



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

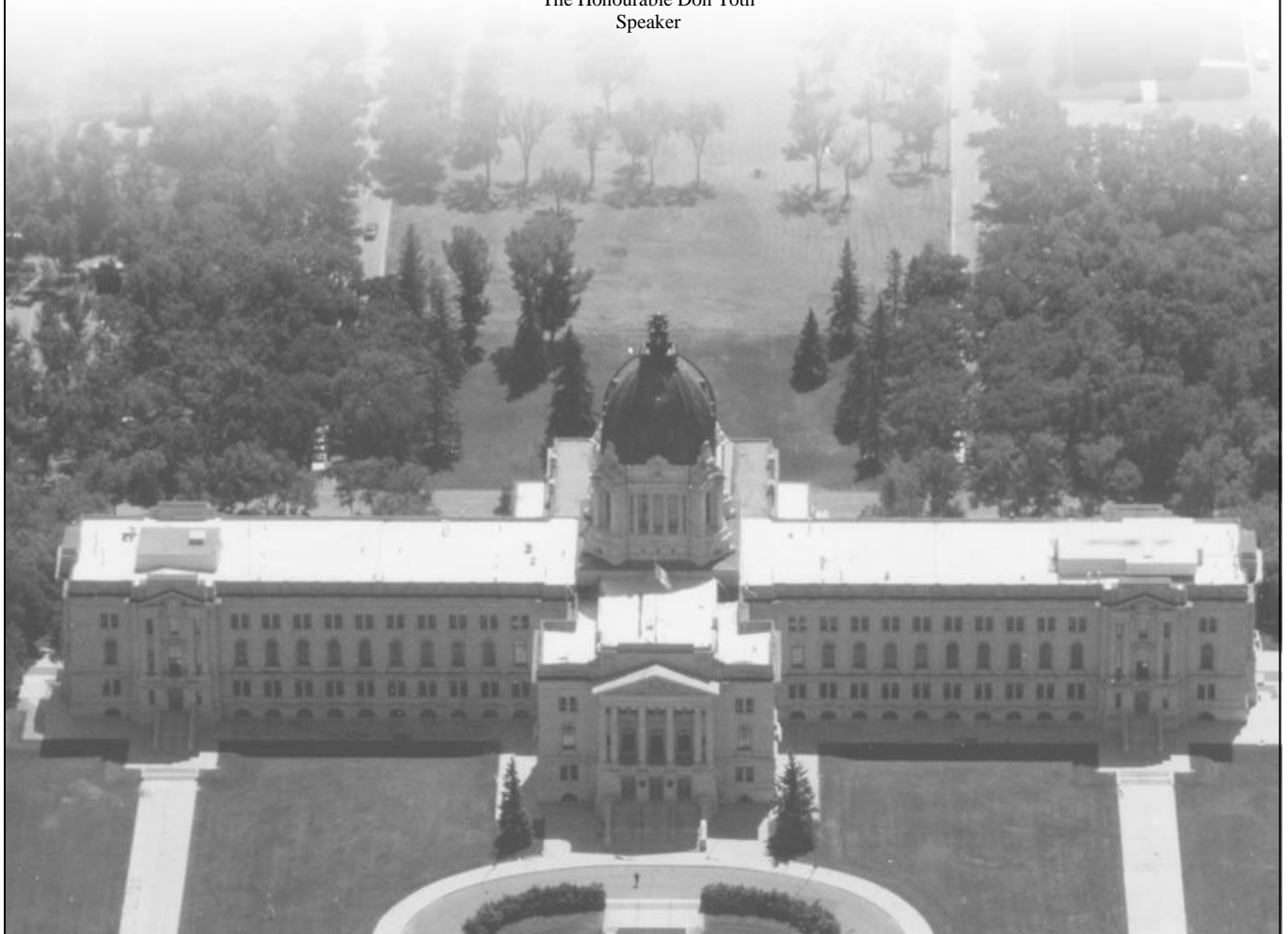
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. 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
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

Clerk: — I wish to inform members that Mr. Speaker will not be present this morning to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of First Nations.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my great pleasure to introduce representatives of the 10th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery who are seated in your gallery here today.

The delegation includes Mr. Larry Schneider, honorary colonel, who members will recall had a distinguished career in public life, serving as both the mayor of Regina and also as a Member of Parliament for our city and a cabinet minister in the Government of Canada. With Mr. Schneider today are Lieutenant Colonel Henry Sobchyshyn; Lieutenant Colonel Gerry Carline; and Major Dave Black, past commanding officers of the regiment; Mr. Keith Inches, Major Keith Inches, curator of the military museum located at the Regina Armoury; and two currently active members, one of whom has served in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in a few moments we will have an opportunity to more properly recognize the 100th anniversary of the 10th Field Regiment, and we warmly encourage all members of this Assembly to welcome these distinguished soldiers to their legislature today.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Regina South in welcoming these special guests to the Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce a special guest to the Assembly today, two special guests. Seated in the west gallery is a local business leader in the great city of Regina, Reg Howard, and joining him is, I believe, the three-time offensive lineman of the year, maybe four-time offensive lineman of the year for the CFL [Canadian Football League], and our own protector of the blind side here in Saskatchewan, the left tackle for the Saskatchewan Roughriders, no. 60, Gene Makowsky. I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly today.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's truly an honour for me to stand today and introduce to you and to the members of this House some very special people from

Habitat for Humanity. And with us in your gallery today we have Barb Cox Lloyd, executive director of Saskatoon; Morris Sawchuk, board Chair of Prince Albert; Dennis Elko, executive director of Lloydminster; Dennis Coutts, CEO [chief executive officer] of Regina; Brian Martynook, Chair of Moose Jaw; Laurie Renton, Chair of Yorkton; Bob Linner, board Chair of Regina; as well as there are other Habitat members.

But most importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have with us a very special couple and their family who are recipients of a Habitat home. And that is Fergus and Beatrice Littlechief are proud owners of a Habitat for Humanity home, and with them is their children, Dalreasha, Kasheena, Desirae, Victoria, Shanice, Terrence, and Nathan. And it's truly . . . This is their first time in their Legislative Assembly. Give us a wave, family, and thank you for coming. I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Too, on behalf of your loyal opposition, I too would like to join in the minister welcoming the folks to their legislature, the Littlechief family there, and also the folks from Habitat for Humanity right across the province. And I know there's some other housing folks up there.

You know, we have a proud history in this province of working with the groups in civil society, particularly Habitat for Humanity. I understand that we first started buying lots for them back in '94. And I know in my own riding in Saskatoon Centre, we're very proud of the ReStore facility where they reused an old curling rink and made really good use of that. And so we're very glad that they're here today.

You know, civil society operators like them are very efficient, but they can also mobilize small armies to get the work done that needs to be done in this province. So I ask all members to join in welcoming the good folks here today. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister from Tourism and Parks.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce a couple of guests seated in your gallery. Joining us today is Mark Shriver. He's the Optimist International president and resides in Woodstock, Georgia, and he's accompanied by his wife, Patricia McKay.

They are guests in Regina this week for the Optimist International world under 18 curling championships. This championship is taking place between March 30th and April 4th at the Callie Curling Club here in Regina. Twenty-four teams from three different countries, including two teams from Japan, are competing, Mr. Speaker. As you can imagine, there's not very many curling rinks in the state of Georgia. In fact I've been told that there are none, Mr. Speaker. So Mark is looking forward to getting into the hack for the first time and throwing a curling rock.

And I would invite all members not only to join me welcoming

them, but I would invite all members and the public to attend part of the curling championship at the Callie Curling Club this week. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the Saskatchewan legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to extend a hello and welcome to Saskatchewan and to Regina, to Mark and Patricia. I hope you enjoy your stay here in Regina and enjoy our beautiful province. And on behalf of the opposition, welcome. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join the minister and the member from Saskatoon Centre in welcoming our guests from Habitat for Humanity. Certainly, especially being a Regina person, especially Dennis Coutts and Bob Linner, but I'd like to wish a special welcome to Beatrice and Fergus Littlechief, the premier family of seven-block Athol. They do a lot for the community, Mr. Speaker. It's really good to see them here today in their legislature. So please join me in welcoming all these important guests, but especially Beatrice and Fergus Littlechief and their family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce special guests of mine here today. And I'd like to introduce — seated in your gallery — my father, Craik Wotherspoon, and his grandson, Eli Lahaye, my nephew. So welcome them. I think there's a day off work for the old guy here today. He's the principal up at Raymore School, and it's a pleasure to have him in the Assembly, and he keeps a keen eye to the proceedings. And we welcome them to the Assembly here today, thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the conditions of our highway. This particular petition pertains to Highway 123, Mr. Speaker, which is the only link to the outside world for the community of Cumberland House. And like many communities in the North, Mr. Speaker, there's only one road in and one road out to this community as well as many others. So, Mr. Speaker, this particular . . . and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining and repairing of this highway.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks from Cumberland House. I so submit.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This old guy is pleased to present a petition that was originated from the Saskatchewan Student Coalition. This petition deals with the implementation of the Saskatchewan scholarship fund. That would be the scholarship fund promised by the Sask Party in the 2007 general election. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement the promised Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

Mr. Speaker, today's signators are all from the great city of Regina. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people in support of autism. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing a comprehensive provincial autism spectrum strategy that is based on proven best practice, evidence-based research treatments, and programming; and given the complexity of the disorder and its treatments, that individualized funding concept be adapted for parents and guardians of autistic individuals.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petition is signed by people from Regina, Qu'Appelle, Balgonie, Moose Jaw, Rosetown, and Emerald Park. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. I'm presenting a petition in support of maintaining educational assistants. As the Assembly will know, in November of 2009 the Ministry of Education published a document where the government is considering changes that would drastically reduce the number of educational assistants in the province. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Cause the government to provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the support they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

I so present on behalf of citizens from the city of Saskatoon.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the reinstatement of the domestic abuse outreach program. And we know that it provided a number of valuable services to women victims of domestic violence and their children and was a model program that probably should have been extended right throughout the province. I'd like to read the prayer.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to reinstate the domestic abuse outreach program as a provincial government service and make it available in all parts of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is signed by the people of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition that has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition, a petition in support of affordable tuition and a call on the Sask Party government to have their actions match their rhetoric. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement a long-term tuition management strategy in which tuition is increased by an average of 2 per cent or the most recent increase to the consumer price index.

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition in support of the expansion of the graduate retention program. The petition is being circulated by citizens of Saskatchewan because the Sask Party government amended the retention program to specifically exclude master's and Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] graduates and graduates from post-secondary institutions outside Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by good folks from

Lumsden and Regina. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on Sask Party's lack of action with respect to climate change:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

To cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, acknowledge and recognize that climate change is occurring and the impacts of climate change are escalating and worsening;

And in so doing, to cause the government to undertake immediate actions to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, actions which will serve to protect Saskatchewan people from the significant costs to our economy, global security, and the quality of life which climate change threatens to bring about, and to also protect Saskatchewan people from longer and more frequent droughts, reduced river flows as the glaciers which feed our rivers shrink, erratic rainfall with more frequent and more serious flooding, and loss of at least the southern part of Saskatchewan's valuable boreal forest which is treasured by so many in our province;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, begin the process of creating a meaningful, significant, comprehensive, and broad-based strategy including enacting substantial and meaningful legislation and substantial and meaningful regulations to meet the commitment solemnly pledged repeatedly in October and November of 2007 during the last provincial election by the Premier, the current member from Swift Current, who at the time of the last provincial election when he made this serious and significant commitment, was serving as the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to reduce our province's greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent from the levels of greenhouse gas emissions which our province produced in the year 2007 to meet said 32 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the year of Our Lord 2020, 10 years from now or one short decade away;

And in so doing, to cause the Premier to instruct his Minister of Environment, the current member from Martensville, to recognize the importance of honouring the Premier's solemnly pledged commitment and to set about the important task of developing a substantial and meaningful plan to seek a reduction of our province's levels of greenhouse gas emissions, rather than continuing to evade all responsibility in her duties to actually address this critically important issue which will directly affect our province's economy and the quality of life for all of our residents;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, reject the intensity-based

reduction targets which the provincial Sask Party government has shamefully followed the federal Conservative government in adopting, in favour of absolute reduction targets, and to immediately enact said absolute reduction targets in the new management and reduction of greenhouse gases Act;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, reverse its ill-advised decision to cut all funding to the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative and to recognize that the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative is a valuable and much-needed organization in that it generates practical options to help Saskatchewan adapt to current and future impacts of climate change and fosters the development of new professionals in the emerging science of climate change impacts and adaptation;

And in so doing, to cause the provincial government to immediately, without delay, restore the full amount of funding which it recently cut to the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Muenster, Prince Albert, and Esterhazy. I so present.

[10:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all recognize here that the utilization and value and full range of professional skills offered by health care providers is promoted to the address and retention and recruitment issues, and thereby ensuring safe staffing levels. We all hope that the Government of Saskatchewan pay heed to that. And also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the government's essential services legislation is making a mockery out of the collective bargaining process in this province. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to negotiating a fair and just collective agreement with health care providers in this province of Saskatchewan.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition again today signed by residents of Saskatchewan concerned about this government's disregard for constitutional, legal, and human rights. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your

honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and equality rights of all Saskatchewan couples and to withdraw the reference to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal that would allow marriage commissioners to opt out of their legal obligation to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, Muenster, Regina, and Vanscoy. And I so submit.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive billion dollar deficits and the billion dollars of debt growth under the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens of Maple Creek, Sedley, and Moosomin. I so submit.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of the Saskatchewan film and television industry. This petition deals with this government's failure to address critical issues to the film industry, which has driven jobs out of this province, and investments, and particularly in light of the closure of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network].

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to make changes to the film employment tax credit that will allow the Saskatchewan film industry to be more competitive with other provinces, to reverse its decision to shut down the Saskatchewan Communications Network, and to work with the industry to reverse the decline in film production.

This petition is signed by residents of Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview

Autism Awareness Month

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April is Autism Awareness Month and it kicks off with World Autism Awareness Day, April 2nd. This is the third United Nations sanctioned Autism Awareness Day, and it serves to raise the complex issues that families and individuals face when dealing with autism. Mr. Speaker, it's estimated that 1 in 110 children have autism spectrum disorder. Parents with autistic children have had to become educators, advocates, caregivers, and financiers.

Last year I commented on the fact that parents want early diagnosis, appropriate scientifically validated treatment, and support for families both financial and emotional. This year nothing has changed. Parents and families are still asking for the same things. Petitions are being presented asking for a comprehensive autism spectrum disorder strategy that includes all of the above-mentioned pieces. The strategy should also address the need for parents of autistic children to have individualized funding as an option for accessing treatment and therapies for their children.

Parents and families came to this legislature to ask for help. Mr. Speaker, hopefully the new money announced in this budget, added together with the three million from last year's, will actually help provide that help. My speech next year then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, could be a celebration of real progress in diagnosis, treatment, and support of autistic individuals. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Cancer Awareness Month

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Although April 1st is best known as a day of fun and jokes, more notably it is the first day of Cancer Awareness Month.

I know all in this Assembly and throughout this great province recognize that cancer is no April Fool's joke, nor is it a laughing matter. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would guess that every person in attendance or listening has been touched by this devastating disease. Many of these same people have witnessed the heroism of the victims and their families fighting cancer. Many of us have felt the pain as we watched loved ones fight or lose their battle. During this month of awareness, we recognize the many volunteers and organizations that work to fundraise, support families and patients affected by cancer, carry out research and cancer care.

I am proud to be part of a government that takes cancer prevention, care, and treatment so seriously, but admittedly we have more to do. But our recently introduced tobacco legislation is a huge step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken before in this Assembly about the

choices we all make. And although victims and families fighting cancer could be bitter, often they rise to the challenge and choose to make things better. In the words chosen by Yorkton Terrier and leukemia patient Luke Boechler, you will not win because I will not lose. Mr. Speaker, I now wear an orange band on my wrist to recognize and support one such individual and family. Their struggle renews the memory of my family's own in the past. The colour is in recognition of those affected by leukemia. Luke, Jeannine, Brian, Paul, and Brittany — I wear this band for you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Coyote and Gopher Populations

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well today marks the end of the Saskatchewan Party's wily coyote killing program. After only five months, more than 30,000 coyotes have been killed. Taxpayers have been stuck with the bill for a half million dollars.

Just last week, the Premier cut neighbourhood development programs to save \$400,000. He cut the Aboriginal employment development program to save \$700,000. Once again the right hand doesn't know what the other right hand is doing.

Take the Minister of Agriculture. After paying people to kill coyotes, he proudly declares that gophers in Saskatchewan are now pests. Well perhaps some members opposite missed science class in high school or can't quite grasp the complicated nature of a simple food chain. But basic biology will tell you that if you kill thousands of predators, the populations that they prey on is likely to grow. Perhaps they should've done some research before dropping hundreds of thousands of dollars into a program because then he would have found that both research and experience have proven time and again that bounty programs like this actually serve to increase the coyote population.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join with me in congratulating the Minister of Agriculture on seeing the light, cancelling this program, and wish him the best of luck in creating a new program to fix the increase in the gopher population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of First Nations.

100th Anniversary Salute

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to salute the 100th anniversary of the 18th Battery of the 10th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery whose roots date back to April 1st, 1910 — 100 years ago today.

In 1939 the 10th Field Brigade as it was then known, including the 18th Battery, was mobilized. It became part of the 2nd Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, Canadian Active Service Force and provided personnel for duty overseas in World War II. Today 18th Battery, 10th Field Regiment is still active, with gunners having served in Afghanistan and other countries with our Canadian forces. This makes it the

longest continuously serving Canadian artillery unit in Saskatchewan and as such represents 100 years of gunner presence in the province and in the world.

Our hats are off to the men and women of today who serve on our behalf. These are dedicated regular forces personnel and reserve volunteers who place themselves in harm's way to preserve our nation's freedom and bring peace to other nations.

Mr. Speaker, it is all too easy to think that war is a tragedy that happens someplace else without affecting us here in Canada. And the fact that our Canadian forces personnel willingly leave their families, their friends, and their communities to fight distant wars to protect others as well as ourselves is good reason to stop, to ponder, and to give thanks for their sacrifice.

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

Taxes, Debt, and Interest Payments

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, a Regina and District Chamber of Commerce plan to eliminate education property taxes is generating a lot of interest. According to the *Leader-Post*, the chamber's big idea is to dedicate the savings from reduced payments on debt to reductions in education property tax. It's an intriguing idea, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier reportedly likes the concept.

One small problem though, Mr. Speaker. Under this government, public debt is set to go up, not down. According to their own budget documents, Mr. Speaker, public debt is forecast to increase \$695.1 million this year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this government has no plans to decrease debt and in fact plans to increase public debt by a whopping \$3.8 billion by 2014, according to their own documents, Mr. Speaker.

With plans like that, the chamber's proposal won't be the only thing generating a lot of interest. As borrowing rates rise from historic lows, this government's growing debt problem will be generating larger and larger interest too — Mr. Speaker, larger and larger interest payments. Far from seeing that kind of tax cuts the chamber's suggesting, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families will see instead tax increases.

In fact you're starting to see it already, Mr. Speaker, as utility rate hikes go up, tuition fees go up, and other back door increases add to their daily costs. They don't like this Premier's concept of increasing public debt, Mr. Speaker, and that's why they're asking him, hey, what's the big idea?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Easter Celebrations

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All around the world, people are preparing to celebrate one of the most important religious holidays of the Christian calendar year. This is not a single day celebration. It is an entire season in the Christian calendar year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today is Holy Thursday. This day

recognizes the last supper that Jesus shared with the Apostles when he broke bread and shared wine. This act is the basis for communion celebrations of Christians to this day.

While spending time with your family and loved ones this weekend — whether it be over a family supper or sitting down to colour Easter eggs — be sure that you don't forget the reason for this holiday. Many people attend church on this special holiday to celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. And for others, this holiday is the season of Easter egg hunts, chocolate bunnies, and turkey suppers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's very important that we remember that, by giving His life, Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins. I urge all members of this Assembly to keep the true meaning of Easter in mind while spending well-deserved time with their families during this first long weekend of spring. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[10:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Poisson D'Avril

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, it's April 1st, the feast of all fools or, as the French call it, poisson d'avril. In centuries past, Mr. Speaker, people observe the day by tricking one another into going on ridiculous errands or seeking non-existent objects such as pigeon's milk or a biography of Eve's mother. It's a day rich in tradition, Mr. Speaker, and the Conservatives love tradition. So, we're not surprised to see the customs of old living on in the government ranks.

One enterprising minister is on an errand to get millions from Ottawa for a domed stadium, but he may have to give up in sheer frustration. Not to be outdone, the SaskPower minister has gone fission for federal dollars to land a nuclear reactor or three, only to find that on the eve of poisson d'avril that the special relationship was one that got away.

So much for foolish errands, Mr. Speaker, how about non-existent objects? Well judging by how the Minister of Finance is balancing the province's books, the rainy day fund may soon fall into that category joining honest accounting, realistic spending predictions, and the minister's own reputation for fiscal prudence.

And then there's the Premier, Mr. Speaker, the feast day's patron saint. From business successes to balanced budgets to political promises kept, when it comes to non-existent objects, no one tops him for tricks played on Saskatchewan's people. That's why they brought in the old saying, they brought the old saying back, Mr. Speaker: fool me once in 2007, shame on you; fool me twice in 2011, shame on me. Mr. Speaker, they won't be fooled again.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition.

Health Care Provision

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. In reading *The Battlefords Daily News* this morning, there's an interesting but shocking comment that is included in the newspaper. And I quote from the newspaper. It says:

"I think there's going to have to be a discussion in this country (on that question) in a non-political way," Gantefoer said. "There isn't a magic bullet. User fees have a role."

Mr. Speaker, in another quote from the newspaper, it says, "User fees have to be part of the solution to cut health care costs, Finance Minister Rod Gantefoer said in North Battleford Wednesday."

My question to the Premier is this. We all know that user fees are the most insidious form of taxes. To the Premier: why are we considering that today? And why is his minister urging the public and this legislature to move to deterrent fees at this time?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was indeed in North Battleford meeting with the citizens there in regard to the budget discussion, and one of the topics that came up was the issue of the cost of health care. I pointed to the fact that in Quebec that they were increasing or putting in user fees in that province.

And I said that that was a problem and it's going to be a tremendous challenge in that province, and that is something that we are very fortunate that we don't have to put our attention to here in Saskatchewan. So that's what I said, Mr. Speaker, and I stand by those comments.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — My question to the minister is this. In the same newspaper story, and I quote, "Chamber First Vice-President Scott Campbell asked Gantefoer what can be done to curb 'abuses in health care.'"

The answer, in quotes: "I think there's going to have to be a discussion in this country (on that question) in a non-political way," Gantefoer said."

Another quote, quoting you: "There isn't a magic bullet. User fees have a role." Now I challenge the minister. Is he saying that the vice-president of the chamber, Scott Campbell, is not being accurate, or is it this minister?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My recollection of the issue was somewhat different than what has been quoted, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I clearly articulated the fact that there's concern right across Canada about the rising costs of health care. At Whitehorse, the Finance ministers of Saskatchewan and all the other provinces, as well as the federal

Finance minister, had comments in regard to the issue of the affordability of health care and the sustainability of it going forward. There certainly was a consensus, among all those present of every political stripe, that it had to be done, and the discussion should be done on a non-political basis because this is an issue right across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's true. I think we're going to have to cope with the issues of the affordability of health care, and we're going to have to face it sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Let's get it clear. Now the minister's saying he wants the discussion. That's where we started this. Why are we discussing the issue of deterrent fees when it wasn't mentioned in the budget? Why are we doing that now?

My question to the minister is this. In 1984, the federal government, under the *Canada Health Act*, conducted research into deterrent fees, the very thing he's talking about, to make the system more efficient. And here's the result and I quote, "That deterrent fees, that they [referring to deterrent fees] are ineffective in controlling health costs." If they are inefficient and it's not effective and by definition is a tax grab, that's what it is on the sick, why are you considering and why are you encouraging the debate?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the broad debate about the affordability for health care is an important issue in Canada. That's important, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to Quebec where user fees have been implemented by that government. In Saskatchewan, unequivocally, we're not interested in that scenario.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this. Within one week of the budget being read, before the vote takes place today, we have discussion on harmonization of the taxes. We now have deterrent fees being discussed and promoted by that minister. We know that the Premier is not up on many of these topics.

But I want to ask him this question: why, before the ink has dried on the budget, are we in discussion around two new taxes in this province? How does that happen?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, part of the process of going out and listening to the people of the province is to have a dialogue with them as we're going through this whole process. We've done it before. We've met with any number of organizations and entities.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Two points. I am having trouble hearing the Minister of Finance. And I'd also like the Minister of Finance to direct his response through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we went out across this province to talk about the budget, we wanted to make sure that we were in a position to listen to what the people were saying. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that there are issues that have to be addressed in the budgets of the future of this province and we have to build for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we're not afraid to listen to what people are thinking and saying. And in terms of user fees, we are not interested. We're grateful we're not in the province of Quebec where that's been implemented by that government. In this government and in this administration, user fees are not on, Mr. Speaker.

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

Municipal Revenue Sharing

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a simple question to the minister: will he guarantee today that the government will deliver on their promise to provide municipalities with one full per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax] next year?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Yes.

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

Mr. Furber: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister may beg to differ. When asked about municipal revenue sharing yesterday, and the Battleford news reports that he said, "Gantefer hinted that might occur, but said everything depends on revenues."

Now, Mr. Speaker, we all know how well they do with their revenue projections. People in Saskatchewan ought to be awfully afraid. To the minister: how much can the people of Saskatchewan expect their taxes to go up next year because of this government's incompetence and their latest broken promise?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we've indicated repeatedly, we will be going to the full 1 per cent of PST next year, which is going to be a very significant increase for municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, in the last two years, we've increased revenue sharing by 43 per cent over the last two years. And I would note for the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that his leader and members sitting on that side of the aisle voted to claw back \$20 million from North Battleford in revenue sharing over the

course of their government.

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

Mr. Furber: — They also indicated repeatedly, before they broke the latest promise, that they were going to do it. So why would anybody trust them at this point? And maybe the Minister of Finance is the honest one over there because this week he's introducing deterrent fees in health care. Last week he mused about the HST [harmonized sales tax], then the Premier shot him down. Now he's talking about municipal revenue sharing, only to get shot down again today.

My question's to the minister: can he tell us today when he plans on implementing the HST? Can he tell us when municipalities can expect to receive their promised full percentage of PST?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it is a pleasure to have the chance to confirm once again for the members opposite that next year we will going to the full one point of PST, Mr. Speaker. It's a commitment that we've made and that frankly, Mr. Speaker, we had made a commitment that over the four years of our mandate we would get to that point, which is precisely what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Big River Saw Mill

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: will the government provide the new owners of the Big River mill with the timber rights they need to reopen the mill and get people back to work?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister from Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the FMA [forest management agreement] reallocation process, we consulted with the industry widely. We made allocations to various companies. After that, there was a new entrant to that. We have preserved 200 000 cubic metres for that entity if they're interested. We've also shown a path towards more, with co-operation with First Nations, and potentially using pulp wood as well. So there is certainly a pathway to what the company in question is looking for, and we would be happy to talk with them about it.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a media report indicated that Eacom Timber CEO Rick Doman says they've been shut out of the process of allocating timber and treated poorly by this government. The report goes on to indicate that, "A letter is on its way to the Premier's office, asking them to

deal with the issue or they'll be forced to move out of our province."

Mr. Speaker, if the owners move out of the province and the equipment in the Big River mill is sold off, this mill will never reopen. To the Premier: this is his last chance. Will he step in and force the minister to work with Eacom and find a solution that will reopen this mill?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We continue to have discussions with Eacom with respect to the potential reopening of the mill.

But I would remind members opposite that in the MOU [memorandum of understanding] that they signed on the eve of the last election that would've committed \$100 million of taxpayers' money to a P.A. [Prince Albert] restart that would never have happened, within that MOU also it contained the fact that the Big River facility would never open under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. They would make sure that that mill remained closed forever. Well the people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, don't . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I would . . . Order. Order. I'm having trouble hearing the Minister of Energy and Resources. Would you like to finish your statement?

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that the people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the people in the Government of Saskatchewan certainly are supportive of initiatives to reopen that facility. We're in discussions with Eacom with respect to that. We've shown them a pathway towards the amount of allocation that is necessary to do that, and we'll be happy to discuss it with them further.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Well I don't think too many people buy that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The minister once described the CEO of Eacom Timber as a shady character, but others apparently do not agree. Eacom Timber was able to get finances to buy Domtar assets in Eastern Canada. The Government of Ontario and the Quebec government both support the deal. But thanks to this government's incompetence of handling this issue, the Big River mill is near the point of no return. If the Premier doesn't step in, the mill will stay closed forever.

Again, to the Premier: is this his idea of building an economy and managing the finances of our province? How does keeping hundreds of people out of work, unable to pay taxes, help our provincial economy and our finances in this province?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, through the reallocation process, we widely consulted with the industry. We have

industry players, First Nations entities that are very, very happy and very, very supportive of the changes that have been made. In addition to that, there has been 200 000 cubic metres that have been reserved should there be an opportunity for a restart of that facility. There's also opportunity for any company or any entity that is interested in restarting that facility to work with First Nations and Métis companies that are interested in this as well. So there is clearly a path available to Eacom or anyone else to restart that facility.

[10:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Autism Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Today is World Autism Day, so my question is about the autism strategy that has been left in limbo. It's a year and a half ago that the government had an autism strategy on paper. Now, people working with children and living with children with autism have seen nothing from this government. The new announcement of 2.5 million into the autism strategy, what is that going to do and when is it going to start?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand and compare our record regarding autism services in the province compared to the members opposite when they were in government. Let's review. When they were in government, they put only \$500,000 into autism in the last couple years of their government, Mr. Speaker. In the first two years we put in 3 million; we've topped it up by another 2.5. That's \$5.5 million going into autism services in Saskatchewan as compared to the 500,000 under their government, Mr. Speaker.

And let's review what one person had to say after the budget. Theresa Savaria said, "It's the most exciting day of my life," Mr. Speaker. That's what the people of Saskatchewan are saying about our strategy on autism.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've had parents here in the gallery living with children with autism, trying to deal with the lack of services for autism and their children and families, and they don't see any of this happening. They participated in getting the strategy. Nothing has come out of that strategy. Nobody trusts that the 2.5 will change anything. So we're asking the minister, what will change? There's health districts, to deal with their budget deficits, that have already said, we're not going to fill those autism positions. They've said that. So how will this strategy move anything forward?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So, Mr. Speaker, we have moved in the last two and a half years. Unfortunately under the previous government, they had done virtually nothing in the autism front. We have increased the number of people that will offer services

for children that suffer from autism. There is more work to do. We've put in an extra two and a half million. That's \$5.5 million, Mr. Speaker. And I will tell you that parents with children of autism are very pleased with the movement that we have made.

I haven't heard from the member opposite. Does she support the \$5.5 million? I guess we'll find out later today when we vote on the budget and she stands in her place and votes against parents with kids of autism and the 5.5 million we put in the budget.

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

Financial Reporting Practices and State of the Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, last week we saw the Sask Party substantially change the government's accounting practices. This is in part why we call this a budget that can't be trusted from a government that can't be trusted with the finances of this province.

To the minister: why is he changing the accounting and reporting rules halfway through this government's term?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we continue to report to the people of Saskatchewan on the same basis as people have generally reported in the past, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I suspect that the member opposite is speaking about is the fact that we have changed the way entities can amortize their capital purchases. And if that's what you're talking about, that's an important change.

Mr. Speaker, it's a change because it simply makes sense. If Crown entities can go out and borrow money for projects that they entertain, it makes sense for the Government of Saskatchewan to make sure that the amortization of those costs are properly covered. And that is a standard accounting procedure, not only in governments, but across the business community and it makes common sense to everyone that sees it.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister highlights just one of the accounting changes. Certainly that's one of them that we're highlighting. There's a few others as well as the capital amortization; it's the off-loading of expenditures out of the operational fund. It's the removal of debt reporting.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party didn't make these abrupt changes because the changes are consistent with some level of public sector accounting. The reality is that they made these changes out of political self-interest because they failed miserably at managing the province's finances. These changes were made for one reason: to conceal the true state of the province's finances from Saskatchewan people. Why doesn't the minister simply come clean?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — This budget has been presented in terms of the accountability that has traditionally been in this legislature, and we'll continue to do so and are pleased and proud of the budget as we presented it and the solid accounting procedures that are embedded in it, Mr. Speaker. The consultation process is something that's important and make sure that it's done in an open and transparent way, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I can compare the green sheets from our budget with the green sheets from the 2007-08 budget and, Mr. Speaker, the methodology is entirely consistent over that period of time. And we're very proud of the budget that we've tabled and are going to vote on today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the only thing that this government's consistent with is going in the wrong direction and becoming less transparent and less accountable to Saskatchewan people.

Here's what the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants has to say about changes to public sector accounting. And I quote:

For each change in accounting policy in the current period, the following information should be disclosed:

- (a) a description of the change;
- (b) the effect of the change on the financial statements of the current period; and
- (c) the reason for the change.

None of these, Mr. Speaker, not a single one of them has been included in this budget or provided to Saskatchewan people. To the minister: if the government's aim wasn't to conceal the true state of the province's finances, why didn't he follow the standards of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, our government has consistently improved upon the reporting methodology that is in place to the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the former government when they tabled their last budget only made a one-year projection of estimate of expenses and revenues. Mr. Speaker, we're doing a four-year projection and trying to be even more forward-looking and planning more effectively and efficiently as we go forward. Mr. Speaker, we'll have our budget stand with any in terms of the methodologies and accountability. The openness and transparency of our budget is beyond repair.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right, Mr. Speaker. Don't listen to the chartered accountants. Listen to this minister, Mr. Speaker. Listen to this minister who, on a weekly basis, is introducing new taxation, tax grabs, new policies, and broken promises, Mr. Speaker. Listen to this minister. Don't listen to the chartered

accountants.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, when you make a change in public accounting, you need to explain what the change is, what effect it will have on your books, and why you made the change. But the minister refuses to do that. Mr. Speaker, they're using accounting trickery. What effect will it have? It'll hide the true state of our finances and the true level of deficit and our debt, understating one and hiding the other.

And why did they make the change? Because they're completely incompetent as it relates to the management of our finances. To the minister: why did he table a budget that he knew was full of accounting tricks and he knew that Saskatchewan people can't trust?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, since the election in 2007, this government has made a number of improvements to the province of Saskatchewan's fiscal position. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we reduced the government General Revenue Fund debt by 40 per cent, reducing it over \$2 billion. Mr. Speaker, that's resulting in saving of interest rates of some \$67 million this year, and that certainly is an important improvement.

Mr. Speaker, we did the largest personal income tax reduction in the history of Saskatchewan — \$300 million — removing 80,000 people from the income tax rolls.

We've done all of those things, Mr. Speaker. We've invested almost \$3 billion in infrastructure of the province of Saskatchewan, and that certainly is something that's important to recognize. We've got the best job creation in Canada, Mr. Speaker — all important initiatives as a result of the budget, Mr. Speaker, that we tabled last week.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're very, very proud of that budget and will continue to move it forward.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the minister spins supposed tax cuts at the same time as he's introducing insidious deterrent fees for health care, at the same time as he's putting a tax grab across families with HST, inviting this discussion for Saskatchewan people. This member has no credibility on these fronts, Mr. Speaker.

Here's what we have today: a massive deficit for the second year in a row, rising debt by the billion, Mr. Speaker, and a budget full of accounting tricks intended to hide the true state of Saskatchewan's finances.

It's funny, Mr. Speaker, how history has a funny way of repeating itself. It would appear that the Don Gass Commission of 1992 — in my hand right here — has new relevance once again, Mr. Speaker, as we see a government retreat to the same kind of accounting tricks that the Devine government did, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister, to the minister: why is he returning to Grant Devine's style of accounting? Hasn't his party learned any error in their ways?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in just a few hours the members opposite, members opposite are going to have their chance for redemption. They're going to have . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I would ask the opposition to give the same respect that was given to the member when he was asking questions, so we could hear the answer.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The members opposite are going to have the chance for some redemption because while they were the Government of Saskatchewan, they left behind a massive infrastructure deficit: crumbling highways, crumbling health care facilities, crumbling education, no revenue sharing deals for municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

They left behind high taxes for families. They left behind 80,000 more low-income people on the tax rolls than exist now. They left behind more debt, Mr. Speaker — debt that we've paid off to the tune of \$2.6 billion. They left behind a have-not Saskatchewan that they presided over for years. They left behind their record of out-migration of our young people. They left behind a terrible job creation record, Mr. Speaker.

In a few hours they've got a chance to vote for a budget, the third budget of this government . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would ask the opposition not to all be yelling from their seats. I can't hear the person that has the floor. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think they want to hear this, but in a few minutes they've got the chance for that redemption, the chance to vote for a third in a string of three budgets that fixes the NDP [New Democratic Party] mess that's left behind and has made this province a leader in the nation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 1,137 through 1,201.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered questions from 1,037 to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon? I had trouble hearing; I apologize. Can you repeat?

Mr. Weekes: — 1137 through 1201.

The Deputy Speaker: — Through 1201.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

Ms. Ross: — Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget lays out our government's plan to move the province forward. Today I had the honour and the opportunity to attend a government announcement, and I'm going to read some of the information that was presented this morning. Government of Saskatchewan helps build 20 homes for families in need:

The Government of Saskatchewan is providing \$1 million to help Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan affiliates build safe, affordable ... [housing] for 20 lower-income families ... This funding is in addition to \$1 million for Habitat that was committed to build 20 homes on March 30 ...

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is 40 homes for families so much in need.

[11:00]

I've had the opportunity to attend the key ceremonies for Habitat for Humanity in Regina and it's a wonderful opportunity to see the joy and the expectation on the families' faces as they receive the keys to their new homes. Those families have had the opportunity to participate by contributing sweat equity to their homes and also making a commitment to help in further Habitat projects. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what our government is all about. It's about presenting and helping families with a hand up, not a handout. Habitat for Humanity is a wonderful opportunity for us to partner with people within the community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has spent a considerable effort in the past year maintaining and enhancing Saskatchewan's economic advantage through lowered property taxes, income tax, and a massive reduction in the provincial debt, plus a record investment in infrastructure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one area I would like to discuss is our seniors. While the previous government talked about a plan for seniors, our government is actually developing a plan for seniors. And one of those priorities is the creation of the senior care strategy. The senior care strategy will identify and address gaps in the current continuum of care provided through home care, community care, and long-term care. And this strategy will focus on developing an immediate and long-term care plan that addresses the care needs of our aging population.

Now improving the coordination of long-term care beds to

allow our senior couples to stay together, supporting non-profit agencies that provide long-term care, and working with the federal government to increase long-term care capacity on First Nation reserves, we have undertaken a pilot project to provide government funding for level 3 and level 4 beds in personal care homes to reduce wait times for long-term care beds. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is working with the regional health authorities, community-based agencies, and senior organizations to create this senior care strategy for Saskatchewan.

Now as part of the government's strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was appointed the Legislative Secretary for long-term care initiatives and have been working on the development of this initiative to form the development of the province's senior care strategy. This strategy will ensure that Saskatchewan seniors have the necessary access to health care programs and services today and in the years to come. Now our mothers and our fathers and our grandmothers and our grandfathers deserve the best care that we are able to provide.

Now my work relates to the long-term care initiative, and it includes research and consultations to identify the needs of our seniors. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to be able to meet and listen to as many seniors and other interested individuals and organizations, we conducted consultations across the province. Now last fall these consultations were held within 13 communities, and I've also had ongoing consultations with individuals up until last week. These consultations also were conducted with health care providers and other individuals.

Mr. Speaker, as the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Health, I've had the privilege of travelling across this wonderful province. And, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, over 49 per cent of our seniors live outside of an urban setting, so it was imperative that I went out. And I had the opportunity to meet and listen to seniors, individuals, and organizations. They needed to share with me their concerns and some of their ideas of how we could provide adequate care and proper care for seniors within their communities.

Mr. Speaker, seniors travelled a fair distance to be able to come and talk to us. They travelled, you know, up to one and a half to two hours to be able to share with their concerns. Now our government is listening to seniors through these consultations. Seniors' voices are being heard and this is the first time.

They shared with me that. They said, do you know what? We've never had anyone come and ask us what we think. This is the first government that has ever gone out to the community and asked people what they think. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is great strides because our government is looking forward to building a better life for everyone in Saskatchewan. We are working to reduce wait times, recruit more health care providers, and retain more graduates, and improve our long-term care facilities.

As our province moves forward, Mr. Speaker, our seniors are going to begin to enjoy a better life. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am so proud that our government has put together a balanced, forward-looking, and responsible budget. Our government is ensuring that no one is being left behind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am so proud and so pleased to be able to support the budget that our Saskatchewan government has presented. I will be voting in favour of the 2010-2011 provincial budget. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to rise today and join in the discussion on the budget today. I'd like to first take this opportunity to thank my wife, Michelle, who's a tremendous support for me. And she works hard and owns her own business in Saskatchewan here, and she always allows me to do the things that I need to do, travelling around Saskatchewan, and is very forgiving on that. So I thank her for that.

And additionally I'd like to thank Rose Rothenburger who's worked in the constituency office in Prince Albert Northcote for a number of years. She does an absolutely tremendous job. She's a tremendous asset to the community as a whole and certainly to me in particular, so I'd like to thank her for that.

Now I'd like to speak to what the government's doing with this budget, with this budget document because, if you look at the document itself, it is entirely dishonest. And why is it dishonest? Why is this a dishonest budget? Why is this a dishonest document?

Well for a couple of reasons. One, they come out and say that somehow it's balanced, which everybody in Saskatchewan now knows it's not, and they continue to say it. But that they actually use taxpayer dollars to put up billboards to tell the people that they're reducing the debt in the province of Saskatchewan is absolutely terrible. But one thing that gets better over time is that fewer and fewer people believe it.

Now if you look at the billboards, they say they've reduced the debt for the Government of Saskatchewan by 42 or whatever per cent. Now I wonder if they're going to use the same bottle of whiteout that they've used in their budget document to whiteout those billboards now because I still see them up. And the billboards are dishonest as well, and they're dishonest for a couple of reasons.

If you look at page 62 in their own budget document, it says that in 2009 the total debt of the province of Saskatchewan, the General Revenue Fund is \$7.7 billion. Next year, it's \$8.1 billion. The year after that, it's \$8.8 billion. It gains another billion dollars and goes to \$9.8 billion in 2012. Another \$1.2 billion is added to that in 2013, and another point nine billion dollars or \$900 million added to that total in 2014. So you've got, on an almost annual basis for the next four years, an increase in the public debt, the province of Saskatchewan, by \$1 billion a year.

And the Premier has the nerve to take out billboards all over Saskatchewan saying that they've paid down debt and that they've reduced the debt in Saskatchewan. Those billboards are false, completely untrue. Now that's one reason why this budget document is an absolute falsehood.

Another reason is because they've taken \$30 million from forest

fire suppression. They've taken it out. Now why would they do that? Why would they take out \$30 million from a program when it's been budgeted the same way for years? Why would they do it? Is it because they know full well what the fire season's going to be like? Or should they have budgeted a reasonable amount for fire suppression?

What have they done? They've cut \$12 million for staff in the North. Now I don't know how this fits into their grand scheme in terms of forestry, but it seems to me like they've got a policy here for harvesting the forest, and that is to allow it to burn to the ground because if you don't budget for fire suppression, that's what happens.

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

Mr. Yates: — I rise on a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: — Will the member state his point of order.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, during the debate over the last few minutes, the member for Saskatoon Northwest very openly gave the finger to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. That is a very offensive action, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I'll ask the members to come to order. I will ask the member for Regina Rosemont to come to order. There's a point of order being stated; I would like to be able to hear it.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The action was very, very offensive and totally unacceptable in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member assures me that there was no such gesture given to the House . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I will ask the member from Regina Rosemont to come to order. This will be the last warning. We're dealing with a point of order. Order. I will ask the member from Athabasca to come to order. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member assures me that he did not do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Having not witnessed it, what happens in this Chamber . . . I would ask all members that it is a place to be treated with respect on both sides. And since I never seen it, this will have to be an issue between the members. I will ask the member from Prince Albert Northcote to continue on with the debate.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the immediate proceedings that were taking place in the House with the heckling back and forth, the member from Regina Rosemont clearly said in the House that . . . and he accused the member from Saskatoon Northwest of lying, Mr. Speaker. I ask that he withdraw that remark and apologize unequivocally to the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that the member from Regina Rosemont had just seen a very vile act in this Assembly. The member failed to own up to it. There were comments back and forth from both sides, Mr. Speaker, all of which would have been out of line.

The Deputy Speaker: — As Speaker, I never witnessed or could hear, because of the yelling going on, of what happened. I would be very careful of members making accusations on both sides, going back and forth. And since I could not hear or did not see anything of that, of either nature, I would ask that we resume debate, the Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly continue to enlighten further the folks of Saskatchewan about why this budget document is a falsehood, why it's untrue for a number of reasons.

And I'd just gotten into . . . With the forestry suppression, what they've done is they've taken money that they should be budgeting for, in forest fire suppression, and hidden it from the people of Saskatchewan. They've taken it off the books when they know full well they should be budgeting for it. So there's \$30 million right there.

Additionally what they've done is gone out to different school boards and the School Boards Association of the province of Saskatchewan, and they've said, you know, we'll hope that you bargain with the teachers and come to some resolution before the end of the budget year, but we're not going to provide any money — wink-wink, nudge-nudge. You'll get it at some point, but we don't want to have to budget for it because it's going to turn this budget into a \$1 billion deficit budget. They don't want to have to do it. And so how can you trust a government who will not budget for expenditures that they know will take place in the coming year?

If you look at health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan, CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union], doctors, their contract has all been due for a number of years. And what has the government done to budget for the increase in expenditures that will be required to pay for the salary increases, the back pay for the contract?

[11:15]

What's that going to cost the tax payers of the province of Saskatchewan? That number should be included in the budget. You should budget for expenditures you know you're going to have to pay. And so again, the reason they've pulled these numbers out of their budget and not put them in their document

is because they're trying to hide what is going to end up being a \$1 billion deficit budget again.

So this document is totally dishonest. They're trying to pull the wool over the people of Saskatchewan's eyes, but it doesn't work. It doesn't work because if you do a little bit of research, it takes about three seconds to turn to page 62. And on page 62, it says that the government debt is going to go, from 2009 to 2014, from \$7.7 billion to \$11.9 billion — an enormous increase for the debt in the province of Saskatchewan. And so it is with great frustration that we talk about what they're doing here today in the budget document to hide the debt in the province of Saskatchewan and the deficit in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now if I could, I'd like to spend some portion of my speech talking about constituency of Prince Albert Northcote, city of Prince Albert and area, because it's the job of the opposition to hold the government to account for the promises that they make. And I'm going to speak to my particular region and the promises that were made there because if you look back at the election that was won by some 61 seats by the member from Prince Albert Carlton, you'll note that he made a very specific promise. He took out an ad in the *Daily Herald* and the ad said that, "A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working."

And so I'm wondering : we've seen three budgets now. And I'm wondering where in this document — if he could point to it, I'd appreciate it — where in this document he says he's going to fulfill that promise because it doesn't exist in here. They provide no funding, no ability for the forestry sector to move forward. And certainly it turns out that a vote for the minister or the member from . . . the former minister, the member from Carlton is not a vote for the mill open and people working at all. In fact it was a vote to close the mill and move it from Saskatchewan.

That's true also with the way they've handled the file on forestry in the town of Big River, the Wapawekka saw mill, the list goes on and on. Now if that one very large broken promise, where you have 700 direct employees in a city of 35,000 isn't enough, they broke two other very big promises now.

Another promise that was broken was the Premier flew into the province or into the city of Prince Albert unannounced, again without any consultation with the city, and said that they would provide airport improvements if they were elected because they think that Prince Albert is the gateway to the North. It's had that moniker for 50 years, but they think it's the gateway to the North, and it's news to them, and so it should have an airport that's improved, a better terminal, longer runway, etc. So they made that promise.

And once again I see nowhere in this document, the third budget document that they've released, that would indicate that they're going to provide any funding whatsoever to make airport improvements in the city of Prince Albert. It's exceedingly frustrating for the people there to have voted for the Saskatchewan Party and then have it turn out to be for reasons that are not true, because they absolutely refuse to keep their promise.

Now additionally the Premier again flew into Prince Albert and stood on the bridge with the then mayor Stiglitz and declared that Prince Albert should have a second bridge because it's the size of the community and the growth that's going to happen and it should have a second bridge. And he thought it'd be a good opportunity for a photo op and to win some votes, and so he made that promise. And so what has happened to that promise? If you look in this document, their own document, there is absolutely no mention of a second bridge for Prince Albert. And when you ask the minister responsible he says, well they'll have to fit it in with all the other expenditures they're making.

And so once again it turns that the Premier comes into the city of Prince Albert and says something that they had no intention of keeping. Because after record revenue years, two of them in a row for the province of Saskatchewan, they can't afford it. And it's because of their absolute inability to manage the finances in Saskatchewan.

Now one thing that they did provide for Prince Albert in this budget document was a cut, a cut of \$165,000 to the P.A. River Bank Development Authority. Now the authority does many things for people on the ground in Prince Albert. And that money could be used to help many, many families with a hand up so that they can own their own home, so that they can become gainfully employed, so that they can improve their own lives. And so the Premier's got \$7 million to spend on a tent in Vancouver that's taken down now, and he races home and cuts \$165,000 from programs for people on the ground in Prince Albert to benefit them. It's absolutely shocking.

And if the \$7 million tent isn't shocking enough, the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan has an image consultant in the United States that they pay over \$500,000 a year to — \$46,000 a month. Now if he would just take a break from the image consultant for four months, it would pay for this program that helps dozens and dozens of families in Prince Albert on a daily basis. And so you wonder why the people in Prince Albert agree that this budget document is absolutely untrue.

Now if you look at the career of the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, he made that promise and turned out to not keep it. In fact they did the exactly the opposite after the election. I think after the Premier made the decision to remove him from cabinet, leaving no cabinet representation from the third-largest city in the province of Saskatchewan or anywhere around there. Same holds true for the fourth-largest city in Saskatchewan; they don't have cabinet representation either.

But if you look at what's gone on with the member from Prince Albert Carlton, they, I think, forced him to second the motion on this budget. And why do I say that? Because they knew that this budget was false. It's a false document. It's absolutely untrue. And so they thought that he would be a good martyr because they've already sold him down the river. They don't think he can win. And so why would you jeopardize anybody's career in seconding this document? The Finance minister's got to do it; that's his job. But who you pick to second it, I think, is a pretty interesting choice.

And so that's where they've . . . that's the respect they have for the member from Prince Albert Carlton. And unfortunately for

him, I think that's going to be borne out in the next election in Prince Albert. We've got a great candidate there in Ted Zurakowski, who's a city councillor. Certainly going to win that riding if he puts in the work, which I know he will.

Now if you look at some of the other things they've done and look at the budget cuts that they've made, they've increased the budget to the Premier's office. But the Aboriginal employment development program which would cost, you know, a little bit over the price of an image consultant in the United States, that program gets cut. And what that program does is it helps Aboriginal people again with their employment. And we have an economy that requires — because of the policies of the NDP, we have a growing economy — that requires additional workers.

And what they're saying in Prince Albert Northcote very specifically is that the Premier can spend \$50,000 and go to Toronto to try to recruit workers there and ends up spending about \$10,000 a worker or \$20,000 a worker to recruit them, but he can't come to P.A. He can't come to P.A. He won't put any money into programs like the Aboriginal employment development program, like the River Bank Development Authority, that helps people gain gainful employment right here in Saskatchewan. So you've got a great, tremendous pool of talented people who are being overlooked by this Premier in Prince Albert Northcote. And it's shameful. And it's unfortunate. And it's a frustration that I hear on a near daily basis in the city of Prince Albert.

Now what else have they cut? They cut early learning and care, \$2 million, \$2 million out of early learning and care, when if you do any research at all on early learning and care, you'll learn this: that investments by government in early learning and care pay back the jurisdiction at a rate of 6 to 1. So if you invest the \$2 million that they pull out, you get back \$12 million in benefit. Seems like a no-brainer.

But unfortunately Sask Party math doesn't allow for them to take part in that initiative. In fact they cut it. They cut literacy initiatives. Again it speaks to people in Prince Albert Northcote and their ability to gain gainful employment and better their lives by learning to read, getting their Grade 12, and getting a job. He's got all kinds of money to fly to Toronto to recruit workers, and nothing for the city of Prince Albert for literacy initiatives.

They cut employment development, work readiness programs by 2.8 million. They cut the Valley View Centre by 1.5 million. And they cut \$8 million from CBOs [community-based organizations] for people with disabilities.

So if you look at that, the list of folks that I just mentioned where they found that it was important to make budgetary cuts: it's Aboriginal employment development; it's the P.A. River Bank Development authority; it's early learning and care; it's literacy initiatives; it's seniors' income plan; it's employment development; it's the Valley View Centre; and it's CBOs programs for people with disabilities.

What kind of mean-spirited government balances or it attempts to balance — it's a \$623 million deficit that we'll find is a \$1 billion deficit by the end of the year — what government

decides that it's okay to try to balance the budget on the backs of the disadvantaged people in the province of Saskatchewan? Who would do that? It's sad that that's where they chose to make their budget cuts. But I think it speaks volumes of who they are and what they are.

Now I think it's important for the people of Saskatchewan to know a number of things. Now it's unfortunate that we've got a situation where you've got now a budget document that can't be trusted brought to you by a government that can't be trusted. And it speaks of the leadership of that government.

But if you look at the reasons why they can't balance the budget, you have to look at what the history of the leadership is in that party. And so you look at the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan whose history is this: when he worked in this building as a ministerial assistant, signed for \$19,000 worth of alcohol that was taken from the liquor stores in Saskatchewan. And what we've asked him to do is pay it back.

Simply, the headline in *The StarPhoenix* was simply "Cause for jailing" and so that anybody that was associated with the theft of that alcohol in the province of Saskatchewan should be jailed. And so when you've got a Premier who was caught with his hand in the cookie jar, I think he should pay it back. I think it's very simple. I think he ought to pay it back, and I think he owes it to the people of Saskatchewan.

His next venture . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

[11:30]

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a well-known tradition in the House that you can't do indirectly what you can't do directly. The member from P.A. Northcote just stated that it's a well-known fact that the Premier had his hand in the cookie jar. Mr. Speaker, that's trying to do indirectly what you cannot do directly. I ask that the member withdraw that comment and apologize unequivocally.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member was simply using a well-known analogy that's used for many, many things. Doesn't necessarily have to have a negative connotation, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite is putting a negative connotation on something said by the member, that's his own interpretation of a metaphor or a phrase used for many, many years. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is simply a comment being used by the member that's been used for many, many years by many, many people.

The Deputy Speaker: — On the point of order, I've listened to both sides and I've also listened to what the member was saying. And I will state that the person in question, the Premier,

has never been charged, and I feel that the member . . . The point of order is well taken, that you can't do indirectly what you won't do directly. So I would ask the member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Furber: — Which other remark, Mr. Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: — The one with the hand in the cookie jar. I would ask him, and apologize.

Mr. Furber: — When I said that the Premier had his hand in the cookie jar, with respect to the booze, I withdraw that remark and apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, member from Prince Albert Northcote, and I recognize him for the budget debate.

Mr. Furber: — Now that's a part of the history of the Premier of Saskatchewan. We'll move on to his next position after he left the Legislative Assembly.

And that's to get a golden parachute and to start . . . \$150,000 of taxpayers' money that was used to fund the guitar museum in Swift Current. And it's been well documented that he had stated in his claim that there would be 40,000 visitors to the guitar museum in his first year. And he is about as accurate with that forecast as the member from Kindersley was on his \$3 billion potash forecast because there are about . . . less than 3,000 people attended the museum, and it closed down and moved out of Saskatchewan. And so that's sort of the second of his most recent jobs. He went from that to starting an outdoor adventure company which, within a couple of short years, failed as well.

And so to get to the budget and why it affects the people of Saskatchewan in a negative way is quite simple. He failed as a ministerial assistant. He failed in his guitar museum . . . can't sell country music to Swift Current. And he failed in an adventure company. And then he became elected. And so that's his history.

And so whose fault is it that we have a budget document that's false? You can hardly blame him. That's all he knows in his history, is a series of failures. Now it's unfortunate, but that's the effects that it has on the people of Saskatchewan. And I think they deserve to know. And they're asking the question of me is . . . in terms of when he's going to pay the money back. He's got \$150,000 of taxpayers' money to kill a guitar museum and \$19,000 in booze. And people are asking me when he's going to pay it back. So I'm hopeful that we see some initiative very soon where the Premier is going to volunteer to pay the money back.

Now if you look at the province of Saskatchewan and what they've done with the forestry industry in Saskatchewan, you'll see clearly . . . we already went over the ad that was taken out: "A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working." But the member from Carlton didn't stop there. His first job was to rip up the MOU that was signed that would have seen a vibrant industry in Saskatchewan. And when you see the price of lumber increasing on a daily basis, the price of pulp nearly double what it was when the mill closed, you would understand that if they'd provided the bridge financing and supported the industry, it would now be again an industry that's

moving forward and that has thousands of people employed. Instead what you've got is Wapawekka saw mill that moves out of the province, the paper mill that moves out of the province, a pulp mill, etc. The list goes on and on.

And what is unfathomable to me is the member from Prince Albert Carlton stands in this legislature seconding this budget, this false document, and says that because the forestry centre is now — two and a half years after they've become government — half empty, that it's a white elephant. But the interesting thing is that you have to ask yourself, what happened to create that situation? What have they done in the forestry industry?

They've absolutely killed it. And they wonder why you can't get a research park to employ people. It's because there's absolutely no support from this government. And even if they don't provide financial support, all they have to do is find a way to divide the FMA appropriately so that assets that still remain in the province of Saskatchewan can be utilized. They can employ Saskatchewan people. The Big River saw mill is an example of that. And so to me, it's extremely frustrating.

Now I'll speak very briefly to what they've done in energy and resources. And I'm going to speak briefly for this reason. When they took office, the minister responsible said that they would keep all the NDP policies that were in place because it was the best royalty regime structure in the world for oil and gas and minerals. And so as long as they keep NDP policy with respect to those items, we'll go easy on them because we agree with them.

Now I could speak at length about what they've done with long-term care. They promised a long-term care facility renovation in the city of Prince Albert. They've backed away from that. People in Prince Albert are asking when they're going to fund it. They said, well it'll be in this budget; don't you worry. Don't you worry. It'll be in this budget. And what happened?

You look at this budget document and they're deferring it again. Now how do they defer renovations to seniors' care homes, and they keep promising that the money's there? Sooner or later, Mr. Speaker, it's going to catch up with them. People are going to figure out that they're not being told the truth.

If you look at what they've done with doctors, vacancies are up 50 per cent under this administration. If you look specifically at Prince Albert, surgery wait-lists have nearly doubled. And I mentioned that on budget day, and I hit a nerve with the Premier. And I hit a nerve with the Premier because the surgical wait-list in Prince Albert has gone, from December 2007 — a month after the election — to 2009 in December, from 861 to 1,573, nearly double.

And so I raised this in the legislature on budget day and the Premier freaks out. He freaks out and is forced to apologize the next day. First time in 105 years, the Premier speaks to the budget in Saskatchewan and is forced to apologize. But it shows his true colour. And you know why I hit a nerve, Mr. Speaker? I hit a nerve because it's in his own city, the health region in that city, where wait-lists have also nearly doubled. And so I assume he's getting a lot of heat from home about the wait-lists for surgeries.

And so they've abandoned health care. They don't have any idea what they're doing on economic development. The Premier's record is abysmal. The document is absolutely untrue right from the start, and they know it. And so for those reasons and many others, I'll not be supporting the motion, and I'll support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Crowns.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's truly my pleasure to rise in the House today and enter into this budget debate. Putting this budget together is really a team effort, and I'd like to take a moment to thank all the people that were involved in this process.

First of all I'd like to thank and to congratulate our Finance minister. He's one of the most focused — with a broad view of the big picture — persons I have ever met. He led the process through a maze that was definitely difficult, and I congratulate him for his work. I'd also like to acknowledge the ministries and the stakeholders. I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues and the staff for the countless hours they put into the creation of this budget. The time it took was well spent because it is a balanced, it is forward-looking, and it's a responsible budget, and it's something we're all proud of.

I'd also like to thank my constituents, as our constituencies are a core to our government. They play a key role in defining goals, and they give us direction. I'd like to recognize my constituency assistant. I've had Linda working with me since I started in June of 1995. She's been with me and helping me all this time, and I can't thank her enough. And last year, Rhonda started working with me. She has a real understanding of the issues and a knowledge that we are there to be the voice of the people from the Kelvington-Wadena constituency. I thank them very much.

And before I delve into this budget, I'd like to spend a little bit of the time talking about my family. The family is the most important part of my life, as it is to all of us in this legislature. I know, without the support of family, I couldn't sit here and do what I do. My family keeps me grounded, and they keep me focused. When I look at my children and I look at my grandchildren, I see hope for the future. I take pride in this budget, knowing that we as government are securing their future here in Saskatchewan.

We're moving this province forward by providing a budget that facilitates growth. It's fiscally responsible, and it maintains an eye on the future. Mr. Speaker, in maintaining fiscal responsibility and tightening our belts as described by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, this budget is the first one in a decade that will actually reduce government spending. Expenditures will drop 1.2 per cent from the budget delivered last year. That's \$123 million savings.

Most importantly, it sends a message. It sends a signal that our government will operate differently. We're thinking outside the box, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're thinking about efficiencies and productivity. We're thinking about the value of the taxpayers' dollars that have been trusted to us to spend wisely on their behalf.

However I think it's important to note and to put on record that a reduction in spending does not mean a reduction in quality of service. It's about finding efficiencies. It's about streamlining process. And it looks at the distribution of assets. We are creating a more effective government by reducing government's footprint, and we are doing so in the least destructive fashion possible.

In Saskatchewan and around the world, we are witnessing transformation and change as government looks at which services they could provide and how they should provide them. Here in Saskatchewan, under the Sask Party government, we have challenged the public service to become smaller while still offering excellent services, offering leadership and public policy. We want to do better. We want to be more effective and more efficient, and we know it can be done.

We also know that to achieve this we need good people. We need high performing, motivated professional people. The people in the public service are the key to change. We are challenging all ministries, all leaders, all employees to be more effective and efficient, and ministries have accepted this challenge. To help them renew and refocus to meet citizens' needs and to provide good value for taxpayers' dollars, we'll be providing central supports.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for five days I've listened to the opposition rant about the budget. I understand that the opposition's job is to challenge and to dissect the government's budget. I can even appreciate their place in the parliamentary process. However I'm left wondering if perhaps their determination to find fault has left them with a clouded perception of reality.

Members opposite have been saying that our budget is not balanced. But if you compare the green sheets from the NDP budget and the 2010 green sheet that the Minister of Finance has presented, it highlights the fact that we have a balanced budget using the NDP's criteria. There's a General Revenue Fund process. The summary deficit, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP was \$700 million, but because the GRF [General Revenue Fund] was balanced off with a savings account, they said it was a balanced budget. It was a balanced budget then. It's a balanced budget today.

The members opposite say that we're stripping the Crowns. But if you look at the amount of dividends that have been taken out — from governments of all stripes — from the Crowns into the General Revenue Fund, even when the Leader of the Opposition was the minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], you're going to find that roughly about 70 per cent dividend was taken from the earnings of the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, if you total the earnings from the Crown corporations in the 2010-11 budget forecast, the subtotal is \$260 million. SaskPower's earnings is predicted to be \$135 million, Mr. Speaker, but we are taking zero dollars from SaskPower, making the dividends this year less than the 70 per cent number the previous government used.

[11:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opposites say we're privatizing health care. The change we're bringing to reduce wait times in the province are part of a universally, a publicly funded health care system with a single payer. This party made a commitment in the last election campaign that — under a single-payer, universal public health care system — this government would take the necessary steps to reduce the NDP wait times for health care. We're doing that in the province today.

In 1996 the minister of Health at the time in the NDP government said they were open to private sector playing a larger role. And there's a quote in the article that goes something like this, Mr. Speaker, and I'm quoting: "Both ideas were endorsed by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses President Judy Junor."

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite note that we discontinued the Aboriginal employment development program. They failed to note that this budget has new initiatives designed specifically to increase the participation of our province's First Nations and Métis people in the economy, initiatives like the creation of three northern enterprise regions that will increase economic development dramatically in northern Saskatchewan, initiatives like the 70 per cent increase in funding to the Clarence Campeau Development Fund that provides loans and mentoring and business planning to Métis entrepreneurs all over our province.

And they also fail to recognize the new initiative, a very important initiative that creates, that gives an opportunity for people to apply for a \$3 million economic development fund to ensure that Saskatchewan's First Nations entrepreneurs can count on assistance to grow their business enterprises.

What the members opposite don't seem to understand or fail to admit is that to keep the province moving forward, we need to evaluate programs and really determine what programs fit the needs as we need to keep the momentum moving. The AEDP [Aboriginal employment development program] 20-year-old program with no measurable outcomes was not progress, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Members opposite claim that we are privatizing Crowns like SaskPower. We are not. We're spending billions of dollars on infrastructure to fill the hole that the NDP created when they spent so little money on our Crowns that they were not ready to grow with us to help the province grow. We are investing money into our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. We're working with the private sector to ensure that we can supply power. And when the people of the province go to turn on their lights, there will be power.

They also seem to forget that under this government, or under their government and when the Leader of the Opposition was the minister for the Crowns, they struck a private purchase deal with SunBridge, a private Alberta-based partnership. Atco was another cogeneration deal with a Calgary-based company, a partnership between SaskPower and a private sector company to supply electricity. And then there was also their Husky oil deal.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time to highlight some positive changes within this budget, the things that I think are

getting lost in the opposition's clouded perception of gloom and doom. The opposition would see some of these changes as scary and as negative. And I understand how they might be misviewing them as opportunities because they are stuck in the past. The members opposite are not only stuck in the past, they're scared of the future. We are not. Innovation and creativity are really not for everyone, I guess.

On budget day, this government announced a four-year plan to reduce the size of the public service. The goal for the first year was 4 per cent and 15 per cent at the end of four years. We can do this largely through attrition. Many of those who retire or move on to other opportunities will not be replaced. We can control this by establishing a centralized review process to ensure that only critical positions will be staffed. It'll be supported by a new \$2.5 million productivity fund which will be used for process improvement, for training, and for succession planning. People may need new skills to prepare for new roles, and the fund will be there to help them.

We're not alone. Other jurisdictions right across the world are working on this type of program. We know it can be done, and it will be done.

My past year as Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission has been a very rewarding one. I had the honour of attending long-service recognition events and the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service. I've met with new employees and employees with many years of experience. I am truly impressed by the people in the public service. I'm impressed by the quality of their work, their commitment, and their pride. They will help us drive this change forward. Together they will transform the public service. We know that it must be smaller, more effective, and more efficient, and it will be.

My ministry, the Public Service Commission, will support this challenge and this change. It's going to play a key role in coordinating the workforce adjustment strategy, working with Executive Council and with other ministries. We will ensure critical areas are staffed, areas where social services and highways and other areas where we know there must be attention paid, to identify flexibility and process improvement and to manage the productivity fund.

The Public Service Commission is also committed to transforming itself. It has consolidated all of government's human resource administrative functions including payroll. Earlier, all professional advisory human service staff were clustered into client teams to provide improved responsiveness to each ministry. The Public Service Commission has conducted a process review and a comprehensive client survey to help identify areas for improvement. Work is already under way to dramatically reduce the time it takes to staff and to classify positions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're proud of the fact that within the ministries there's an enormous excitement and work under way to help us undertake this work. And we're proud of them.

In the year ahead, the Public Service Commission will continue to support government by working as a business partner with ministries. They'll be providing strategies to address organized

human resources need. They're going to be coaching and supporting managers. They're going to be providing direction on human resource impacts on policies and for emerging issues like pandemic planning that we had last year. They're going to be making sure that the basic work is well done.

And by working with our public service unions — as you know, our ratification of the tentative agreement is now under way — the Public Service Commission will also focus on the importance of youth, the importance of the First Nations and Métis people and other diverse groups in growing our economy.

The Public Service Commission is committed to providing the best human resource management services possible to support ministries carrying out the mandates of our government. The government recognizes and fully acknowledges the need amongst ministries to increase staffing levels, and those needs will be addressed as the process continues.

The public service has also accepted the challenge to be part of the new public service to work with us during this exciting time of transformation and to help the public service be the best, the strongest, and the smartest, and the leanest it could be.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have stood in the House for weeks, talking about the goal of our government to reduce the size of the public service, and they used the terms "firing" repeatedly to generate fear and discomfort. The member from Regina Coronation Park stood in his place and spoke of 1,700 pink slips that were going to be handed out over the next four years. And this could not be further from a true fact. The government has been carefully . . . a thought-out plan by using attrition to accomplish our goals. This is different from how the members opposite chose to reach their goals in the past. They chose to provide little explanation to the reductions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe the members opposite should remember that in 1996, when 544 government workers received layoff notices, the then minister of the Public Service Commission said, "Reductions . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres not to be yelling from her seat. I recognize the Minister of the Crowns.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, in 1996, when 544 government workers received layoff notices, the former minister of the Public Service Commission, Lorne Calvert said, and I quote: "Reductions have been necessary to achieve the . . . [objections] of providing affordable and effective government."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2002-2003, the budget speech, after announcing the government would be reducing full-time equivalents by 350, the former Finance minister, Eric Cline said, we're going to change how government does business, making it more effective and more efficient. And what did the former NDP Environment minister say in 2004 in response to 200 job cuts and the closure of nine rural and northern SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] offices and six northern fire bases? He said, and I quote: "We have our priorities and we have to support those priorities."

This was laying people off.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the member from Regina Rosemont understands that this review is important because he said in the media a week or so ago, and I quote, "Well I think efficiencies certainly can be found. A mindful eye certainly has to be there. It should be part of the plan of government in any given budget year."

And even the head of SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], Bob Bymoen said, and I quote, "We're always looking for efficiencies in government and there's always room for a little bit of that." Mr. Speaker, I believe that everyone is in agreement with our goal, and I don't know why the members opposite don't just admit it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the responsibilities I've been given is being the voice for the Information Technology Office. It continues to update information systems in our government. The recently announced RFQ [request for quotation] for network upgrades shows a determination to integrate private sector skills into the management of our IT [information technology] systems. ITO [Information Technology Office] plays an absolutely crucial role in ensuring our government industries can deliver needed services to the public.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of a single eight-hour day without ITO services is estimated to be \$2.4 million. Mr. Speaker, this need for upgrades in this infrastructure didn't come overnight. It was part of the infrastructure deficit left to us by the previous government and we are working to fill that deficit.

Mr. Speaker, under SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], we're pleased to be in a position to provide value to the shareholders in the form of an increased dividend for 2010. This is one important way the corporation can give the people of Saskatchewan a return on the money they have invested in SGI Canada. We're able to do this because excellent financial results in the past couple of years.

With the introduction of a one-part, five-year driver's licence which will be implemented in January of 2011, SGI is making it more convenient and less expensive for the people of Saskatchewan to hold a driver's licence. The project will create efficiencies. It'll decrease the cost of administration and it will lead to the end of a 1.3 million annual subsidy that has been provided in the past year to offset the cost of photo ID [identification].

Government's commitment to more funding for highways and construction and resurfacing is an important part to maintain an infrastructure that contributes to safer roads. In addition to preventing deaths and injuries, fewer vehicle collisions also help the bottom line at SGI, helping maintain the lowest auto insurance rates in Canada.

The government's commitment to providing funding for additional police officers will help the crime prevention and traffic enforcement issues. This benefits all of SGI's operations, as reduced property crime lowers the overall costs for property claims, and increased traffic enforcement improves road safety which will lead to fewer collisions and fewer claims.

There's another traffic initiative taking place that SGI has had a hand in developing. The report impaired drivers program or our RID program is a pilot project that's taking place in the city of Saskatoon. The RID program is spearheaded by SGI, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, and the Saskatoon Police Service, with support from the Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Drinking and Driving, and Rawlco Radio. The program encouraged Saskatoon residents to call 911 and report suspected impaired drivers to police. This is an initiative that I hope to see grow and flourish in the future and that it will be expanded to other cities and towns within our province.

The government's commitment to funding for post-secondary education will help ensure SGI has a solid pool of potential new employees for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have had much to say about CIC, the Crown Investments Corporation. This government takes great pride in the success of the Crown Investments Corporation and our Crown sector as a whole. The vision of the Crown sector in 2010-2011 has not changed. It is to provide Saskatchewan people with the best possible service at the lowest possible cost to our citizens, and at the same time contributing to the growth of our province. Meeting this goal was a challenge as Saskatchewan is among the leaders in Canada in both population and job growth, but the Crown sector's keeping pace, providing increased infrastructure and service needs for the whole of our province.

The Crowns are providing increased support to the provincial Treasury this year, but they're well positioned to so. For example, SaskTel has the strongest balance sheet of any telecommunication company in Canada. At SaskPower, where capital needs to be retained to replace aging infrastructures with cleaner, more expensive technologies, no dividend is going to be given to the GRF this year.

The past 10 years under the NDP, the average capital spend in SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy was \$500 million. This government and the same three Crowns in our first three years invested \$2.8 billion. Even with the increased dividend, the Crown corporations are spending an unprecedented 1.3 billion on capital programs in 2010 to upgrade infrastructure and help with the growing demands.

[12:00]

Led by SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy, the capital program is also helping to stimulate the Saskatchewan economy. SaskEnergy is investing \$103 million; SaskPower, \$832 million; and SaskTel, \$389 million, including the rural infrastructure program. The Crowns are focused on finding efficiencies in their operations, the same as within executive government. The Crown sector will build on the three major productivity reviews as SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy, and they'll continue to manage FTE [full-time equivalent] growth and reduce staffing levels through attrition.

The Crown sector also continues to sell out-of-province assets that aren't core to the Crowns' businesses as outlined in our Sask-first policy. I know the members opposite have had a number of comments about this, but our government believes

that taxpayers' money should be spent here in Saskatchewan. That enables us to reinvest money right here in our province. The divesting of these assets continues to be done in a thoughtful and reasonable and prudent manner.

We're retaining operations outside the province in cases where it supports the Crowns' core businesses. For example SGI Canada continues to operate in five other provinces which provides a geographical spread of risk. There are many exciting projects and initiatives under way this year in the Crown sector to support government policies and enhance our services. And I thank the hard-working people over there for being involved.

SaskEnergy is partnering with the private sector to recover natural gas that is usually flared off, which is good news for SaskEnergy customers and good news for our environment. SGI's Auto Fund redevelopment is utilizing technology and Internet to become more user-friendly, increase its capacity for re-commerce or business online. This also helps SGI and its customers to go green.

SaskWater's providing the infrastructure for major developments in the potash industry at projects like the one in Belle Plaine.

SaskPower is making another significant investment in its capital program to help with transmission and system reliabilities — key priorities for our customers. SaskPower has already partnered with the private sector on two natural gas power plants and is working on partnerships that will generate 200 megawatts of wind power by 2013. In real terms, 200 megawatts will supply power for approximately 200,000 homes for a year. SaskPower is leading in the development of one of the world's first and largest integrated carbon capture and storage commercial projects at the Boundary dam power station at Estevan.

Sask Gaming Corporation has revitalized both of its casino properties to ensure that it continues to provide a high-quality entertainment experience for customers. And SGC [Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation] also continues to be an industry leader in responsible gaming practices.

SaskTel will complete the rural infrastructure program this year, bringing cellular or wireless coverage to 98 per cent of the province and high-speed Internet to 100 per cent of the province. SaskTel is also working with First Nations communities as part of this program. And SaskTel is also adapting new technology standards that result in the availability of an increased variety of cellphones as well.

CIC continues to administer the Gradworks programs. It provides 12-month internships in the Crowns to recent post-secondary graduates with little or no experience. Nearly 85 per cent of the Gradworks interns stay in the province, and over half of them continue to work in the Crowns.

The CIC Aboriginal bursary program provides financial assistance to qualifying students and was expanded in 2009 to include the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], as well as the University of Regina. In 2010 CIC will receive \$3

million for a program to support economic development for our First Nations people.

Investment in infrastructure, increasing employment opportunities in the sector for youth and First Nations people, adopting environmentally sustainable business practices, and investing in Saskatchewan's businesses and increasing efficiencies are key priorities for CIC within the Crown sector.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Provincial Secretary has been and will continue to be very busy in the future. With support from the protocol office, we'll encourage diplomatic engagement and strengthen relationships with national and international partners.

We will continue to invest in the French-language service centre which provides services to citizens province-wide as well as increases the capacity to support recruitment, settlement, and retention of French-speaking people in our province. We look forward to continued partnerships and collaboration with the francophone community to identify and undertake key initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Information Services Corporation will focus on securing a strong future while exploring exciting new opportunities. With the upcoming transfer of the corporations branch from the Ministry of Justice to ISC [Information Services Corporation] in October, it will leverage ISC's significant registry expertise, its core competency, and infrastructure to enhance and evolve service delivery to our business community. The corporations branch is the first step in future development of an online portal to provide convenient and cost-effective means to deliver government services to business.

The first phase of the project, an online business registry, will be developed and implemented early in 2011. The business registry service will allow new businesses to complete the steps required to register a business using an online application. This phase is going to be offered in three registration services. We can register a business through the corporations branch. You can register as an employer for workers' compensation and register for provincial sales tax with the Ministry of Finance.

By the end of 2012, Information Services Corp will begin to expand the services offered beyond registration and will provide business owners with a single point of entry for most other government services. Business owners will self-manage their online profiles and work with online environment to get the necessary permits and licences and remit taxes and comply with other government requirements. Our goal is to make sure it's easy to do business in our province, to streamline processes, and to ultimately reduce the cost for business and government. As a former business owner, I understand the impact these changes will have for the entrepreneurs of our province, and I know that these changes will be beneficial and most welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to discuss the budget with some of my constituents last weekend at various events around my constituency. And I know that there is tremendous support for this budget. My constituents are pleased with the direction this government is taking. Even our province's toughest critics, those that sit on coffee row, had a positive

thing to say about our province's budget. They share our vision of a balanced, forward-looking, responsible budget. They appreciate our approach to the budget, appreciate that we have a commitment to health care, highways, and schools. They appreciate the fact that we have not increased the debt. They appreciate the fact that we've invested money in infrastructure, that we've cut the number of people that are paying tax. They appreciate the fact that rural Saskatchewan is the front of our minds when we make our decisions.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I thank them and my colleagues for the opportunity to share with you many of the great things I see coming out of this budget. And it gives me great pleasure to put forward my confidence and my support for our budget.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to be able to rise and speak to the budget today. We have a budget here, Mr. Speaker, that is anything but accountable, transparent, and open — which are all the things that the members opposite profess. I am going to be, obviously, not supporting the budget and will be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition, Mr. Speaker. So I want to state that at the outset of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget that tells a story, and it tells a story of a Premier who likes to talk differently in different circles, depending on who he's talking to. Now you know, I started making notes just quickly, and I'm going to digress from the speech that I had originally written because I think this is a story that has to be told about this particular budget, Mr. Speaker. And that is, that depending on who the Premier is speaking to, or any one of his ministers, they seem to want to conform the story to the audience at hand.

So for instance, Mr. Speaker, they talk about how concerned they are for the First Nations and Métis population of Saskatchewan. They talk about how concerned they are for the duty to consult and how they want to engage the Aboriginal population of the province in the economy of the province, Mr. Speaker. And we see quite the opposite happen in this budget, Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about some of those cuts that were made that the First Nations and Métis people of this province were not even consulted on, Mr. Speaker, were not even consulted on until they heard them on the floor of the legislature on the day of the budget. Let's talk for instance about the Aboriginal employment development program, a program that's been in place, a program that has an agreement signed, a program that was given glowing reports by the former minister for First Nations and Métis Relations which is the minister for, I mean the member from . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, the previous speaker, unfortunately I can't recall the constituency that she represents . . . anyway, giving glowing reports. And then all of a sudden in this budget, Mr. Speaker, it's cut.

An Hon. Member: — Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Morin: — So Kelvington-Wadena, thank you, member for Kelvington-Wadena. And all of a sudden in this budget, it's cut,

Mr. Speaker. Why? Well we're not really sure why because previously she would love to do the photo ops and everything, talking about what a great program it was. But then all of a sudden one day in the legislature, on the day of the budget, it's cut because, well, they don't believe it's meeting the outcomes that it should. So it's funny how that changed very quickly.

Let's also talk for instance about the disrespect, the absolute disrespect that was shown to the First Nations University of Canada, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this again is an institution that is one of the most amazing sources of pride and joy for us as a Saskatchewan province. This is an internationally renowned institution. It has amazingly glowing reports from individuals from other universities, from other countries that have the privilege of attending here or doing some apprenticing here and such.

And yet, and yet, Mr. Speaker, without being able to engage the provincial government or the Minister for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour in meaningful discussions as to what needs to occur to be able to move that institution forward and deal with some of the issues that were at hand, it simply slashed the funding which in turn slashed the funding from the Harper Tories. And no one can tell me, Mr. Speaker, no one can tell me that that discussion didn't take place to those cuts being made because they did. Those cuts went hand in hand. And now we see that the Harper Tories are simply going to provide bridge funding to tie over the school year, but there's no commitment of going forward into the future. So those students and those professors still have great uncertainty with respect to that institution.

Let's talk about, for instance . . . Oh I just mis-swallowed. Excuse me. I swallowed the wrong way. Let's talk about, for instance, the Premier talking to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce at TCU Place — excuse me; I mis-swallowed — a few days prior to delivering the provincial budget speech. In his state of the province address to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce . . . And I'm quoting from *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker:

In his "state of the province" address to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce at TCU Place, Wall said the province needs to take steps to reduce tobacco use and cited a report saying one of the biggest obstacles has been the lack of taxation on tobacco products sold on First Nations.

"Smoking remains one of the most harmful and costly health issues. The financial cost is great, the human cost is greater," said Wall. "And the problem continues to be greatest among our First Nations people."

I'm still struggling with that sip I took, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, this is what the Premier told the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce a few days prior to the budget. So what happens in the budget, Mr. Speaker? In the budget, Mr. Speaker, they decide that they are going to make this announcement. And I just want to quote from the Premier's speech to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce on that day because I happen to have a copy of it as well:

Smoking remains one of the most harmful and costly

health-challenges. The financial cost is great . . . the human cost is greater.

He goes on to quote and says, “And the problem continues to be greatest amongst our First Nations population.” Then he tells the chamber of commerce that:

Our government takes this issue very seriously. I have asked my Minister of First Nations and Métis Affairs, Bill Hutchinson, to begin discussions on this important matter with the FSIN . . .

And while I can't give you the exact details today, this issue will be addressed in the upcoming budget.

[12:15]

So Mr. Speaker, when speaking to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce a few days prior to the budget, he already knew full well what was going to be in the budget but only talked then about his Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations talking to the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], at that point going forward to begin important discussions on this matter.

Decision was already made, but there was no consultations with the people it would most directly affect who, quite frankly, in their statements afterwards said, you know what? You're right. We have an issue with smoking. But we also have bigger issues with diabetes for instance, Mr. Speaker, or other health-related issues that they've been asking for help on for a long, long time that are falling on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker.

Let's also talk about one other aspect of the Premier's speech to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. He talks about, for instance, property taxes and he says, “. . . we've taken steps to reduce education property tax.” Now listen carefully to the next part of his quote, Mr. Speaker: “And when we can afford more we will do more,” Mr. Speaker. So I want to repeat what the Premier said a few days before the provincial budget to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce: “And when we can afford more we will do more,” with respect to property taxes, Mr. Speaker.

Now isn't that interesting, because today in question period when we talked about it they say, the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs stood up and said, yes they're doing it. Well isn't that interesting . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . For Municipal Affairs, thank you. Stood up and said, yes we're doing it. Well what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier says, when we can do more on property taxes, we will do more. The Finance minister says, when we can do more, we will do more. But it seems that the Minister for Municipal Affairs knows something that both the Premier and the Minister of Finance don't know, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at this quote. This is from . . . Oh, it's very recent, Mr. Speaker. It's called yesterday. And this is from *The Battlefords Daily News*. And this is when:

Battleford Mayor Chris Odishaw asked if the municipal revenue sharing formula, held at nine-tenths of one per cent of the Provincial Sales Tax this year as part of the

government's cost-cutting, will go up to one per cent next year, as the government promised earlier.

So he wanted to know if they're going to keep their promise on municipal revenue sharing. “Gantefoer hinted that might occur, but said everything depends on revenues.”

So again, Mr. Speaker, we see the Minister for Municipal Affairs saying one thing and the Minister of Finance and the Premier saying something quite different when it comes to the revenue sharing formula, when it comes to dealing with property taxes going forward, Mr. Speaker.

Let's also look at, for instance, what the Premier said about Ralph Waldo Emerson. And it looks like I might be digressing, but it's really not. He quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson in his speech to the chamber about the budget and said a quote. And then he said:

My mom used to say it a little differently. She said, “If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you jump off a cliff too?” I remember on one occasion I said, “Mom, this is Saskatchewan. There are no cliffs.” I spent time in my room thinking about that. She was right, of course.

I'm of course thinking, well his mom was right about cliffs as well, but the Premier was talking about quite something different.

He says, “You can't do something just because everyone else is doing it.”

Again, Mr. Speaker, very interesting, very interesting that the Premier says this because he's bringing forward Bills and agreements with others that are not in the best interests of Saskatchewan residents, but forging ahead because of favours that were made to others and simple and pure ideology, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look, for instance, at the issue of chiropractic services in this province, Mr. Speaker. Instead of being a leader on this issue, what is the Premier doing? The Premier has decided to be a follower. He is going to follow other provinces in creating a user fee for chiropractic services and delisting the service, Mr. Speaker. That's what he's doing. Instead of being a leader on the issue of medicare, he has decided to be a follower, and not to the advantage of the people of Saskatchewan by any means.

Let's also talk about something, another quote that he said, which is, “It's about spending smarter instead of spending more.” Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about a program which doesn't cost the provincial government a lot of money, but will have far-reaching impacts when it is out of control. And that's called the Dutch elm disease program, Mr. Speaker. This is a program that prevents Dutch elm disease from spreading, especially into our larger centres like Regina and Saskatoon, as well as Moose Jaw and Yorkton and the other smaller centres as well.

Mr. Speaker, they've cut the spending to this program. When Dutch elm disease comes into the city, because they're not being able to deal with the trees around the municipalities that make sure that it doesn't enter into the cities, once it hits the

cities, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be catastrophic. It is going to be too late to deal with the problem, Mr. Speaker.

But they're off-loading this onto the municipal governments to deal with. Problem with that is, Mr. Speaker, the municipal governments can't deal with what they've already got on their plate because they broke their promise, the Sask Party broke their promise, on revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. So the municipal governments already have to pick up the tab with respect to the revenue sharing portion of the Sask Party broken promise, which means that the municipalities are dealing with infrastructure costs that they didn't know that they would have to deal with. Mill rates are going to have to be increased. The tax burden is going to be shifted onto those municipalities.

So when they say, the Sask Party says, that they are saving money for individuals in Saskatchewan, it's a shell game, Mr. Speaker. It's a shell game because they're raising costs elsewhere. That is going to be the tax burden for the people of Saskatchewan, whether it's increased utility costs, whether it's increases through municipalities that aren't seeing the funding that they need or elsewhere, Mr. Speaker.

Now he also talks about, and I found this one quite disconcerting, this is also from his speech to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. And he says, "We will make some difficult but needed decisions to refocus on the front lines of health care, on our classrooms and on our lecture theatres."

Here's the part that's disconcerting. A few paragraphs later, he says, "It is true that in a democracy, the citizenry give up, if only temporarily, some of its freedoms to the government it has chosen."

Mr. Speaker, what's especially disconcerting about this is that there is serious, serious problems with this budget when it comes to health, education, and post-secondary education. Mr. Speaker, serious concerns.

And it's based purely on ideology, Mr. Speaker. Purely on ideology. The Sask Party seems to think that people should be able to pay their own way, pay their own way regarding everything that they do, and that they should simply be able to go on their own means and not have any sort of involvement from the government, Mr. Speaker, whether it's not dealing with the issue of high cost of affordability for students to access post-secondary education, whether it's dealing with the high cost of health care in terms of for instance having to now pay for chiropractic services, or whether it's dealing with the \$275 per student inequity between the students in the Regina separate school system versus the students in the public school system, Mr. Speaker.

They seem to think that it's ok to have their ideology, have its footprint all over everything regardless of how it affects the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, we've heard also that there's been some beans spilled. Some more beans spilled, Mr. Speaker, and that's with respect to the harmonized sales tax.

Now they're obviously — as I've heard one expression which I like the best — trying to stuff the toothpaste back into the tube, Mr. Speaker. But guess what? The cat's out of the bag. They are

definitely going to look at harmonizing the sales taxes in this province to be able to balance off, or to not even balance off, to be able to cover off some of the debt that they are going to be incurring as a government going forward into the future. That's what this government is planning on doing. Make no mistake about it. Make no mistake about it. The only good thing is that we've had some forewarning and foreshadowing on what this Sask Party government intends on doing, Mr. Speaker.

Now the other revelation that we heard, Mr. Speaker, is one that we heard yesterday, and this again is from the Finance Minister. This comes from the *Battlefords Daily News*, and unfortunately it's not good news again for the people of Saskatchewan in terms of dealing with their health, Mr. Speaker. And the quote from the *Battlefords Daily News* is this, "User fees have to be part of the solution to cut health care costs, Finance Minister Rod Gantfoer said in North Battleford Wednesday."

Now this is very disconcerting, Mr. Speaker. Very disconcerting. Because nowhere in their election platform, nowhere did I see any notion of user fees going to be implemented or that it was even on the radar. Mind you, there was nothing, nothing in their platform about harmonizing sales taxes either, Mr. Speaker.

So before they throw stones in glass houses, before they throw stones about what is said and what is done, I suggest they look in the mirror and take a good hard look in the mirror because what they're doing is completely contrary to their election platform document, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan, they won't be fooled, they know what they promised. And they know what they're doing right now, Mr. Speaker.

I go on to quote from *The Battlefords Daily News*: "Gantfoer made that statement during a breakfast [March 31st] at the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce. He came to the city to speak about the provincial budget, released March 24th."

So there you go, Mr. Speaker. We know what the budget entails. We know what's coming. We know a harmonized sales tax is coming, whether that's before the next election or right after the next election. We know that user fees for health care are coming, whether it's before the next election or after the next election, Mr. Speaker, if this Sask Party government is re-elected.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the Sask Party election platform document. This document that they put out prior to the election in November 2007. One of the most egregious things, Mr. Speaker, one of the most egregious things is something that they stated in this platform that is completely opposite of what's happening right now. They said, and I quote, in their platform, Sask Party election platform:

Saskatchewan people expect their government to be open, honest, and accountable. A Saskatchewan Party Government will provide Saskatchewan people with more transparency and accountability than any previous government . . .

Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. It's untruthful. It's not, it's completely disingenuous and, Mr. Speaker, it's dishonest.

And it will come forward to bite them firmly where anyone wants to decide they should be bitten, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Now, as I said, Mr. Speaker, this is a false budget. It talks, it reduces the funding for forest fire suppression. It has no funding built in for teacher contracts that are upcoming, Mr. Speaker. So what signal is that sending to teachers, Mr. Speaker? Is it telling them that they are not going to get a raise? Or is it telling them that their school districts will have to find more savings, which means cuts, Mr. Speaker? What is, what signal does that send to the teachers of this province, Mr. Speaker?

And so you know, I have a number of questions that I'd like to put out, Mr. Speaker. And perhaps I could get some help from some of my colleagues because I need some help answering these questions, Mr. Speaker. Is this a budget dishonest in its spending predictions, Mr. Speaker? You bet it is. Is this budget causing uncertainty in the civil servant, civil service? You bet it is. Is this budget cutting programs like the Aboriginal employment development program and the Dutch elm disease prevention program as well as many others that are going to have significant impact in the future, Mr. Speaker? You bet it is.

Is this a budget that is going to cause further hardship for Saskatchewan people, for instance the chiropractic program? Financial hardship, hardship regarding physical health and thereby causing hardship through emotional hardship, Mr. Speaker? You bet it is.

Is this a budget that is going to incur further debt, Mr. Speaker? You bet it is. One only has to look at the budget document to see that that debt to the GDP [gross domestic product] ratio is going to be increasing steadily to year 2014 if the Sask Party stays in place.

Is this a budget that disrespects the responsibility of duty to consult in announcing changes and cuts that were discussed with First Nations and Métis organizations prior to being introduced in the budget, Mr. Speaker? You bet it is.

Is this a budget that disrespects our children by pitting separate school boards versus public school boards with respect to equitable funding to the amount of \$275 less per student in the Regina separate school system? You bet it is.

Is the NDP as the official opposition going to do everything in its capacity to hold the government accountable, inform the people of Saskatchewan about the truth of the nefarious ongoing of the Sask Party government, rather than the spin that Sask Party puts on all of its dishonest actions this government is taking, and be able to provide a much better and trustworthy alternative to . . .

[12:30]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. It now being 12:30 under rule 30(6), I remind the members that the Minister of Finance now has 20 minutes to conclude the debate on the budget motion. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

Mr. Speaker, once again it's a great pleasure for me to rise in this House and close the debate on the budget motion for this current budget year 2010-2011.

Mr. Speaker, as anyone may imagine, this task of presenting a budget and preparing a budget is a rather formidable task, and I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the people that helped in that whole entire process. First of all, I'd like to thank the constituents of the Melfort constituency for their ongoing support, understanding, and good advice over the years. It's been a pleasure to support the people's advice and direction.

And I would like to acknowledge my Melfort constituency assistants, Laurie Hookway and Peggy Gordon. In Regina here, I have to also recognize and thank and I express my appreciation to the people in my office here in Regina, to the chief of staff Dick Carter, also to Kim Jalbert, Carrie Klassen, and Fred Fedosoff.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss as well if, having this opportunity, not to thank the Ministry of Finance under the leadership of Deputy Minister Doug Matthies for all of their work and dedication to helping to prepare the government's budget this year. I would especially like to thank the Premier, to my cabinet colleagues, to my caucus colleagues, and all of the support staff here in Regina for the support in the budget process. It's truly a document that we have prepared that is not just for us, but it's for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to state some incredibly important initiatives that we had in this budget. Mr. Speaker, there are some important things that we said that we wanted to do in terms of a theme for this budget. We've used the three thematic ideas of balanced, forward-looking, and responsible.

It's balanced because it's the only province in Canada that's reducing spending 1.2 per cent; it's \$125 million. Mr. Speaker, it also on a General Revenue Fund basis shows a surplus of \$20 million. Therefore it's a balanced budget, and that's important.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's also important to recognize that government-supported debt has decreased to \$4.15 billion and is going to remain flat for the duration of this budget. And that's an important initiative because it results in significant savings of interest costs to the people of Saskatchewan, not just this year but every year going forward into the future. Mr. Speaker, we were also very fortunate in that we were able to budget in such a way as that we had to use less than \$200 million from our Growth and Financial Security Fund that was our rainy day fund and leave a balance of over \$500 million in that account going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to make sure that this budget was forward-looking, and we made sure that we had key infrastructure investments that need to be supported going forward. We wanted to make sure that we supported economic development initiatives, that we were supporting education, and we were protecting core services.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to make sure that this budget was responsible because we are of an obligation to lead Saskatchewan in a responsible way, while protecting core services for citizens that are in most need of our support.

Mr. Speaker, in the past it has always been of interest to me to have the opposition not represent quite factually the situation that has changed from November of '07 to March of '10. In November '07, I would like to remind the House that the General Revenue Fund debt in the province, that we inherited from the members opposite, was \$6.8 billion. We also inherited a savings account balance of \$1.2 billion, for a total of \$5.6 billion net. As of March 10th of this year, our General Revenue Fund debt is \$4.1 billion, and we have a savings account balance of 500 million, a net number of \$3.6 billion, which is an improvement overall in that period of time of over \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's a question that has been asked from time to time about what has our growth agenda contributed to. Well, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 while everyone was focusing on the collapse of the potash market, countries like China and India were doing business with Saskatchewan in an unprecedented way. As I mentioned in my budget speech, for example, while China was not purchasing potash in 2009, canola sales were up 80 per cent to \$553 million. Peas were up 51 per cent to \$105 million, and linseed was up 341 per cent to \$69.4 million.

In India, a similar country that was buying virtually no potash in 2009, there was \$975 million of goods sold to India, which represents almost 45 per cent of the entire exports of the country of Canada . . . came from Saskatchewan, with only 4 per cent of the population. And so we are punching way above our weight, and we need to recognize those successes as well.

Mr. Speaker, one of the key organizations that deserve to get credit for that significant change in the sales across the continents was the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, STEP, who have done an absolute fabulous job with their 400 business members in selling Saskatchewan's story right around the world. And in recognition of their achievements and the confidence that we have in that organization, we increased our contribution to that organization by 10 per cent in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, 2009 was a challenging year for every jurisdiction in the world as the world economy suffered the largest recession since the 1930s, and that has certainly had a tremendous impact on virtually every jurisdiction in the world. Many jurisdictions were severely hampered on their ability to move forward. In Canada many of the provinces have experienced significant and very troublesome deficits, and in Saskatchewan we were able to have some bright spots in the midst of the worst recession in decades.

In 2009 in Saskatchewan, employment increased by 7,900 people — 1.5 per cent — the only province in Canada that experienced positive employment growth in 2009. Our unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent, the lowest in Canada. Our population has risen through the last 14 consecutive quarters, an increase of over 16,000 people from October to October, an incredible record of success in the face of a world-wide recession, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget looks forward. And I'd like to just mention some of the highlights.

In 2010-11 our capital spending is going to be \$632 million in our budget — the third highest capital budget in the history of

the province, almost \$3 billion over three years to fix the infrastructure pothole that was left by the previous administration. Mr. Speaker, part of that was \$177 million in municipal infrastructure, an increase of nearly 30 per cent to make sure that we were able to capture all of the federal infrastructure and stimulus dollars that are available so that we maximize the opportunities that the province have.

In agriculture we spent \$16 million in agricultural research and development. We spent \$16 million to the Saskatchewan Research Council to support the good work that they do across the province and for this country. We made a four-year commitment to the Canadian Light Source of almost \$12 million to ensure that the synchrotron is going to continue to prosper and do well as they increase the beamlines that are available for research scientists from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we made sure that we were sensitive of the needs of the health care system by making sure that we spent an extra \$7.9 million on health care training seats. We're spending \$3.5 million on our physician recruitment strategy and agency, \$6.6 million on a medical education system enhancements, and \$10.5 million to start the patients-first initiative by reducing surgical wait times and wait-lists. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that that's responsible.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to deliver key health and social care programs for people that are most vulnerable. They say in a rising economy that a rising tide floats all boats, and that may be true, Mr. Speaker. But I think we have an obligation to recognize that not all boats are in the same shape. Some of them have been pretty beat up by life and have some leaks in them, and we've got to make sure we don't leave those boats behind as the economy moves forward. And so we need to protect some core services.

Mr. Speaker, we're increasing funding by \$10 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to help them with their important work. And, Mr. Speaker, we're announcing that we have increased spending by \$2.5 million to autism services as we help families struggle with this very difficult disease and challenge moving forward. And in this restraint budget, we're going to increase the spending to regional health authorities by 5 per cent to provide funding for their base and increase for their funding, base funding of \$2.6 billion.

In social services, we are spending extra money, \$345 million in income assistance programs. We're spending \$182 million for child and family services including new child welfare spaces. Mr. Speaker, we're increasing the money that is available in the funding to school divisions so that they can exercise their important programs to educate our children going forward to the future. We're also making sure that we make our commitment and fulfill our commitment of 30 extra police officers over the four-year period of time, and that's going to be seen to in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, we have had to tell our municipal partners that we are going to have to freeze their funding at an incredible \$167 million — historic high levels after dramatic increases over the previous two years. And we're going to move forward and fully fund the program as we had promised at 1 per cent of the PST in the next budget year. And that's a commitment we're

certainly going to keep because it's one that we made in good faith and we're going to keep in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, we made sure that we also made sure we're funding the province's complete share of agriculture stabilization programs, AgriStability, and invest in crop insurance and improve the services that those ministries or those programs deliver to our farm families in the province.

Mr. Speaker, while we have lowered expenditures in 14 ministries with the process that we've developed for this budget . . . because we knew that there was going to be restraint that was expected and decisions were going to have to be made that were going to be difficult and heart-rendering, and we certainly have made those decisions.

So we've had 14 ministries that actually have ended up with reduced spending in this period of restraint and difficult challenges. The health growth is limited this year to a 3.1 per cent increase, and that's an incredible achievement as we struggle to make sure that we provide the services that our people need in regard to health services. Lower debt-servicing costs have helped us in that we're going to save \$67 million budget over budget, and that's a worthwhile result of the paydown of our debt.

Mr. Speaker, we've also recognized that we need to reduce the size of government and the footprint that government has in the economy, and we're going to lead by example in this reduction. Over four years, our goal is to reduce the public service by 15 per cent by a policy of attrition and vacancy management, Mr. Speaker. Every year, there's something between 6 and 8 per cent of people leave the public service from retirement or moving on to new opportunities. On average we're going to not fill 4 per cent of those positions. And we know it's an ongoing challenge.

My colleague, the minister from Kelvington-Wadena, certainly spoke in more detail about this whole program. We know it's achievable, but we know we also need to set a target, and it's going to be a challenge to make sure this is done appropriately. Difficult decisions were made, and they had to be made. And we understand that this is what the member from Regina Rosemont meant when he said that the government must, quote, reign in spending, on a March 2nd, 2010 scum. Indeed we have reigned in spending, and I hope that the members opposite will support that initiative because we certainly are consistent with his advice.

I note that, in the following, that of eight provinces that have released their budgets, Saskatchewan is the only budget to show a decline year over year in budget expenses, and I think that is a leadership role that we can be very, very proud of. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Sherry Cooper, the Bank of Montreal chief economist, said in a newsletter March 24th, 2010, and I quote:

This budget does what few others are likely to do this fiscal year — take immediate steps to rein in spending growth. [This budget] . . . should keep Saskatchewan high on the list of Canada's best positioned provinces.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Martin, a business commentator on CJME radio on March 25th, 2010 said, and I quote, "At the end of the

day however this is probably the only government in the country that's cutting its spending."

[12:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, as late as today's *Leader-Post* had a quote from Doug Elliott, in today's *Leader-Post* saying, in terms of the weekly wage exceeds the national average for the first time in our history, he said, "We're ahead of Canada for the first time . . . We can brag about it."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in recent years governments of all stripes, including our own, have followed the well-worn path of bigger government and increased spending. Our government believes that it doesn't work that way. We believe you cannot spend your way out of a deficit. We have chosen a different path.

This budget is balanced, forward-looking, and responsible. This path that we have chosen is not the easy path, but it is the right path to ensure Saskatchewan's economic momentum continues as we are poised to lead the nation in growth in the next two years. It's a right path for the new Saskatchewan. We're looking to the future with confidence and with hope. We know that, without a doubt, that the best days of this province are still ahead of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'll proudly support the budget.

The Speaker: — Order. The motion before the Assembly is the amendment raised by the member from the constituency of Regina Dewdney, seconded by the member from Cumberland:

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

"that the government no longer has the confidence of the Members of this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan for the following reasons: presenting an inaccurate portrayal of the province's debt and deficit while forcing Saskatchewan people to pay the price for the government's financial mismanagement through hurtful cuts to important programs and services."

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour please rise. Oh, pardon me. Those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

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

[The division bells rang from 12:47 until 12:48.]

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

[The division bells rang from 12:51 until 12:53.]

[Yeas — 20]

Lingenfelter	McCall	Belanger
Harper	Trew	Higgins
Junor	Atkinson	Nilson
Forbes	Vermette	Broten
Furber	Morin	Yates
Iwanchuk	Taylor	Quennell
Wotherspoon	Chartier	

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please rise.

[Nays — 34]

Wall	Morgan	Bjornerud
Gantfoer	Draude	Boyd
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Duncan	Huyghebaert	Heppner
Harpauer	D'Autremont	Harrison
Norris	Reiter	Hutchinson
Brkich	Elhard	Hart
Schriemer	Stewart	Allchurch
Weekes	Wilson	Michelson
LeClerc	Ottenbreit	Ross
Chisholm	Bradshaw	Kirsch
McMillan		

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 20; those opposed, 34.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment defeated. Order. Order. Before I call the motion, I did hear a comment about someone speaking the truth. Now where it came from, I don't know. But I want to remind members that I would ask members to be mindful of being respectful when the debate is being called, when the vote is being called.

The motion before the Assembly brought forward by the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

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

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 of the motion say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

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

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

[Yeas — 34]

Wall	Morgan	Bjornerud
Gantfoer	Draude	Boyd
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Duncan	Huyghebaert	Heppner
Harpauer	D'Autremont	Harrison
Norris	Reiter	Hutchinson
Brkich	Elhard	Hart
Schriemer	Stewart	Allchurch
Weekes	Wilson	Michelson
LeClerc	Ottenbreit	Ross
Chisholm	Bradshaw	Kirsch
McMillan		

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please rise.

[Nays — 20]

Lingenfelter	McCall	Belanger
Harper	Trew	Higgins
Junor	Atkinson	Nilson
Forbes	Vermette	Broten
Furber	Morin	Yates
Iwanchuk	Taylor	Quennell
Wotherspoon	Chartier	

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 34; those opposed, 20.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion is carried.

It now being near the hour of adjournment, this House will stand adjourned until Monday, April the 12th at 1:30 p.m.

In the meantime, I trust that all members will enjoy the Easter weekend and week with their family and friends. Have a great Easter.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership
Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Research Council

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. June Draude
Minister Responsible for Crown Investments
Corporation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
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Government Insurance
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Hon. Rod Gantfoer
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Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

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Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
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Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Capital Commission