



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

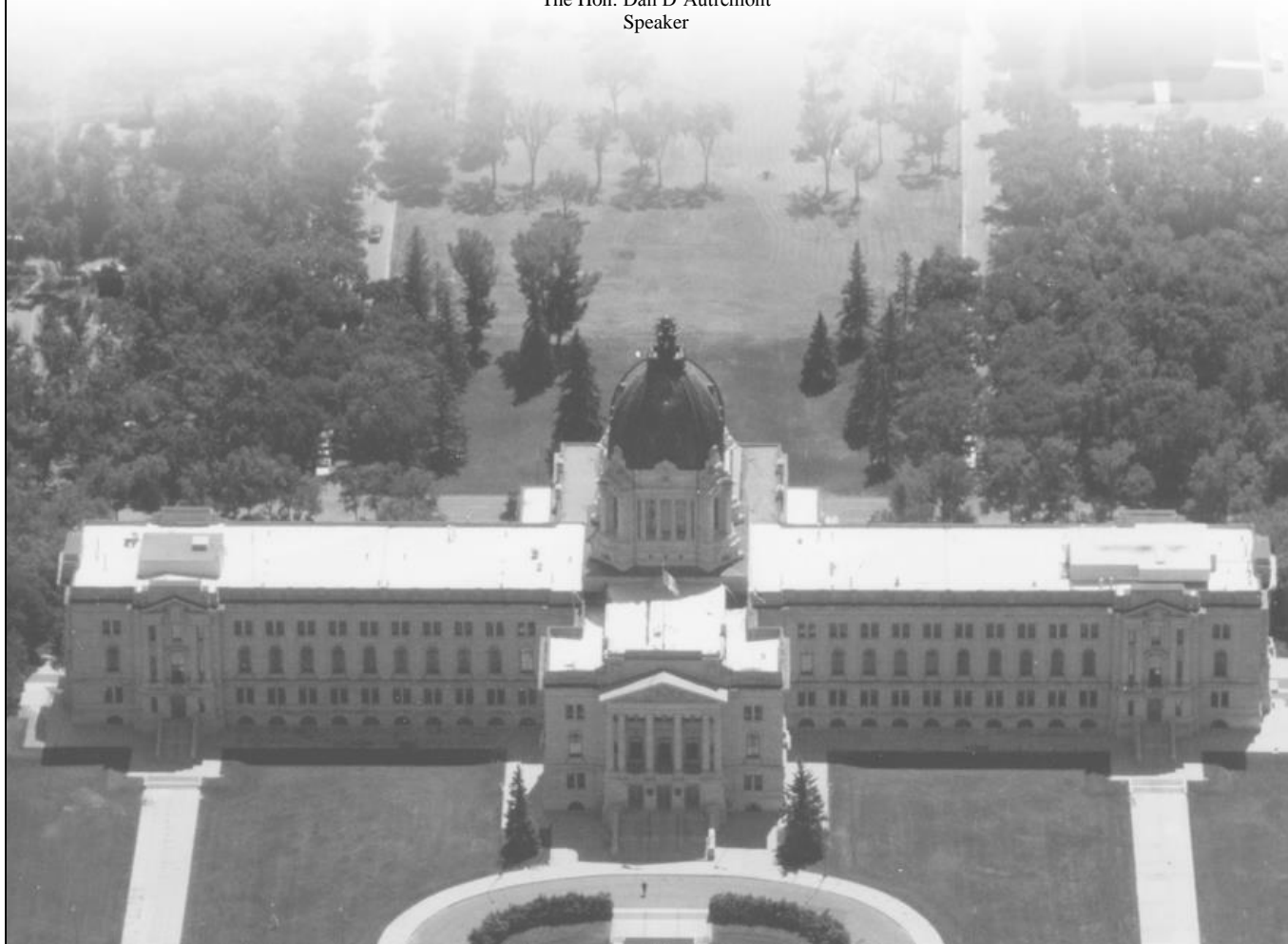
of the

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 met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce three gentlemen seated in your gallery. Two of them are representatives from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities or SARM, President David Marit and Vice-president Ray Orb. And I'd ask you to give a wave. I think most people in this outfit know you, but just the same.

Also seated with them is Mr. Franck Groeneweg, the new Chair of the Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission. Franck farms in the Edgeley area. Franck is new to the Chair role, and I wish him the very best in that.

I'd like to ask all of my colleagues to join me in thanking all three of these gentlemen for their leadership and their contributions to our agricultural industry and to the province, and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister and welcome David Marit, president of SARM, to his Assembly here today and thank him for his leadership in the province, also to welcome Ray here as well, thanking him for his leadership. And Franck, nice to see you, and thank you for your leadership in agriculture and particularly your role in canola. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these members, these Saskatchewan residents and leaders, to their Assembly.

And while still on my feet, I'm pleased to introduce Connor Ferrie to his Assembly. Connor is a political science student at the University of Regina. He's been working with me as an intern. It's been a pleasure working with Connor. Connor hails from Coronach, and we've had a really enjoyable time. Connor's had the chance to come out and see some of the connections an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] makes in the community. He's been out to community events. He's even been out to the Outdoor Hockey League in Rosemont. He's also attended budget day and some of the proceedings here, including the Public Accounts Committee. So I ask all members to welcome Connor Ferrie to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Minister of Agriculture and the member opposite in welcoming our guests from SARM and the canola commission here this morning.

And particularly I'd like to extend a welcome to the reeve of my

municipality, Ray Orb. Ray's been a long-serving reeve and has been involved with SARM at the provincial level for many years. And Ray and my association go back many years when I served a short period of time on the RM [rural municipality] council and served for many years on what we called at that time the ag committee and organized a number of spring ratepayer suppers. So I'd like to ask all members to join with me in welcoming our guests this morning.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not often we have folks down from Meadow Lake, and it's great to see two very good friends of mine here today, Merv and Blanche Johnson, two pillars of our community in Meadow Lake. Dr. Johnson has been a doctor for many, many decades in Meadow, and it's just great to see them down here. And I look forward to having a chat after question period.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of education. And we know that education is one of the most vital services the government provides to citizens. And we know that this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence, and that this government has failed to develop a real plan to close the Aboriginal education gap, support English as an additional language students, support community schools and their communities and students.

We know that this government has adopted a P3 [public-private partnership] privatization approach to building the new schools the province needs, even though the scheme will cost more than traditionally built schools and will leave out community needs in the design of the schools. And we know that we must build the best education system for today and for Saskatchewan's future. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately prioritize education by laying out a long-term vision and plan with the necessary resources to provide the best quality education for Saskatchewan, that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes, that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that builds strong educational infrastructure to serve students and communities long into the future.

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

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents who are

concerned with the safety on Dewdney Avenue, and they want to see the rerouting of the heavy-haul truck traffic that has inundated Dewdney Avenue. It's unsafe, and certainly they state that any further delays of this government are unacceptable to address a problem and an unsafe condition created by that government. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents of Regina and Bethune. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

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

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

It is signed by many good people of this province. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition in support of making major improvements to Highway 155 of northwestern Saskatchewan. The people that have signed the petition are from all throughout the land, Mr. Speaker, but the petition that I'm presenting today are primarily being signed from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to ensure that the provincial government commit to repairing and upgrading Highway 155.

And, Mr. Speaker, again as I indicated, we have signatures from all throughout Saskatchewan on many petitions, and this particular page are primarily from Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Appreciation for Retiring Director of Autism Resource Centre

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice. Mr. Speaker, ARC, or the Autism Resource Centre, always brings that quote to mind for me and it was certainly on my mind yesterday as I had the privilege to join with the Minister of Social Services, the member from Coronation Park, and my friend and colleague the member from Rosemont at a celebration yesterday marking the retirement of Theresa Savaria after 23 standout years as the executive director of Autism Resource Centre.

Theresa Savaria is one of those amazing people that does indeed make sure that the arc of the universe bends towards justice and towards caring and compassion and action. ARC has been working to help individuals living with autism live up to their full potential through awareness, education, and meaningful programming since 1977. And since 1991, Theresa Savaria has been an integral part of that journey.

As a non-profit, community-based organization in Regina, ARC helps people with autism spectrum disorder as well as their families. Though ARC was initially geared towards helping children and families with autism, further programs have been introduced transitioning ARC towards helping older individuals with the challenge of entering the workforce.

All Saskatchewan people deserve an opportunity to participate fully and be engaged to the best of their abilities. ARC, with the help of Theresa Savaria, has made big steps in that direction. We are sure that a change of position won't make her lose her passion for helping community. And it was so great to see all the people from across the province and indeed across Western Canada come out to say thank you to her yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in expressing our gratitude to Theresa Savaria for her years of community work as well as her work with ARC to help address the needs of people living with autism spectrum disorder. We thank her for her tremendous legacy of action, of caring and compassion, of leadership and love. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Battlefords Citizen of the Year

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to rise before you today and recognize our Battlefords and district Citizen of the Year. This year's recipient was Jerry Wintonyk.

Jerry is so very worthy of this recognition, Mr. Speaker. He has been our North Battleford building inspector for 38 years. In that capacity, he has been a tremendous ambassador for our city and has always provided excellent professional service to anyone who called on him.

But, Mr. Speaker, that evening highlighted not only his

professional duties, but the countless hours that he dedicated to numerous charities and organizations in our community. Jerry has been the chairman of our Battlefords Union Hospital Foundation and has worked tirelessly in organizing the Wayne Pruden Memorial Golf Tournament, one of that organization's major fundraisers.

Mr. Speaker, time doesn't permit me to talk about all that Jerry has contributed to our community, so I will just highlight some of his involvements: Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Empty Stocking fund, Battlefords United Way, Kidney Foundation, and on and on it goes.

Along with this, Jerry has also been very active in his professional association, having been a director of the Saskatchewan Building Officials Association for 28 years, membership Chair for 19 years, and president in 1985. He has always shared his knowledge and experience with new members to that association.

Mr. Speaker, I have known Jerry for 42 years. I'm honoured to call him a friend. You know, he was the goaltender for our hockey team for many years. And with the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford and myself playing in front of him, you can imagine he had a lot of busy nights.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Jerry on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for all that he does for our community. Thank you.

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

Indian Head Reservist Commands Canadian Warship

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on March 15th of this year, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Glace Bay*, commanded by Indian Head's own Lieutenant Commander Victoria DeVita, participated in Operation Caribe, a multinational drug interdiction operation covering the Caribbean Basin and the eastern Pacific Ocean.

As part of that operation, sailors from *Glace Bay* boarded and searched a fishing vessel for drugs. Shortly thereafter, the fishing vessel caught fire and sank and 2400 kilograms of cocaine was recovered. *Glace Bay* has been commended for their effective role in this important work.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Commander DeVita, like most of the crew of *Glace Bay*, is a naval reservist on full-time service. There are approximately 4,000 full- and part-time naval reservists across Canada with 24 naval reserve divisions, including HMC [Her Majesty's Canadian] ships *Queen* in Regina and *Unicorn* in Saskatoon. It's fair to say that sailors from Saskatchewan have built a reputation as among the best in the world with remarkable contributions. Naval reservists augment the regular navy and also provide the core crews for the Kingston-class coastal defence vessels, including both *Glace Bay* and the HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Saskatoon*.

Lieutenant Commander DeVita also has the distinction of being only the fourth woman in history to command a Canadian warship. Hers has been a distinguished career to date, and I am

confident she will continue to serve Saskatchewan proud and I know Indian Head proud. I ask all colleagues to join with me in extending a Bravo Zulu, the traditional naval signal for well done, to HMCS *Glace Bay* and her captain. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Unity Graduate Named Junior Citizen of the Year

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in this Assembly today to recognize Jonathan Neigum, a young man from the town of Unity who's known for excelling at all he does. He was recently named the 2013 Junior Citizen of the Year for the northwest region at a ceremony in The Battlefords, and this title was well deserved, Mr. Speaker.

Jonathan was a 2013 high school graduate who won several scholarships last spring and was a highly decorated volunteer while attending Unity High School. Jonathan excelled academically, graduating high school with a 98.7 overall average, which makes me wonder what he did wrong. Anyway he also is a successful curler, winning provincial bronze medal in 2012. As a member of the Unity Curling Club, he instructed young curlers during evening sessions, teaching upwards of 50 junior curlers.

Among other activities, the young man served as the school council's treasurer and the students against drunk driving treasurer. At the induction ceremony, Jonathan cited his great-aunt as the main reason for why he got so involved in volunteer work.

Mr. Speaker, last spring I had the honour of presenting Jonathan with a \$1,000 Sask Ag scholarship. The money will go towards pursuing post-secondary education at the University of Saskatchewan where he aspires to obtain a law degree. That's maybe where he went wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Mr. Jonathan Neigum on all his accomplishments and wish him the best with his future endeavours. And he will be staying in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Peacock Toilers Provincial Basketball Champions

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I know some members have already recognized the outstanding efforts made by high school basketball teams across the province at Hoopla last weekend, but I would be remiss if I didn't highlight how momentous a weekend it was for A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw. What made this so special was that both the Peacock boys and girls won provincial titles in their respective championship divisions.

Mr. Speaker, the Peacock boys beat the Prince Albert St. Mary Marauders to win the Hoopla provincial 4A title. Head coach

Bryan Adams credited the strong defence for the win, while assertive offence performance came from five different players, all with double-figure scoring.

Meanwhile the Peacock girls won the school's first provincial girls' basketball championship since 1994, as they defeated Notre Dame in the 4A girls' final. It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that Coach Renee Verge had led the team to the title game in three of the past four years only to see it slip away, making this victory even extra sweet.

It's the first time since 1956 that both the Peacock boys' and girls' teams have won the provincial basketball title in the same year. I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating Moose Jaw's A.E. Peacock Collegiate Toolers boys and girls on winning their respective provincial titles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Good News From the Forest Industry

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our forests are one of the great resources our province is blessed with, and every day more and more good news is coming out of the forest industry.

Today 7 of the 11 mills in our province have returned to production, including the Big River mill. Saskatchewan sold over \$650 million in forestry products last year. Our government wants to see this industry continue to grow. That is why yesterday our government announced a new streamlined timber dues system that is more market-based and consistent across the industry. It was developed in consultation with the industry and will enable the forest industry to continue its steady growth. This is quite a turnaround from the days of the NDP [New Democratic Party] government.

The NDP cared so much about the forest industry, their government commissioned a forest competitiveness report in 2006 and then refused to implement any of it. With the report shelved, the NDP then tried, in the last days before the 2007 election, a \$100 million gamble of taxpayers' money as a vote grab.

The Leader of the Opposition has completely ignored our province's forest industry, and ironically even his famous tree book didn't have a plan for the industry. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Next statement. I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me read a quote from today's Regina *Leader-Post* on page A2, and I quote: "The NDP had no comment." What was it in relation to? Only the biggest economic issue currently facing our province, the grain transportation backlog. And the Saskatchewan NDP had no comment, which is perhaps fitting. It just about sums up in one line their entire approach and

record when it comes to supporting our agriculture producers.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has now asked 87 questions since this sitting of the legislature began. How many have been on the ag issue? Not one. How many have been on the grain transportation backlog? Not one. Our government has been standing up for our producers and working to get grain moving. This is an extremely serious issue and the Leader of the Opposition seems both unwilling and incapable of speaking to it. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, his official position is that quote, the NDP has no comment.

It's time for the Leader of the Opposition to do the right thing. He can stand in his place right here, right now, and support our producers. We're about to find out if he's willing to do that, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Costs and Benefits of Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been trying to get some decent answers from this government about its massive lean project, about how much it will cost Saskatchewan taxpayers. But this government hasn't been entirely forthcoming. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the government refused to provide answers to our written questions asking how much taxpayers have spent over the last three years to fly Japanese senseis from Japan to Saskatchewan.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier: why won't his government answer this very basic question? How much have taxpayers spent to fly Japanese senseis from Japan to Saskatchewan over the last three years?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the answers to his question is pretty clear and has been offered in the Assembly many times by the minister: \$26 million I think spent to date on a \$40 million contract, roughly point two per cent of the overall Health spending over the next four years.

Here's the good news, Mr. Speaker. There has already been more taxpayers' money saved as a result of lean than the entire project cost, and we've seen improvement in patient care. But the answer is \$26 million spent to date, Mr. Speaker, more than that saved. Mr. Speaker, \$40 million over the life of the contract, more than that to be saved as well.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the specific question was how much taxpayers have spent to fly Japanese senseis over the last three years.

There was another question, Mr. Speaker, that this government tabled yesterday and they refused to answer. They refused to provide an answer to the written question on how much they have spent on on-site Japan kanban seminars over the last three years.

So my question once again to the Premier: why won't his government answer this very basic question? How much has been spent over the last three years on on-site Japan kanban seminars?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, taxpayers do want to know what these things cost, what a contract costs. Mr. Speaker, they want to know and they do know. The answer is \$40 million. That's the total cost of the contract over four years.

We're going to remain in budget. If anything, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work to come in under budget in the overall investment that we're going to make in the province. The good news is we've already saved more in taxpayers' dollars than the original contract cost, all the while improving patient-centred care, all the while empowering the front line.

Mr. Speaker, to date we've spent \$26 million. That has also been recovered. More than that's been recovered in savings as a result of lean, Mr. Speaker. That is the total cost of the contract to date, the total cost being \$40 million. It's a matter of the public record. Once again, the good news, Mr. Speaker, already more has been saved than the total contract will cost.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is talking of so-called savings, he should know what the expenses are. He should be easily able to say how much they've spent on sensei and on on-site kanban seminars, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why he doesn't want Saskatchewan taxpayers to know how much they've spent on flying senseis from Japan to Saskatchewan. I don't know why he doesn't want taxpayers to know how much they've spent on on-site Japan kanban seminars, Mr. Speaker. But perhaps it's because they are embarrassed, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps it's because even proponents, pro-lean people are sharply criticizing this government for its approach.

We can think, Mr. Speaker, of the local expert, the lean black belt expert who has problems with this government's approach to its massive lean pet project, identifying, Mr. Speaker, that it's poorly structured. It's overly, too costly, full of hype, Mr. Speaker, and it's obsessed with Japanese terminology and Japanese senseis.

My question for the Premier: if he's too embarrassed to actually say how much they've spent on senseis, how much they've spent on the kanban seminars, Mr. Speaker, then it's time to cancel the fat cash cow contract. Will he do that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated in the past, and as the Premier has indicated, the contract with John Black and Associates, as a part of what we've spent at the Ministry of Health and the regional health authorities, totals to date \$26 million, of which we have saved already \$39.9 million. And in fact we had a meeting in Moose Jaw just a couple of weeks ago, and I think there'll be even more savings to report coming out of that meeting and in the following weeks to add to the \$39.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, the JBA [John Black and Associates] contract that we have signed today, we've spent with JBA approximately \$18.8 million as a ministry. That is a four-year contract that we have the option to renew at each year interval, Mr. Speaker. And so we are just at the beginning stages of our lean journey. But certainly the most significant lean transformation work that is being done all across health systems in Canada is taking place in Saskatchewan, to the point where other provinces — including Ontario, including British Columbia, including NDP Manitoba — are looking at what we are doing in Saskatchewan and looking to see exactly how we have deployed lean across the system.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, as this government takes the Saskatchewan taxpayer on this lean journey, how about they detail the journey expenses of the Japanese senseis who are flying from Japan to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is too embarrassed to stand up in the Assembly and say how much they are spending on the kanban seminars, how much they are spending on the Japanese senseis. I think he's too embarrassed because even solid Sask Party supporters, Mr. Speaker, are embarrassed by this.

We see a quote, Mr. Speaker, from retired nurse C.E. Rathwell's letter to the paper. And she said, "I'm deeply disappointed the premier 'drank the Kool-Aid' on the 'lean' method." She says, Mr. Speaker, that lean is "... an extreme waste of money and a sham." She says, "... there are too many overpaid administrators and not enough frontline health-care workers."

Here's another quote. She says, "We don't need ... Japanese 'senseis' to fix our very sick health-care system. We just need a bit of common sense to restore our once enviable system."

I agree with her, Mr. Speaker. We don't need the senseis. We don't need the kanban training. We don't need more overpaid administrators, Mr. Speaker. We need some honesty and some clear answers from the government when it comes to the expenses for this lean project.

Will the Premier have the courage to stand today and say how much they're paying for the senseis and the kanban seminars?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the contract with John Black and Associates and the people that John Black employs, whether that be consultants or the employees of his own organization, has totalled to date \$18.8 million. The health regions have spent an additional \$6.7 million, for a total to this point of \$26 million.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, mentioned somebody that had a concern about lean. In fact the Premier phoned that individual to find out more about what their concern is. We're interested in knowing what that concern is. We've offered to the Leader of the Opposition to provide the feedback that he's received — and apparently his

inbox is full — redact the information and provide it to us because we're interested in that, Mr. Speaker.

But we know from the savings that we are seeing in the system — whether that be on the blood services, whether that be on reducing wait times for mental health, whether that be on efficiencies and MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] scans — that this is something that is working for the patients. It is improving care. It is improving safety. And I think we're on the right track in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for School Division

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's increasingly clear that students and educators are going to take a hit for that government's budget choices. Saskatoon Public School Division say they will be getting \$128 less per student this year. That leaves the division with a \$2.9 million shortfall, this at a time that the division is growing in population and complexity. And that means resources for our classrooms will be stretched even thinner and that there will be cuts forced upon students and classrooms. To the Education minister: how can he justify this cut to students and classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's always right for school boards to advocate for their students, and we respect that. But I think we ought to step back a minute and look at what the reality of the numbers are. This budget year, Saskatoon Public School Division received a 2.9 per cent increase in funding. Provincially there was an increase of 2.4 per cent to the operating grant.

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, they're projecting a 2.4 increase in enrolment in the upcoming year. We provide them additional funding for that. That means in the last seven years Saskatoon Public has seen an operating increase of over 33 per cent while at the same time their enrolments have only increased by 16 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the funding model is not calculated on a per student basis but if you want to look at it that way, in 2007-2008, Saskatoon Public received \$7,626 per student and this year will receive \$10,199 per student, an increase of 33.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I've heard about the new math. I'm not exactly sure what you'd call the minister's math though. I will take the Chair of the Saskatoon Public School Board's word who says, "So not very complicated math tells you we're actually getting less money per student." Saskatoon's Public School Division says its funding will be in shortfall of \$2.9 million and that, per student, they'll be cut \$128 per student.

And this is what that Education minister had to say yesterday:

It's not a matter that we want to get into the math. I'm going to meet with them and I will certainly work out as many issues as we've got and, you know, explain to them the methodology and the calculation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure Saskatoon Public School Division knows how to do the math, and I'm pretty sure they don't need the Education minister to come out and explain his failed methodology. What I do know they need is that government to step up to the plate and make investments where they matter in the lives of students. To the Education minister: why is that government failing to do just that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister mentioned something from his seat. The funding for school divisions is in excess of \$1.8 billion.

Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite to say and criticize my willingness to sit down and talk to a school division is something that's simply unacceptable. I will always be willing to sit down and talk to and meet with school divisions and sort out the methodology.

There was a new funding model created at the request of the school divisions. They worked their way through it, Mr. Speaker. As it's being applied, we will continue to sit down and work with them, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, Saskatoon's Public School Division asked for 11 portable classrooms. They need those because their enrolment is growing by 500 students, Mr. Speaker. They asked for 11, but this government gave them two, Mr. Speaker. Now I'm sure that Education minister doesn't want to get into that math either, and I'm sure he maybe even has some methodology to try to explain that two is somehow greater than 11, Mr. Speaker. But the reality for students in classrooms is that they're already facing crowded conditions. This will only make it worse, and it's not conducive to good learning outcomes.

To the Education minister: when will this government get serious about fixing the basics in our education system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we're always willing to sit down and sort out things with the school division. I'm quite prepared to do that. We've indicated publicly, Mr. Speaker, that when schools get to be 129 per cent utilization, then we're prepared to provide portables. We do it on the basis of funding that's available. And, Mr. Speaker, this year we spent \$7 million on additional capital. We have a record investment, Mr. Speaker, in capital.

Within the Saskatoon Public School Division, we're providing four new joint-use schools, which is a total of eight schools. Mr. Speaker, in addition to that we are providing a variety of different funding and upgrading projects for Saskatoon Public. We will continue to work with them to make sure that the needs

of the students are addressed, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern with that government. It neglects the basics. It ignores the real issues on the front lines and it just plows ahead with its own agenda.

In health, care facilities put forward urgent requests. The Saskatoon Health Region needs 450 care aides. It's asked for only 38. The government forced them to scale that back to 19 care aides. Now the Saskatoon Public School Division needs 11 portables, and this government says, no, all you're getting is two. And oh, by the way, we're also cutting your student funding, forcing the division to make cuts for students. Meanwhile that government, that Premier is spending untold millions on pet projects like lean and standardized testing.

To the Education minister: why is this government continually neglecting the basics in our education system while plowing ahead with its costly and misguided pet projects.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon and area we are spending \$146 million since we've been in government. Ten major capital projects: Willowgrove, Nutana Collegiate, Holy Family, Georges Vanier, Holy Cross, St. Matthew, E.D. Feehan, St. Mary, Martensville High School, Warman; 21 relocatables; 180 renovations projects; 14 early year projects; six joint-use P3 projects.

Mr. Speaker, we've done an incredible amount of things there. And what have the members done? You can talk about what their expenditures are when they closed 176 schools, because the expenditures that went to those schools is zero because the people have left.

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

Federal Grain Transportation Legislation

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the government has occasionally tried to claim that the grain transportation crisis is its number one issue this session, but it didn't even mention the crisis in its budget speech. It's an economic catastrophe facing our province, and the total cost to producers is in the billions.

Yesterday's federal legislation is too little and too late. Gerry Ritz did not listen to farmers and he didn't listen to Saskatchewan. The penalties are way too weak. The actions taken are way too few. But our Ag minister told reporters yesterday, "On this file we were on the same page. I'm convinced of that and the Saskatchewan Conservative caucus was too." But today he's written a letter to the feds flip-flopping. It reads an entirely different message from what he was saying yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, this is Ritz's legislation. Why is this government patting the feds on the back publicly when they are failing producers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I hardly know where to start with this one. I was going to say, the way the member started out, Mr. Speaker, I was going to say, it sounds like she's reading my press releases, but apparently only part of them.

Mr. Speaker, we're not particularly pleased with what's in the legislation, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we're unhappy with what's not in it. We'd asked for more. We did a lot of work on this file since last May 31st, and we led Western Canada on this file. And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we got no support from those members across there — not that leader or that critic. They didn't write a letter. They didn't send an email. They didn't make a phone call. They couldn't even bother to text the federal minister in support . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — The minister may finish his answer.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The end of my answer is that they have been absolutely no help in this file whatsoever. They've been a hindrance. We could have used a little support from the opposition. I recognize that the federal government doesn't have a lot of faith in this opposition, but at least it would show solidarity here.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, why is our Ag minister more worried about being friends with Gerry Ritz and the Conservative caucus than actually standing up for Saskatchewan? The other Saskatchewan Conservative MPs [Member of Parliament], the other Saskatchewan Conservative MPs won't even speak up for producers, and the bill announced yesterday is a dismal failure, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't build any of the needed capacity we need in the grain system, and it doesn't do nearly enough to get the needed increase in rail cars that will get this grain moving. It's weak. It's late to the punch. And it won't help the captive farmers who are losing billions of dollars.

To the minister: why is he continuing to defend what the feds are doing instead of demanding that the federal government actually table legislation that will help farmers in Saskatchewan today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill, as deficient — that's a word I used to describe it in an interview yesterday — as it is, will help. That's absolutely wrong what the member just said. It will help.

However, we are disappointed, Mr. Speaker. We're disappointed that the level of service agreements that we asked for, with reciprocal penalties between the railways and the shippers that we asked for are not in the bill. We're disappointed that the increased car numbers, the 13,000 cars a week that we asked for, are not in the bill. We're disappointed

the increased fines, from 100,000 to \$250,000 a day on the railways that we asked for, are not in the bill. And that we asked for those fines to be funnelled back to agriculture in some fashion, whether it be research or some function. That's not in the bill, Mr. Speaker. We're disappointed in those things.

The Speaker: — You know, this is question and answer period and, when a question is asked, I would think the members asking would like to hear the answer. When the minister is answering, I would think that his own colleagues, including the Premier, would be interested in hearing the answers. So please, members, allow the questions and answers to be heard.

I recognize the member for Athabasca.

New Bridges for Saskatoon and Prince Albert

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Finance minister was at the North Saskatoon Business Association luncheon and he was asked what his definition of commitment is. This business person said the Premier committed to a north bridge for Saskatoon three years ago, but that commitment has amounted to nothing. And now this government is once again committing to a north bridge for Saskatoon but it still has no dollars attached to that commitment. The Finance minister didn't properly answer the question at the NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association], so let's see if he'll answer it here today.

To the minister: what is his definition of commitment? Where is the money? How much money will the province give, and what is the timeline?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for the opportunity to rise in this Assembly since last Wednesday after I delivered the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I made it clear in my budget speech, I made it clear in Saskatoon last Friday afternoon at the North Saskatoon Business Association where we have indicated that we will be an effective partner with the city of Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, in fact I received the letter from the mayor of Saskatoon that very day to say thank you for being involved in our discussions.

The commitment is this, Mr. Speaker, and it's public knowledge. There are discussions going on between the city of Saskatoon, the municipal council, and the federal government. The federal government has indicated that there might be some support. I have indicated, the Premier has indicated that we're prepared to be a partner in this arrangement if indeed the federal government is going to be an active player.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, Fred Shero the late, great hockey coach of the Philadelphia Flyers was once asked what his definition of commitment was. And he said, the difference between contribution and commitment is like bacon and eggs. The chicken makes a contribution but the pig makes a commitment, is what he said. Mr. Speaker, we're not even getting the chicken making any contributions today. So don't

talk to us about commitment.

Mr. Speaker, on to another bridge. Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is left wondering what it's going to take to get a real commitment from this government. Prince Albert is also asking for support for a second bridge. And all of northern Saskatchewan needs P.A. [Prince Albert] to have a second bridge because 80 per cent of us traveling the North goes through Prince Albert.

To the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Highways or any minister out there that understands commitment: what will it take for this government to start paying attention to the needs of Saskatoon and Prince Albert?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite brought up the Philadelphia Flyers, and I can tell you my commitment has been to the Toronto Maple Leafs. And I'll tell you, that's commitment. That's commitment, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, I have to inquire as to where the opposition sits on this project in Saskatoon. This is an application to P3 Canada. There's going to be the potential of a bridge being built — a commuter bridge in Saskatoon — with the federal government, the city of Saskatoon, and the province. We've indicated that if there are going to be funds needed for 2015-16, we're going to be an active player with all of the other partners. Where are the NDP going to be on their commitment to that bridge?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, it's a real shame that the Saskatchewan Party MLAs from Prince Albert and Saskatchewan Rivers are so ineffective that they can't even get Prince Albert onto this government's radar, Mr. Speaker. I'll say it for them. Prince Albert needs a second bridge — loud and clear.

The member from P.A. Northcote used to recognize that. She said in the last election, and I quote, "One thing that I won't let drop off the table is we need a second bridge as we continue to grow. And I will push hard." Well, Mr. Speaker, we haven't seen her push hard at all for that bridge. And neither has the member from Prince Albert Carlton, or the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, or the member from Batoche, or the member from Shellbrook, and the list goes on. They've all been very silent.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: I realize that the P.A. and area MLAs are not strong voices, but why is this government still completely ignoring this very important need for Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, today's going to be the vote on the budget, the vote where we have increased funding to Highways by \$88 million, Highways and Infrastructure, Mr.

Speaker. A huge amount of infrastructure is being built, infrastructure deficit that we inherited from the NDP, and we're going to keep moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder where the two MLAs representing northern Saskatchewan are going to sit on the fact that we have put \$2 million towards the renewal of the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert. Where are they going to be on the fact that we're moving forward by providing better health care in the North, right from Prince Albert all the way north? Are they going to vote to support that element of this very good budget, Mr. Speaker?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always with a sense of pride that I take my place in this debate in this Chamber. And so I'm glad to have an opportunity to talk a bit about what this budget means to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, the feedback that I get from them, and how it relates to different of the critic duties that I've been charged with, Mr. Speaker, and how I see that playing out.

It's been interesting watching the debate as it's rolled out on the floor of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and indeed across the province in terms of the sell job that that government has engaged in right down to the last set of questions in this just-expired question period, Mr. Speaker, and the way that the word has gone forth.

And it brings to mind, you know, listening to the sell job and listening to the speeches from certain of the members opposite brings to mind a few different sort of proverbs or adages, Mr. Speaker, one being, the best defence is a good offence. We see that in terms of the way that the finances are tightening up. Revenues are down. And they don't have the . . . As you know, they've still got record revenues in the broader sort of scheme of things, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of when they came to power of, say, in 2007 and there were literally billions of dollars in terms of cash on hand, in terms of reserves, you know, there was a lot of latitude, a lot of room to manoeuvre in terms of what that government was blessed with out of the gates in 2007.

And you know, in their more honest moments, Mr. Speaker, and this is from the Premier on down, we've heard acknowledgement of the situation that they inherited in 2007 and in terms of the fiscal capacity that the province had at that time. I would add very briefly, Mr. Speaker, because I know

time is short and I've got other things I want to get to, it certainly wasn't the situation that Roy Romanow and the NDP government inherited in 1991 where there was a problem with the deficit deficit, where there was more money needed to be spent servicing the debt than on the entire Education budget. It certainly wasn't that kind of situation that they inherited, Mr. Speaker.

But as the years have gone on since 2007, you know, everybody needs a song sheet, and I get that, Mr. Speaker. And certainly when they've got the caucus choir practice going over there, the song sheet is, they keep coming back to the line of infrastructure deficit. And that's the way that they can get around saying, well you know, it's all the NDP's fault. And it's one variation on the theme where they like to, you know, try to, you know, revise the history and say that the NDP wasn't perfect.

And you know, this just in, Mr. Speaker. The NDP government that I was proudly a member of, part of, Mr. Speaker, we weren't perfect. There were mistakes made. But the record on balance was one of working for people, working for growth, and working for a better Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And again in terms of decisions that were made, there were mistakes made in certain circumstances. But when you stack it up alongside the kind of non-stop revisionist barrage that you get in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and it's nowhere more apparent than in a speech like the budget speech, it's sort of . . . You'd wonder, you know, and I think it's, in the words of the member from Moose Jaw North, it's like, what are they talking about, Mr. Speaker? So I guess, you know, the best defence is a good offence. They're feeling sensitive about various of the decisions they've had to make. Things are tightening up a bit in terms of the finances, so they go on the offence, and it's everybody else's fault except for theirs, Mr. Speaker — not taking responsibility.

In terms of the budgets, Mr. Speaker, there was certainly the good. There was certainly the bad. There was certainly the ugly in terms of the various parts of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

One of the good things that we're glad to see was the move to the summary financial statement. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, we registered that fairly clearly in the Throne Speech. But it's funny how that government was dragged kicking and screaming to this position, Mr. Speaker, how they've put the black mark beside the good name of Saskatchewan in terms of having a budget actually fail an audit, first in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. And there have been some pretty interesting regimes throughout the history of this province, but first failed audit in the history of this province.

And the lengths that they went to to try and circumvent and sabotage the work of the auditor, to dismiss the work of the auditor, the work that went on in the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, and it was interesting that when it came time for a vote in the committee just earlier in this year on whether or not generally accepted accounting principles should apply to the budget, members opposite in the main voted against that.

But there was one member over there, and I'm not sure if I should go too far down this road because, you know, I don't

think it will make him all that popular with his caucus colleagues. But in I think foreshadowing of things to come, there was one member over there that had the guts to say, you know, I can't vote for this — I can't stomach this anymore; the jig is up — and registered an abstention on the vote where all the other, you know, where that government used the majority to come in to the Public Accounts Committee and vote down endorsing generally accepted accounting principles.

And you know, I can only imagine how the conversation played out in that caucus and the conversion ultimately to the position where we've got the summary financial statements for us. And again that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the process. But you know, it's something we've been calling for. It's something the government has finally moved on. It's unfortunate that they had to fail an audit and to bring that kind of embarrassment to the province of Saskatchewan's good name, Mr. Speaker, but at least we've accomplished that, and I want to thank those that played different roles in bringing that about.

And the folks that, you know, rolled in to sing from the caucus song sheet, Mr. Speaker, or the Premier's office . . . follow the Premier's office marching orders, I don't think it was them that got this job done. I think it was the auditor. I think it was the people of Saskatchewan calling for books you can trust. I think it was this opposition, you know, not letting this government off the hook in terms of that very important question of financial trust. And I think there were some members over there that played a role that showed that they had some spine to them, Mr. Speaker, and so I'm thankful for that.

And I guess in terms of the process of the budget, we're glad to see that, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to again the substance of the budget questions, well last year, Mr. Speaker, and again we've heard different members get up and talk about, you know, yet another balanced budget, I think seventh consecutive balanced budget . . . And even now I think we have the member from Regina Walsh Acres saying yes, that's great. Well, Mr. Speaker, last year when all was said and done, the auditor weighed in and said it wasn't in fact a balanced budget. The \$58 million surplus that they were calling for was actually a \$580 million deficit.

So again, Mr. Speaker, it's not just with a bit of salt that we're listening to the members opposite go through their budget speeches here where they're patting themselves on the back and the self-congratulation and all of that, you know. We'll take the word of the auditor. So in terms of what happens with this budget on the substance, Mr. Speaker, and whether or not it's balanced, the jury is indeed still out.

To be sure, there were good things in this budget. There were some good things in terms of infrastructure, good things in terms of programming. There were some good things in Advanced Education, Mr. Speaker. We've got further questions on how those will work out but, you know, there were certainly some good things on the ledger.

Alongside that though, Mr. Speaker, we know that with the funding extended to the institutions, that we see on our university campuses that tuition will continue to rise, further securing, I would imagine, Saskatchewan's dubious distinction

as having the second-highest level of tuition as reported by Statistics Canada in all of Canada, something that members opposite deny but Statistics Canada says otherwise. And again, Mr. Speaker, that means students are going to pay more.

And then in terms of programs, they're going to get less because we've seen programs being cut, programs up for review. And in terms of paying more and getting less, Mr. Speaker, I think students deserve better. And in terms of the staff and the faculty that are impacted by this and in terms of the reputations of our institutions, Mr. Speaker, we watch this with some obvious cause for concern.

And we look particularly at the . . . Again there were some good pieces around Advanced Education capital infrastructure in this budget, but I note with interest that the University of Regina residence still goes wanting and I note that there was not even a mention of the important work that's going on around the College Avenue Campus. And again, Mr. Speaker, I hope this isn't something where they're waiting for the big reveal come the eve of the election, but we'll see how that works out. These are requests that are being made by the University of Regina that deserve serious consideration and serious support.

We see the unfortunate circumstance with the First Nations University of Canada being forced to curtail enrolment with their Saskatoon Campus, Mr. Speaker. And again at a time where we should be making good on that huge potential there in terms of First Nations and Métis individuals in this province, it's highly unfortunate to see something like that go on.

In terms of health care, Mr. Speaker, again we see some . . . There's some good pilots there. I know an individual that's been very involved in the work around calling for hot spotting or trying to find a better way to work through those bottlenecks that arise, and particularly in ERs [emergency room]. And that individual is someone who's on the streets, you know, working very hard, works with a big heart and a lot of care for the people that he comes into contact with. But his observation on this is, you know, he just hopes to goodness they don't somehow find a way to screw this up. He's hopeful but you know his jury's still out in terms of the way that the support is brought to bear in terms of hot spotting.

And you know there are other good pilots, Mr. Speaker, in terms of, you know, around home care or seniors' care, but in terms of that, the way that this was . . . Again I'd really compliment the work of Saskatchewan people having the guts to come forward and say that what's happening in seniors' care is not . . . Our seniors deserve better. And then the way that this government has responded, the big sort of launch in the fall of the urgent action fund and the commitment that the minister evinced towards it at that time, those are all again worthy of consideration but the proof is often in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of the way that the anger and the commitment to action that was proclaimed by this government in the fall and the way we see that not being followed through on in terms of this budget, Mr. Speaker, and the way that the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* stated it very succinctly in this weekend's editorial, stating "Our seniors deserve better," again, Mr. Speaker, that speaks of the disconnect that exists between the way that this government can hype some things up or proclaim support or

interest but then the follow-through tends to be something very different. So that's one thing.

[11:00]

We see the continued sort of crisis going on in terms of emergency rooms. Again there are fine things going on. I was glad to see the work of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region around bedlining. But I note, Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent that went in on Friday night at 8:30 and then finally saw a doctor at 4 in the morning — this is a woman of some advanced years — and finally got the treatment she needed for her mini-strokes that she was having. And the sort of circus that she reported going on in the emergency room waiting area.

And again, Mr. Speaker, the real people's experience of the health care system alongside the sort of propaganda lines that we hear from that government on different things they like to congratulate themselves on, there's a huge disconnect. And again we see, alongside these good pilots, we see further cuts in terms of the overall budgets for the health regions. And those will be made up by what is ubiquitous, or in an Orwellian turn, Mr. Speaker, voluntary management of vacancies and, you know, poorer service for people that need it most.

And then alongside that, Mr. Speaker, we see this government having 40 million and counting when it comes to their pet lean project and funds for United States consultants, flying around Japanese senseis and the like. So again, Mr. Speaker, some good things, but the way this plays out on the ground is something else.

Something I want to talk particularly about, Mr. Speaker, is that I was glad to see the planning dollars announced for Sacred Heart Community School. Again we get the loud roar from the members opposite. And you know, it's a funny dynamic, Mr. Speaker, in terms of . . . One of the speeches given earlier this week was from the member from Regina Coronation Park. And his sort of upshot was that, you know, the government wasn't getting enough thanks for their budget so he was going to spend a lot of his remarks thanking them, you know, just to make sure that was done.

And you sort of wonder about, you know, what's the psychology of a government where they need to be thanked and applauded at every turn. But you know, so for the planning money, just to be very clear about this, I'm glad to see it in the budget. I'm glad to see it in the budget. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, the way this plays out in practice is, we'll see where the follow-through goes.

We also see the fact that this has been raised with the government over seven years, and that this has gone on and on and it's finally come to a crisis point. And that's where the community has finally gotten some action. And again, not so much action but planning dollars and, you know, hope for the future. And you know, that's a good thing. But in that broader context of what is the immediate content of this budget and the record of this government alongside that, we'll be watching this very closely.

And I guess in terms of Sacred Heart, I want to say a really special thank you to Principal Starla Grebinski —

award-winning Principal Starla Grebinski — and the teachers and staff and the volunteers that make that such a special school in our community, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Father John Weckend of St. Cecilia's parish and all the parishioners over in St. Cecilia's parish which of course has subsumed what used to be the old Sacred Heart parish, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm thankful to Catholic schools' community councils from across this city that weighed in on this, that said, this is important; this can't go on. How is it that the kids at Sacred Heart can't have a gym, let alone this refurbishment, Mr. Speaker?

And the way that . . . Again, I want to thank the Regina Catholic School Board as well in terms of their determination in not forgetting this issue and continuing to raise it with this government. And again this is a government that says, well you know, where's our big round of applause and where's our undying thanks and all of that?

And you know, in the lead up to last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Chair of the Regina Catholic School Board met with that government and members opposite something like a half-dozen times, Mr. Speaker, a half-dozen times, and again only to come to the budget and to be very disappointed. Then of course the school got into crisis, and then we saw what happened there. So again we're glad to see this in the budget, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of how this plays out, we'll be watching it very, very closely.

And you need look . . . Just one last thing on this topic of Sacred Heart, Mr. Speaker. In terms of what happened with Scott Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, where it was announced in the 2008 budget and the revitalization of Scott Collegiate serving as the anchor for the North Central Shared Facility. Well that was in 2008, Mr. Speaker. That was four Education ministers ago. And you can look, you know, you could sit over at Sacred Heart in the parking lot and look over at Scott Collegiate. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? They've yet to turn sod on that project that was announced in the budget of 2008. So you'll forgive me if I'm less than, you know, fulsome in terms of blindly trusting whatever this government puts forward. Should it show up, I'll be happy to support it then. Mr. Speaker, I was certainly supportive of seeing it in the 2008 budget, but the wait goes on.

One other thing, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the disconnect that exists with this government. Again we hear about things being really great in the province in terms of different fronts, but we know that something else is going on. And it was just this week, Mr. Speaker, where we saw Advance Engineered Products issuing layoff notices in Regina and in Saskatoon, announcing that they'd need to terminate 78 workers here in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker, another 49 workers in Saskatoon. So nearly 130 families, Mr. Speaker, that are impacted by these layoffs.

And of course this was a company that that government felt free to use for a photo op in October to brag themselves up. And when it comes time for the photo ops, you know, you can't get them there fast enough, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes time for them to stand beside those workers and this corporation to see if there can't be something better arrived at, we hear something very different in terms of the attention of this government.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of cost of living questions, in terms of

privatization issues that come to play in this budget, in terms of a wholly inadequate response to the education and employment task force report on First Nations and Métis people, in terms of, you know, proclaiming steady growth but seeing that steady growth in debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for many reasons, while there are certainly some good things in this budget, on the whole this budget is wanting and is not up to the mark, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with that, I will be — just to make this very clear — I'll be supporting the amendment, but I will not be supporting this budget.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased this morning to be able to enter into the debate that has been occurring over the last week or so on the budget, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to making some comments on the budget.

First of all though, I do want to say a few words of thanks to some important people, as this provides an opportunity to do some reflection and say a few words. I of course, Mr. Speaker, want to thank my family for all of their support. I know all of us, we wouldn't be able to do what we do, wouldn't be able to do our jobs without the support of our loved ones.

I want to thank the people that I work with all the time, my fellow NDP MLAs, Mr. Speaker, for their friendship and their hard work in all that they do. Please know I'm very grateful for everything that you're doing, and thank our staff as well who work hard, work long hours, and give of themselves in really significant ways, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank my constituents, the people of Saskatoon Massey Place, for the insight and the advice and the feedback that they provide to me and have been for the years that I've been elected and in the last year or so, Mr. Speaker, as I've certainly cared about my own constituency but had a focus on reaching out and being in the province as a whole. Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely thank the people of the province for the good conversations and the good visits that I've had over the last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, looking at this budget, my thoughts went to one interaction that I saw not too long ago. And it was a woman speaking with some other individuals, and what she said was, the problem with this government is that they take the cake and we just get the crumbs. And that expression that she said, Mr. Speaker, stuck in my head because as we've looked at this budget, as we've seen the steps that this government has taken, I think it is a good description of the approach that this government has taken with the budget before us.

And in this budget, Mr. Speaker, what we see are cuts and crumbs for Saskatchewan people. And we've been talking about this throughout the last week as many of the topics that we've covered in question period. I think of the questions just today that our deputy leader was raising about education in Saskatoon where we have the Public School Board hugely concerned about a reduction in funding, a request for 11 portables but only receiving two, Mr. Speaker — cuts of that nature.

We see in health care, Mr. Speaker, this week we talked about home care. And we see examples of patients in our capital city who do not have access to the home care services that they need. Mr. Speaker, we see this government failing to prioritize the things that really matter to Saskatchewan people. And we've had a very strong focus on the need for better seniors' care, on the need for better standards, on the need for better funding to address desperately needed staff, repairs, and equipment, Mr. Speaker.

But we haven't seen the meaningful action that Saskatchewan people need and Saskatchewan people expected in this budget to address the crisis that we have in seniors' care. And unfortunately we've seen an obsession and a preoccupation, a tunnel vision on something else, Mr. Speaker. And that of course, when we look at health care, is this government's lean project — their pet project. And we've had many exchanges in question period, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen this focus on lean at the expense of the basics that Saskatchewan people want and Saskatchewan people need in health care.

We have this government saying no to moderate requests from health regions to have more care aids, to have better equipment. But we see them saying yes to very generous, lucrative contracts, and the most notable being to the one US [United States] consultant as it relates to lean, Mr. Speaker.

So that's the context of the actions that we see by this government. Then we look at what Saskatchewan people are doing. And that, Mr. Speaker, is where we see the great examples of Saskatchewan people doing their part — on the business front, on the education front, contributing to communities through community-based organizations. Doing all the things that Saskatchewan people have been so great at doing over the course of the history of our province, the things that have made our province strong. And it's because of those actions that the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker, the statistics that the province has, have been strong. Because Saskatchewan people are doing their part. Saskatchewan business leaders are doing their part. Saskatchewan workers are doing their part, Mr. Speaker.

But unfortunately what we see in this budget is government not doing its part, and government dropping the ball. And again I'll go back to the very recent examples that we see with respect to the budget for the Public School Division in Saskatoon and the reduction in funding that it will be receiving per student. So when government's not living up to its role, when government's dropping the ball, it's Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, that pay the price. It's Saskatchewan people that have to pay more.

Our House Leader, in his remarks just prior to mine, talked about students at our post-secondary institutions having to pay more but get less. We know families, Mr. Speaker, are paying more with respect to the utilities that they pay. With the cost of living going up, with housing expenses going up, Mr. Speaker, we know that this is putting a squeeze on families.

[11:15]

And then we think to the health care front. We think to the examples that we've covered in this House and the examples that many families experience on a daily basis, where families

are having to make up the difference for the shortcomings in this government's approach when it comes to health care, when it comes to seniors' care.

We think of the Phillips example, the Phillips family as one example, Mr. Speaker, where they had to use all their vacation time and then hire a private care provider to go into the hospital just to ensure that their mother was receiving help with the basics — help with getting to the bathroom, help with meals, ensuring that her needs were being met.

So it's with that perspective, Mr. Speaker, that we approach this budget document, knowing that the strength that we have in the province is because of the contributions of Saskatchewan people, but knowing that Saskatchewan people are being asked to pay more and more, are being asked to make up for the shortfalls that we see with this government's approach, and being asked to make up for the poor choices that this government is making when it comes to their pet projects whether it's in health, whether it's in education.

So as we approach this budget, Mr. Speaker, the lens that we had as an opposition was to ask ourselves, how does this budget translate the things that are going on in the province to actually making life better for Saskatchewan families? Actually speaking to, actually improving in a tangible way, the things that Saskatchewan families want to see action on, — and rightfully so — the areas where they deserve to have better services and better attention by this government?

So we outlined a number of concerns that we had where we wanted to see some action by this government. We want to see this government end the cash cow contracts to the US consultant for the lean pet project, the \$40 million-plus that we see being spent. We want to see that contract ended and have the dollars go into the front lines to provide more care aids, to provide more cleaners in our hospitals, to provide more care for our loved ones.

We want to see this government actually recognize that we need to have better standards for seniors who are in care and have a plan on how to get there, and to take some good concrete steps in that direction. But instead what we saw, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Currently the Leader of the Opposition has entered into the budget debate. I think it would be respectful of members to, if they have conversations, to perhaps do them in a quieter fashion. I would . . . Or else take them outside. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — When we look at seniors' care, Mr. Speaker, it was this government that removed the minimum care standards that seniors could expect if they were in care facilities, Mr. Speaker. It was this government that slow-walked the public reporting, Mr. Speaker, with respect to inspections of private care homes.

So we have concerns when it comes to the cash cow contracts that this government has engaged in and has taken on and been happy to write huge cheques for. We have concerns around the inaction, and we wanted to see better action when it comes to seniors' care.

And we also, Mr. Speaker, wanted to see improvements to education, improvements in the classroom, especially as it relates to the early years in elementary schools, in order to have class sizes that are reasonable for kids, for children, and reasonable for teachers and educators.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to see a common sense, a responsible approach when it comes to building schools in our province. We want to see this government clearly state the costs with their plan, the timelines with their plan, Mr. Speaker, and information on what the product would be. We want to see a responsible approach, and that's what we were looking for in this budget.

We wanted to see, Mr. Speaker, the focus on the right issues when it comes to education, instead of plowing millions of dollars into standardized testing. And again our Education critic, the member from Rosemont, did a fine job yesterday in highlighting the confusion that the government side has when it comes to standardized testing and the bizarre responses that we had from the minister, Mr. Speaker.

We wanted to see those millions being poured into standardized testing to actually go into the classroom to provide more educational assistants, to provide a better learning environment for our kids. We wanted to see in this budget, Mr. Speaker, no increase to the education tax that the Premier mused about in order to fund bridges and overpasses. In every conversation I had, Mr. Speaker, with families, with municipal leaders, people identified this as a nonsensical approach, a wrong-headed approach, and we did not want to see an increase in education tax to fund those items in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, the last component that we identified where we wanted to see clear and concrete action has to address the cost of living. And this is what families across the province are facing, whether it's a young family starting out, or whether it's seniors looking at costs of housing, looking at costs of basics, looking at increased health care costs, Mr. Speaker. We wanted to see good action on that.

And a good budget should be listening to Saskatchewan people. A good budget should be recognizing the areas where Saskatchewan people want to see improvements. And then it should be bringing a plan forward to have those better care standards, to have those better classrooms, and to be making life more affordable for Saskatchewan families.

But my concern, Mr. Speaker, in reading this budget, is that we don't see those steps. In fact we see opposite steps. We see cuts, Mr. Speaker, and we see crumbs of action, crumbs of funding, when in fact the government eats the cake and cranks out self-congratulatory news releases. And the message that's being given to families, Mr. Speaker, is that they need to brace themselves. They need to brace themselves for the things that they care about not being addressed, whether that's a crowded classroom for their children, whether that's the level of care that their loved one is receiving in a hospital or a care home, and whether that's the dismissive approach that we see from this government when it comes to their choices around lean, around standardized testing.

So what are many of these cuts? Well, Mr. Speaker, in health

care, we actually see cuts of \$51.9 million to be cut from health care. And the contrast, Mr. Speaker, that's shocking to me, that's concerning to me is their willingness to spend \$40 million on one contract with a US consultant, pour millions and millions into the creation of another whole level of health bureaucracy through their kaizen promotion offices, Mr. Speaker, more than happy to shell out millions in that front, and then turn around to health regions and say, well actually, you need to cut \$52 million from the budgets. Those are cross messages, Mr. Speaker, that do not sit well with Saskatchewan people.

When the health regions put forward their urgent request to the minister to address the crisis that we have in seniors' care, they put forward a moderate request because they knew that the pool of funding that was available was limited. It was highlighted in question period today, for example, that the Saskatoon Health Region identified the need for 450 care aids. They only asked for 38. They only got 19, Mr. Speaker.

The health regions were forced by this government to scale back their moderate request, which would have made a step in the right direction to start addressing the problems that we have with care. But then at the same time, Mr. Speaker, what we had this government say to regions was, well we don't have money for a special dementia unit in P.A. We don't have money for some more care aids in Saskatoon. But you know what? We've got some money for another lean consultant, and if you could add that to your urgent request we would be more than happy to provide funding for that. To me, Mr. Speaker, those are misplaced priorities that speaks to this government's desire to focus on a shiny pet project while they're ignoring the basics that need to be addressed for Saskatchewan people.

Home care, Mr. Speaker, we had some announcements around home care about things that would be offered in the future. Government focused on that, talking about it in the budget, but ignoring the present reality that people in Regina are facing for those that need home care. We received an email, Mr. Speaker, from someone within the region clearly stating that they weren't accepting new home care clients and didn't know when they would be able to do so. To me, Mr. Speaker, that shows a failure to address the urgent needs now, while they're focused on projects such as lean and happy to pour millions of dollars into that.

And while they do that, it means people are left in the hospital when they could be going to their homes if they had home care supports. It means many people out in the community, Mr. Speaker, who rely on home care services are having those services scaled back. And that in turn, Mr. Speaker, will inevitably cost the health care system more, but most importantly, it will cost people's health. It will not do what we want to happen when it comes to people living healthy lives and improving their quality of life and their life situation, Mr. Speaker.

We see, Mr. Speaker, this government still pouring millions of dollars into a misguided standardized testing approach. When our Ed critic yesterday, the member from Rosemont, asked the minister where they stand on standardized testing, I have not heard stranger responses for some time in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, because I could not, and I think many educators in the

province, could not make sense of what the minister was saying with respect to where they stand and why they continue to pour millions of dollars into a computer system for standardized testing.

When we look at our school facilities, we have the example from today in question period where the Saskatoon Public School Division asked for 11 portables, but they're only getting two. We know, Mr. Speaker, that will mean the classes are more cramped, are more crowded, and our kids won't have the learning environment that they need.

We see in this budget, Mr. Speaker, this government plowing ahead with its P3 rent-a-school approach. We see a plan, Mr. Speaker, by this government that will cost more. We see a plan by this government that will take longer. And we see a plan by this government that will not guarantee we have the final product, we have the type of schools that we need to have good, strong communities, and have schools as the hub of our neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP, we brought forward a very reasonable, a very common sense piece of private members' legislation, the P3 accountability and transparency Act. We said if this government thinks their rent-a-school approach is the best approach to go with, well then they should prove it, Mr. Speaker. And they should do that by doing a number of things.

One, they should state the full cost of the project, including the cost of credit, up front. To me, Mr. Speaker, that seems like a very reasonable suggestion.

Two, Mr. Speaker, there should be a competitive bidding process in place so that it's not simply one person, but we need to have at least three bids on a project. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, to have small- and medium-size contractors in the province have the realistic option of being competitive in the bidding process, Mr. Speaker. And when I hear from business owners who have been supplying trades work and construction work and building schools over the decades, Mr. Speaker, they're concerned when they see a rent-a-school approach by this government that could force them out of the bidding process and force them out of having a realistic chance of securing the job, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we called for this government, when it comes to its rent-a-school approach, that there needs to be an independent watchdog in place to ensure that everything stays above board and to provide the honest assessment whether or not Saskatchewan taxpayers are getting good value, whether or not Saskatchewan students are getting the best types of schools that they need and that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to cost of living, we see expenses going up for Saskatchewan families. We see the many utilities that Saskatchewan families are facing going up. We see a budget, Mr. Speaker, that provides less to municipalities which in turn will increase taxes at the municipal level for many Saskatchewan families.

Now there was one flip-flop, Mr. Speaker, that was a welcome one, and that was on the issue of education tax being increased and being used for roads and bridges. The government did

flip-flop on that one from the initial suggestion that it was going to go down that path. So that was one of the must-haves that we identified as an opposition, and I'm glad they've taken that course of action. I'm concerned that it created some stress for Saskatchewan people while the option was being more than mused about by this government, but I'm pleased to see that flip-flop.

On the environment, Mr. Speaker, we've had concerns with this government's track record when it comes to their pattern of action related to throne speeches and to budgets. On a number of occasions we've seen the Premier travel down to the States and make the argument that we need to provide our trading partners . . . As an energy-producing province and a resource-based province when it comes to much of our economic activity, the argument has been made that we need to provide environmental elbow room to our trading partners. And I would agree, Mr. Speaker.

But what's important are the actions that are made by the government when they return from these trips and make these claims. And when we've seen these trips occur and talk about environmental elbow room, but then when we see the Premier come back, when we see the steps taken in the budget of the Environment, when we see a total cut to carbon-reducing green programs now at 83 per cent, when we see the watering down of standards and of targets, Mr. Speaker, that sends a very different message. It to me indicates that the walk is not living up to the talk.

And then, Mr. Speaker, when we look at agriculture and we see an attention, Mr. Speaker, by this government that has been about providing the bear hugs, has been about providing the love to the federal Conservatives, has been about embracing the federal Ag minister, Gerry Ritz, on every and any opportunity possible, but then actually not bringing results for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker . . .

We have the absence of the grain transportation crisis being talked about in the budget, to me which is a glaring omission, Mr. Speaker. And after all of the hype that we've seen about the stance the government members are taking, what do we see when the federal legislation is tabled, Mr. Speaker? We see legislation that will not bring action for Saskatchewan producers, legislation that does not have penalties that are strong enough, legislation that does not address the need for better performance standards, Mr. Speaker, legislation that does not address the need for greater capacity when it comes to transportation for the grain transportation crisis that we have in the province.

[11:30]

And to me, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough to use the kid gloves with the federal minister and to have the constant congratulatory messages given to the federal Ag minister and the federal Conservatives when this is not bringing results to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at northern Saskatchewan, again we see a neglect and an approach that is not addressing the needs in the northern communities, and the members from Athabasca and Cumberland have done a good job of describing the

shortcomings in this budget when it comes to the North. And I would highlight when we see any sort of very small, positive step, Mr. Speaker, it's because people in local communities in the North have mobilized. People in northern communities have gotten together, have applied pressure to this government, and have called for a better way forward.

And so we see some initial dollars when it comes to some planning for a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker. But as the members from the North have highlighted, when we see untold millions being poured into pet projects like lean, when we see Japanese senseis being flown to the province with great dollars being spent . . . We don't actually know because this government is unwilling to actually answer the written questions and say how much they are paying for senseis, how much they are paying for the on-site Japan kanban seminars, Mr. Speaker. But those are the dollars that need to be poured into good projects like better long-term care for people in the province, like people in northern Saskatchewan.

We also, Mr. Speaker, see a lack of action when it comes to the futures fund, the sovereign wealth fund, the long-term savings fund, Mr. Speaker. You know, when this was talked about and Peter MacKinnon, former president of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] provided government with its report, the Premier said that this needs to be more than a PR [public relations] exercise. Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that's what the whole exercise has materialized and has turned into through this budget. We see the recommendations from Peter MacKinnon being received. We see the report being received. And we see it being put on the shelf, Mr. Speaker.

We know that in this year the government will add 1.6 billion in debt to the budget alone, and overall the debt is up to \$4 billion since '09.

One other highlight, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to identify as a positive step, but a much-too-late positive step, is the move to a summary budget focus. It was not sustainable and acceptable for this government to be sticking with that approach. When Saskatchewan is the first province in the history of the country to fail an audit on its central books, that is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. And as the auditor clearly stated, it was because of the new scheme that this government developed, that this government implemented. So they had no choice in my view but to change. It was too late.

What I hope to see, Mr. Speaker, is a change in the actions of Sask Party members when they're dealing with the auditor when they're in Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker. I would sincerely hope that we see a change of heart and a change of action that we have seen, which to date has been very disrespectful and has been a very undermining approach when it comes to the Provincial Auditor.

So we'll be watching this very closely to ensure that the independent officers of the legislature, most certainly including the Provincial Auditor, receives the respect, and that the words of these independent officers are listened to as they need to be.

Good to see, Mr. Speaker, the funding for the manufacturing centre of excellence. That is a good approach as it supports the diversification of our economy, and I think that is a positive

thing.

But overall, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the content of this budget, it is one that focuses on providing cake for the government but only crumbs for the people of the province. And it's one that carries on with cuts that are hurtful to Saskatchewan families as it relates to seniors' care, as it relates to health care, as it relates to education.

And the message being given to Saskatchewan people is that they need to brace themselves. They need to brace themselves for things in education getting worse. And they need to brace themselves for health care not being fixed as it needs to be, while at the same time, they need to have patience — they are told from this government — to put up with the misguided approaches of millions and millions into lean, millions and millions into standardized testing.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, as official opposition, we will be focusing on the things that matter to Saskatchewan families. Now that means we will be focusing on education. We'll be focusing on health care. We'll be focusing on seniors' care. And we'll be focusing on the increased cost of living, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan families are confronted with every month as they pay their bills.

And with those comments on the budget, Mr. Speaker, I indicate that I will be supporting the amendment and I will not be supporting the government on the budget. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to be able to enter into another debate in this Assembly, and specifically a debate around the budget for the province of Saskatchewan.

There are few debates that are as important as this one, few moments in the political life of a province that are as important as the budget debate and the eventual support of the budget by this House and therefore, Mr. Speaker, the deployment of services, the provision of services for Saskatchewan people as a result.

I want to once again thank my family for the opportunities I have to serve in this place while they're busy between Saskatoon and Swift Current living their lives. I want to thank those who help in our constituency office. Nola Smith has done a great job as a constituency assistant. And I must also thank Everett Hindley. Though we don't get along, we travel the province together and have for some time. And I'm grateful for his support, as I am for the support of colleagues in the family that we have on this side of the House, and those that then support us in the respective offices in this building, Mr. Speaker.

Before I make some comments around the budget — and I want to make way for the Minister of Finance; he is the one who should be featured today and frankly congratulated today for the culmination of the debate and an excellent budget for the province — but before I get into the main part of my remarks I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that none of the debate that we've had so far, no element of the debate, no item in the

budget, is possible without revenue, obviously, to the treasury to perform the functions of government, to support what's in the budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, we depend to a great degree for that revenue on the health of the agricultural economy in this province. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, here of late in the last few years we've seen the steady rise, the ascendancy of the importance of the agricultural sector, not just in terms of production, not just in terms of what farmers do and what ranchers do every single day but also, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the innovation economy that's growing up around agriculture, even shortline manufacturing that we see, manufacturing exports increasing related as well to agriculture, maybe not in our province but in other parts of the world that need what our manufacturers are producing.

The bottom line though, Mr. Speaker, is just quite simply this: without a strong and robust agricultural sector we simply couldn't provide the public services we want to provide to the people of the province. We couldn't shorten wait times for surgery as we are because we have additional money to invest in that project. We could not build new schools in the province. We could not provide programs for those who have intellectual disabilities. We could do none of these things, Mr. Speaker. We couldn't hold taxes at a competitive level. We couldn't build highways and make investments in infrastructure were it not for the economy, and the agriculture sector is an increasingly important part of our economy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I was shocked when the Leader of the Opposition just now summed up the things that would be priorities for him going forward, reasons why he couldn't support the budget. And I think he listed four or five things. I didn't write them down, but I noted what he did not mention. Not a word in that list of priorities for the NDP about agriculture. Not a word of rural Saskatchewan.

I followed most of his speech. I think he spent about 30 seconds, he spent about 30 seconds on ... [inaudible interjection] ... well the member for Lakeview wants to intervene in the debate. He's saying I wasn't listening. Well we were. I think the member for Estevan counted. There was about 45 seconds in a 30-minute speech on agriculture. And now, Mr. Speaker, it's quiet on the other side of the House. It's quiet. It's a welcome quiet, Mr. Speaker, but it speaks volumes, that quietness does, about where this Leader of the Opposition has been on the agricultural file.

And again this relates directly to the budget. We simply cannot do the things that are involved in this budget without an economy to support it. The number one issue, the number one economic issue in this province, bar none, this year — and I would argue one of the most significant economic issues this province has faced in the last number of years — is what's happening with respect to grain transportation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it would be shocking if the Leader of the Opposition — after probably, I don't know, 70 questions in question period — it would be shocking if he had only maybe raised the question of agriculture 9, 10, 11, 12 times out of the 70. I think rural Saskatchewan would be disappointed in that, that the Leader of the Opposition, the gentleman that would like

to be Premier of the province, has not deigned, has not tried to mention the transportation crisis in agriculture once in his questions, Mr. Speaker. Not once.

It would have been, it would have been I think alarming had the number been 12, 13, 14. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is a disservice — and that is a mild way to put it — it is a disservice not just to rural Saskatchewan but to all of the people of this province that the party that would like to put itself off as the government-in-waiting, though there's only nine of them today, that that party, that party would have its leader not once raise the issue on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Speaker.

I would make this prediction as well: that as long as they are so out of touch with what Saskatchewan needs and wants for its leadership, they can expect their group not to grow beyond nine, frankly, in subsequent elections because the people of this province understand with clarity the importance of the economy as it relates to budget. They understand that. And they know that, yes, oil is important and mining is important and manufacturing is growing in importance as we see a diversified economy, and the innovation sector is important. But agriculture, Mr. Speaker, in a province that has 44 per cent of this nation's arable acres, is vital. It is a vital cylinder in our increasingly diversified economic engine.

And, Mr. Speaker, the good news is this, notwithstanding the fact the NDP have not raised the issue, the leader has not raised the issue . . . By the way, notwithstanding the fact that not even a letter has been sent to the Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture federally from the Leader of the Opposition.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, we know he's happy to write to the Prime Minister. In fact in question period, I think it was just a few weeks ago, he stood in his place and he asked a question of the Minister of First Nations and Métis Affairs and Northern Saskatchewan on the issue, on the important issue of on-reserve fire suppression and firefighting. It's an important issue. He noted, by the way, the Leader of the Opposition did, that he had taken the time to write a letter to the Prime Minister. Fair enough. That's something he should do. We are also engaged in the issue, the minister meeting with Minister Valcourt for example and raising our concerns around this.

So we know then that the NDP, the leader of the NDP is happy to write a letter on a federal matter. And so, Mr. Speaker, how shocking it is that the Minister of Agriculture and the Primer Minister's office have noted there is not one correspondence, not one letter sent from the Leader of the Opposition, sent from the Agriculture critic across the way to deal with the grain commodity transportation issue to fight for Saskatchewan farmers.

Anyway the good news is this, Mr. Speaker: as long as there are women and men on this side of the House that remember upon what strength this province was built in the first place, that remember that rural Saskatchewan is every bit as important as the urban parts of our province or northern parts of the province, as long as there are women and men of that calibre and that quality on this side of the House, the Government of Saskatchewan will fight for farmers in this province, with or without the help of the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it turns out in politics that there's a balance here in this place. In the legislature and in all arms of government, including on the opposition benches, there always needs to be a balance between talk and action. And, Mr. Speaker, sometimes in government we don't always get the balance right. Sometimes we do a little bit more talking and a little bit less acting than we should.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that's actually characterized some of the debate. And I followed some of the debate of members on this side of the House and members on the other side of the House. And I've noted actually that on this side of the House, our members have said, look, here's the challenge that the province faces — positive challenges of growth — but here's what they are and here's what we're prepared to do. Here are the actions in the Minister of Finance's budget to actually deal with those challenges. There has been a lot of action on this side of the House represented in those speeches because that's what's in the budget.

And there's been a lot of talk from members opposite. And I was in opposition; frankly that's what you do in opposition. You do a lot of talking because you're not able to affect change because you're sitting on the opposition side of the House, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, the member for Lakeview wants to intervene. Once again he's talking, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to act on this side of the House.

But it's been an important part of the budget debate where we've been able to compare, we've been able to compare the member for Lakeview's talk versus actions on this side of the House. And, Mr. Speaker, what's actually been really interesting is to compare the talk from the member for Lakeview and his NDP colleagues, even when they were in a position to act. It's an interesting comparison, and this budget affords that comparison. It allows us to make that comparison with the bright light of the Chamber and all of the words in the budget.

[11:45]

Because, Mr. Speaker, I want the legislature to consider for example the long-standing issue of summary financial statements. And there was, Mr. Speaker, as you will know, in this Assembly and outside this Assembly, dating back to the 1990s and even to 2002 — and I think the Minister of Finance has some highlighted documents he'll share with us on this matter when he speaks to the debate — there was always though a lot of talk about summary financial statements.

There was a lot of talk from the NDP when they were in office about summary financial statements. In fact I think in about — was it 2004? — they took an initial step to begin reporting both the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and the summary financial statements. What there continued though to be, Mr. Speaker, is talk — including from our side, to be fair, when we were in opposition — about the importance of moving to a more summary financial report to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of budgeting.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the talk now has stopped, and there is action in this budget. I remember the Finance critic across the way

railing against the government, exhorting the government, please move to summaries. And I heard in his words, frankly I thought I heard that if we were to take that step, if we were just to move to summaries, he would have to support a budget like that. I thought I sensed that in what he was saying because of the historic nature of that development.

Never before in the history of the province — I think that's an introduction to a sentence that the Finance critic across the way has used. He likes to talk about what's never happened before in the province with respect to auditors. Never before in the history of the province has the auditor been able to come out on budget day and say this move to summaries is a better way to report to taxpayers. That's never happened before because it's never been done before, Mr. Speaker. We replaced talk — some of it on our side, to be fair — but we've replaced talk with action.

Mr. Speaker, for a long time in this province, and I remember it sitting in opposition, there was talk about the education property tax. There was talk about the disproportional amount of education tax paid for again by rural Saskatchewan, principally by farmers. Mr. Speaker, an EPT [education property tax] featured prominently in the run-up to the budget obviously, and that's why it's germane to the budget debate today. I remember the leader of the government of the day, the NDP government, going to SARM at least once, maybe twice, going to the convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and saying, we're going to get it done, talking a lot about the importance of reducing education property tax. Just trust the NDP. We will get it done, he said. There was a lot of talk.

And, Mr. Speaker, while the government talked, rural Saskatchewan revolted. Rural Saskatchewan had public meetings because they got tired of hearing talk from the government when they wanted action. Mr. Speaker, shortly after the 2007 election, after a report from the current Minister of Government Relations to the then minister of Education, the current Minister of Finance, historic action took place in terms of reducing education property tax in this province.

There was a lot of talk in Saskatchewan in years previously about reducing income tax, especially for low- and middle-income people, Mr. Speaker, lots of talk about that. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that as a result of the actions of this government — and there's an element in this current budget that's referenced; I'll get to that in moment — as the result of the actions on this side, the talk has stopped, Mr. Speaker. And now the basic personal exemption for Saskatchewan people and the child tax credit has risen to the point where a family of four can earn more, tax free, in terms of provincial income tax than any other place in the country. The talk from their side has been replaced by action on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

And here's something else. Here's something else. Lots of people were saying on budget day, you know what, we support this. This budget is balanced. It moves to summaries. It makes infrastructure investments. And there are no tax increases, not to EPT or anything else, Mr. Speaker, not even the so-called sin taxes went up in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance pointed out to his colleagues at our own meeting just before budget night that actually there is a tax reduction in the budget. About \$6 million, I think is the amount . . .

An Hon. Member: — 6.5.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — \$6.5 million. The Minister of Finance corrects me as he is wont to do. There's a tax cut in this budget actually, Mr. Speaker. And do you know why? Because we replaced talk of indexing exemptions — and that just means that those basic exemptions from paying taxes ought to keep up with inflation — the talk about that from members opposite has been replaced by action on this side of the House. And so now we have indexed, for inflationary pressures, the basic exemption, thereby meaning the families of this province, those who pay personal income tax will pay \$6.5 million less than they paid last year, Mr. Speaker.

And more to the point, and I mentioned this on the social media that seems to be an important source of question period support for the opposition. I mentioned on Twitter yesterday that the number of people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and it's reinforced in this budget today, the number of people that have been dropped from the tax rolls completely — so these will be principally low-income people moving up into the middle-income bracket, strata, frankly — the number of people who no longer pay income tax to the province of Saskatchewan at all because we've increased the exemption, thereby reducing taxes, 114,000 Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. That's action.

Mr. Speaker, there was always talk in this province about cutting debt. And while there's not an additional payment of debt represented in this current budget, certainly it's referenced because, Mr. Speaker, we've had this debate and discussion about when we start saving for the future. Do we pay off some of the debt? Some of it's at 10 per cent, inherited from the previous administrations. Do we pay that all off and then begin to save for the future? And we're going to have that debate. But it bears repeating, Mr. Speaker, that those folks on that side of the House may have talked about debt repayment. On this side of the House we paid off \$3 billion in general, unsupported debt in the province of Saskatchewan. We've reduced the debt of Saskatchewan by 44 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Now when I say unsupported debt, I mean the debt of general operations in government. Governments will borrow in two different ways. They'll borrow in ways where you have a debt that's supported, typically in a Crown corporation where you have companies, commercial entities that borrow just like any other commercial entity, and then on a regular basis pay back both the principal and the interest of that loan. It's supported debt.

And then you have, Mr. Speaker, I would call the bad debt. And that's general government debt where there isn't a regimen of paying the principal, where governments, especially those who simply want to talk about things, are happy just to pay the interest rate.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's been interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition on this debate about when we start our futures fund,

when do we start savings. He says, in a scrum, he says, well we should start saving money earlier because people pay a mortgage and they save. Except, Mr. Speaker, that belies a complete misunderstanding of what general operating debt is. It's nothing like a mortgage. It's more like a credit card where we're just paying off the interest. And we on this side of the House said, we have to stop talking about this. We have to make some payments on the principal. We have to reduce the debt. And that's what we've done by \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. We have to stop just talking about these things and start taking action.

Mr. Speaker, we know there's a \$16 billion deficit in infrastructure in the province. And we heard across the way a lot of talk about that, in fact. In fact we hear demands every day from the opposition that there should be an investment in infrastructure. And while they were in government, when they had a chance to do it, Mr. Speaker, of course they were talking about it and not acting. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report to the House, and it's built on in this particular budget, that we've now spent more than \$16 billion on infrastructure during the last six years, building those hospitals, building long-term care facilities, record budgets in Highways, partnerships with the municipalities in terms of infrastructure improvement. We're acting on it, Mr. Speaker. We've stopped talking.

Mr. Speaker, for a long time in the province of Saskatchewan, there was talk about better supports for those with disabilities. For a very long, long season there was a lot of talk, including from the previous administration that had the chance to do something for those who are most vulnerable in this province, for those who unequivocally and in an unqualified way need the support of government.

Mr. Speaker, there was talk about how as social democrats they cared about these vulnerable people. But, Mr. Speaker, when we inherited government, we found that it was only talk, it seemed. Because the minister of Social Services of the day, the current Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], brought forward to one of those early cabinet meetings a report that said this — and this was a stark report, Mr. Speaker, by any reasonable measure. The report said 440 people with intellectual disabilities were on a wait-list. What were they waiting for, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What were they waiting for that government to provide, when they sat over here? They were waiting simply for the dignity of a home. And their families were waiting, Mr. Speaker, for some respite, some programming, because they were of course the main caregivers for these Saskatchewan residents, our people who had intellectual disabilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister of the day, followed by the current Social Services minister, has made it among the highest priorities of this government, if not the very top priority, to replace the talk and the platitudes from the social democrats with actions from this side of the House. And that list of 440 people waiting has been eliminated. Now there are other families who have come on to the list, Mr. Speaker, but it is never going to get to that level. And as they come on, we are finding places for those people to live, for the dignity that they deserve.

And, Mr. Speaker, in this particular budget alone we see record

investments for the disabled. Mr. Speaker, on this journey to improve support for disabled people in our province, the current minister had been meeting with the sector, and they made a simple request. They said, you know, we're not really welfare recipients. We're not really on social assistance because that would seem to indicate that there's more that we could do, and we simply can't do these things. And so we don't want any money right now. But could you call it something else because we don't find the dignity in what it's called today. And the Minister of Social Services came back to cabinet and said, well why wouldn't we do this?

And so what was born on that occasion — again action on behalf of that sector instead of talk — was the Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities, Mr. Speaker, because it is an income source for them. And we've heard from so many recipients. I remember one in particular, and I don't have the direct quote in front of me, but I remember her saying to the minister and to the government and to all who would listen, that she had family members that used to accuse her of being on welfare, and that hurt her. And then when we changed the program — without increasing the rates at all yet, just changing the name — she said she found dignity in that. She said they don't say that anymore because I would work; I would do more if I could. But I can't, and so this is income support.

And then, Mr. Speaker, we took it a step further, and we campaigned on not just changing the name, but increasing the support for those people in the province of Saskatchewan, increasing that income support. And one of the biggest spending items in this particular budget is increased support for the Saskatchewan assured income for the disabled. That's action, Mr. Speaker, a lot more than the talk we used to receive from the governments previous to us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite also like to talk a lot about the importance of engaging Aboriginal people in the economy. When we inherited government, we found just a lack of any real, functioning, credible programs that were delivering results. And it wasn't necessarily . . . We shouldn't blame the previous government for it. We really shouldn't because governments across this dominion, across Canada, have found this to be very elusive. How do we find things that work so that we can better engage First Nations, and in our province, Métis people, in the economy?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we worked hard to make this a top priority. Before we go to Ireland to recruit people, before we even go to Calgary and get Saskatchewan people to come home, we must, in a labour shortage situation, first better engage First Nations people. If the Aboriginal employment gap is here and the rest of the province is at 4 per cent, that's a challenge. That's a problem, and we ought to deal with it.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we set about making some historic changes in investment, in our approach to this issue, this gap in terms of Aboriginal employment and employment for others including, Mr. Speaker, what ended up being I think — the Minister of Advanced Education can correct me if I'm wrong — what ended up being a 48 per cent increase in funding to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, Mr. Speaker.

Lots of talk about the kind of programming we needed, the

money that you needed to support programming, especially at an institution like SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] that connects graduates with jobs and gets them involved in the economy. Lots of talk over there. A 48 per cent increase and more in the budget as well. And that's why I believe those in administration at SIIT said after budget day, "This budget is a good budget." They said it, Mr. Speaker, because it offered more action on that front and less talk than what they used to get, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of adult basic education and the wait-list we have in this province that we're slowly reducing, that we're eliminating, it's been a long-standing issue that's gotten a lot of talk again from . . . Not, by the way, in this debate — I haven't noted it — but in the past certainly. Mr. Speaker, in our growth plan we highlighted a plan to eliminate the wait-list for adult basic education. And funding for ABE [adult basic education] is up 58 per cent and we've added 1,000 seats. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more fundamental than getting that adult basic education available not just to First Nations and Métis, but all who want it because that is the foundation for what's next in terms of skill training and that's how we'll deal with the labour shortage in this province and better engage people in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is action and not talk.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, with respect to education — and we've had a bit of debate even on it, even on it here today — I think it's important to note that . . . And the Saskatoon school division came out today with some numbers about per-student funding being decreased. Mr. Speaker, since we took office, the per-student funding for that particular school division is up 33 per cent while enrolment's up 16 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, operational budgets for school divisions have increased. And once more what you've seen from this government . . . Again it's unprecedented and about action and not talk. What you saw from this government, I think a year ago September, was us intervening mid-school-year — I don't think it ever happened in the province — with additional dollars. And the former minister of Education led this additional dollars for growth pressures in not just Saskatoon, but some of the satellite communities there and some of it may even have flowed to Regina as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we have \$18 million for similar growth pressures, I believe, for similar growth pressures going forward. That's for places like Saskatoon. That's for places like Regina. It's for places like Martensville and fast-growing communities around the major centres, Mr. Speaker. And moreover, if the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, we will have a minister who will sit down with all the school boards as we go through this year and fully determine the nature of these pressures and do something that those folks only ever talked about when they were government — provide in-year increases, Mr. Speaker. That's what we've done in the past. And the minister will sit down with these groups and make sure that the provision of resources are there for Saskatchewan schools and teachers and the students, of course.

And while we're doing that on the operating side, Mr. Speaker, in an unprecedented way, this government will build new schools in Saskatchewan. And members opposite will oppose new schools in Saskatchewan because they don't like the way they're being built. The Leader of the Opposition opposes a school in his own constituency because he doesn't like that it'll be bundled with other schools, because he doesn't like that it'll be financed in the long term, doesn't like the way it's going to be financed.

His Education critic, also the Finance critic at one point, demands more resources for education and then opposes new schools. He says . . . or maybe he doesn't oppose them. Maybe I'm not being fair. Maybe the Education critic and the Leader of the Opposition support the schools that we've announced. Maybe they agree that we need one in Massey Place. Maybe they agree that all the schools we've outlined, both in the city and the country, are needed but maybe their position is, you can't build them except but the old way. I think that is his position actually. I think that's what he said, and I think that's the Leader of the Opposition's position.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, do you know what the deficit in this province would be if we were to simply cash flow every school in the same way that the NDP did? It's not possible unless you want to have a fiscal wreck on your hands, which we're not prepared to allow to happen. Mr. Speaker, it's a specious argument then for members opposite to say, build us a school in our community. Build one in . . . Build schools in Regina. Build one in the Leader of the Opposition's constituency. But we won't support it unless you build it the old-fashioned way. And by the way, they know, if they're being honest with themselves, that the old-fashioned way would mean these schools would simply not get built for years and years and years when we know the pressure is today.

I think I heard the member for Lakeview say it's about choice. You bet it's about choice. On this side of the House, it's the identification of the fact that this province is growing. Enrolment is up and we're going to use sound methods, proven methods to build schools, but we will choose to build those schools now when they're needed, Mr. Speaker, and not make them wait for a lot more talk from the member for Lakeview or the Education critic or the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we see another record investment in health care in the budget, and I just want to touch on it briefly before I give way to the Minister of Finance, because health care is important and it, I think, is a priority for the Leader of the Opposition as well. He's asked a lot of questions on health care. Not on the grain transportation crisis, but a lot on health care, to be fair. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would just point out we have another record investment in health care, but in terms of action versus talk, here again we see an additional investment in the surgical wait times initiative. We were able to see a report out I think just earlier this week that demonstrated we are well on our way to providing surgeries within three months for Saskatchewan people. This is a remarkable process that's under way. There's two reasons why we're able to do it. One is we have a growing economy and a broader tax base and so we've been able to make an additional investment in the surgical wait times initiative.

Here's the other reason we're able to do it. We're using private clinics, Mr. Speaker, and nobody has burst into flames so far. You know, Mr. Speaker, the projects are moving forward. Surgeries are happening. And I've noted that the Leader of the Opposition opposes the use of private clinics, and that's fair enough. I look forward to that debate and I look forward to the debate in the election campaign, because we're going to have the Leader of the Opposition advocating for the same old ideological way of doing surgeries — and therefore he'll be advocating for the same old longest wait-list in the country that we inherited from the NDP and from the member for Regina Lakeview when he was the Health minister. The longest wait-list in the country. That's the NDP brand in health care. That's the NDP legacy. And so when this government has developed and demonstrated success in reducing those wait times by adding more resources and using private clinics in the public system, they opposed that too. More talk. And action, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, after a lot of talk about long-term care in this province from when they were in government and when they've been sitting over on the opposition side, on the long-term care front, this side is actually building long-term care facilities and adding beds, Mr. Speaker — not just in the rural areas, but at a place like the Catholic Health Ministry, Amicus, the Catholic Health Ministry project in Saskatoon. But again, the Leader of the Opposition opposed that project, railed against that faith-based approach to long-term care facilities.

By the way, that's added dementia capacity in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And we note the Leader of the Opposition stands up and says, we need more dementia capacity in Saskatoon and right across the province, but don't partner with the faith-based community to get it done because we can't support that unless it's done the same old, tired, ineffective NDP ideological way.

And by the way, if you take a look at how the seats are set up in this House, you will note that the people of the province have voted for action and not talk and ideology on that side of House.

Mr. Speaker, the most important thing we can do in a budget is ensure that it's balanced. Arguably the long-term legacy of any particular budget is that it avoids borrowing for operations. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that for the seventh time in the life of this government, the Finance minister — first Mr. Gantfoer and now the current member for Canora-Pelly — has stood in this place and delivered one of Canada's only balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. That means we're not going to add to that unsupported debt where we're not making principal payments and only trying to track the interest rates.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, if I may just close with this, I think that is the reason why the budget's been well-received, that it's got the fundamentals right. There's infrastructure investments that are important. There is investments in health care and education, building on success there. There's support for our most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. But it's done in the framework of fiscal probity, responsibility. It's a summary budget for the first time in the province's history, and it is balanced.

And it is why I believe, Mr. Speaker . . . That kind of budgeting is why I believe that we can look to the words of the NDP

member for Athabasca, because the NDP member for Athabasca said more about this budget and previous budgets than anyone on this side of the House could say. Because in a clarion moment of just honesty to the *Northern Pride* paper in Meadow Lake on 17 September, 2013, it says, "The Athabasca NDP MLA said he is pleased with how things have been shaping up for the province financially under the reign of the current Saskatchewan Party government." I don't think there's anyone more surprised to get that kind of endorsement from the NDP than that member's old friend and Leafs fan, the member for Canora-Pelly and the Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to hear from the Minister of Finance and then we're going to have a vote. And a couple of members have been asking for some very specific things over there. The member for Cumberland has been wanting a long-term care facility. It's in the budget. It's his chance to vote for that facility. The member for Regina Elphinstone has been working hard for Sacred Heart School, doing a good job of making the case. It's in the budget, Mr. Speaker. Regina members have been advocating for Connaught. It's also in the budget. The Leader of the Opposition wants a school in his area, in his constituency. It's certainly related and involved in the budgeting for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Athabasca has said the finances for the province are good under the Saskatchewan Party. Here's a chance for all of them to do something that I think we've only ever seen the member for Kindersley do, at least in the contemporary history of this government, where an opposition member actually had the courage of his conviction to stand up, as the member for Kindersley did when he was in opposition, and vote in favour of an NDP budget.

You see, Mr. Speaker, what he had been doing is advocating for no PST [provincial sales tax] increase in the budget. He wasn't asking the NDP government of the day to cut PST. He was just saying, don't increase it because it hurts us on the west side. And he made a commitment. He said, if you will do that, notwithstanding other concerns I might have in the budget, I will support the budget because it's the right thing to do. It's the principled thing to do.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't just have one thing that had been asked for by members opposite. There is a grocery list from summary financials to specific schools to long-term care facilities. Now is the chance for the NDP on a principled basis to vote in favour of action instead of only ever talking about the challenges, talking about the issues they want to bring forward to the legislature. I'm personally looking forward to that. I think we're all anxious to see how that works out. I think if there's a few over there that are still thinking of voting against the budget, I'm confident the Minister of Finance is going to convince them as well.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to make way for him and I want to encourage members opposite to vote for a balanced budget that meets the interests and the desires that they have raised in this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that I will be voting in favour of action instead of talk. I'll be voting for the budget and against the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, it is my duty pursuant to

rule 31(7) to inform the Assembly that the Minister of Finance is about to exercise his right to close the debate, and afterwards all members will be precluded from speaking to this question. Therefore, if there are any members who wish to speak, let them do so now.

Seeing none, I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand and close debate on my fourth budget. I've had the pleasure of being the Finance minister, and I want to thank the Premier for giving me that honour and working with the people of Saskatchewan to develop this budget.

This has been a challenging budget because, Mr. Speaker, I'll indicate right off the beginning that the revenues of the province of Saskatchewan, on a consolidated financial basis last year, were \$14.17 billion, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, this year's revenue is \$100 million less. So it was a challenge. And then the only way that you can meet challenges, Mr. Speaker, is to look at the whole picture. So that was a process that took a while.

I want to also indicate at this time, Mr. Speaker, as I had an opportunity on budget day to thank my family, but today I want to especially extend my appreciation to my staff back in Canora-Pelly. Carol Sleeva, who is my constituency assistant, and Michele Wiwchar, who acts as a fill-in when we need a replacement, have done just a terrific job. So thank you to those individuals. But also thank you to my staff in my office here in the legislature in room 312. We have a terrific staff, Mr. Speaker, who have worked tirelessly for months to ensure that I understood all of the material that was coming from different ministries, that there were always concerns that were brought forward, and I want to extend my appreciation as well.

I also want to say thank you to all of my caucus colleagues. This is the fifth day of budget resumption debate, and I've listened to, I think, every one. Parts of every one, some complete. The comments made by members on this side of the House. And that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not going to spend a lot of time repeating all of the great things that are happening in different ministries, in different constituencies, and ensuring that we move forward, because they've done a terrific job. And I want to say thank you to all of my colleagues behind me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to . . . I think first of all I want to clarify a couple of things for the people of Saskatchewan based on the present process that we're following. And, Mr. Speaker, as the media reported, everyone knows that this is the first time in the province of Saskatchewan that we will have only a summary budget.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, for a long time we've had both, Mr. Speaker. We've had both, Mr. Speaker. We've had both. And you know, I think, I think it's in order, Mr. Speaker, because not all of the members opposite were in this Assembly for as long as I have been.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to read a resolution, and this resolution reads this way:

That this Assembly urge the government to follow the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor and begin using summary financial statements in its budgets in order that all financial activity of the government be incorporated to provide the people of Saskatchewan with a much more accurate, honest, and transparent view of the state of the provincial government's finances when the annual budget is presented.

Mr. Speaker, that was a motion introduced on December 12th, 2002. Mr. Speaker, up to that point — and I had been in this legislature since 1995 — there was only a General Revenue Fund budget. There was no summary financial statements. There was no accounting under a summary basis. So, Mr. Speaker, we were advocating for that. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this motion moved on December 12th, 2002, was moved by myself and seconded by the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Speaker, that motion was introduced and the government of the day, the NDP, would not support that motion.

Mr. Speaker, they introduced an amendment, many amendments, but I'm going to put one on the record, Mr. Speaker. It's amendment (c) of that particular debate and it's recorded in *Hansard* on Thursday, December 12th, 2002, and it says this:

recognize that the Provincial Auditor's office in its recent presentation to the Public Accounts Committee indicated that a modified form of summary financial budgeting would be appropriate for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that amendment passed. And what that is saying, Mr. Speaker, is I've listened to the member from Rosemont talk about how horrible this budget has been for years and years and years, and we're not following. Mr. Speaker, this is the same NDP opposition that was the same NDP government that passed this resolution that says that the Provincial Auditor is supportive of amended summary financials. And, Mr. Speaker, since that motion was introduced, we saw the very next year minister Melenchuk stand in this Assembly, and this is a quote from the *Leader-Post*, and it says this:

Melenchuk announced Friday that his government will move to what are called summary financial statements for 2004-2005 budget — a complete spending plan . . . advocated by [the] Saskatchewan Party and the Provincial Auditor.

. . . "What you will get is a complete picture, as in all summary financial plans, a complete picture of all activities of government . . ."

That's reported in the *Leader-Post*, March 29th. Well, Mr. Speaker, you know what happened after that budget? We had an election. And Mr. Melenchuk was not successful in returning. So the following year, in March of 2004, now the Finance minister, Harry Van Mulligen, introduces in this House on March 31st that the government is moving forward to summary

financial statements. So, Mr. Speaker, this is not new.

And you know, if people just listened to the member from Rosemont, they would think that none of this has been happening, ever. Well I can tell you that the auditor has reviewed the summary financial budgeting, which has been done, and it has received an unqualified opinion of the auditor every single year, Mr. Speaker, every single year.

So, Mr. Speaker, we recognized, we recognized — not the NDP — we recognized that there needed to be better clarity, that we have to ensure that the public, not only here in Saskatchewan but across the piece, Mr. Speaker, because there are bond rating agencies that come to Saskatchewan and look at our complete picture. And they do, Mr. Speaker. They looked at the complete picture of the province of Saskatchewan. They recognized that this province was moving forward, and that's why we have a AAA rating today, Mr. Speaker. It's not because we didn't do away with the General Revenue Fund in its entirety and only focus on the summaries. It's because we, over the last number of years, have been moving forward. With the support of the people of Saskatchewan, we've been moving forward and now we have 1,117,503 people in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's not because of the policies of the former government.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things. The Premier commented about advantages in Saskatchewan, and he talked about the personal income tax. We've had a bit of debate in this House about, well what have you done for us lately? And of course the change, the indexation of personal income tax this year continues on and, as the Premier mentioned, a \$6.5 million reduction. But, Mr. Speaker, also you have to take into account what has been happening over the last year.

I'm going to very quickly comment on one specific group of people in this province — seniors, seniors earning \$25,000. In 2007 if you were a senior earning \$25,000, you paid provincial tax. In fact you paid \$1,067 if you had an income of \$25,000. For 2014, Mr. Speaker, with indexation and all of the changes we've made over the last six years, that person is going to pay zero. No provincial tax.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are distinct advantages for being a resident in the province of Saskatchewan. There are so many things in this budget that I would like to review, but I'm going to just spend a little bit of time talking about two of the elements that we introduced, and that's support for infrastructure and that's support for people.

All of my colleagues have reviewed, and it doesn't matter whether it's the Minister of Health who's talked about \$5 billion for health and the fact regional health authorities are going to receive \$3.25 billion of that or the Cancer Agency that's going to receive \$155 million, and they're going to continue moving forward; or whether you talk about the Minister of Education, who now school boards are going to receive \$1.82 billion of investment from the Government of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to make this one comment because I listen to the opposition speeches as well. And I listen to some of the comments also thrown by members opposite. And I listened to the member of Lakeview just a few minutes

ago. Waved this card. And he said, not a mention of agriculture on here. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, you know what the mill rate is for agriculture today? It's 2.67 mills. And we made a decision, Mr. Speaker, as we were building this budget, to ensure that education property taxes remained the same as last year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of the NDP, under the leadership of that person who was in cabinet, there were tax revolts. There were people who were saying, enough is enough. You continue to download on us. Today, Mr. Speaker, we don't download on taxpayers. We keep the same tax commitment and in fact there is no education property tax in this budget.

That member just a little while ago commented, I think it was a few years ago when we were talking about the tax credit, he said, the film employment tax credit, you should've kept it. You should have kept investing in that. And oh by the way, you can take it from agriculture or you can take it from municipal investment, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of comments that were made by members opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I listen to some of the members talk about the desire to meet the needs of the North, the member from Cumberland talking for years literally about the La Ronge long-term care facility. We've introduced that, Mr. Speaker. We've introduced that. And we're going to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things in this budget that have met the challenges, and the Premier has very adequately summarized what we have introduced for some of the concerns opposite, Mr. Speaker. We've met those challenges. We've looked at growth, but most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we have looked at summary budgeting on the whole. And I know it will be a bit of a challenge for the media and everybody in the province to look at. How did the budget go from \$11.5 billion to now \$14 billion? Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's all about the fact that now we're doing it on a one summary budget and we have that commitment. Mr. Speaker, there are extra documents in this year's budget. People who are going online or are receiving the package will note that there is still the core operational side. There's still an Estimates document. Those are the ways that we have to appropriate the money to ensure that ministries have adequate dollars to continue with their programs and expenses throughout the year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, I'm honoured to represent the government and be the Finance minister, and I've travelled through a few of the communities already to listen to what the response has been about the budget. And as the Premier said, you know, the people wanted a solid budget. They wanted to make sure that there was a commitment to steady growth. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think is . . . It speaks for itself. And I'm going to talk a little about Advanced Education. I know the member, the minister's already mentioned this, but I want to mention this again. In the budget you're going to see \$216 million for student support — that's everything from the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, the SAGES [Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings] program, the funding of interest costs for student loans. But you know what's very, very important in that spend as well is \$82 million for the graduate retention program.

Mr. Speaker, when we introduced that program in 2008, students were leaving. There were no job opportunities. It had been already entrenched in them for years and years and years of NDP stagnation, declining student enrolments by 3,500 per year. There were no opportunities. People were leaving. So we as a government said, what do we need to do to encourage students to stay?

Well, Mr. Speaker, over 60,000 students who are no longer students — they're now working in the province of Saskatchewan — are starting to now recoup the benefit of living in Saskatchewan. They're now eligible to receive up to \$20,000 of their tuition costs over a seven-year period. Sixty thousand have now made Saskatchewan home and I'm pleased to be able to put forward \$82 million.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on with highways and agriculture. But I won't, Mr. Speaker, but I won't because there's been such a terrific job done by my colleagues. It's on *Hansard* and I'm sure that people have had opportunity to look at it.

But besides travelling to Weyburn and North Battleford and Saskatoon and Regina and tomorrow to Yorkton — I'm sure I'll hear the same thing in Yorkton — I've heard very positive comments from the public. I've heard comments about the budget and how we're moving forward.

But I want to put on the record a few comments made by individuals, Mr. Speaker, who are leaders in this community. And that's maybe a reason why the member from Rosemont, with this very first comment, is actually going to support this budget. I think he will, Mr. Speaker, because this is the quotation: "These are critical steps in eliminating confusion and helping legislators and the public better understand the government's finances. Our office strongly supports these changes." Mr. Speaker, that's a quote from Judy Ferguson, Acting Provincial Auditor, and it's about moving towards summary, which is what he's been advocating for.

From the Canadian Taxpayers Federation:

It's great news that they didn't take the easy way out and raise taxes. We're glad to see that they continued to look at ways of making the government more efficient instead of just simply asking the taxpayers to pay more money.

Kind of the NDP philosophy of the past.

"The province has put forward a budget that, while dealing with demands for increased expenditures due to growth and the cost of living, has managed overall expectations across the board." Steven McLellan, CEO [chief executive officer] of Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, from Debra Button, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] president: "The government's investment in our communities will go a long way to helping us meet the demands of growth."

Mr. Speaker, from the Advocate for Children and Youth, Bob Pringle. This is what Mr. Pringle had to say:

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

Mr. Speaker, this has been entered into *Hansard* by a number of my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this is from Amy McNeil, executive director of SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres]. And her quote is this: "We are leading the country, if not North America and the world, in supports for people with disabilities, and it's something the Saskatchewan Party should be very proud of."

So, Mr. Speaker, with all the investments in capital, \$2.9 billion in Crowns and other ministries — \$2.9 billion — with all of the investments in the various ministries, whether that be Health or Highways or Education or Advanced Education or Agriculture or Social Services, Mr. Speaker, there are so many great things in this budget. People have told us about that. They have said that this is a budget for the future. It's a budget that will mean that Saskatchewan is going to continue on that path of steady growth.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget, and I dare say the members opposite have no choice but to support this budget as well.

[12:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the main motion moved by the member from Regina Rosemont and seconded by the member from Regina Lakeview:

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

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that offers only cuts and crumbs for Saskatchewan families, doesn't address the needs and priorities of today, and fails to plan for the long term.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the nos have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:31 until 12:32.]

The Deputy Speaker: — All those . . . [inaudible] . . . in favour of the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 41]

[Yeas — 9]

Broten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Draude	Duncan	Krawetz
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Harpauer	Toth	Doherty
Norris	Reiter	McMillan
Heppner	Harrison	Wyant
Tell	Weekes	Elhard
Bradshaw	Bjornerud	Makowsky
Ottobreit	Campeau	Wilson
Marchuk	Kirsch	Michelson
Doke	Cox	Jurgens
Steinley	Hickie	Lawrence
Tochor	Moe	Parent
Phillips	Docherty	

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — 41]

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Draude	Duncan	Krawetz
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Harpauer	Toth	Doherty
Norris	Reiter	McMillan
Heppner	Harrison	Wyant
Tell	Weekes	Elhard
Bradshaw	Bjornerud	Makowsky
Ottobreit	Campeau	Wilson
Marchuk	Kirsch	Michelson
Doke	Cox	Jurgens
Steinley	Hickie	Lawrence
Tochor	Moe	Parent
Phillips	Docherty	

The Deputy Speaker — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 9]

Broten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

Clerk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the budget motion, 41; those opposed, 9.

Clerk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 9; those opposed, 41.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion lost.

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

The question now before the Assembly is the budget motion proposed by the Minister of Finance and seconded by the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook:

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that the House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

That this Assembly approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:37.]

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — Those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:34 until 12:35.]

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please rise.

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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