking books.

I'd also like to highlight a couple of other areas that have continued to be significant for us. I touched on this point briefly last week, and that is we see overall \$184.8 million or a \$10.8 million increase in targeted funding from government ministries for initiatives that help First Nations and Métis people, including a \$3 million fund directed specifically at initiatives to address the future recommendations of the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes. That's significant.

As that work is being wrapped up, and we anticipate in the coming weeks that we'll begin to see what that final report and recommendations will look like, what we've done is anticipate that and actually begin to budget for it. I think that's profoundly important, both symbolically sending a message but also and most importantly, most significantly, substantively. That is, that we truly do want to hear from the task force that, based on its consultations with grassroots, ways that we can help make a difference on educational outcomes and employment outcomes. Really that's just another way of talking about . . . We're looking to find ways, through this task force on education and employment, we're looking to find ways to ensure that there's greater student success and that there's greater success in the transition from learning to earning. And we know how important that is.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to highlight the investments that are being made in the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan. Again, that's vitally important for our province when we think about the importance of nuclear medicine. We know that as a province we're moving forward with the PET/CT [positron emission tomography/computed tomography]. It's going to help in the treatment and diagnosis for people right across the province, and we've certainly seen a number of community organizations and activities supporting that endeavour. Not too long ago at the restaurant Manos in the heart of Saskatoon Greystone, there was actually a fundraiser there as part a Greek dining night. That was important.

We also see continued investment in the cyclotron which is connected to the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. And the significance of that is that in partnership with the federal government, in partnership with our post-secondary educational institutions, in partnership with the private sector, we as a province continue to invest in helping to explore new opportunities for medical isotopes to be produced in new and innovative ways. And again, that speaks directly to helping to ensure that we're helping to enhance our diagnostic capacity and our treatment for individuals in need of this type of medical science. This is an important investment.

It also speaks to this government's commitment to adding value to our uranium, and we know how important that is. When we think about nuclear medicine, Saskatchewan used to be a leader. And for reasons of ideology, indifference, and inertia — after years of leadership under Dr. Harold Johns and Sylvia Fedoruk and others — we saw that the province let that drift

away, let it slip away. So technology developed in Saskatchewan that has helped to save millions of lives around the world wasn't available, wasn't accessible here. We're attempting to address that, making sure that there's greater capacity for health care and health services here within the province.

We also want to make sure that that's just one piece of adding value to our uranium. And again, as the Premier highlighted today in question period, we certainly want to continue to hear from members opposite, including the new leader of the NDP, where they are on value added regarding our uranium and the cycle that we know takes place. We want to add value to that, and certainly we've seen a whole series of investments that continue to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak about the investment which is \$3 million to be allocated towards the first year of our government's seven-year commitment regarding the Global Institute for Food Security. What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan has a profound and important track record. So when we look over the course of the last 100 years, we can see a number of government initiatives that have made a very, very significant difference to the people of this province, to the people of our country, and people around the world.

I would argue that one of the most significant decisions in the history of Saskatchewan, while it was undertaken by the premiership of Walter Scott, and that was (a) the establishment of the University of Saskatchewan as one of the initial acts and areas of priorities for that first government. But within that, it was to ensure that for the first time in Canadian history, a College of Agriculture — now called the College of Agriculture and Bioresources — that a College of Agriculture was embedded within a Canadian university. That was one of the most significant steps that could have been taken, and this province and our country continue to benefit and reap the benefit of having a research-intensive College of Agriculture embedded within the structure of a post-secondary, in this case, Canadian university.

[15:00]

The significance of that track record has allowed us to see over the course of many decades leadership played in a number of fields in Canadian and international agriculture. It has allowed for, in recent years, us to begin to see the diversification and development of crops, and that being lead, not exclusively but certainly being lead, by the Crop Development Centre under the leadership of Colleen Christensen and others.

When we think about the rise and role of pulse crops for example and the significance in trade terms of what that does for Saskatchewan's economy and Canada's economy, that's why the significance of the Global Institute for Food Security really resonates for people right across the province — obviously within the university, obviously within the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, but also within the private sector where we saw very, very significant partnerships come together, and also for producers. Because we know, with a growing global population, we know that we're going to have to make very significant steps, in fact leaps forward regarding food production. And not simply the production of food but

also then its transportation, its storage, its distribution. And this is an attempt through these investments to have Saskatchewan continuing to play that leadership role that we have so ably played as a province over the course of 100 years and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to continue to highlight a few other aspects of this budget. When we think about the economy, I want to talk about the dollars that are being added — \$1.5 million to increase the capacity of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. Now that total number will be over \$21 million to purchase an additional 300 training seats, and we know that those seats are also then complemented by new dollars that will enhance the apprenticeship training allowance to meet the demand to support new and more apprentices entering our system. And we know how important that is when we think about the 11,000 or so jobs that are open and available today and the tens of thousands of more jobs that will be opening up along the way.

In addition to the new funds, the \$184.8 million in funding for First Nations and Métis people that . . . more than \$10 million additional in this budget. We also see that dollars are being increased to support newcomers for our settlement support programming. We see this as being complementary, that is, investing in post-secondary and skills training initiatives right here within the province of Saskatchewan for Saskatchewan young people first and foremost. Then we see that we want to make sure that we're attracting back our expats and then inviting newcomers from across the country and around the world. So we see that the investments here in Saskatchewan with a special focus and emphasis on First Nations and Métis learners, then attracting back our expats . . .

And we're hearing many, many stories. I just heard one this weekend where a resident of Greystone received a letter. It was rather an interesting letter. He was wondering of its content. It was from a different country. It was handwritten. And he opened the letter and the letter came from an expat. And the letter said, if you're interested in selling your house, I'm interested in buying it back because that was the house that I grew up in. And my friend said, that's a very interesting idea. And he wrote back and said, thanks very much, we'll be in touch. And the individual got back to him and said, I don't think you understood me. He said, I live outside the country now, and I want to purchase back that house that was our family's house. And my friend said well, you know, this, again it's interesting, we appreciate the offer.

Well it wasn't more than a week, that house has essentially now been sold. The individual is coming back from another country. He was absolutely focused on making sure that they purchased back the family house where he was raised. He wants to make sure his family can share in that. And by all accounts it seems that that kind of priority was reflected on the significance of having his family not simply back in Saskatchewan but back in the neighbourhood, the very neighbourhood where he was raised.

And so those are the kind of stories that are heartening, that help to reflect not simply statistics about growth or discussion of budget that is so important, but it actually allows us to make sense, family by family, community by community, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, block by block, of the

transformation that is under way within our province. A transformation as I've quoted, Mr. Speaker, that really makes sense when we begin to think about Bricker and Ibbitson's commentary from their recent book. And when we think about the significance of those quotes — that is, Saskatchewan growing robustly — here's a story that actually allows us to see what that means. And those quotes, again I'll just make sure that I highlight those from the book *The Big Shift*: "The province [that is Saskatchewan] has reversed years of population decline and is growing again, robustly." And we see from this one anecdote the significance of that.

I would also like to highlight a couple of other features, and this one especially given the city of Saskatoon and the growth that's under way. We see new dollars and in fact \$27 million, an 11.4 increase for municipal revenue sharing. And that is now \$264.4 million, a \$27 million increase. That's an 11.4 per cent increase for municipal revenue sharing which is part of \$362 million overall for direct provincial support to municipalities, an increase of \$19.6 million from the 2012-13 budget. This is significant for our cities and for our communities.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas that we could continue to . . . that we could continue with, but I know that some of my colleagues would like to enter into and contribute to, with far greater eloquence than myself, this debate and discussion.

But I would like to reiterate how honoured I am here, to be here on behalf of people of Saskatoon Greystone, to speak directly to this balanced budget — the only balanced budget within the country, a balanced budget that helps to reflect and reinforce why Saskatchewan has a AAA credit rating, a balanced budget that makes investments in health care, in entities like our Cancer Agency. We know how significant that agency is for families right across the province.

It's a budget that makes investments in transition houses, including a new transition house, Mr. Speaker. That's profoundly important. It's helping some of the most vulnerable within our communities, and we think that's one of the measures of a sound budget. It's not the only measure, but it's one that makes a difference in people's lives.

We see investments in post-secondary education, in skills training, new investments for First Nations and Métis people, especially those that are rolling up their sleeves and seeking to get the skills to join the Saskatchewan economy in meaningful ways that allow them to maximize their potential.

We also see investment for increased settlement services for newcomers, newcomers that are helping to contribute to the record population growth that's under way within the province. And we know that population growth in and of itself is profoundly important. In fact Tony Blair said in his recent memoir, Tony Blair said specifically, there's a pretty simple indicator for jurisdictions. That is, are people moving in or are people moving out? We know that hundreds of thousands of people left Saskatchewan between 1970 and 2007. We know that. But we also know that record population growth is now occurring and that people are voting with their feet. That is, there is a sense of optimism. And whether those are newcomers from across the country or around the world, or those expats that are returning to Saskatchewan, they're doing so in adding

to that sense of optimism that really was one of the foundational pieces for the creation of this province.

I'll conclude with a story if I can, Mr. Speaker, and that is a story of the introduction between, the introduction between . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Some of my colleagues are offering kind of their own option on what the story should include, but this story's an important one. It's the story of the meeting between our first premier, Premier Walter Scott, and the first president to the University of Saskatchewan, Walter Murray.

And as Walter Murray got off the train and he was greeted by our premier, obviously looking around . . . And he was coming from the Atlantic coast, from the East Coast, well established, the post-secondary institutions were there and easily recognized and contributing already to their local communities and well beyond. And in that initial discussion, he looked around, Walter Murray did, and said essentially, why should I stay? Because he didn't see structures. He didn't see a university that he was about to take over. They were going to have to build it.

And to summarize our former lieutenant governor, Dr. Gordon Barnhart, who did the research and found the quote, but to paraphrase, Walter Scott said simply this. He said, because this is a big land for big people with big ideas. And, Mr. Speaker, that sentiment, that sentiment has been captured by our Premier today and certainly been captured by our Minister of Finance, because we know that people are coming to Saskatchewan in record numbers because it remains a big land for big people with big ideas.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that it's people across the province that are helping to foster and facilitate the growth that this budget, the only balanced budget in the country, helps to ensure that we sustain the growth and share the benefits of that growth with people across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to offer seconding of the motion of this balanced budget, the only balanced budget in the country. Thank you for the opportunity to join this debate.

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When my 48 colleagues and I were elected to govern this province, the people told us loud and clear, keep fiscal prudence top of mind. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we have a balanced growth budget. That is why we have controlled spending. That is why some things have to wait. That is why we have increased taxes on cigarettes and alcohol. That is why we are increasing spending in education, post-secondary education, and health care.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to participate in this debate and I support the budget, the balanced growth budget our government delivered last week. It is through the creativity and genius, hard work and determination of our people that our government is able to continuously deliver balanced budgets. People, quality of life, and balance are recurrent themes of our government, and are evident in this 2013 balanced growth budget.

[15:15]

Let's take a look at what others are saying. Murray Mandryk says: "I like this budget. It has a sense of heart and decency . . ." Alan Thomarat, CEO of Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association, says: "We are very pleased with the budget. It does stay the course. It is balanced. It stays on track. We want to continue the momentum we see in Saskatchewan."

I will give you one more quote, Mr. Speaker, from Mr. Steve McLellan from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. He's their CEO:

Yes, we are overall very pleased, quite frankly. We are still one of the only provinces in the country that have a balanced budget and we can't forget about the significance of that.

Mr. Speaker, our sixth consecutive balanced budget focuses on investments to quality of life, investments to infrastructure, and investments to a growing economy. These investments will help us to achieve our goals to grow our province to 1.2 million people by 2020, double our exports, and to continue to invest in programs and services important to Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the people of Saskatchewan elected 49 MLAs to govern our province. All 49 of the MLAs on this side of the House have brought the voices, the ideas of their constituents to the table where real decisions are made. It is the people of Saskatchewan that told us to govern with fiscal prudence and make Saskatchewan a business-friendly place to be. Our government takes to heart what people tell us. We listen, we hear, and we implement.

Mr. Speaker, when we look around and speak to the 1,089,807 people in our province, we hear that many of them are business owners. These business owners and businesses create jobs, jobs that provide an income, an income that pays the bills, an income that supports our families, and an income that contributes to a better quality of life for our children and our children's children.

Mr. Speaker, before I highlight some of the items in this budget, I will take a few minutes to thank my family, my MLA team, my executive, and my supporters. My husband Al keeps the home fires burning while I'm in Regina and often has to listen to me as I develop my speeches. There is no amount of money that can be paid for the value he provides when he gives me feedback with a critical, but supportive ear. So I will give one very big thank you.

Thank you as well to my Prince Albert Northcote team of Sharon, Brent, and Donna. They keep my MLA office running smoothly and help me keep a visual and written record of how our government is helping the people of Prince Albert Northcote, Prince Albert, and indeed Saskatchewan.

Another big thank you to my executive and supporters at large. They keep their ear to the ground and continue to share the voice of our community with me. Mr. Speaker, this balanced growth budget balances the books and balances the priorities of Saskatchewan people. I also thank all my brothers, my sisters, my brothers-in-law, my sisters-in-law, my whole family.

Mr. Speaker, our balanced growth budget controls spending and

continues to make investments to ensure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. It also delivers on commitments we made in the plan for growth and keeps fiscal prudence at its core. Our plan for growth set a goal of 1.2 million people by 2020, and we are right on target. Right now we have 1,089,807 people calling Saskatchewan home — 21,690 of those people were new to Saskatchewan in 2012. Contrast this to the out-migration when the NDP were in power.

Improving quality of life is important to my constituents. It is important to our government. That is why we are increasing benefits under the seniors' income plan and the Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities, or SAID, programs. More is being done to fight the scourge of domestic violence. Families and especially women will see the increased funding for women's shelters right across the province. In Prince Albert we will see an extra \$100,000 of support. Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert we will see more than \$1 million slated for the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] to create new spaces for young and expectant mothers and for independent living and peer home spaces for youth transitioning to adulthood.

Continuing on this same theme of increased quality of life, our government is making good on our 2011 election campaign promise to support the community mobilization partnership with an increase of \$700,000. This innovative program, that will start right in my constituency of Prince Albert Northcote and our city of Prince Albert, is the first of its kind in Canada. It is being adopted throughout our province and indeed our nation.

This community mobilization partnership, a result of innovation and new ideas, is leveraging the strong sense of community Prince Albert and our province has. In Prince Albert we call it the Hub. This multi-layered, multi-partnered strategy is improving the quality of life in our province by building safer and healthier environments. It is getting at the root causes of crime and helping to prevent so many young people from going down that dangerous path. It is helping our youth to be part of a thriving, safe community we all so much want.

Our government set a goal and we are achieving it. We want surgical wait times reduced. For example, over the past three years in Prince Albert, we have seen a reduction in the number of people waiting longer than six months for surgery. Under the NDP this wait-list had more than 500 people on it. Now it is down to 60.

Mr. Speaker, education is important to our government. For example, Mr. Larry Rosia, SIAST president says, and I quote, "We're getting more money which is great news for us. For us, it's all about creating jobs. The economy wants our graduates, so we have to go back and use that money to create as many graduates as we can for this booming economy."

Mr. Rosia goes to on say, and I quote, "The new budget and the announcement fits very well with the province's growth plan. SIAST supports that growth plan, particularly its focus on students and Aboriginal people, both which resonate with SIAST." I'd like to add that SIAST, our northern . . . one of the four campuses of SIAST is located right in my constituency of Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Speaker, our balanced growth budget goes on to provide a graduate retention program, the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, which all help to improve the quality of life for families. There is funding for 300 additional apprenticeship training seats. Our balanced growth budget is providing a \$1.5 million increase for work readiness, employment development to accelerate essential skills training, and increase employment opportunities for First Nations and Métis people. This boosts annual funding to nearly \$25 million.

Mr. Speaker, in the little over 500 days since I've been elected, I've had many opportunities to see and hear how much our First Nations and Métis people appreciate our emphasis on post-secondary education and skills training. One prime example is my friend Trudy. Trudy is a young First Nations woman of Dene ancestry. She is contributing to her future and that of her children through business and human resources training at SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that SIIT is also located in my constituency of Prince Albert Northcote. Our government wants to eliminate the wait-list for adult basic education. Mr. Speaker, we are increasing spending for this by \$1.5 million.

People continue to be a focus of this government. Our Social Services minister says it so well, and I quote:

Our children are the future of this great province. We need to do everything we can to ensure that they reach their full potential. Our economic strength is helping us achieve meaningful change and better outcomes for the most vulnerable members of our society through initiatives like the children and youth agenda. That is why growth is so important — so we can improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, we now have 12 new pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs in Prince Albert since 2007, and all of them continue to receive funding. With a growing population, child care spaces are needed. Prince Albert has a total of 272 new child care spaces since 2007. There are a further 20 child care spaces in development.

A new item within this year's budget will immediately benefit the medically fragile children of Prince Albert. \$180,000 in provincial funding for the newly opened Hope's Home will provide 44 child care spaces and assist with renovations; 11 of these spaces are for medically high-needs children. Contrast this, Mr. Speaker, with the NDP record. There were no child care spaces for medically fragile children when they were in power.

Housing is another commitment we made to improve quality of life for families in this province. I will refer once again to a quote made by Dennis Coutts, CEO, Habitat for Humanity. He says, and I quote: "We are the envy of the country. I applaud the Government of Saskatchewan for keeping their commitment for more housing to help low-income, hard-working Saskatchewan people."

The hard-working people of this province is why we are continuing our \$344 million commitment for 12,600 new

housing units across the province.

Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure is important to the people of this province. It is important to our government. A growing population needs infrastructure. This balanced growth budget is the first step towards the \$2.5 billion we committed to investing towards infrastructure in the next three years.

For example, there is \$281 million for highways. Some of that money will be used to complete the twinning of Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert. I for one, Mr. Speaker, hope that mother nature bestows some good highway building weather upon us this summer. Another example of infrastructure spending is Pineview Terrace Lodge long-term care facility. We should see that completed in 2013.

Housing is another commitment we made to investment in infrastructure. As the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation says so well, "Our plan is working." The minister goes on to say, "Housing starts, including rentals, are up, vacancy rates are improving and response to our programs from our housing partners is going strong."

Mr. Speaker, the CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] housing outlook indicates that Saskatchewan has nine starts per 1,000 people compared to a national average of six starts per 1,000 people. So, Mr. Speaker, we see other organizations outside of our government highlighting the good work that we are doing.

We are continuing our \$344 million commitment for the housing units. In Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, we have 132 households that have been helped to achieve home ownership. I join my colleague from Prince Albert Carlton in congratulating these families who now have a place of their own to call home.

[15:30]

We continue to hear that people want new rental units in Prince Albert. We have 372 new rental units completed or in progress since 2007. Now, Mr. Speaker, let's compare that, compare our record to that of the NDP. To be fair, I will use the following statistics from the NDP's, or to compare to the NDP's last five years of being in power. Housing starts are now up 66 per cent. Rental starts are 342 per cent higher than the last five years of NDP being in power. Which record, Mr. Speaker, which record does the people of Saskatchewan want as we move forward?

Mr. Speaker, supporting a growing economy so that we can continue to invest in our people is important. Our Saskatchewan Party government has reduced debt. Since 2007 we paid the provincial debt down by \$3 billion. This is generating a \$600 million savings in interest. Mr. Speaker, our balanced growth budget sees record revenue sharing for municipalities. Municipalities now receive \$264 million in this budget.

Let's compare that again to the last year of NDP rule. Prince Albert got \$2.99 million in the 2007 budget. Contrast this to the 149 per cent increase under the governance of the Saskatchewan Party. What does that mean? That means that Prince Albert receives \$7.47 million in this budget. Mr. Speaker, the \$7.47 million that Prince Albert receives is unconditional funding. It is up to the mayor and councillors of

our city to decide how they will spend these funds to provide for the needs and services of our citizens.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, our government introduced a new uranium royalty structure that will attract new investment in uranium mines and more jobs for First Nations people in the North. I will once again go to some quotes. The CEO of Athabasca Basin authority says these changes will lead to new mines and expansions. For example, the changes announced by the . . . This is a quote by Tim Gitzel, CEO of Cameco. He says, and I quote, "The changes announcement by the provincial government will give us added confidence to continue the large investment we are making to sustain and grow productions from our Saskatchewan operations."

Mr. Jarret Adams of Areva says, "It is a royalty system that encourages us to invest more in this province." Dave McIlmoyl who runs the Northern Resource Trucking, which is 70 per cent Aboriginal-owned, says the changes are the boost his industry needs. I quote, "It means more jobs, more training, more infrastructure in the North and that's what the North needs."

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and on, but I won't. Since the budget is fiscally prudent, I feel it is important to be verbosely prudent as well. Thus I will close with the following. Saskatchewan is the place to be. It's the envy of the nation. We have a strong and growing economy. We have a balanced budget. Saskatchewan remains at the top or close to it according to nationwide economic indicators. Saskatchewan is the best place to live, to work, to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to join in this debate on the budget. And first things first. I want to say that I support our balanced growth budget. This is a great budget for all of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and it shows prudence, it shows the agility of the Saskatchewan Party to be able to move this province forward.

Mr. Speaker, first things first. I want to thank the people of Carrot River Valley for the privilege. And also I am humbled to represent them because they are very good people coming from northeastern Saskatchewan where, as Carrot River Valley is well-known for its agricultural . . . [inaudible] . . . and to be able to do a good job in the agriculture. And not only that — we can grow huge carrots, Mr. Speaker.

And speaking of an agricultural community reminds me of back when the NDP was in power and how they basically forgot about agriculture in Saskatchewan, how they ran down rural Saskatchewan, how they wouldn't do anything for rural Saskatchewan, how they closed 52 hospitals in rural Saskatchewan, neglected the roads, neglected the farmers, neglected everything.

The fact is I remember, Mr. Speaker, shortly after I was elected, my seatmate, who was minister of Agriculture at that time, was taking questions from the Ag critic on the other side — not that they had any because they didn't have anybody from rural

Saskatchewan — and was complaining about what the Saskatchewan Party was doing for rural Saskatchewan. And I can still remember this. And he picked up a file folder and he said, here's everything the NDP did for rural Saskatchewan. We opened it up and it was empty which, Mr. Speaker, is basically the way it was back in those days.

Now you take a look, take a look at Carrot River Valley now and see what is going on, see how things are moving forward. Mr. Speaker, we have a new school that's going to be built in Hudson Bay. You know the NDP, they didn't care about schools in rural Saskatchewan. They didn't care about rural Saskatchewan at all. We have a new Cumberland community college building over in Nipawin. Moving it forward.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the one thing we did — and I brought it up before how they closed 52 hospitals in rural Saskatchewan — this government has a Rural Health minister, my good friend and colleague from Biggar. Now, Mr. Speaker, he actually came out and he went to all of our hospitals in rural Saskatchewan. And he went around there talking to them because, I'll tell you what, now there's a minister that cares. A far sight different than the NDP when all they did is send a minister out there to close the hospitals. Oh excuse me, they didn't send a minister out there; they sent somebody else out there to close up.

Mr. Speaker, it's people like these and it's a government like this that will help and benefit rural Saskatchewan. And I give our Health minister credit and our Rural Health minister credit for moving up on so many of the things that they have come forward with.

You know, a good example in this budget, another \$10 million to shorten the surgical wait times so by 2014 nobody is waiting more than three months, Mr. Speaker. These are initiatives not just good for urban Saskatchewan, but great for rural Saskatchewan.

Another thing put forward in this is the rural physician incentive program. Mr. Speaker, \$120,000 for physicians to go out into rural Saskatchewan who will serve communities of under 10,000 people. They do that for five years, it's \$120,000 into their pocket.

The recruiting of the nurses, a recruiting of the physicians that we've done since this government has taken power has just made a tremendous difference for all of Saskatchewan, but especially rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, also it continued support for our STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] helicopter fleet. So now in rural Saskatchewan when something does happen, we have the ability to be able to go out there and pick those people up and get them in for medical treatment. Mr. Speaker, these are great things. And that's just on the health end, just on the health end alone.

Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the roads that the NDP sat there and neglected for years, having the worst highways in all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, an overall budget of \$576 billion. This year alone, we have beaten our \$2.2 billion promise that we made when we first started up. Mr. Speaker,

this government, this government is not just a bump in the road, such as the NDP like to claim. We're actually going to make it smooth and transitional, just like the roads in Saskatchewan are coming to be.

Mr. Speaker, there are also other things that are coming up in or around the Carrot River Valley. Now the transition house, the first one built since 1989, is right next door to us, in my good friend from Melfort, his constituency. Mr. Speaker, this is a great thing — first built since 1989, and it's in rural Saskatchewan to top it all off. Mr. Speaker, we had the first Habitat for Humanity home built in Nipawin, first rural Habitat home built in rural Saskatchewan last year.

We just keep on talking about how many things and where the NDP actually left . . . One other thing I'd like to bring up, Mr. Speaker, is the revenue sharing. Now we all know that for years the NDP sat there on revenue sharing, and they said, you know, they weren't going to do anything on it to speak of. You know, it was always just, okay, well we'll get you to apply for a grant — an ad hoc system.

Since 2007 the town of Tisdale — and I've got them all here, but I'd kind of like to read them out — the town of Tisdale went up 133 per cent since 2007, Mr. Speaker. Carrot River. Carrot River, the revenue sharing increased from \$98,696 in '07-08 to 2013-14 it's 225,199 — 128 per cent increase. Nipawin . . . It's going to, it would take a long time to read out all these numbers, but I'm just going to go through the various different amounts.

Nipawin. Nipawin went up 130 per cent from 414,000 to 953. Hudson Bay went from 169 to 337,000 — 100 per cent increase. The RM [rural municipality] of Moose Range went from 245,000 to 424,000 in that same period of time. The RM of Arborfield went from 116,000 to 244,000 — 110 per cent increase. The RM of Nipawin increased from 216 to \$384,000. The RM of Hudson Bay, 262,000 to 321.

Mr. Speaker, the RM of Connaught went from 131,000 to 290,000. And Tisdale, Mr. Speaker, Tisdale, Mr. Speaker, went from 130,000 to 257,000.

This is a government that is committed to helping with the infrastructure problems that the NDP neglected for years in rural Saskatchewan.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, we have so many things we can talk about here. And when you sit back and you look at what the NDP actually had in their policy, remember we are operating on a balanced budget. It is a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP they had their little book here, their policy. They called it policy 11. Now I take it, it was, the figures were put together by Mr. Lingenfelter and the member from Regina Rosemont, who is now the Deputy Opposition Leader. And you would have thought that that member, listening to his leader, Mr. Lingenfelter at that time, I guess he was maybe, you know, drinking the same Kool-Aid. They actually wanted to have a \$5 billion expense account.

Now quite often that member from over there says this government is working on a credit card. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We have a balanced budget on both sides of the books. And, Mr. Speaker, for him to say that we were going to operate on a credit card, I don't know what he was going to operate on. They were planning on spending \$5 billion of money that the province didn't have. They were going to run it right into the ground, Mr. Speaker. For all we know, they were going to buy up the potash mines and start doing that themselves or maybe go back into another potato factory. They seemed to be doing real well at that.

And to top it all off, Mr. Speaker, as if that isn't bad enough, this whole thing was signed by the current leader, by the current Leader of the Opposition. It's his policy, his policy all the way through. Let's run this government, let's run Saskatchewan back in the hole. Chase everybody back out again because that's what they were doing before. You know, when they sat back and bragged and bragged in 2004 about slowing the out-migration, Mr. Speaker, take a look at what we've done.

Now we can have the members chirping from the other side, talking about their various different things. But the whole catch is they were running this province into the ground. Saskatchewan was a have-not province, and now Saskatchewan is a have province. And they're just kind of a little bit bitter — I would almost say a little bit jealous — that now the province is moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many, many, many things that have been done over our term in government. And some of the other things that we've accomplished is helping out on the long-term care, Mr. Speaker, where the NDP kept on shutting down all the long-term care beds within this province. There's 13 of them moving ahead in this province at this time, and one of the reasons being, it is being a different . . . a change in the formula. This government implemented a 20/80 formula. So in other words, the government's going to pay 80 per cent. This made it far nicer to have long-term care beds coming up within our different communities. And the amazing thing is a bunch of these are in rural Saskatchewan where again the NDP completely forgot about them.

Now there happens to be a new one going up in Tisdale, which is in the Carrot River Valley constituency. Now the thing that this government's done is they've increased the dialysis capacity in Tisdale.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on and on about this, but let's talk about, let's talk about the North because I am very close to the North, Mr. Speaker. And some of the things that were said . . . Now the member from Athabasca who actually represents that area up there, he said on Thursday, he said:

The Saskatchewan Party, in their archaic thinking, look at the North as a place they can simply take out all the resources and not put anything back. And, Mr. Speaker, that action is going to create problems for the Saskatchewan Party sooner than later.

And I know that the mining companies are getting angry with this government. [Go figure on that one.] And I

know that the mining companies are telling these guys, do something. Because what happens if this government doesn't start doing anything, Mr. Speaker? The peace in the valley that's created over the years under a smart growth [is] thinking . . . [that it's] going to be gone, Mr. Speaker. People in the North are going to get angrier and angrier and angrier. And some of that anger's going to spill over to the corporate sector. And is that good for the provincial economy, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely not. It's not good.

Now that was a quote from the member from Athabasca on Thursday. Now let's just see what was said by Tim Gitzel, CEO of Cameco, and this was in a press release on March the 20th:

"While the long-term fundamentals remain positive, uranium mining is addressing some short-term uncertainty," said Tim Gitzel, president and CEO of Cameco. "The changes announced by the provincial government will give us added confidence to continue the large investment we are making to sustain and grow production from our Saskatchewan operations."

You know, I kind of wonder when you listen — there's two northern members — when you listen to what they sit there and rant and rave about, how, what are they doing? Like I mean, it's almost as if, it's almost as if they listened to Lewis Carroll and they're taking on the role of the mad hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*. Like I mean, it's a bit of a, truthfully it's a bit of a joke.

Here we are, we are helping out, and we need those people in the North. We need them working. We want to see our Aboriginal people working of which the mines are big employers of, but we want to see people working all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that's what this budget does. This budget makes it so people all across Saskatchewan are working. And as I've said before and I've said it many a time, my children didn't leave Saskatchewan when they finished off university. No sir, my children are both working in this province. They didn't have to go running to Alberta or BC [British Columbia] or, heaven forbid, Eastern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this province has grown. This province has grown by 80 . . . What is it? 80-some thousand people . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Eighty-nine thousand. Eighty-nine thousand people in the last year since we've been in government, Mr. Speaker. That's what this province wanted to see. They want to see a government that is a prudent government, that can manage this province properly, have a balanced growth. Mr. Speaker, we're going to see this province up to 1.2 million people by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is moving this province forward. And it is budgets like this that make this province move forward, along with all my colleagues on this side of the House and the Premier. And I think it's going to be a long, long time before the NDP are ever going to see this side of the House again. And I really hope they never do because we want to move Saskatchewan forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of our budget that we've put forward, but first what I'd like to do is I want to thank the people that helped me get here. First and foremost, I need to speak about my wife, Marjorie. As we all know here, without the support of our spouses and significant others, we wouldn't be able to do the job for the people of Saskatchewan that we're able to do.

We were at an event two weekends ago with the member from Moose Jaw North, and it was one of the first times since elected publicly that somebody actually stood up and they thanked the member and myself, and then they took about 10 minutes thanking our spouses and our families for allowing us the time to do the best job that we can do for the people of Saskatchewan. And it was nice to see for a change that people out there actually recognize the effort that our families put in for us.

When I was elected two years ago or a year and a half ago, my wife was there on just about every doorstep. My kids were there with me. My family was such a support. We went forward, and without their support I wouldn't be standing here today.

So with this balanced budget that we've put forward, it's great, especially for my kids — my kids that are going to university, working in this province, staying in this province and they don't have to leave. You know, back when I was a kid, all my friends on the bus out to Alberta, on the bus down east. Wherever it was, it wasn't staying in Saskatchewan. Now our kids, all our kids get to stay in this province.

My son has just moved back to the city of Regina, and he was actually getting from employers here in the city, he was getting job offer after job offer after job offer. And he's 20 years old. The fact that our economy is growing that quick that a kid that's 20 years old is being offered job after job after job, that he gets to pick and choose, shows you the quality of employment opportunities that a budget like this allows us to put . . .

I also want to thank my mom and dad, because without my parents' support I wouldn't be able to be here today. I wouldn't be able to stand up and speak to the people of Saskatchewan about how great our province is and about our balanced growth going forward.

So on to the budget. The theme of our budget we talked about is balanced growth, and our balanced growth means controlled spending and continuing to make investments to all aspects of life here in the province.

And I'm going to bring it home to Moose Jaw a little bit here. So let's talk about the biggest thing going in Moose Jaw right now is the Moose Jaw hospital, the new hospital. This budget has put \$50 million towards the construction of this brand new hospital in Moose Jaw, state-of-the-art hospital.

The funding will be used to cover our project contingency fund for the IPD team. The IPD stands for integrated project delivery. This project requires the project owners and consultants to work with a team through the design, from the start to the commissioning, to increase value, maximize

efficiency, and reduce waste on a project. Some of the funding of course will be used for the lean consulting, and the region will continue to undertake a series of initiatives focused on the patient experience throughout 2013 and '14 in order to improve the improvements that we talk about.

So let's just talk about one of those improvements that this balanced budget's able to do. Today it was announced that the hemodialysis unit in Moose Jaw Union Hospital has doubled its capacity, doubled its capacity starting today. So what that's done, it's allowed 17 patients, 17 patients who've been travelling back and forth from Moose Jaw to Regina and, you know, these are people that are taking dialysis. So they're driving here and they're spending eight hours on the dialysis machine and driving home. So these people get to stay at home and do it now. This unit will now be open six days a week, and that's up from three days a week.

[16:00]

I want to quote one of the patients that they've interviewed on this. This is one of our Moose Jaw residents, Hardy Doerksen, and what he said is:

I'm so excited about this. I can't even find the words. My daughter drives me to Regina twice a week for my dialysis, and this will be so much more convenient for all of us.

So on top of providing this service for our Moose Jaw people in our hospital, it gets them to spend more family time. They're doing it right in our city. And I know I had constituents come to my office and go, why aren't we doing this? Why aren't we doing this? And you know what? We get to do that. So we get to do this within a balanced budget while moving the province forward. Our dialysis treatments, they get to extend the life and improve the quality of life from people suffering from kidney failure. So this is very important.

Now we've also in this budget, since we're talking about Moose Jaw, we've set aside \$5 million for the transition of our people that live out in Valley View. Now this has been ongoing for the last year that we made an announcement that we're going to close Valley View. And what we've done in that year is we've gone . . . our Valley View transition team has met with the families and people that live out in Valley View and have started to put together a plan, and put together a plan that will be turned in in the next little while here to the Minister of Social Services. And what this \$5 million does is it allows us to continue planning and start planning for new homes for these people in our city of Moose Jaw.

So we're doing this within a balanced budget and we're going to do it right the first time. We're going to take the time to do it right. So instead of in 2002 just saying we're not going to take any more patients out at Valley View or people that live in Valley View and create a backlog for these people for a place to live across the province . . . some of the most, the people that need our help the most, there was a backlog of over 400 people. We're shrinking that backlog. On top of that, we're taking forward a plan for the rest of the people in the province. So we're able to do that again within a balanced budget and continue moving the process forward.



This budget is our sixth consecutive balanced budget. I don't think there's too many other jurisdictions in Canada right now that they've had two consecutive balanced budgets, let alone six consecutive balanced budgets. We've been able to do that since we came into government — six consecutive balanced budgets. Since 2007, we've reduced our provincial debt by \$3 billion. And what that means is . . . Everybody goes, okay, \$3 billion. That's a lot of money. What does that really mean? Well we saved \$600 million in interest savings for the people of Saskatchewan. Prudent fiscal management is the key, is the key if we're to achieve our growth plan for a population of 1.2 million people by 2020.

So we've talked about the growth in the people moving into the province. We've had 80,000 people over the last . . . how many years? Four years? Four years? Just 80,000 people just over the last four years. Almost 90,000. So that's taking the city of P.A. [Prince Albert], the city of Moose Jaw, and probably Yorkton maybe fitting in one of our smaller cities. So if the people of Saskatchewan think about that, you're adding three or four of our major population centres into this province in the last five years. And we're providing for the infrastructure for this. We're providing homes for these people to live in. We're doing it all within a balanced budget.

I want to quote what Discover Moose Jaw said on Saturday. Their headline on their website was the Moose Jaw mayor is pleased with the budget announcement. Now we all know who the Moose Jaw mayor is. The Moose Jaw mayor is the former member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, former member Deb Higgins. Fine lady, doing a good job as mayor of Moose Jaw . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, she said. She was deputy leader of the opposition in the last term, and she was pleased with the budget announcement.

Now what she was talking about was the revenue sharing. Our revenue sharing in Moose Jaw since 2007-2008 budget was \$2.8 million; 2013-2014, it's \$7,076,565. That's an increase of 151 per cent. That's 1 per cent . . . that's their portion of the 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax]. Last year they got \$6,310,203. They got an increase in one year of \$766,362. So that's based on the PST, which shows that our province is growing. We have increased sales. The more people that live here, the more stuff they actually need to live. They get to go out and buy groceries and gas and all those things, and they pay the PST on that, and we split that up. And the former deputy leader of the opposition is pleased with our budget announcement.

The opposition talks about listening to the people of Saskatchewan. They like to listen to the people of Saskatchewan. You have to do a little bit more than listen to the people of Saskatchewan. You actually have to implement some of the things they said. So I'm just going to quote some people and some of the things that were said about the budget.

There were a couple of the things that we . . . and this is a quote. "There were a couple of things in the budget that we were encouraged by. They sounded positive. One of them of course was the increased funding to women's shelters and attempting to do some work around curbing violence to women so we're supportive to that." And that was Larry Hubich, SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] president. And I like

quoting the president of the SFL, especially when he's so positive on our budget.

I'd actually like to promote . . . to quote the member from Regina Rosemont. And this is what he said. There's a program, First Link, to support Alzheimer's patients and families and that's a good step. He even likes our budget.

**An Hon. Member:** — Wonder if he'll vote for us?

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Oh that's a good question. We'll know in a little bit here. One of the members that sits in the press gallery every day, Ms. Stefani Langenberger . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Langenegger.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Langenegger, Langenegger. I want to quote her: "The government would tell you they've done a lot more in the last five or six years than the NDP did in 16 years." And that's true too. This government has added thousands of daycare spaces.

You know, we listen to the people of Saskatchewan. We keep moving forward and that's what we need to do as a government. We need to continue listening to the people of Saskatchewan. So this is what Larry Rosia has said; he's the president of SIAST: "When we look at the forecast for the next five years out there, there's a huge demand for graduates. So I think that some of the investment is just an indication of what the province is saying and what industry is saying." So when the president of SIAST is going, the province is listening to the people of Saskatchewan, to the industry of Saskatchewan, I'm pretty sure we're on the right track.

Here's another quote from the president of SIAST: "We're getting more money which is good news for us. For us it's all about creating jobs. The economy wants our graduates, so we have to go back and use that money to create as many graduates as we can for this booming economy." This economy is not a myth. It is a boom. All you have to do is look at our job numbers growing year after year, month after month.

So let's take a look at the financial sector and say what they're saying about our province, whether or not this balanced budget is real.

Saskatchewan's relatively stronger fiscal position means that social programs will likely see proportionately larger investments than in some provinces still in the red. Saskatchewan will also enjoy a fiscal benefit in the form of declining debt charges [and I actually covered that] — a dividend linked to both earlier debt paydowns and an extremely low interest rate environment . . .

And that's a quote from the CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce].

We want to talk about balanced growth. That's what we need for this province — growth not for the sake of growth but growth for the betterment of the people of this province. We heard about it. The Premier sent us out last summer. I went out, and I talked to people, and we talked. And when I talked about it, there were some very, very key, base things that they brought

forward. And it was we need to keep growing the infrastructure. We need to make sure we do that to keep this province doing it. However we have to do it within a balanced budget. It is so important that we maintain that balanced budget, that we don't go further into debt growing this province.

I've got to take my glasses off here to read the small print. Quality of life. We had a \$131.8 million increase for the regional health authorities' base for operating, fundings for health care, staff, drugs, medical supplies, and other operating costs. Again we're doing all of this within the balanced budget. We need to listen to the people of Saskatchewan — keep growing this province, keep growing it within a balanced budget.

Along the lines of our labour force development because this is key to keep this economy firing on all cylinders, we have to make sure that we have the people in place to keep our job positions full. Actually having a low unemployment rate is great, but having all these jobs taking time to fill, it actually takes a . . . It's not best.

So what we're able to do is we've put \$448 million to support the base operating of our Saskatchewan universities, federated and affiliated colleges, which is actually an increase of \$9.2 million. We put 149.6 million operating funding for Saskatchewan technical institutes and 27.6 million in operating funding for regional colleges.

To help our students . . . Because you can put all this money into universities, colleges, or technical institutes, but if the support for students isn't there, we're not going to be able to fill those schools. So we put \$117.4 million in student supports, which is an increase of almost 20 million — 19.6 million or 20 per cent — which includes 63.9 million in refundable and non-refundable tax credits for the graduation retention program. And remember when I was talking earlier about our kids staying home and working? This is even more incentive. On top of the economy firing on all cylinders, our kids actually get tax incentives to stay home and work after they graduate from university and our colleges.

We've got 7.5 million for the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. We've got \$6.5 million to establish the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings. That would have been great when my kids were little, when the opposition was in power, if we had something like that that allowed me to save more money for my kids' education when my kids were little. But now they're grown. They're going to school. They're in apprenticeship programs. They're working, and they're in university.

Well better late than never, but it took us to implement it. Instead of talking about . . . You know, the opposition talks and talks and talks. We're going to do this. We were going to do that. This is what you should do. We actually go out and do what we say we're going to do. We implement the programs.

[16:15]

One of the reasons that I had so much fun knocking on doors in Moose Jaw is I had the platform from '07 and I was able to go through the platform in '07 and go, we did what we said we

were going to do, check mark after check mark after check mark — over 100 promises made, over 100 promises kept. So if you're going to base what a government's going to do, you take a look at what they've done in the past, and chances are that's what they're going to continue doing to the future . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Exactly. Like my friend from Yorkton said, best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. So we're going to continue on this path to 2020. We want to grow this province to 1.2 million people by the year 2020. We've got a good start on that now. We've got a population growth that we haven't seen in almost 100 years. There's a reason for that. There's lots of reasons for that.

And I think one of the major reasons for that is this government has a positive attitude. We're going to take this province forward. We're going to help move it forward. We're going to get out of the way. We're going to continue doing that, rather than the negative nine and everything we do is bad, everything we say we bad, every economic indicator out there that everybody talks about the province is wrong. The negative nine, I think, might have the wrong attitude.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in support of the budget, and thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I found that speech very interesting. It reminded me of one of those fact-finder, fact-truth detectors that they have on CNN [Cable News Network] during the leadership or the presidential debates. And that thing would be just spinning out of control after listening to that speech and the previous ones. I just have to say it was very entertaining. I don't know how much was solid in there, but what the heck. It's always entertaining to hear folks speak regardless if the truth does happen to get in the way a little bit every once in a while.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say one thing before I start. And I want to just comment on the member I think was from Turtleford, the member's statement today about the highway workers and how I totally agree with that. And I think our highway workers and the good job they've done over the course of this winter and this spring, and we know it's not over yet. But the hat's off to those guys, hat's off to those guys, the guys working the plows, working the phones.

And I've got to tell you, I feel like I just check that hotline all the time even if I'm not driving for a couple of days. I feel I'm in that habit. But I've got to tell you, it's been the worst winter. In fact I was just making a list of the five blizzards we've had this winter where I know I've been affected. I know the first one was . . . Actually it was interesting. It was the SFL convention, but I think the folks opposite were having a convention in Saskatoon and many had a hard time getting up to that convention. There was one around Remembrance Day weekend. There was one in January. In fact actually the first day again coming back to the legislature there was a blizzard, and people had a hard time getting in on that Sunday. So clearly those folks have just worked just amazingly — and good member's statement.

But we're here to talk about the budget, and clearly our role in

the opposition is to provide scrutiny and to make sure that it's as transparent and as accountable as possible. And I know the member just prior to me talked about the checklist, and I do have a couple of spots where those checks didn't actually land on the paper. And we'll maybe talk about that, but we do have some concerns.

And I know one of them talked about listening, and often it seems to me that this government has a habit of selective listening, not fully listening. I know he quoted the president of the SFL, and I would agree with the president of the SFL. And I know on this side, we've all said that we appreciate the increased funding to transition housing. But I know, I know if you looked at the whole quote, I would think there was probably more, there was probably more to that quote than that member added. And I think he probably should check the record. And I know these folks are very good at selective listening, cutting and pasting, and I've been a victim of that as well from that side where they thought that was very interesting, that little piece that I said. And I have to say that they need to do a better job, a better job, a much better job of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll speak for a bit here, but I do want to make sure that if there's any confusion, yes I will be voting against this budget. This budget has serious fatal flaws in it. While containing some good pieces, there are fatal flaws in it, and I will highlight those. And I will be speaking in favour of the amendment, and that is:

That all the words "That the Assembly" be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the government for tabling a credit card budget that pushes costs on future generations, hurts health care, fails students and schools, rolls back the clock on environment progress, denies transparency, and relies on short-sighted privatization schemes.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that covers it really well. And I'll highlight what I mean by some of those areas of concern because I think this government has really produced a credit card budget. I know these folks obsess on the balanced budget and probably, in the next week or two, we'll probably see billboards go up and advertising go up even though just a few short weeks ago, a few short weeks ago, they spent over \$90,000 telling people, be ready for a tight budget, that this will be a very tight budget. There's not much money to go around. And they spent \$90,000 doing that, and they also fixed up the Premier's office, putting in a hardwood floor of some \$22,000.

So we have some concerns about the mixed messages, the inconsistency of this government when it really counts and really delivering for the people of Saskatchewan, the middle class of this province, the people who have worked hard. The people have worked hard to get this province to where it is. They're not feeling like this budget really delivers for them. And so I'll speak about those kind of things. And I think that's very, very important, you know.

Mr. Speaker, from my riding in Saskatoon Centre, it's obviously probably the most urban riding in the province. I think it covers about 3 square miles. It's essentially between

20th Street and 29th Street. Yes it's very... nine blocks wide and about 27 blocks long. And it's something I can walk in the morning. And I know that not many can say that.

But I can tell you that when you start to talk about going up the stairs in the apartment blocks, the miles start to add on, you know. But the whole wide range of people who live in that riding, those who are in the most vulnerable situation, low-income workers, those who are on the SAID program, those who are recent immigrants, new Canadians that have moved to the province because they are thinking this is the place where there will be opportunity... And we sure hope there are. We think there is.

But there's problems. There's difficulties with the kind of things that they have come to expect. And so, Mr. Speaker, on one end of the continuum we have that situation. We have a strong, strong middle class out in Mount Royal, Caswell, parts of Riversdale, Westmount, in those areas and downtown. We also have a lot of seniors who live downtown and throughout the riding actually.

So they're watching this very closely, to what happens to them and what are the concerns that they find and what are they looking for when it comes to a provincial government and what a provincial government should be doing for them.

And so I can speak from a point of real diversity in my community. And of course downtown as well, along Spadina, I can tell you that in the condos there, there are some people who enjoy very well-paying jobs and are there. And we sure appreciate the fact that they're there and they're contributing to the economy. And they do very much add to the value of our economy through their expertise and what they can offer in the workplace.

But it is a wide range of people who live in my riding. It's not a homogeneous type of situation at all. In fact it's so diverse. And sometimes I feel, when you're walking down 20th Street or walking down Spadina, you can be in two different worlds, but it's one riding. And I appreciate that; it keeps me grounded. But it's a challenge that I think this province has, and it reflects that challenge very much.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I have three high schools in my riding and numerous elementary schools, and clearly they're feeling some of the challenges as well. And I know for example Mount Royal is a wonderful example of the kind of changes that we foresaw that would need the help in this province when we were in government because it really became a SIAST west, a module of SIAST being able to deliver skills training to students right in, very close to their homes. And it's worked out to be a very, very good model. So we're really, really proud of that.

And of course we are also home to Station 20 West, the new community hub on 20th Street that just opened last fall. And the kind of work that's happening out of there, it's so exciting to support community people, both in the services they need and to make sure that they get those services — whether it be health care, help with their children, nutrition, all those kind of things. So it's very, very important.

So the kind of issues that this government's putting forward are very relevant to the folks in my riding. And so when we take a look at a budget like this, they want to make sure it's the very best that it can possibly be, that it's transparent, that it meets the needs of our citizens. And that's why we have a real problem with some of the things in it.

As we said, some of the things like the Linkin, that's very solid. We had called for that, that's important.

The transition house support, very important. That's very good. My only caveat with that would be that somehow we have to address the issue of somehow a strategy that stops the type of domestic abuse that leads to that. And I would like to see the government take a stronger role in that.

But we see a credit card budget in front of us. And we worry about that because what we're really doing is, as we've described, kicking the can down the road for our young people, for the next generation to pay for the bills. And this just isn't on. We know this government obsesses about the idea, the concept of balanced budgets, and we should all strive for that. But when a budget's delivered, it is the budget. We see several examples of where already the Premier and the government's signalling that they have flexibility, and that this really isn't quite what it seems to be.

We heard on the Thursday morning last week where the Premier was speculating about changes or increases to education funding to meet the needs of our crowded classrooms because they did it last year. Just seems to be a habit of what they do mid-year, and that shouldn't happen. That shouldn't happen. This is about good planning. This is about good planning.

And we know this government is not above asking the Crowns to deliver more funds through a dividend, special dividends, that when the going gets tough they will rely on them. And that puts our Crowns in a very difficult situation. So that's why we have a problem with them calling this a balanced budget when we already start to see holes in the budget, the holes in the budget.

And we've talked about flooding today. Where is that? We see the crop insurance start thinking along the lines of what the problems they can anticipate in the fall but not so much with flooding. We know this is going to be a big problem. I think we can probably say definitively that this is going to be a problem. Every day that it keeps cool like the days we've had in the last several weeks means that we're going to probably have significant flooding. And for this government to deny that, I think, is really problematic, but they've kept to their balanced budget concept.

[16:30]

So we have a real problem with this. And I've not heard any of the previous members acknowledge the fact that in their budget documents they've talked about increasing the debt — increasing the debt by \$850 million. They're strangely silent on that. Who's going to pay for that?

And then they have this idea, this P3 idea. And we have a lot of

legitimate questions about that because clearly that's pushing debt further down the road. We need to know a lot more about that. And I think when you spend the kind of money that they're talking about on P3s when they've already spent \$1 million just a few short years ago deciding not to go down that road. All of a sudden now there are deciding to go down that road. We have some real, real concerns.

So we think they're ill-prepared for this. And it's going to let our kids down because they end up having to pay for it, and we have some strong questions about it. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was very concerned when I heard the amount of money that was raised when it came to education support. Clearly, clearly that is an area that when we have people come to our province, they look at our education system. And we believe that it's second to none, that it's an excellent system. All systems can improve. And I think that when we talk to people in the schools and our school systems, they say, yes we can do better. We can do better. But we think it's second to none. We think we've produced some outstanding students in our province.

Unfortunately though, we see challenges though that we have to do better. And we have do particularly better around the Aboriginal graduation rates. That's something that we can do, that we need to do. And we see that commitment just not in this budget. We don't see the commitment to the Aboriginal students in our communities, and that's left just out there with a big question mark and not very much support, not very much support at all. And we're also seeing real challenges where we have a government that's willing to intervene where they've not gone before but where they're willing to intervene.

And the number of minutes . . . We've seen the minister go that he wants specific minutes for subjects per day in our classrooms. He's willing to go that far. He's willing to say, when does the school year start? Right after Labour Day. But he's not willing to say what a maximum number of kids in a classroom should be. He's not willing to have that conversation at all. And we find that strange. We find that really passing the buck, if you will. We think that there should be a discussion about that because we've seen and we've heard stories about classrooms are crowded and that we need better supports. And we need to figure out how to do this. And they've made a commitment that we understand it's up to 40 portables that they're willing to provide.

Now by their own numbers, Mr. Speaker, they talk about 4,500 new students in our schools. I think it was 2,300 this year, 1,200 the year before. That's great. Good to see the increases — 4,500 new students, 40 classrooms. It sounds like we do have a class size here. It sounds like the math on that is about 115 kids that they're willing to put into a classroom. We just don't think that's . . . That doesn't make any sense. That doesn't make any sense at all.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when they put out these kind of numbers, we have a lot of questions. And I can understand why other people would have questions about that. Now they love to read, and they will get up and they will read other quotes. And this is what the Saskatchewan School Boards Association says, and I quote:

Today's provincial budget represents at best "status quo"

for boards of education in Saskatchewan.

“As a result of the government’s decision to fully fund pre-K to 12 education in Saskatchewan, school boards are on a fixed income determined by the province and individual school boards have little flexibility to respond to challenges within school divisions,” said SSBA President Janet Foord.

So this is just something, just one quote. And they’re saying essentially their hands are tied. They’re seeing their schools’ population growing. We all know they’re growing, but their hands are tied. They can’t do what needs to be done to improve student performance in the schools. They can’t do what needs to be done to improve student performance.

So what is this government’s, what’s this government’s response? It’s to put in \$6 million for standardized testing, \$6 million for standardized testing. Now we all know and we all think that you do have to have some assessment. Nobody’s against assessment. Everybody wants to know how their kids are doing in school. Obviously that’s a fact and we all share that. But we also think and we think that people have a sense of priorities, and their priorities are supporting students in the classroom. Parents want to see that their kids are having the best experience, the best learning experience that they possibly can have. And if they’re hearing that all this government wants to do is support and provide 40 portable classrooms to deal with these overcrowded classrooms but yet provide \$6 million for standardized testing — and of which that I understand 5.9 million is for computer hardware — it just doesn’t, it just doesn’t add up.

You know, Mr. Speaker, these folks love to talk about past behaviour predicts future behaviour. We’ve seen this government where they cut 350 educational assistants and then the minister would get up and say that they’ve added 19 more. But they cut 350, they’ve cut 350. They’ve added 19 more. These things just don’t add up. They don’t make sense.

And for most families they’re saying, we want to see our schools supported. We want to see our kids do well. That’s number one. And they have faith and confidence in their teachers, and that’s really what’s really important.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real concerns about what’s happening with education in this province. And you know, and I have to say as well one of the most important contributions to this debate about education was made last fall when the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation] talked about poverty in our communities, about the prices that some families are experiencing when it comes to income and nutrition and how that’s limiting the ability for their students, for their children to perform in school and to learn. And this is really, really a problem. And so, Mr. Speaker, we need to talk to the STF. We need to talk to the school boards and talk about what really is important in our schools. And that’s how we do good planning and that’s what we do . . . That’s good listening; that’s not selective listening that we hear from the other side.

And so, Mr. Speaker, and as well, we need to create in our schools an environment where we’re attracting the best to be our teachers. And I think the signals that this government has

sent to teachers — whether it’s over standardized testing, the last bargaining session they had, all sorts of things, overcrowded classrooms, not willing to have authentic conversations about what’s important for students in Saskatchewan — I think we’re sending mixed messages to our teachers.

And that’s a problem because both parents and teachers are really worried about the future of our schools, when you see a government that is obsessed with standardized testing, can’t really articulate what that means. We’re hearing different versions of it almost weekly. But we know what’s really important is providing resources that the teachers think are important in those classrooms, and that’s just not happening.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to talk about . . . One of my other critic roles is around labour, and we have not really had a conversation about that. It was not raised at all in the budget speech and it was not even in one of their press releases. So I am waiting to hear from the minister when he gets up and speaks about the implications of Bill 85 in this budget.

You know, last year when this was announced on May 2nd, we were all surprised because it wasn’t part of the budget. It wasn’t part of the Throne Speech. And you know, Mr. Speaker, when the minister was asked about it, he said, well there would not be a problem. We could just absorb the costs; we could just absorb the costs. And the fact of the matter is they couldn’t absorb the costs and we had to have supplementary estimates last fall, last November, where . . . Actually it was early December when it came to committee, where the minister did acknowledge that in fact he was incorrect. He was out by \$700,000, and that was up to November 28th. That was what the budget line was, or the overspent on Bill 85. And I don’t know what happened in the other four months, December, January, February, and March. He could have hit \$1 million on doing the work for that bill.

But the fact of the matter is they were ill-prepared, ill-planned, and to start that process. But the minister said not to worry, that he was going to make sure everything was all right, and that it would work out in the end.

Now we look at this, the new budget, and we have the same, the very same concerns. Here you have the biggest rewrite of labour laws in this province in 100 years and nothing special for it, nothing special for it. This reminds me so much of the essential services bill, and the fact that they had said at that time it wasn’t going to cost any money, but here we are, five years later, mired down in court over this. This has got to be costing the government something, if not because they’ve had to make some decisions about not to do this because we have to still deal with the essential services legislation. Those are choices. Those are choices. And we have a choice of what to do with Bill 85. And you know every day, Mr. Speaker, I get up and I raise a petition . . . We’re not saying well . . . We’re saying, delay it. We understand the government has the majority, and they will have their way. But let’s get it right so we’re not ending up in court all the time, that we’re not ending up in court.

I have personally some real problems with the bill. I don’t think it’s well-thought-out and of course when the bill comes forward, we’ll have that vote. But, Mr. Speaker, I have some real concerns that this, this bill when it’s passed — and this

government has said it will pass this spring — what the implications of that are and what the implications are for the labour bill or labour budget.

So when I look at the estimates here, I see that it's going up about \$1 million. It's going from 17.4 million up to 18.4 million. And we can talk about where we see the big difference is. We see that central management gets 300,000. We see that essentially labour standards gets about 50,000 more dollars. I'm not sure if that's just the cost of doing business, if there's anything special in there. Labour Relations Board gets 15,000 more. The labour relations and mediation — and this is going to be a big one when you're changing around *The Trade Union Act* — it goes up by \$13,000, and worker's advocate goes up by 12,000.

Now the biggest one goes up and this, this may be good, and I'm interested in hearing more about this and I hope the minister tells us about this, but occupational health and safety goes up about, I would say that's about \$900,000. It goes from 7.6 million to 8.5. So that's significant and that may be good. I'm curious to know why that's going up so much. Now people might say, well that's good because we're having more occupational health and safety inspectors. But here's the catch, Mr. Speaker. They're going up from 147 FTEs [full-time equivalent] to 149. So they're going up two people. That's not \$900,000. That's not 900. So where's that money going? What's it doing in occupational health and safety? Clearly a priority of the government and we share that priority. When it comes to safety in our workplaces, it's got to happen. We don't know what that is. There was no budget announcement. Nobody said that they're doing this, they're doing that, they're doing what. We don't know what's happening to money in occupational health and safety. So we're anxiously awaiting that.

But, Mr. Speaker, the implementation of Bill 85 is going to be huge. It's going to be huge. A few weeks ago, we had a labour forum at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] at the College of Law, actually at the business college there. Myself and the minister were there and we had a very good, frank, full discussion about Bill 85. One of the points that was made, one of the points that was made was implementation. When you do this kind of bill, when you do this kind of omnibus bill, you just can't let it go out there with no support. That's crazy. And we're looking at, you know, the way it's written now with so much ambiguity and we're not seeing the regulations. It's going to be a real piecemeal implementation. So we have some real, real concerns about how that's going to play out.

[16:45]

And so when I look at Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, I have a lot of questions, a lot of questions. And this is going to affect a lot of people over the next while. And how are they planning to put in place Bill 85 because, as I said and these folks like to say it, past behaviour indicates future behaviour? And the Minister of Labour was out by \$700,000, if not more, last year and he's not said anything about the implementation of this bill so I can only gather we're headed for a deficit when it comes to labour relations. And I anxiously await to see what happens with that. And so if they were to do the right thing, postpone the passing of that bill, make sure it's done well and

we'd be all on board more or less, then it would be a better situation.

But as I said, it just reminds me of the essential services train wreck that we had, that we continue to have six years later because they didn't think that out and they said that would just go through, no problem. And here we have Bill 85. It's destined to repeat. So I'm really concerned about that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just also want to say that I do have some concerns that the Minister of Finance has raised this issue around pooled retirement plans. And we have some interest in that. We'll have more discussion.

I do want to raise my concern though that we couldn't have done more and the Minister of Finance couldn't have done more when he had an opportunity at the national federal meetings to advocate for those workers who cannot, for whatever reason, establish a good savings practice and they just don't have a future when it comes to retirement. And that's something that we really, really have to talk about.

So I think that in many ways that's a big picture and we know in Saskatchewan only about 25 per cent of us actually have RSVPs and that many of us don't have government or work pension plans. And so this is going to be a big problem for many, many people.

I want to talk a little bit about housing. And I know that we're anxiously, and I am anxiously awaiting to see the results of all the numbers this government continues to roll out. And they're pretty bold and, you know, last year, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you remember the announcement when they were going to build 10,000 apartments. We've not heard anything about the 10,000 apartments.

They had this tax credit announcement and we raised concerns because first we asked, where did you get the number 10,000 from? Well they seemed to come out of thin air, 10,000. And in fact these were not rental apartments. They were actually, could be quite legitimately condos that they were establishing. And so we have a problem with that.

But we have a real problem on a couple of fronts. One is that they're selling these 300 affordable homes in Regina and Moose Jaw and they're selling 336 acres of land just outside of Regina here. And I know that actually the closing date is March 31st for the expression of interest on it. And we heard the minister talk about a number, 53 million, last week and when I looked in the budget, there's nothing about 53 million.

And it reminds me of a couple of years ago when the minister just, within 48 hours of the budget being announced, she had a new plan, the five-point plan, that wasn't reflected in the budget. And here we have 53 million and I don't know whether it's in the budget or not and we don't know whether these 300 families, whether there's 300 empty places that they can go to.

Last Thursday when they made this announcement with Deveraux, it sounds very interesting, but they were willing to buy these properties. I think they were for \$206,000 each. The government's doing sort of a switch, but they're selling these houses for 199, 198,000. So essentially the loss to the

government is about \$8,000 per unit on these 48. Now if this is the pattern — and again going back to their past practice indicates future practice — here you have a government that's willing to sell their houses for less, and buy high, sell low type of mentality.

Somehow the minister came up with a number of saving \$2 million. We come up with a number that it's costing them \$2 million because if you do 300 times 8,000, that's actually 2.4 million. So, Mr. Speaker, we're not sure of the minister's math on this. And the way she portrayed it as a savings when it was actually a cost, that's a real problem. So I have a real problem with that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a minute to talk a little bit about shelters. And we know, we know for sure, and it is a good thing what they've done in Melfort. That's a worthy, worthy thing. And we appreciate and the folks in Melfort and that area will really be thankful for that.

But we're hearing stories both in Estevan, North Battleford, and in P.A. around shelters. And the thing that's been happening in P.A. has just been tragic where we've had four people die this winter, frozen to death, and it's been really tragic. And we think this is something the government needs to pay attention to. It's a complex issue. It's about housing first, how it's important to have people in shelter every night, particularly when you have winters like we have.

North Battleford's talking about it, when they have people, workers coming through on the Yellowhead and having to stop in North Battleford and no place to stay, no place to stay.

We're hearing the same story in Estevan, you know. And Estevan is quite a unique circumstance because here we have an economy that's firing so strong, but yet housing is a crisis. And the vacancy rate, you know, these folks will say vacancy rates are going up across the province. Several places it's not going up, and one of them is Estevan where in fact it dropped from 1 per cent to point six per cent in the fall. So they have some real challenges. And I know down there they've established a shelter — it's called Warm Welcome, I think is what it is — just to meet the needs. And ironically it meets the needs of many folks right from those who are dealing with severe mental health issues, poverty and that, but also people who have a job but just can't find a place to stay. They need a place to stay so they can go to work the next day.

So we have to do more about that, Mr. Speaker. So we want to get that on the record, that we would expect more. And we would like to see the government step up around the shelters — that has to be addressed — and housing first, right across the province, right across the province because we think that's very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, the government also would like to . . . This is a big deal for people in my riding, and I would often think about the stories where I would hear families actually arguing about how are they going to make ends meet because of the cost of child care. So you may have a space, but the subsidies aren't working. They're not working, Mr. Speaker, and we need to do more to make sure they actually do work. Something's not working here. And you have so many spaces that this

government has put there — needs to be more — but ironically in the budget we see that the actual total amount for subsidies has actually gone down. And we can't understand why that would be because we think, from what I'm hearing from our constituents, daycare is pretty, pretty expensive. So we have some real concerns about that, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, and the one issue I do want to say . . . And I know the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow talked about every promise made in the last 2007 campaign. And I do want to bring this one up because I think it's so hugely important that they said and they made a promise that they would reinstate the all-party committee about child exploitation through the sex trade. They have not done that. That was a major promise in 2007, and they have promptly forgotten about that. And we see too many examples of the fact that this continues to be a problem.

And, Mr. Speaker, ironically back when it was first done in the late 1990s, two issues were not a big deal — and you've probably heard me talk about this — but two issues were not a big deal, and was not part of that report. It was the Internet and gangs. And that's a reality of too many of our communities, and we have to do something about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, to sum up, as I said I have too many concerns in my areas of critic responsibilities that we need to see more done around education. We think the government's dropping the ball big time on education. They're going down the wrong path dealing with standardized testing when we should be dealing with overcrowded classrooms. That's really important, especially English as a second language. That kind of support has to be there. We have to do more to provide for our schools so parents have confidence that their children are learning.

Housing, we're seeing a shell game here. We're waiting to see what actually happens. This government is very good at churning out press releases and new numbers and the amount it's spending, but we're just seeing too many gaps in the housing in our communities — high rents, high rents, or no place available. And that's a problem both for workers, seniors, youth, those who are very vulnerable, who need a place to stay.

So we have some problems. And I said too about the labour relations, the fact that this minister miscalculated last year on his budget by over \$700,000. And we seem to be going down that path yet again, yet again, and so I have some real concerns about that.

So I would agree with my colleagues over here, the critic for Finance, when he talks about this being a credit card budget. We see debt increasing by \$850 million. And we see a dangerous plan of P3s that we don't know what that really means. And the minister responsible seems to be caught in an ideological loop on this, not giving straight answers. So we have some real concerns.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll be supporting the amendment but not the budget. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's with great pleasure that I rise in the Assembly today and have an opportunity to address our Saskatchewan Party government, our budget, our sixth consecutive balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, and what we believe to be probably one of the only balanced budgets within Canada. And we're pretty happy that we're able to deliver this for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, I too have some concerns, but most of them were raised by those members over there about how they look at the books that were handed in and also how they can talk about how they can't support a budget that builds the first transition house for women's violence in Saskatchewan since 1985, adds more seats to transition houses in Regina and Saskatoon to help women fleeing domestic abuse, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's something where that member said he supported that. And I believe that if he really wanted to stand up for the people of Saskatoon Centre, he'd be able to support a budget that increases support to women within Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of comments made by the members opposite that I'm going to get through maybe later on in the evening. But first of all, I do have to thank the people of Regina Walsh Acres for allowing me to stand in this position today. I have some great support out there, Mr. Speaker. And I have a great, great support network that starts and finishes with my wonderful wife, my wonderful wife of almost four years now, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the biggest reasons why I'm going to be supporting this budget is because it's set a solid foundation for our province moving forward. And a solid foundation's very important to us because myself and my wife are having our first child in May, Mr. Speaker. And we want our children to live in Saskatchewan, raise their families in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And this is a budget that's going to set that . . . as the members opposite say, kick the stone down the path for our future generations to be able to live here and not flee the province in the hordes that they did in the early '90s and early 2000s, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they talk about the working people of Saskatchewan, and I've had questions from the member from Regina Elphinstone about how I can't support the working people of Saskatchewan. And I find it very funny, Mr. Speaker, like we support the working people of Saskatchewan more than they ever did because more people in this province are working than ever before. Mr. Speaker, you support working people by allowing them to make more money, keep more of that money in their pockets by having lower taxes, Mr. Speaker, and not by making more people leave the province so we have to tax the people that are here more.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite confused how they can come across at us and ask us questions of how we don't support working people. Obviously I don't believe, like they always say, when there's less people, there's more for the people that stay. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a fundamental flaw in the idea of a party that doesn't really believe in economic growth, economic prosperity, Mr. Speaker . . .

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





**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS</b>	
Elhard .....	2863
Broten .....	2863
Wall .....	2863
Wotherspoon .....	2864
Lawrence .....	2864
McCall .....	2864
Jurgens .....	2864
Bjornerud .....	2864
<b>PRESENTING PETITIONS</b>	
Belanger .....	2864
Forbes .....	2865
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS</b>	
New Transition House in Melfort	
Phillips .....	2865
Breaking the Silence Conference	
Forbes .....	2865
Supporting Habitat for Humanity	
Steinley .....	2865
Northern Trappers Convention	
Vermette .....	2866
Students Fundraise for Hunger in Moose Jaw	
Michelson .....	2866
Recognizing and Thanking Highway Workers	
Doke .....	2866
Position on Uranium Development	
Hickie .....	2867
<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>	
Support for Health Care	
Broten .....	2867
Wall .....	2867
Public-Private Partnerships	
Wotherspoon .....	2868
McMorris .....	2869
IPAC-CO2	
Wotherspoon .....	2870
Harpauer .....	2870
Potential Spring Flooding	
Sproule .....	2871
Reiter .....	2871
<b>POINT OF ORDER</b>	
Sproule .....	2872
Harrison .....	2872
Harpauer .....	2872
The Speaker .....	2872
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS</b>	
Bill No. 88 — <i>The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Duncan .....	2872
<b>SECOND READINGS</b>	
Bill No. 88 — <i>The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Duncan .....	2872
Broten .....	2873
<b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY</b>	
Bill No. 88 — <i>The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Broten .....	2873
Duncan .....	2873
<b>THIRD READINGS</b>	
Bill No. 88 — <i>The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Duncan .....	2874
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>	
Makowsky .....	2874

**SPECIAL ORDER  
ADJOURNED DEBATES  
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY  
(BUDGET DEBATE)**

<b>Norris</b> .....	2874
<b>Jurgens</b> .....	2879
<b>Bradshaw</b> .....	2881
<b>Lawrence</b> .....	2884
<b>Forbes</b> .....	2886
<b>Steinley</b> .....	2892

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