



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

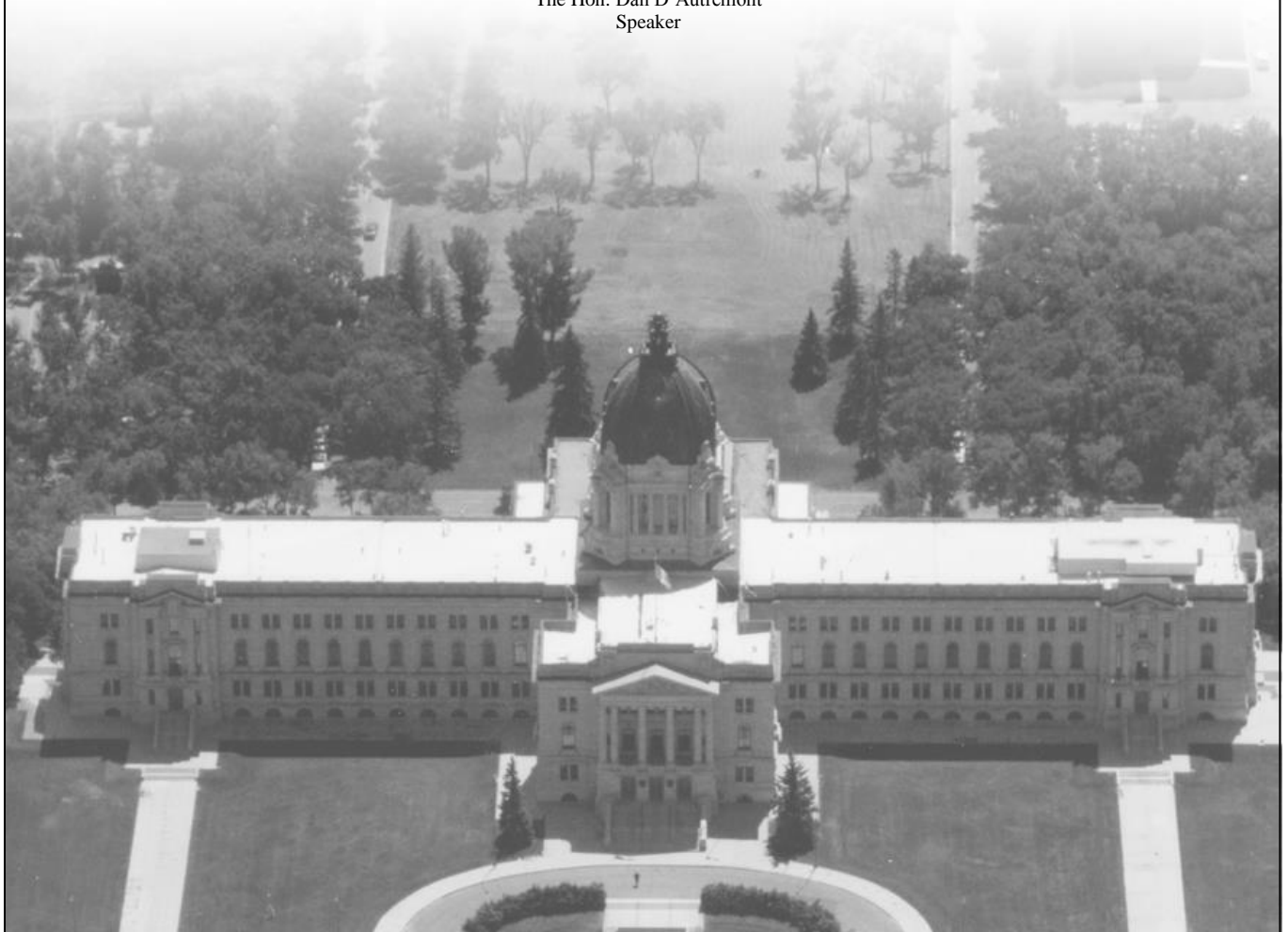
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

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
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Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
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Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
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Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
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Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
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Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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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 Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce in your gallery Ms. Ellen Williams, originally from Amherst, Nova Scotia. She is a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan. She's a recipient — one of 55,000, new numbers just out — benefiting from the graduate retention program.

Her dissertation is on the 2009 labour market strategy and its impact on Aboriginal integration in the labour market. Her supervisor is Dr. Loleen Berdahl. And I'd ask all members to help me welcome Ms. Williams to her Assembly, especially since she now calls Saskatchewan home.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, seated in your gallery it's my pleasure to introduce some very special guests here today that are integral in the Spring Free From Racism event each year that occurs. It occurred yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and once again we had thousands of people come together here in Regina to celebrate diversity, but also recommit ourselves towards the elimination of racial discrimination.

I'd like to introduce some leadership from the committee here today. The Chair is here today. The Chair has served for each of the 15 years right from the start, and I'd recognize Barb Dedi. Give us a wave there, Barb. And I'd like to recognize two other committee members that's here with Barb today; that would be Randy Ward and Corinna Kantymir. These individuals and so many others certainly make Spring Free From Racism a great success. I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in also welcoming the Spring Free From Racism committee. I had the great opportunity along with the member from Regina Dewdney, and we had an absolute great experience. And I'd like to thank Barb in particular for your leadership the last 15 years. And it's an absolutely vital and important role that you provide, and thank you for helping to combat racism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present

a petition against Saskatchewan health care laundry privatization. And we know that in May 2013, the Government of Saskatchewan announced its plan to privatize health care laundry in Saskatchewan, handing it over to a for-profit, Alberta-based corporation, K-Bro Linen. We know that as a result of this decision to privatize health care laundry, six non-profit, public health care laundry facilities will be closed within two years in the communities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Weyburn, Regina, and Saskatoon. We know that the privatization of health care laundry will mean that fair-wage jobs will be replaced, poverty wages, and public accountability will be lost. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly be pleased to cause the government to reverse the misguided decision to privatize Saskatchewan's health care laundry which will result in the devastating loss of over 300 jobs in the communities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Weyburn, Regina, and Saskatoon.

And moreover, the privatization of health care laundry will misuse vital taxpayer's dollars by taking money out of Saskatchewan's health care system to boost the profits of an Alberta-based corporation; and furthermore, the privatization of health care laundry will put patient care at risk as Saskatchewan's health regions lose direct control over laundry and thereby will have a significantly reduced ability to quickly and effectively respond to infectious outbreaks in health care facilities.

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

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents that are in support of safety on Dewdney Avenue and in support of rerouting heavy-haul truck traffic from Dewdney Avenue.

They state that any further delays from the government to address a problem that government created is entirely unacceptable. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents from Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program also known as RPO. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government stubbornly ignored the call to maintain this program. Instead it cancelled the RPO. That means the dream of home ownership is destroyed for many families in the North. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building community in our province's beautiful North.

This is signed by many people of this good province. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Spring Free From Racism

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. Over this past weekend, I had the great opportunity to bring greetings at the 15th annual Spring Free From Racism event that took place at the Italian Club here in Regina. This event is a great way to celebrate International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which took place on Friday. Mr. Speaker, this year's Spring Free From Racism included entertainment, food, and display groups representing the many different cultures and cultural organizations from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, with more and more families immigrating to Saskatchewan from around the world, it is important for us to take the time to learn about other cultures so we can understand their uniqueness. Spring Free From Racism is a great event that allows us to learn about diversity and respect in a fun and upbeat atmosphere. But it also reminds us that racism and discrimination are still alive in our cities, at our schools, in our businesses, and on our streets. And it's everyone's responsibility to stand against it.

Mr. Speaker, this event could not have happened without the hard work from the Spring Free From Racism committee, the sponsors, and all the volunteers who prepared the amazing food and provided the wonderful entertainment.

I ask all members to join me in thanking all those who helped to make Spring Free From Racism possible and to celebrate the many diverse cultures that were represented. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to bring attention to a proud spring tradition in Regina, Spring Free From Racism. Held yesterday, it once again brought together thousands of people together in our community. I was pleased

to attend, along with other members, including the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Spring Free is both a day of celebration as well as a day to recommit to the elimination of racism every day. This year marked the 15th Spring Free From Racism and people, like its Chair, Barb Dedi, and all committee members and supporters past and present, deserve our thanks. This event supports the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and does so by celebrating and sharing our cultural diversity. It's a day filled with cultural dance, festivities, food, and kinship. I look forward to it every year.

Our province is built on a rich and proud history of First Nations people. Our modern story of immigration and multiculturalism builds on that foundation. Just like the diverse weave of my Scottish tartan or of the Métis sash, this is what makes us stronger. As our motto states, "from many peoples, strength" Waves of immigration from all over the world continue to this day, enriching our province, evolving who we are, and making us stronger. But we have more work to do. There's more we can be, and it's through knowledge, sharing, learning, and celebration provided through events such as Spring Free that we will make progress.

I ask all members to join with me in thanking the organizers, performers, supporters, and attendees for their role in making Spring Free From Racism another great success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Tuberculosis Day

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is World TB [tuberculosis] Day. TB Day is meant to raise awareness of the fact that tuberculosis remains an epidemic in much of the world. This year's World TB Day is focused on a global effort to create and cure 3 million people, work towards zero TB deaths and infections, and reduce the stigma related with TB.

Our government recognizes more work needs to be done to prevent and control TB in our province. Mr. Speaker, last June our government announced a provincial TB strategy aimed at reducing TB rates over a five-year period. Special efforts will be directed to communities in the North with high TB rates. Every year the Ministry of Health provides 2 million to Saskatoon Health Region for TB prevention and control Saskatchewan, and 180,000 for focused prevention and control programming in the North. An additional 500,000 was provided in 2013-2014; half of this funding was specifically allocated to northern communities with a high rate of TB.

The Ministry of Health is collaborating with health regions, First Nations, the Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada, and the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority on initiatives to prevent and control TB. We are working with these agencies and communities to raise awareness of TB symptoms, reduce the stigma associated with TB, and support individuals and families impacted by TB.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue efforts to prevent TB, reduce TB rates in our province. We'll continue to work on improving the quality of life for all of our residents. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Canadian Interuniversity Sport Men's Hockey Championship

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Saskatchewan Huskies for their incredible performance at the CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] men's hockey championship at the University of Saskatchewan this weekend. The Huskies were defeated 3 to 1 by the University of Alberta's Golden Bears in Sunday's amazing final.

All sorts of records were broken this weekend, Mr. Speaker. The number one ranked Bears prevailed again, marking a record 14th win and their third CIS title in Saskatoon. The attendance levels broke records for the 52-year-old tournament, and there were 6,289 fans at Sunday's final at the Credit Union Centre. The Huskies had a great showing and were said to have played a scrappy game. The guys left it all on the ice in their first final since 2005. Despite the loss, the Huskies performed exceptionally well as the host team. We couldn't be more proud of the focus and determination of these players.

Dave Adolph is the head coach and, despite the heartbreaking loss, said he remains proud of his team. He told reporters over the weekend:

Our guys gave it everything they had. They fought their way to credibility, and they proved they belonged in this tournament. Today they just ran into a powerhouse.

Mr. Speaker, I do take great pride in seeing our young athletes representing not only their university and their team but also the whole community. Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me in congratulating the Huskies men's hockey team for their performance and to the sponsors, volunteers, and organizers who made this tournament possible.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Central Services.

Headstart on a Home Program

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about two new housing developments in the city of Warman that will allow 11 individuals and families to build a future in their own home. I am pleased that our government provided over \$1 million to Marco Developments and \$1.3 million to Welcome Homes through the Headstart on a Home program.

The goal of Headstart is to increase the availability of entry-level housing across Saskatchewan. And I'm happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that we are making progress. When we began the Headstart partnership, we expected about 1,000 new entry-level homes would be built throughout the province but, Mr. Speaker, the program has become a resounding success. Headstart on a Home was expected to create 1,000 new housing

units in five years. To the end of February 2014, Headstart on a Home has financed 1,086 new housing units, either completed or under construction in just three years. An additional 265 units have been approved for financing but are not yet under construction.

The federal budget, delivered February 11, 2014, announced the termination of the federal immigrant investor program that funds Headstart. However there is no immediate impact on the program, and I am pleased that Headstart will continue to help people purchase a home because, Mr. Speaker, housing matters to everyone.

Our government will continue to work hard with our partners to improve housing options for all of Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

Big River Saw Mill

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to share with you and my fellow members a positive success story happening in my constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers.

On March 7th I had the wonderful opportunity to tour the Big River saw mill with Carrier Forest Products president Bill Korbyban. Mr. Speaker, it was extremely difficult for the people of Big River and surrounding area when the mill was shut down in 2006. Now with the work of Carrier Forest Products, the mill is back up running with one shift already working in the saw mill, and the second shift will be starting today. The total number of workers is expected to reach around 80 persons when the mill is running at full production.

This mill uses scanning and optimization equipment that is among the most advanced technology of any saw mill in North America. Carrier Forest Products also utilizes the Prince Albert saw mill as a reloading site for getting their finished product onto rail. This is a wonderful opportunity for Big River.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in celebrating the running of the Big River saw mill and the emerging opportunities in the forestry sector in my constituency. Thank you very much.

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

Canadian Interuniversity Sport Men's Hockey Championship

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As expected it was an exciting weekend for men's hockey at the Credit Union Centre in Saskatoon.

The University of Saskatchewan Huskies came on strong at the Canadian university men's hockey championship with a 3-2 win against the Acadia Axemen and an impressive 9-0 victory against the Windsor Lancers in the semifinal before facing off

against the top-seeded Alberta Golden Bears in the championship game. Unfortunately they were unable to overcome Canada's western powerhouse and were defeated 3-1 yesterday afternoon.

It was a record 14th University Cup victory for the Golden Bears, who ended the season with an extremely impressive 25, 2, and 1 record. The Huskies fared extremely well in the tournament after going into it ranked fifth.

It was a bittersweet moment for the Huskies' star Derek Hulak who scored Saskatchewan's lone goal in the final, as he was named the championship MVP [most valuable player] after leading the tournament with four goals and two assists. The championship game was played in front of a crowd of nearly 6,300 people, bringing the total attendance to a record 41,089.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, my father-in-law, Bernie Broughton, who was in attendance for the final game to cheer on the Huskies, had a little bit more luck than our home team Huskies, and he won the 50/50 of over \$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to congratulate the University Huskies Saskatchewan men's hockey team on the hard fought tournament, and the sponsors, organizers, and volunteers of the 2014 PotashCorp CIS University Cup on a successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Costs and Benefits of Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, even hard core supporters of lean believe this government has gone overboard. They're publicly questioning why this government is so intent pushing Japanese terminology on health care workers, and they're publicly questioning why on earth this government is spending 40 million on one US [United States] consultant and \$3,500 per day on Japanese sensei.

One tweet from a lean supporter says, "Forty million. I can't stop laughing. Premier Brad Wall's getting fleeced." So this cash cow contract with John Black is bad enough, even for those who love lean, but that's just the start of the government's expenses when it comes to the lean project. So my question for the Premier is this: how much money in total is the government spending on lean promotion?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member has indicated ... [inaudible] ... Ministry of Health, what we will spend over a four-year period on the lean journey, Mr. Speaker, is approximately \$40 million. It's approximately \$10 million a year. We have the ability to renew that contract at the end of each contract renewal period, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but I think it's important to say that this is, while it is a part of a contract, Mr. Speaker, this is a process that we're going through. It's not an event, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to

change the culture within the health care system in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Other provinces have begun around the corners in terms of advancing lean. I know British Columbia has had some small projects, Mr. Speaker. Ontario has looked at lean. The Manitoba government is looking at bringing in a lean office, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, some early lean work did involve the member from Regina Lakeview when he was the minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. I think the difference is this is the first government to take the time and the energy, Mr. Speaker, to implement lean all across the entire health care system.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is the first government to sign up for a cash cow contract to one US consultant for \$40 million. But, Mr. Speaker, that's just the start of the lean expenses that this government is pursuing. We know about the \$40 million cash cow contract. We know about the \$3,500 per day Japanese sensei, but we don't know the grand total of what government is spending to promote the lean project. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve an answer from the Premier on this. So my question, very specific, to the Premier is this: how much money, in total, is the government spending on lean promotions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, Mr. Speaker, we have made a decision as a government to implement lean all throughout the health care system, Mr. Speaker, to focus on continual improvement within the system, Mr. Speaker. This side of the House frankly is not, Mr. Speaker, not satisfied with the status quo when it comes to the work that we need to do to provide a better service to the people of Saskatchewan, to be more patient focused, Mr. Speaker. That began early under the former Health minister, in terms of a focus on the patient through the Patient First, Mr. Speaker. That continued with Releasing Time to Care, Mr. Speaker, and then with the deployment of lean across the system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is what people are saying. This is the director of network operations for ThedaCare, Mike Stoecklein, and he says:

There is commendable effort to bring lean thinking to healthcare in an entire province of Canada — Saskatchewan to be specific. This is a huge effort. In my experience, no one has taken on something this large and this hard.

Mr. Speaker, I think it demonstrates that this government on this side of the House continues to be leaders when it comes to health care in this country.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan taxpayers deserve to have an answer from the Premier about what the grand total is for this lean project, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government hasn't found a fat lean cheque that they're not willing and anxious and eager to write, Mr. Speaker. We know about the \$40 million contract to one US consultant. We know about the \$3,500 per day Japanese senseis, Mr. Speaker, but we know that there's a lot more spending going on.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has created at least, at least 15 kaizen promotion offices. The Ministry of Health has a kaizen promotion office. eHealth Saskatchewan has one. 3S Health [Health Shared Services Saskatchewan] has one. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has one. At least 10 health regions have kaizen promotion offices and the Health Quality Council runs the provincial kaizen promotion office, Mr. Speaker. And this is all well and above, Mr. Speaker, well over the \$40 million lucrative contract and the \$3,500-a-day Japanese senseis.

So my very specific question to the Premier, not to the Health minister but to the Premier is: how much are taxpayers paying for the 15 kaizen promotion offices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to date the Ministry of Health has spent \$18.8 million and the RHAs [regional health authority] have spent \$6.7 million, Mr. Speaker, on the deployment of lean throughout the health care system with respect to the kaizen promotion offices, Mr. Speaker, within the Ministry of Health. At one time that was the branch of policy and planning, Mr. Speaker.

What we're doing is, we frankly changed the name, Mr. Speaker. Much of the same individuals who would have been working within those offices, within the branch. Mr. Speaker, we've put, Mr. Speaker, we've decided to put our focus on deploying lean, Mr. Speaker, knowing the benefits, knowing that it will serve a useful purpose, Mr. Speaker, in transforming the health care system here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the Mayo Clinic has to say about lean. Mr. Speaker, I'll just quote from a document that was produced by Dr. John Toussaint for the Mayo Clinic, Mr. Speaker. It says, "Lean is a cultural transformation that changes how an organization works," Mr. Speaker. It says that "Unlike specific programs, Lean has no finish line. Creating a culture of Lean is to create an insatiable appetite for improvement."

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on SaskJobs there are still postings up for kaizen specialists that are being advertised.

My question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan taxpayers deserve to have this answer, what is the grand total for all contracts, for all RHA work, for all kaizen promotion offices for the lean bill? Question to the Premier: what is the total?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, as I mentioned before, \$26 million has been spent to date by the Ministry of Health and the RHAs. The contract that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, it's an option of up to a four-year contract where the Ministry of Health will spend up to \$40 million.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, there's also the kaizen promotion offices and many other expenditures. It's not just the \$40 million for the one consultant. It's not the \$3,500-a-day Japanese senseis. It's also the kaizen promotion officers. But it's also, Mr. Speaker, the training that health care workers are forced to go through, Mr. Speaker, in these training sessions, Mr. Speaker, where they learn how to fold paper airplanes, where they learn Japanese words. My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is: how much money are taxpayers paying for health care workers to go through the lean training?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker. To date we've spent \$26 million — \$18.8 million by the ministry, 6.7 by regional health authorities. Mr. Speaker, we have to date saved more than that dollar amount, Mr. Speaker, through the deployment of lean, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he has received concerns from front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, which is . . . Mr. Speaker, we'd be interested in that information because at the heart of lean, Mr. Speaker, is using the front-line staff to actually find the improvements within the system to focus on quality, to focus on safety rather than the old way of doing things in health care where it's top down. Mr. Speaker, this is actually engaging the front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Leader of the Opposition, we don't need the information of who the people are or where they work, Mr. Speaker, but I will again put out the offer to the Leader of the Opposition to provide that information. We're always interested in that feedback and always interested in hearing from the front lines in how we can improve this program, Mr. Speaker, which I think will be very effective for the front lines and for patients over the long term.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we have seen how this government treats families who speak out against it. We've seen examples over the last year, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I will not betray the trust of individuals who have written to me in confidence explaining situations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when looking at the cost, we know that this government created a special fee code for physicians to attend lean training. In fact doctors are being paid more than \$30,000 each to take lean training. So over and above the \$40 million contract with the US consultant, the \$3,500 senseis, the promotion offices, Mr. Speaker, doctors alone are earning and being paid more than \$30,000 each to receive lean training. And that doesn't include the expenses, Mr. Speaker, for senior executives, managers, nurses, care aids, and other front-line providers, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't include the staff

replacement costs.

My question, Mr. Speaker is to the Premier: how much money are taxpayers paying for health care workers to take training sessions where they fold paper airplanes, learn Japanese terminology, and how much in total is this government spending on its lean promotion project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just think it is just such a disservice to the entire system and those who are working in the system for the Leader of the Opposition to disparage people that are involved in this process, Mr. Speaker, people that have been involved in it, Mr. Speaker, front-line workers, whether they be doctors, yes, that are an important part of the system, Mr. Speaker, or nurses or other staff members as well as patients, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

Here's what the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] had to say about lean:

We support Saskatchewan's transformation agenda in improving the health of the people of this province, and the use of LEAN methodology to improve access to safe, quality patient care.

Mr. Speaker, that's directly from the SMA. Here's Dr. Joy Dobson from Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region:

Having seen many patient safety initiatives over the years, I have been a member of the "lean cult" for almost a decade. I believe it is a powerful method to improve both the care of each patient and the system in which we [do] work.

Mr. Speaker, again we don't need the information of who sent the information to the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, Mr. Speaker, even by tweets alone, we know that 2 to 1 people that have responded to the Leader of the Opposition are actually in favour of lean.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government has hired an army of lean proponents to be advocating lean out in the broader public. But what's important, Mr. Speaker, is for this government to be listening to the front-line health care workers who are voicing very real concerns.

Mr. Speaker, my criticism is not with those working within the health care system, but it's within this government, Mr. Speaker, who signs the fat lean contract, \$40 million contract for one US consultant, Mr. Speaker, Japanese senseis.

Front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker, are saying that this government has lost its common sense when it comes to improving our health care system. My question for the Premier, as it has been throughout all of question period: what is the total tab of this government's lean promotion cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, the total contract costs will be approximately \$40 million over a four-year period. Mr. Speaker, in terms of what lean has achieved and in terms of the cost, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the Leader of the Opposition, by using lean methodology and reducing the wait-list for people accessing mental health and addictions in Regina Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker, by reducing the wait-list from 400 people down to 70 people, by reducing cancelled appointments, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would tell us what is the cost of not doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Reducing the number of cancelled MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] in Regina Qu'Appelle from 12 a week down to one a week, which allowed 450 MRIs a year without a single dollar of additional resources, what is the cost of not doing that work, Mr. Speaker? In terms of the efficiencies that we'll find within the system including, Mr. Speaker, if people would just take a second to think about it, reducing the amount of blood products that people donate freely, that we don't discard anymore, Mr. Speaker, nearly \$40 million in blood products that are not thrown away as they used to be, what is the cost of not doing that work in our health care system?

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

Capital Funding for Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, existing schools in our province require a lot of attention but this government hasn't been meeting those needs. The Chair of the Saskatoon school board says this. I quote:

If a building has to get to the point where there are significant health and safety issues to get any funding from the province, that will put us in a very awkward position, because we tend not to let our buildings get to that stage.

To the Education minister: is this the case? Do our schools need to be unhealthy and unsafe before that government will pay attention?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to answer the member's question. He's referring to a letter written by Ray Morrison, Chair of the Saskatoon Public School Board, regarding Pleasant Hill School.

Mr. Speaker, I used to live across the back alley from that school, so I am familiar with that school. It's been on the list, the request list from Saskatoon Public since 2003 during the time when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were in government. They chose to serve the members, those constituents by providing a liquor store instead.

Mr. Speaker, we've made a major commitment in Saskatoon. We are going to work our way through the list. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that that particular school is operating right now at about 57 per cent capacity. It is on the list. It's a ways down the list. And we'll work with Saskatoon

Public ongoing.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Pleasant Hill School in Saskatoon, as referenced by the minister, desperately needs a new roof. It needs electrical, plumbing, and a mechanical upgrade, and it also needs asbestos to be removed from that school.

The \$11 million renovation to Pleasant Hill School was near the top of the old capital repair list. Now, Mr. Speaker, with what was announced this last week, it doesn't even crack the top 10 of that government. So this leaves the Chair of the Saskatoon Public School Board asking, "Does the building have to be like Connaught and falling down to get any attention?" To the minister: what's his answer to that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the members opposite are even asking questions about our commitment to capital and what we're doing.

We built two emergent needs in the city of Regina but, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon we have committed and spent \$146.019 million. Ten major capital projects — Willowgrove, Nutana Collegiate, Holy Family, Georges Vanier, Holy Cross, St. Matthew, E.D. Feehan, St. Mary's, Martensville High School, Warman Middle School — 21 relocatables, 180 renovation projects, 14 early years projects. Six new joint-use P3 [public-private partnership] schools — Evergreen, Rosewood, Stonebridge, Hampton Village, Warman, and Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, we'll make no apologies for having spent \$146 million when the members over there chose to build a liquor store. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can boast and brag all he wants, but the reality is that the Chair of the Saskatoon Public School Board says that the new process is puzzling and it's characterized as a head-scratcher, Mr. Speaker. And in the fall we heard that 75 per cent of the school roof systems across this province need to be replaced within the next five years or else they're going to have system failure, so you'd think this government would be taking this issue seriously.

But what do we see from that government? We actually see a \$23 million cut from the capital budget to build and repair the schools that we need. No wonder we have people like the Chair of the public school board in Saskatoon questioning whether schools need to be unhealthy, unsafe, and crumbling before that government will provide any funding or any commitment. To the minister: why is that government cutting \$23 million from school capital, and why is it waiting for schools to be unhealthy, unsafe, and crumbling before it pays attention?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite had

a unique method of dealing with capital needs: they just simply closed the schools, 176 of them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since we've been in government, we have spent \$700 million on school projects, big and small: 43 major capital projects, 22 brand new schools, 25 major renovations, nine joint-use schools.

And Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget, \$96.2 million which will provide for four new projects, seven ongoing projects like those in Langenburg and Gravelbourg, 29 new relocatables plus, Mr. Speaker, a 23 per cent increase in preventive maintenance funding so that schools can build roofs, do electrical as they see fit. And those funds are absolutely unrestricted. They can do with them as needed. In 2007-2008, the last year the NDP would govern, \$18 million, Mr. Speaker. We'll take no lessons. We have a lot of work left to do, Mr. Speaker, but we won't be taking instruction from them.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's sort of what we see from this government so often. We bring forward the voice of leadership in this province for democratically elected . . .

[Interjections]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Ray Morrison? You want to laugh at Ray Morrison? The Chair of the Public School Board in Saskatoon brings forward concerns and it's dismissed. And all we see is political partisan spin and boasting from that government.

And this is a repeat of what we saw last year. Portables over real classrooms, a P3 rent-a-school scheme instead of honest, upfront investments in the schools and classrooms we need. And capital planning, a capital planning list that doesn't even address the needs that school boards have identified as their top priorities.

Question to the minister: why does this government stubbornly refuse to listen to the boards and trustees who are on the front lines of education and know their capital needs best?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it was not that long ago the Leader of the Opposition was advocating that we get up and build tent schools. We're not building tent schools. We're going to work to . . . We have good methodology. We worked with the school divisions to develop that methodology.

Mr. Speaker, we inherited a \$1.2 billion building deficit when we took government. We have invested more in our first seven years in government than the opposition did in 16 years. Mr. Speaker, there has been a 268 per cent increase in school infrastructure spending. The members opposite can call it spin; they can call it whatever they want. But their reality is a closure of 176 schools.

Some of the very first money we allocated when we went through it was completing projects. They were announced as far back as 2003. Mr. Speaker, over 70 per cent of our schools are

at least 40 years old, and we're making up for years and years of neglect. We have a long ways to go and, Mr. Speaker, we're doing it.

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

Minimum Wage

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last July the government promised to make changes to the minimum wage before 2014. It broke that promise, and what the Labour minister told the Canadian restaurant and food association is that, and I quote, "Saskatchewan's minimum wage will not rise until the new Saskatchewan employment Act indexation formula kicks in next November."

To the minister: why did this government break its promise, and why is the minimum wage not going up until at least November?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we last increased minimum wage December 1st, 2012. We increased it to \$10 an hour at that time. At that point in time, we were the third-highest after-tax income for full-time minimum wage earners. Since we have been in government, we've increased the minimum wage from \$7.95 an hour to \$10 per hour, an over 25 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that it's necessary to index the minimum wage to provide security for low-income workers. And, Mr. Speaker, we're well on in drafting regulations and doing final consultation. It is not very far off, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — The minister is not saying it looks like it's going to be November. And he's right. The minimum wage has not gone up since 2012, but Saskatchewan has fallen behind Nova Scotia, Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], the Yukon, and Nunavut. And we know that the Saskatchewan people continue to be squeezed by the rising costs of living. This government needs to increase the minimum wage and index it to inflation.

And we saw a couple of weeks ago how quickly this government can draft regulations. They can do it overnight when the pressure is on them. So there's no reason why this government has to keep delaying this. To the minister: why is this government breaking its promise and dragging its feet on minimum wage?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this government has a commitment to low-income people. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to ensure that they've got good opportunities for employment, that the wages are indexed and brought up reasonably expeditiously. Mr. Speaker, they will always ratchet up and down depending on what's . . . [inaudible] . . . in places in other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, when we formed government, we also chose to increase the basic personal tax exemption which eliminated personal income tax for 114,000 people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I can also advise the members opposite that they had a chance to introduce indexation. And, Mr. Speaker, they were in government for 16 years. They did not index, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to put the question to them why they didn't choose to index during their 16 years in government. They knew about it. They could have done it. They did nothing, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's what the media report from last July says, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's Labour minister is promising changes to minimum wage legislation before the new year. Don Morgan's pledge comes after the NDP yesterday accused the government of unnecessarily delaying a minimum wage index. Morgan says a formula is being developed and that a policy will be in place before the end of this year.

Well that's over eight months ago. The government missed its year-end deadline and now we know the minimum wage won't go up until at least November. And meanwhile Saskatchewan people continue to get squeezed by the rising cost of living. To the minister: what's the real reason why this government is refusing to help those who make minimum wage?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I indicated earlier that the NDP could have introduced indexation during its 16 years but they didn't know about it. They didn't care about it. The previous leader of the opposition knew nothing about minimum wage. He claimed we hadn't raised minimum wage in three years while the fact is that we'd raised it from 9.25 and we'd raised it up and continued to raise it up.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, the previous leader, Dwain Lingenfelter, said on CHAB radio, minimum wage workers in Moose Jaw have not had an increase in three years. Flat out wrong, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're a government that has a commitment to low-income workers. We've increased it by over 25 per cent since 2007. We've . . . [inaudible] . . . the personal income tax. We've doubled the low-income tax credit. We've decreased the education portion of property tax by nearly \$166 million or 22 per cent. We've increased the disability tax credit by 25 per cent, and exempted the disability tax credit. Mr. Speaker, we have a record that we're not apologizing for.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 263.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to question 263.

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 Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again it's a pleasure to rise in this House and talk about our budget, our seventh consecutive balanced budget, and to speak about what it's doing for my community, Mr. Speaker.

I want to first of all take some time to — of course like we always do, and I always have in the past — thank my family for supporting me in the adventure I've been on since 2006, being lucky enough to be voted in in 2007, and having the honour to serve the Prince Albert Carlton constituency with my colleagues here in the Saskatchewan Party government.

Day in, day out we come to work, whether it's in our offices in our constituencies or to Regina, and we hear from people who want to have this province thrive. They want to see their children stay in this province. They want their loved ones to have a very happy, fruitful life in Saskatchewan and to see a future.

And with every balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, we bring forth new initiatives. We bring forth new incentives, or we in fact have maintained what we started off with, a consistent message, Mr. Speaker, of controlled spending, being prudent in our fiscal responsibilities, understanding that we have the awesome responsibility to spend taxpayers' dollars, the taxpayers of this province who day in, day out go to work, build this province, made it what it is today, Mr. Speaker, and continue to support their families. So every time that there is a very difficult budget to put forth, we still surpass the expectations of the people of this province I believe, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to take a second to thank my wife, Charlene, for supporting me from day one. And every time I get to stand up here, I talk about my lovely daughters, Alyssa and Mackenzie, who are now currently in University of Saskatchewan, doing very well, I might add. I'm very proud to say that. And I will say that they are doing a little better than their father had, I think, back in his day to be sure, Mr. Speaker.

But that's where I want to start this particular talk today on my supporting the budget itself, Mr. Speaker. You know, there was a time that when university students went to school, they took a chance. They went to high school, got their diplomas and thought, maybe I'd stay in Saskatchewan and get my degree,

and maybe, if I'm lucky, get a job here.

Well one thing we did as this government, Mr. Speaker, from day one, we put in the graduate retention program. And we see more and more students who are staying in this province who are . . . Actually I believe the number is somewhere around 55,000, Mr. Speaker, a top-of-my-head number I just picked out of the air. I think I'm correct on that one.

And I think that bodes well that we see graduates who aren't just staying here looking for jobs that are, you know, maybe not in line with their degree or what they want to take in life, what they wanted to do in university, but they're finding professional level jobs because this province has a need for those students, Mr. Speaker. The ones who stick around this province have the academic qualifications, whether it be through a technical school, any post-secondary institution, Mr. Speaker. There's demands for those positions in this province.

So I know my wife and I are very happy to see our daughters in university at the University of Saskatchewan. We're both alumni from that school. I know it's made many changes since we were at university, Mr. Speaker. We can thank the ministers of Advanced Education for the amount of dollars that went into those post-secondary institutions like the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan.

We saw capital projects go up and up in spending because we had a need to address that shortfall left for so many years by the previous government. That bodes well for the fact that those institutions are attracting students as well, Mr. Speaker. And if you have the attraction mechanism in place to bring students into academia, they will stay in Saskatchewan hopefully after and still bolster those academic ranks, Mr. Speaker. So that's one of those, kind of, you know, self-fulfilling prophecies — if you build it, they will come. And look what's happened now, Mr. Speaker.

You know, there's one other thing that was really nice to see for our government to put in place when we took over in 2007, and to this day we still do it, Mr. Speaker. It's the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings. Those are dollars that parents never would have seen before, Mr. Speaker. And the actual Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship is another one that helps to lessen the burden on those students entering post-secondary education right after high school. And it's not just a one-time deal, Mr. Speaker. So it's good to see that we have this initiative, this promise we made. And we are keeping that promise moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

The budget talked about many, many things around this that are going to be beneficial to many people in this province, but you know I want to focus now more on my city, the lovely city of Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. You know, the school divisions in Prince Albert have demands, have needs that they want to see addressed. And one thing in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is that we did see money increased to both school divisions for preventative maintenance and renewal programs.

So both divisions are seeing an injection of dollars to help bolster those particular programs, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as that it's been money continuously given, granted for repairs to things like roofs and other things like that. But it's autonomous

as well, Mr. Speaker, so thereby letting the actual school divisions put those dollars to use as they see fit based on a needs-based assessment, Mr. Speaker, which is important.

You know, another piece that's near and dear to my heart for Prince Albert is of course the continued funding that we have to our specialized police operational units, whether it be RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers or my own Prince Albert Police Service that I was from, Mr. Speaker. The government — and to give some credit due, the previous government did fund some positions initially — but this government took a strong stance on specialized units to attack drugs and gangs and internet exploitation of our children.

And again this government is very committed to that ongoing dollar spend, to increase those dollars for those positions as they've been required throughout the years of this government to this day where Prince Albert, I believe, is using those dollars in their joint forces units especially to make some pretty significant drug busts as well, which keep drugs off the streets. It keeps our youth safe. And it's one of those things, it's one of those damn right ideas, Mr. Speaker, so you can't say much more about that than that. It's money well spent. And I'm sure this government will always look at that as a means to keep our community safe, not just Prince Albert but others, more spots as well, Mr. Speaker.

The biggest part of this budget really is the \$2 million renewal planning dollars coming to the Victoria Hospital, Mr. Speaker. What's exciting about that is that I found it interesting when the member from Athabasca did an op-ed piece in the *Prince Alberta Daily Herald* about a week before the budget. I think it was a Friday or the Thursday before the budget. He talked about how the members from Prince Albert and area had never raised this issue in the House that there was a need for dollars to renew the Vic Hospital.

Well I hate to tell members opposite, but the member from Athabasca should know this. Maybe some members over across like Rosemont don't understand the process how government works. But you know, when you're a member of this government, a government, you have accessibility to all the ministers, whether it'd be at caucus meetings or one-to-one meetings, Mr. Speaker. So it's important here that the members opposite recognize that you don't have to bring up an issue in the House because we have access to the great front benches of this government who time and time again have an open door policy for the backbenchers and members of caucus to bring concerns forward from their communities.

So this \$2 million renewal study planning dollars that are coming into play as a result of the Minister of Health, it's to be expected that if you were able to approach a minister and ask for those dollars, there's a chance it's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. So if the members opposite don't understand that, well welcome to government. Welcome to how the government process works. We don't have to worry about bringing it up in the House. We can do it through meetings with the ministers, either as a team from the area or individually. And the previous Health minister was no different as this Health minister is today, Mr. Speaker.

One thing that the . . . The North is well serviced by members

of this caucus. Whether you look at Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, Sask Rivers, Carrot River, Prince Albert, I mean we do a good enough job day in, day out to service our, help our people get what they need. And I think the members opposite should recognize that. There's no line that says the North is north of Prince Albert. Because that's what they want to pick, then the Sask Rivers MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] does a wonderful job in bringing points forward to service your area, like infrastructure demands, the flooding issues from the past. Same the member from Carrot River, same thing. Where's the line that the members opposite want to say is the North?

I believe that, as the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook said when he seconded the budget speech, is that the North is represented from a wide base, whether it be south of La Ronge or a little further south of Prince Albert even, Mr. Speaker. So the North is well represented, day in, day out.

And we have support in the North as well. We saw the mayor of La Ronge thank us for the long-term care facility funding that he was looking for. And he looks forward to how the study's going to come forth to either look at additional beds or it's going to be a brand new building. He's not sure yet, but he's looking forward to that. And he thanks our government for that.

I think the member from Athabasca should understand how government works. It's disheartening to think that he wants to play partisan politics in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* to say that we don't do our job. And clearly in this budget our job has been done, Mr. Speaker, as it was in the past. We got money . . . We saw money released and given since day one for the twinning of Highway No. 11 which we were able to paint that last stripe on with the help of MP [Member of Parliament] Randy Hoback. We also had the member from Prince Albert Northcote and Batoche there that day as we painted the stripe, the last stripe, much like the last stake, the last spike in the railway system the member from Batoche had talked about that day.

That was money that was put into place budget after budget. So I believe that as we see these budgets come forward, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see a continued presence for Prince Albert in one way, shape, or form. We saw the housing, the Minister of Social Services continuously put money into housing projects to service those individuals who needed that help. So we have to thank the Minister of Social Services who didn't lose sight Prince Albert's necessary in her scheme as she budgeted through the whole process. So I want to thank the minister for that.

You know it's also important that we look at some people who support us. Some people actually, you know, don't always speak in the public but they get a chance on budget day to give quotes. I want to thank my mayor for his quote in the *paNOW* article from March 20th. I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, in regards, this of course is in regards to the budget: "I think the biggest announcement is that there's no education tax increase, no personal tax increase, no tax increase at all for all of residents of the province of Saskatchewan."

He goes on to say, "So I think that's a big positive considering the revenue that they've lost, and they were looking for new sources, and they were talking at the SUMA conference about

increasing education tax,” Mr. Speaker. That’s from my mayor and I’m proud to say that quote in the House today. Because you know what, Mr. Speaker, he is coming forward to thank this government for not raising taxes, which is part of our mantra. It would be the very, very last step we would ever, ever do, Mr. Speaker.

But we heard of course, talking about the 2011 campaign, about the \$5 billion credit card the NDP had across the way and their campaign promises. To this day we have no idea how that would have cost the people of this province had they got elected, except for massive deficits most likely. And they would have taken money from Municipal Affairs and Agriculture to pay for other things, which is a sad testament to how they would have robbed Peter to pay Paul.

And of course in this budget we saw controlled spending, Mr. Speaker. We saw a mechanism in place where we recognize it was a tight budget. And you know what, the members of treasury board did a great job. I want to thank them, along with the Minister of Finance, because they put in some gruelling, long hours to come forth with this budget.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Those nights and those days they spend in the Finance ministry talking about item by item — to look at a controlled spend, to not raise taxes, to keep the balanced budget approach that we have — should be commended. The members opposite fail to realize that because I do believe when they were in government many of their debates and their time in treasury board meetings had their feet up on tables, reading newspapers while officials did the grunt work, Mr. Speaker. And it’s sad to say because in this government, our people are at the front, at the table doing work, time and time again looking at ways to ensure that we have balanced budgets, ensure we have our needs addressed as MLAs in the area, for our areas.

But we also saw in this budget money for the members opposite like Elphinstone, Mr. Speaker, who are seeing, after his hard work — I’ll give him credit — petition after petition about a new school, he’s getting that money for it, Mr. Speaker. But we have that kind of thing going forward. So as a government, we aren’t just being biased. We aren’t just saying it’s for our needs. We’re addressing needs across this province, even for the members opposite.

So maybe they should take some time and thank us in the budget. And maybe, Mr. Speaker, they should vote in favour of this budget because the controlled spending puts money in their constituencies as well if they’ve asked for it. They should be thankful for that and hopefully they’re going to support the budget, Mr. Speaker.

So today, I’m going to finish up by saying this, Mr. Speaker, I will be in support of our budget, but I will not support the amendment opposite. Thank you.

[14:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to rise today to join in the budget debate. Mr. Speaker, I want to

start off with just a few very brief personal remarks, a few thank yous.

I want to thank my constituency assistant in Saskatoon, Gordon Rutten, for helping me deal with issues on a day-to-day basis when I’m in session, and would like to thank the staff in the minister’s office in Regina. These are some of the brightest, most hard-working people that I’ve met, and they do a remarkably good job. And in both ministries, we’ve got some wonderful staff that work there. And those people in all of the offices continue to amaze me at the support that they give the citizens of our province. Our province is a better place for the hard work that is done by our civil service, and for that I thank them.

I want to also thank the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast for their support and their candour. I’m pleased that when I go out to places I go, stand in line in the grocery store or wherever, and people will come up and say thank you for having done this or could you do more of that, could you do less of this, whatever else. And I respect and value that kind of input on a ongoing basis.

And of course I want to thank my wife, Sandy, who frankly continues to amaze me by her ongoing continuing ability to put up with me.

Both of our mothers are now in their 90s and are doing very well. Late last year my own mother developed a tumour in one kidney and at the age of 93 had the tumour and the entire kidney removed. She received excellent care at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon. To anyone that has criticism of our front-line health care workers, I would say hogwash. These people work hard, offer great comfort to their patients. Mr. Speaker, these people care and it shows. From our family to them, we say thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to talk for a few minutes about what’s taking place with regards to Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. Saskatchewan continues to have the second-highest workplace injury rate in Canada. This is something that is simply unacceptable, and we’ve been working hard to reduce it. We’ve seen a 43 per cent reduction in the injury rates since 2002. We’ve increased the number of workplace inspections and the number of files being sent to Justice. We’ve also increased the maximum dollar of fines.

This budget retains funding levels for the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety in order to continue our offering education and enforcement of labour standards and OHS [occupational health and safety] safety standards as well as labour mediation.

The office of the workers’ advocate will receive an additional \$100,000 in order to continue our offering high-quality advocacy services to injured workers who need assistance with understanding their claim or preparing an appeal.

Mr. Speaker, as came up in question period, we are well on in being able to announce the indexing of minimum wage. This legislation also will allow for some additional leaves for workers to allow for citizenship, personal tragedies, and a number of other things. So, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with

those through the amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, and we also have introduced most recently the final chapter which is the essential services provisions.

Mr. Speaker, the essential services provisions are designed to ensure the continued health and safety of the public and will provide unions and employers with the tools that they need to resolve issues and ultimately reach collective agreements. Essential services agreements will only be required once an impasse in bargaining has occurred and conciliation and mediation has been unsuccessful. We've also expanded the definition of public employer to include all employers that include and provide a public service, for example, a private ambulance service such as exists in Saskatoon.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are provisions that will enable disputes to be heard by an arbitrator, arbitration board, or Labour Relations Board. Hearings are required to be commenced within seven days of an appointment of an application, and a decision is to be rendered within 14 days of the conclusion of a hearing so that the essential services process can be expedited all the way along. Mr. Speaker, there is provisions in the Act that unions will be able to challenge aspects of the essential services notices.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, I can indicate just a little bit about the process. An employer would be required to identify the essential service, the classifications of employees providing the service, the number of positions, and the location where the employees are to work. The union provides in turn a schedule. If there is disagreements, there is the ability to go the Labour Relations Board.

There's also provisions to resolve a collective agreement where a strike or lockout is determined to be ineffective. Either party would have the ability to apply to the Labour Relations Board for a determination as to whether a strike is ineffective in an essential services situation, and if so, the parties would submit to binding arbitration.

All of the changes that I have mentioned are the result of consultations that occurred in 2012 and 2013.

The amendments to the essential services part will not be proclaimed until after the Supreme Court of Canada has made a final determination regarding the current challenge which is tentatively set to be heard in May of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to close by talking about the other portfolio that I hold, Education. Last Wednesday our government tabled a balanced budget and that balanced budget supports steady growth. For education, steady growth means investing not only in new initiatives and infrastructure, but also ensuring that our initiatives and infrastructure are well supported. That's exactly what this budget provides for.

Our population is at an all-time high. There are now 1,117,503 people living in Saskatchewan. That's 20,000 more people calling Saskatchewan home in just one year, and what that means for education in our province is a growing student population. We have over 2,000 new students in our education system this school year.

I read a document recently that was produced in June of 2001 under the previous NDP government. It was a document that outlined student enrolment projections for the next 10 years. The NDP projection for the year 2010-2011 was 141,074 students. Had the government of the NDP been re-elected in 2007, the province would be in a sad place with continued out-migration. Thankfully they lost, and what we saw in 2010 was 165,000 students — an increase of 25,000 over what the NDP had projected.

So that's the choices, Mr. Speaker — 141,000 or 165,000. To those additional 24,000 students I would say to them, welcome. We have work to do to make sure we have schools for you, and we're well on our way to doing it.

Mr. Speaker, we're a government that's planning for growth, not decline. This budget accounts for that.

This budget provides a 2.4 per cent increase in operating grants to school divisions. It recognizes projected enrolments by school divisions. Nineteen million dollars is budgeted for an additional \$2,000 to enrol our students this fall. We've recorded birth rates in our province that are at an all-time population high. We also have growing diversity in our population. This represents challenges, but let me be clear. These are good challenges to have. Our government knows that we need to support our education, and we're doing it. It's far better than the members opposite that chose to deal with budget problems by closing 176 schools.

Mr. Speaker, the supports for learning component of the funding formula, which directly supports the classroom, will increase by 3 per cent this year to a total of \$276 million. The opposition may be interested to know that part of those dollars pay for education assistants, of which there are more today than there ever were under the NDP.

This budget also provides for our First Nations and Métis students: \$4.3 million for First Nations- and Métis-specific initiatives in school divisions, \$600,000 for summer literacy camps in the North, \$6 million to continue to respond to recommendations from the joint task force on Aboriginal education and employment.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also recognizes the importance of early childhood learning: over \$1.2 million to support creating 15 new pre-kindergarten programs to bring the total increase in pre-K programs under this government up 104 per cent; over \$2.2 million to create 500 new child care spaces to bring the total increase in child care spaces under our government to 53 per cent.

The budget provides nearly \$100 million in capital dollars. That makes our government's seven-year investment in school infrastructure to about \$700 million. Forty new schools, of which 18 are joint-use P3 schools, one in the Opposition Leader's constituency. He's complaining about it. What I'd do is I'd suggest to him that he might want to get in touch with his constituents. They need it. They want it. He should remember what happened to the last NDP leader that was out of touch with his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, there was also 25 major renovations and additions,

900 smaller capital projects. That's how this side of the House handles population growth and economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been calling for a plan for education. This budget provides that. For the first time ever, an education plan was developed by and for the sector. It's hard to believe that this was never done before in the history of our province. We value our sector partners in education, and this budget reflects our shared commitment to putting students first.

This is what some of the sector partners are saying about this budget. Colin Keess, president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, had this to say on budget day:

I'd like to compliment the minister on acknowledging what teachers do for the province of Saskatchewan, the value of work that teachers have and the work that they do every day with our children.

The president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association had this to say:

We're happy that the government has put education as a priority this year. We knew it was going to be a tight budget, so we're quite happy. We're also happy to be working with them and having the conversation going forward.

I'd like to encourage the members opposite to join the education sector and support this budget. I want to be clear that this is not a status quo budget. This budget provides new funding for increased enrolment, supports for learning in the classroom, First Nations-Métis initiatives, library initiatives, a funding increase to a number of CBOs [community-based organization], new pre-kindergarten programs, more child care spaces, more new schools, more relocatables, more preventive maintenance. It has something in it for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, for the member for Lakeview, he's getting Connaught School rebuilt. For the member for Elphinstone-Centre, he is getting a new school to replace Sacred Heart. Mr. Speaker, those members complained about P3s. Well, Mr. Speaker, those are going to be traditional builds. I'm going to be watching for how they vote on the budget because, Mr. Speaker, these are things that are needed by their constituents. Their constituents have asked for them. I've gone to those schools. They need them. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to watch how those members opposite vote on those things. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell their constituents how they voted.

That's how this side of the House is going to deal with growth. We intend to be balanced and responsible. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm going to be supporting this year's budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great honour that I rise today as representative of Fairview to speak about the 2014-15 budget. And, Mr. Speaker, how do I feel about this budget? In the words of *Duck Dynasty's* Phil

Robertson, "Happy, happy, happy." And here's why.

I'd like to start out by saying that this budget is about people, all the while living within our means, which my late mushom always stressed how important it was to live within your means, Mr. Speaker. He didn't use the terms fiscal probity or fiscal constraint, but he understood what it meant to live within your means. Take care of the bills first and then see what's left to spend carefully on necessities, and if you need to tighten your belt, then do what needs to be done.

This budget is doing exactly that — living within our means while paying down the debt, Mr. Speaker. This budget was able to invest in people while living within our means.

I'd first like to thank my family, my daughter, immediate and extended family for being there for my mother who is in palliative care in Saskatoon while I'm here in Regina representing my electorate. I'd like to thank those in our health care system of taking great care of my mother.

I'd like to thank my electorate for the opportunity to be their voice in the legislature, and I would like to thank my constituency assistant, Adrienne, for all the hard work and handling, at most times, difficult cases that come to our office and for going above and beyond for our Fairview constituents and others who decide to come to our office. We have a student who is getting some experience at the Fairview office, one of the many vulnerable youth, and his name is Jared. And thank you, Jared, for picking our office to do your work placement.

I'd like to also acknowledge the long hours that treasury board members put in and also the work of the Finance minister and his staff at the ministry.

Mr. Speaker, we are all still learning, myself and Adrienne, in my office. There's no handbook on how to be an MLA, and we do our best to advocate for our constituents and others.

We've had a relationship with the Parkridge Centre, which is a long-term care centre facility in Fairview, very early on after the 2011 election, one which is a business relationship. The residents print my Christmas cards every year, and this allows them to make a little money to buy equipment for their computer room. So I am very excited about the 8 million allocated in this year's budget to the facility renovation of the long-term care home. My office is located kitty-corner to the facility, and I live down the road.

[14:45]

I'm going to put in a little plug in for the centre so people know how much this centre does for the community. It is home to over 240 residents ranging in age from preschool to over 100 years of age. It is a heavy-care facility, and many residents require specialized care. In addition to the long-term care programs, there are also some short-stay programs including a geriatric enablement unit, emergency respite, and planned respite. And Parkridge is also the home to the community day program, where clients who live in the community come to Parkridge for the day to receive support services to help them remain in the community. The 8 million will be going toward much needed renovations and let them continue doing excellent

work.

This facility is deeply embedded in the community of Fairview. As the MLA, I would like to say thank you. Many families depend on the services Parkridge provides, as well as families knowing that their loved ones are well cared for.

Mr. Speaker, there are other investments in long-term care, home care, acute care, prescription drugs, and other services for seniors. The government will also target funding to continue enhancements to long-term care facilities and home care programs for seniors.

So some of the highlights are, 27.3 million to continue construction of five previously announced long-term care facilities in Biggar, Kelvington, Kipling, Maple Creek, and Prince Albert; 4.5 million, which is a \$2.5 million increase, for the Home First/Quick Response pilot program to serve innovative home care supports to better serve seniors; 3.7 million for Urgent Issues Action Fund to continue to improve services for long-term care facilities, and 800,000 for a new seniors' house call pilot program to develop an innovative mobile outreach team to provide intensive home care supports to seniors with complex health issues.

And this is particularly important, Mr. Speaker, to myself. When we had my mother in my home, it was easier to call the home care nursing staff than rush her to the emergency room when she had issues which happened in the middle of the night. The home care staff were familiar with our situation, and their response time was timely. And in some cases like my mom, you know, it was very traumatic to her physically and difficult to move her to the car, to the emergency room, and then back home again.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and the vital role it plays in our health care system. And the 4.9 million increase to help plan, organize, deliver, and evaluate cancer care and related health services is significant. They are a part of my mom's health care team, and I want to thank them for everything they do every day for Saskatchewan families. The 3.3 per cent increase will help them to continue to do their good work.

And there's also funding in place to plan replacement of long-term care facilities in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and plan for more long-term care beds in La Ronge. Mr. Speaker, before I go on to other subjects, I would like to say thank you for the allocation going towards long-term care beds in La Ronge. I have friends and some family living there, and the Minister of Advanced Education and I were able to visit with some of the community last summer. As well I had the opportunity to have anti-bullying consultations about a week or two later. We met some amazing people and their dedication to the community is phenomenal. I hope to be able to go visit again soon.

And speaking of bullying, I had the opportunity to tour the province, you know, last summer and bring forth recommendations as a result of the consultations. And you know, a significant amount of the 1.4 million was dedicated to the bullying initiative over three years; 815,000 was dedicated for the 2014-15 budget.

There will be an allocation of 250,000 for the online reporting; 50,000 for the Kids Help Phone; 250,000 for risk assessment training for school divisions; 100,000 for restorative-based restorative action approaches, which is the prevention model; and 15,000 for the second Student First forum; and 80,000 for professional development opportunities to teach students appropriate online material.

So far, you know, the Ministry of Education has been able to partner with the SaskTel I Am Stronger campaign to house anti-bullying resources, supports an anonymous reporting tool, and developing an anonymous smartphone-friendly Internet reporting tool, and continue to support the toll-free Kids Help Phone, and to distribute a handout which promotes the establishment of gay-straight alliances and understanding of LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] students, and strike a provincial advisory body to establish consistent policies and protocols across our school divisions.

So the Ministry of Education and Justice got together and they assessed the implications of the federal cyberbullying legislation and also coordinate work with the child and family agenda ministries to help vulnerable children get the services they need to keep children in school.

So we're also engaging the Advocate for Children and Youth to provide another method of having unresolved bullying complaints heard and enhance school-based restorative justice approaches, building on the success of the restorative action programming. So this will teach children how to resolve conflict, develop leadership, and build healthy relationships; and also partner with the Human Rights Commission to educate children on how to build positive relationships; also provide instructional supports for teachers in order to teach responsible online behaviour to our students. And, you know, we will be holding the second annual Student First Forum — one we already had this past fall and one coming up.

So, Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education is very near and dear to my heart, as a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] student in sort of a holding pattern for now. I am still constant at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] campus and very much still a part of the university community, Mr. Speaker. So I was very pleased to see this as well. The budget provides an increase in operating funds to post-secondary institutions, investment in students, and support and funding for key capital projects. You know, the Ministry of Advanced Education will receive 817.8 million, which is an increase of 24 million or 3.7 per cent over the last year.

To support operational increases in several key investments at post-secondary institutions, we definitely heard from the post-secondary community. So this includes a 12.3 million increase in operating funds, representing an average 2 per cent increase for universities, federated and affiliated colleges, technical institutes, and regional colleges, as well as 19.8 million direct investment in First Nations and Métis education.

So you know, the budget, it makes post-secondary education, you know, more affordable for families by providing 134 million in student supports including 82 million in refundable and non-refundable tax credits for the graduate retention

program and 7 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, which my daughter was able to utilize this past year when she started her first year of university. So 7.5 million in funding for the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings and 32 million for the Student Aid Fund to support grants and bursaries through the student loan program and 5 million for other scholarships. And as a past student who depended lots on scholarships just for, you know, to pay everyday bills, it's huge.

So the budget provides also 32.6 million in capital investments to support post-secondary infrastructure including, you know, 6.5 million for the Health Sciences facility at the U of S; 4.5 million to support construction of the Trades and Technology Centre at Parkland Regional College; 1 million to support ongoing construction of the Southeast Regional College; and 20.6 million for capital improvements, repairs, and equipment at post-secondary institutions.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is going to transition nicely to my interest in training because, you know, I've always had an interest in education and training and they go hand in hand, Mr. Speaker. Not everybody, you know, would like to go to university. They'd like to utilize some of our colleges and our training institutions. And again one of them is my daughter as well. She tried a year of university and decided it wasn't for her, and now she wants to go into training and get a journeyman's trades certificate.

So increasing investment in training programs and labour force development, the Ministry of Economy allocate 500,000 for the establishment of a manufacturing centre of excellence which will focus on productivity improvement, innovation, and workforce development for the provincial manufacturing centre. My brother, he's a welder and wanted to stay close to home. He got tired of, you know, going up to northern Alberta for work, decided to stay here, and he's working at one of our manufacturing centres near his small town. So he's able to see his family every night, which is nice. The total value of Saskatchewan manufactured shipments for 2013 was 15.2 billion which is a new record for the province and up from 14.2 in 2012.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I could go on and on about education and training but I kind of wanted to highlight a little bit about the First Nations and Métis and Northern Affairs initiatives. So this budget allocates 189.2 million for program funding targeted primarily for First Nations and Métis organizations and individuals, which is an increase of 4.4 million or 2.4 per cent from the funding in last year's budget. And what's really significant is the 6 million to double the funding for initiatives in response to the joint task force on improving education employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis. And this is part of the growth plan, you know, which is to build on the report and recommendations of the joint task force and seek partnerships within, you know, the experts, the Tribal Councils, the First Nations themselves, and the businesses to increase employment, businesses, and engagement in the economy.

One thing that really stood out was the Parkridge allocation. Because as the representative of Fairview, I think this is a pretty significant. And as the MLA, I'm very grateful for the

allocation. And I know that there is many others who would like to speak, so I'd like to conclude that I support this budget going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand in this Assembly for the umpteenth time, to have had the pleasure of, having had the pleasure of representing the constituents of Moosomin since 1986. And, Mr. Speaker, that certainly wouldn't have been possible had it not been for the valued support of my wife, my family, certainly a lot of friends, and a lot of friends I've made over the years as the member for the constituency of Moosomin.

Another group of individuals that is certainly integral to the well-being of an MLA is constituency assistants. And I'm pleased to have a young gentleman, Jeff Cole who has now ably filled in the office and is doing an excellent job. And he is supported by Audrey McEwen. So I say thank you to Jeff and Audrey for their support in the office. Tina Durbin spent almost 20 years in my office and did a superb job as well. And I know she's now enjoying retirement and the opportunity of getting to spend more time with her granddaughter.

So, Mr. Speaker, we all know that this job sometimes is not always the easiest. And certainly we can look at the negative, but I've tended to, over the years, to look at the positive. So many people that I've had the privilege of getting to know and meet, individuals who've contacted the office or spoken directly to me, and while we may not have been able to answer their inquiries to the degree that they would have liked, at the end of the day have always expressed their gratitude for the efforts that have been made, whether it's through the office and my staff or whether it's myself. Mr. Speaker, those are rewarding experiences.

Mr. Speaker, this past week the Minister of Finance presented another balanced budget to the people of Saskatchewan. This year's budget is certainly balanced, and the most important factor I think, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it's balanced without any tax increases. And that's something that I've heard a lot of people speaking about over the past weekend, things that they were really impressed with.

And I believe what the budget basically does is speaks to steady growth and moving the province of Saskatchewan forward. It's a budget that, as people will look back, they will be looking at what the Minister of Finance has done this year in balancing the books with revenues that were very slim, actually down from last year. But by not increasing taxes, but by controlling spending, the minister was able to let the people of Saskatchewan know that this government is being a fiscally conservative — I use the word conservative — Saskatchewan Party in moving this province forward.

[15:00]

And when I talk about moving our province forward, many of my colleagues have seen exponential growth in the communities and the constituencies they represent. Well the constituency of Moosomin is no different.

The number of people that have been moving into the constituency, the job opportunities that are availing themselves, I'm going to speak of one specific industry. Seed Hawk manufacturing, a direct seed equipment manufacturer, which started something like, I believe around 12 years ago in the constituency, and through the progress of time has ramped up their manufacturing to the point that they now have 250 people that are currently employed at the facility, which is only four miles from home, and also four years ago entered into a relationship with Väderstad, a direct seeding manufacturer out of Sweden who this past year bought out and became the major stakeholders in the plant.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen that plant grow, the current ownership are looking to expand the employment or number of people working at the plant from 250 currently to, in the near future, to some 400 people. And that's just one small manufacturing plant here in Saskatchewan. It happens to be in the constituency of Moosomin. But that speaks of what's happening across the province, and I think that speaks to what this budget means to a lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan.

When we talk about balancing the budget, controlling spending, and putting forward a budget that speaks about growth, it tells the investment community that Saskatchewan is a place to invest your funds, your resources. And we're looking forward to continuing to see this province grow.

This past weekend I noticed in my own local community, I was amazed as I was driving around the community, a number of for sale signs on housing, all of sudden they're not there. And one person said to me at an event I was at, did you notice that's an Ontario plate sitting in the driveway? I think what we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is we're seeing people not only from outside of the country but even within our country, Eastern Canada, are looking at Saskatchewan as a place to invest in, as a place to find job opportunities and raise their families.

Not only was this budget balanced, Mr. Speaker, but the Minister of Finance presented a budget that is showing the summary financial statements as the Provincial Auditor has been calling for for years. I think, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor says, "Our office strongly supports these changes. They will eliminate confusion and help legislators and the public better understand the government's finances."

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I think you'll find that people still relate more closely to the general revenue pool because it's much like having a chequing account. You know what's coming in; you know what's going out. The money's going into health. It's going into education. It's going into policing. It's going into our parks and renewable resources, Mr. Speaker. And then people also understand what the Crown corporations do. They understand the fact that Crown corporations need money to invest in infrastructure to continue to provide the services, but they don't necessarily look at them as one specific line.

However, given the fact that the auditor has been asking for this, this budget has been presented in that format of summary financial statements. And it's a budget that is balanced and showing steady growth for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, let me just, in speaking about this budget of steady growth, I just want to offer a few comments that we've seen this past week from individuals and groups. The *Leader-Post* editorial for example on March 20th said "Overall then, Krawetz has crafted a steady, solid managerial plan that deals with the reality of slower growth."

Moose Jaw *Times-Herald*, the article said, "Good governance is generally more about progress and less about perfection, and in that respect, Saskatchewan's government is doing a decent job."

Lanny McInnes of the Retail Council of Canada says, "Consumers can feel comfortable that this budget is not going to hit them in the pocketbook and it's going to help grow the economy."

And Marilyn Braun-Pollon says this: "We commend the province for not taking the easy way out, but instead controlling their spending by making some tough decisions."

And as the Minister of Finance said, yes, it wasn't the easiest budget to put forward. But as my colleague earlier mentioned, a number of the members on this side of the House sat with the Finance minister and his officials as they went through the budget line by line and looked at places where they could streamline in order to ensure that there was money available to put into programs and meeting the needs of Saskatchewan people.

And I think one of the biggest areas, Mr. Speaker, that we will see people speaking about, is that we've been putting money into people. Seniors for example will be seeing increase in the seniors' income supplement, Mr. Speaker. That's something for a lot of seniors who are living on the basic, bottom-line pension plans. That seniors' income supplement has certainly become an advantage in this province. We also have increased the amount of money that we're putting into the pockets of seniors who are living in private care homes. And that again, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the fact that we are committed to meeting the needs of people across this province and our seniors.

And it certainly is well spoken of within this budget — the fact that people appreciate the fact that this budget, while trying to be fiscally responsible, is also looking at reaching out to those who have specific needs in the province of Saskatchewan.

This budget as well has also shown a strong support for people with disabilities. And over the years, Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure of seeing how, even in the constituency of Moosomin, we have Kin-Ability centres that have sprung up. We've got SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres] locations where people with disabilities have had the opportunity to feel like they are members of the community. Rather than put away in institutions, they are now involved in the community.

And as you go through some of the communities in my constituency to speak to people with disabilities and walk into the SARC locations or meet them in fact in the coffee shop — they're not afraid to go to the coffee shop — and sit down with people. And they're always pleased to see — I'm sure other MLAs find this as well — they're pleased to see their MLAs walk in and come over and say hi to them and see how they're

doing, Mr. Speaker. I don't think government can go wrong when it shows that it's willing to meet the needs of those who are the least amongst us, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to see that this Finance minister and our government is thinking of people, not just money. We're thinking of people and putting the money to help people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency there's a couple of projects that are ongoing. One that has been a long time coming — and I commend the member for Cypress Hills, for he actually initiated the project — is completing the construction of Highway 48 between Kipling and No. 9 Highway. And this year if the things, if the weather co-operates, I would assume by the time the July 1st weekend rolls around, we're going to have that project completed. And I anticipate we're going to see trailers rolling down that highway as they move down to Kenosee Park.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I was talking to people following the budget at the tea, there was a young lady came up to me and she said, you know, we really enjoy going down to Kenosee Park to spend some time down there. Have there been any improvements done to Highway 48? It's the closest, most direct way. And I was happy to inform her that I'm sure by the time they get on — even right now, they can travel down that road — but by the time they get to tourism season, that highway is going to be well travelled, as it will be completed from White City right through to the Manitoba border with a good paved and constructed highway. And I'm pleased to see that we've moved forward on that.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also talked about funding going into current heavy care facilities in the province. And I have a facility that's moving forward, in fact it's basically closed in now — the integrated health care facility in the community of Kipling. A few people were asking me the other day, whatever happened? Was there no mention of Kipling, no funding for the Kipling project? Well I was able to point people out to the fact that the Minister of Finance actually pointed out, Kipling was one of the five facilities that there's money in the budget going towards the ongoing progress of the capital expenditures as these communities move forward with their construction.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many, so many other areas that we could speak about as well. One of the things this budget did as well is we expanded the expenditures in highway construction. People in that Wolseley-Grenfell corridor are going to see an improvement to the Highway No. 1 as resurfacing will take place this year. And it's not just Highway No. 1. But my colleagues sitting here in the legislature in this Assembly will be speaking about highway construction, maintenance, and repair that would be going on in these areas, their areas.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to speak about how this government has learned to work with people in developing ongoing not only communication but finding ways of how we can address some of the needs and the requests out there. Most recently I had the pleasure of joining with the Minister of Central Services as we gathered with people in the community of Wolseley. Now for those who may not be familiar, Wolseley is a community along the highway, No. 1 Highway, a community that has done an elaborate job or a very commendable job in preserving some of the historic buildings within the community.

For example if you haven't seen the opera house, you may want to take a moment to drive off the highway and just look at the beautiful community centre, the old opera house that has been refurbished. Or maybe you want to take a moment to just walk across the swinging bridge that was refurbished in the community of Wolseley.

And then most recently, in 1894-1895 there was a courthouse built in that community, and it's been sitting vacant for a number of years. And they've been asking me, is there anything that can be done to see this courthouse being utilized rather than letting it fall apart? And back last, I believe it was last summer with the minister of government Central Services, we met with the community. And we asked them to put forward a proposal as to how they . . . what could be done. And sitting down with the minister, the minister indicated that it cost the government a pile of money every year, even though it's a building that's just sitting there not being utilized.

And so the community put forward a proposal. And a week ago we handed them the keys, turned the building over to them. We're going to put some money into addressing some of the structural needs. The building will be refurbished, and it's going to be the new town offices will be operating out of that building. And the people of Wolseley couldn't be any happier than to see that that building wasn't just going to be dismantled, but now it's another landmark that they can have to sell their community.

Mr. Speaker, we see ongoing construction on the PotashCorp expansion at Rocanville. There again, the service . . . As the expansion is moving forward more job opportunities are opening up for the people of the Moosomin constituency and, I will add, the surrounding area because people travel from north of the Qu'Appelle Valley or the Melville-Saltcoats area to work at the mine at Rocanville. We see a major expansion in oil development in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, overall this budget, as we have noted by many players, is certainly a budget that is balanced. It's speaking to steady growth in the province of Saskatchewan. And this government is committed to continuing to move the province forward. And we're looking forward with great anticipation to what this province can and will be.

We're a resource-based province with a lot of potential, a lot of opportunities. Yes, our resources are under pressure right now. But I anticipate, Mr. Speaker, that these resources, these valuable resources will pay big dividends in the future as we continue to grow as a province.

I'd just like to close, Mr. Speaker, about speaking to the commitment this province has made to the agricultural community here in the province of Saskatchewan. When we first met for spring session, the big question on people's minds was getting last year's bumper crop to market. And one of the first debates we had in this Legislative Assembly was endeavouring to address that issue.

And following that debate, we've seen the federal government move in a number of areas. But also, the warmer weather right now, I'm beginning to see trains pulling up to the grain-handling system in our constituency and across this

province, starting to move that commodity, the grain, to market. And as that commodity moves to market, it opens up the doors for the agricultural producers of my area and across this province to get the cash flow to begin the process of planning for the spring as well as meeting the financial requirements that they have entered into. So, Mr. Speaker, this government has shown its commitment to the agricultural community.

[15:15]

One other area I would like to speak to is the new livestock insurance program. I had the pleasure of attending the southeast Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association meeting and dinner on Friday evening in Wawota, and that was the first thing people were asking me about. What does it mean? How are we going to have the opportunity to be involved? And I was fortunate actually to learn more about it myself because they had invited a representative from crop insurance, a young lady who just did a superb job.

By the time the evening was over, every producer there was pleased to hear how the province is moving forward, some of the opportunities that will be offered to them, the fact that they can insure their livestock as they have been able to do with their grain, opportunities. And they were, the comments were nothing but positive, Mr. Speaker. People were just pleased to see how our government has moved to build this province and include the people of the province in our decision making.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm standing here today fully supportive of the budget presented by the member for Canora, the Finance minister of this province, and will be voting against the amendment placed by the opposition. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand and speak in favour of the budget today that the Finance minister brought down last week. I'd just like to thank my wife and my staff back in Biggar in the MLA office and the staff here in Regina for all the good work that they do.

I just want to touch on some of the highlights of the budget. Obviously as Minister of Rural and Remote Health, a keen interest in the Health budget. You know, Saskatchewan will invest nearly \$5 billion in health care in the upcoming fiscal year. Funding is \$144 million or 3 per cent increase over 2013-14 and the budget includes investments in reduced surgical wait times and emergency department waits. That's key capital projects. Developed additional collaborative emergency centres or CECs — which I'll like to speak on more in depth later — and improved services for seniors and support the rural physician workforce.

Capital investments in the upcoming year total \$95 million. Funding for ongoing projects include 16 million to complete the new hospital in Moose Jaw; 27 million to continue construction of the long-term care facilities in Biggar, Kelvington, Kipling, Maple Creek, and Prince Albert. I'm very honoured to have the long-term care home being built in Biggar. It's due to be opened late this spring or early this summer. And it's a fabulous facility that's going to be opened for our seniors in Biggar.

And some of the other very important parts in the Health budget in the coming year is hot-spotting, the pilot program that will begin in Saskatoon and Regina to identify and assist these high-cost, high-use patients, helping them receive the care they need. Other priority investments include an additional 3.4 million for improved primary health care and collaborative emergency centres, with an increase of 2.6 million to continue incentives that encourage physicians to work in rural communities and provide locum physician relief for those who are temporarily away from their home.

Regional health authorities will use \$3.25 billion, an increase of 107.5 million, to provide services through its cancer services in Regina and Saskatoon, offer prevention and early detection programs, and conduct research. This represents a 4.9 million or a 3.3 per cent increase over last year.

Mr. Speaker, some very innovative supports for seniors. The budget makes a number of improvements to improve the quality of life for our Saskatchewan seniors. Highlights include 27.3 million to continue construction of the five previously announced long-term care facilities that I just mentioned. 4.5 million, a 2.5 million increase for the Home First/Quick Response pilot program to provide innovative home care supports to better serve seniors. 3.7 million for Urgent Issues Action Fund to continue to improve services in long-term care facilities. 800,000 for a new seniors' house call pilot program to develop an innovative mobile outreach team to provide intensive home care supports to seniors with complex health issues, and funding to plan replacement of long-term care facilities in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, and a plan for more long-term care beds in La Ronge.

Mr. Speaker, also a \$10 per month increase in the benefit under the seniors' income plan in July 2014 to a maximum of \$260 for senior citizens and \$225 per month for each member of a married couple. Next year the single benefit will increase to \$270 per month and triple what it was in 2007. Nearly 15,000 Saskatchewan seniors receive the seniors' income plan benefit each month. Seniors receiving the SIP [seniors' income plan] benefits are also entitled to additional health benefits such as free eye care, examinations every 12 months, chiropractic services to a maximum of 12 services per year, a reduced prescription drug plan semi-annual deductible, a home care subsidy, and an exemption from many of the charges under the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program are just some of the things in the budget.

More focused on the rural health, in the last two years I visited 80 communities in Saskatchewan, in remote and rural Saskatchewan. It's been a great honour and a privilege, quite frankly, to be able to travel to these communities, both in the North and around rural Saskatchewan, listening to all the stakeholders. We would meet with the staff and sit and have coffee with them or a meeting and ask them their opinion on what needs to be improved in their facility or in health care in particular. It's interesting that the debate about lean is going on now, and without an exception all the health care providers in the facilities that I visited thought the lean initiative and strategy was well worth it. They see the improvements and they really appreciated having an input into any changes that may be needed in their facility. So it's certainly good, when you talk to the staff one-on-one or in groups, that they are quite happy with

it. So I think the opposition is really off base in their concerns. It's improving health care, improving safety. It's better care for patients but also for staff as well, and there's many examples of improvements and innovation because of the lean strategy in our facilities.

We also would meet with physicians and nurse practitioners and we would always have a meeting with community leaders separately to discuss the issues in their community, health care in particular in the facility. As I had mentioned before, the 19.5 overall investment in rural health services and primary health care, 13.1 for primary health, that's a 3.4 million increase from last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, collaborative emergency centres, or CECs, are up and running. We have one operating in Maidstone and Shaunavon and we will have three more running — well, not only by the end of the year, hopefully in the next few months — in Canora, Wakaw, Spiritwood. And the communities and the staff and the physicians are working together to get these facilities up. A collaborative emergency centre is a form of primary health care which has a nighttime model and a daytime model.

The nighttime model is staffed by a registered nurse and an advanced paramedic in contact with a STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] emergency physician. And patients that come into the . . . So the nighttime model generally starts about 8 p.m. and runs to 8 a.m. People that come in for care are triaged. Some are treated, released. Others are told to come back for a same-day or next-day appointment. And the true emergencies are either sent by ground, ambulance, or STARS to an emergency centre to be looked after quickly.

The daytime model is made up of physicians and nurse practitioners, the full arena primary health care staff. And that's what's innovative about this. This takes the pressure off physicians being on call at night. That's certainly a recruitment and retention vehicle for physicians in rural Saskatchewan. And from the patient's point of view, they know they can come in and get same-day or next-day appointments. So they don't need to go to emergency just to see a doctor for simple things like getting prescriptions and minor ailments. And so they're working very well in those two communities and we're going to open more in the future. And this is going to spread across the province, giving very good emergency service to many communities across Saskatchewan.

Of course the other important innovative emergency service in rural Saskatchewan is STARS. Everything but the patient actually arriving in Saskatoon or Regina at the hospitals there is a rural emergency health care, and STARS is very well received and are saving many, many lives and giving very good health care to people across rural Saskatchewan.

We're continuing to work on innovation sites. There's eight sites in rural Saskatchewan: Leader, Meadow Lake, Whitecap, Fort Qu'Appelle, Lestock. There's urban in Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Regina, and Lloydminster.

In the budget, Mr. Speaker, \$5.2 million for rural locums. That's a 2.2 million increase from last year. Each region can recruit two regional-based locums, 12 positions fully funded

towards a commitment of 20 locums over four years.

Another important innovation is funding of \$685,000 for the rural physician recruitment incentive, a \$435,000 increase, and we anticipate that 30 doctors per year will realize the program in this year.

As announced, \$500,000 for the planning towards a new long-term care home in La Ronge is a very exciting development, and the people of northern Saskatchewan are very happy to see that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move on to some of the agriculture highlights and the budget for agriculture of \$371.6 million to ensure farmers and ranchers get support they need, highlighted by \$79 million for strategic initiatives such as research market development, an increase of 7.5 million from the previous year. The budget also includes the new western livestock price insurance program and enhancements to the crop insurance program.

I think it's not in the budget, but it's worth noting and thanking the Minister of Agriculture has been working on this file. The file that I'm referring to is the slow movement of grain and farm commodities in the last few months. Our government and our Agriculture minister has recognized deficiencies and been working towards it since last May quite frankly. This is an ongoing situation. This didn't happen just overnight. It's been exacerbated by a record crop but slow movement of grain and commodities in the winter months has been a problem for a long time.

The Minister of Agriculture's worked on it for many months starting last May, and again very . . . highlighted the issue again to cabinet and to caucus last fall. And the Premier has had an active role in getting the stakeholders together to improve rail transportation. A delegation headed by the Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Economy, Minister of Highways, and the Legislative Secretary to Agriculture has done great work. And quite frankly I believe they're also working of course with the federal government and have a lot of input with the federal government on how to improve the rail transportation system for agriculture commodities. And they've been, you know, working with all the stakeholders — grain companies, railway companies, and the federal government — to increase the number of cars that are used and get more grain to the ports mainly in British Columbia.

So I'd really like to thank our team that has done a fabulous job in improving the transportation of grain. I think that with the warmer weather we're already starting to see much improved transportation of grain, and this is much needed. And it's not only just this year, but we are going to continue to have bumper crops or excellent . . . I think the norm is going to be a high record number of bushels and tonnes produced in Saskatchewan. So we need to continue to improve our rail system.

[15:30]

Just want to touch on some other areas in education. Saskatchewan students will benefit from \$815,000 in new funding to implement Saskatchewan's action plan to address

bullying and cyberbullying, 588,000 in new funding to expand English as an additional language, 200,000 in new funding to provide alternate format and materials for students with disabilities, \$2 million increase for CommunityNet bandwidth, \$6 million in funding — double the amount provided last year — for the continued response to recommendations from the joint task force on improving First Nations and Métis education and employment outcomes in Saskatchewan.

Highways and infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, so vital . . . our infrastructure deficit that we were left with as a government after 16 years of NDP rule. And we continue to make headway in improving the infrastructure in the province. So the highways and infrastructure budget includes \$664.5 million to operate and maintain Saskatchewan's highways and transportation system.

Some of the things that we are doing in this year's budget includes major projects that fulfill that objective, including pre-construction work on the Regina bypass project; twinning Highway 16 from Saskatoon to Clavet; pre-construction work for future passing lanes on Highway 7 between Rosetown and Delisle, with part of that goes to the Biggar constituency; and the two pilot projects to upgrade obsolete thin membrane surface primary highways to primary weight super grids. I think that holds a lot of promise in the future and that it's going to take many years and a lot of investment, but I think this is the way to deal with the thin membranes to improve transportation in the more rural parts of Saskatchewan.

\$118 million worth of rural highway upgrades across the province, 95 million to repave about 300 kilometres of highways, and 37.6 million to renew bridges and culverts are some of where the money is going to be spent in Highways.

And also our government always has been a government that cares for people that have disadvantages in society, and it's no different in this budget. The province will increase investment in Saskatchewan child and family agenda by \$8.7 million to meet the needs of children, the youth, and families at risk. In total the province has committed \$62.5 million in new funding to the agenda since it was created in 2011. That's a sign of a caring government.

Other initiatives are the Ministry of Health is leading the work of the mental health and addictions action plan, other plans to help keep families together and prevent children from coming into care. Social Services, increasing intensive family supports for after-hours services to families. Also as part of the building partnerships to reduce crime initiative, two additional centres of responsibility will be implemented in 2014.

Five hundred additional licensed child care spaces will be created to meet the unprecedented demand for child care and to support positive child development.

And again, both in a health sense and just with seniors in particular, we continue to have unprecedented supported for people with disabilities and with the seniors.

Highlights in this budget — 9.9 million of funding to the Ministry of Economy is employment assistance for people with disabilities. Ministry of Health will spend \$7.6 million for autism intervention and 4.2 million for intensive fetal alcohol

disorder.

And the Ministry of Social Services will invest \$5.1 million in the upcoming year under the Saskatchewan assured income disability or SAID program for the third year in a row by \$20 a month for those in residential care.

Social Services budget will also see an increase of 20.4 million or 14 per cent more for community-based organizations that provide residential spaces and programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very, a very good budget. There's never enough money to go around to everything we want, naturally, in one year. But this government has year after year, budget after budget, have had number one, a balanced budget. We've reduced debt and we have increased funding to areas that we need right across the spectrum of the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this budget and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Mr. Docherty: — Okay, enough of that. It's my honour to rise today in response to the budget. But before I begin I'd be remiss if I didn't thank some very important people. First, the constituents of Regina Coronation Park. I'm proud to serve as their representative in this Assembly and I want to thank them for being a community that embodies the best of Saskatchewan. Coronation Park is a diverse community of hard-working families from all over the world. I want to thank them for sharing their experiences and their traditions with me.

I'd also like to thank my family: my mother, my brother, sister-in-law, nephews, and nieces. Thanks to my friends, both old and new. Thanks to Lisa for embarking on our many new adventures and thanks for putting up with me . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it is kind of tough. Also I want to thank my constituency assistant, Kristy Shaw. This has been Kristy's first year as my CA [constituency assistant] and she's doing a bang-up job helping to make sure the people of Coronation Park are well served by their government.

This government is all about serving the people of Saskatchewan. One of the best ways any government can serve the people it represents is by being faithful, sensible stewards of the public purse. I want to thank and congratulate the Minister of Finance for shouldering that challenge on behalf of this government. Under his stewardship, the Premier's leadership, we've yet again brought in a budget that is balanced both fiscally and in terms of making investments where they matter most.

Fiscally, the budget is balanced, with a surplus. And for the first time it is reported on a summary basis. In terms of investment, this budget addresses the needs of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens while also addressing key infrastructure needs, many of which we inherited from the members opposite.

Speaking of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to point out that I'm beginning to get a bit worried. Not worried about what they might do because they clearly have no idea what they would do themselves. No, Mr. Speaker, I'm worried about the state of their memory. They constantly call on our government to maintain a balanced budget, but in the same breath call for unrealistically high spending. It's almost as if they've forgotten the importance of living within one's means, especially when it's not your own money that you're spending. These aren't our dollars. They belong to the men and women who are keeping our economy strong: workers, small-business owners, investors, families. But to listen to the opposition, one would almost think that they want us to squander those dollars and then go in debt on top of it like a big orange credit card, as the Premier put it. So that's worrisome.

You know what else worries me about their memory? The fact that they so easily seem to have forgotten how we ended up with so many infrastructure needs. Yes, our economic growth has created some new challenges, but the biggest challenge of all are the ones inherited from them. They are the ones who closed long-term care facilities, hospitals, and schools. They are the ones who let roads fall into disrepair. They are the ones who made this mess, Mr. Speaker. We are the ones who've been working since 2007 to clean it up. They didn't agree with or applaud anything in this budget, Mr. Speaker, except for one solitary thing — our move to summary financial statements. Really, Mr. Speaker? They want us to believe and the people of Saskatchewan to believe that there's nothing else in this budget worthy of their support and appreciation. Really?

For example, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't you think that the NDP, who constantly remind us how important it is for First Nations and Métis people to benefit from the same economic growth and opportunities that non-Aboriginal people do, would say thank you for the 700 new adult basic education seats created in this year's budget? That brings the total number of adult basic education seats up to 8,580, Mr. Speaker, many of which will be filled by First Nations and Métis residents wanting to improve their skills to take advantage of this province's growth. Well, Mr. Speaker, sadly the members opposite have not thanked us. But I think we'll take the opportunity to say you're welcome anyways.

You know what else surprises me, Mr. Speaker? The fact that even though the members opposite, particularly their leader and their Education and Finance critic, have spent so much time and energy decrying the state of education, they don't seem too keen on our continued investments in Saskatchewan's education system. They petition daily for our government to invest in a new gym for Sacred Heart School here in Regina. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? We're not just investing in a gym. We're investing in a whole new school, and not just one, Mr. Speaker. We're investing in a second new school for Regina to replace Connaught and in two major renovation projects for St. Brieux and Sacred Heart School in Moose Jaw. But, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have been oddly quiet about these investments so we'll help them out. You're welcome.

And not just once have we heard a happy word from the naysayers opposite about the joint-use schools for Regina, Saskatoon, Warman, and Martensville.

Well that was bad enough, especially considering that the Leader of the Opposition almost daily tabled petitions calling for a new school for Hampton Village. We gave him one. They didn't even bother to show up for the announcement to congratulate the people of Hampton Village for their new school or thank the government for its support. So I'll say it for him. Thank you and you're welcome.

And since we're talking about P3s, Mr. Speaker, maybe we've stumbled across the reason why they're anti-P3. It can't be because P3s don't work, because they do. It can't be because these schools aren't needed, because they are. Maybe it's because the concept of P3s remind them of their own shortcomings. Mr. Speaker, we have P3s but they have no Ps of their own. No plan, no policy, and certainly no platform.

So, Mr. Speaker, of course they're anti-P3. Because instead of actually standing for something, they're hoping that if they criticize us enough, no one will notice that today's NDP appear to stand for nothing more or less than just opposing everything our government is proud to stand for. We stand for progress. We stand for prosperity. And most of all we stand for people, the great people of Saskatchewan.

How do we stand for progress? We aren't afraid of new ideas if those new ideas will make our community stronger and the lives of the people we serve better.

How do we stand for prosperity? By creating an environment where investments in Saskatchewan are growing, where jobs are being created, and where communities are growing. And for all that, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, you're welcome.

The most important thing we stand for is the people of this province. How do we stand for people, Mr. Speaker? By making investments that make lives better, investments like over a half million dollars new funding to expand English as an additional language support, \$200,000 in new funding to provide alternate-format materials for students with disabilities.

And speaking of making lives better, Mr. Speaker, this budget includes \$815,000 in new funding to implement Saskatchewan's action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying, again a subject the members opposite used to talk about. Why the member for Saskatoon Centre used to table petitions every day for the government to take action on anti-bullying and cyberbullying, and we did. We came up with an action plan and backed it up with dollars. But nothing from the members opposite. So again, Mr. Speaker, you're welcome.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but I think I've spent enough time focusing on the silence of the members opposite. I'd like to turn my attention to some of the budget initiatives nearest and dearest to my heart as the Legislative Secretary of disability issues, supports to citizens with disabilities.

This budget includes over \$446 million in funding for people with disabilities, an increase of more than \$84 million over last year and more than double the funding provided in 2007-2008. That's right. More than double. It includes \$9.9 million to the employability assistance for people with disabilities program to help adults with disabilities prepare for, find, and maintain employment. And that employment isn't just about the wages

and the salary earned. It's about the dignity of a job, about taking pride in and contributing to the economy, about helping build Saskatchewan into an even stronger province by viewing people as abled, not disabled. That's what those jobs are about, Mr. Speaker.

This budget includes \$7.6 million for autism interventions, \$4.2 million for intensive fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention programming, \$43 million for Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living to maintain benefits for people with long-term disabilities or illnesses, and \$3.5 million for capital and operative funding for transit assistance for people with disabilities.

[15:45]

This budget also includes \$5.1 million to increase benefits under the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program or SAID. This is the third year in a row we've increased benefits under SAID and that's a record I couldn't be more proud of. This year SAID benefits will increase by \$20 a month for people in residential care, \$50 a month for individuals, \$55 a month for couples. SAID, designed in collaboration with the disability community, is a landmark income security program for people with disabilities and a significant part of our government's commitment to make Saskatchewan the best place to live in Canada for people with disabilities.

And these are some of the responses to the budget from the disability community, Mr. Speaker:

I'm encouraged with the direction government has taken in addressing the education and employment gaps for First Nations and Métis people, developing a mental health and addictions action plan, and adding more pre-kindergarten and child care spaces, positive parenting programs, and other services for families.

That's a quote from Bob Pringle, the Advocate for Children and Youth. Here's another quote, Mr. Speaker:

We thank the Government of Saskatchewan for honouring their election promise to increase SAID benefit rates to \$20 a month for individuals in residential care, \$50 a month for individuals living independently, and \$50 a month for couples living independently. SAID enrolment has exceeded our expectations. We are grateful that over 11,000 individuals have been able to benefit from this.

And that's Judy Hannah, SACL [Saskatchewan Association for Community Living] project coordinator.

Here's another one, Mr. Speaker: "Thank you to the Government of Saskatchewan for making persons with disabilities one of the priorities in the 2014-15 budget." Gloria Mahussier, the SACL president.

Well here's another one, Mr. Speaker. "We're a leader in the country, if not North America and the world, in supports for people with disabilities. And it's something the Saskatchewan Party should be very proud of." Amy McNeil, executive director of SARC. Here's another quote from SARC:

... the 2014-15 Provincial Budget Address included important funding increases dedicated to making Saskatchewan the best place for people with disabilities to live. These investments are part of a positive, multi-year approach. Since 2008, [who was in power in 2008? Oh, the Sask Party] the government has significantly increased funding targeted towards improving the lives of people with disabilities. This began with a commitment from Government that people with disabilities would no longer have extensive waits for residential and community-based day programs.

Again another quote from SARC and our disability community.

Mr. Speaker, another big part of that commitment is the development of a provincial disability strategy. And I'm proud to have spent the past year working with members of the citizen consultation team for leading the development of that strategy. After a winter of hard work behind the scenes, the team is getting ready to embark on public consultations this spring.

And I'd like to thank the 15 citizen consultation team members, the government officials, the Minister of Social Services for all their work so far and for the exciting work still ahead. And so thank you to all.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'd like to end my comments by saying that I'm proud to support the motion in favour of this budget. I thank the Premier and the Finance minister for their leadership in providing the people of Saskatchewan with yet again another balanced budget. And I thank the people of Saskatchewan for the continued trust in our government, and I will be voting against the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy to stand up today and enter this debate on our budget on steady growth. But before I get into that, I want to take the time that most of our members do to thank the people that are most important to us. And I need to start with my wife. She's . . .

An Hon. Member: — Your much better half.

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes, much better half. She's the one that allows me to do this job to the full extent I can. She keeps the lights on at home, making sure that everything's okay there. And so when we do have some time, we get to spend it with our grandkid. So I really want to thank my wife for that.

And talking about grandkids, I still . . . I have three wonderful boys. They're all in the . . . Well actually I've got one away at school in Manitoba right now, but he works here in Saskatchewan. He's doing his apprenticeship, 10 weeks' training out in Manitoba. So he comes back and forth every weekend. And he's working to be an aircraft mechanic. He's already a pilot. He helped me quite a bit on the campaign, as my other two boys. That would be Ryan that's just out right now. Geoff's still in university. He tells me he may graduate this year. I'm hoping he'll graduate this year. I think this is year five or six. I've kind of lost track, but he's working hard in university right here. And then Dylan. Dylan — my kids

compete quite a bit — Dylan got married last year, and now we're grandparents. And so the way the kids keep score is he's winning right now in the way they keep score.

But my grandson, Jordison trumps all. So actually he's not winning any more; it's my grandson. However, to continue with our steady growth platform, he has told me that they're expecting another one. So we have another grandbaby on the way. So he's going to be like him and his brother. They're only a year apart. So Jordison and his younger sibling are going to be just over a year apart. We're looking forward to that this summer. And also I want to mention my daughter-in-law, Kayleigh, because she's the one that takes care of my grandkid and does a great job. So we're looking really forward to that. So my family's grown just like the province has grown over the last year.

And you know, so your family is your most important thing, but I would be very remiss if I didn't talk about Laurie, my CA back in the office. We all have CAs here that allow us to be here and take care of all the things that go on in the office in Moose Jaw. And when I get back Thursday afternoon or Friday, it depends what's going on, she gives me my list of constituents that I get to actually contact, call back, touch base with then and see how we're doing with the issues they brought forward to the office. So I want to thank Laurie Kosior for the great job that she does back in my office.

Now I also want to thank the constituents of Moose Jaw Wakamow. They're the ones that gave me the honour to be able to stand here today and do this reply to the budget, our seventh consecutive balanced budget. So I don't know if that's lucky seven or not, but we're going to have a surplus of \$71 million on a budget of expenses of just over \$14 billion.

And talking to the people that support me back home, they said, stay away from the numbers because the numbers are the numbers, but it's . . . Talk about the people. So I really want to talk about the people, but we have to touch on the numbers just a little bit and how it affects the people.

We'll talk about the \$16 million to finish off the brand new hospital that is going to serve Five Hills Health Region. So we're going to finish off that new hospital in Moose Jaw and the money is there to do it. This government, as opposed to some other governments, actually does what it says it's going to do. We say we are going to build a hospital; we build a hospital. We say we are going to provide the funding for the hospital; we provide the funding for the hospital. So it's there this year. We're going to finish it off.

We also want to talk about some of the schools. Sacred Heart is actually just down the street and around the corner from where I live, and it's slated as one of the four schools that are up for a major renovation. So we have money there for that. So talking to the folks in the riding, they're very happy that that money is there to upgrade Sacred Heart.

And if you take a drive around Moose Jaw Wakamow now, you'll see that it's almost fortuitous because we have the Westheath subdivision. It's basically exploding. South Hill is growing at a very rapid pace. And then just about four blocks south of where I live, there's this new apartment complex going

up that's being built as well as some single-family dwelling units there and some condos that are being developed. And it's being done by the private sector. They're seeing the potential of our province, the province of Saskatchewan growing. They're not going to the government, you've got to build this for us. They are coming ahead and going ahead and doing that. So they see the growth there.

One of the things I want to talk about, just a little bit on the other side of the coin, is our members opposite. You know, I don't know if the N actually stands for new anymore. I'm pretty sure it stands for negative because, you know, they come and they ask, and we say, okay, we're going to give them a new school in Regina Elphinstone-Centre. So does that mean they're going to vote for the budget? We're going to give them a new school in Regina Lakeview. Does that mean that MLA is going to vote for the budget?

An Hon. Member: — What about the Elphinstone one?

Mr. Lawrence: — Well I already said the Elphinstone one. And we're going to build a seniors' home in La Ronge. So they come and they come forward and they say, okay, we need this. We need this. And we sit back, and we go through the budget. So instead of going, no, we're not going to do that because that's an NDP riding, we help all the people of Saskatchewan.

We don't go and close down rural hospitals like somebody else did. We don't go down and close schools. We talk about rebuilding schools, building new schools — nine new joint-use schools, two new schools here in Regina on top of that. And what do the members do? They stand up, and they're very negative about it. According to them, there's nothing good in this budget except that it's a summary budget. You would think if, you know, if my riding was getting a brand new school, I would be standing up cheering. Mine gets a whole new renovation on the school. I'm very happy. If we were getting a brand new school, it would be yes. How can we say no to this budget?

When we talk about a seniors' home, we don't close down seniors' homes. We don't close down seniors' beds. We open them. What do they do? They close them. We opened one in one of their ridings, and I don't think I've seen anybody look that angry. I'm going to steal a quote from one of our other members that . . . looked so angry when we announced that seniors' home in La Ronge that I'm going to wonder how they're going to explain to their constituents when they vote against new schools in their riding, new seniors' homes in their riding. How are they going to be able to stand there on the door when it's time to campaign next time and go, yes, we voted against that budget for our new school? Yes, we voted against that seniors' home because it was the wrong idea. We don't need that. Well actually yes, they do. That's why we're providing that.

And it's not just schools and hospitals that we're providing money for infrastructure. I grew up down in Estevan. I was in the oil field for a long time. And that highway was busy back in the '80s. That's Highway 39. And we set aside money to look at twinning Highway 39, to twin Highway 39 and Highway 6 coming into Regina. We listened to the people of Saskatchewan. We get out. We talk to them. We do that

year-round. We don't do that just election year.

We get out, I was out door knocking last summer, talking to constituents. And they're like, is there an election? And I'm like, no, there's no election. Well what are you doing here? Well we just want to touch base with you and see how we're doing as a government, see how everything's going. And the constituents are, you know, you were here before the last election and now you're here now, but we hadn't seen anybody on our doorstep that was a politician for, you know, 10 or 12 years before that. And I'm not sure who was out there before me. Well actually I'm pretty sure who was out there. But I got out and talked to as many folks as I can, and not talk to them, listen to what they have to say.

[16:00]

One of the things when I'm listening to constituents is I say sometimes politicians talk too much, and we need to listen more. And the people go, really that's the first politician that's ever said that to me. So I really try and listen to what the folks have to say.

So you know, we talk about steady growth. We do this again. How we did that this year to balance this budget is controlled spending. I'm sure the members have a fundamental problem with that controlled spending because in their last platform their spending was projected at an extra \$5 billion, an extra \$5 billion.

So when you go to their party website and their caucus website and go, okay, so what's their platform? It's not found. They don't have a platform on their website. So it becomes, okay, I understand the idea behind being the opposition. But when you're opposing new schools in your own riding, when you're opposing seniors' homes in your own riding that you've stood up here and talked about and asked for, and the government goes, yes, we need to do that because it's the right thing to do for the people of Saskatchewan . . .

And it doesn't matter which political stripe your MLA is. You need a new school; we're going to do our best to get you that new school. So you know, it was mentioned before. When we announced the new schools in Hampton Village, the Leader of the Opposition didn't even show up. He stood up here over and over and over again, asked for that new school. So we go, okay. Fifty-one times he stood up and asked for that new school. And when we say, okay, we're going to give you a new school. You want to come to the announcement? It's like, uh, uh, uh, no. You know, you'd think he would be happy, but no. He's against a new school in his own riding, yes, the negative nine. I think they really need to take a look at renaming their party or rebranding it and incorporating negative into that name.

So I was talking about Highway 39 earlier. And the reason I brought that up is because I have a whole bunch of family members that use that highway just about every day. I've got brothers and sisters, uncles, cousins, my dad. They're still all active in the oil field down in that Estevan-Weyburn area. So working on twinning that highway is something that makes me very happy because that's one of the economic drivers of our province, is the oil field. So getting that going is really kind of important and close to my heart.

We talk about record funding in health care. So we're increasing the funding to meet the three-month wait-list. We're putting in support for primary care centres and collaborative emergency centres. We've also introduced programs to reduce ER [emergency room] wait times and improve patient flow.

You know, over and over and over again we talk about the growth in the province, but it's most apparent in some of our K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools. So we're moving forward with that. And I'd like to know, and I've heard the question asked from our side before, is it the new schools they're against or is it just the principle of P3 that they're against? And they've never really come out and said whether or not they're for the new schools or if it's just the funding process, the funding model that we're probably going to use to fund these schools. What do they say? They sit there and they won't answer. They won't put it on their website.

You know, when our Premier took over as leader, it wasn't long before we had our new growth platform — one year. One year, we had our new growth platform up there for everybody to see. And they laughed at it and said it was nonsensical and those numbers could never, never be hit.

So we're a year into the Leader of the Opposition's mandate as Leader of the Opposition, and what's on their website? Nothing. It's just not there. So you know, to oppose everything just for the sake of opposing it, I don't know if that's the right thing to do. Actually I'm pretty sure that's the wrong thing to do, especially with no reason. It's just when you say you're wrong, you should probably back that up with something other than you're just wrong and sit down and throw a pout because you're not winning. You know, it's time to actually stand up and say why we're wrong, not just, you know, sit back and go, you're wrong. You actually should back that up with an argument.

So when we look at this, we talk about a balanced budget. They talked about it being hard on families. Well we have no tax increases. We have controlled spending. We have huge investments in infrastructure and huge investments in people. That's why there's 48 of us over here and nine over there because we actually listen to what the people have to say. We take time to go out, talk to folks, take their ideas, bring them back, bring them into caucus, bring them into our caucus members, have that discussion. And you know, it shows up.

So at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank everybody for giving me the time to stand up, thank my constituents, my family, my CA. I also want to say that I will be supporting the budget, and I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it gives me great pleasure to stand up here and discuss the budget, this great budget that we just came down with here last week. Mr. Speaker, as usual, we have to do some thank yous, and I want to thank the people of Carrot River Valley for giving me the honour and the privilege to represent them for the past six years in this House, and it's been great.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I plan on throwing my hat in the ring again and to run again for the next election because I believe that this government is a government that's moving forward. Besides that, Mr. Speaker, when I brought that up to my wife, she was ecstatic also because she said, you're not ready to retire because if you retire, you know, within two weeks around our house there'd be one of us dead, and it could be me. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to continue to represent the people of Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my constituency assistants, Cindy Warner and Shelley Meyer and Charlene Enns.

An Hon. Member: — How much help do you need?

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well they haven't killed me yet, but sometimes they would like to. But they do a fantastic job of running our office at home, Mr. Speaker. They do the, as everybody here in the legislature knows, our constituency assistants do the yeoman work. And you know, we're kind of the ones out in the public's eye but, Mr. Speaker, they do great work. And I will say that it's really nice to have people like that helping us out within our constituency, and I know I'm not the only one, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk . . . Obviously what I'm up here doing is talking about the budget. First off, it's a balanced budget again, Mr. Speaker. This party's done a great job on balancing the budget. And not only do we balance the budget but, Mr. Speaker, we haven't got any tax increases this time around. This is important. This is important to help grow the economy. You know, Saskatchewan used to be known as a very high-tax province. It's kind of kept the economy down. But that was back years ago when the NDP was in power.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also know it's a very tight budget. We have to control our spending. We have to invest in infrastructure, but we have to do it carefully. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's a well-known fact on our infrastructure that we've had to do a lot of backfilling on it because of 16 years of the previous administration running the infrastructure in the ground. And they were far willing, rather than fix the infrastructure, they just shut it down. You know, they talked about education. They shut down — what? — 176 schools, shut down 52 rural hospitals. They didn't think of investing in infrastructure.

And you take a look in the Carrot River Valley constituency alone. We're getting a brand new school in Hudson Bay, Mr. Speaker. It's being built as we speak. When you take a look at the roads that have been improved in the Carrot River Valley constituency, and not just in Carrot River Valley constituency, Mr. Speaker, but all over the province, our Minister of Highways has done a fantastic job of fixing up the mess that this government was left to look after, Mr. Speaker.

And of course in rural Saskatchewan, one thing we always talk about besides how much snow we have and what the weather's doing to our crops, but one thing we have in common, we always talk about health. Now under the NDP the health system was, you know, I hate to say it this way but it was basically the laughingstock of Canada. It wasn't a laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. Our health system had the longest wait times in all of Canada, the longest wait times in all of Canada.

Now we're moving forward. And yet every single day, what does the Opposition Leader do? He stands up and criticizes us for moving forward on our health initiatives. Mr. Speaker, boy, they've got short memories. They were criticized all across the country for the way that they ran the health system here in Saskatchewan, which was the birthplace of medicare, Mr. Speaker.

Now you take a look at this side of the House. Not only, not only do we have a Health minister, but we have a Rural Health minister also. You know, under Roy's revenge, they forgot about rural Saskatchewan. They just went out there and closed all the hospitals down. But yet we have a Rural Health minister who goes out and visits all of our communities, Mr. Speaker. He went out and has been around to 80 different rural communities looking at their health systems, trying to figure out a way how we can improve the health system for our people in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, these are fundamental things that the NDP never ever thought about.

I'll go back to them closing those 52 hospitals. We're building new hospitals, Mr. Speaker. Some of them were announced by the NDP but they just never got around to building them. What an amazing thing. They like to do that on schools also. So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at that end of it, this budget continues with what we started in 2007 and moving things forward.

Mr. Speaker, we could talk about agriculture, very important in Saskatchewan. Now the NDP, all they can do is sit back and criticize on the ag end of it. But when we ran into grain transportation problems, our Minister of Agriculture immediately — immediately — started working on it way back, actually way back last spring, and continued all the way through. We have a Premier that has gone and met with our counterparts in Ottawa on various different occasions. We've had the minister, his delegation going down there and meeting with them. And now we're getting action on the transportation of grain which is so vitally important to the people of Saskatchewan and to the people of Carrot River Valley.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, the other thing we have is we had the opposition sitting there chastising, kind of laughing, saying, well the backbenchers never do anything, talking about northern Saskatchewan, saying the backbenchers never did anything. You know, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how they used to . . . Well I guess I know how they used to run it. It was kind of a mess over there. But in this government, everybody gets a say. It goes through caucus. Every man and woman has a chance to say what they think in caucus and to go along. And just because you're a minister doesn't mean that you're a higher priority in getting everything. No, Mr. Speaker, it works all the way across the board. Everybody has a say, and that's the way our caucus operates — much different than the caucus from across the way.

Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about northern Saskatchewan. And my counterpart from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton mentioned it, how all of us, including that line across the North, are representing the North very well. We've got major things going on. Up there we have forestry, and I know my counterpart from Saskatchewan Rivers just had a mill start up, going up in Big River. Mr. Speaker, under the NDP the mills were all

shutting down. Why? Well part of it was economics, but part of it was a convoluted system that they had in their forest management practices.

Now, Mr. Speaker, take a look at what's happened since this government's gotten in power. We have the Weyerhaeuser mill restarted in Hudson Bay. We have Edgewood lumber that got restarted in Carrot River. We have Carrier lumber that got started up in Big River. The mills are doing well, and the people are doing well. And under this government business likes to thrive, unlike the members opposite who at one time used to chase people out of the province.

You know, I can still remember the old saying that, well we'll just leave that oil in the ground because it'll be there later on. Well I've got news for you. If you leave it there too long, you're not going to have the employment. You're not going to have a growing province, and you're not to be moving the province forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government sees things in a far different way. We like to see people working. We like to see the province growing. We don't like shutting down schools. We like a good health system. And, Mr. Speaker, that's moving our province forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if on this budget I didn't give credit to treasury board. These people have put in yeoman work along with our Finance minister and his staff. They've done a fantastic job of coming forward with a balanced budget in relatively tight times, Mr. Speaker.

Let's face it. Saskatchewan, they didn't completely miss the recession, but they came pretty close. Saskatchewan now is a place to be, not a place to be from, Mr. Speaker, because in Saskatchewan we have jobs. We have people that are going out there, working, getting good wages. I believe we are actually the third-highest weekly wage in Canada at the present time, Mr. Speaker, a far cry from when the NDP were in power. And you know, the kids would come out of school, and what would they do? They would take their suitcase and head to Alberta or British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, my how things have changed in the last seven years. How this province has pulled together is . . . This is an optimistic province now. You know, you walk around the province back in 2000, and people were walking around, and everybody had a frown on their face. Now you know something, Mr. Speaker? They're all walking around smiling. Saskatchewan's known throughout not just Canada but throughout North America as a place, as a place to be, a place to work, a place to raise your family, and I'm very proud that both of my children are working right here in Saskatchewan now. That means when they eventually, and when I say eventually, but when they eventually get married and have grandchildren, they won't have very far to come and see grandpa and I won't have very far to return them either.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know the things that we have done in this province, we as a government, and I guess I can say we as the people of Saskatchewan, when you take a look at what we've done with the tax situation, the NDP were just up complaining today about the minimum wage. Well what good does it do you

if you raise the minimum wage and then you tax it all back?

This government has taken 114,000 people off of the tax rolls. That's how we're helping the low-income earners in this province, Mr. Speaker. They are not having to pay tax. Before, under the old NDP system, yes, you could raise the minimum wage, which they basically never did, but they said they would've, you know, had they been here. Yes, right. But the catch is, is they would have just taxed it all back anyway. We took 114,000 people off of that tax roll.

Mr. Speaker, our budget continues on. The NDP always sits back and claims that they wanted to help the seniors. So what did they do by helping the seniors? They closed a bunch of beds, didn't build any seniors' homes. Oh that reminds me, Mr. Speaker, we are getting a brand new long-term care facility being built in Tisdale.

You know, Mr. Speaker, so what have we got now? Let's start adding it up. Under this government, Carrot River Valley, we're getting better roads by a long shot. We're having our mills reopen. We're having our agriculture producers paying way less tax on their land than what they were before. We're actually funding crop insurance, unlike the negative nine across the way.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I said the roads, the hospitals, the health system. We're improving our health system. We're getting more docs up in our area than what we had before, Mr. Speaker. The member from Biggar, the Minister of Rural Health, has made sure that we are getting more docs in the province and we're getting more nurses in the province to be able to help move rural Saskatchewan forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the one thing, like I said on the financing, it had to be tight. And although we're not going to get everything, and everybody isn't going to get everything, this government is committed to bringing as much as what we can forward to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I forgot about one more thing. We were talking about education. And I know I'd use up a little bit extra of your time here, but Cumberland College just built a brand new facility in Nipawin, Mr. Speaker. Now that Cumberland College facility is used a lot by our First Nations people up there. So we're getting people coming from Cumberland House, Shoal Lake, and Red Earth who are attending there, whether to upgrade their education, whether to look at getting trades. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an untapped resource that we can use within this province. And this government stands behind our education, our education to help these people along to be able to move this province forward in that respect also, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, with these few odds and ends in my short little bit of time of standing up here speaking, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I will certainly be supporting this budget, and I will not be supporting the amendment put forth by the NDP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, the theme of the 2014-15 balanced budget will keep Saskatchewan on a path of steady growth.

Saskatchewan's population grew 20,000 people — second highest in Canada only behind Alberta — in 2013 to an all-time high of 1,117,503 people. Mr. Speaker, the budget is balanced. There are no tax increases. It controls spending, investment, and infrastructure. And there are investments in people that will ensure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I can't believe the member from Rosemont wouldn't stand up and support a budget that is going to replace Sacred Heart School and is based on a summary focus, something that he's been talking about for months and months and months.

The members opposite got up and stood when the Finance minister announced the summary focus for the budget, but I was quite surprised that they wouldn't stay on their feet for the rest of it.

Mr. Speaker, before I continue on, I would like to take the opportunity to thank some people. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, thank you to my colleagues at treasury board for their knowledge and guidance during this budget process. As a member of treasury board, I was very impressed with the presentations of all the ministries. I would like to thank the Finance ministry and the Finance minister for all the support and resources needed to obtain a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the third parties for their presentations and future plans. This includes universities, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], health regions, and school divisions. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my constituency assistants, Cheryl Hume and Maureen Paron, for their dedication to the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford while I spent extra time on this budget process.

Mr. Speaker, this is our government's seventh consecutive balanced budget. As I said, our population grew by 20,000 people in 2013 to an all-time high of 1,117,503 people according to Stats Canada. Saskatchewan's population grew at a rate of 1.83 per cent in 2013, the second-highest growth rate among the 10 provinces, only behind Alberta. Saskatchewan and Alberta were also the only two provinces to enjoy net interprovincial in-migration.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about how this 2014-15 budget supports municipal growth in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's municipalities are receiving \$394.6 million in direct provincial support in this year's provincial balanced budget to build communities and enhance quality of life for their residents. That's up 32.8 million or 9.1 per cent from the 2013-14 budget, and it's up 152 million or 63.1 per cent from the 2007-08 budget. Overall municipal revenue sharing is more than doubled what it was in 2007, up 129.7 million from the 2007-08 budget.

Mr. Speaker, urban revenue sharing for all cities, towns, villages, and resort villages will amount to 165.2 million in 2014-15. Revenue sharing for rural municipalities, which includes organized hamlets, will total 72.6 million, and northern municipalities will receive 19.2 million in revenue sharing in the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, through municipal revenue sharing, SaskBuilds

and a future federal-provincial municipal infrastructure agreement, the Government of Saskatchewan will assist municipalities with infrastructure investments to meet the opportunities and challenge of growth.

Mr. Speaker, this year's balanced budget avoids tax increases by controlling government spending. This year's budget also sees the government moving to a summary focus as recommended by the Provincial Auditor. A budget surplus of 71 million is forecasted, taking into account all government business enterprises including commercial Crown corporations and government service organizations which include ministries, boards of education, health regions, among others.

Mr. Speaker, this year's balanced budget invests in infrastructure and people, aligning the goals and priorities of the Saskatchewan plan for growth. Government has also chosen to maintain the current provincial tax provisions for credit unions, including the special income tax reduction and the exemption from paying the provincial capital tax, recognizing the restraints credit unions face related to raising capital as well as their important place in the economy of our province.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014-15 agriculture budget of 371.6 million will help to ensure farmers and ranchers have the support they need to keep the agriculture industry growing and strong after record production levels and exports in 2013. The budget, Mr. Speaker, is highlighted by nearly 79 million for strategic initiatives such as research and market development, an increase of 7.5 million from the previous year. The budget also includes the new western livestock price insurance program and enhancements to crop insurance programs.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, approximately 242 million or 65 per cent of the 2014-15 budget will go toward fully funding business risk management programs including AgriStability, AgriInvest, and crop insurance. The Crop Insurance Corporation will deliver western livestock price insurance to Saskatchewan cattle and hog producers, providing them protection against unexpected market price declines.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers harvested a record crop of 38.4 million tonnes in 2013, surpassing the 2020 growth plan target of 36 million tonnes. Saskatchewan also set a new record of \$11.7 billion worth of agriculture exports in 2013, an increase of 83 per cent since 2007. The budget provides significant support to help producers continue to increase production and the growth plan export goal of \$15 billion by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will invest nearly 5 billion in health care in 2014-15 to continue health system's patient-first transformation and support improved access to high-quality care for the province's growing population. The funding is 144 million or 3 per cent increase over 2013-14.

Mr. Speaker, some of the highlights of the health budget are 3.25 billion for regional health authorities; 155.7 million for Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to provide cancer care services; 8 million for upgrades and repairs to Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon; 60.5 million for surgical wait-list initiative; 13.1

million to support innovative approaches that enhance access to primary health care, including additional collaborative emergency centres that are known as CECs to improve health services for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, CECs are designed to increase access to high-quality, comprehensive primary health care that can deal with unexpected illness or injury in a timely fashion. The first CEC was established in Maidstone in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency, and this year's funding will bring the total to five centres.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy with increasing investment in training programs and labour force development, regulatory modernization, and establishing the Saskatchewan manufacturing centre of excellence are the priorities of the 2014-15 Minister of the Economy budget. The total value of Saskatchewan's manufacturing shipments for 2013 was approximately \$15.2 million, a new record for the province and up from 14.2 billion in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014 budget also continues to invest more in training opportunities to address Saskatchewan's labour market shortages, including a 1 million increase for the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission for 300 additional training seats in 2014-15 for a total of 22.2 million and 6,700 seats; 500,000 increase for apprenticeship training allowance; 924,000 increase for provincial training allowance; and 2.1 million increase for 700 new adult basic education seats, totalling 8,580 seats.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of the Economy has also introduced a new oil and gas well levy. Coming into effect April 1st, the new levy will streamline licensing and regulation by eliminating 10 different licensing fees which amount for more than 20,000 annual transactions. The new levy will require that industry pay 90 per cent of the government's oversight. Mr. Speaker, the new levy will help fund service improvements to eliminate the unnecessary paperwork to the regulatory process. In the coming year the government plans to move to a single window online system for licence applications that will significantly reduce the current administrative burden faced by industry.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan continues to have one of the strongest economies in Canada, forecast to have the second-fastest growth this year. Mr. Speaker, the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency has seen and is seeing even more growth with the recent Husky Energy announcements. Husky Energy's approval of two new heavy oil thermal projects in the Edam East and the Vawn area are under construction now. Each plant when fully operational will create about 20 full-time jobs, and during the construction phase employment will peak at approximately 400 persons at each plant. The construction of the two facilities will be staggered.

Mr. Speaker, the two projects will each produce 10,000 barrels per day and both will sit on approximately 12 hectares with low NOx [nitrogen oxides] burners to minimize emissions. These two facilities will be added to the list of seven other thermal facilities that currently produce 37 barrels per day. Two other plants under construction — Sandall and Rush Lake just north of Paynton — will add another 33,500 barrels per day of new production over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, Husky's focus or growing focus on thermal projects is guided by a rich portfolio of opportunities and a proven template of smaller, steam-assisted, gravity drainage better known as SAGD plants providing better access to heavy oil reservoirs. Husky also has a pipeline of additional thermal projects under evaluation for development.

Mr. Speaker, one would have to think because of seven consecutive balanced budgets and a government that welcomes business, maybe this is why now we see these types of investment. We're also seeing investment by Altex and CN [Canadian National]. Altex is partnered with the RM [rural municipality] of Wilton and CN in construction of a major oil-loading facility at Lashburn and one at Unity. The Lashburn facility is currently loading 85 to 90 cars per day, moving to 300 to 350 cars per day over the next 16 months.

Mr. Speaker, company president Glen Perry said that the expansion of the energy and transportation sector in the Unity district "is vital to our growth and prosperity. We [both] look forward to the immediate spinoff and future job growth that will result from development of this Transload facility." "The economic benefits for our community are evident with the development of this facility by Altex," Mayor Sylvia Maljan had to say.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency there are oil haulers, vac trucks, welding rigs, and good jobs for many. Is it possible that seven consecutive balanced budgets, a government with a plan for growth, and a record investment in health care, infrastructure, and education may have something to do with that? I think so. It's a much better attitude out there than the last 16 years of a non-productive NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish up I would like to address some of the comments made in the last couple of weeks by members opposite. Mr. Speaker, on March 4th, 2014, the member from Elphinstone-Centre in adjourned debates on Bill 129 had this to say . . . And maybe it's one of these things where there is so much paperwork because there are so many legislative secretaries.

I've known some legislative secretaries over the years that have done some good work. [He goes on also to say] I think it provides for a better engagement of backbenchers or people that are not in cabinet.

. . . But the practice can descend into some pretty ridiculous depths. And I think at the end of the Devine government . . . if they weren't in cabinet, they were a Legislative Secretary and they got pay in perquisite that came along with that.

Mr. Speaker, is he impugning the character of our legislative secretaries? Mr. Speaker, the member from Elphinstone-Centre cannot continue to speak out of both sides of his mouth. On one hand, he speaks, he encourages engagement from members of the legislature but then stands and insinuates that our government's legislative secretaries only engage for additional pay. This is something that he should apologize for.

Mr. Speaker, the member also said:

... there are currently backbench MLAs that serve on treasury board, do I understand that correctly?

... I'll be interested to get a more definite explanation in the terms of the whole appointing of non-cabinet members to treasury board and how that authority was arrived at ...

Mr. Speaker, once again, is the member opposite against inclusive government, against the government that looks to maximize the talents of all members of its caucus, a government that ensures that the voices of private members and their constituents are heard at the treasury board level?

Mr. Speaker, also the member from Saskatoon Centre on March 12th during adjourned debates, he had this to say. Now stay with me because I don't know where this goes.

But now you see the backbench is being brought into [the] Executive Council. And I have a question about what does that really mean? ... It's kind of fuzzy, [yes, I guess] that backbenchers can be brought in and out.

... *The Financial Administration Act* as being amended to eliminate the Investment Board, and provide the treasury board so it can have non-ministerial members.

He also says:

And maybe I'm wrong [I would agree there] because this hasn't really been explained well to ... you know, that they do have non-executive members, Executive Council members as part of the treasury board. And typically, you know, from what I understand, you have Executive Council, then you have the backbenchers, and the backbenchers are there to support Executive Council.

Stay with me here because this even gets better:

And that's how our democracy kind of works [he says]. You have the backbenchers, while technically not part of the Executive Council, can sort of say, you know, we want to keep you in line. That's how a caucus meeting goes, right? That you have to make sure your work that you present has the support of the backbench, and if it doesn't, then you've got a problem.

Mr. Speaker, what I don't understand here is what is the member asking for. Does he want private members to be excluded from decision making or is this how they run their caucus?

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say ... I've only got one more page of this and then we'll move on to something real good. He also goes on to say:

But many of the other legislative secretaries haven't quite achieved the same level of profile in the public. And I think that it's important that when we have people who are appointed legislative secretaries that they actually do get out there and create profile within the public and do some work on that.

He also says:

So I think there is a role for legislative secretaries, but they need to be much more active. And as I say, I think that very few of them actually do achieve that profile in the public, and so I wonder, why do you even have legislative secretaries [for]? Now you're getting rid of the idea that you have to reappoint them. I mean I think it would be good for them to show up maybe once a year to get their new contract. That would be at least showing that they are interested in their role.

Mr. Speaker, I hope for the sake of the constituents of Saskatoon Centre the member does not truly believe what he is saying. I would hope that the member doesn't truly believe showing up once a year to renew a contract should be the baseline of interest and performance for elected officials. Mr. Speaker, this illustrates the difference between the two sides of the House. This side of the House is about action; that side, talk.

The members opposite equate work with press clippings, photo ops, and public profiles. On this side of the House, we equate work with putting boots on the ground and meeting with concerned stakeholders. The members opposite talk about moving to a summary budget. Our government takes action on introducing a balanced summary budget.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite will think for himself over there and vote to support this seventh consecutive balanced budget that he knows is a good thing, a budget that holds the line on spending, a budget that offers no tax increases, a budget that is balanced on a summary basis. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and definitely not supporting the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm really pleased today to rise to respond to the '14-15 budget on behalf of the people from the Kelvington-Wadena constituency. I'm pleased to take some time to talk about the impact this budget had on the people of the province, not just the people that are here today but the people that will move into our province and continue to call Saskatchewan home.

We all know that our neighbouring provinces, and perhaps some of the provinces right across the Dominion of Canada are watching us, and perhaps they're even envying us in some cases. Some of them are probably thinking and wondering who this new Saskatchewan is. Where is the little, self-conscious, sad, timid province that used to have no self-esteem or no vision, the province that we used to know? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, things have changed a lot. Saskatchewan is no longer a have-not province just trying to survive. We are a thriving province. And I know it's the good people of Saskatchewan and our abundant resources that have allowed that to happen. But I am very proud to be part of a government that's part of this growth.

I'm also proud of the fact that we have a Premier, the most popular Premier in Canada who is visionary and a caring individual. I thank him for his energy. I also want to thank his family. I want to thank Tami and Faith and Megan and Colter

and his mom and dad for sharing him with us. I know he can do what he does so well because of the support that he has back home. So we thank them as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my long-time friend and colleague, a man who is not only dedicated to his job and his family, but to his roots and his Ukrainian heritage, our Finance minister, the member from Canora-Pelly, I want to thank him on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan for being focused and detailed and strong, and just a little bit OC [obsessive-compulsive].

[16:45]

The Finance minister's staff and his officials from Finance have questioned and considered every dollar that we brought forward in this budget. Their drive and determination was infectious. The budget was built on the strong will of the Finance minister and the treasury board and the caucus of the Saskatchewan Party. And I think all of us should be thankful for working together.

The Finance minister is just about as nice as the member from Walsh Acres. I'm saying just about, not quite though, because the member from Walsh Acres gave me his jacket last week and I was freezing in the cold. And the Minister of Finance just chastised me for not bringing a jacket. So I thank him; I thank the member from Walsh Acres.

I want to thank the staff in my office here in Regina: Stacey Ferguson, my new chief of staff, and Megan Burns, Krista MacNeil, Sherry Rosenberg, Linda Holzer, and Ms. Black who just returned. Thank you for treating every issue like the clients, and every client like they're your family. That's a very important group that is around me. I want to thank Amanda Plummer who decided to go to greener pastures in Environment.

For the officials in the ministry who work with all of us with the programs and the policies and the financial issues, and their job is to building better lives for vulnerable people, I want to tell them that I respect them. Linda and Anne in my office in Wadena — Linda's been there for as long as I've been elected, and Anne is a new part-time assistant. And each time a phone call comes into the office, they tell me that they're looking at it through my eyes and they try and be me, which isn't always easy, but I thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I have five kids and eight grandchildren and every one of them makes a difference in my life. They're very active young people that are living mostly outside of the province, but I wish they were closer, and that's my goal is to have my family move home. And to my husband, Marty, a husband of 47 years, I thank him for his love and support and his ideas and sometimes his criticism, but mostly just for being himself.

And for the people of Kelvington-Wadena, it's an honour to represent them. Anybody who's never been to that beautiful part of the province, I invite them to come to visit to Greenwater Park with one of the best golf courses in Saskatchewan, to the other resorts, Marean Lake and Barrier Lake and Fishing Lake, and to see the view, the thousands of acres of farm land and forestry and the cattle and the rodeo. And it's a great part of the province to live in.

I also have two First Nations — Yellow Quill and Fishing Lake First Nation — and I know that they work hard to achieve outcomes in educational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, just last week I had the pleasure of meeting with a group in Saskatoon called Upstream. With them was Ryan Meili, Alison Robertson, and Charles Plante. And they shared their ideas on the next steps to address affordability. I thank them for their time. I look forward to future discussions. But they reminded me of a quote that's important to me and that I believe in, but I think that the members opposite haven't really thought about it. The quote was, "A dream without a plan is a wish."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why the Premier presented the Saskatchewan plan for growth, growth with a purpose, to improve the lives of the people in Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is . . . Out of the nearly \$14 billion budget that we just brought down, nearly 1 billion of that is for people with disabilities; \$446.2 million of that is for people with disabilities. I know that the Premier has said very often that his goal and the goal of our government is to make Saskatchewan the best place to live in Canada if you have a disability. And we're working very hard, not just within government and across ministries, but with the community-based organizations to do just that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've spent in this budget \$9.9 million in funding from the Ministry of the Economy for employment assistance for people for disabilities to assist adults with disabilities prepare for work and to maintain employment.

In the Ministry of Health, we spent \$7.6 million for autism intervention and 4.2 million for intensive fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention and programming. There's also \$43 million for Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living to maintain benefits for people with long-term disabilities, and in Finance, \$15.8 million for the disability tax credit and the disability supplement.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of our plan in the last election, part of the platform was the investment for people that are on the SAID program. This year there's an extra \$5.1 million increase, or an increase of \$5.1 million for people on SAID. That's going to give them an extra \$20 a month for those in residential care, \$50 a month for individuals, and \$55 a month for couples. This year we're expecting to have more than 12,000 households be on the SAID program, and we're very proud of the opportunity to provide a program that provides respect and dignity.

The budget also sees an increase of \$20.4 million for community-based organizations and also support for the transition of residents from Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw to new homes in the communities right around the province. It's going to contribute to further development of assessment and stabilization and crisis support, and there will be an additional support of \$17.34 million to help CBOs address the recruitment and retention.

One of the issues that's very important to me and my colleagues in the Human Services Committee is the child and family agenda. This year in total the province will have committed nearly \$62.5 million to the agenda since it was created in 2011.

This year the Ministry of Health introduced and is working on one of the most important issues that I believe we can be looking at as government, and that is the mental health and addictions action plan. During the consultations, there was more than 3,000 submissions received and over 300 individuals participated in 18 communities.

To keep families together and prevent children from coming into care, the Ministry of Social Services is increasing the intensive family supports and after-hours . . . to support families. We're also expanding the positive parenting program to give parents the skills and confidence they need to keep their children at home.

And part of the building partnerships to reduce initiative, we have two additional centres of responsibility, and we'll now have 10 hubs across our province, in Prince Albert, Yorkton, La Ronge, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Estevan, Weyburn, Nipawin, Saskatoon, Lloydminster, and Swift Current.

There will be an additional 500 licensed daycare spaces and 15 new pre-kindergarten programs.

The Minister of Education is leading the work on implementing the recommendations of the joint force on improved education and employment outcomes.

And I'm really pleased with a news release that came from the provincial . . . from the child advocate talking about his support for the council for children's office that will be established this year. Their program will roll out in '15-16.

One of the issues that the members opposite are talking about very often is the support for seniors, and I'm very pleased that this budget is recognizing and continues to recognize the needs. We have \$27.3 million to continue the construction of five previously announced long-term care facilities. We have \$4.5 million for the Home First/Quick Response pilot project, money for urgent actions fund, for seniors' house call programs, and to replace long-term care facilities in Qu'Appelle and plan for the long-term care in La Ronge.

Mr. Speaker, also during this budget, we have a budget for seniors of \$10 a month increase in benefits for seniors under the seniors' income plan. And next year the benefit will increase to \$270 a month which is triple what it was in 2007. There's nearly 15,000 Saskatchewan seniors receive the seniors' income benefits. There's also an increase in the monthly income for the personal care home benefit from \$1,875 to \$1,950 which will take place in July of this year.

Mr. Speaker, another one of the issues that's been important to me and to the people of the province is our investment in affordable housing. The highlights of this budget includes money for the first of a five-year extension to the federal-provincial investment in affordable housing, more money for Habitat for Humanity, and an expansion of the life lease program to increase the number of affordable units.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was 18 years ago that I was first elected. The NDP focused . . . That's when they began their focus of what I think was forgetting about rural Saskatchewan. During that time they closed 52 hospitals. They continued to have the

highest education portion of property tax, I believe, in Canada. The roads crumbled and the RMs' needs were ignored.

And I remember sitting on the other side of the House and listening to the former premier, Roy Romanow, point at the nine of us of the Sask Party members saying, you'll never be back. You'll never get elected. And then in 2003, the next election, the NDP used fear to beat hope, and they won a minority election. They kept people submissive by scaring them with no plan and no vision. And then in 2007, hope did beat fear. Our kids started coming home again and staying home. Our population increased and people started smiling like we knew they could.

And now we're bringing down our seventh balanced budget. Not everybody watched the budget, but I know the effect of the budget is going to be felt by everyone. There's new hospitals, new schools, new roads, and more help for people with disabilities, more housing. There's a summary financial statement with positive affirmation from the Provincial Auditor's office and people like the Children's Advocate and from SARC. And I'm very pleased with the work that's being done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe in tomorrow. I believe in the people of our province, regardless of their abilities. I believe in the children of our province. I believe that we have an opportunity to be more than we've ever been. I believe I will not be supporting the amendment from the members opposite, and I know I will be supporting the budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too am very pleased to have this opportunity to rise in this hallowed Chamber and lend my voice in support of this steady growth budget.

But before I get into my discussion on this budget, I, like my colleagues, have some people I very much need to recognize today. Firstly, my thanks to the constituents of The Battlefords not only for having the faith in my ability to represent them but for all of their input, comments, and suggestions. That's what makes for strong democratic government.

Then I would like to thank two tremendous ladies, Lillian Robinson and Gail Heintz. They're my two CAs back in the constituency office in The Battlefords. About a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to have to man my office up there due to vacation leave and an illness. And I thought, how bad can that be? I should be able to handle it for a couple of days. I soon found out differently. I had two phone lines ringing and a constituent sitting in my office, and the whole thing was just coming unravelled in front of me. I gained a whole new appreciation for those two ladies and what they do on that time. They do their job very efficiently, with compassion, and with great concern for their constituents, and I thank them very much for what they do up there.

Finally to my family for the patience they've shown with me for the times that I'm away from family functions and sometimes being extra tired when they are around, and of course especially

to my wife, Linda. As we all know in this Chamber, this life can be a little hectic at times and very demanding. So the great support that I get from her allows me to meet the requirements of this job. I thank her for keeping me focused, keeping me motivated, keeping me grounded, and yes, sometimes even chilled out when I need to be, when I get a little overheated.

This budget is exciting in many ways, but I would like to first just break it down into five components. Number one, this is a balanced budget, and it is a budget based on the summary financials only. This government has listened to our Provincial Auditor and changed the focus of our annual budget. To quote our Acting Provincial Auditor who says of this budget: "It will eliminate confusion and help legislators and the public better understand the government's finances." Mr. Speaker, this budget highlights \$71 million surplus, total revenue of 14.07 billion, and expense of 14 billion.

Number two, we are pleased to report that no tax increases are included in this budget. Number three, we have controlled spending. And if you examine our core spending — the old GRF [General Revenue Fund] if you will, our chequebook — you will see \$11.9 billion in revenue and \$11.08 billion in expenses, leaving \$105 million to contribute to the summary financials.

By controlling our spending, Mr. Speaker, we will avoid increasing our government debt which, by the way, we have reduced by some 44 per cent since we formed government. Saskatchewan's debt as a percentage of GDP [gross domestic product] is forecast to be 14.2 per cent at the end of March 2015. That's down a whopping 29 per cent from '07-08 and 57 per cent from 2000-2001. That's something all Saskatchewan residents are thankful for, with accumulated interest savings of nearly \$1 billion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — It now being past 5 p.m., this House now stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight.

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

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