



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

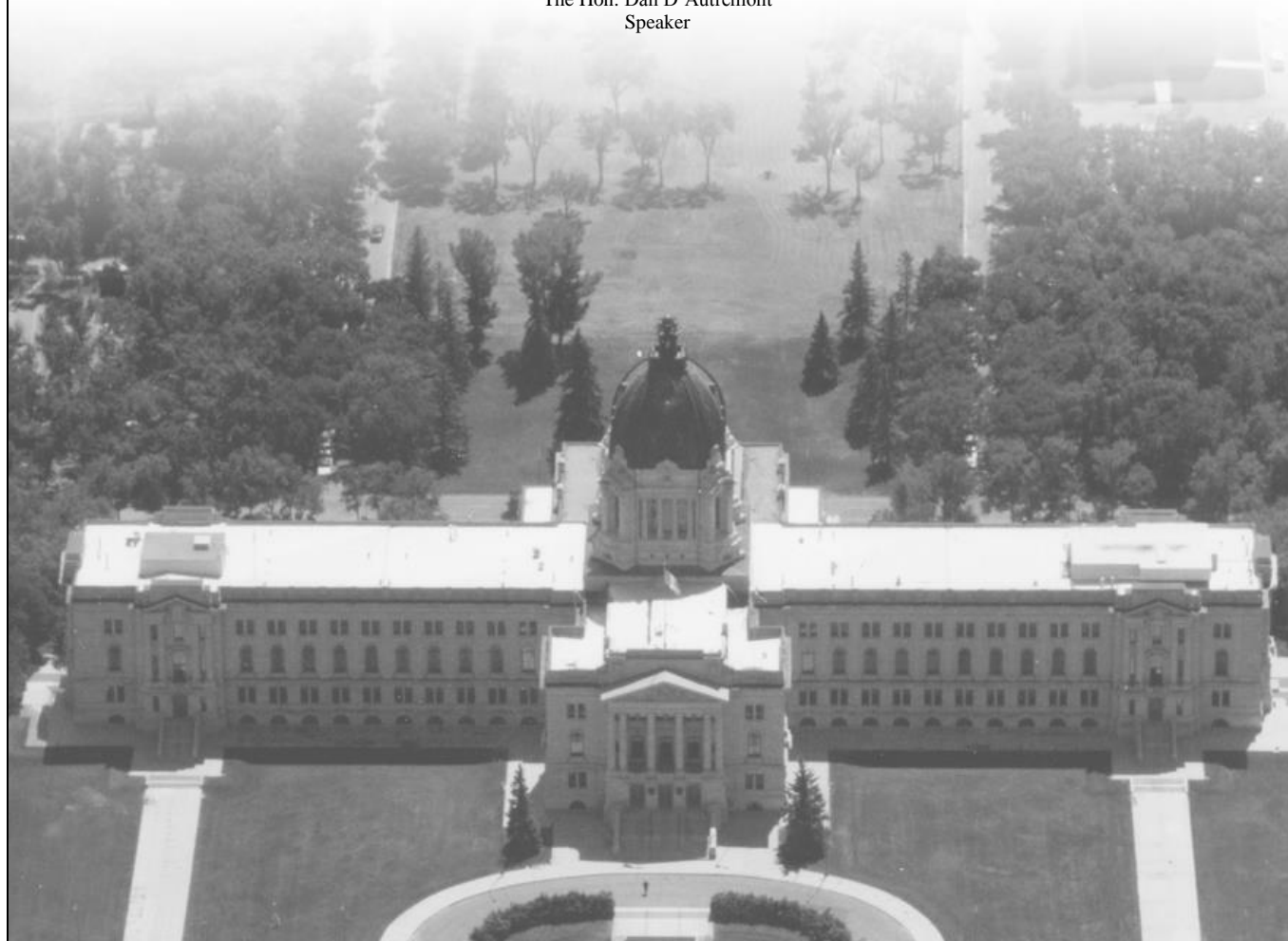
of the

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
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, debate will resume. I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

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.]

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was able to wrap up my substantive comments before the supper break. I'll just clean up now.

Mr. Speaker, I was doing a few thank yous as is tradition during the budget speech, Mr. Speaker. I'd certainly like to thank my constituency assistant, Brittany, who does great work on behalf of the people of Regina Dewdney.

Of course I'd like to thank the minister, the minister and the treasury board who do a lot of work, Mr. Speaker. For the folks that might be watching at home, this is basically a year-round event. We hear about the budget once a year, people out there in the province, but this is a very substantive, long process. And certainly we have one of the best Finance ministers, I believe the best in Canada, so we're very fortunate that he's on our side, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly I'd like to thank of course and I always will try to do this every time I can, thank the constituents of Regina Dewdney who put their trust in me, a rookie person in politics, and they put their trust in me a couple of years ago in the last election, Mr. Speaker. So I thank them for that, certainly. And when I think about the people of Regina Dewdney, and of course all the people across the province, I think of all the great growth that continues to happen in our constituency, and I think of the families in our constituency, Mr. Speaker. The member from Wascana Plains talked about her parents. I'm lucky enough to have them in my constituency, and those are the type of people that worked so hard to build our province, Mr. Speaker. They are people that opened up business, they farm in our province, they work hard to support their families. And that's certainly the people I continue to look forward to represent, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the small-business owners, and certainly in Regina Dewdney there are a lot of them. I think about the area along Quance Street, Victoria Avenue East and that corridor there; there's all kinds of businesses. Certainly people think about the big box stores along there, but a lot of the companies that have opened up recently are small businesses, Mr. Speaker. And that's certainly the backbone of our province: the people that take risks, that put their money in harm's way to follow that

dream to be able to be their own boss, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot of respect for those folks that do that. And certainly like I mentioned, very important to the economy. And they employ a lot of people, Mr. Speaker. So I'm certainly very honoured and happy to represent them.

I also think about the volunteers in our great province of Saskatchewan. And I know we have the highest volunteer participation rate in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And I think of someone like Phyllis Bamford, Mr. Speaker. She's the president and has been for many, many years of the Dewdney East constituency — not constituency, but the Dewdney East community group, Mr. Speaker — and they do great work in that community, as recently with the member from Northeast at a Community Connections event, Mr. Speaker. And it was a chance for people to welcome newcomers to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I was able to talk to people from the Open Door Society, and they do just great work with newcomers in our province. And of course we know that we have records amount of people coming to our great province, Mr. Speaker. Certainly a refreshing change from what we had seen for many years previous, Mr. Speaker.

So I think of Phyllis. And they've also opened many, a couple of parks — swing sets and play structures and those kind of things in the area, Mr. Speaker. So those things are quality of life things, and people like Phyllis, they don't do it for money, obviously. They do it because they think it's important to give back, Mr. Speaker. They volunteer their time, expect nothing in return, and they make our province so much better. So when I think of the families and the good folks and the people that work so hard in our province and the people of Regina Dewdney, I'm very happy to be able to represent people like that.

Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd turn my comments . . . It seems lately on the backbenches you get to watch things that are happening in the House. And lately there's been talk from the members opposite. It seems it's been a bit of fascination, or they seem to be hung up on Japanese terms for things that are going on in government. And I thought it's kind of interesting. I think it's in a few situations I've seen tweets and things on the Internet and it's almost like they are mocking those terms, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's sort of a distraction as to what the important work that's going on.

I know a few of them. They've been talking about sensei over and over. They've said that many, many times during question period. They've talked about the word kaizen and, Mr. Speaker, I have a little bit of history with the word kaizen, Mr. Speaker, so I didn't have to look it up as to what it was. I knew about it. And I heard that many, many years ago, many years ago when I was playing football and one of the coaches I had at the time, that was sort of one of his mottoes. And what kaizen means is continual, never-ending improvement every single day. And that sort of became a motto of ours at the time, Mr. Speaker. And I thought, you know, that's a pretty good saying. That's pretty interesting. It kind of sort of hit home to me. I remember it all these years later so it must of sort of sunk in a little bit.

And another thing that coach talked about all those years ago was not related to that, but it was, it takes no talent, it takes no

talent to do those little things every single day that will get you better. And it may be something as easy as watching a little bit more film, getting in the weight room just the five extra more minutes, Mr. Speaker. And so those are one of those things that you can get just a little bit better every day. His philosophy, that coach, was if you get just a little bit better every day, that will add up. That'll add up, and you will get better, and you'll get better.

And certainly when I think about those years, I think that year was a turning point certainly in my career. I got better. We were a young group then, but the coach would always ask, not every day but most days, what did you do to get better? What little thing did you do? What did you concentrate on to get just a little bit better?

And of course you would have to fill him in. Well you know, I really worked on my first step. I worked on my hand placement. I watched a little bit more film, Mr. Speaker. And sure enough . . . And like I said, we had some real young, raw guys that worked really hard. He made us work quite hard, but we got much, much better. And we bought in a little bit to that motto, Mr. Speaker.

And so I don't bring that up, and obviously, Mr. Speaker, that's not . . . The word isn't why we achieved more. We got better. And I should mention that history proved that that group, it was young but over time there was many players that went on to very good things, very good things in the league.

And so again, the point here is what . . . I'm not trying to make that that was a magic word that just automatically things happened, but sort of a mindset. And certainly I think it illustrates that if we had, if I . . . I don't want to speak too much for my team, my former teammates, but if I took the NDP [New Democratic Party] attitude of just sort of mocking that word and saying, oh that can't work; it's a silly word; it doesn't mean anything; it's something I don't understand — if we had taken that attitude, I don't think good things might have happened that year. So I think, as I mentioned before, the members opposite are maybe getting a little bit hung up on the words and worrying about the wrong thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thought I would help the members opposite to realize that the words aren't that big of a deal, but also get them a little more comfortable with some of the sayings and how they apply to this budget. So I looked up a few words that I think are applicable to the current budget, Mr. Speaker. And one of the words is *kinkouyosan*. It means a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. We've had seven balanced budgets since this government took office, Mr. Speaker, three since I've been able to be an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Speaker. And the other term, *mattaku zouzei shinai*, no tax increases, Mr. Speaker. No tax increases.

And certainly I think those two sayings, or not the words necessarily but what happens and what it means, is enough for me. Just those two things, if I heard that I'd be more than happy to support this budget, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to do that for sure.

But what else does it mean? It's not the words, but what it means to our province, Mr. Speaker. One example is \$50

million less in interest costs just this year alone, Mr. Speaker. That's \$50 million that will no longer have to be paid to banks outside our province, Mr. Speaker. That's nearly \$1 billion in saved interest payments since '07. So we've been paying off NDP debt for all these years, Mr. Speaker, and it allows us to invest rather than pay out to banks and bondholders, Mr. Speaker. And so I would like to commend the government in its first term who paid off large amounts of debt, Mr. Speaker. We paid off 44 per cent of the GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt in the province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, again we've talked about the growth plan on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It's a plan that we have to grow this economy to be able to make strategic investments, not only strategic investments but also the money we've saved on paying off NDP debt, Mr. Speaker. And of course that growth helps for the following. I'm going to focus on a few things that are important in the budget to the people of Regina specifically. But of course my colleagues have much more eloquently said many things, the great things this budget has done for our province, so I'll just hit on a few, Mr. Speaker, while I have time here.

Certainly we've been able to do great work on the municipal revenue-sharing side, Mr. Speaker. Now I hear when I talk to my constituents out there, a lot of them say we need the roads to get better, we need the roads to get better in our cities. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, I hear that a lot. And constituents of course, sometimes when you're a politician at their door or you're talking to them at the mall or whatever, they're not sure which level of government that city roads are a part of, Mr. Speaker, who they belong to. But certainly the city of Regina this year is getting roughly \$40 million in revenue sharing, up 154 per cent since 2007, Mr. Speaker, obviously a lot of cash there. I know our mayor certainly calls this the envy of . . . What happens in our province, 1 per cent of the GST [goods and services tax] goes directly to municipalities, Mr. Speaker. He calls it the envy of Canada, and I certainly commend the cabinet for taking that move, Mr. Speaker, and helping with that municipal infrastructure.

Certainly in this budget we've seen from the minister long-term care upgrades in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. That will be coming. That's important work. We've heard from the members opposite a lot about long-term care and their concerns about that. We're acting on this and it's good to see that's happening in our capital city.

Work continues on road infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned just earlier, on the municipal side they're able to do so much more with the money we've helped them out with, but the Ministry of Highways has worked diligently on overpasses and bypasses in the Regina area, which are again so important. The west Regina bypass recently, the overpass at Pinkie was opened and work continues there, moving north towards Dewdney on Pinkie Road and certainly to the great work that's happening at the Global Transportation Hub, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, the east bypass, it wouldn't be a speech of mine if I didn't talk about the east bypass. And certainly Victoria Avenue East runs through the heart of Regina Dewdney and certainly a thing I hear lots from my constituents over and over is the traffic, the traffic that is along Victoria Avenue. There's seven

traffic lights between Prince of Wales Drive and the Ring Road. And there's a lot of heavy hauling going on, which is a good thing. It's a good thing to see that, Mr. Speaker, but certainly if we could bypass some of that through the outskirts of the city of Regina, it will alleviate that congestion. It also speaks, Mr. Speaker, to safety certainly with that increased traffic and with the overpasses. And the plans that are being worked on will help with that safety factor and that issue.

And certainly it's a massive project, Mr. Speaker. It's going to cost a lot of money. It's going to take quite a bit of time, but we're working on it. And that's great to see, and that's good news for Regina and area certainly.

Mr. Speaker, 1.8 billion has been spent on highways since 2011. Well on our way to the promised \$2.2 billion of highway infrastructure. So that's good for our province.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget as well there's \$50 million for the stadium, for the Regina revitalization initiative, Mr. Speaker. And that's a big project for our city, another big project. Certainly not only is it going to be a great facility, something to be very proud of for our province and certainly the city of Regina of course, but also the revitalization of the footprint of the current Mosaic Stadium, there'll be revitalization there. So certainly a big game changer for the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

[19:15]

And certainly it falls along with a lot of things that are happening in the CFL [Canadian Football League] in terms of stadiums, Mr. Speaker. I know in BC [British Columbia] they put a retrofitted, retractable dome that came with an over \$500 million price tag, and that certainly puts our project into perspective, Mr. Speaker. Winnipeg's opened a new stadium. Coming new this year is Hamilton, has a new facility coming, Mr. Speaker. Ottawa is coming back in the league. One whole side of their stands is going to be brand new, Mr. Speaker. And there's talk in Toronto of course of the Argos moving to an outdoor facility. So, Mr. Speaker, that's exciting news. Of course I'm off on a tangent here, but that's okay. It's good news for our province, Mr. Speaker.

One thing I haven't heard though, from the members opposite, is they've been very quiet on this stadium issue, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it's a big project for us and it is a large price tag, Mr. Speaker. But I think back to the 1930s and 1940s; I'm sure they said the same thing about the current stadium now, Mr. Speaker. And you think about what that facility, what that field has meant to this province and this city, Mr. Speaker. It brings all sorts of people in during the games, also concerts, those types of things, Mr. Speaker. And just the relationship the Roughriders have with our community and with our province, Mr. Speaker, and all that would have been lost if there wasn't those investments made.

And certainly, when you look at the current stadium, it is a large price tag, Mr. Speaker. But again up front, yes, it does cost a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, but think of all the events that will happen in the next 50 or 60 years. This is a long-term project, Mr. Speaker. And so you think about all the relationships that are built in the stands. You think about all the

amateur sports that happen on the field, Mr. Speaker, and boy, it's just sort of a magnet and a meeting place for our community. And it's going to be exciting to see what it looks like, first of all, when it gets start being built and of course when we see the new stadium right there on the exhibition grounds there, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be an exciting day, and we look forward to that.

But I also mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, they usually, you know, they oppose everything basically. They oppose everything, and I haven't heard them say, come out yea or nay on the stadium. So where do they stand on it, Mr. Speaker? I'd be interested to see. I believe the member from Elphinstone-Centre hasn't spoken yet. I'd like to see what he has to say with the infrastructure build right in his constituency.

And speaking of that also, Mr. Speaker, in this budget we have 12 homes for Habitat for Humanity being built, \$750,000 on top of the millions of dollars we've contributed to that great initiative, Mr. Speaker. So we're excited about that. I've been to a few key ceremonies. I've been able to contribute some of my time to those projects.

And again, Mr. Speaker, many of those builds happen in the constituency of Elphinstone-Centre, Mr. Speaker. They happen right there. So I guess we'll wait and see, Mr. Speaker, about how that member votes on the budget on Thursday, but those are new homes. Those are new families moving to that area. It's about urban renewal. It's about families getting a chance to own their own home. So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge that member to think, consider and think about how he's going to vote because these are important infrastructure bills in his constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Speaking of another new initiative, Mr. Speaker, is we're having . . . Well I have the Japanese term for it. I'm continuing my education here. Atarashi gakkou, that's the word for new schools. Those are new schools that are happening right here in Regina, two new schools. Sacred Heart and Connaught School, Mr. Speaker, those are important to our city. Again they are right in the constituency of Lakeview and Elphinstone-Centre.

So I urge that member . . . I know the NDP has a big track record of opposing everything. They simply oppose everything. And, Mr. Speaker, so they simply oppose everything but they also . . . Important to that also is they have no kaikaku. They have no kaikaku. They don't have a plan, Mr. Speaker. They don't have a plan for what's going to happen for our province, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to simply oppose everything, and that's fine. That's what they choose to do. So you know, it's been said before if you oppose everything, you oppose nothing.

But what we'd like to see, and certainly I think the people of the province deserve, what would they do differently. It's easy to oppose; anybody can do that, Mr. Speaker. But what would you do? And more importantly, what would you do differently? How would you pay for it? How would you pay for it? I think that's two very important questions the members opposite just haven't answered, Mr. Speaker. And I think the people of the province deserve to have that debate happen. This is what this House is for. That's what this beautiful building is all about, having that debate. And so we'll see what happens, Mr.

Speaker.

But I'd like to thank my constituents once again. I'd like to thank the minister and the treasury board once again for tabling a great budget, Mr. Speaker, certainly the envy of many, many jurisdictions. Like I said before, a balanced budget with no new taxes. Many, many, many, many jurisdictions — national, subnational, municipal — would love to be able to say that. I think that would make the front page. We've gotten fairly used to it here, Mr. Speaker. The last seven budgets, as I mentioned, have had that situation, Mr. Speaker. So I think a lot of places they'd have a parade or they'd have some sort of celebration to note that accomplishment, Mr. Speaker. We're very lucky we've had prudent management of our resources. That's what the people expect from our government, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we've been able to do in this budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wrap up my comments and listen to my friends here, my fellow MLAs. They will be able to talk about the steady growth budget far more eloquently than me, Mr. Speaker. But I'd like to say that I definitely will be, on behalf of the people of Regina Dewdney, be supporting this budget. So thank you.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand in the House and represent the people from Moose Jaw North and to express a note of thanks to all the people in Moose Jaw, especially in Moose Jaw North, who support me.

Also a great deal of thanks to my family, my wife, Debbie, for all the support she gives me, as well as the constituency office. I've got three people that work there regularly, two part-time, Deb Mutlow and Rosalie Boots; and then my full-time assistant is Judy Hatfield who is very diligent in working with the constituents for the constituency, doing a great job.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister delivered the Saskatchewan Party government's seventh balanced budget in this Legislative Assembly just last Wednesday. The budget was entitled *Steady Growth*, planning for economic strength and caring for the people of Saskatchewan. Growth really is what this budget is all about. It's common sense, fiscally responsible, beneficial to all the people of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, since last Wednesday, the Finance minister has been making presentations to different groups, different locations throughout the province. And yesterday I sat down with him for just a few minutes and asked him, what is the reception that he's getting with these presentations at different locations of the province?

And without a doubt, the presentations are being very well received. Everybody is quite excited that this is a balanced budget. There's no tax increases. It's investing in infrastructure and investing in people and it is controlling spending. And I think that's very prudent of this government to come up with this. I want to thank the minister for his guidance on this, and his ministry and all the people involved in bringing this budget to fruition for the people of Saskatchewan. The Finance minister could have . . . could see, hear no negative impact on

this budget, and we appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, at last week's budget presentation there was a number of guests that I had brought into the budget presentation. They were delighted to be here. It's always nice to be invited and especially I appreciate them coming in to the House here to hear the budget. After they were here, they all expressed a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for the minister and the Premier for the leadership that he provides.

They did have one thing that they were very disappointed in, and I kind of went into some discussion with that. I guess with the amount of space on that side of the room, they were seated behind the opposition benches, and the one guest of mine was very frustrated with all the nattering that was going on. And if I can quote him: "I was frustrated at the ignorance, disrespectful manner of the member from Athabasca." The guest was astounded at the reaction of this member who had really tarnished his visit to this House. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's unfortunate that the uncouth actions of a member actually ruined the visit for one of our visitors to their Legislative Assembly, and especially on this historic day of our budget presentation.

And it was a historic day. This is the seventh balanced budget that this government has brought out. There's no tax increases. It controls spending while investing in infrastructure and people.

Mr. Speaker, probably, and this has been gone over before, but probably the biggest change was the actual budget reporting strategy. The government is now reporting on the summary financial for the province, which includes all aspects of government finances, including the Saskatchewan Crown finances as well as the core income and expenses of our government. This change is to accommodate recommendations of the Provincial Auditor. And this has been something that they've mentioned, over the last six years since I've been involved, that this is something they would like to see changed. So I think it's very well done that this government has decided to make that step and go into the summary finances.

Whereas the summary financial figures were always reported, the actual business of the government was reported more specifically on the income received from taxes and resource revenue, and compared with the expenditures of programs, invested in programs like health care and highways and social services, parks, corrections, education, and so on. The Crowns' financial had been reported separately and now it'll be included with the summary finances.

Because the Crowns are so unique to Saskatchewan — we have more than most provinces — the summary financials statement is a little bit more elaborate and takes a little bit more planning. But the summary financial will be the total financial picture of the province. We will also continue to report the income and expenses of the government core operations; however the reporting will be around the summary financial statement.

This budget projects less revenue, smaller revenue than the previous year, and that's understandable with the revenue from resources, especially potash. And we've had to react accordingly. So this balanced budget is balanced by controlling

spending through programs and expenditures of the government.

It is for the betterment of all Saskatchewan people that this budget was designed as a balanced budget with major projects all throughout the province. If you go through the budget you will hear major projects in Yorkton, La Ronge, North Battleford, Swift Current, Lloydminster, Estevan, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw.

[19:30]

And I'm pleased, but not particularly surprised, that there is funding included for the completion of the new hospital. It's the lean design, proven efficiencies, and better patient care. Mr. Speaker, when the hospital was announced three years ago, the minister of the day told me quite distinctly that we would not announce it unless we knew we had the funds to carry it through and actually see it built. So it was not surprising but it was certainly pleasing to see the expenditure for the completion of the hospital in Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, I know the opposition is against lean, and I have no idea why. Lean is a proven program that has been proven over the years in different aspects of all society. So the lean concept is being introduced in our health system and is being very efficient. In fact yesterday the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Five Hills Health Region, Cheryl Craig, expressed her support for the lean principles in her interview on CHAB radio.

Also in this budget, Mr. Speaker, there's funding provided for major renovations for Sacred Heart School in Moose Jaw and funding made available to make sure the progress of Valley View Centre continues appropriately. My colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow this morning was at the key presentation for the Habitat for Humanity this morning, for another family. And Habitat for Humanity is another program that this government is very in support of, and there's money in the budget for continuing the Habitat for Humanity.

Steady growth is probably the best description that I can put for my city of Moose Jaw. When we think of Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, we think of tourism obviously: the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, the Tunnels of Moose Jaw, the murals. There are three outstanding museums, the heritage buildings.

And unfortunately just about 10 days ago, one of the heritage buildings burned down. Thank goodness there was no loss of life, but it does disrupt the people there. I want to mention, Nelson Reid was one of the owners of a little bookstore right beside where the fire took place. Nelson was the first one to smell the smoke and certainly reacted very quickly in helping to alert all the residents and get everybody out. So I certainly want to recognize him for doing that.

There are still a good number of heritage buildings in Moose Jaw, and there's good gift shops and good shopping. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a good place to live. And I'm pleased to represent the people in this legislature.

There's a lot that happens in Moose Jaw. We have the largest CP [Canadian Pacific] rail centre between Calgary and

Winnipeg. The new K+S potash mine continues to go into construction and develop with a lot of spinoffs in major construction around the area. The industrial corridor with Mosaic and Yara Belle Plaine potash and the ethanol plant, all part of the growth of the area and the growth of Moose Jaw. In Moose Jaw there's manufacturing of windows, there's Doepker Industries, there's CJAY Trailers manufacturings. Moose Jaw's the medical centre for the Five Hills Health Region, and that's why the hospital is so important for the city.

There is a lot that's happening in Moose Jaw. There's two new car dealers that are building to go along with a lot of the car dealers that have expanded in recent years. A lot of businesses along Thatcher Drive, with the new hotels, autobody, carpet stores, service centres, restaurants. Most important of all to Moose Jaw, even though it's a great centre with a lot of things happening, but agriculture is very important to the city of Moose Jaw. Even though Moose Jaw North, my constituency, is considered an urban constituency, we really rely very heavily on the sector of agriculture to grow the city and keep the city active. And I want to spend a few minutes talking about agriculture and how it pertains to the budget and to the city of Moose Jaw.

This government realizes the importance of agriculture and understands the need to support and present agricultural producers' interests in this province. Agriculture investment in the budget includes research, education, regulations, and investment in value-added sector. Direct support is provided to farmers through loans, income stability programs, and insurance programs. Agriculture investment is in Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, the Saskatchewan Agricultural Stabilization Fund, Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, the Pastures Revolving Fund, Prairie Diagnostic Services, the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation, and Livestock Service Revolving Fund. This government supports our agricultural producers.

In and around Moose Jaw, agriculture is a huge industry. We've got the big grain companies like Cargill Limited, Viterra, Parrish & Heimbecker. And we've got a couple of real specialty plants like Simpson Seeds who is in their second generation of supporting the agricultural in split peas and lentils and specialty crops.

We've got a new ... expanded in that area and that was Agricorp. This was a \$10 million investment that opened just last year, Mr. Speaker. It's a huge facility just on the edge of Moose Jaw, and already they're planning an expansion of \$3 million. To them, Mr. Speaker, the grain transportation is a huge issue. And to Agricorp, I was talking to them on the weekend, and their first allocation of grain cars for this month came on the weekend. March 21st was the first grain car allocation they received. So good for this government to be proactive and encouraging the federal government to take action and step up and get the grain moving.

Yet, you know what, Mr. Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition has not made a phone call. He's not wrote a letter. He's not even wrote one email in support of producers on the grain transportation issue. Mr. Speaker, that side over there has very little comprehension about agriculture. There's no understanding about agriculture or agricultural problems. And

they continue to be out of touch with agriculture.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, just on March 13th the member from Saskatoon Nutana, the agriculture critic implied that the biggest and worst, and I'm quoting from *Hansard* here: "The biggest, worst thing that could happen right now is a bumper crop again this year." The biggest and worst thing that could happen right now is a bumper crop again this year. What a crazy thing to say. It just doesn't even make sense, and it doesn't make any sense to anybody on this side.

And I even asked a few of my agricultural friends, what would be the worst thing that could happen. Well one guy said, you know, if we couldn't get our seed in the ground, that would be the worst that could happen. And I said that's the worst that could happen? Well, he says, no, maybe not. The worst that could happen is if we got the seed in the ground and then it didn't grow. And I says, well that would be the worst that could happen. Well, maybe not. He says if you got the seed in the ground, you put all the chemicals and fertilizer, and sprayed it, and then a hail storm came and wiped it all out. That would be the worst. And I said, well that would be pretty bad.

Well, he said, you know, if you put the seed in the ground and it grew and you put all the chemicals and fertilizers with it. And then you went and combined it, your combine started on fire, burned all the grain, and took the whole house and the homestead with it. That would be the worst thing that could happen. And I said, well what if you had another bumper crop? How would that fare? Well that would be pretty good, he thought. You know, so where they're coming from, I don't know. But the worst thing that could happen wouldn't be another bumper crop, that's for sure.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the movement of grain is vital to the survival of farming, the farming business. And it certainly would be devastating to around Moose Jaw if it didn't happen. That's why this government placed a motion in support of grain transportation. That's why there's a policy in place in this budget to assist agricultural producers. We believe in agriculture. We care about farmers. We work for them to assure agriculture is sustainable, and we have programs in place to assist where needed. In the budget there's care for agriculture.

The budget is balanced. There's no tax increases, and this is a huge issue in the province as the province continues to grow. Mr. Speaker, over the last six years our government lowered taxes, making Saskatchewan one of the lowest tax jurisdictions in Canada from being one of the highest under the NDP. Personal income tax was lowered. Property tax was lowered. Small business corporate tax was also lowered. With no tax increases and controlled spending there remains the major investment to benefit all of Saskatchewan people.

Infrastructure remains a priority of this government as well. There are increases in spending and health care and education, in highways as well as increased benefits to assist seniors and those with disabilities. Families will benefit from more daycare spaces, new schools, and post-secondary investments. Programs like the graduation retention program and the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship will continue to assist families and students. Major Crown corporations will continue to invest to upgrade the system and keep planning for the future, Mr.

Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will keep Saskatchewan on the path to steady growth. It is a budget to benefit all Saskatchewan citizens with these major points. It is a balanced budget. There are no tax increases. It controls spending. It's investing in infrastructure and investing in people. This is a budget I will support, and I will not support the opposition amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to enter into the debate tonight on the budget. This is actually the fifth opportunity I've had since I've been an MLA to wade into the budget discussion here. And usually it's nice to start, to have the opportunity to thank some of the important people in our lives who allow us the opportunity to be able to serve here and do the best we possibly can.

I have to start actually with my 16-year-old daughter. This time 16 years ago, Mr. Speaker, I was holding a two-hour-old baby. It's my daughter Hennessey's 16th birthday today. And really, Mr. Speaker, it was the birth of Hennessey when I was 27 years old that changed my outlook on life. Her birth, our relationship, our time together when I was home with her for several years, her needs as a child, my needs as a parent, those all helped shape my political perspective and actually compelled me into my own experience as an activist at that point. I had grown up in an activist family, but it wasn't really until Hennessey was born where I found the place where I felt like I needed to make a difference, and that was on ensuring that families have the support they need to lead the best possible lives. So happy birthday, Hennessey. Hennessey usually doesn't like any attention being drawn to her whatsoever but . . . Again I'm glad to be in this budget debate tonight, but I am a little sad that I'm not there with her celebrating her 16th birthday, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Does she have her driver's licence yet?

Ms. Chartier: — That's another discussion, Minister of Finance.

I also want to thank my six-year-old, Ophelia, who is quite an amazing little girl, fiercely independent and a little bit sassy, but she's bright and knows far more about politics than any six-year-old should ever know and spends a great deal of time listening to the radio — we always have the radio on in the house — and always has questions about the news. So I think the two most important people in my life, Mr. Speaker, are Ophelia and Hennessey, and they make huge sacrifices so their mom can serve the people of Saskatoon Riversdale and the province of Saskatchewan. And one of the reasons I'm doing it is for them, too, Mr. Speaker, but it's not without some difficulties.

I want to thank my mom and dad, who continue to be there whenever I need them. They live two blocks from me, Mr. Speaker. I live two blocks from where I grew up and my parents have been in that home for almost 60 years, actually. And Grandpa Rusty still walks down to the school when Ophelia's finished kindergarten and picks her up and brings her home.

And Grandma Georgie makes cookies with Ophelia. Grandpa Rusty makes ice cream. And they hang out. And I'm really grateful that I have parents who are willing and able to spend time with my kids. I think it's pretty special to have parents close by and parents who are still well and totally keen on being the awesome grandparents that they are and awesome parents to me. I couldn't do this job without my parents, Mr. Speaker.

My sister Michelle and her husband, John, who I mention every time I have an opportunity. My sister is like a second mother to my children, and in my absence today on Hennessey's birthday, Michelle was there picking up Ophelia from child care at lunch, racing over to the high school to take her a cupcake, and coming home and then going out and seeing Hennessey again. So my sister Michelle makes sure that my kids are good and that I'm good too. And for that I'm grateful for Auntie Mich and Uncle John.

[19:45]

My assistants, my constituency assistants, both Vanessa and Judy and Puck, when Puck is in my office, they do a great job of ensuring that people in Saskatoon Riversdale have what they need, and I am grateful for their incredible skills. They bring to that office compassion, integrity, and determination to get good things done, and all three of them are incredibly smart women.

I would be remiss if I didn't actually mention my child care providers, Aryn and Carly. Ophelia goes to child care with four little boys actually, and Ophelia at six is the matriarch of these . . . of the child care, actually. These four little boys, who are all under four, absolutely adore Ophelia, and Ophelia absolutely loves and nurtures them. Like I said, she's a little bit sassy, but she's incredibly nurturing, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to also thank my kids' dads for being there when I'm not there as well, to ensure that my girls have what they need when they need them.

And last but not least in thinking about — well actually this isn't last but not least — the people of Saskatoon Riversdale who continue to trust me to do work for them, who share the good and the bad of their lives, and on a daily basis to help me come prepared to the legislature, to have the privilege of being their voice in this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to thank actually all the caucus staff we have. Sometimes I think as MLAs we always remember our constituency staff, but sometimes forget to thank or acknowledge all the hard work that our caucus staff does. We have a small staff who I think does a mighty work, Mr. Speaker. And I think, in general, the staff in the legislature, all the legislative staff, right from the committees branch to the cafeteria and everyone in between does a great job of ensuring that all of us, every MLA in this building, is well supported to do the work of the province, Mr. Speaker.

And now to the task at hand. I'd like obviously to talk about the 2014-2015 budget here tonight. It's interesting hearing from the members opposite who talk about opposition as opposing everything. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, our job is to hold this government to account, and where they aren't doing what they need to do to ensure people in Saskatchewan are well supported

and are leading full and meaningful lives, it's our job to call into question and point out the holes where the government is failing, Mr. Speaker. That is a big part of our job.

But it's also interesting to hear members on their feet say, well there's no plan. What else, what would the NDP do differently? And I will get to that, Mr. Speaker. But we have a private member's . . . Mr. Speaker, we have a private member's bill before this legislature, Bill 606, *The Residents-in-care Bill of Rights Act*. That's a fine place to start, Mr. Speaker, but I will speak about that a little bit further down, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the things that we would do differently, among many others.

There's a few areas that I'd like to cover, but sort of in light of thinking about my children, I would like to start with this government's record on child care in this particular budget, Mr. Speaker, and what some of the problems in this budget are with respect to child care.

So child care, Mr. Speaker, is about economic development. It's about economic development, Mr. Speaker. People cannot be engaged in employment or education if they do not have reliable child care that they trust and that they feel comfortable in. So that's one big piece of child care: economic development. You can't ensure that people are in the workforce if they don't have child care that they can rely on.

Another piece, it's about also ensuring our children are well equipped, Mr. Speaker, from pre-K to grade 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] education and beyond so they have the brightest future possible. Those are two of the things that child care is about: economic development and ensuring our children have the best possible start to ensure a long-term future both for them and for the province, Mr. Speaker.

So there is nothing worse, nothing worse, Mr. Speaker, than leaving your child in care that you don't quite trust. You know you don't have any other options, but this is where you have arranged and you go to work or you go to school in the morning with this feeling of unease, Mr. Speaker. And every day you go, you drop your child off and, you know, you're just not feeling great about that, but you have no options, Mr. Speaker. That is a huge reality for so many people today, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan. In the last week, in the last week I've spoken to two people who have had their child care arrangements fall through, and it's incredibly frustrating and stressful, creates huge amount of anxiety for individuals.

And the reality is women still carry a huge, the bulk of child care responsibility, Mr. Speaker, whether it's providing care in the home or making arrangements for child care. The reality is children are . . . women are still carrying the bulk of the responsibility for child care, and it weighs heavily on many people, Mr. Speaker. In fact, with a daughter now in kindergarten, I run into other families. And school, Mr. Speaker, school is not child care nor should it be considered child care, but I speak to so many families, Mr. Speaker, who cannot wait until their children start school, until they hit grade 1.

And the reality is that's not a perfect child care arrangement. There's still common dismissal days, there's still Christmas

holidays, Easter holidays, the summer to figure out, where you book your kids in a million different camps because you need to find something for them to do.

But parents are relieved when their children hit school age. And the reality . . . It's sort of like hurry up and turn six, which is really unfortunate. I know now from experience. I have two children, a 16-year-old and a six-year-old, and that time when they're little goes so incredibly fast, Mr. Speaker. Had you asked me that 16 years ago today, I would have had no idea, but reflecting back, it goes so incredibly fast and I hate the idea that there are parents who don't have the opportunity to savour those really precious days with their young children because of stresses around child care.

I'd like to outline a few facts here, Mr. Speaker. Last year in estimates the previous minister, we had a discussion about quantifying the demand for child care. I asked the minister if he knew what the demand for licensed child care in Saskatchewan was. He didn't know and he said, at this current time there is no way of quantifying that. Well, Mr. Speaker, we can figure out how many people we're going to have in corrections facilities, how many people were going to use certain roads or bridges, but we can't figure out how many people need licensed child care, Mr. Speaker? I would beg to differ with the minister on that.

And we talked about, we had a discussion about what Manitoba does. I was hoping this would have been in the budget. Manitoba has an online child care registry, Mr. Speaker, and that online child care registry does a couple of things. First of all, it simplifies not having your name on 25 different child care lists, Mr. Speaker. That is the first thing it does, makes it simple for parents. But the second thing it does is it provides governments with the opportunity to be able to quantify or have a sense of how many child care spaces that they need. So last year the minister tells me that 500 is aggressive, and I said, well how do you know 500 is aggressive if you have no idea what the need is? The reality is you can predict those things, Mr. Speaker. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I would like to talk a little bit about the context here. I'm going to quantify it for the minister.

So let's talk a little bit about numbers, Mr. Speaker, numbers in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite should stop beaking and start listening to some of these numbers. There are currently 73,298 children under the age of five in Saskatchewan, compared with 63,332 five years ago. This is from Doug Elliot of the *Sask Trends Monitor*. So there are more than 10,000 children — a 16 per cent increase — and the equivalent of an extra 10,000 preschoolers in Saskatchewan in the last five years, Mr. Speaker. Then the number of children under 12 has increased almost as quickly, growing by 11 per cent over the same number. Which is great, but you know what? That means families need services, and adding 500 spaces a year is a drop in the bucket, Mr. Speaker. If we want people . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Martensville is telling me to settle down and take a deep breath. I talk to families every day, Mr. Speaker. I talk to families who are experiencing real difficulties because of the lack of child care. This is not something to scoff about, Mr. Speaker. This is a real issue for many families and it makes me angry that the members think this is funny. This makes me angry that the

members think this is funny, Mr. Speaker.

So the reality, Mr. Speaker, is the number of working women with preschoolers at home increased 32,400 to 38,000 between 2008 and 2013. So perhaps this would suggest that the demand for child care will have increased by 17 per cent in the last five years. I believe it's incumbent on this government to ensure that they have an accurate picture of what the demographic looks like and ensure that the services are there for families who need them to work.

We hear the talk of labour force shortage. If you want families to work, if you want families to work and get an education, you need to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that you are providing the services that they need, and that is not happening. It's 2014, Mr. Speaker. There is more than . . . There is huge challenges for families who need child care and that is the cold, hard reality, Mr. Speaker, the cold, hard reality.

I believe in some budget documents it mentioned almost being up to or over 14,000 spaces after these 500 are added. When you look at 73,000 children under five with 70 per cent or almost 70 per cent of mothers with children under five in the paid labour force, there is a huge disconnect there, Mr. Speaker, a huge disconnect. And the government needs to start to address this. And we have some stories actually. You can look . . .

So in terms of context here, this government is adding 500 new spaces. Two news stories from last week alone, Mr. Speaker, about the University of Saskatchewan having to, for now . . . They would have been the ones who would have gotten some of these child care spaces I believe, in the last year's budget, that haven't opened up. So when the government talks about 14,000 spaces, those spaces aren't open. The ones from last year aren't open. I'll be eager to sit down with the Minister of Education and get an exact number on how many spaces are in fact operational at this point in time. So I look forward to the Education estimates to have those questions answered, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, the University of Saskatchewan had a project, a 2011 survey. So three years ago, Mr. Speaker, a survey of employees and students suggested the campus could use about 800 child care spaces but the demand was actually put closer to 1,000. So in fact, all the spaces, the reality is 500 spaces is a drop in the bucket. That's just at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] that they need 1,000 child care spaces, Mr. Speaker — at the University of Saskatchewan, one location in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't speak to the 500 spaces that need to be spread out across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Another story, Mr. Speaker, the daycare in Warman — this is from CTV last week — parents in Warman are concerned about a lack of daycare and they are frustrated with having to arrange for care in Saskatoon. The government doesn't seek out places that need daycares. They wait for requests, so a group of volunteers has put together their request, registered, and came up with a financial plan and a budget. So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, there are people asking for child care spaces. Five hundred spaces is a drop in the bucket and doesn't do what's necessary.

I think it's important to talk about some stories too around what

people go through when they don't have adequate child care. Last summer at the end of August there were stories that appeared . . . Well on CBC news was one of them, but there are stories that families, Mr. Speaker, were leaving children in care. There's a man who says he paid a woman \$400. He took his child there to child care. The quality of care was not there. The child was in a soaking diaper all day. There were huge concerns with care.

There have been news story after news story about concerns around unlicensed child care. The onus is on this government to ensure that there are high-quality, affordable child care for families that are well monitored, Mr. Speaker. And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. I hear the members opposite commenting about parents not having any responsibility. This is a government who wants parents to work, needs parents to work. We have a labour force shortage. Parents need support in child care, Mr. Speaker. There is empirical study after empirical study that shows what high-quality child care does for both children and families, Mr. Speaker. Those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, are good for kids, they're good for families, and they're good for the province of Saskatchewan.

[20:00]

I think it's important to talk a little bit about . . . When we talk about child care it's important to talk about another piece of child care. So we have, under the Ministry of Education that is responsible for child care spaces, but under Social Services, Social Services is responsible for the subsidies that are offered. The one thing that I would have expected or would like to have seen in this budget is addressing the turning point, Mr. Speaker. The turning point is the place at which you no longer receive the full subsidy. The reality is families might be making a little bit more money than they used to, but they're not making very much ground. Everything has gone up — housing, food, utilities across the piece. It's very expensive for families to make ends meet, Mr. Speaker. So the turning point again is the income level up to where the full subsidy is available. And it has not changed, Mr. Speaker, since the early 1980s. That is the fact of the matter. This turning point has remained at \$1,640 since the early '80s.

So any dollar you make over \$1,640, you no longer are eligible for the full subsidy. And make no mistake that full subsidy does not cover the whole cost of child care for any family. So with the turning point here, it's interesting that since the 1980s this has not changed, Mr. Speaker. This would have been an opportunity to help ensure families have access to child care. The number in Social Services, Mr. Speaker, the number in Social Services, the child care parent subsidies, this budget is \$14.675 million, and that has gone down from previous budgets, Mr. Speaker. And why has it gone down? Because fewer people are eligible for it, Mr. Speaker, because they haven't changed the turning point.

They have an opportunity here. This government has record revenue in this province, growth that needs support by good, quality child care and ensuring that parents have an opportunity to access that. There are all kinds of pressures that parents feel, and this government has an opportunity to help relieve one of those in those first five years of a child's life, and actually basically up to the year of age 12. So if you're making

minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, and working 40 hours a week, that's about \$1,600 a month. You would still be eligible for the full subsidy, but barely. And again like I said, make no mistake that full subsidy does not necessarily cover the cost of child care. So you're not getting rich, Mr. Speaker, and able to tap into this subsidy.

The reality is I've talked to directors in child care facilities who are advocating on behalf of families who say that they see this as a real barrier for care for families.

Another thing around child care that would be interesting and would be good for this government to address is, and when we get to Social Services estimates around the subsidy piece, what happens right now, Mr. Speaker, and this goes to staffing complements in the various ministries.

So a person starts using child care and applies for the subsidy. So you might be enrolled in an educational program. You put your child into care, Mr. Speaker, and you apply for the subsidy. But it takes about three months. It can take up to three months to find out if you get the subsidy. So in the meantime you're racking up a debt at that child care facility. You're not 100 per cent sure that you're eligible and then what ends up happening is, it takes the government three months to process the request. They reject you. You're not eligible for the subsidy, Mr. Speaker. And then you have no money to pay the debt, so you walk away from child care. You have to exit your education, Mr. Speaker, and the child care is left with that bad debt. Spoken to child care after child care who has had that experience of being left with a bad debt because of the slow processing the child care subsidy, Mr. Speaker. That's a huge difficulty.

Some other things that have come up that, again, once we get to estimates under Social Services, this government has paid out a subsidy of 25 cents. I've asked written questions about the range of subsidies, Mr. Speaker, and the lowest this government has paid out a 25-cent child care subsidy. What an incredible insult to whomever received that 25 cents, Mr. Speaker. What an incredible insult.

So there is much work to do in child care, Mr. Speaker, and this government has barely scratched the surface. They can pat themselves on the back, but it's Saskatchewan families with young children who are seeing that child care is not getting better in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact there's several people in this House who will be tapping into child care likely in the next years and they will see for themselves that it is a huge challenge, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps when those young families on the opposite side of the House have an opportunity and have to start looking for child care, they might become huge advocates instead of heckling me on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, because it is a real problem, a real problem, Mr. Speaker.

So moving from support of our youngest, most vulnerable, I think I need to talk a little bit about seniors' care and support for our more mature residents who also can be incredibly vulnerable as well, Mr. Speaker.

The one thing I would have liked, and we would have liked to

have seen in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is the government's commitment to minimum quality of care standards. A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, this government cut the minimum quality of care standards and we've seen seniors' care decline in this province because of this. We've heard abysmal story after story about how our seniors are being treated in long-term and personal care homes, Mr. Speaker. We've heard story after story.

So you know what? A year ago, Mr. Speaker, in this house, the NDP and others started raising the issue, saying, there's a real, there's some huge red flags going up around seniors' care in this province. And initially the minister said, nothing to see here; no problem, no crisis. It was pushed hard enough and he called for a CEO tour. He was going to send his CEOs out to long-term care facilities to figure out what the problem was, Mr. Speaker, to see if there was a problem.

Well they reported in July, Mr. Speaker. The report wasn't made public. We did a freedom of information request, a freedom of information request. After the second, after the 30 days the freedom of information request didn't come back. There was an extension of that freedom of information request for a report that was already compiled, Mr. Speaker. The day after the freedom of information request, or the day that it was to come to the opposition, that's when the Minister of Health had his news conference announcing the critical, the urgent action fund, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government made this report public after much prodding, Mr. Speaker, after much prodding. And I can see there were absolutely shameful things in this report, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to talk about some of those things . . . out of Central Parkland Lodge in Lanigan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we were arguing that a big part of the problem, we and other people who have come forward to talk about some of the issues, have talked about part of the problem being, or the root cause of the problem being a lack of staffing in seniors' homes, Mr. Speaker, that people didn't have . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not in every facility.

Ms. Chartier: — And the minister is heckling, not in every facility. Yes, not in every facility but where it's happening it is absolutely not acceptable how our seniors are being treated, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not acceptable. So, Central Parkland Lodge in Lanigan:

Staff member commented they sometimes struggle with priorities. For example, when feeding one resident and another rings to be toileted, they don't know if they should interrupt the meal which in turn gets cold for that resident, or if they should go to the toilet with the person who may soil themselves.

Stensrud Lodge, quote, they can hear people crying for help in the evening because of staffing shortages — 1 to 25 care aid ratio on evenings.

We have Spruce Manor Special Care Home in Dalmeny, Martensville. "Staffing levels are inadequate to meet the needs of residents due to the increased level of acuity. Residents want

a bath more than once a week. Think that the care their loved one is getting very good, however there isn't enough because staff are too busy."

Saskatoon Extencicare. "They don't always get help when they need it and have to wait to get up. Sometimes they need to get up at 6:30 a.m. even though breakfast isn't until 8:00 a.m. Comments that it's a shame seniors aren't prioritized for funding. Building is not appropriate."

This is heartbreaking, Mr. Speaker. And again, the lens through which I see this is that of my parents who are both 81 years old, who are still in their own home and, as I've said before, provide care for me still, Mr. Speaker, when I speak about my children and how great my parents take care of me and my other siblings and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren in my family. So I'm glad my parents are still in their home and still able to be in their home. But when I think about what I'd want for my own parents and I hear some of these stories, it absolutely breaks my heart.

One woman actually says, "My husband was taught when he was a child not to pee in his pants, and now they are telling him to just go in his pants. He tries to go to the bathroom by himself but they tell him he is at risk of falling . . . Go to bed at 5:45 p.m. and up at 9:00 a.m. — way too long [to be] in bed."

Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon. "Response time is not good. Waiting up to 20 minutes most of the time. Sometimes residents feel this is personal against them because they have to wait so long. Residents don't get their teeth cleaned regularly, shaving is rushed causing neck rash. Only bathed once per week. Walking program is neglected and there is a lack of physio."

Porteous Lodge. "Need more people to answer buzzers. The average wait time is 40 minutes. Need more staff. Residents want at least two baths per week. They feel dirty and even in jail they get more than that."

These are the feelings . . . These are some of the things that came out of the CEO tour, Mr. Speaker. There's more. There are pages and pages and pages of it.

At the Mennonite Nursing Homes in Rosthern, "Staffing levels are inadequate to meet the needs of the residents due to increased levels of acuity."

The reality is, in our seniors' care homes, Mr. Speaker, long-term care, there's levels 3 and 4, for the most part, in long-term care facilities. The reality is that that level of acuity has increased. Personal care homes for that matter, Mr. Speaker, from my understanding, that level of acuity has increased. It's getting harder and harder to get into long-term care homes, Mr. Speaker, which is not acceptable.

We had a story, Mr. Speaker, here in the House a couple of weeks ago, Ron Caron. Ron Caron suffers from dementia. He's a senior, a young senior. He's 65 years old and has a high level of dementia. He currently is living at the Dubé Centre, an acute psychiatric facility in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

People at the Dubé Centre are incredible folks. They are trained to deal with people with mental health issues. Dementia is not a

mental health issue, Mr. Speaker, and being in a psychiatric facility is not the place for someone with dementia. Being in a hospital is not the place for someone with dementia. You get the same meal on Monday . . . And particularly at the Dubé again, it's a hospital setting so there are times where tension is ramped up. You have people in psychosis. First of all it's not a residence. It's not a residence for anybody, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly isn't a place for someone with dementia.

And when I first spoke to Ron's daughter Sheila and she told me that she was told that he was too high needs for long-term care, I thought, like my initial reaction was, well what do you mean? That can't be possible. That's the only place for him, is in a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker, with the proper supports. But he is a complex case and needs a lot of care, Mr. Speaker.

But I've since learned that there are people who, in the Saskatoon Health Region — I don't know; I haven't had a chance to confirm in other health regions — who don't ever make it on to long-term care lists. They're sort of people living in limbo, because when they're assessed, they know at CPAS in Saskatoon, client/patient access services, that there is not any place for them to go. So CPAS doesn't put people on the long-term care list because there's no facilities or services for complex cases, Mr. Speaker.

So people are sitting in limbo, people like Mr. Caron, who still, more than two and a half weeks later, is still at the Dubé Centre in Saskatoon, a place that is not for him despite staff who want to do their very best. They are not equipped to do that.

[20:15]

But Mr. Caron isn't the only person who doesn't belong in the Dubé Centre. The reality is there are other people who . . . I had asked some written questions about community living service division clients living in acute psychiatric facilities because we were aware that there were some people in facilities throughout the province. And I believe a fellow has just celebrated — well celebrate is not the right word — has just marked two years in the Dubé Centre, Mr. Speaker. Two years in an acute psychiatric hospital, Mr. Speaker, a place where you shouldn't be more than about six weeks until you're stabilized and you leave. That is not acceptable. And the reason that happens is because we don't have the facilities for these individuals, Mr. Speaker. So part of it is about needing more facilities, so building more is part of it. But the reality is the facilities that we currently already have, Mr. Speaker, are not being staffed appropriately to provide the care that seniors need and deserve, Mr. Speaker. So it's not just about building facilities and putting in place home care. And that's a discussion we'll have in a moment here, Mr. Speaker.

It is a complex issue and there's multiple parts and pieces to it, but the reality is this government ignored \$8.5 million of urgent requests that were raised in the CEO tour last fall. The minister put a \$10 million urgent action fund together with an additional \$3.7 million, and that was to deal with urgent action items, but the reality is that fell \$8.5 million short for urgent items, Mr. Speaker. Staff to take you to the washroom, call bells, dementia units aren't extras in health care, Mr. Speaker; those are the basics in our ever-changing, aging demographic, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about the increased level of acuity, the level 3 and 4 in long-term care and increased levels of acuity in personal care homes, I know in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, that the firefighters actually get phone calls to do lifts in personal care homes, Mr. Speaker. So taxpayers in Saskatoon — and firefighters that I've spoken to have never complained about this; they've pointed it out to me — but they are getting calls to personal care homes to do lifts because the personal care homes do not have the proper complement of staff to be able to do a lift when someone falls off a toilet, falls out of a chair.

So the Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services, Mr. Speaker, goes and lifts people up in personal care homes. And like I said, I've not heard the fire service complain about this, but they have acknowledged that they do it on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, and the Saskatoon Health Region last spring was tracking that at the request of the fire and protective services. So that is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and the Minister of Finance said we'll check into it. He can happily check into that, Mr. Speaker, and he'll find out that in fact Saskatoon taxpayers are supporting personal care homes by going in and doing lifts, Mr. Speaker.

I've talked a little bit about Ron Caron. I think that there's some challenges when we . . . I know having spoken to people about being housed at the Dubé, whether it's someone like Ron Caron or community living service division clients, there is some fear that this government, around the closure of Valley View, hasn't put the proper plan in place. And the proof is in the pudding, Mr. Speaker, that there are people at Valley View who should be in the community, Mr. Speaker. So this was before Valley View started discharging or moving people into community, Mr. Speaker. So I hope that the government sees that there is a need for huge community supports and proper housing for not just seniors who have behavioural issues but younger people as well, Mr. Speaker.

So I've talked a little bit about the long-term care and personal care home difficulties. The home care piece, Mr. Speaker, so this government has touted last week putting I believe it was \$4.5 million into the Home First/Quick Response home care pilot program to keep people out of long-term care to ensure people can stay in their homes, which is great. But today, Mr. Speaker, today, Mr. Speaker, we heard about a memo in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Mr. Speaker, about people not being able to get the home care that they needed.

I had an opportunity to chat with a licensed practical nurse tonight who actually had this very experience himself about not . . . one of his clients isn't going to get the service she needs next week, a long-term client, Mr. Speaker. And he had said to me, how is it that a government can announce \$4.5 million in one hand and on the other say that there's no home care available? We're cutting services for people, Mr. Speaker. This is a huge disconnect. It makes absolutely no sense, Mr. Speaker. There is something not quite right by a government who's announcing money in one program and then the same program is not able to deliver the services that it needs to do, Mr. Speaker. That is hugely problematic. That is hugely problematic.

The one thing that I also need to address around health regions,

Mr. Speaker, is the efficiency targets, the \$51-plus million. The reality is what happened last year when the government did the same thing to health regions, the various units had to start out in a deficit, Mr. Speaker. So I'm speaking about the Saskatoon Health Region in particular. So you start out in a deficit position, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? It doesn't matter. You might be the most efficiently run unit in the Saskatoon Health Region, but you're still told to find efficiencies. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, you can only find so much efficiency before you start impacting service. And that's what we're seeing in the Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker.

We've had story after story. For example, we've heard about vacancy management. The Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon, we've heard from people who've spoke up here in the legislature, who have written letters to the editor, pointing out the filthy state of Royal University Hospital because of a lack of cleaning staff, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard about people not getting pain medication in ample time because of a lack of staffing at RUH [Royal University Hospital]. The reality is when you tell whatever unit it is in the Saskatoon Health Region that they have to start in a deficit, it's going to start impacting services, Mr. Speaker. And it has. We've seen that, Mr. Speaker. We have seen that.

There's one particular program that I'd like to touch on that's had a decrease, Mr. Speaker — family health benefits, Mr. Speaker. And I know the minister and I will chat about this in estimates, but I had an opportunity a couple years ago to chat with a woman and her family who received the Saskatchewan employment supplement, Mr. Speaker. And the Saskatchewan employment supplement is for lower income families. It provides them, lower income working families, Mr. Speaker, it provides them a top-up, and family health benefits can be hugely beneficial that . . . those come with employment supplement, Mr. Speaker.

So I had a family a couple years ago who had, I believe, three small children, and he was a custodian and she, in fact, was a day home provider. They weren't rich, Mr. Speaker. And in fact he got a \$25 raise which they were happy about and then . . . or he had a small raise which put him \$25 over the eligibility for the Saskatchewan employment supplement. They weren't concerned about losing the employment supplement, but he was diabetic, Mr. Speaker, and some of their children had some serious challenges around health. Those family health benefits were incredibly important to them, Mr. Speaker, and they no longer qualified. And their family was going to take a huge hit and they weren't quite sure how they were going to deal with that.

So we have, in the budget, estimated in last year it was 5.362 million and this year it's 4.712 million. So that's a decrease, Mr. Speaker, and I think the minister may explain that as less uptake, which would make sense, less utilization, as the Finance minister's pointed out. But part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is utilization is tied to income thresholds. And people in Saskatchewan might be making a little bit more money, but everything else has gone up too.

Again we talk about housing; we talk about all our utilities, Mr. Speaker. We talk about all kinds of things. So you bump

yourself . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Walsh Acres is saying a little bit more, Mr. Speaker. This person was \$25 over the employment supplement threshold — \$25, Mr. Speaker, over the employment supplement threshold — which I want to talk about.

So the threshold for this family, Mr. Speaker, three children, two adults, Mr. Speaker, the threshold was \$3,570 a month, which is I believe \$42,840 a year for a whole family, Mr. Speaker, for five people — five people, Mr. Speaker — which is not a heck of a lot of money. So this family lost their employment supplement and with it family health benefits. But I need to point out that the eligibility criteria for the employment supplement has not changed since 2008, Mr. Speaker, and we are eight years on — eight years on, Mr. Speaker. What has happened in those eight years? Everything has gone up, including the cost of housing, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — '08 to 2014 is six years.

Ms. Chartier: — Sorry, six years, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the members opposite for their help. They're incredibly helpful, Mr. Speaker. But the reality, that has not changed since 2008. What has gone up . . . It seems like they've been here forever, Mr. Speaker. I think that that's what part of the problem is here. It seems like they've been here for a very long time. Seven and a half years, Mr. Speaker, is a long time.

So the reality is I will have that discussion about utilization of family health benefits. But the fact that that employment supplement, the income threshold hasn't changed is problematic and has real impacts on families, Mr. Speaker, families who are employed, who are working their butts off to try to make a go of it, and it has a real impact on these families, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, about . . . I'm a woman of many papers here, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to take my time. I need to talk a little bit about ER [emergency room] wait times. There is just so much to talk about here, Mr. Speaker, that it's . . . lots to talk about. ER wait times.

So the government has in fact put some money into reducing ER wait times, but the reality is they should figure this out, Mr. Speaker. Pasqua ER in Regina, the capital city and one of the most booming provinces in Canada almost closed this fall. Mr. Speaker, that almost closed, Mr. Speaker, and almost wasn't very satisfactory for many of the people who were going to . . . It came down to the wire, Mr. Speaker. It came down to the wire, Mr. Speaker. So they almost had to close the ER at Pasqua at night, Mr. Speaker. Huge problem.

The reality is, according to the latest CIHI [Canadian Institute for Health Information] data, the reality is Saskatchewan has ER times three hours longer than the average Canadian wait, Mr. Speaker. So the wait time, according to CIHI, is almost 11 hours in an emergency room. That is not . . .

[Interjections]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So people in

Saskatchewan on average are waiting almost 11 hours in an emergency room. Anybody who's gone to an emergency room in an emergency, Mr. Speaker, 11 hours is not acceptable. If you've ever gone to an emergency room with a young child, it is not fun whether the wait is 2 hours long or, heaven forbid, 11 hours long. I've only had the occasion to do that in Saskatchewan here once when my daughter had pneumonia, and it was not a pleasant experience, Mr. Speaker. Being in the ER at any time isn't a pleasant experience, but let alone if you're having to wait for up to 11 hours, Mr. Speaker.

So that investment is more than welcome, and hopefully they can start doing something about this record. The only province, I believe, that is below us in terms of this record is Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a very proud record in that case here, Mr. Speaker. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, 11 hours, up to 11 hours in an emergency room here in Saskatchewan — three hours longer than the average in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We have to talk a little bit about priorities, Mr. Speaker. And when we talk about priorities this government says, well where else would you spend money, or what would you do differently? Well, I think a \$40 million contract and counting, and counting — the meter is still running, Mr. Speaker — that would be a place that we would scrap a contract and put money into front-line care, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, I think about my dad who has always said, you know, we hire consultants to look at our watch and tell us what time it is, Mr. Speaker. And is that not why we pay managers in health care, Mr. Speaker, is to find efficiencies and to listen to front-line workers, Mr. Speaker? Is that not why, is that not why we pay for front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker? Is that not what the role of managers is?

[20:30]

And you know, lean, Mr. Speaker, what I take issue to right now is the \$40 million contract with an American consultant and a meter that continues to run, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity to speak to many people in the Saskatoon Health Region, both front-line workers and managers, who express their concern about the \$40 million contract. They talk about the one thing the minister hasn't talked about, is the lost hours or the net cost, Mr. Speaker. The cost of when you're pulled to do a rapid process improvement workshop, rapid progress improvement workshop, that you're pulled on to one of these for upwards of seven weeks, Mr. Speaker. So you have a manager, someone who is paid more than \$100,000 a year, and many other staff to focus on one of these workshops, Mr. Speaker.

How much of their other work are they getting done at this time, Mr. Speaker? So what is the opportunity cost of giving that up? The reality is they are struggling to do their other work and being pulled away for weeks at a time. And it's not . . . So the minister has not given us a net cost of what that is, Mr. Speaker. The reality is these aren't employees who are being paid \$50,000 a year. These are people who are being paid much more than that being pulled away from their regular work to engage in these processes that may or may not produce results. And I sure hope that they do produce results, Mr. Speaker, because we're spending a heck of a lot of money on them.

We've got the \$40 million John Black contract, \$17 million kaizen promotion offices. And the minister said, oh these are offices that already existed, but the reality he also mentioned that they've pulled staff and redeployed staff into these kaizen promotion offices. My question is, well what were those staff doing before if they were redeployed from somewhere else? Like who is doing the other work that they were doing, Mr. Speaker?

So \$17 million for the kaizen promotion offices, \$730,000 for international travel for health administrators for two years, \$30,000 each for docs to get lean training, \$3,500 per day for Japanese sensei, plus the \$2,000 flight to get them here each time, Mr. Speaker. So what are the other expenses, Mr. Speaker? And I don't think the minister has answered that, the net cost of lean. We don't know what this net cost is going to be, and I think the people of Saskatchewan want to know.

I think something that's near and dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker, is midwifery. And as of late, I've received many, many letters about the lack of midwifery services in Saskatchewan. The reality is, since 2008 midwifery was proclaimed in the legislature in February. I believe it was February 2008, early 2008 anyway. We have gone up and down with the number of midwives in Saskatoon, very few midwives in Regina and one other health region. I've asked some written questions to get a handle on exactly how many midwives there are, but I do hear from women who, when they find out they're pregnant, they call the office to try to get on the list and discover that they can't. There is a huge waiting list, huge demand for midwifery services. And women in Saskatchewan, across this province — not just in those three health regions, Mr. Speaker, but across this province — deserve access to midwifery services.

But the reality is, even in those health regions that have midwifery services, they're not getting the services that they need. There are demands, there are unmet demands for midwifery services which . . . Midwifery in a normal pregnancy, Mr. Speaker, has been shown to have health care savings for the government, Mr. Speaker, and better outcomes for women and babies. And that's what it should be about, Mr. Speaker. And this government has an opportunity to lead on that, and they have chosen not to do that, Mr. Speaker. They could put designated money aside. They could send a message to the health regions that this is something that needs doing and they should be doing it. And I hear that from women over and over again, Mr. Speaker.

Something else, Mr. Speaker, that caused me a little bit of concern. Mental health and addictions is an area in which I'm personally very interested, as I think most people in here know. I have a nephew who tragically died last summer after suffering from bipolar disorder for a few years, Mr. Speaker.

And I know, well last May I believe it was, the government announced a plan to pursue a mental health and addictions strategy and action plan and started a consultation process. And my argument is that I was hoping that there might be a place marker in this budget. The report, I understand the commissioner will be reporting late spring or early summer, and I was hoping that there would be a marker in this budget to make some of those expenditures in this fiscal year. The reality is last year the government did that with Valley View. They put

\$5 million aside when they knew something was coming down the pipe. They knew Valley View would be closing and they set money aside. I would have liked to have seen this government take mental health seriously and put money aside for the recommendations that the commissioner will come up with in the summer, Mr. Speaker.

The reality again is this is an urgent issue. This is a matter of life and death. People die because they don't have mental health services or the proper mental health services. And I am speaking from experience, Mr. Speaker, coming from a family who has a very capable brother and sister-in-law who are incredible advocates who worked very hard for my nephew, Jordan, to get him the services that he needed. And they still couldn't get what he needed.

There are huge gaps in our system, and I would have liked to have seen a placeholder in the budget so families weren't waiting two years from the time . . . And who knows? Well we'll see what we see in next year's budget, which is a year away. And I hope that this government can come up with some mid-year money to address some of the things that the commissioner's going to come up with.

I am a big believer in consultation and real and meaningful consultation, Mr. Speaker. But the government has also done work in the past, and I think that there's that fine balance between making sure you're talking to people and engaging. But there was an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, that this government had done a paper actually:

The Ministry of Health Community Care Branch and Prairie North Regional Health Authority have partnered to develop a provincial project that addresses the lack of adequate mental health facilities and community resources for persons with severe psychiatric illness and/or persons considered to have high complex needs.

Mr. Speaker, the government already had some idea of people who work with or have family members who have mental health challenges, know where the holes are. You leave an acute psychiatric facility like the Dubé Centre and there's nowhere for you to go. So you come out of an acute phase, and hopefully you've got a family like my nephew had. My brother and his wife still had Jordan living at home and tried to offer him as much support there, but there are many people who don't have.

And that's not an easy thing, Mr. Speaker. Jordan wasn't an easy . . . He was a great kid, amazing young man, but wasn't an easy young man, as many people who have mental health challenges are not always easy, Mr. Speaker. But there's lots of people who don't have those kinds of supports. And so they leave a facility like the Dubé in Saskatoon, an acute psychiatric facility, and have nowhere to go.

And I know in this paper they recommended step-down beds, residential step-down beds. I'll give you some numbers here, Mr. Speaker:

Intensive Residential Support Beds are living arrangements that would provide duplex or small group home-type residences for clients and would provide 24-hour support to ensure safety for clients and staff.

That was one recommendation. They were recommending 15 in Saskatoon Health Region, 15 in Regina, 5 in Prince Albert Parkland, and 5 in Prairie North, for a total of 40 beds.

Step-Down Beds are living arrangements that provide apartment-style accommodations or small group homes for clients. Twenty-four (24) hour support is provided with one staff per . . . patients per shift. This support would be less intensive than that of the Residential Support Beds option described above.

They were recommending 25 in the Saskatoon Health Region, 25 in Regina, 10 in Prince Albert, 10 at Prairie North Health Region, and 10 in Five Hills Health Region. So those are a few of the things that I would have liked to have seen in the budget.

Under health as well there was no direct . . . Under health there was no money for the hospital in North Battleford. I understand in SaskBuilds there's \$2 million planning set aside, so it sounds like the government is in fact going to pursue a P3 [public-private partnership] with the North Battleford hospital and correctional facility, which we'll have some concerns with and we'll look at more carefully when the government goes a little bit further down that path, Mr. Speaker. But that is where I would have liked to have seen a little bit more money spent or any money set aside, a marker set aside for the work that they've had this commissioner doing, Mr. Speaker.

I would be remiss if I did not talk about the summary financials, Mr. Speaker. So I've been here since October 2009, and my colleague from Regina Rosemont has I think placed a petition almost every day calling on the government to move to reporting the government's finances on a summary financial basis. So the reality, Mr. Speaker, is over recent years, every other jurisdiction has made that move. But this fall we heard that this government failed an audit on its General Revenue Fund. First time in the history of Canada, Mr. Speaker, that a government failed its audit on the General Revenue Fund.

And I've heard the Minister of Finance on several times get up when the member from Rosemont asked questions and tried to spin it as this is a practice that had been happening for many, many years. The summary financial reporting on a GRF versus summary financial wasn't the issue. The auditor had described and laid out some very specific points, Mr. Speaker, and particularly some that impacted other bodies, Mr. Speaker. This sitting, in Public Accounts, as of a couple months ago, we heard that five health regions had qualified audits, Mr. Speaker, because of this government's failed audits, because they had to adhere to the government's new scheme, Mr. Speaker. So this government had no choice but to move to summary financial basis. Like they're all over there, crowing about moving to summary financial basis, which it's about time, Mr. Speaker. And they had no choice but to do it. They had no choice but to do it, Mr. Speaker, after being shamed with a failed audit in the fall, Mr. Speaker, after . . .

The other points, Mr. Speaker, as I'm just wrapping up here, is I need to talk a little bit about debt, Mr. Speaker. So I've heard, I've heard the members opposite over the last couple of days talk about debt not going up. But I don't know if any of them have taken a look at page 66 of their own budget, Mr. Speaker, where the reality is debt is going up, year over year, between

last year and this year. So public debt is going up \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. That is not acceptable. So I don't understand how members opposite, if they looked at page 66, wouldn't realize that their debt is going up, Mr. Speaker.

We look at 2009, the total debt, government debt in Saskatchewan was \$7.7 billion, Mr. Speaker. It's forecast this year for 11 point eight one five point two billion dollars. That is an increase, Mr. Speaker, by a lot. So for a government to talk about debt not going up is patently false, and I don't know how they can stand and claim that it's not going up. So that is something to be of some concern, Mr. Speaker.

The last thing that I want to just briefly touch on — I know I've taken far more than my fair share of time here — is as the former Culture critic. As a former Culture critic, Mr. Speaker, when this government two years ago cut the film employment tax credit, we saw an exodus of people. Well we had a huge outcry from people in the film industry saying, you will not have a film industry in this province if you do this. The reality is I continue to hear about the exodus of people from Saskatchewan.

There was someone who has been in Regina for all his life. His wife works here. He's not been able to get a job in the film industry in the last couple years. He's now in BC right now, Mr. Speaker, test driving a job for the next few months to see if Vancouver is where they want to be. And his wife, who is connected here, who has roots in Regina, will leave her job. And this couple may and this family may be leaving Regina. So the effect of the cut to the film tax credit continues to have ripple effects, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting that just this fall, *WolfCop*, which was a film that was made here in Saskatchewan, ended up tapping into the expired film tax credit only because they had some connections with someone who had an application in. But they needed the film tax credit, Mr. Speaker, to be able to make the movie here.

And so the reality is we no longer have a film industry. There are a few people who make films, Mr. Speaker, but we do not have a thriving film industry here in Saskatchewan anymore thanks to this government's cut to the film employment tax credit.

So I've taken more than my fair share of time, Mr. Speaker, but with that . . . And I'm glad to hear that the members have been so engaged in my comments tonight. I'm glad to hear they were so engaged and interested in what I had to say. But with that, I will be supporting the amendment and will not be supporting the motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the debate on the 2014-15 Saskatchewan provincial budget, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin my remarks on the '14-15 budget, I do want to, as all members I believe have done as they enter debate on the budget, Mr. Speaker, begin with a couple of thank yous, first of all to the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Speaker, it has been eight years, it'll be eight years in June since they first selected me to represent them in their Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, it's been an incredible honour to represent the people of the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Mr. Speaker, the time has gone by quite quickly but it has been an honour and a privilege to serve the people in this institution, Mr. Speaker. From time to time I often just think of the fact that with, especially with the growing province, Mr. Speaker, that with 1.117 million people inhabiting the province of Saskatchewan, that at any given time there is only 58 people that are chosen from amongst more than a million people to be able to stand in this place and speak on behalf of the people that we represent and to say our piece, Mr. Speaker. And so I'm always mindful of the honour that people of Weyburn-Big Muddy have given me.

Mr. Speaker, in the eight years I'll say that the hair's probably a little bit more grey than it was in 2006. But certainly the energy and the commitment and the determination is still there for me, Mr. Speaker, to represent the people to best of my ability. And certainly I just want to again thank the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy for their support over the years, particularly in the last two years as I've taken on a new challenge as the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituency assistant Marcie. Mr. Speaker, I've mentioned that I've served the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy for eight years, but Marcie in fact has served the people of the constituency not long after the 1999 election, Mr. Speaker. She has been a devoted, faithful servant to the people, always has a smile on her face to greet the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy regardless of why they're coming to the office. And she does a tremendous job for me, and I'm very much in appreciation of the work that she does.

I want to thank the people that work here in the office, in my ministerial office, Mr. Speaker. Brittany, Cole, Christopher, and Morgan, Mr. Speaker, do a great job day in and day out for me. For the most part, all of them are fairly new to the office and the Minister of Health. They've come from other offices around the building, Mr. Speaker. And in fact we have a fairly young office in this building, Mr. Speaker. But they bring a lot of energy and hard work to the role that they provide and serve me and the Ministry of Health and the Government of Saskatchewan. They do a great job. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they've only, as I've mentioned, most of them have only been here for a couple of months in my office, but you'd never know it by how quickly they have taken on the role as working in my office, Mr. Speaker, and how quickly they've come up to speed. So I want to thank them.

I also want to thank the Minister for Rural and Remote Health and those that work in his office. We have a good collaborative relationship between the two offices. Often times there's a bit of a blend in terms of the work that the people that work for us do, and so they do a tremendous job as well, supporting not only the member from Biggar but also myself.

Mr. Speaker, and I also do want to thank my wife, Amanda. Mr. Speaker, Amanda has been incredible support for many years, Mr. Speaker, both in my involvement in elected life but as well even outside of elected life, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've been very blessed, particularly in the last couple of years. Mr. Speaker, I think you'll know we've had the opportunity in the last two years or so to move to a farm, Mr. Speaker. We have had the opportunity to purchase the original quarter section that my great-grandparents, when they first came to the province, where they first settled here in Saskatchewan and took up farming, Mr. Speaker, when they came to Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, so we've lived in fact in the, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've lived in fact in the same, not only the same quarter section but in fact the same yard site where my great-grandparents and my grandparents and my father would have been raised. And it's just always humbling just to think about the hardships that they would have endured, Mr. Speaker, the years of plenty and the years of not so plenty, Mr. Speaker, and the determination that it took for them to not only survive through droughts and wars and other hardships, but also to settle in Saskatchewan and decide to raise a family.

And, Mr. Speaker, on the topic of blessings, I'm pleased to be able to say that while I'm the fourth generation of my family to live on this particular piece of property, Mr. Speaker, we will be welcoming, Amanda and I will be welcoming the fifth generation of our family later this year that will be raised on the northwest quarter of the third section, Mr. Speaker. And so we're very excited about the upcoming birth of our first child later this summer, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a growing province, and we thought we'd better do our part to further the growth agenda of this province and this government, and so we're very excited about that.

Mr. Speaker, in the eight years that I've had the pleasure of being in this role, often what usually happens, and it's usually the same reporter from the local *Weyburn Review*, somebody that I've known for many years, going back to school, after budget day I'll phone the reporter and give my comments. And the first question is always usually the same, you know. What does this budget mean to the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, to the people that you represent? And what do you think that they'll think of this budget when they get into the details, Mr. Speaker?

And I just think of, you know, just in terms of the broad themes of the budget, in terms of with the fact that it's a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't have any tax increases. In fact as the Minister of Finance has pointed out, it does include, because of the indexation of the basic personal exemption, a small personal income tax decrease. It invests in infrastructure, which I'll talk a little bit about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It controls spending, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it invests in the people of this province.

And so my reaction to this budget, as it has been in the past number of budgets under this government, is that I believe that the people of my constituency will support this budget, Mr. Speaker, because it speaks to the values of what the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, what they tell me when I talk to them in terms of what they expect out of their government. They expect, Mr. Speaker, that the government will live within its means. They expect that the government will only ask from the taxpayers, will only ask from the people the dollars that it needs to actually provide for the services that are required. No more

than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whenever possible.

It provides for investments into our communities, into our municipalities, into our network of our highway system, into our health care, into our education system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it invests in the people of this province, particularly, Mr. Speaker, those who may require the help of the government and of their fellow citizens. And it does it in a meaningful way and one that I am proud to support. And while I will say this at the end if I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for all of those reasons, for all of those reasons why I think that the people of my constituency can support this budget and for the reasons why I think they will support it when they learn the details over the coming weeks and months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be supporting the budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just I'll talk briefly about my constituency and some of the areas that I think this budget will have a positive impact. Obviously as has been I think well known over the last number of years as we're seeing the province grow, we're seeing the province's economy really thrive and do well in terms of job creation, in terms of providing opportunity for those in this province and for those that are calling this province home, perhaps again after having left a number of years ago but as well for those who are calling this place home for the first time, Mr. Speaker. What is taking place in Weyburn-Big Muddy is no different than what you're seeing around the province. But I think there are some special things to note about the southeast and the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just some of the, as I look around my community and some of the developments, first of all it's just a growing population. The new people that you see in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency that are calling it home for the first time, are coming in droves to the Weyburn area in part because of the oil activity and the Bakken Formation and the role that technology and hard work and determination and ingenuity has played in unlocking, Mr. Speaker, a resource that for many years had thought not to be accessible with the technology of the day. Mr. Speaker, we're seeing . . .

An Hon. Member: — And hard work.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — And the hard work of the people that work in that industry, absolutely. I have a number of family members that work in that industry, would be glad that I mentioned that this evening. And perhaps I'll talk a little bit about them later.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look around Weyburn, just in the last couple of months we've seen what is becoming almost an annual rite of spring, and that's a brand new hotel opening up in the city of Weyburn. So this would be the fourth brand new hotel that just opened up. I believe it's a Microtel hotel. It's a beautiful location, just on the edge of the city on the south side of the city, in an area that has become home to a lot of development around other hotels and other commercial enterprises, new restaurants and the like that are expected to pop up. We're seeing new developments, housing developments, and a real, a good mix of housing developments in terms of not just single dwelling but as well as apartment buildings, condominiums that range the entire spectrum of the price point for people that are looking for housing in Weyburn.

We're seeing the old Souris Valley development, grounds being developed. That's where one of the old Saskatchewan hospitals was, a beautiful location in Weyburn. And I'm pleased to see the city council in the last couple of years have had I think a great foresight in seeing what this beautiful part of the city could be in the future in terms of development, making sure that we preserve a little bit of the past and understanding what that facility and what the grounds meant for the people of Weyburn and the people of the province. And there is, you know, I think I could probably on another day get into a debate about that part of our history, but certainly it's an important part of the community's history.

So there is developments happening there. There is developments on South Hill that's I think going to be a rejuvenation for that part of our community. We're seeing developments on the northeast part of the city, on the east side of the city on Highway 13, both some rural developments in the RM [rural municipality]. Mr. Speaker, we're seeing great partnerships, and I'll maybe speak about this a little bit more in the next couple of weeks, between the RM and the city of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

Those are some of the things that I'm seeing right in the Weyburn area. And the same would be true, Mr. Speaker, in the optimism that you see in other parts of the constituency, whether you're in Ogema, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or one of the communities that borders the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and the Estevan constituency is Radville, which is I think benefiting from what we're seeing all across this province. And we're looking forward to opening up the new integrated facility in Radville in the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker, that I know will be a great development for that community and the people in that community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as it relates directly to the budget, a couple of areas that I do want to highlight, I will talk a little bit about the ministry that I have the responsibility for. But I do want to talk about a couple of other areas. Certainly I've talked a little bit about the impact, the positive impact that the oil industry has had for many, many years, but also I would say in the last number of years with some new developments across the entire southeast part of the province and what that's meaning for jobs and opportunities for people of the constituency. But of course I wouldn't be able to speak about Weyburn-Big Muddy without talking about the positive impact that agriculture has, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Particularly I want to mention two things. First of all, agriculture is obviously a dynamic industry. There is always a lot of change. There is always a lot of entrepreneurship and ingenuity in terms of what producers are doing to transform the industry and to be competitive with all the other competitors all across the world.

[21:00]

Mr. Speaker, just recently there's been, I think, a significant change for my area in terms of the business of agriculture that I just want to briefly talk about. In the last couple of weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as people will know, the shareholders of the Weyburn Inland Terminal have made a decision that they're going to sell the company to another organization that has a long-standing history in the ag industry. Mr. Speaker, this has caused, I think, a lot of debate around the community and, I

think, around the province in terms of this institution and what its fate would've been during this whole process.

And I just want to, Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize those who with a lot of vision, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of I think criticism at the time in the mid-1970s from, at the time, from organizations, from churches, from provincial governments, from other ag industries, ag businesses who put a lot of cold water on what these farmers wanted to do, to really take control over their own destiny as much as they could. And you know, some of them are, you know, are still in the industry or perhaps have retired from industry.

Some of them have since passed, and I think of Art Mainil would've been one of them and, Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize the . . . while the business is going to be changing hands, just recognize the hard work, the determination, and the entrepreneurship that, what was at the time termed and today termed just a bunch a farmers that decided to do in building the Weyburn Inland Terminal into one of the premier businesses, ag businesses in this province, Mr. Speaker. And so I just wanted to take the opportunity to recognize all that they did to build that business over several decades, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to . . . I think that this . . . Well I look at my constituency in terms of agriculture. Obviously ranching is an important part of it, especially in the Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker. That is some of the most beautiful country in this entire province, Mr. Speaker, and some of the most hard-working individuals, who for many generations have grown their businesses, grown their herds, weathered some difficult times, Mr. Speaker. And I know that there's a lot of positive news in terms of some of the supports that are now going to be in place in terms of the livestock program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think just support that perhaps wasn't there in the past that will now be available, particularly to those families that are perhaps transitioning to the younger generation, and we have a lot of those in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency.

And on that topic, on both that new support program, but as well as what the government's response has been in terms of the challenges that we've seen in moving grain over the last couple of months, on behalf of my constituents, I can only thank the Premier and the Agriculture minister and members of the government caucus and cabinet that have worked diligently on this issue for more than a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light of what we were going to be seeing, not just in terms of last year's harvest, but what we have envisioned for the growth of the Ag sector in this province and knowing that the other sectors that are important — the transportation industry and the rail industry — what they would need to do to be able to meet the challenge that I . . . that we believe that our producers will be putting in front of them over the next number of years as we grow this industry, as the industry grows itself. And so on behalf of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the Premier and especially the Ag minister on the great job that they've been doing on this very important file for the province.

Mr. Speaker, so that's a little bit about agriculture and my constituency. We're seeing a number of good developments within the constituency, particularly around the role of education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to thank the

Minister for Advanced Education for, as well as the cabinet and the treasury board, for the \$1 million investment into the continued work around the Southeast Regional College. It's an important project, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that when, you know, you look at the role of both the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system as well as the advanced education system, whether that be adult basic education, whether that be the ability for a student — much like I did when I was finished high school — to be able to begin their university education right at home, closer to home. And that's what I did at Southeast Regional College.

I think what Weyburn is doing and what the education system is doing is really, I think could serve for a model for other communities where we have co-located on one campus what is now the high school which will be turned into the junior high plus the high school, that will include the Southeast Regional College. And that includes, I think, an important enhancement to our community that the government — frankly, and I think this is a good thing — didn't fund. This was a community-supported initiative with the city and the citizens and a great board that did a lot of fundraising: a \$4 million performing arts centre, all located right on the same campus. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so the investments into advanced education as well as continued construction is, I think, a positive for the educational system and what we can offer our students, both on the K to 12 side as well as after their grade 12 year ends, and building a bit of a hub for the community around all those types of services.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a bit of the infrastructure that's taking place in terms of educational infrastructure. I also, you know . . . One of the things that did come up in terms of my constituents immediately after budget and especially in the news is the work that is going to begin, in terms of the preconstruction, looking at the twinning of 39 and 6 highway. This is one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think from some of the earliest days when I was first elected, as we saw increasing oil activity, as we saw increasing population.

Keeping in mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just as an example in I think the short time that I've been a member of the legislature, the population of Weyburn itself would have been around probably 9,400, 9,300 people. And in that time it's grown to probably, you know, we're pushing 12,000 people, probably a little bit over that. And that's happening in Weyburn.

It's happening as well to probably the same extent if not a little bit bigger in Estevan. It's happening in the communities all in between, and that's caused I think a lot more traffic that we're seeing on our highways. Especially if you look at how important that network of the highway, 6 and 39 . . . It's part of the national highway system. North Portal, which is on the other side of Estevan, is the major port in which we see a lot of traffic come through from the United States, and a lot of that feeds up through Estevan, Weyburn, and then on to Regina. And then from Regina, it can get to either going west to Calgary or going northwest to Saskatoon and Edmonton.

And so the work, this has been something . . . Especially in the last couple of years, there's been a lot of attention based on, unfortunately, some tragic situations, tragic accidents that have taken place on that busy stretch of highway. And so this

government signalling that this is a priority in terms of increasing, improving the safety, improving the free flow of goods to and from our major trading partner in the United States, I think bodes well for just the continued growth that we're going to see in the southeast part of the province. And so that's an important project in the constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to talk a little bit about health before my time is finished here. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the health budget. So this is an increased budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We will spend, just in terms of what the government spends either through the Ministry of Health or our regional health authorities, \$4.99 billion — nearly \$5 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Works out to a little bit over \$552,000 an hour, 24 hours a day. So in the time that the member from Riversdale spoke, we spent about a half a million dollars in the health care system. That's about the rate that we spend, Mr. Speaker.

Now some members thought it would have been a little bit higher than that. Maybe, you know, \$2 million or \$2.5 million while she was speaking. But she spoke for an hour, so it was about \$550,000 that we spent. Represents about 42 per cent, 43 per cent of the provincial budget. It is a 3 per cent increase.

As the Finance minister and the Premier had indicated in the lead up to the budget, that it was going to be a bit of a tighter budget this year, and so a 3 per cent increase translates into about \$144 million based on what we spent last year. I think even within what would be a tighter budget, especially with a health budget, a 3 per cent increase, I think we're going to move forward with a number of important initiatives, some that have already begun in previous years and some that are new that I'll talk a little bit about.

In terms of capital, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spent in the first six years of our government just over, now with this budget it'll be just over \$1 billion in health capital. That's both on equipment . . . That's on maintenance, mainly on maintenance, and new construction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing that there is much more that we need to do in terms of renewing old facilities, upgrading the ones that we currently have, knowing that approximately two-thirds of our health capital was built before 1970, and knowing that previous governments had not invested a lot in terms of the maintenance of health facilities. So this budget does provide dollars, \$16 million for the final construction of the Moose Jaw Hospital, which we look forward to completing at the end of this year as well.

And the member opposite talked a little bit about the importance of long-term care. And I'll talk a little bit about that later. But as members will know, a bit of a difference in terms of the record of this government versus the previous members opposite. In the 16 years that they were government, 16 long-term care facilities closed, Mr. Speaker.

We are in the midst of completing construction on 13 long-term care facilities. We know that Samaritan Place in Saskatoon opened. That's a 14th. And we're seeing the renewal of three long-term care facilities in Swift Current . . . that'll be built attached to the hospital, the regional hospital in Swift Current. So we have invested significantly in long-term care and renewal of the capital. \$27 million will continue construction on Biggar,

Kelvington, Kipling, Maple Creek, and Prince Albert.

As well, on the topic of Prince Albert, when it comes to new funding for facility planning, obviously, Mr. Speaker, part of what we're doing in the budget does increase the maintenance dollars in this budget for existing facilities. But we know that we need to do both maintenance, but we also do need to renew capital facilities across the province. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, three and a half million has been set aside for some planning of some facilities.

We're looking at the renewal of several facilities here in the city of Regina. I think, as we get more into the details of that over this next year, I think people will see that that is going to translate into a fairly significant renewal of the beds within the city of Regina, which are long overdue. I believe the last new beds, new facility in the city of Regina, was in the early 1980s, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we know that we have much to do in terms of both here in the capital city.

It also includes planning dollars to begin the renewal of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an important hospital in terms of not just in Prince Albert in terms of the population that the area of Prince Albert serves, the third largest community, but also the catchment area of people from the North, people from other regional sites that end up in Prince Albert for care. We know that it is a busy hospital. I believe the numbers, one of the stats that I saw is that the facility, which was planned in a phased approach in terms of stages — and, unfortunately, I believe it was the third stage didn't actually happen back in the early 1990s — but that was a hospital that was built for, I believe it was about 1,000 births a year. And last year they had nearly 1,500 births take place in that hospital. So we certainly know the capacity pressures.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, facility planning for additional long-term care beds in La Ronge. Now this is one I want to talk a little bit about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On budget day in fact I'm sitting next to the Finance minister, and I knew that this part was coming up in his speech. He mentioned this part in his speech. And knowing the member from Cumberland has really asked I think, in my time as Health minister, in the two years I've been Health minister, I think the only questions he's ever asked, certainly on the floor of the Chamber, is La Ronge — when is there going to be more long-term care beds? We know there's a need in La Ronge. When is there going to be more long-term care beds in La Ronge?

And so the Minister of Finance announces that the planning dollars have been put in place to add long-term care beds in La Ronge. And I look over from the member from Cumberland and I actually thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought that he'd mistaken what the Finance minister had said. I thought maybe he thought the Finance minister said that we're closing the long-term care beds in La Ronge, that we're closing the facility. By the looks on his face, you'd think that we'd just announced that we were closing the long-term care facility in La Ronge. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are adding planning dollars in this budget to add long-term care beds to the community of La Ronge.

[21:15]

I think this has been well received by the community. We look forward to adding those beds and adding the capacity in that community, regardless of how the member opposite may vote. But I would encourage it. This is the one issue that he's brought forward in this House. This is the one issue that he's asked me questions on. It's in the budget. I would encourage the member for Cumberland to actually vote for this budget and stand up for the people of Cumberland and stand up for the people of La Ronge. Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that's the work that we're doing on capital.

On the operational side, what we're looking at — and the member opposite from Riversdale talked a little bit about a couple of the programs — one is the emergency department wait times. So we've added \$4 million in this budget for a couple of initiatives. One, we've set a pretty ambitious goal that by 2017 we want to be in a position to have no waits in the emergency department. It's a big goal. It's ambitious. We have a lot of work to do, and the system I think is prepared for that, but they know it is a big challenge.

Much of that though is more than just the emergency department. It goes to the flow of the patient through the system. That's why other programs such as the Home First/Quick Response are so important. If we have a senior that, because of an incident that may happen at home, doesn't require emergency care but requires something fairly urgent — and it may be late at night, it may be when the home care hours don't provide service — we think that there's a better way to provide services to those seniors. That's why we're piloting it in Regina, in Saskatoon, and Prince Albert to provide that additional support to hopefully defer or delay placement in the emergency room or an acute care bed and return that senior back home as soon as possible. That will help on the emergency department wait time strategy.

We're also looking at providing . . . And I know the members opposite have said there's no new money for seniors in the budget. I'm looking forward, if I have time, to dispel that myth because the budget does include \$800,000 to begin a new program for house calls for seniors who are living at home who may need some additional support so that we can hopefully keep them out of whether it be long-term care or a personal care home.

So that is new dollars that is in this budget and relates back to the patient flow into the emergency departments, as well hot-spotting, which is going to be looking at those patients in the system . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, people I think would be shocked to know that 1 per cent of the patients in the system account for about 21 per cent of what we spend in the system. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have instances, and this just shows that as a system we're not serving these people well, where people are showing up in the emergency room department in some cases as many as 150 times in one year. Obviously we need to catch that sooner, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to put together a pilot in Regina and Saskatoon to identify these individuals and personalize a care plan around them so that we can hopefully defer a trip to the emergency room and free up the emergency room for what is actually for, which is emergencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what some commentators are

saying about the initiative. One of I think the most, perhaps one of the most notable health policy health reporters in Canada is André Picard who writes for *The Globe and Mail*. This is what he said on January 9th of this year. The title of the article is, “Brad Wall’s health-care promise is difficult — but smart.” He says, and I quote:

... the Saskatchewan Party, which has overseen some pretty dynamic changes in the province in recent years — among them bolstering the health system to make it what is undoubtedly the country’s best . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he goes on to talk about, and I quote again:

Saskatchewan, to its credit, seems to understand this complex dynamic, and has invested in a “patient flow initiative” to find solutions along the continuum rather than just pouring money into emergency rooms.

And he closes the article . . . and again this is André Picard. He’s a health columnist with *The Globe and Mail*, one of the most recognized health columnists in Canada:

If other province’s had Saskatchewan’s chutzpah, then the needed transformation of the healthcare system might actually become a living, breathing initiative rather than merely the subject of memos and reports.

So that’s what people across this country, when they look at what Saskatchewan’s doing, when they look at the emergency department initiative, when they look at what we’ve done on surgical wait times, that’s what commentators from across the country are looking at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an ambitious goal, and we only, I think, have to look at what this government has already achieved, knowing that there is more work to be done. But this budget includes \$60.5 million in the surgical wait times to support . . . What we’re trying to do is get to three months for the offer of surgery, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was a four-year commitment. We know that there is more work to be done. Saskatoon’s going to need a few more months, later into this year. Regina’s going to need an additional year as well. But to date we’ve spent \$186 million. But it’s more than just spending money. It’s how you spend the dollars. It’s being smarter about the dollars that you are spending, and this is what has been achieved since the government changed.

The number of people waiting more than 18 months is down 97 per cent. In prior days, going back to 2005 and 2006, we actually used to count the people waiting longer than 18 months. If you can consider that, not even the wait from when the person sees their family physician to actually see the specialist, but the wait from when the specialist actually says you’re a candidate for surgery and you’re going on the wait list. We used to count the number of people that waited longer than 18 months from that referral by a specialist to when the surgery actually took place. We used to count that by the thousands, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2 and 3 and 4,000 people waiting longer than 18 months. That’s down 97 per cent, almost down to zero in terms of waiting 18 months.

Waiting more than one year, down 93 per cent. Waiting more than six months, down 83 per cent. Waiting more than three months, down 70 per cent, to the point where 80 per cent of the people in the system are having surgery performed within three months, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That’s why this government has taken an ambitious plan for wait times, knowing that there’s more work to be done, but why we think that we have the people in place and have the processes in place and have the goals and the ambition to be able to achieve the same type of results on the emergency departments and the flow of the patients, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk a little bit about, if I have some time left, I also want to talk a little bit about, I want to talk a little bit about — and this is important — two other things. One thing that I do want to note is that what this budget does include, and what I think was a good move on behalf of the government or by the government and treasury board, is that the budget once again includes dollars to recognize the population growth in this province. So \$24 million has been earmarked that’ll be dispersed to the regional health authorities based on the fact that the population is growing and that we’ll see more patients through the system.

To date, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of population growth that we’ve acknowledged, we’ve spent \$73 million just in population growth dollars within the health budget. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, at a time when the province was losing people — and we know what years those were — obviously you don’t need dollars for population growth. You don’t need dollars for demographic challenges. But that is something that we’ve recognized, that the province is a growing province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to mention before I move to my concluding remarks, the member opposite from Riversdale talked about the efficiencies that the regions will have to find. \$51.9 million is the target that we’ve set for the Ministry of Health, for the RHAs [regional health authority], and for the Cancer Agency. This is something that is not unexpected, and as the member opposite alluded to, the regions have had to I think work very hard to come in line in terms of their budgets in the last year. The Saskatoon Health Region believed that they would have a \$30 million deficit at the beginning of this fiscal year that’s ending at the end of the month. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they’re on track to not have a deficit this year. So they’ve worked really hard to try to come in line in terms of what their allocation was.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when all the regions report on a . . . what to this year, the budget year that ends in March, what is a \$4.84 billion budget, I think that we will see, in terms of all the regional health authorities, an overall deficit of regional health authorities that will be I would say less than double digits — somewhere under \$10 million for a system that will spend \$4.84 billion. Mr. Deputy Speaker there was a time — and while that’s a concern, obviously it’s a very small fraction of the overall health budget and the regional health authorities budget — there was a time and it wasn’t that long ago, when the NDP, the members opposite when they were in the government put out a news release that actually said, good news, only 28 of the 32 health regions are running deficits this year, and it’s only \$50 billion.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was at a time when the health budget was only \$2.5 billion. Put it into today's dollars. That would be as if the health regions were running a \$100 million deficit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In terms of the supports that we're providing to the region and to the system, we ought not to take any lessons from the members opposite when it comes to fiscal discipline within the health regions.

And on the topic of efficiencies, we've done this in the last number of years. We've said to the health regions, on average we want to find 1.5 per cent in efficiencies. We need to bend the cost curve. All health regions, all Health ministries, all provincial governments for years — and this just hasn't been recently, but for years, going back to even not long after the days when medicare was actually introduced — the question of sustainability actually became an issue, and whether or not it was fiscally sustainable for provincial governments to not only run the system but also improve the system.

So this idea that we're asking regions to find efficiencies, this has been done for many years. In fact under the former government, as I mentioned before in question period, in 2004 . . . in fact we're only six days away from the 10th anniversary of the budget when it came out in 2004, in a year when the budget went up 6.3 per cent. So more than twice what it is in this '14-15 budget, 6.3 per cent increase.

What did the Health minister of the day ask the regions to do? He asked to find efficiencies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact we know where they did find their efficiencies. They closed 90 beds, including 50 long-term care beds in 12 communities. They cut 92 jobs including 40 nursing jobs. And then the minister of the day, the member for Lakeview said, and I quote . . . This is what *The Western Producer* says: "Another 160 jobs could go because Nilson said the regional health authorities must find 20 million in cost savings through administrative efficiencies."

So this idea that we're trying to find efficiencies is certainly not new, but I think what the difference is and what is new is the approach that we've taken. And I do, as my closing remarks, I do want to talk a little bit about what I think has got a little bit of attention in the last couple of days and the last couple of weeks, and that's this government's work around implementing lean within the health care system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've made a decision as a government that we want to replicate what other high-performing health systems are doing in terms of improving quality, improving safety, and finding efficiencies within the health care system. This is something that, as I mentioned before, provinces, former governments, other jurisdictions have been grappling with even from the beginning days of medicare.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the members opposite were the government, Ken Fyke did an inquiry on the health care system and, as is reported in Jeffrey Simpson's recent book, *Chronic Condition*, this is what Ken Fyke had to say: "Quality and efficiency problems are the true enemies of sustainability."

So I think we have a choice. We're running a health care system in this province as all other provinces are, as previous governments have done. We have decisions to make in terms of

how do we make the system more efficient and sustainable, especially in light of the demographic challenges that we're going to face as a province and as a health care system across the country. We can take a path of laying people off and ending positions and cutting nursing positions and going back to a day where we had 600 vacancies, 600 not only vacancies but 600 RN [registered nurse] positions that were required for the system, or to the days where 450 doctors were let go from the system.

That's the approach that we can take, that this province has taken in the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think that what we're doing is we're taking a different approach. It does involve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, making an investment. But in terms of the words, in the words of the member from Riversdale of opportunity costs, I just would remind the member opposite, even today what we have, even if you set aside the work around quality improvements and lower wait times and the work in terms of safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because all of that is waste to the system.

When we cause harm to a patient, that is waste in the system. It doesn't do the patient any good, and obviously we're going to have to correct the mistake that we do. So we're going to have to pay for that as well. When we have people waiting on wait-lists, that is no good for the patient and it's not good for the system as well. We need a more efficient way to move patients through the system, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what we've already saved, if you leave aside even on the quality and on the safety side, just in terms of the efficiencies, we've saved to date \$39.9 million. And some of those savings, I think, are pretty well known, but I want to talk a little bit about them. We've saved \$35 million since we began the lean journey in blood and plasma products through lean improvements. And you know, what that actually means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is people that freely give of their blood products. They don't get paid for it. They do it on their own time. This is something that people are very generous in this province and in this country.

[21:30]

For the typical blood product, typical red blood products have a shelf life of about 41 days. And what we were doing prior to the work of lean and why this is so important, what the savings actually mean is that we are throwing, to date have thrown \$36 million worth of blood products, we've thrown less that amount. I'll maybe try to say that in a better way. Had we not gone through the lean improvements, we would have thrown away blood products.

So people donate their blood. They expect that it's actually going to go into a patient and be used. But the way that the system has worked is we would throw those products away. It reaches its end life. It reaches its expiry date, and we throw it away. Because of the work of lean and improving the system, we're not throwing as much product, we're not discarding as much product away. And this has been recognized by the Canadian Blood Services.

In terms of opportunity costs — and I know the member from Riversdale talked about the importance of mental health and addictions and not waiting to make improvements for when the

commissioner reports, Mr. Deputy Speaker — the number of cancelled appointments at the Regina Qu'Appelle mental health and addictions clinic have gone from 42 per cent, cancelled appointments happen 42 per cent of the time, has gone down to zero. That means that the wait-list for people that are accessing that help has gone from 400 clients down to 70. That means that we are able to provide services in a more timely fashion, which I do not believe anybody, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can put a price tag on what that has meant for those patients and those families, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And lean has been a big part of that, finding out from the front-line staff what actually will improve the processes so that we can see these people, treat these people, and provide supports more timely, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have seen in Regina Qu'Appelle the rate of cancelled MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] go from on average 12 a week down to one a week. Now if you think about what that means, if you reduce it from 12 a week, which we average, down to one a week, we can do 650 more scans a year without any additional resources. If we apply that same principle and that same productivity level across the entire system, that would be 2,600 additional MRI scans, meaning 2,600 people would not be waiting as long as they do right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I could go on and on in terms of the improvements that we've seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the work that we've seen with the work that we're doing with lean. And I would say this. When we announced a contract with John Black and Associates, it was in August of 2012. And in that article . . . It's Janet French who wrote the article. It's a very I think a very fair article which is nearly a year and a half old. All of that spelled out what we'd spent on consultants, all of that spelled out in the article, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we'd spent on travel. Yes, it is an investment. It's point two per cent though of what we'll spend in the health system. Even over the four-year period, over four, if you can think about this, over the four-year period that that contract will run, it's about a cost of \$40 million, but in that time we will spend as a health system close to \$20 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we believe that it is an investment that will pay dividends and already is paying dividends.

But in that article of Janet French's in August of 2012, it talks about a similar example. The Cleveland Clinic, who is one of the highest rated health organizations in the United States, has an employee base similar to what the entire health care system in Saskatchewan does. They as well invested \$40 million in lean and in the first five years saved \$100 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that that's what we can provide to our patients and to the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not a contract that we entered into lightly but understanding what the benefits will be, the long-term care benefits, the long-term benefits to the system, and to the transformation agenda that we are championing in this province to an extent that nobody in this country is doing. No other jurisdiction is going to the lengths that we are to improve quality, to improve efficiencies, and to improve patient safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That's why I support the work that we're doing. That's why I support the work that the health regions and the Cancer Agency and all of our partners are doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps the criticism that we'll face from the members opposite, but that's why we're doing it.

It is for our patients. It's in line with the Patient First Review that we did. And for all of those reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment. I will be supporting the budget.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Indeed it's an honour for me to rise in the House on behalf of the constituents of Regina Douglas Park and make some comments and remarks about the 2014-15 budget. However before I begin those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the Minister of Health for that explanation and purposeful speech regarding lean. It needed to be said. Well said, Mr. Minister, and thanks for that. It's a direction we need to take.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents and bring some comments about this balanced budget, our seventh balanced budget, a budget that contains no tax increases. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as was explained to us last night by the very eloquent and loquacious Minister of Culture, Sport and Recreation, there's actually an efficiency, a tax efficiency in this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it was a challenge . . . in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We'll get to that a little later. It's a budget that controls spending. It's a budget that highlights investments in infrastructure and of course most importantly, an investment that invests in the people of this great province, Mr. Speaker. So it's a balanced budget, a budget with no tax increases, a budget that controls spending, has investments in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and investments in people.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour and a privilege to rise again on behalf of the constituents of Regina Douglas Park. It's still very much and for me always will be an honour to walk up the steps of this magnificent legislature. The shine, so to speak, has not come off the shoes. Now until last night, I thought that was a pretty good metaphor, but the one-horse pony took it. And I think the one-horse pony will be a legend, probably one of those icons of the twenty-seventh legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so I yield to the Minister of Infrastructure on that one.

Mr. Speaker, we're blessed with a very great leader. And I want to thank our Premier for the leadership that he provides this province, this legislature, our government, our cabinet. I want to thank our cabinet for the commitment, Mr. Speaker, the dedication that the women and men of our cabinet provide the people of this province. It's an onerous job, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I have the utmost respect for our Premier and the members of our cabinet.

Of course my caucus colleagues who have become friends and who share their expertise, their experience, and their knowledge with folks like us newbies, and I'm really appreciative of that and I've enjoyed every minute. To the legislative staff that provide support and resources for us on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I also want to acknowledge several other people. You know, my parents, they're not with us anymore, but I can't help think about how they would feel about their Saskatchewan, Mr.

Speaker. They loved this province and contributed so much to it. My dad served in the Second World War, in the Italian campaign, fought the battle at Monte Cassino. My mom raising four boys on the 7 block of College Avenue in a 700-square-foot house, Mr. Speaker, and I can remember no cupboards on the door and my dad was a carpenter . . . no doors on the cupboard and my dad was a carpenter, Mr. Speaker.

My older brother Pat and his wife, Sharon. Pat's a paint contractor. He's been a paint contractor in the city and southern Saskatchewan for about 45 years, Mr. Speaker. His support with me in this endeavour going forward has been very meaningful to me. And I also have a sister in Regina and her husband, Brian. My sister Lois is a nurse in management at the Regina General Hospital, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank them for their contributions.

Of course my wife, Karen, my partner and best friend; my sons, Christian and Cameron; my daughters, Michelle and Melanie; and seven wonderful grandchildren and soon to be eight, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, it's pretty neat.

I need to mention my constituency assistant of course, Becky Mason, who keeps things going over at the constituency office. Becky, thank you for all that you do on a daily basis to help us meet the needs of our constituents.

My friends, personal friends of course who have stood by me throughout my term. And of course the people of Regina's Douglas Park, the most important people, the people why we're here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Regina Douglas Park has 16 seniors' centres. And I want to list them all for the record to acknowledge the contributions that our seniors have made to this great province. And so I thank them. I thank the seniors at the Bentley, at the Marion Gardens and Marion Chateau, the College Park Retirement Residence. I want to add that I've spent several times visiting the residents at College Park. We've had a very good time. Annually they raise funds with an activity called the seniors' Olympics. Now I'm not a participant athletically in that event, Mr. Speaker, but it is indeed a lot of fun. And so I salute the people over at College Park Retirement.

To the seniors over at the Prairie Place; the Heritage; Cornwall Village; the Hamilton Plaza; First Baptist Place; Embury Heights; Cedarwood Manor; the Horizon; Mary Helen Herchmer; Milton Heights; Selo Gardens, the Ukrainian-sponsored, supported seniors' complex, Mr. Deputy Speaker; the Broadway Terrace; and the Qu'Appelle House down on College Avenue, Mr. Speaker, a salute to the seniors in those 16 residences in the heart of Regina Douglas Park. Thank you for your contributions to this province.

To the seven schools that we have in Regina Douglas Park, Mr. Speaker, and almost 4,000 students — 3,779 students in the seven elementary and high schools that we have in this constituency, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me get to the budget. Mr. Speaker, the budget is truly a collaborative effort. And in that vein I would like to thank our Minister of Finance for the leadership and diligence that he provides, as has been alluded to many times in

the House already, one of the best, if not the best, Finance minister in our country. We're very blessed to have him, Mr. Speaker, and I thank him for his diligence.

To treasury board, again, the members of treasury board, their commitment and due diligence in bringing down or bringing forth, rather, a budget of significance, a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, yet a budget that allows us to move forward. It's my understanding, 43 days of deliberations basically line by line to make sure that we get things right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in presenting this budget. And of course our caucus, they have significant input and influence into a budget that is again one of Canada's best.

So what about this budget? You know, the budget begins with a vision. And our government has very clearly articulated that vision, Mr. Speaker, and that's to be the best place in Canada to live, to earn a living, and to raise a family. And once that vision has been articulated, Mr. Speaker, then one needs to ask the question, how do you get there? How do we fulfill that vision? How do we get to that end, Mr. Speaker? Well, you develop a plan. It's just, it's that easy, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I found it very interesting reading the *Leader-Post* last weekend. I was reading Bruce Johnstone's editorial, and he was quoting Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. He was paraphrasing the Queen of Hearts when she stated here, and I quote, here we have to run as fast as we can to stay in one place. And he went on to paraphrase that. And there are many interpretations, but certainly suffice to say that there's a lot happening in Saskatchewan, and still we're able to hold the line and record steady growth, Mr. Speaker.

[21:45]

It was interesting to me to see that *Alice in Wonderland* quote in his editorial because when I was preparing some of these remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had thought about the *Alice in Wonderland* story. And there's another scene in that story, and it goes something like this. Alice is having a chat with the cat. And she says, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here," asked Alice. Well that depends on where you want to go, replied the cat. And Alice's response was, I don't really know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see that dynamic repeating itself virtually every day across the floor. No plan, no policy, no leadership, no direction. I guess no problem. Mr. Speaker, so unlike the members opposite, we have a plan. We have a map for our future, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? I think, I think the people like it. I think the people like our plan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I know they like it. Forty-nine on this side, nine on that side, so I think our plan has received some approval.

Of course the plan . . . And we're not afraid. We're quite proud to acknowledge and articulate that we base this plan on a set of guiding principles. And very quickly, Mr. Speaker, no. I principle is the economic growth and job creation through the private sector, not more government, Mr. Speaker.

No. 2, smaller, less intrusive, more efficient government, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that we will reach our 15 per cent reduction over the course of the four years.

Controlled spending and balanced budget as evidenced by the seventh balanced budget that we have presented today, Mr. Speaker. And this budget obviously contains controlled spending.

High quality health care for all of our citizens. And you've heard the Minister of Health articulate our investment in health care. And for a government to allocate 42 per cent of its overall budget to health indicates the commitment we've made to the citizens of this province, with regards to health. Not crumbs, Mr. Speaker.

A strong social safety net for those who need it. We are committed for Saskatchewan to be the best place to live for people with a disability.

Democratic reforms to better serve the people.

No. 7, individual freedom and the equality of opportunity for all Saskatchewan citizens, Mr. Speaker.

And no. 8, complete all of the above within a strong, united Canada.

Witness, Mr. Speaker, the Olympic champions from Saskatchewan. Witness, Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the cause in Afghanistan, our veterans, and we salute them. Witness the Highway of Heroes, Mr. Speaker. And that's our commitment to a strong Saskatchewan and Canada, Mr. Speaker. Even the wall of heroes in St. Andrew's School, Mr. Speaker, where a classroom of grade 6 students has acknowledged the contributions of our veterans through a wall of heroes, Mr. Speaker. So the principles that our budget is formed on, Mr. Speaker, are very solid, and we're proud to take those, take that budget based on those principles forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I said there's a lot happening in this budget, a lot of very positive initiatives and support that I will elaborate on a couple of areas in a few minutes. But very, very, quickly, Mr. Speaker, as it pertains to investments in infrastructure, our little brochure here outlines it very, very clearly: the Regina bypass project and the Estevan bypass; commitment for a Saskatoon commuter bridge; twinning projects of Highway 16 east of Saskatoon, Highways 6, 7, and 39, Mr. Speaker. And I could go on.

With regards to investments in people, Mr. Speaker: record funding in health care includes funding to meet the three-month wait list target, support for primary care centres and collaborative emergency centres, etc.; increased benefits for recipients of the seniors' income plan, personal home care benefits, Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities, Mr. Speaker.

And as our Minister of Health mentioned in his remarks, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the unusual growth that's taking place in this province, Mr. Speaker. And for the first time, well this budget represents the second time in our history there is funding to help students to . . . enrolment growth in K to 12 schools. A very significant, in fact the most significant support for our school boards, Mr. Speaker, because that funding allows them to plan for education today, happening in our classrooms immediately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's a

very significant initiative, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'll elaborate on a couple in more detail shortly.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 we made a number of promises. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to acknowledge that we've kept many of those promises, over 130 to be exact. The graduate retention program, for example, rebating up to \$20,000 in undergrad tuition, promise kept; created the Saskatchewan scholarship fund, promise kept; hired 120 new police officers, promise kept; exceeded our promise to hire 800 more nurses, promise kept; 40 new physician training seats and 60 new medical residency positions, promise kept. I think you get the message, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't need to go on.

The point here is that action, not words, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a party, this is a government of action, and we intend to continue to move in that direction as we go forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget has been crafted of course with our principles in mind, crafted with our growth plan always at the forefront, keeping in mind reality, limited resources, and the ability to pay, Mr. Speaker. A balanced approach, not a wishful thinking, unrealistic pie-in-the-sky, Mad Hatter approach, if I may, Mr. Speaker, used by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind you of the \$2.7 billion platform that was announced last election, Mr. Speaker: \$450 million on health, \$783 million on housing, \$417 million on education, \$72 million on the environment, \$503 million on family, \$402 million on other promises, Mr. Speaker. Add it up and you have a \$2.7 billion worth of spending with absolutely . . . Well, that's not exactly true, Mr. Speaker. They were going to raise potash royalties. Now wouldn't that be great, given the market today, Mr. Speaker? Not only would we be not selling any potash, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have any companies producing. We would have jobs lost. Pack your suitcase; I'm out of here. That's where we'd be today, Mr. Speaker. Think about it. My dad used to say, Russ, I was born at night, but not last night, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I got involved politically was because I love the new attitude that exists in our province. Mr. Speaker, we have direction. We have purpose. We have pride. There's a feeling of optimism. Mr. Speaker, something freeing is going on in Saskatchewan. We're free from the good-enough syndrome. We're free from apologizing for being from Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there's more. You know, there's something freeing about seeing your assets and your net worth growing. Look at Saskatchewan's population today, 1,117,503 people. Our manufacturing leads the country, Mr. Speaker. Our exports, and as our Premier often says, not bad for a province without a port.

Mr. Speaker, there's something freeing about knowing where your money's going, where it's going today, where it's going tomorrow, next week, next month, 10 years from now, Mr. Speaker. It's because we have a plan. We have a plan. Mr. Speaker, there's something freeing about planning ahead and having the cash to do so. Look after your pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves. Mr. Speaker, there's something freeing about seeing your debt being eliminated — 44 per cent reduction in the debt, Mr. Speaker. There's

something freeing about never having to worry about how things are going because you have taken care of business at home, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I read recently an NDP slogan that read I believe, “focused on what matters.” I ask, Mr. Speaker, how can you focus on what matters without a plan, without direction, Mr. Speaker? I guess it’s that no plan, no focus, no problem. So let me just make a few remarks about what matters. And I really do want to concentrate a little bit on our seniors, Mr. Speaker. As I articulated, 16 seniors’ complexes, homes in Regina Douglas Park.

So here’s a little of what we’ve done for seniors, Mr. Speaker. The 2014 core operational plan includes the following investments that will benefit Saskatchewan seniors: \$27.3 million in capital to continue five previously announced long-term care facilities through a government co-ownership model with regional health authorities; \$4.5 million for the Home First/Quick Response home care program to provide innovative home care solutions to better serve seniors; \$3.7 million for ongoing funding of items in seniors’ care Urgent Issues Action Fund, primarily for staffing and recreation supports; one and a half million dollars for planning of long-term care facilities in Regina and La Ronge; and \$800,000 for a new seniors’ house call pilot program to develop an innovative mobile outreach team to provide home visits to seniors with complex health issues, Mr. Speaker. That matters.

The 2014-15 core operational plan also includes the following adjustments to benefits that are targeted to Saskatchewan seniors. The seniors’ income plan recipients will receive benefit increases of \$10 a month. Sixteen years they went without an increase into the income plan. Seniors’ personal care home benefit will be increasing the monthly income eligibility threshold by \$75, Mr. Speaker, from \$1,875 a month to \$1,950 a month for an average benefit of \$385 per month. New operating funding for 24 long-term care beds at Pineview Terrace in Prince Albert, and the senior citizens’ ambulance assistance program will receive increased funding for additional claims.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. The point I’m making here, Mr. Speaker, is that when it comes to senior citizens, and as we heard in other remarks, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to our children, when it comes to the health care of the citizens of our province, Mr. Speaker, they matter and we care.

Mr. Speaker, one of the pillars of this budget — and I’ll conclude with these, Mr. Speaker — one of the pillars of our budget is controlled spending. You know, Mr. Speaker, in this day and age, it’s very easy to get caught up in spending. Spending, it’s like a frenzy, Mr. Speaker, and it tempts us every single day. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we create ways to convince ourselves that it’s okay to spend. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, even governments get caught up in that. It’s easy to spend. It’s okay to spend.

As the Minister of Infrastructure alluded to last night, you know, when treasury board receive their submissions from the ministries and ministries appear before treasury board, they don’t come with bad ideas. They don’t come with bad programs for approval, Mr. Speaker. They come with programs that are

important to the people of Saskatchewan, otherwise they wouldn’t waste anybody’s time trying to present these programs. And so it’s very difficult to not get caught up in a spending frenzy.

You know, if we simplify things, and we look at our own personal lives, sometimes we find it very easy to make up ways to convince ourselves that it’s okay to spend. We rationalize, and we become very good at it. It’s very tempting. And as I said, we as governments can get caught up in it sometimes too.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I know that some of these things are familiar. I don’t want to wait. I want to enjoy it now, not when I’m old and grey, personally. I didn’t — this is a good one — I didn’t buy the \$150 one. Buying the \$50 one is like saving \$100. You’ve run that one by, Mr. Speaker. Or I deserve a treat. It’s a reward. Or you only live once. Or it’s an investment. You see, Mr. Speaker? It’s very easy to spend.

So how do you control that spending? How do you control that spending when there are so many forces tugging on a very limited amount of resources? Well the answer to that is simple, Mr. Speaker. You have to make tough decisions. But in order to make tough decisions, Mr. Speaker, you need to have some tools.

Very quickly and very briefly, one of the tools we have of course is the whole budget process, the treasury board process led by our Ministry of Finance, Mr. Speaker, a group of people that take that task on very, very seriously, line by line. They argue. They discuss. They think through the proposals and the budgets that are presented them by the various ministries, Mr. Speaker. And in the end, they make tough decisions. They control spending.

[22:00]

One of the other tools that we have decided to employ, Mr. Speaker, is — as has already been mentioned by the Minister of Health — the lean management system. And I do want to spend a couple of minutes on that beyond what our minister has spoken about because we have made an investment in lean, Mr. Speaker, and it is producing benefits, as has been alluded to, for the people of Saskatchewan. Lean’s the term that’s used to describe the continuous pursuit of improvement through the elimination of waste. How fundamental is that? How bad is that when you try to find a way to eliminate waste? It’s just that simple, Mr. Speaker. Lean empowers the provider to generate and implement value-added, innovative solutions to problems. How bad is that, Mr. Speaker? And, Mr. Speaker, the lean process is just one of . . . Here comes another metaphor, Mr. Speaker — and that’s just one of the arrows in the quiver.

Let me just talk about health. I know the minister has elaborated a little bit, but I want to add a little bit. As the first province in Canada to apply lean methodology across its entire health system, we are committed to providing patient- and family-centred, high-quality care to all of the people in Saskatchewan. We are equally committed to providing taxpayers with the best possible value for their tax dollars. Lean improvements have focused on reducing waits, improving safety and quality of care for Saskatchewan patients, as well as improving the work environment for care providers.

Mr. Speaker, during the period from March the 1st, 2012 to January 31st, 2014, a total of 638 lean improvement events were completed across the health system. Mr. Speaker, that translates into a 31 per cent reduction in space, 45 per cent reduction in inventory, 72 per cent reduction in defects — for example, medical errors, falls, etc. — and a 52 per cent reduction in patient lead time.

Mr. Speaker, those aren't one-time savings. Those are forever qualitative efficiencies and benefits that benefit the patients and the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's the product of lean.

And if we look beyond just the Ministry of Health . . . One more health stat, Mr. Speaker, and then we can look across government. In out-of-country claims, Mr. Speaker, there was a backlog of 2,200 claims from individuals across the province. As a result of lean, the backlog of claims was eliminated. There was an 81 per cent improvement in average processing time, etc., Mr. Speaker.

From the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General, payments process for Public Guardian and Trustee office. Clients were frustrated about paying for a service that was inefficient. As a result of lean, client satisfaction increased when they received clarity from the staff about when they could get their cheques and learned that often they would receive it that same day. That's helping the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

From the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, labour standards complaint resolution. The time to resolve an investigation from employees regarding hours of work, pay, and benefits was too long. As a result of work, the time to resolve a complaint is down by approximately 30 per cent. Mr. Speaker. And I could go on across the ministries, across government.

This process is a deliberate investment by the Government of Saskatchewan to improve the quality of life for the people of Saskatchewan in terms of how we manage efficiencies within our ministries, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that, I will conclude my remarks. I will be supporting the motion for the budget, and I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to join into the debate on this important document. But before I do so, I would like to simply thank my wife, April, for all that she does, for the support that she's given me over the past 28 months. The support that we get from our spouses allows us to do the critical job that we do. The toughest part of the job may be the fact that we are away from home and away from loved ones so much.

I would also like to take the time to thank my CAs [constituency assistant], Laurie Hookway and Peggy Gordon who do a great job, not only for me but for the people, all the residents of the Melfort constituency. And I want to thank the people of the Melfort constituency for the faith they have placed

in me and did so 28 months ago, and for the gracious way I'm treated when I'm around in the constituency.

During the past week, I've had the opportunity to be interviewed by local media back home and I've been asked to describe the steady growth budget, and I simply said that it's good government. It's a balanced budget. It's a budget that doesn't increase taxes. It's a budget that controls government spending. It's a budget that places priorities on continued growth, on skills training, on health care, on seniors, and on making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live, to work, and to raise a family.

We continue as a government to chip away at the massive infrastructure deficit that was left to us from the people across the aisle, putting much needed capital into the Saskatchewan highway system, the education system, the health care system, the long-term care system, all needed upgrades when we won in 2007.

And then I was asked, okay, what about the Melfort constituency? What does it do for us in Melfort constituency? You know, and we have a great agricultural background there and industry there and this does a lot to show stability in farming, not only in grain farming but also with beef producers and with beekeepers. And you know, that's very important because over the years farming has been up and down and up and down and finally we're getting a handle on it to keep it on a level and growing keel.

And I look at the powerful manufacturing base that exists in the Melfort constituency, the iron triangle it's called, consisting of Bourgault Industries, Bourgault Tillage Tools, Doepker Industries, Schulte Industries, Michel's Industries, Condor's, FPS [Failure Prevention Services], M & K, Worley's and so many more, all in the Melfort constituency. And that doesn't count the world's largest potash mine, BHP, that is now under construction. But I see in this budget that we have put money aside, and we're starting the manufacturing centre of excellence right here in Saskatchewan and really, in the Melfort constituency. Where else? What else could happen that would help us more?

And then I see improvements in education, health care, long-term care, First Nations programs, programs that keep our children and our grandchildren right here in Saskatchewan. And I sit in this Chamber, and I see an opposition of buzzwords. That's buzz, buzzwords.

You know, they don't put the research in. They come out with a smart economy. They're going to build a smart economy. I've heard of smart phones. I've heard of smart cars. There's no place that they explain what a smart economy is. Saskatchewan today has the most diversified economy in Canada. What are they going to do to make it a smart economy?

They have rent-a-school is a term they've been bringing out. No idea what that means. Wrong-headed. I love that one, wrong-headed. Japanese dictionary. And one that actually makes some sense until you think about it: minimum care standards.

You know, we've heard quite a bit on minimum care standards.

And like so many of us, when we get into situations where we relate it back to our lives . . . And I relate this one to my mother, who is and always has been a very strong lady. She raised four sons and then had a precious daughter who just had a birthday yesterday, and she's still precious. I'll leave that there. In fact my mother even, mom and dad even brought in a cousin from BC just to make sure the house was full.

Mom and dad moved into a care home. I believe seven years ago they moved into the care home. And if somebody had told them at that time that they're going to spend two hours a day looking after mom and dad, I know how it would have gone. It would have gone five minutes of how are you doing this morning, Mary, Wes? How are you doing? And it would have been five minutes at night, the same thing. It would have been an hour and 50 minutes of mom saying, get away from me. I don't need it. Stay away. You know, because you have a two-hour minimum. Now unfortunately, mom needs more help and she gets it, well over two hours a day.

And you know, too often we hear rhetoric, and we hear this two hours a day minimum. So I got thinking about what would it look like if we did that. What would it look like? And the only thing I could think of is, okay, let's have a clipboard on the front of every door so when somebody walks into the room, they sign in. And then they walk out of the room, they sign out. If they want to take a roll of toilet paper into the room, they sign in. Come out, they sign out.

And then what happens? Somebody at the end of the day has to take those sheets and has to add them up, and adds them up to come out to maybe an hour and 45 minutes. And what do you do then? You supplied all the need, all the care, all the affection that they receive in those homes, and it only added up to an hour and a half.

What about lunch where they bring everybody together in a room three times a day, and you have two people there? Is that care or is that not care? Do they sign in or not?

And then you get people totalling these up at the end of the day just to see what happens, so we hire somebody for that. And then that happens in every institution, every facility. And then it goes up to administration to check on that, so let's hire more administration to do that.

And I know if it happened on the other side, and if they made it happen when they were in government, it would add cost and they would raise taxes. And it would add cost, and they would raise taxes. And it would add cost, and they would close 1,200 beds in rural Saskatchewan. That's what they did. That's what they would do again.

In the real world, it's just not like that. When you get done your job, when you do a job and you do it well, you go on to the next one. You don't time yourself. You don't look. You don't check to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were there long enough. It's just not the real world.

I think 193 pages of regulations is probably minimum standards and makes sense. But to put everybody on the watch, on the clock doesn't make any sense. It doesn't today. It doesn't tomorrow. It doesn't ever.

The other day, yesterday . . . And I just really hate to quote my seatmate, the member from Coronation Park, but I'm going to do it this one time because he does come up with some pretty good lines. He was saying that the opposition is against P3s because they have no Ps. They have no plan, no policy, no platform. I like that.

And yet last week, just for a minute, I thought I saw a plan, maybe a gem of a sliver of a policy there. And it happened during an exchange between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, and the Leader of the Opposition kind of explained his stand on lean. He said, buy a book and teach everybody else. What a great idea. The member from Rosemont I believe is in the teaching profession. He probably went to university for a few years to become a teacher. He could've bought a book and went out and taught.

[22:15]

We have a member from Lakeview who could have got a law degree in a week and a half by reading a book, you know. They would open a library, and they could shut down all the SIASTs [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], all the universities, because you could read a book. Now that's a plan. Not a good one, but that's a plan.

When I was a kid and I was about 10 years old, I used to work at my father's newspaper. And you know, I did important jobs like clean under the presses, move away some paper, try to keep my hands out of the equipment, see how dirty, how much printer's ink I could get on in a day. But I was 10 years old. And I was thinking the other night about words we used to use in that. We used to use Ludlow, reglets — words that meant something totally different in the printing industry — words like slugs and chases and platens and beds and spacers and picas and points and strippers. At 10 years old I knew what they all meant. They were strange words, but at 10 years old I knew what they all meant.

Now we have the Leader of the Opposition who talks about a Japanese dictionary on the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region website. A Japanese dictionary is the way he describes it. If you look it up, it's a glossary. It's a glossary of 91 terms; 12, 12 of them are Japanese. Twelve words. I have more trouble at a Wok Box than . . . You know, it's just 12 words. They won't be meeting for sushi after the session.

You know, and there's a few things that I think are just wrong and things that happen and things that happen in this Chamber that I don't understand. Because to me being an MLA is 17 weeks in here trying to decide what we can do that's good for the province. Things like the budget that gives us a year's plan for the budget. And the other weeks we are back home, and what we do is we work with individuals, with groups, trying to make this province better. That's how we work when we're away from this Chamber.

The other day, well today I checked my inbox today. And I'm not overly proficient at cleaning out my inbox, and I had not cleaned it out. And I had 404 messages in my inbox. I've opened them. I've read them, but they're in there. Last week the Leader of the Opposition informs us, he has an inbox full of safety concerns from nurses, an inbox full. Can we see them?

No. No, we can't see them. An inbox. Is that 100? Is that 200? Has he got 404, like I had this morning, messages in his inbox? We're talking safety concerns here, safety concerns from nurses all across the province, and he won't share them.

Why won't he share them? Because they have names on them and the people are afraid of it. Well we said, take the names off. Gives us the concerns without the names, and he still won't do it. Is that why we're here? Is that why we're MLAs? We have safety concerns, but we're not going to tell anybody. We're not going to let anybody know. It baffles me, it really does, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, I am very thankful that we have so many people at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health District that understand what's going on, that understands the 12 words in Japanese, that understand working together to make things better. And the money we save will go into better health care. They understand that, and they're working together. We have an opposition that can't go to a foreign restaurant.

At some point, Mr. Speaker, do the people watching at home or the reporters in the gallery or the people in the gallery or the reporters in the rotunda, do they ask and begin to lose confidence in us, and unfortunately not only the opposition, but in all of us as politicians? And I think that is so unfortunate that a person who would hold back, according to his own estimates, hundreds of safety concerns . . .

We have a member from the other side who stood up the other day and read a petition and read the 48 communities it came from. It was six communities. Six listed, 48 named. Is that an error? I don't understand it. I just don't. Is this politics, Mr. Speaker? Is this the way we want to conduct ourselves in this great Chamber? It may be called politics, and it may be called exaggerations, but I know . . . I keep a dictionary from my father's 48 years in the newspaper industry in my office. And in that dictionary there are words for things like that, and in every other room in this province there are words for things like that.

I think I'm done. I think I've had enough to say. But I do want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for reasons of transparent government, of caring government, and of good government, I will be supporting the budget motion, and I'll be completely rejecting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed once again a privilege to stand before this House and speak on this year's budget. I would first off like to thank the team back home — I call them team Telfer — my CA, Mary Anne, and her husband, Don, who work in my office. I appreciate their work, their friendship, and the time they spend on the job. I thank them very much for that.

I would also like to thank my wife, Valerie. This fall was 38 years, and we appreciate what we receive from our spouses. And I especially appreciate her for the time and the love and the attention and the help she gives me.

I would also like to say . . . I'm thrilled to say that November

3rd, this past November 3rd, that was my 10th year in this House. And I'm thrilled to say that I have represented Batoche for these past 10 years.

I would also like to say thank you to the Minister of Finance and his fabulous team for the job they did.

And then I would also like to mention the immigrants. To these new people of our province, I say thank you for immigrating to our Saskatchewan. We love our Saskatchewan, and we hope that you will too. And we welcome you to our Saskatchewan and hope that you will be achieving your hopes and your dreams in our great province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is the perfect match for this year's economy. Best of all it is balanced, balanced, balanced. To this side of the House and to the people of Saskatchewan, this is very important. To the NDP, it's not so important. They say we should have spent millions more. First and foremost, our side says don't spend money you don't have.

I ask of the NDP, if you don't go into debt, where do you go to get the money, that extra money that you would need to still be able to balance the budget? Well, Mr. Speaker, let me guess. Like past NDP governments, they would extract the money needed from agriculture and municipal. Same old NDP story. Take it from rural Saskatchewan. And we are still recovering from a lifetime of NDP rural pillage. The NDP say the budget does not spend enough money on health care, social services, highways, and on and on. Have they ever heard the old adage, you can never dig your way out of a hole; you only dig deeper?

Mr. Speaker, this budget is tailored to what Saskatchewan needs not what the NDP wants. Our government says you should spend only the money you have. But do the members on the other side of the House not understand the fact that debt accumulates more debt.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been interesting to be a fly on the wall in the NDP caucus room after they saw the budget. I think we would have heard things like, this is going to be a tough budget to criticize. Where can we poke holes in this budget? I wish we could have written budgets like this when we were in power. Wow, it really is balanced. Where do we go from here? We're really going to have to use our imagination on this one. Somebody order more coffee; it's going to be a late night.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP believe in spending more than what is brought in. If in power, they would have brought in a Stompin' Tom budget yelling, save a lot of money, spending we ain't got. Mr. Speaker, a household run like that is destined to fall, and so is a province.

Our government has paid off 44 per cent of the province's debt. That is remarkable. That is real progress. That is something we can build on. Mr. Speaker, if the NDP Finance critic, the member from Regina Rosemont, ever had a chance to write a budget like this, he would be ecstatic. Mr. Speaker, I hope and pray that he never has that chance. Mr. Speaker, I might say if the NDP would have written budgets like this, they might have had a better chance of staying in power.

When faced with a tighter budget, our government cut

government spending, not raised taxes. This has to be the path of our future. This is the road to success for all of Saskatchewan. Now that Saskatchewan is a have province, it does not give the government the green light to spend like we've won a mega lottery. And in order to stay a have province, we must be very careful and remember there always is a morning after.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to quote from the book, *Peace, Progress and Prosperity* by Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart. This book is the story of Walter Scott, our first premier. I quote, "To be a successful Saskatchewan politician, one had to have rural roots and close ties with the land." Mr. Speaker, that holds true for political parties of today in Saskatchewan. By the way, losing \$34 million on potatoes does not qualify for ties with the land.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was born of agriculture. In 1900 Saskatchewan produced 7.8 per cent of Canada's wheat and Ontario produced 84.7 per cent. By 1910, just 10 years later, just 10 years and Saskatchewan produced 50.7 per cent of Canada's wheat and Ontario was down to only 15 per cent. Ag is still a huge part on our economic ladder. Ag is still the number two . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It now being 7 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

Makowsky	4913
Michelson	4916
Chartier	4918
Duncan	4927
Marchuk	4934
Phillips	4938
Kirsch	4940

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

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

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

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

Hon. Kevin Doherty

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

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

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

Hon. Nancy Heppner

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

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan

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

Hon. Don McMorris

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

Hon. Don Morgan

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

Hon. Rob Norris

Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Jim Reiter

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

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General