



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

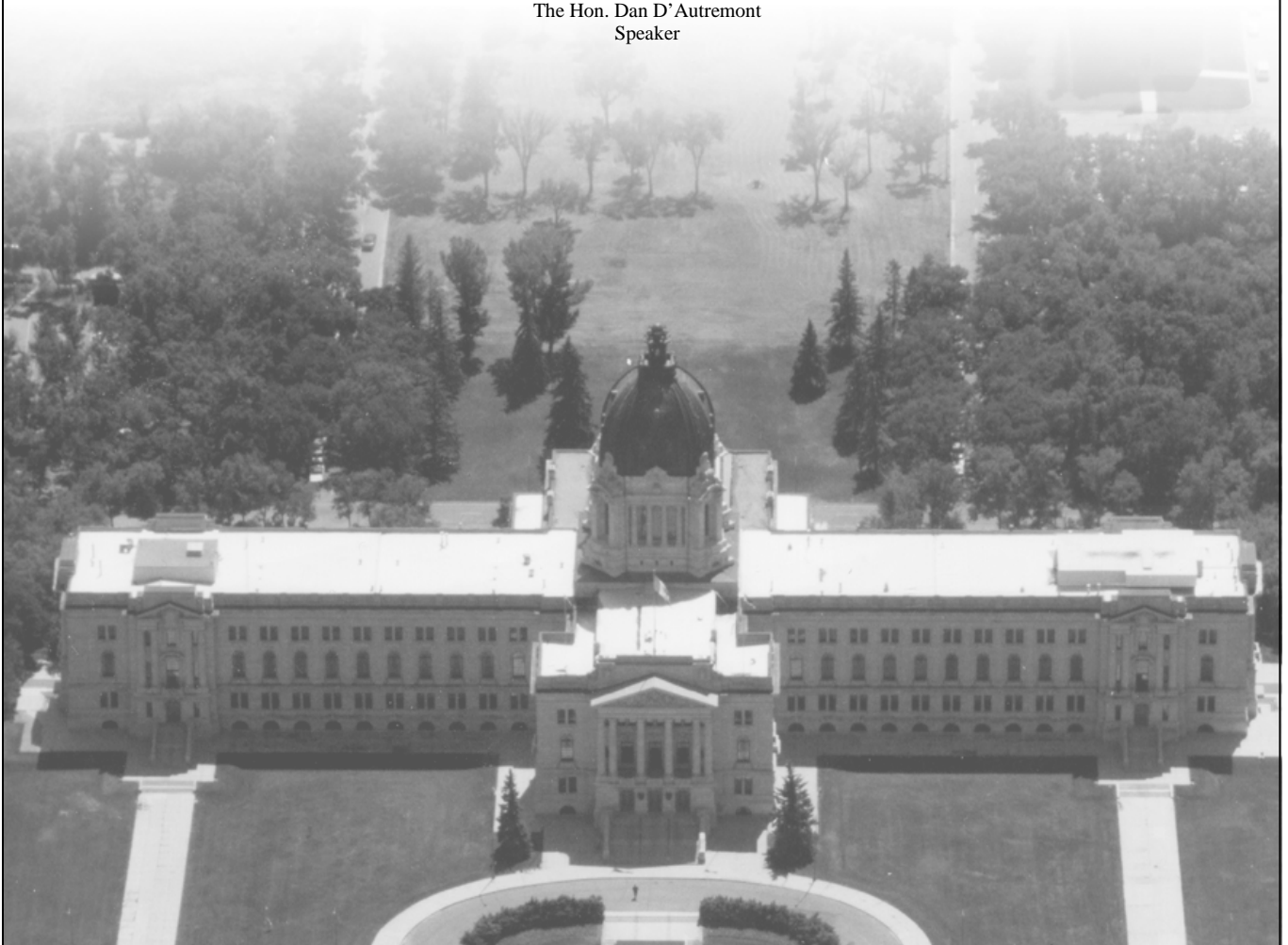
of the

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, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
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Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, 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
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Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
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Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we have a very, very special guest, and actually special guests, in your gallery today that it is my great pleasure to introduce to you and then through you to all members of the Assembly. They are Gabriel Reaume. We'll ask Gabriel to give us a little wave. There he is. His brother Adrian has joined us as well as his mom, Allana is here.

When Gabriel was diagnosed with mesothelioma in May of 2012, Mr. Speaker, he was 8. He was given a 5 per cent chance of living more than two years. After undergoing chemotherapy and losing his right lung and five ribs, Gabriel is cancer free. Throughout his treatment Gabriel remained very, very optimistic, and his is an inspiring story for every single member of this legislature and everybody in the province of Saskatchewan. He remains very much full of courage with respect to what he has went through, and he continues to believe that “cancer isn't all that bad.”

Today Gabriel is serving as the ambassador for this year's Relay for Life in Regina and is here helping to sell daffodils in the annual spring campaign. And I think the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to say hello and purchase some, and many members have. And we want to welcome Gabriel and his brother Adrian and his mom here today.

He's gathered his family and entered a team, the G Squad, in the Regina Relay for Life. And here's another quote from Gabriel. He said, “I can't wait to meet more survivors and to join in the relay with my family and friends. Keep calm and fight on.”

Mr. Speaker, we just want to say to Gabriel how very proud we are of him and all those that he represents who battle this terrible disease. We're grateful for the Cancer Society for all the research that's happening, for the medical care professionals who are there for Gabriel and all too many that, like him, face this terrible, terrible challenge of cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to welcome our honoured guest here today and thank him for his inspiration and his example.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming this remarkable family to the legislature and thank them for their service and what they're doing for the larger fight and a larger cause. And that's the remarkable thing about so many people in this province: it's not just about their own family, but it's about so many other families.

When I asked Gabriel about his brother, why his brother was along, he said, well Adrian's my bodyguard today. But, Mr. Speaker, when you're a fighter like Gabriel, I don't think you need a bodyguard. He's clearly proven that. And they said there's an older sister, but she didn't want to miss school today, so she's not along. So, Mr. Speaker, I extend my warm welcome to this family here today, thank them for their work, and encourage all members to go down, make a donation, and get some daffodils. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, I'm delighted to welcome some very special guests in the post-secondary educational sector to their Assembly here today, Mr. Speaker. Seated in your gallery are the various board Chairs of our regional colleges, along with their respective CEOs [chief executive officer] of the seven regional colleges. Unfortunately two of the board Chairs couldn't join us there today, Mr. Speaker, but these ladies and gentlemen are meeting, they meet usually two or three times a year as a group. And I have the opportunity to meet with them as well after question period here today, Mr. Speaker, and discuss some issues common across the post-secondary educational sector.

And so to you, Mr. Speaker, and to colleagues, if they could just give a wave as I introduce them: we have Mr. Glenn Hepp, the chairperson from Carlton Trail Regional College; Dr. Ivan Yackel, the CEO of Carlton Trail; Mr. Jim Thiessen, chairperson, Cumberland; Dr. Tom Weegar, CEO of Cumberland; George Janzen, chairperson of Great Plains regional college and Dr. David Keast, the CEO of Great Plains; Mr. Glenn Lafleur from Northlands regional college, along with Toby Greschner, the CEO of Northlands; Ms. Lydia Cyr, chairperson, Parkland Regional College, along with Dr. Fay Myers, the CEO of Parkland. And I might just add, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. Myers is retiring in June after 25 years of service at that particular college, and we wish her all the best in her retirement. Mr. Dion McGrath, CEO of Southeast; is Dion with us? Oh he's down there, okay. I couldn't see him, sorry. And Tavia Laliberte — I always get that wrong, Tavia; I'm sorry — CEO of North West; and Marlene Beaudry, the executive secretary for both Northwest and the Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming these accomplished educators to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these leaders in the post-secondary education sector to their Legislative Assembly.

Certainly one of the things we've been blessed with in Saskatchewan is geography, no shortage of it. And certainly the regional college system is that great edge in terms of getting the

learning opportunities to learners from every corner, to every corner of this province. So it's really good to see these CEOs and Chairs from the various regional colleges here today.

And I'd also like to join with the minister in congratulating Fay on many years of great service to the sector and to so many students. You will be missed, but thank you very much for the service that you have provided this province these 25 years on. And enjoy a well-deserved retirement, but I'm sure you'll be on to greater things there as well. But again I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming these leaders to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to welcome to you a fine young fellow that grew up in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook just north of the community of Hafford. Mr. Cole Janostin is here to visit the Assembly today. Upon graduating from the Hafford Central School, Mr. Speaker, Cole attended the Okanagan College, where he completed his commercial pilot training licence, Mr. Speaker. He's on his way now to Fredericton, New Brunswick to work as a pilot with Leading Edge, Mr. Speaker, and we wish him all the best in the start of his career. We know he'll represent Saskatchewan and the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook and the community of Hafford very well in everything he does.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce Dr. Neil Alexander in your gallery. Dr. Alexander has been the executive director of the Sylvia Fedoruk Centre for Nuclear Innovation since July 2014, a centre that's doing great work on cancer research, amongst many other endeavours.

Prior to that, Dr. Alexander served in a number of senior executive roles in the Canadian nuclear industry, including president and general manager of Rolls-Royce Civil Nuclear Canada, president of the Organization of CANDU Industries, and as vice-president of business development with SNC-Lavalin Nuclear. I very much look forward to our discussion today, and I would ask that all members join me in welcoming Dr. Alexander to his Assembly today.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I too on behalf of the official opposition would like to welcome Dr. Alexander to the Legislative Assembly. I and my colleague from Saskatoon Centre had an opportunity to get a very good tour of all the amazing work that's happening there and really excited about seeing the results for Saskatchewan residents. So again, on behalf of the official opposition, thank you for all you do and all the good work, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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 calling for greater support for education here in Saskatchewan. And we know that education is one of the most vital services that government provides to its citizens, but yet this government has failed to deliver a long-term plan and vision and the necessary resources to prioritize the delivery of educational excellence; that this government has also failed to develop a plan, a real plan to close the Aboriginal education gap, to support English as an additional language students, and to support community schools and their communities and students. And I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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 that provides 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the good city of Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the unsafe conditions created on Dewdney Avenue by that government and their failure to plan a safe route of traffic for dangerous heavy-haul truck traffic. 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 the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina once again. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North. It is getting harder and harder for families, seniors, women, and children to find shelter. Poverty is a problem. We know that for a fact. Skyrocketing home

ownership costs are huge. And I want to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Sask Party government, the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased again to present a petition in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. The petitioners point out, Mr. Speaker, that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government; that this government has removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, resulting in neglect; and that chronic understaffing, they point out, in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, things like infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

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

Mr. Speaker, once again this petition is signed by folks from many communities in Saskatchewan. Today it's signed by folks from Melfort, Beatty, Naicam, Star City, Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan for real action on climate change. And the people who have signed the petition want to bring to the attention of the Assembly the following: Saskatchewan's emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes as of October 2013 and show no signs of decreasing; slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy-efficiency program set this province on a backwards course; and that since 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact a real plan and allocate appropriate funding in the provincial budget to tackle climate change by reducing

greenhouse gas emissions, helping families transition to energy-efficient homes, and encouraging everyone in the province to take real action to protect the environment.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by individuals from Prince Albert, Regina, Moose Jaw, Lloydminster, Nipawin, Regina Beach, Estevan, and Redvers. And I so present.

[10:15]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Purple Day

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly in recognition of Purple Day, the international day of awareness for epilepsy. Epilepsy puts a lot of stress on families all across our province and brings significant challenges for those living with it.

My nephew Nolan has epilepsy, and I've seen first-hand how difficult this can be for families and people touched by this condition. Having better access to needed supports, therapies, and health professionals is critical in Saskatchewan. This needs to be a focus of government.

I'd like to thank Cineplex in Saskatoon for arranging a special movie screening for the families of children living with epilepsy, earlier this year. Regular theatre conditions can aggravate the symptoms of people living with epilepsy, and so the Cineplex staff adapted the environment through sound, light, and breaks to accommodate those with this condition. For many families this was the first chance they have ever had to take a trip to the movies, something that so many of us take for granted.

Mr. Speaker, we need more of these accommodations and adaptations in our public spaces and schools, so that everyone can feel welcome and thrive. And we need government to do better when it comes to ensuring access to supports, therapies, and health professionals. And so I ask members to join with me in recognizing Purple Day and in committing to make our province the best place in Canada for people and families living with epilepsy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to recognize the International Day for Epilepsy, or Purple Day. Epilepsy is a condition of the brain characterized by recurrent seizures and can affect anyone at any age. There is currently no cure for epilepsy. However through surgery, medication, and lifestyle changes many people are able to control their seizures.

There are approximately 50 million people living with epilepsy. That is an estimated 1 in every 100 people. Here in Canada more than 300,000 citizens are living with this condition. Epilepsy affects each person differently, including what could trigger their seizures. Purple Day is about bringing awareness of epilepsy in an effort to dispel harmful myths and to let those who live with epilepsy know that they are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, Purple Day was created by Cassidy Megan, a young girl from Nova Scotia who lives with epilepsy. Cassidy wanted to bring awareness about epilepsy in an effort to fight the stigma of this condition. In 2009 with the help of the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia and the Anita Kaufmann Foundation, Purple Day was launched internationally.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing March 26 as Purple Day and thank Cassidy Megan for all her work to make this day possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan's Living Fiddling Heritage

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report to this Assembly that yesterday the House of Commons passed third reading of Bill S-218, *An Act respecting National Fiddling Day*. This bill proclaims the third Saturday of May each and every year as National Fiddling Day. This brings Canada in line with World Fiddle Day.

In the debate yesterday, many members of the House of Commons rose to speak about their regions' rich fiddling history. Unfortunately none of Saskatchewan's MPs [Member of Parliament] spoke about our living fiddle heritage here in Saskatchewan. So I'd like to take a few minutes today to boast about the exciting and diverse fiddle community that we have here.

Of course, no story about Saskatchewan fiddling would be complete without mention of John Arcand, the master of the Métis fiddle. John is originally from Big River, now in Saskatoon. He's been an inspiration to so many here in Saskatchewan and has put the Métis fiddle style on the map, so to speak, Mr. Speaker. He is likely one of the most decorated fiddle players in Canada, and I'm proud to call him my friend.

I would also like to mention Michele Amy from Forget, in your area, Mr. Speaker. She has single-handedly raised the profile of fiddling in southeastern Saskatchewan, hosting an exciting fiddle camp each summer at Kenosee Lake, and this year presenting an exciting musical theatre show called a *Fiddle History of Canada* at the community theatre in Carlyle.

I was able to see the world premiere of this show in Smithers, BC [British Columbia] in 2012. It made me so proud to be a Canadian, and I hope that members from that area will be able to take in the show on the May 2nd weekend. Mr. Speaker, fiddling is alive and well in Saskatchewan, and we'll be celebrating that fact on the third weekend in May. To all members, take in a fiddle event near you. Thank you.

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

Habitat for Humanity Build in Moose Jaw

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity has become a staple in this province and a huge contributor to breaking the cycle of poverty, one family at a time. This past Friday I had the opportunity to volunteer at the

Home Street build in Moose Jaw. As the fifth Habitat build in Moose Jaw, this project got under way just a few months ago. Yet the Korbo family, Krista and her two-year-old daughter Sawyer, are closer than ever to owning their own home.

Habitat for Humanity is an amazing organization, and this government has supported Habitat's efforts to lift families up and change their lives through home ownership. With \$65,000 committed to each build, our commitment to Habitat for Humanity is stronger than ever. Mr. Speaker, this is my fourth time volunteering at a Habitat for Humanity project, and every time I am truly amazed at the talent and generosity of all the volunteers. The house is coming along well, and last weekend I actually had the opportunity to install door frames and some casing last week. I just want to throw a shout-out to Fern Paulhus, the coordinator. He's a great teacher, especially when he can teach me.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits of home ownership go far beyond the cycle of poverty. This family, just like all others that Habitat works with, will put in the hours necessary to call . . . to build this home their own.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in congratulating Habitat for Humanity on another successful build. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Volunteers Make a Difference to People Living With Diabetes

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday I had the honour to attend the National Volunteer Awards Luncheon hosted by the Canadian Diabetes Association of Saskatchewan at Government House. The volunteers recognized the outstanding contributions of volunteers, donors, corporations, and individuals whose actions have helped others to prevent and manage diabetes. I'm pleased to note that out of 11 national awards, three were from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that diabetes is a serious disease affecting a growing number of residents in our province. Together these volunteers provide a strong team devoted to helping people living with diabetes to live healthy lives while working towards a cure. By participating in community outreach programs, by sharing their stories, and donating towards diabetic projects and research, these volunteers have made a difference. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that Statistics Canada recently reported that our province has the highest volunteer rate in all of Canada.

Our local volunteers were honoured for their efforts, time, and commitment to the Canadian Diabetes Association last Thursday: Betty Sigfusson of Pilot Butte, Sarah Struthers of Saskatoon, and Georgia Joorisity of Regina. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing Betty, Sarah, and Georgia along with all the other volunteers who are dedicated to improving the lives of people living with diabetes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Peacock Senior Girls Win Regional Basketball Finals

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend was an exciting weekend for the Peacock Toilers basketball team. The Peacock senior girls hosted the 4A southern regional tournament in Moose Jaw over the weekend. The Toilers are the defending 4A senior girls' provincial champions and have worked hard this season to defend their title.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on Saturday the girls completed that task, defeating the Central Cyclones by a score of 78 to 39 in the regional finals, earning the number one position into next week's provincial championship tour.

Caitlyn Kitts led the Toilers, scoring 9 of the team's first 11 points and finished with a total of 23 points that night. The Toilers were certainly happy with the results, but they were far from satisfied as the team now focuses quickly, turning to prepare for their third straight trip to Hoopla and their defending provincial title from last year.

The senior girls won't be the only team from Peacock making the trip to Saskatoon this weekend, Mr. Speaker. The Peacock senior boys will join the girls, after winning the 4A title last year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me, congratulating the Peacock senior girls' basketball team on winning the southern regionals and wishing both the girls' and the boys' teams the best of luck in the provincial tournaments this weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Carrot River Midget Loggers Take Northern Championship

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Carrot River Midget Loggers provincial hockey team consisted of 16 Carrot River players and five players from Hudson Bay, and they began their provincial series games in mid-February. This series is the total points of a two-game showdown.

Carrot River squared off against Kelvington in the first round, winning by one point. The second saw a battle between our team and Cudworth, again in a knuckle-biter series that saw Carrot River move on by a one-point lead.

On Sunday, March the 8th, the Loggers were host to Hillmond for the first game in the northern championship. Carrot River walked away with a five-goal lead. The following Sunday, Carrot River travelled to Hillmond with a game that saw the scoreboard bounce back and forth between the teams, yet Carrot River won and came up victorious again with a total of a six-point victory for the final score.

Leading the team were coaches Chris Bergen and Calvin Kunz, assistant coach Greg Nicklen, trainer Al McCrea, and manager Alois Bronner.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in congratulating the Carrot River Loggers in bringing home the

2015 Midget C northern championship banner. We wish them all the best as they move into the provincial gold final game against Carnduff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Hyperbaric Therapy and Moose Jaw Hospital

Mr. Broten: — Donna Hodel was diagnosed with breast cancer and squamous cell carcinoma in her neck 12 years ago. She received 33 radiation treatments. These treatments, they destroyed her saliva glands which can compromise the health of teeth. The treatments also reduced blood flow to her jaw. She has this to say:

Because of the decreased blood flow, they don't want to ever pull one of my teeth because the trauma to the bone would make it difficult to heal, resulting in osteonecrosis, bone death. Then they would need to remove my jaw completely. The only option I have, if I need an extraction, is the hyperbaric chamber. My dentist said not to worry. There's one in Moose Jaw, very convenient.

Why won't the Premier reverse this government's decision and keep this vital public service here in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for raising this question and the specific case. With respect to the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw, I think the Minister of Health has stated and the Minister of Remote Health has also stated that it is the preference of the government to find a solution whereby the chamber could continue to operate in the province. Its presence in the new Moose Jaw Hospital is potentially an option, but there may be others.

Mr. Speaker, we know that treatment that the hyperbaric chamber provides is available, for certain cases is available in other ways, perhaps not for this particular case. And, Mr. Speaker, we do want to be able to provide as many services as close to home as possible, and I think that's why the Minister of Health has asked the health regions to explore potential solutions in this regard.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health has said it is not an option to have it in the Moose Jaw Hospital because they shrunk the size of the hospital. The government is clearly on the record — very different story here.

The Moose Jaw Hospital has the only, the only hyperbaric chamber between Toronto and Edmonton, but this government let the \$40 million American lean consultant shrink the size of the hospital, Mr. Speaker, and the hyperbaric chamber was left out of the design. This government, they have also said on the record, Mr. Speaker, that the hyperbaric chamber is not a high priority for them.

Well for people like Donna, it sure is a high priority, Mr. Speaker, and the prospect of losing this important health care service is very troubling, very concerning. She says this:

This is a real possibility for me and I'm sure at least hundreds of others in our province alone. It's not a hugely expensive piece of machinery. Saskatchewan is booming, they tell us, but I've yet to see any benefit of it, and now my little lifeline in a serious time of need will be gone too.

Well the Premier said it's a preference, Mr. Speaker. That is not a plan. That is no guarantee to people like Donna. How can the Premier justify losing this important medical service here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I thank the member for the question. In any number of cases, with respect to treatments in the province of Saskatchewan, the preference of the government is to provide services as close to home as possible.

[10:30]

We know that of course sometimes the preference isn't met because we have had for some years in this province an out-of-province approval process. We would rather that not be an option with respect to the hyperbaric chamber. That's why the minister has indicated he has asked the regions involved, not just the region involving the Moose Jaw Hospital but others around the province to find a solution so that we can see the continued operation of the chamber, which is currently obviously still offered now in the province at its current location.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about space here where a whole wing of a hospital is needed, and it's absolutely mind boggling that this government would go ahead with a plan and leave out something so important as the hyperbaric chamber.

You know, because of her medical condition, Donna would require roughly 20 treatments in a hyperbaric chamber if they needed to pull just one of her teeth. That's what she would have to do in order to avoid a jaw amputation. If we lose the hyperbaric chamber in our province, Donna would have to go to Edmonton for about those 20 treatments. My question to the Premier: would the province cover the costs of those trips?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we do have interprovincial agreements when it comes to sharing of services, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the hyperbaric chamber, I can repeat: what the Premier has indicated is that the Ministry of Health is working with not just Five Hills Health Region but other health regions to determine the best way that we can continue to provide hyperbaric services to citizens of this province, Mr. Speaker.

We are looking at those options. We know that the vast majority, as in this case, is an outpatient type of treatment, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at options to continue to provide it as outpatient, but we are also exploring whether or not that it could be provided in an in-patient site, Mr. Speaker. So no decisions have been made at this time, but our intention is to find a solution to being able to provide hyperbaric services to the people of this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government is clearly on record saying that they're only open to options — no guarantee, no plan whatsoever. In fact the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region said that he hasn't been told that this is a high priority for the government at all. It makes no sense, and many people in the medical community feel the same way.

Dr. David Amies, who has spent many years providing hyperbaric treatment in the Moose Jaw Union Hospital, says this:

It's disappointing that we can take a sophisticated instrument like this out of our community, which was raised through the efforts of the community, and it'll be junked.

Dr. Amies points out that the hyperbaric chamber saves this government a lot of money — all those trips out of province, Mr. Speaker — not only because we're not sending patients out of the province, but the hyperbaric chamber reduces the need for amputations, and it helps people. It helps cancer victims, Mr. Speaker, heal more quickly. It makes sense. It is the right thing to do.

This government doesn't have a plan, and it is absolutely mind boggling why they do not. What will it take for this Premier to realize that it is a mistake to throw this all in limbo and to get rid of the hyperbaric chamber in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition will know and certainly the former Health minister on the other side will know that the hyperbaric chamber has never been a provincial resource. It's been an asset of the Five Hills Health Region that was donated, Mr. Speaker. We have taken the additional step though to look to see how we can continue to provide, in a provincial context, hyperbaric services in the province of Saskatchewan, whether that be on an outpatient basis or on an in-patient basis.

We're also, as a part of that analysis, looking at what the costs would be to provide hyperbaric services outside of the province for people that we would have to provide that service to, Mr. Speaker. That is all a part of the analysis, and we haven't made a decision yet. But we are actively working on ensuring that we can continue to provide hyperbaric services to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Moose Jaw Hospital — I will put it on the record — I think it will serve the people of this province very well into the future, Mr. Speaker. It will have an additional

MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] for this province, Mr. Speaker, for the people of southern Saskatchewan, and it will be a great asset to not just the people of Moose Jaw but the people of Five Hills Health Region and beyond.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is such short-sighted and little and narrow thinking that we're hearing from this government today. A valuable piece of medical equipment, raised up from the community for the support for it, Mr. Speaker, provided for many years, and at times of record prosperity for many years, this government is pulling it away. We're not even talking about tens of millions of dollars here, and even if it was about dollars, Mr. Speaker, we know it actually saves money in the long run because you're keeping people closer to home for treatment and you're helping them heal faster. Why they're digging their heels on this with no plan is absolutely bizarre.

You know, the Health minister recently received a letter — 185 of them actually — signed by concerned individuals. They were forwarded by Yvonne Sawatzky, and she's a registered psychiatric nurse from Cut Knife. Here's what her letter says, "Surely the new facility in Moose Jaw could not have been so poorly planned. Surely if the planning was indeed so poor, space could be allocated in another facility." But she emphasized, and this ties into something that the minister said, "A private clinic is not the appropriate alternative for this chamber because those needing this treatment often have very serious medical conditions that require concurrent hospital care." There was a reason why it was in the hospital, Mr. Speaker.

What does the Premier have to say to this registered psychiatric nurse and the 185 people who have written to this government saying, give your heads a shake; this makes no sense?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take a moment to correct the Leader of the Opposition. Over the last 15, 16 years since the hyperbaric chamber has been in use in the city of Moose Jaw, the vast majority of cases have been on an outpatient basis that have had no other in-patient care that was provided, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't due to hospitalization, Mr. Speaker. The vast majority was outpatient treatment, Mr. Speaker. That's why there is a case to be made for it to be provided on a continuing basis on an outpatient basis, Mr. Speaker.

But we are looking at that option in terms of whether or not there's the opportunity for a clinic to provide this in Moose Jaw or in another location, whether or not there's an opportunity to provide it in an in-patient site, Mr. Speaker, as well as doing the analysis based on what it will cost the province to provide the service on an ongoing basis to the people of this province outside of the province. That is a part of the analysis, and we will be making a decision on that, on how we are going to provide hyperbaric services on an ongoing basis.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, in the first response that the

Premier provided, he said that it was still an option for the hyperbaric chamber to be in the Moose Jaw Hospital. That's contrary to everything the government has said. It's contrary to what the minister has said, senior health officials, CEOs of health regions, Mr. Speaker. So somebody doesn't know what they're talking about. My question to the Premier: what is the actual story here? Is it still an option for the hyperbaric chamber to be in the Moose Jaw Hospital, yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a number of different options, both on an outpatient basis as well as on an in-patient basis, whether that be in Moose Jaw or whether that be in another location. So certainly that is a part of the deliberations that we are making, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to say that we are very pleased with how the progress has gone on the Moose Jaw Hospital, Mr. Speaker, the fact that this is the government, on this side of the House, that has made the commitment not just to planning for a Moose Jaw hospital but obviously on a completed hospital that will be open for patients, to serve patients later this year, that will have the newest, most state-of-the-art MRI machine for this province and will be able to provide services for many years to come in an efficient and an effective manner. Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased about that, and I think the people of Moose Jaw are as well.

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

Quality of Care and Patient Safety

Ms. Chartier: — Just 1 in 10 nurses in our province say that quality of patient care has gotten better over the last year. The majority of nurses say there's been no improvement whatsoever, and a third of nurses say that the quality of patient care in our province has declined over the last year. What does the Health minister have to say about this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well certainly we are committed on this side of the House to ensuring that we have continuous quality improvement in the health care system in this province, Mr. Speaker. I think first and foremost that starts by ensuring that you have the proper number of health care professionals serving the patients of this province, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen a dramatic turnaround when it comes to the front-line staff in this province at a time where . . . Over the same time period under the NDP [New Democratic Party], nearly 200 physicians were lost. Under this government, 423 additional physicians are practising in this province, Mr. Speaker, as well ensuring that we have front-line staff when it comes to our nursing complement.

I know our professional bodies that do the licensing have reported to us that never before in the history of this province have we had more licensed professionals on the nursing front working in this province, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-six hundred

nurses of all designations, additional nurses of all designations are licensed, Mr. Speaker, to the point where the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association] put out a news release not that many months ago saying that never before in the history of this province have we seen more nurses working, licensed in this province. You can see that is evident by the budgets that we have brought down, not only this year but in previous years.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Those nurses are saying there are big problems, Mr. Speaker. Nurses are not just concerned about the quality of patient care, they're also concerned about patient safety. Just 1 in 10 nurses say patient safety has improved over the last year. A bit more than half of nurses say there's been no change to patient safety over this same time frame, but a third of nurses say that patient safety has gotten worse over this last year. What does the Health minister have to say about that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well what I would say to that is that ensuring that you have the proper complement of health professionals in this province is one thing, Mr. Speaker, but you also have to look at the processes that you have in place to ensure that you're actually delivering a safe and quality service, Mr. Speaker.

So we have, as I've mentioned before, we have worked hard to address the front-line staffing issues that were left behind by the NDP government at a time where they were cutting nursing positions. They were cutting beds. They were cutting physician positions. They were cutting pharmacists, Mr. Speaker, a decrease in the number of pharmacists under the NDP. We're seeing a dramatic increase in those types of positions all across this province, Mr. Speaker, and we're actually ensuring that we have additional beds open.

I want to correct what was said a couple of days ago by the Leader of the Opposition when he said that a resident, a patient was being housed, Mr. Speaker, in a closet, in a transitional unit that was a closet. Well, Mr. Speaker, it was being used for supplies in the past because it was actually a hospital room that was converted under the NDP into a storage room. That has now been changed back to a hospital room under this government.

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

Ms. Chartier: — After years of the lean experiment in our hospitals and care facilities, the majority of nurses say there has been absolutely no improvement to quality of care or patient safety. A third of nurses say quality of care and patient safety have actually gotten worse. That is an incredibly damning indictment of the Sask Party government's approach to our health care system. Is the Health minister ready to admit that the John Black lean has failed where it matters most, in quality of care and patient safety?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would note that SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] membership that was surveyed, a strong majority, nearly 72 per cent that were surveyed rated the quality of patient care delivered positively in their workplace, Mr. Speaker. I can point to a number of examples of where care has improved, Mr. Speaker.

At Five Hills Health Region, the time from when a mental health appointment was made to the time the clients received the service has been reduced by more than 90 per cent. Individual appointments for adults saw a 99 per cent reduction in the wait times. Group services for adults saw a 94 per cent reduction. And individual appointments for children and youth, from the time that an appointment was made to when the service was received, a 95 per cent reduction, Mr. Speaker — one health region. Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the examples that we've seen improvements in the services that we're providing in a quality service that we're providing.

We know that there is more work to be done, Mr. Speaker. We're not satisfied with the status quo, as the members opposite were when they were in the government, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're working on making important changes to our health care system.

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

Ms. Chartier: — I guess when you've been duped by a snake oil salesman and you've handed over more than \$40 million, it's pretty difficult to admit a mistake was made. But while John Black attends appreciation tea parties and laughs his way to the bank and while this government keeps pretending this was a wise investment, health care professionals are left frustrated and concerned and patients are left with a quality of care and level of patient safety that is worse.

To the minister: what will it take for this government to admit that John Black lean has been disastrous where it matters most, in quality of care and patient safety?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, I'll just give an example of where lean has been used to make improvements in the health care system. In the Sunrise Health Region, outpatient mental health patients were placed, prior to lean, Mr. Speaker, they were placed on a wait-list for treatment for up to a week without a known appointment date, Mr. Speaker. These are people that are seeking mental health support in the most critical time of their life, Mr. Speaker, in some of the most critical periods of a crisis in their life. Mr. Speaker, before lean, wait times were up to a week without a known appointment. Now for people with very severe mental health challenges, Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent of the time in Sunrise Health Region an appointment is received within 24 hours of seeking assistance.

This is the work that we need to be doing in our health care system, Mr. Speaker. It is one thing to be able to criticize that work, and I appreciate that. That's the position of the members opposite. But this is why we are doing this work: to ensure that we reduce our wait times; that we provide a quality service, Mr.

Speaker; and that we provide a service that people desperately need, when they need it, at the appropriate place with the appropriate providers.

[10:45]

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

Government Procurement Policy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — There was a lot of concerning news about significant job losses in our province yesterday, and it was another reminder about how important it is for this government to finally fix its flawed procurement policy and strengthen our economy. It wouldn't have prevented the job losses yesterday, but for many of the workers — and they can heckle and laugh if they want — but for many of the workers that were laid off, a better procurement policy would mean other job options would be available for them.

I don't understand why this government is dragging its feet on changes to its current procurement policy, one that's simplistic, one that's naive, one that doesn't get best value for taxpayers, and it puts Saskatchewan businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Let's fix it now. Let's put Saskatchewan first. Let's create good jobs here in Saskatchewan. What does this Premier have against this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question with respect to the procurement issue. And let me just say on the matter of the layoffs that have been announced, the Minister of Jobs and Trade for the government has obviously asked that our rapid response unit be deployed to those companies where layoffs are occurring. We also note that in the case of a number of them, especially on the manufacturing side, a great many of them are temporary, thankfully.

We ought not to ever take anything for granted though, and that's why this budget has some specific initiatives in it with respect to new incentives for new jobs created in manufacturing and processing, one that we'll hope members opposite will support. I'm hopeful we'll see some companies respond to these incentives very soon, as we see other sectors of the economy maybe pick up some of the slack from what's happening on the energy side and in certain sectors. We see, Mr. Speaker, 10,000 jobs on saskjobs.ca.

Procurement is certainly part of the economic milieu and policies of the government. The minister responsible's been working hard and consulting with companies across Saskatchewan, and I think very, very soon, very soon he's going to have something to say on the matter of a procurement policy for the government that will serve the interests of Saskatchewan as a part of a free trade relationship within Canada but also to put a top priority on procuring locally.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we know that this government, that they aren't good listeners, but if they were listening after that budget last week and if they were hearing the

same things from businesses across Saskatchewan that I was, Saskatchewan businesses were hugely disappointed that this procurement bill wasn't fixed, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know what the current Premier's approach to procurement looks like, Mr. Speaker? It's trucks rolling in, truck after truck from Ontario and Quebec and from Texas and from California as this government doles out contracts to these companies from other jurisdictions. Meanwhile companies here in Saskatchewan, like steel fabricators, are in layoff mode because this government keeps bypassing them. That's what this government's procurement policy looks like.

I can't understand why this Premier is defending such a flawed procurement policy and slow walking important changes. He should fix it. He should put Saskatchewan first, boost our economy, create good jobs here in our province. Why won't this Premier simply show some leadership and do just that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's certainly true, as it always has been true, that as a result of agreements in interprovincial trade, Saskatchewan companies are competing with others across the country. The member has raised the example of a long-term care centre in my hometown where we're able to go down the list and see a great many Swift Current suppliers and Saskatoon suppliers and yes, some from Calgary, and yes, the steel from Quebec.

The issue of Quebec steel is one that we've been working on. The issue of procurement is one that we'll continue to work on. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd invite members to wait for just a matter really of days, and they'll hear more from the minister responsible who's been working hard on the file.

In the meantime, in the meantime, I invite the Deputy Leader of the NDP and especially his seatmate, the Leader of the NDP, to practise what they preach, even in small things. You know we went on . . . You just have to Google search things that the NDP might be selling on behalf of their leader, and what you will find are T-shirts featuring the name of the Leader of the NDP, T-shirts that are available for sale for Saskatchewan people, supporters of his party. Where did they get the T-shirts from? Providence, Rhode Island, Mr. Speaker.

Here it is. Here's the website with these . . . Well he's laughing. He's kind of laughing. The Leader of the Opposition's laughing about it. If he's going to have credibility on the big things, he needs to be consistent on the little things.

There's lots of T-shirt manufacturers in the province of Saskatchewan. The Southwest Ability Centre in Swift Current will supply the leader his political shirts at a good price, Mr. Speaker, at a good quality. Now would be the time for the Leader of the Opposition to sort of stand up and apologize for saying one thing, lecturing about buying local and not actually buying local himself, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I mean that Premier is almost an artist of grandstanding. For him to get up, Mr.

Speaker, with his policy that sells out the interests of Saskatchewan businesses and doesn't provide best value for taxpayers and play these sort of games that have direct impact on businesses and the livelihoods of workers across Saskatchewan is unacceptable and hugely weak. That Premier, through his sellout model, in the P3 [public-private partnership] long-term care facility in his home community has Alberta rebar, an Ontario mechanical company, and Quebec steel, Mr. Speaker. That's this model of procurement by this Premier.

We put forward a better procurement bill, Mr. Speaker. It's all about fairness for Saskatchewan businesses. It's about boosting the economy and creating more jobs, and it's about getting better value for taxpayers. That is common sense, Mr. Speaker.

When will this Premier show some leadership, pull his head out of the sand, and finally provide value for taxpayers and boost this economy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — First with respect to the long-term care facility, there are many, many more suppliers from Saskatoon, from Regina, from Swift Current for the long-term care facility. Is the Hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying, even with new procurement policies, there won't be suppliers from outside of our province that will be part of construction here? It has always been the case. It will always be the case.

Can we improve the procurement policy after consulting with industry? The answer is yes. The minister is doing the work, and you're going to hear very soon about what the position of the government is.

In the meantime, I again invite the Leader of the NDP to stand up and explain this inconsistency. Why in the world would he hector and lecture the province about buying local, have a special day for buying local — not a bad idea — and buy his political T-shirts from Providence, Rhode Island, Mr. Speaker? The bad news is they're not buying local. The NDP leader won't even buy his shirts locally.

Here's the good news: they've only sold four of them, Mr. Speaker. He's only sold four of them. So he can . . . Because I'm sure there will be a spike in sales after we've done some promoting here today, now is the time for him to dump his Providence, Rhode Island supplier for his NDP leader T-shirts and switch to a good Saskatchewan supplier.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave for an introduction, please.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues for leave. In the west gallery, there is a group of 16 grade 11 and 12 students from Campus Regina Public. Their teachers are accompanying them, are Mr. Scott Gardiner and Chris Hartman. I look forward to meeting with them in just a few minutes. Please welcome them.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Do you want me to start recognizing members, perhaps?

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. Mr. Krawetz that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm proud to resume the debate on the budget that we began yesterday where we spoke about the incredible debt that this government is leaving for the future generations. And, Mr. Speaker, this debt has been very, very well defined. We have a lot of information as to what these amounts will come to, and basically, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, there's debt in every page that the budget has been presented.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we want to be able to say to the people of Saskatchewan is this: what would the NDP do differently, Mr. Speaker? What we would not do, Mr. Speaker, is we would not spend \$40 million on an American-based consulting company to run our health care system. We would approach the front-line workers to ask for their advice as to how we can improve the health care system in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What the NDP would not do, Mr. Speaker, during a time of record revenue, is put the province \$1.5 billion more into debt. We would not do that, Mr. Speaker. We would find ways and means in which we would reduce the debt and, Mr. Speaker, do strategic investment and continue working and building for the future of our grandkids and our great-grandkids, Mr. Speaker.

What we would also not do, Mr. Speaker, what we would not do is we would not increase consultants used to work for the Government of Saskatchewan by 227 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We've raised that issue before. We've asked, what are consultants being used for? No explanation. And yet the auditor noted that there is a 227 per cent increase in consultants used. We don't know what the consultants are going to be used for.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's why it's important as a government that you do strategic yet very well-defined and very appreciated and certainly value for money, encourage a good, strong, energetic civil service that would be able to serve Saskatchewan for years and years to come, as opposed to consultants that nobody knows what their role is.

What we would not do, Mr. Speaker, is give \$5 million to a company that sold us defective meters. The smart meter fiasco, Mr. Speaker, has cost the government an incredible amount of money, and this is not what the Saskatchewan NDP would do, Mr. Speaker.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't be cancelling road projects in northern Saskatchewan. The Wollaston Lake road is one prime example, Mr. Speaker, where this government made an announcement, and they ripped the opportunity for Wollaston Lake to enjoy an all-weather road, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Saskatchewan Party done, Mr. Speaker.

What we wouldn't do, Mr. Speaker, is we wouldn't confuse the potash industry. We'd work very closely with them to make sure that they continued investing into Saskatchewan. And one need not look any further than the Alberta example under the former Premier Stelmach, when he talked about the royalty issues with oil and gas, Mr. Speaker. And what happened is they came en masse to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, under our former Premier Calvert, and they basically invested in Saskatchewan.

So you've got to be very, very careful when you begin to talk about the potash issue, Mr. Speaker. This is something that Saskatchewan cannot risk. It's very, very important that you work very closely alongside of our investors, and certainly an industry as important as potash is one particular sector that you want to be very, very careful with.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we had record revenue, as the current Saskatchewan Party does, Mr. Speaker, Pleasant Hill School would not have asbestos in it. Today as we . . . [inaudible] . . . in the province of Saskatchewan that there is a school in Saskatoon that has asbestos in it, and the government has refused to move it, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, the NDP would not ask parents to dress their kids up when they go to school because in the middle of winter they've got to open the windows to let fresh air in because there's air quality problems in that school. We would not ask parents to dress up their kids extra warm because we were forced to open the windows to ensure that there's fresh air in the classroom, air that of course, if the air flow's not improved, certainly creates a danger for the children.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we would not do, Mr. Speaker, is we would not ask for more MLAs, [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Mr. Speaker. That's one of the most important things that I think people ought to know that the Saskatchewan Party is doing as well. They're adding more money, Mr. Speaker.

And what we also ought to know, Mr. Speaker, and people of Saskatchewan know this, that perhaps the greatest grain transportation crisis in the history of Saskatchewan — and let me re-emphasize that — the greatest grain transportation in the

history of Saskatchewan has happened under the Conservative watch in Ottawa and certainly under the Saskatchewan Party watch in Saskatchewan. And they cannot, Mr. Speaker, they cannot deny that almost \$5 billion of crop was left in farmers' bins over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, because guess what? The Conservatives couldn't get it to market, Mr. Speaker. And this grain continues sitting in the bins, and it's under their watch, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

So as you look at some of the examples, and I'll point out other examples that I noticed, Mr. Speaker. As we look at the . . . As we toured, the member from Saskatoon and I toured, and we saw some of the family farms around Yorkton being flooded, Mr. Speaker. And we heard about the incredible waste of PDAP money, provincial disaster assistance program money, in which they didn't do things properly, the government didn't, and they continue seeing flooding around the Yorkton area, Mr. Speaker. And then we toured the Humboldt area, Mr. Speaker, where we seen family farms being threatened by water, Mr. Speaker, all throughout that area. And it's a huge, huge problem.

So whether it's a grain transportation crisis, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's meddling with the potash industry or whether not addressing the water challenges that rural Saskatchewan is having, never mind the whole notion of health care, Mr. Speaker, we saw how the Saskatchewan Party have totally turned their backs on key areas and key people that had entrusted them to do the right thing. And with record revenue, they couldn't get the job done, Mr. Speaker, and that's really the most important thing that I think people of Saskatchewan are beginning to realize. They're beginning to realize that not only has this government forgotten their way, Mr. Speaker, they simply have not delivered.

So it's really, really important that we know that the people of Saskatchewan are speaking up, and I want to recognize a few of them before I close my comments.

But before I go there, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about northern Saskatchewan as a whole. One of the reasons that we don't support the Saskatchewan Party in this budget, or any other budget as a northern representative, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they have taken away so much opportunity in the North, and they refuse to recognize some of the challenges of northern Saskatchewan.

Why is it important to continue investing in northern Saskatchewan? Because, as they indicated in their budget, they're taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of northern resources, Mr. Speaker, every single year, and they make money off the North. What do northern people want? They want decent highways, and that government has not invested any money in highways in northern Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, not only did they take money away from Wollaston Lake when the announcement was made, Mr. Speaker, they also ripped away \$65 million that was slated for northern Saskatchewan to fix some of the community access roads in Cumberland House, Pelican Narrows, Patuanak, Turnor Lake, Dillon. The list goes on.

This government took that money, and they left the North with

no money for infrastructure and for highways, Mr. Speaker. That is their record. And yet they go ahead and take as many resources as they can out of the North, Mr. Speaker, and not putting anything back. And the northern people are saying one thing: if you want to take the resources out of the North, put something back for the people of the North to at least see that some of our resources being taken from our land, at least there's some value in terms of having some of the benefit returned to us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to notice is the Minister of the Economy. The Minister of the Economy comes along and he comes to northern Saskatchewan and what does he do, Mr. Speaker? What does he do? He really, he really pulled a fast one on the northern Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And what did he do? The Minister of the Economy, he came to northern Saskatchewan and he ripped away the term supply licence for the northwest communities, Mr. Speaker. This is where a collection of northern communities had the opportunity to look at forest industry possibilities, and what happened was the Minister of the Economy, he come there and he took away the TSL [term supply licence] and he gave it to someone else.

And I'll say to the people of the La Ronge area, and the La Ronge Indian Band, they're looking at your TSL as well. They want to come along and they want to rip away that opportunity that was afforded to the northern Saskatchewan people by taking more of their resources.

So one of the points that I'll raise as you begin to take away and strip away resource opportunity from northern Indian bands or from the northern Métis communities, you have to honour the Crown in all these discussions. Because when many of our First Nations signed some of these treaties, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't just the First Nations that signed, it was the Government of Canada, and the intent there was to share the opportunities. And we see none of that, absolutely none of that in this budget where they have completely ignored and they have completely forgotten the North, Mr. Speaker. This is what's really important, and that's the reason it's really important for us to remind people of what they have taken out and not put back in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they have not put in anything of any significance in the North, and that's one of the reasons why we vote against this budget, Mr. Speaker. We vote because they have forgotten so much and they have taken out so much, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we will continue voting against the Sask Party budget.

That's why as northern people we will continue, we will continue to fight for northern Saskatchewan, and we will continue asking for our fair return on the resources being extracted by the Saskatchewan Party government. Because we're not just your playground to come dig resources out, you've got to make strategic investments and you've got to get with the program. And that's what's really, really important when it comes to northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They're taking away highways opportunities, Mr. Speaker, employment opportunities, resource sharing of things like forestry. They have taken that opportunity away from us.

And, Mr. Speaker, the most telling example, the most telling example of the lack of commitment to northern Saskatchewan is

when this government came along and they started kicking people out of their homes. They started kicking people out of their homes, and the reason they kicked these people out of their homes was because they got a job. That's why they kicked people out of their homes. They cancelled the home ownership opportunity for people because they were making too much money, is what the minister said. Why didn't they give them the integrity and opportunity to own their own home? That's what this government did.

So as you take away the TSL, you refuse to commit to northern opportunities, you kick people out of their homes, you take away any opportunity for ownership, the list goes on as to how this government has penalized Northern Saskatchewan. And that's why we vote against their budget, and that's why we vote against them all the time, Mr. Speaker. We're here to fight and stand up for northern people.

Now my final point I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, is I want to recognize a couple of champions, as I've said, very quickly. One of them is the Prairie Spirit School Division. They have stood up and they have challenged this government. They have said, you're numbers do not jibe with our numbers. We are therefore putting on public notice the fact that the Prairie School Division is going to fight back. And I applaud their effort, Mr. Speaker, I applaud their effort.

And I also applaud one particular SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] delegate who stood up at the SARM convention and said that it's time that SARM stands up to the government because you don't have two political masters. You're there to represent the RMs [rural municipality]. And there is so much, so many things that the former president of SARM didn't bring forward to the government, and then we find out over time, he's now the Sask Party candidate.

I also want to recognize that delegate that stood up at SARM and saying, this is not acceptable — you represent the RMs; you do not represent the political masters in Regina. And you see, Mr. Speaker, we saw that kind of manipulation on a regular basis. So I want to recognize those champions that stand up and speak out and say, enough, enough of this. And that's why in northern Saskatchewan, the northern MLAs will continue fighting. We'll continue voting against budgets that ignore us, that rip away opportunities, that force families from their home, and don't have any vision nor plan for northern Saskatchewan and many other areas throughout the province.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, that's why I say today that the NDP will stand up, and we will provide better government than what we have seen from the current government, Mr. Speaker. We will rebuild our schools, Mr. Speaker. We will build the best health care system available. We'll make sure we protect Saskatchewan's business interests. We will encourage investment, if you want to see the economy continue to build, Mr. Speaker, and not falter under the so-called Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I stand up today. That's why I stand up today.

And I tell my colleagues, do not fear because what we're seeing there is we're seeing that the Saskatchewan Party government are messing it up. We ask them for the last several years . . . you have messed it up. And what I wouldn't mind doing, Mr.

Speaker, in my closing comment is to tell people this: in the last eight or nine years, or eight years that the Saskatchewan Party government has been in charge, they've had almost \$100 billion at their disposal. And I could almost guarantee, the first eight years that the NDP were in power, I would say we probably had maybe 30 billion in total, Mr. Speaker. I'm hazarding a guess. But these guys had, they've had three times the revenue and they still can't get the job done. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we will always vote against them. We will always stand up like the good prairie school division, the Prairie Spirit School Division, like that delegate at SARM, like the many people that speak out. We will stand up with them and we will acknowledge the champions.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again we say to them, they lack vision. They lack the opportunity to really build for the future of Saskatchewan, and they're putting us further into debt and penalizing a lot of people and not responding to some real serious provincial challenges that many people have. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that I will not be supporting their budget. I will be voting against their budget, and with the amendment by my colleagues on this side of the Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As ever, glad to take my place in this Assembly and join debate on the matters in front of us, in this case the budget speech.

As is the custom, Mr. Speaker, you don't get here on your own, and certainly there are a lot of people that each and every one of us, as members in this Assembly, have to be thankful for in our lives. First and foremost, of course, the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre that continue to place their trust in me.

And it's a humbling thing, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the work that the people set out for us, and that's certainly true in my case, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, a tremendously diverse place, lots of great neighbourhoods that are almost their own little worlds unto themselves, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of the heritage community, in terms of North Central, in terms of Regent Park or the old Warehouse District or downtown or Cathedral or the different places that I have the privilege to represent in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of great people and a lot of great organizations that make a tremendous contribution to the well-being of those communities and to the collective overall, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the staff that we have the privilege of working with, it's you know, again there's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes, and certainly in the constituency office or the caucus office as the case may be, and so the folks that are working with us there, Mr. Speaker, again I want to publicly get on the record my thanks and appreciation for all the work that gets done in that regard. So thank you very much to folks like Tim and to the folks in the caucus office that help us each and every day.

And also to family, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the McCalls were a ragtag bunch and we've had some additions to the family. We've had some folks that sadly have passed on in recent times, Mr. Speaker. Again though it's that family that gives you

so much and more than you could ever give back into it, Mr. Speaker. But I'm certainly blessed very much in terms of having that family support, that family guidance, and as I think about the opportunity of, you know, talking about the budget and the affairs of the day with my father who recently celebrated his 81st birthday, to be able to talk about the issues of the neighbourhood and the province over a great dish of pickerel that the member from Cumberland had brought back for us, it was a great occasion, Mr. Speaker. I get so much from that guidance but certainly through the McCall family as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the budget, again I think all of us take a look at these things in terms of what it means first and foremost for the people of your particular constituency, what it means for your different critic areas, and what it means for the province as a whole, and certainly in terms of what this budget means for the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. I'd be frankly wrong if I didn't say that there were some good things that are in this budget and that I'm glad to see moving forward on all of these particular points. But in terms of how this nets out, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the old adage that even a broken watch can be right twice a day, Mr. Speaker. There's still a lot of other terrain to cover as regards to this budget, and how this budget nets out is why I'll be supporting the amendment and voting against this government.

Now again in terms of the things that are good to see in this budget, I'm certainly glad to see the reannouncement for Sacred Heart Community School, one of the largest schools in Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and certainly we're glad to see that proceeding as it should. But again, Mr. Speaker, I'm so thankful for the leadership of people like Principal Starla Grebinski who is coming up on retirement this year after decades of service in the education system. And you know, we all gain so much from our teachers, Mr. Speaker, and certainly she was my teacher in grade 3, way back when. She did the best she could with me, Mr. Speaker. So any of the good things we'll credit to that, to teachers like Starla, but of course all the bad is my own to take responsibility for, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

But we're glad to see Sacred Heart moving forward. Again tremendous community effort had to be brought to bear to get a response from this government when the gym was falling down and the scoreboard was falling off the wall of the gym and the lights were falling off the roof, Mr. Speaker, and the continued refusal on the part of this government to listen to the Catholic school board and how that was a critical infrastructure that needed support. So I'm thankful for the work of people like Father John Weckend out of the Saint Cecilia's and Sacred Heart parish, and the parishioners that rallied around the cause.

I'm thankful for the work of people like Elder Mike Pinay who does a lot of work with the kids at Sacred Heart and certainly weighed in on this and the need for the kids at Sacred Heart to get a first-class learning opportunity. And I'm thankful for the many, many people in the community that stood up and said, this is unfair. These kids deserve . . . They're not second-class citizens. They deserve a first-class education opportunity like anyone else in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll be interested to see of course how this plan rolls out, because of course, not a stone's throw away you have Scott Collegiate, which in the summer of 2007 was ranked second on the province-wide capital list, and then was reiterated as a priority for this government in the 2008 budget. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, I was on record then and I've been on record in different junctures over the years in terms of saying that I was glad to see the government make that announcement and make that commitment. And then of course the years go by, Mr. Speaker.

Now the fences are up and they seem to be on the verge of finally turning the sod on a project that they announced in the 2008 budget, seven years ago, seven budgets ago, Mr. Speaker. We're interested . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And of course I hear one of the former Education ministers saying some things from her seat, and certainly it's interesting that that was the minister that saw fit to come around the neighbourhood in advance of the 2011 election and make a big announcement recommitting to the project in the gym at Albert School. And then of course, you know, the announcement goes by, and the election goes by, and the slow-walking continues. So we're looking forward very much to that sod being turned, Mr. Speaker.

But I think that people like Principal Shannon Fayant and Vice-Principal Chris Beingessner and all the folks at Scott and all the folks that have made commitments to the North Central Shared Facility that Scott Collegiate will be the centrepiece of . . . Mr. Speaker, I can hardly wait. And I know that that's certainly the case for the students as well, who again richly deserve a first-class education opportunity and not to be slow-walked or to be dismissed or to have games played with their education. And I also think about the seven years of students that have gone through there that didn't have that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll see if the shovels go into the ground, and I'm sure that, you know, it was the . . . As we moved into the election season last time, it garnered an announcement. Hopefully this time it will garner some actual action, Mr. Speaker.

I think about the situation at the Pasqua Hospital, Mr. Speaker, again down Dewdney Avenue. My colleague, the member from Regina Rosemont, does a good job describing what heavy-haul traffic has done to Dewdney Avenue generally. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the medical transports that roll into the Pasqua Hospital, I'm not sure what the precise protocol is for those folks, but I'm sure there's something that goes on because Dewdney Avenue is something of a roller coaster in terms of the up and down bumps that you have to endure to get through to get to the ER [emergency room] there.

Then when you get to the ER, the emergency room, Mr. Speaker, often as not the ER wait times are quite frankly a mess. And you see this, you see this, Mr. Speaker, if you're on the ground and if you actually talk to the people that have to rely on these services. But you contrast that against the sort of self-congratulation and the back-patting that goes on with this government as regards their approach to health care. It's again the hype is very different from the reality, and in terms of what we see in places like the ER at Pasqua Hospital, tells two very different stories.

Again we're glad to see some things in this budget when it comes to seniors. I'm glad to see the seniors' income plan receive another increase. I'm glad to see that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also interested to see that again, as per an earlier budget, though they give on one hand, they've turned to the drug, the prescription drug plan for seniors, to take yet again. So in an earlier budget, Mr. Speaker, for every \$1 they gave in the seniors' income plan, they took 2 on the other hand from increasing the premium on the seniors' drug plan. Now again in this particular round of giving on the one hand and taking on the other, they've kicked 6,000 seniors off the rolls for eligibility with the seniors' drug plan. So again, behind the announcements that are made by this government in terms of all the good things, there's the fine print, and you've always got to read the fine print with these people in terms of the budget, Mr. Speaker. So you know, good thing on the one hand; questionable thing on the other.

Another thing that will impact seniors, and one thing that I've heard a lot from seniors about in recent days, Mr. Speaker — because of course there are different announcements this government made in the lead-up to the budget, to get some of that bad news over the side to not step on their great budget story — one of the things was the change to how Sask Housing is going to be operating on behalf of the people of the province, and the approach to affordable housing versus social housing, Mr. Speaker. And this has caused a great deal of turmoil for any number of seniors in the riding of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and I know that's the case for other ridings as well. And they don't appreciate it in the slightest, Mr. Speaker.

One other thing that's interesting to see and we'll be watching to see how this looks out, and again apropos of earlier budgets on the part of this government, they'll talk about the importance of housing, but when it comes to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the direct vehicle by which this government has an impact in the housing market, they're clawing \$5 million from its budget. And again, this isn't the \$8 million that was taken out of the Sask Housing budget of the first budget on the part of this government. But again it's, you know, there's good words on the one hand, and what are the actions on the other?

When we see what's being put together on the social services file generally in terms of . . . Again we're glad to see the increase to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability]. Good to see that, Mr. Speaker, no question. But on the other hand it's always interesting to follow the rhetoric of this government. They talk about increasing the amount of money that's going to the social assistance program. And you know, there are folks that would look at that and say, oh does that mean that they're going to increase the amount being forwarded to people that are on social assistance? Well no, that's not the case. They're increasing the overall budget because the welfare rolls have grown under this government.

Or you see the cut to the Saskatchewan employment supplement where the \$1 million there, you know, lines up interestingly alongside the three more MLAs that they're bringing to bear, Mr. Speaker, that it's something else in terms of again, what the priorities are of this government.

You know, we've seen in Regina a 20-per-cent-plus increase on

the food bank utilization rates the year previous to this one. And one of the things that you'd think is that when they get around to announcing an anti-poverty announcement or strategy in the fall and that they're going to proceed with that, you'd think that then they would at least have the good sense to make decisions that line up with that. But you don't, Mr. Speaker. What you see instead is cuts to things like the employment supplement, again the very same people who are the working poor, who are trying to get ahead. But when it comes to this government giving a hand up, they're getting a bit of a shove, Mr. Speaker. And it's no wonder in that regard in terms of seniors, in terms of the working poor, in terms of new Canadians that are the growth markets in terms of that 20-per-cent-plus increase at the Regina Food Bank. So when it comes to the way this government is talking about things and the actions on the ground, two different things.

And it's like that in a lot of different cases, Mr. Speaker. We didn't see any action on child care in this budget. We didn't see enough of an effort around the fact that Saskatchewan leads the country in terms of abuse of women. We didn't see the kind of action that's needed to make sure that the utilities that keep on going up . . . We've seen this government rely on the fact that they're going to be squeezing the Crowns yet again and passing that cost on to the people of Saskatchewan. We've seen the fact that education and the kind of budgets you need there to make sure that teachers are getting the support they need and students are getting the support they need, there is a lot of questionable parts in that part of the budget, least of which is the P3 approach. And you see the . . .

You know, again you see some good things. You see the adult basic education again being increased on the part of this government. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it would make better sense to fix the problem in the first place and support the primary and secondary education systems in this province so that you're not just adding to the adult basic education supply — which is good; don't get me wrong — but you're making for a better chance of success in the first place.

As regards some of the critic areas, Mr. Speaker, at the . . . Oh where to begin? Again some good things in this budget. Glad to see the additional dollars to institutions like SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] or Gabriel Dumont or the Dumont Technical. Glad to see that, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of the overall approach of this government and the need for increased engagement between First Nations and non-First Nations in this province, this government, on a lot of other fronts, is not carrying the ball, least of which my colleague from Athabasca was up talking about the duty of the Crown to engage. And we've seen, you know, a fair chunk of change ripped out of this budget yet again by this government when it comes to putting their money where their mouth is when it comes to engagement.

In terms of the University of Regina alone, when it comes to that post-secondary capital budget, Mr. Speaker, we didn't see any action on the College Avenue Campus. We didn't see any. We didn't get a lot of assurance around things like the 50-plus roofs that are leaking at the University of Regina as referenced by the president of the University of Regina in her state of the university address early in the year to the Regina Chamber of Commerce.

We see the changes to the graduate retention program, Mr. Speaker, and again in terms of changing it in a way where they can take \$33.5 million out of the program and then try to say with a straight face that everything is fine. It's kind of breathtaking, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that this government can say that with a straight face after having campaigned on it and after having done ads about it and have to, you know, go in to students and their families and saying, here's the deal. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, they've fundamentally changed the program.

And this adds to a situation where again we've seen tuition, you know, for the last number of years under this government, increasing year in and year out. And when they first came into power, Mr. Speaker, they were in for the tuition freeze but no more. It's sort of like we're going to cut your budget but on the other hand, you know, we'll let you charge whatever the students will bear. And then in terms of the students, we'll change the graduate retention program, which was our deal with them, and extend that further into the future. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a broken promise on the part of this government, and they should know better.

I think the sort of height of it was the . . . There's a lot of other different topics to get into, Mr. Speaker, but the last one I'll go with is what's happened on the University of Saskatchewan campus where we've had no lesser light than Alex Usher weigh in, Alex Usher of course a well-recognized authority on post-secondary education issues, not just in Canada but around the world. But talking about how this government's approach to budgeting is sort of like having the institutions be mugged by their own government and, in terms of the savings that were garnered through a wrenching process by the University of Saskatchewan, having those in turn wrenched back from the University of Saskatchewan. And again it's sort of the no good deed goes unpunished school of public policy, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the university going out there, making some very tough decisions, and then in terms of what are the benefits of all those wrenching decisions, well the government's there saying, well thank you very much; we'll be taking that.

[11:30]

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what we see going forward with this government, it's going to be, you know . . . Again the institutions have some very hard decisions to make as regards what's going to happen with tuition and what's going to happen with the services. And I believe that there will be increases on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, and cuts on the other, and either way, students are not being served by this government as they should be.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of different things in this budget that, you know, have been covered very well by my colleagues on this side. You talk about what's happened with the rainy day fund being drained, the way that, you know, \$700 million in borrowing is being characterized as a balance. There's some of the stuff that makes you think it's like a tribute album to George Orwell, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that they keep huffing and puffing and saying, oh up is down, down is up, black is white and on we go.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the balanced budget and the

purported balanced budget on the part of this government, and again in a time of record revenues, the way that this government has not saved a penny for the go-forward, Mr. Speaker, it's a sad state of affairs in terms of the many blessings that have been bestowed on the people of Saskatchewan in this province.

So how this goes forward, Mr. Speaker, we'll see. Historically there have been some budgets at critical junctures in the history of this Assembly where there was one thing presented in a budget before an election and then it turned out to be something very different after. And I'm sure that they've got some ideas about what budgets those might be, but I think of the 1986-87 budget that was presented by Gary Lane, back when a number of the leading lights on that side were tiny Tories toiling away in the ministerial offices of the Grant Devine Progressive Conservative government. And in terms of the budget that was presented and the way that that kicked the can down the road into a place where, in '91-92, Mr. Speaker, the then Roy Romanow NDP government had to spend more on servicing the debt racked up by those individuals than they spent on education in its entirety.

When they were running around with the old credit card, Mr. Speaker, there was a debt that came due, and the problem is, it wasn't those individuals that had to pay it. It was the people of the province.

So we'll see how the fine hype job that's done on this budget stacks up over the long haul. What we've seen around the accountability approach, the fact that they couldn't get the third quarter numbers out and had to provide them in a big old information dump on the morning of the budget, I think that speaks about where this government's going to be going with this particular set of numbers, Mr. Speaker. But for those reasons and for many more, I'm going to be supporting the amendment, and I won't be supporting the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this morning to join into the discussion that's been going on in this Assembly over the past days since the Finance minister has delivered the budget here to the province and in this Legislative Chamber. And I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to add my thoughts and many of my concerns around this budget, following on the heels of my colleagues in the official opposition who have also expressed their views and their concerns about this budget.

And you know, I have to say to the members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, how I've appreciated their focus, their attention, the remarks that they have made about the priorities that their constituents have, and not just their own constituents but the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker, as we are listening to the people in the province, bringing forward concerns and bringing forward good suggestions as to what should also be taking place, or should be taking place instead of the actions that we've seen. So I've enjoyed listening to their remarks, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to say I've also been quite surprised with the approach and the tone and the tenor that we've seen from

government members through the course of this debate, through the course of this discussion. But you know, I think, Mr. Speaker, the tone which we have seen which is . . . I've seen a lot of anger, a lot of frustration. I've seen a lot of focus, Mr. Speaker, on politics as opposed to the priorities that the Saskatchewan people have. But I think in some ways that it is perhaps a default position that they have when they know that the product that they're talking about, the decision that they're talking about, the budget that they're talking about, doesn't in fact align and meet up with what the priorities are for Saskatchewan people and truly what the needs are for Saskatchewan people. So I've certainly had some concerns as I've listened to the remarks that the members on the government side have said.

But I will assure you, Mr. Speaker, that on the opposition side we will stay focused on the priorities of the people of the province of Saskatchewan and be sure to call this government to account when the decisions that they're making are missing the mark and the decisions that they're making are not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And I'll be getting into those comments further on into my remarks.

Before I get into details around the budget discussion, I do want to offer a few words to different folks. Any of us in politics here, Mr. Speaker, we require a lot of support from a lot of people in order to do what we do. And I want to say thank you first of all to my caucus, to my colleagues for the co-operation, for the dedication, and for the diligent job that they do. I want to say thank you also to all the people that help us as MLAs, Mr. Speaker. And I think of our constituency assistants in our offices, the staff here in our caucus office, and those in party office as well.

And I want to say thank you too, Mr. Speaker, to all of the staff of the Legislative Assembly. You know, sometimes we maybe take it a bit for granted that the cafeteria is operating and the building is clean and looking as great as it does, that all the support and all the background stuff just gets done. That's only because and through the hard work of many dedicated staff who have devoted their careers to the Legislative Assembly, but more importantly devoted their careers to ensuring that democracy can take place and is alive and well in the province.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to say thank you to my constituents. And I know every MLA, I would hope, you know, appreciates their constituents and the feedback and the content and the advice that is given. And I want to say a special thank you to the people of Saskatoon Massey Place constituency for their support. And whether it's interactions at the new rink the volunteers just built in Massey Place neighbourhood or whether it's down in Hampton Village and Dundonald neighbourhoods or whether it's on the other end of the constituency in Mayfair and Caswell, thank you so much for your support and for giving me the honour of working as your MLA. I truly do appreciate it.

And all of us, Mr. Speaker, are — at least I would hope all of us, and I certainly am — grateful for the role of our families and our loved ones. And I want to say a special thank you to Ruth who, when I'm gone, does a fantastic job parenting our three girls, Ingrid, Clara, and Gudrun. I miss you very much and look forward to seeing you soon.

And I do want to say also a thank you to my Grandma Ferne, Mr. Speaker, in Outlook, Saskatchewan. And I know when the legislative sitting is on, Grandma always has the TV on. And so she doesn't just watch members on this side. She watches everyone, Mr. Speaker, because the legislature channel is on loop. And I know she has good discussions down at mealtime as she's enjoying her life there in the good community of Outlook, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of this budget, I think of the many people who have come here to the legislature over the past weeks. And on day after day, Mr. Speaker, we've heard stories from Saskatchewan people who have built up the courage, who have the conviction and the determination to share their stories, to voice their concerns, to talk about their ideas, and to share that with us as legislators here in this Assembly, and to share that with the broader public, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say thank you for all of those people who have come to the legislature.

You know in a democracy, it's so very important to have those freedoms: you know, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression, the assurance that we can be safe as we're doing that and can be protected, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank those people for their willingness to do that. We should never take that for granted and we should never minimize the ability to do that and the importance of that.

You know, from the very first day of the sitting, I think of the 70-some folks who came from the community of Craik, who came with a rally in front of the legislature to share their concerns, to share their concerns of what they see as an erosion of health care in their community. And it wasn't just folks from Craik. There were people from Central Butte and from Coronach as well. And what I found interesting, Mr. Speaker, was that this really was a real snapshot of the community and it was a large percentage of the community. And it was people from all different walks of life and it was people from all different political stripes as well.

I know in speaking with them, a great, great number of them talked to me about how they had supported the government in the past election. Some talked about being Liberals once upon a time, some talked about how they were still Progressive Conservatives or had been at one time, and some of them talked about being New Democrats as well, Mr. Speaker. But it was a snapshot of the community who came to the legislature because they had a concern. And they have a real frustration with this government on the decisions being made and what the implications will be for their community when it comes to health care that they've had for 100 years in the community. And I commend them for coming forward, and I want them to know that we will continue to fight so that they are heard and so that the right decisions are made for that community.

I think of the parents who came here from the community of Esterhazy, who travelled here with concerns about the quality of their school building, talking about air quality, Mr. Speaker, that is far from acceptable as it's being monitored and as the levels show, concerned about the ability for the kids to be safe and the ability of their kids to have the best learning environment possible so that they can be healthy, so that they can do well in school, so that they can advance.

I think of Tony Kot's mom, who came to the legislature. Tony's 34 years old. His neurosurgeon said that he required emergency surgery, Mr. Speaker, and it was difficult to hear his mother talk about his plight and how, because of a lack of space, because of a lack of beds for him, how that emergency surgery was being delayed and the pain and the agony that he was experiencing as a dad and as someone who wants to get better, Mr. Speaker.

I think of Dave Carr and Sara Bucsis-Gunn, who brought forward their awful stories of massive ambulance bills. Listening to Dave talk about his wife, who has passed away, talk about the huge interest charges that were being applied to these bills, how with minimum payments and the schedule that had been worked out, he was just falling further and further behind.

The huge disconnect. I remember the remarks from Sara talking about when their little daughter was in the car turning blue, how they were having to think about whether or not they could afford this medical, this ambulance bill, whether they should call an ambulance or whether they should hop in the vehicle and drive as fast as possible. And how when she passed away, Mr. Speaker, their daughter Leandra, how there were still huge bills that had to be paid for that basic medical service.

I think of Gail and Jim Sack, who spoke about the hyperbaric chamber because of the benefit that it had when they had carbon monoxide poisoning and how that helped save their lives and helped them recover. And we talked about that more again today in the Assembly.

I think of the 88-year-old gentleman, Sorn Kear, who had that nightmare experience at RUH [Royal University Hospital] in the emergency room, how he was put in a temporary area behind a curtain, taken away. And when he was brought back that space was occupied and he was left in front of the admissions desk in his gown, in pain, nauseous, very embarrassed, Mr. Speaker, for hours.

I think of the families of Kay Shumaker, Elizabeth Martens, and Ray Cherpin, who travelled to the Legislature from the city of Swift Current to express big concerns about the quality of seniors' care that their families were experiencing, talking about how they have compliments for the staff for the hard work and the good work that they're doing, but simply the reality of short-staffing and what that means for their loved ones, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the story that we heard from Earl Luhr's family, who without a diagnosis, Mr. Speaker, as the family says, was put into a converted storage closet, Mr. Speaker, and to have the government call into question this story of what the family is saying, of what the family is saying. And the Premier is heckling now, calling into question the story that a family would come forward, Mr. Speaker.

And so often we have seen this dismissive approach by this government, and it is so sad. And I know when family members come forward, Mr. Speaker, to have a dismissive approach by this government, to have an approach . . . and then the Health minister raises questions about the validity of this story. When a family comes forward, Mr. Speaker, and tells their story, we shouldn't have an approach where a government dismisses

them. We shouldn't have an approach where the government's willing to throw them under the bus, Mr. Speaker, with their story. It takes courage for a family to come forward and share a very painful story, especially when someone dies. And to do that, Mr. Speaker, sadly it's become normal that we've seen from this government's approach to families.

We think of Lois Rein's family, how they spoke out about seniors' care getting worse. And today, Mr. Speaker, is Lois's funeral. We think about the pain that their family has experienced, through the awful fall that she had, the broken femur that she endured, how she was on the floor, Mr. Speaker, for hours. It's hard to exactly say how long she was on the floor, but we know it was a considerable amount of time, and to not having an ambulance called until 2:30 in the afternoon.

[11:45]

And then I think of Donna's story today that we talked about in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, that Donna shared with us: how Donna valiantly and bravely fought cancer and beat it, but how the treatment took a toll on her body. And there's concerns with her oral health, with her mouth, and how her dentist said that she could count on the hyperbaric chamber, Mr. Speaker, when she needed it, and how alarmed and concerned she was that this government would take that service away, that this government would provide no plan for that service.

And we saw the evidence of no plan whatsoever today in the remarks by this government with the Premier saying, well it could be in the hospital. That's contrary to everything that the Health minister has said, what health region officials have said, what Ministry of Health officials have said. And to me it just demonstrates how on this issue, they're making it up as they go along, Mr. Speaker, on the back of a napkin.

Well I say families and patients in Saskatchewan like Donna deserve a lot more than that, Mr. Speaker. Government members may not like that, but that is the reality. To take away a service that has been raised, that has been provided through donations of the good people of this province; during years of record prosperity, to build a hospital that is smaller than the previous and punt that important service out of it is not only short-sighted, Mr. Speaker, but it is rightfully offensive to those who raised the funds to provide that service and the health professionals who have been delivering it for so long.

And that's that same sentiment that I've heard from Saskatchewan people time and time again throughout this province, that after years and years of record revenues we haven't seen the improvements to health care, to seniors' care, and to education that should have been there. We haven't seen those improvements to those areas, Mr. Speaker, the areas that families have every right to count on and have every right to expect, especially during the years of record revenues that this government has had — billions and billions of dollars more every year. And we haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker. We haven't seen that approach because of the misplaced priorities that we've seen from this government.

You know, with that kind of money that they've been raking in, we should have some of the very best schools in the country. Instead, we see classes that are under-resourced, that are

overcrowded. We see children not getting, students not getting the necessary one-on-one attention that they need; not enough educational assistants, Mr. Speaker, to support teachers; not enough professionals to provide services. And instead what we see from this government is a costly and a reckless approach that they are pushing on the people of the province for a privatized rent-a-school scheme, Mr. Speaker, that will cost more in the long run and will not be in the best interests of Saskatchewan students.

With the kind of money that this government has raked in, we should have some of the best health care and the best seniors' care in the country. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we hear stories like Sorn's.

And the member from Moose Jaw, the member from Moose Jaw North is heckling, Mr. Speaker. You would think the member from Moose Jaw, instead of directing his energy into heckling, Mr. Speaker, he would direct his energy to talking to the Minister of Health or the Premier, Mr. Speaker, to say Moose Jaw should have a hyperbaric chamber. You think he would go to bat for the people in his community.

But this is the thing, Mr. Speaker, that we see from this government. They get angry. They're more intent on petty politics. They're more intent, Mr. Speaker, in creating an atmosphere, a tone in this House that doesn't support democracy. It doesn't encourage people to be involved because that's their game plan, Mr. Speaker. And when faced with a budget that isn't good for Saskatchewan people, that isn't focused on the right priorities, Mr. Speaker, instead we see heckling, and we see dismissing the good Saskatchewan people who come forward to this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard again today from nurses who share their concerns about how the quality of care and how patient care is not improving, Mr. Speaker. Most nurses say there's been no improvements whatsoever, and many nurses say that the quality of care and patient safety is actually getting worse.

We think also, Mr. Speaker, of the seniors' care crisis and how this government's approach and, again, their dismissive attitude towards it has caused many problems for Saskatchewan seniors — people who deserve respect, who deserve dignity. You know, we see suffering because of short-staffing. And we also see, Mr. Speaker, the effects of this government having removed the minimum care standards that were in place. You know, what they should have done, Mr. Speaker, was to strengthen those standards as opposed to deleting them. That would have gone a distance in helping seniors in our province.

As the member just before me spoke about, Mr. Speaker, we see challenges for many students in the post-secondary sector. We see everything going up for them, from utilities . . . We see tuition going up. We see costs going up, Mr. Speaker.

And now we have, again, the second Health minister heckling from his seat, Mr. Speaker, the individual who represents rural Saskatchewan but is satisfied, Mr. Speaker, is content, Mr. Speaker, in having people in rural Saskatchewan pay more for ambulance fees. Happy to shovel millions out the door for John Black, but unwilling to reduce ambulance fees for people in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we see this government who has inherited a fortune, has had an economic boom, and raked in billions and billions more every single year, and it sure spent a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. In fact we know it spent every last penny. It's drained the rainy day fund, and it's added billions of dollars of debt, 1.5 billion of new debt this year alone.

Now the Premier argues and he's made this argument recently, Mr. Speaker, and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Someone just said, it's not debt. I think it was the Minister for Post-Secondary Education, I believe. I don't know which minister said it, but they said it's not debt. Mr. Speaker, when you're borrowing money to balance your books, you're putting that burden on the people of Saskatchewan, not now but for future generations. And that's what we see the legacy of this Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier argues, well you know, that there's this one credit card that we made some payments on, but on this other credit card, Mr. Speaker, and he says, well this is the credit card that was maxed out in the '80s, Mr. Speaker. But this Sask Party government has been racking up debt on the other credit cards.

You know, no family in Saskatchewan takes the approach where they've said, you know, we've made a few payments on our MasterCard, but they've racked up a ton of debt on their Visa. They've taken on a bigger mortgage. They've taken on a new truck payment. And then overall they pretend, Mr. Speaker, that they've reduced debt. That doesn't pass the smell test with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and it ought not to pass the smell test with this government's approach to our finances in the province. The truth is debt is going up. Make no mistake about it.

You know, but despite spending every penny that's come in, Mr. Speaker, as fast as it's rolled in, despite that, Saskatchewan people have not been feeling the benefits. Because so much of that money, Mr. Speaker, has been spent on things that don't really matter for Saskatchewan people.

You know with that kind of money, Saskatchewan can afford to fix seniors' care. They can afford to make proper improvements in our schools. And they can afford to make proper improvements in health care. They can afford, Mr. Speaker, to make life better for vulnerable people in this province.

I think of Jerry Peequaquat in Saskatoon who froze to death in Saskatoon on a cold winter night in Saskatchewan. He could have benefited, Mr. Speaker, from proper wraparound supports. Again, Mr. Speaker, a reminder to all of us of how the vulnerable need support and how everyday families need support, Mr. Speaker. But the government isn't doing this. What they're asking, what they're proposing in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is that families pay more and they get less. And it's this government, Mr. Speaker, as I said, that is putting a ton of debt into the backpacks of our children and their grandchildren. And that is shameful.

We see massive debt increases, and that will be the legacy, Mr. Speaker, of this Finance minister. And we see neglect of what really matters; that will be the Sask Party's legacy. Saskatchewan people, the hard-working, the committed, the caring people of this province, Mr. Speaker, deserve a

government that invests in their priorities, a government that works to ensure that our province's prosperity is there to deliver opportunities for young people, affordability for families, and security and dignity for our seniors and our elders.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, what we get from this government day after day is one that believes its own spin, one that dismisses major concerns as they come forward. We see it lived out in the examples of families who come forward and we see it lived out in their approach to the concerns that are raised forward on the floor of this Assembly. And we see this most glaringly, Mr. Speaker, in health care, in seniors' care, in education.

And we know many other areas have been left out as well. We think of agricultural producers, Mr. Speaker, about the huge concerns around grain transportation, the huge concerns . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Again, again they're mocking, Mr. Speaker. No, what we're focused on are the priorities of Saskatchewan people. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, they point, Mr. Speaker, they heckle, Mr. Speaker. Instead of that, how about some solutions for the grain transportation crisis for producers here in the province? And the Premier laughs. The Premier, the member from Estevan, the member from Martensville, they laugh, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as producers come here to the Assembly, as producers come here to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to talk about how there isn't a solution, who express concern about what the federal government isn't doing and lament the fact that this government has not done what it should be doing and working with the feds to have real solutions and real consequences for grain transportation companies, Mr. Speaker, that are not meeting the needs of producers here in the province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, also of the many business owners in the province. I think of many whom I've met, Mr. Speaker, and I've heard their concerns about how this government has a failed policy when it comes to procurement, and this is a fact, Mr. Speaker. Again this government makes light of it. This government pretends that it's a small matter. Well it's not a small matter, Mr. Speaker, for those businesses in Saskatchewan, for those businesses in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that have had to give out pink slips to workers, those businesses in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who have expressed to me — and I know expressed to many members on the government side as well — their huge frustration to have big projects, Mr. Speaker, given to out-of-province corporations, Mr. Speaker, out-of-country corporations, Mr. Speaker, and have been hurting the Saskatchewan businesses that are committed here, the Saskatchewan businesses that employ workers and, Mr. Speaker, who pay mortgages, who pay taxes at the municipal level, Mr. Speaker. That's the concern. And this government's approach of simply looking at lowest initial price really is not getting the best value for Saskatchewan taxpayers — not looking at the quality of the product, not looking at the track record, the delivery schedule, the warranty, Mr. Speaker, looking at all those factors, let alone looking at a consideration for a local net benefit. And so I think it's concerning to many in the province to see this government minimize this concern for the Saskatchewan economy.

I think of residents, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan who are shut out once again, who are missing a huge opportunity with the bad roads that they must endure, a failure

to invest in education, and a cost of living, Mr. Speaker, that makes it harder and harder for the day to life reality that they face. I think of the report, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial chamber put out with respect to the opportunities that this government is ignoring when it comes to northern Saskatchewan.

You know, I think about the fact that they imposed a so-called essential travel policy, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time they were happy to send people down to LA [Los Angeles], down to the States for different things, but they couldn't attend, Mr. Speaker, they couldn't attend an important meeting of private-public health sector in the Far North, Mr. Speaker, to hear what the concerns are and be part of it. They said that wasn't essential. A real example again, Mr. Speaker, of the misplaced priorities and the lack of concern for such an important part of our province.

I think of the university students, Mr. Speaker — high tuition, program cuts. But this government doesn't seem to care. In fact, and we know, Mr. Speaker, this government broke its promise with the changes that it's implemented now or is in the process of implementing with the graduate retention program, while at the same time satisfied to have students paying among the highest tuitions in the country . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Not true; they dispute Statistics Canada, Mr. Speaker, and that's a standard game plan and approach that we see with this government. But I think, Mr. Speaker, of the example that was raised by the member from Elphinstone-Centre, talking about the amount that a single mother, a recent graduate, Mr. Speaker, would have to make to benefit from this program. Over \$54,000 I believe was the amount, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think of those families, I think of those individuals working to put their families ahead. And that's who this government should be thinking about when it's making these decisions. I think of low-income working families — they should be able to count on a bit of help from this government — who have had the Saskatchewan employment supplement cut back. And I think of the many families, Mr. Speaker, I think of the many families . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And now we have the lone voice, Mr. Speaker, here from Prince Albert also chirping in, Mr. Speaker.

Think of the people, Mr. Speaker, you know, instead of thumping her desk, Mr. Speaker. Instead of thumping her desk, Mr. Speaker, you'd think she would voice some concern when this government plows ahead with a housing project, Mr. Speaker, that totally cuts out Prince Albert businesses and the community. That would be showing some leadership, Mr. Speaker. You'd think that member would speak up in the face of this government's decision to eliminate good jobs in that community. And you know, Mr. Speaker, when they don't like what's being said, they yell; they bellow; they holler. That's what they do, Mr. Speaker. But that will not prevent us from standing up for people throughout the province, whether it's Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, or Moose Jaw.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, I think of those who need mental health services and how they're being horribly let down by this government in this budget. And I think, Mr. Speaker, of this government's

approach to the environment. Once again, Mr. Speaker, it seemed like the environment had a major target on it with respect to their cuts. Over the last several years, this government has cut funding for green programs by more than 85 per cent. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve better than that. Saskatchewan people deserve a government that is focused on their priorities, not their misplaced priorities.

Here are a few things, Mr. Speaker, that this government, that this Finance minister should have cut in the budget. They should have cut their obsession with this lean pet project that they've been going on and forcing on the province now for years including, Mr. Speaker . . . They say it's over in a week. Well, Mr. Speaker, John Black may not show up in the flesh but the bills will be rolling in here for a long time going forward. That is clear. I'm curious if the Finance minister will be going to the John Black tea party later on this week. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but we know they have such great affection for this individual. Mr. Speaker, they should have gotten rid of the lean specialists that they have employed and created throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, we know that these kaizen operation teams are far more consumed with the communications efforts of this government as opposed to doing what's best for Saskatchewan patients.

Mr. Speaker, we see this government with bloated health care administration. You know, I think of the many conversations I've had with front-line workers who've said, you know, when people have been added, it's someone who sits behind the glass, someone at a computer; it's someone following me with a stopwatch. It's not someone, Mr. Speaker, that can help me do my job and provide proper patient care to Saskatchewan residents, and that is a shame.

You know, this government should have cut its spending on private consultants. They've increased the use of private consultants by 228 per cent. We see the tab now, Mr. Speaker, at \$120 million and even though, Mr. Speaker, the independent Provincial Auditor points out that in 70 per cent of the instances there is no paper trail. There is no written explanation as to why these consultants are hired or what they're doing. That is somewhere where they should have cut and they should certainly be providing more transparency.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's \$3 million contract with an American lobbyist, that would have been a place to cut, Mr. Speaker. The parties, the Oscar Hollywood events, Mr. Speaker. How they'll shortchange artists here in the province but then go down to Oscar events in LA makes no sense, especially at a time when they'll ignore an important meeting going on somewhere here in the province that could actually bring benefits to Saskatchewan people.

I think of the \$5 million research gift given to the American manufacturer of the failed and dangerous smart meters program that they've had. That should have been cut, Mr. Speaker. I think of the \$18 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money that's currently held by the American manufacturer as part of a future purchase agreement, Mr. Speaker. They weren't only content to give them a beautiful Christmas present for the so-called development of a meter that wasn't a dud. They're also content, Mr. Speaker, to have a huge amount of resources tied up in this American firm. I think of their ridiculously

expensive P3 rent-a-school approach which will cost more, will take longer, Mr. Speaker, and not bring the result and not bring the type of schools that we need here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we as a province could and should be doing so much better. You know, after a decade of resource wealth, we should have some of the best schools in the country. We should be covering ambulance costs, Mr. Speaker, rather than having the highest ambulance fees in the country. We should have excellent, well-staffed seniors' care, seniors' homes, Mr. Speaker, that bring dignity, safety, and respect, Mr. Speaker. We should have a futures fund instead of spending every penny as fast as it came in, Mr. Speaker. We should have seen some proper leadership. Instead we see a report commissioned; we see the inches of dust that it has collected. And we see, Mr. Speaker, that we should have policies in place that support Saskatchewan businesses, policies in place that support the Saskatchewan economy, that support jobs and allow entrepreneurs to do well, Mr. Speaker.

Instead we see a government, we see a government with a track record and an approach, with a path and a trajectory of high spending but with low returns for Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. That's what we have seen with this government. And this budget, this budget, Mr. Speaker, is all about misplaced priorities instead of focusing on what really matters for Saskatchewan people. You know, it can't just be about, Mr. Speaker, the province doing well. It must absolutely be about people doing well, and that is our focus on this side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this budget. Instead I will support the amendment that has been brought forward by the deputy leader, the member for Regina Rosemont, and seconded by the member of Nutana:

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

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that increases spending to a record level but is full of waste and fails to deliver opportunities for young people, fairness and affordability for families, and dignity and security for seniors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the chance to participate in the budget debate. I appreciate the opportunity to follow the Leader of the Opposition because it's very important that whoever follows the Leader of the Opposition correct the record. It's very important that whoever follows the Leader of the Opposition do a bit of a fact check and do a bit of cleanup, Mr. Speaker, and I hope to be able to do that. That is actually the definition and the purpose of debate so, throughout the speech, I'll do that.

But I think it's also important to highlight when there might be areas of inconsistency in any of our arguments, including members opposite. You know, throughout his speech I heard the Leader of the Opposition pick on members who might have been talking from their chairs, and decry it and deride it as bad

behaviour, Mr. Speaker. Just earlier today in question period, who was heckling from their chairs after questions their side asked? The Leader of the Opposition. Of course he participates in this thing and, you know, I think it passes just a little bit strange for Saskatchewan people to hear the Leader of the Opposition chastise, hector others in this House, probably those on his own side too in caucus, to adhere to some sort of standard that he himself does not meet, Mr. Speaker.

This standard should also apply to facts presented in the House, facts presented in the Legislative Assembly where, by parliamentary rule, we are not allowed perhaps to characterize certain statements as we would otherwise. In this place therefore, it's very, very important that we rely on the information that's been brought forward by members. And I'm going to get into the perfunctories of the speech earlier on but, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of them in particular I'd like to raise here with respect to members and the particular debate we've just had, including his canvassing of an important issue, health care issue, that was brought forward with respect to somebody that was in what he characterized as a closet in the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the member will know, because we've corrected him, the Minister of Health corrected him on the record that this room that he has characterized still today as a closet, still said it today, Mr. Speaker, was a storage room, became a storage room under their watch when they were in government, in that hospital. What it was previous to that was a hospital room, Mr. Speaker. We are now in the process of cleaning up a lot of health care messes left behind by the member for Lakeview, left behind by the Leader of the Opposition's party. One of them is to take hospital rooms and beds they've closed and reopen them, reopen them, including this particular room that he characterized as a closet. And we're not critical of this family that went through a tragedy at all. It's up to him, before he presents the facts in this House, to dig down and ask the questions.

I'm in a moment going to go through a long list of budget-related comments made by that member, made by his colleagues, that are just wrong. They took information in the budget; they put out a press release that was just fundamentally wrong.

I would provide some counsel to the members opposite. I know they want to increase their number in the next election. One day they'd like to form the government. At the core of that aspiration will need to be on their part, at the core of that aspiration will need to be on their part to earn the trust of Saskatchewan people. And in order to earn their trust, you can't play fast and loose with the facts. You can't put out press releases before they're researched. You can't make claims about the operations of government that are wrong and then, when you're proven wrong — as this has happened to my friend, the Leader of the Opposition — to continue to tell the same story.

Because whether it's a budget debate or whether it's about presenting to the people of the province the choice they will have in a year from now or maybe sooner . . . Maybe if the opposition, who really don't like this budget, in the days ahead demand to have an election on the budget because of the change

in direction, maybe we would have an election much sooner. On that occasion, in the months leading up to that, whenever it happens, and on the occasion of the next election, we're going to see what happens to the NDP's presentation of their case and the facts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, debate is useful. And the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite have raised important cases in this House in health care, raised important issues to which there has been a response from government, not completely perhaps to the liking of members opposite but a response. And that's when this place is working well, and we credit both sides for participating in the debate.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we'll also be waiting to see in the months ahead is veracity in the statements they make and also a notion of what they might do differently, rather than running through a list of expenditure changes they would make that don't come anywhere near to the billions in promises that they've made dating back to the '11 election and now promises that this Leader of the Opposition has made.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few comments about not just the budget itself, and I'm going to be brief because we should hear from the Minister of Finance today especially on this occasion. But I want to say, before I get into those remarks, a thank you to my family at home, to Tami and to Faith who are both at home, and we have two children as you know, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan, Megan and Colter, and they remain just my greatest source of support, have enabled me to pursue public life for all of these years, and I will ever be grateful to them. So I want to say that.

We have a great local team in Swift Current that have been very gracious with me, knowing that my schedule demands that I'm not always in the constituency as much as I would like. Nola Smith in the constituency office does an excellent job working on behalf of the people of Swift Current and others because of course in our office we hear from others from across the province.

I need to acknowledge Everett Hindley who for years now . . . He would say way too many years. Frankly I might agree. No, we get along. We mostly just pretend to argue. He has been working with me since 1999 really, since I was first elected. He's become indispensable in my efforts to carry out these duties, and he's just become a very, very, good friend. And so I want to thank him, Mr. Speaker, as well.

I want to thank all my colleagues for continuing to provide me the support and advice that I need to carry on, hopefully in some effective way, in this current job.

Mr. Speaker, the budget was delivered by the member for Canora-Pelly. And he has, by the way, he has heard the comments from members I think on both sides of the House. In a generous way I'd say thank you to the members opposite and to my colleagues. He's heard from so many of them, and I've heard you mention in the speech your kudos to our friend and the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier. I particularly enjoyed the story of the member for Last Mountain with respect to his first meeting with Ken Krawetz, and Ken has . . . sorry, with the Hon. Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance, Mr.

Speaker. Soon we'll be able to call him that other thing, but not just yet.

Mr. Speaker, I can inform members of the House that he has asked, through members . . . I think some of the members just on my right have confirmed that he has requested that we stop saying nice things about him. He's nodding his head that he doesn't want us to say . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, throughout all of our years together, I have listened to his advice, and I've listened to his counsel. And I think the government's been better for it; I've been better for it. But on this occasion, I'm going to ignore what he has to say, and I'm not going to listen to his advice because it's very important for me to be able to stand in this Assembly and acknowledge the great amount of work that happens with respect to every single budget.

This is true no matter what side of the House has brought . . . what government was in power. We know the amount of pressure and work that resides with this particular position, the Finance minister's job. He has a team and we have a great treasury board, and caucus helps and a wonderful ministry. The deputy, Clare Isman, has done outstanding work. But there is a unique pressure and focus that falls on whoever the Minister of Finance is, and that has been the case with our friend, the member for Canora-Pelly, the Deputy Leader of our party.

Throughout all of these budgets, every one balanced, every single one of them balanced, all of them seeking to build the province, all of them seeking to aspire to a long-term vision of growth for this province, the province that he loves, throughout all of that, throughout all of those budgets, I don't know if anyone has acquitted themselves, in our ranks I would just say, as well as, as competently, as professionally, with the great level of integrity as the member for Canora-Pelly, Mr. Speaker. I'm intensely proud to have been able to serve alongside him. I'll never hear quite right out of this side perhaps, Mr. Speaker, for the rest of my life, but it's a small price to pay to be able to have worked with this gentleman. And we thank him for his good work with respect to the budget.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, we do want to hear from the Finance minister, and so I just want to talk about a few things. There were some priorities that we had going into the budget, knowing there was a \$700 million ditch to try to fill, decreased oil revenues that really no one anticipated. No one called 100 bucks to 50 bucks — no one, not one analyst. All of us who are energy-producing jurisdictions in North America, in the world really, are faced with uniquely challenging budgets. And while other jurisdictions have greater challenges to meet, including Alberta next door — they'll table their budget today — we had a \$700 million hole in the revenues.

So the challenge that the Minister of Finance put forth to government and the parameters that we set forth for the development of this budget would be that if we could avoid a tax increase, we ought to do it. And if we could also continue to see an infrastructure investment occurring, that we would deal with the infrastructure deficit that faces this province like so many other places in Canada. If we could do that in a very tight budget . . . These seem inconsistent goals perhaps or goals that are incongruous. But, Mr. Speaker, that was the objective: keep

taxes low, control operating spending.

Let's keep building the province, knowing that whatever's happened in oil will change, maybe not as rapidly as the fall happened, but inexorably we know that oil prices will rise again. Some analysts are saying, you know, the new number is going to be 70 or 75 or 80. Those are going to seem like halcyon days compared to what we've been through. Not very long ago, that would have seemed to be disaster, by the way, when we were at 100. But when that happens, you know, we're going to be in a unique position, and the province's growth, which is continuing even now, is going to increase.

GDP [gross domestic product] rates are already forecast to get a little stronger and a little bit stronger for our province in the years ahead. What will that mean in terms of infrastructure? It means that the infrastructure deficit we've been dealing with for seven years as a government will be exacerbated if we were to, say, stop building now in this difficult budget, that we won't do the bypass and we'll punt on the schools and we won't do the health care capital and we won't provide the funding to municipalities. Had we made that choice in this budget, what would happen in a year or 18 months when the economy starts to gain even more strength than it has now? And there's still strength there. More on that in a moment.

What would happen then in terms of the infrastructure deficit? We would find, Mr. Speaker, I think that we would be getting in the way of our own growth then. That infrastructure deficit, if we stopped now, if that's what the Minister of Finance had said a week ago yesterday, that we're going to just stop infrastructure investment, we would find out that we would be getting in the way of our own growth, that we would be the barrier to continued growth in the province. And I think we can all agree that, notwithstanding the challenges that come with growth, it's much preferred to the opposite, which of course is decline, which this province knew too well for a very, very long time, a very long time.

So, Mr. Speaker, those were the objectives. Let's control operating spending. Like just over a 1 per cent increase in operating spending, that's remarkable in this day and age, knowing that there are the demands that we have heard from members opposite, frankly, and from the people of the province and from our own MLAs: control operating spending, no tax increases. Keep building the province of Saskatchewan

With respect to the no tax increase piece, I want to talk a bit about education property tax if I can because this is an area of great progress that we've made in the province. We hear NDP members say, where did the money go? And maybe you've heard us now, Mr. Speaker, present a long list of where the money went. One area of investment that we made as a government is in historic education property tax reductions, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite will know that they had many, many years to deal with the issue, but they kept punting, and they'd go to SARM and say, maybe next year, maybe the year after that. And there was no progress — a few gimmicky rebates but not meaningful education property tax relief.

We were elected on a platform that said, you know, currently in the province 60 per cent is coming from ratepayers on education funding; 40 per cent is coming from the government.

We'd like to reverse that. Our long-term goal would be that 40 per cent would only have to come from property owners, from families, and from small businesses; 60 per cent would be funded by general revenues. That was our objective.

Mr. Speaker, the then minister of Education who is now the same Minister of Finance worked well with the current Minister of Government Relations, the member for Rosetown, and they presented to this House and to this province a brand new plan for education property tax relief, the net result of which was a reversal in the 60/40 split, as I've just explained. Actually we went a bit further.

What the result was, by the way, also for farmers who had so long asked for members opposite to do something about . . . I mean there's not a lot the provincial government always can do in the global world of agriculture. One thing, for sure — there's more than one — but one thing for sure that this provincial government can do, whoever sits over here, is to make sure that education property taxes aren't running wild on farm land. And they were.

As a result of the changes made, we saw an 80 per cent, 78 to 80 per cent reduction in education property taxes paid by agricultural producers in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact what we have seen in the intervening months is that the formula's actually gotten to the point where now about 35 per cent, only 35 per cent is coming from ratepayers, 65 per cent from general revenues.

So we talked throughout the budget process about getting to that 40/60 split again, and that would have meant a net decrease in EPT [education property tax] under our government but an increase in this budget. We did consider in earnest, but we remembered the directive of the Minister of Finance. We remembered the directive of the people of this province who said, let's not immediately move to tax hikes if this is a temporary challenge that we have fiscally. Let's not make these decisions on a temporary basis to solve some longer term issues. And so, Mr. Speaker, we chose not to increase the EPT.

We looked at other issues on the operating side, on revenue sharing. Mr. Speaker, one of the promises we made as a government is to meaningfully improve the relationship and the partnership between the province and our municipalities.

We've had fiscal challenges in this province before, Mr. Speaker. And make no mistake, what the New Democrats faced when they came to office in '91 was a great challenge. It was a time of difficulty, and I think they made some good choices. I think they also made some choices that perhaps we would like to review. They might want to review them too.

With respect to the latter category, I think mistakes were made with respect to municipal revenue sharing. One of the choices that they made in office, in the face of revenue challenges much like we're facing today, was to off-load it to municipalities. The off-load was historic and unprecedented.

We made a commitment that we would negotiate a new revenue-sharing deal that would have the municipalities sharing the revenue at the rough proportion of the province's own source revenue. Mr. Speaker, the province's own source

revenue has increased 27 per cent since 2007; municipal revenue sharing is up over 100 per cent. And so we'd looked at that. We thought we'd actually over-delivered on the general commitment, and we looked at that as an option in the budget. We chose not to do it because we have made commitments.

The one point on the PST [provincial sales tax] was a formula we wanted. It can work well. It's simple. And though it seems to be unfair in terms of maybe perhaps being exceeding the original goal we had for revenue sharing, it's not unfair, but the fact is, it is exceeding the goal. We had that as a candidate for change. We chose not to make that decision.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes a budget is as much about what isn't in it as what is in it. Mr. Speaker, there are no tax increases here. We didn't change our commitment to municipal revenue sharing. We actually made increased investments in seniors' care, an issue that has received a lot of attention in this legislature. We made strategic investments in a number of areas, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday I remember the Leader of the Opposition was standing in his place and demanding more maintenance, health care capital maintenance. And the Minister of Finance, as he's wont to do, just off the top of his head quickly slid the exact, specific numbers over to me, demonstrating that we've increased maintenance funding by 20 per cent in a very difficult budget. It's a millions of dollars increase. We've laid out a four-year plan to achieve more.

Mr. Speaker, there is a long list that my colleagues have canvassed very well in this Assembly of infrastructure investments being made, but I want this House to hear again that since we've formed government we've increased investment by \$8 billion.

And the members ask where the money went. It went to, well it went to this massive increase in infrastructure spending that we have made to help continue to build and grow our province. Mr. Speaker, in this particular budget \$1.25 billion . . . Sorry, over the years 1.25 billion in infrastructure for our health care system; over a billion by the way on the government side, the line department side, on infrastructure in this budget; 2 billion from the Crowns, making this the historic infrastructure budget for the province of Saskatchewan. Within that 1.25 billion in infrastructure and health care alone, let's not forget the good work of the member for North Battleford and the new Sask Hospital. We'll be hearing more about that.

Let's not forget . . . And I heard the Leader of the Opposition sort of picking members out opposite. And I think he picked out the member for Moose Jaw North, when we were talking about some Moose Jaw issues here, and asked him, you know, what was he doing on certain Moose Jaw issues. Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what he was doing, and I'll tell you what the other member from Moose Jaw have been doing. They have, since they were elected and before they were elected, been fighting for an important health care project in that city, one of our large urban centres, a brand new hospital that has been needed for a very long time. They were working towards a project that was ignored by members opposite, notwithstanding Moose Jaw members in the cabinet, notwithstanding an MLA from Moose Jaw as the premier of the province who knew the state of that

Moose Jaw Hospital and kept punting it and kept delaying it and kept delaying it, Mr. Speaker.

There's many other investments been made in Moose Jaw that these members have fought for, but if there was only that one, it would answer that Leader of the Opposition's question, what have the members from Moose Jaw been doing? They've been working to get the hospital built in Moose Jaw that should have been built long ago by the NDP.

We're going to continue to build long-term care facilities. We have projects in rural Saskatchewan, in Kelvington-Wadena's constituency, and in my constituency, I will point out, Mr. Speaker, as well that's the case.

In fact with the LTC [long-term care], we've talked about the importance of clarifying the record with respect to the NDP. I want to be able to share, with respect to the long-term care project, exactly where the suppliers are coming from for the project because you'll remember we had a debate about buying local. The member for, the deputy leader has made it is his passion, and the leader's too, to exhort everybody to buy local. He wants a buy local day, people in the community, and they should. And all of that, you know, makes a lot of sense.

But to make his case, he doesn't always provide all of the facts, Mr. Speaker. The long-term care project in Swift Current: design, Stantec Architecture, Regina. Surveying comes from Swift Current; site stripping, Wiebe Contracting, Swift Current; building backfill, Swift Current; site services, Knudsen Excavating, Swift Current; concrete foundations, PCL, Regina; mechanical — and I think I heard him say the mechanical was outsourced — mechanical, Modern Niagara, Saskatoon; electrical, Humboldt Electric, Saskatoon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are suppliers that are working on the project from out of province, as there has ever been in Saskatchewan and in every other jurisdiction in the country. You're going to want procurement that is respectful of free trade agreements but also puts a priority on local businesses, and in that environment, you will always have suppliers from other jurisdictions who will win certain bids. But in his comments, he characterizes LTC as being out — the project in Swift Current — as being completely outsourced, and the facts don't back him up, Mr. Speaker. The LTC project is in the budget and moving ahead, and I think we'll talk a little bit more about buy local later on.

Mr. Speaker, there's significant investment in highways and transportation; I think the largest, once again the largest, a record investment in highways and transportation infrastructure in the budget, Mr. Speaker. And we know it's a record because it's a record that breaks the previous record that was set by this government, which broke a previous record that was set by this government, and you can go all back for seven years.

Every year in office we've said we are going to invest in highways and infrastructure, transportation infrastructure. We've kept the promise. We keep breaking our record. And we all, by the way, travel the highways, Mr. Speaker, and I know you do as well. We know that the work's not over. We had a \$1 billion pothole left behind by members opposite. That's not our numbers. It was the CAA [Canadian Automobile Association].

The CAA basically said — and I'm paraphrasing a little bit — they said, good luck, whoever the government of Saskatchewan is, because after years of neglect you've got a \$1 billion infrastructure deficit in highways alone, Mr. Speaker. This budget seeks to close the gap, and we're going to continue to make progress in that.

Mr. Speaker, from an operational standpoint, I want to talk about health care for a moment. The Cancer Agency funding under this government has increased almost 100 per cent since 2008, and there's more support for the Cancer Agency in this particular budget. There's another \$10 million to enhance seniors' care, bringing the total to 14.5 million in 2015-16, with a focus on the HomeFirst program, something that has been well received and is highly regarded. Dementia behaviour units in Saskatoon and Regina will receive some resources, increased choice and flexibility in care options, Mr. Speaker: 2.8 million in capital renovations at RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] to develop specialized units for individuals with dementia; 700,000 to develop a new geriatric program. That's the first ever I think in the province of Saskatchewan, in southern Saskatchewan, and that's a project that is also funded in a very, very tight budget.

May I just say this, Mr. Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition brings forward mostly health care cases, and I think he's quite effective. I think he's an effective Health critic for the opposition, and government needs to be accountable for the individual cases that come before the House as well as the overall care that's being provided. Mr. Speaker, day after day as the cases are brought forward . . . I also want to make a comment about the response from the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I hope this is the response of governments throughout the country, frankly, and I hope it's the response of all of us in this government, and that it might be one day, if there ever is another government here run by members opposite, that they too would conduct themselves as earnestly, with the compassion, but as earnestly and as competently and as effectively as the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy has through now many sessions of the legislature.

Moreover I want to say that in this very tight budget, the Minister of Health has been able to fight for significant increases in health care spending at a time of austerity.

[12:30]

The Speaker: — I must inform the Assembly that under rule 31(8), it is my duty at this time to interrupt the debate to allow the Minister of Finance to exercise his right to close the debate on the motion and the amendment. That's the rules.

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. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a tradition in this Assembly that the Minister of Finance is the last person to speak before the vote on the amendment and the budget takes place.

I want to first of all begin by saying thank you. Thank you to all

of the people that I recognized a week ago as I stood in this legislature and delivered my fifth and final budget. I mentioned a few names, but I do want to also mention some names that are up . . . of people who are sitting in the gallery opposite, Mr. Speaker.

I want to personally thank Dawn Popescul, Jane Johnston, and Natalie Pepper. These are staff members that are in my office. They make sure that I am organized and that I know exactly where I'm going and on what day I'm doing it. So I want to extend my appreciation to them, and I'd ask members to join me in doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure for the last five days of listening to members on this side of the House speak, including members on that side of the House, and I want to thank all of them. I want to thank all of them for their passion, for their interest, and of course their commitment to the province of Saskatchewan.

And I know in speaking to our Whip that not all members had the opportunity to speak. I understand about six, about a half-dozen probably, were not able to be fit within the timeline, and in fact the Premier was not able to finish his remarks today because of the timelines that we must follow.

So I want to say thank you to the member from Wood River and the member from Kelvington-Wadena. Both of those members are also joining the group that I will be doing, and that's going to be referred to as a past MLA. So I want to thank those two members who did not get an opportunity to address the House. But I do want to thank the members for Melville-Saltcoats, Moosomin, Saskatoon Greystone, Estevan, Regina South for your comments, and of course the fact that these members are also indicating that they will not be seeking re-election. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express my appreciation to our newest member here in the Legislative Assembly, the member for Lloydminster who seconded the budget speech. And I read her speech, Mr. Speaker. I was already out doing some post-budget speeches that Thursday afternoon of last week, and she did just a terrific job. So I want to say thank you to the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. Speaker, in this Legislative Assembly, as my colleagues remind me, I've been here a while. I've been here almost 20 years. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, that you know, opposite, I believe there are two members opposite who were here back in 1995, elected in '95.

And on this side of the House, I believe there are six members who were elected at a time when *Hansard* said something, Mr. Speaker. *Hansard*, and I guess *Hansard* is part of the archives of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, back on April the 17th, 1997 . . . Okay, so those of you who were not here know that that's most of you. And you had the opportunity to watch this on the legislative channel because I know you were watching in 1997, even though you weren't elected. Mr. Speaker, I was in a debate with the minister of Education — now of course no longer a member — Pat Atkinson, I can use her name.

Pat Atkinson and I had a debate about funding of education and negotiating contracts. And we got into some discussion about being a have-not province and the fact that the province of Saskatchewan would qualify for equalization payments. And I kept asking her a series of questions until finally she says this, and I quote:

When you put together a budget it's what you think might happen, and maybe some day you'll have the opportunity to do this. And it's . . . well maybe someday you will, but I'm sure that we'll . . . [all be] gone [by then].

Mr. Speaker, that was the quote from the minister of Education. And I look around the Assembly now and, as I said, there's only eight of us here and over on that other side of the House. All of those or most of those members except for the member from Regina Lakeview and the member from Athabasca are the only two left, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about a vision. And it's remarkable, Mr. Speaker, because not too long ago, I believe it was last summer, we recognized the leadership of our first premier in this province, Walter Scott. And reason I mention that today, because we've had debate about whether or not a government should borrow for infrastructure, ensuring that this province moves forward.

And I want to put this on the record, Mr. Speaker, because we did some searching. We searched the archives over and over, and they did produce a lot of interesting information. Mr. Speaker, from the Act of 1907. And I'll put it into context, Mr. Speaker, because you have to understand that. What was the budget of the entire government at the time in 1907? \$2.4 million. The entire budget of the province of Saskatchewan, 2.4 million, sort of like our 14.2 billion today.

What did the government do under the leadership of Walter Scott? Well they passed an Act. And that Act was assented to on April the 3rd, 1907. And it said this through an order in council—and I'll get through the preamble, Mr. Speaker — says that the government of the day should borrow “. . . two million dollars for the purpose of defraying the cost of the public buildings and permanent public improvements . . .”

Mr. Speaker, from the archives we've been able to get this information that said the vision of Walter Scott was that we would build this province. We would build the infrastructure. And of that \$2 million, this building was going to cost \$1.75 million. You know, but the other interesting thing also contained in this message from the archives and it says this: “The said sum of money or any portion thereof may be borrowed for any term or terms not exceeding forty years at a rate not exceeding four per cent . . .”

So, Mr. Speaker, when you think about that and you think about the fact that the government had a budget, had a budget of \$2.4 million and they had a vision, they had a vision to build roads and hospitals and schools and this great building, and they borrowed \$2 million, Mr. Speaker, and they paid for it over 40 years, almost the entire budget of the province was borrowed to ensure that this province would move forward. I think, Mr. Speaker, we learn a lot, we learn a lot from history and the past and, Mr. Speaker, I love digging into the archival . . .

[inaudible] . . . because, as most of my colleagues on this of the House will know, a lot of time they have to go into my files and dig into those archives over and over again to ensure that the information is in fact accurate. Because at all times, at all times you have to have factual information and that's where the archives come in.

The members opposite know that I love numbers. And I love numbers for a reason, because numbers are what is going to keep you on that straight and narrow. They're going to give you the information. They're going to tell you what kind of expenditures occurred in agriculture, in health care, in the past. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report of course that we continue on that path.

But in my closing remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to mention what I consider five important numbers and I want to put these numbers on the public record. I think these numbers, Mr. Speaker, will indicate just how far our province has come.

Mr. Speaker, the first number I want to talk about is 5 billion, \$5 billion in total tax reduction since 2007. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter whether you talk about the personal income tax and the fact that we've made changes to the exemptions, we've made changes to the brackets. We in fact this year . . . The Premier commented on the fact that we had no tax increases. Well, Mr. Speaker, we also had a tax decrease because we follow an indexation and on January 1 all of the exemptions were enhanced by 1.7 per cent, and as a result of that, an additional — and I say additional, Mr. Speaker — \$10.6 million is now in the hands of people for 2015.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a relatively small number, but when you think about the changes that we've made since 2007, all of the changes that now mean that a senior earning \$25,000 of income in a year, taxable income, that senior, Mr. Speaker, for 2015 will pay \$16 of provincial income tax — \$16, Mr. Speaker, from the time when the NDP used to enhance the labour rate . . . minimum wage. They used to enhance the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, and then they'd tax the people, they'd tax them. So, Mr. Speaker, we've made some very significant changes. I want to compare 2007 to today, Mr. Speaker. If we didn't make those changes, we would have \$490 million more this year in the treasury of the province instead of in the pockets of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will probably roll their eyes on this one, but I do have to talk about education property tax and mill rates. Mr. Speaker, I want to give two examples because I think, as the Premier commented, right till the very end at treasury board we were looking at changes. We were looking at the fact that maybe we should change the mill rate across the piece — agriculture, residential, commercial, resource — change the mill rates in the province of Saskatchewan by one mill, and the province . . . The revenue coming from that increase is 110 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to give you an example, and it's an example that everyone is a little bit different because school divisions didn't have the same mill rate. But for a school division like mine that had a 22 mill levy in 2008 — because we made the change in 2009 — if you had \$500,000 worth of taxable agricultural land, 22 mills would give you a tax bill, an

education property tax bill of \$11,000. Now let's take you today, or in fact let's take you to last year because we've maintained the same rate. We've only lowered it each and every year since 2009. Today because the mill rate is 2.67 mills on that same \$500,000 taxable assessment, \$1,335 worth of tax — 11,000 to 1,335. Now you know, Mr. Speaker, why we don't have tax revolts anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I'll give you an example of a residential property. Residential property, let's just assume that the taxable assessment is \$200,000. Twenty-two mills at \$200,000, that's \$4,400. At 5.03, which is today's mill rate, \$1,060, Mr. Speaker, 25 per cent.

My second number, Mr. Speaker, is eight. Eight consecutive balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, by this government, and five by myself as Finance minister. Mr. Speaker, we're going to move forward with summaries. We know there are many things that we have to do, but we're going to continue to build as the Provincial Auditor has recognized and we're going to move forward with the Q1 [first quarter] and Q3 based on summaries.

[12:45]

Mr. Speaker, third number: two, two AAA credit ratings for the first time in our province, Mr. Speaker. And a quotation I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, from September of 2014 when Moody's rated the province with a AAA, and this is a quote directly from the Moody's statement, and it says this: "Saskatchewan's AAA rating reflects the province's fiscal discipline and sustained low debt levels, which underscore prudent financial management practices," Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I think you can see very clearly that because of the fact that we inherited a 6.8 operational debt, we paid down \$3 billion of that, Mr. Speaker, saving cumulatively, over the period of time, \$1.2 billion in interest, and as a result of making those kinds of decisions, we have now two AAA ratings.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth number I'd like to leave for the people of Saskatchewan is 20 billion, \$20 billion worth of infrastructure investment by this government since 2007. That's remarkable, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the fact that Crowns, Crowns continue to need to build. We need to deliver services. We need to replace aging infrastructure, and they're continuing to do that, Mr. Speaker.

One very quick example. On March 15th, I was sitting at home and the power went out. That was Sunday morning. I called SaskPower and they said, there's no power outage anywhere in Saskatchewan. You have a problem specifically to your farm. So out came the serviceman an hour later, and he said, I don't know if we can fix your power today. I go, well what do you mean you can't fix it today? He said, well the pole is so old — I've noticed that the insulator broke off — and the pole is so old I don't know if I can safely climb it, and I'll have to call a bucket truck. So, Mr. Speaker, as he drove away after fixing it an hour later, he said to me, make sure the capital budget for Crowns isn't cut.

Mr. Speaker, within that same infrastructure investment, we also commit dollars to people. We invest in people. And I'm going to leave you, Mr. Speaker, with a comparison, a comparison for health, education, and social services and

assistance, which of course are the themes now within our summary budget. This year's expenditure on those three areas is \$10.4 billion, Mr. Speaker, 10.4.

And the reason I use that number now, to ensure that people understand it you have to go back to 2007, same areas, comparing apples to apples. Can't do the NDP math and do apples to oranges as they like to do. You've got to do apples to apples. The expenditure in 2007 was \$4.3 billion less, or in other words, now we're spending 67 per cent more on those three areas of health, education, and social services, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the fifth and final number is 1,132,640. My colleagues know that number well because they've heard me use it many a time. Mr. Speaker, that's the population, the new population of the province of Saskatchewan revealed last Wednesday. Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has indicated that our province's population has risen over the last seven years by 122,000 people, Mr. Speaker — 122,000 people.

That brings challenges, Mr. Speaker. That's why we need to build more highways. That's why the Minister of Highways needs to build the Warman and Martensville interchanges. That's why we need to do the Regina bypass. That's why we need to hire more nurses and doctors and teachers. That's because we have a growing population, Mr. Speaker, and that is why, since the vision of Walter Scott, now under this Premier, we have the highest ever growth in the population of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by indicating that serving as the Finance minister has been the greatest opportunity, the greatest challenge, the greatest privilege, and the greatest honour of my career. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, that the amendment read:

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

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that increases spending to a record level but is full of waste and fails to deliver opportunities for young people, fairness and affordability for families, and dignity and security for seniors.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — All those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

The Speaker: — The nays have it. Call in the members.

[Yeas — 45]

[The division bells rang from 12:51 until 12:52.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour, please rise.

[Yeas — 9]

Brotten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Wyant	Duncan	Krawetz
Boyd	Eagles	McMorris
Reiter	Harpauer	Toth
Huyghebaert	Doherty	Moe
Docherty	Campeau	Heppner
Cheveldayoff	Harrison	Tell
Ottenbreit	Norris	Hart
Kirsch	Bjornerud	Brkich
Makowsky	Weekes	Cox
Wilson	Marchuk	Ross
Bradshaw	Michelson	Hutchinson
Young	Jurgens	Steinley
Merriman	Lawrence	Tochor
Elhard	Parent	Doke

The Speaker: — All those opposed, please rise.

[Nays — 45]

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Wyant	Duncan	Krawetz
Boyd	Eagles	McMorris
Reiter	Harpauer	Toth
Huyghebaert	Doherty	Moe
Docherty	Campeau	Heppner
Cheveldayoff	Harrison	Tell
Ottenbreit	Norris	Hart
Kirsch	Bjornerud	Brkich
Makowsky	Weekes	Cox
Wilson	Marchuk	Ross
Bradshaw	Michelson	Hutchinson
Young	Jurgens	Steinley
Merriman	Lawrence	Tochor
Elhard	Parent	Doke

The Speaker: — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 9]

Brotten	Forbes	Wotherspoon
Vermette	Belanger	Chartier
McCall	Nilson	Sproule

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the budget motion, 45; those opposed, 9.

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

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 9; those opposed, 45.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion lost.

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

On the main budget motion as moved by the member for Canora-Pelly, the Minister of Finance, and the member for Lloydminster:

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:58.]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — All those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

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

[The division bells rang from 12:55 until 12:56.]

The 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 of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Jennifer Campeau

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Mark Docherty

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

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Social Services
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Hon. Jeremy Harrison

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Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
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Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
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Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Lyle Stewart

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds