



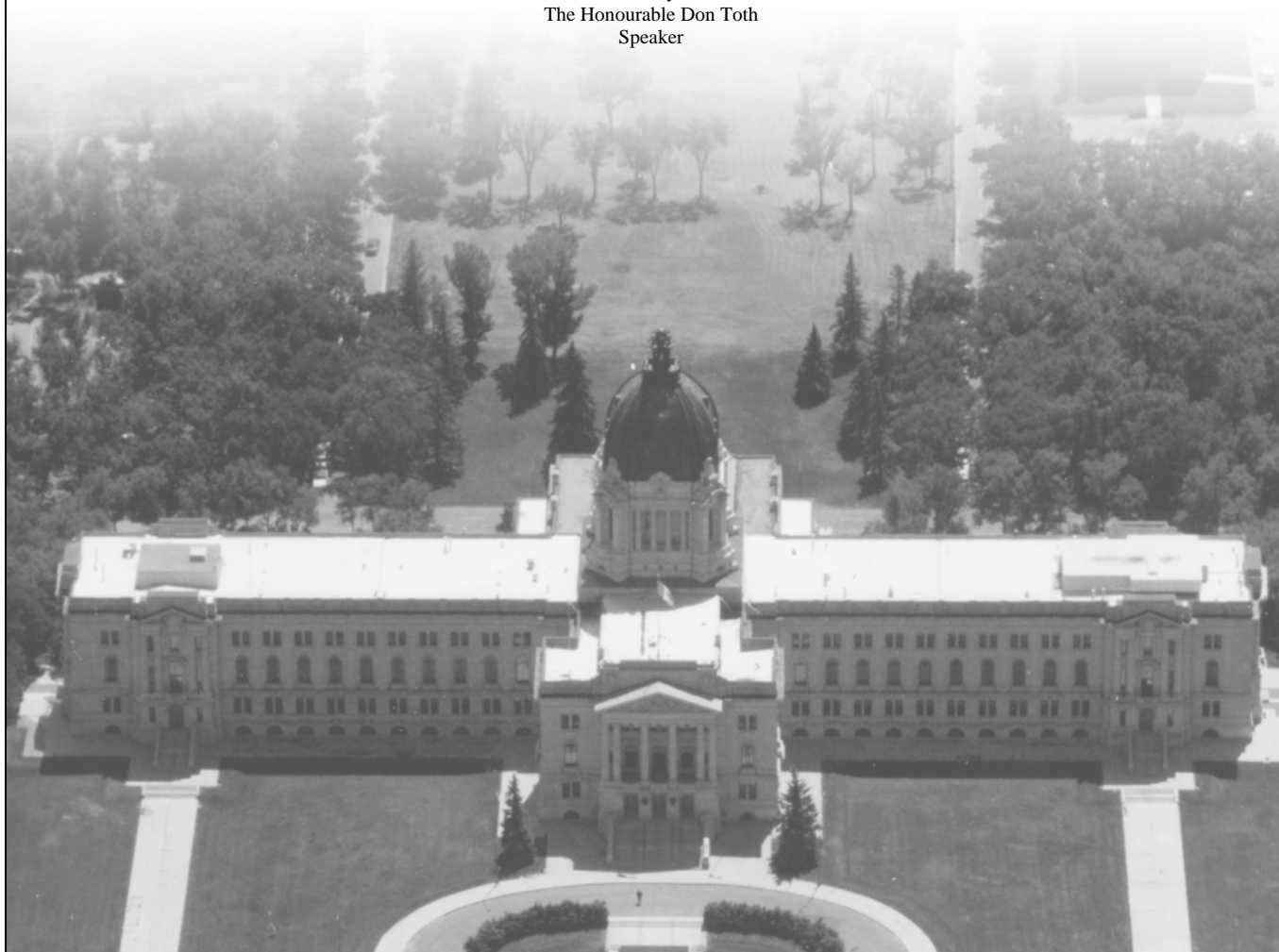
FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

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 — Lorne Calvert

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Joan	NDP	Cumberland
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
Brotan, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. 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, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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
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, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. 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
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly His Excellency, William Fisher, the High Commissioner of Australia to Canada. We want to welcome him here to the Legislative Assembly today. He has had a number of meetings throughout today, including a meeting with myself where we were able to discuss a number of mutual interests between the province of Saskatchewan and Australia as a nation, including agriculture, including our interest in pursuing clean coal technology, shared by Australia and some specific states, in fact, there.

As well as we were able to discuss for some time the fact that between our two countries, — and specifically Saskatchewan I'm thinking of in this regard — we supply 60 per cent of the world's uranium. We talked a little bit about just the tonnage of greenhouse gases that might be displaced by that uranium from our respective areas of the world. So I wanted to say to the High Commissioner, we welcome him here. We are grateful for his return visit again to the province. We look forward to a continued relationship between the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, and Australia. And I ask all members to welcome him to the Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier and welcome the High Commissioner again to the province and to this legislature. It's very good to see you back. In addition to the very long ties that we've had of course with the people of Australia through the British Commonwealth and the trading relationship that has developed between our two nations, we have seen in the last several years, Mr. Speaker, a renewed interest between the provinces of Canada and some of the states of Australia, developing new relationships that I think are going to be very, very profitable. And if I may say to the High Commissioner that Australia has profited also from the export, at least temporary export, of many of our young people who have chosen to spend a year or so in Australia. Being the father of one of those, I thank you on her behalf for the great Australian hospitality.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the legislature some

guests seated in your gallery. On your far left, Mr. Speaker, is Ashley Rosom. And Ashley is my cousin and a resident of Regina and she attends the U of R [University of Regina] and studies kinesiology. Beside Ashley is Dave Rosom, her father, who is my uncle. And Dave has been kind enough to open his comfortable home to me during my early days here in Regina, so I thank them for that.

Beside Dave is Chris Broten, my dad. Beside Chris is Stuart Noble, my brother-in-law, my sister Julianne Broten-Noble, and a childhood friend of my sister, Myfanwy Van Vliet. Julianne and Stuart live in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which is also Stuart's home. They're back for the holidays so it was a pleasant surprise that they were able to be here today. Julianne is no stranger to the legislature and the work of government. One year during university she worked in this legislature for the past member for Saskatoon Massey Place, and she currently works in Stormont, which is the Northern Ireland parliament buildings, as a civil servant.

Her husband Stuart works for an NGO [non-government organization] called CARE [Christian Action Research and Education] that operates throughout Europe dealing with governments and politicians. So he too is no stranger to legislative buildings. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a number of individuals seated in the east gallery and two individuals seated on the floor of the legislature. These are members of the Regina Queen City Good Samaritans — the Good Sams. We're joined today by president and first lady, Stan and Elaine Iles. If you could please give us a wave. There we go. And we're also joined by past president and also past first lady, George and Gina Berar, seated on the floor here. They're the advance guard, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Good Sam club is a group of recreational vehicle owners that are active in camping throughout North America. They're able to meet and camp with people from all walks of life, all ethnic groups, and all age groups. We thereby extend their knowledge of the world around us and other people's opinions.

They do a tremendous amount of volunteer work such as being camp hosts at campgrounds, working to clean campgrounds, preparing and painting camp buildings, doing highway cleanup, helping people that are having vehicle or other trouble on the road — being good Samaritans of course, Mr. Speaker — hosting meals at campgrounds for tour groups passing through, entertaining at seniors homes, helping out at Christmastime with gifts for charity groups, in general being a good Samaritan.

I think they may, as well, Mr. Speaker, pass out the odd wheat

sheaf pin. Is that true? The wheat sheaf pin's still very popular? Very good. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming the Good Sams to their legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, if I could, introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House two friends of mine, Jennifer Soloway and Lindsay Adams, who are in the gallery today. They're great friends of mine and even better friends of the province. Welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Prince Albert Mayor Receives Order of Merit

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday evening we honoured the lives of seven individuals with the province's highest honour, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

I am proud to say one of those fine individuals, Mr. Jim Scarrow, is a constituent of mine. Mr. Scarrow is well deserving of this honour as he has shown both individual success as well as significant contribution to the province, particularly in his hometown of Prince Albert.

After taking a look at the vast amount of Mr. Scarrow's accomplishments, it is difficult for me to know where to begin. In his lifetime he has an incredible broadcasting career, but what he is best known for is his outstanding leadership and community service. For years Mr. Scarrow has been actively involved with the Kinsmen clubs locally, provincially, and nationally. He was a founding member of the Saskatchewan Kinsmen Foundation for the handicapped and he played a major role in the production of the Kinsmen Telemiracle telethons.

Mr. Scarrow has also played a key role in the success of many other fundraising efforts in Prince Albert and surrounding communities, including the E. A. Rawlinson Centre for performing and visual arts, the Prince Albert Children's Haven, and the Prince Albert Raiders hockey club. Most recently he has taken on the new role of mayor for the city of Prince Albert. And while this is not Mr. Scarrow's first time being honoured or being recognized for his accomplishments and achievements, you can bet it will not be his last.

So today, Mr. Speaker, as MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Prince Albert Carlton, I ask all members to join in with me in personally recognizing and thanking His Worship, Jim Scarrow, for the hard work, time, and effort he has dedicated to the people of Prince Albert and to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Business Owner Assists Runners in Need

Ms. Atkinson: — Saskatoon Nutana, my constituency office, is located in the unique Broadway business district which offers a variety of services and shops.

One of those businesses is Brainsport, the running shoe, owned by Brian Michasiw. Brainsport supports customers' footwear, provides clothing, supplies, and organized running groups. Brian Michasiw also serves needs well beyond his customers on Broadway. From donors he collects used running shoes for athletes who cannot afford proper footwear for their sport. Brian checks for the best used running shoes to distribute to runners in need, both here and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, Brian and Jason Warick, a Saskatoon journalist and marathon runner getting ready for the Olympics, have taken eight hockey bags full of used shoes to a Kenyan training camp for high-level African middle-distance runners. The camp, sponsored by the IOC [International Olympic Committee], is situated on land owned by Kip Keano, the 1968 Olympic gold medal winner for the 1500 metres.

Though the attending athletes are very high-level competitors, they do not have the means to purchase the high standard of shoes used by North American runners. To assist these runners in their training programs and to help protect them from injury, Brian fitted and distributed the best shoes to suit each runner.

Also attending the training camp are junior athletes who show great potential as competitors. Brian provided running shoes to a young athlete who went on to win a world junior championship.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all legislators I want to congratulate Brian Michasiw of Brainsport for this inspiring program for athletes in need, both here at home and abroad. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Saskatoon Scientist Receives Order of Merit

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise here today to share with you and through you the accomplishments of one of our province's great citizens.

On December 13, Saskatoon Sutherland constituent, Dr. Reuben Mapletoft, a University of Saskatchewan professor, was awarded our highest honour, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

Dr. Mapletoft was born in Paradise Hill in 1943. He grew up on a farm near Fort Pitt and attended a one-room schoolhouse for the first eight years of his education. He attended high school in Frenchman Butte and university in Ontario, South Africa, and Wisconsin.

Dr. Mapletoft and his wife, Janet, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary the night he received this award. They have two sons, John and David.

Dr. Mapletoft is known for his research in reproductive biology. He patented a substance that replaces serum in the cryopreservation of embryos and assisted in the development of a drug to induce super ovulation in cattle. This therefore increased embryo production. His embryo transfer protocols have become the de facto standard for clinical use worldwide.

Dr. Mapletoft has given over 150 lectures in more than 30 countries and has trained students from all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to join me in congratulating Saskatchewan's Dr. Reuben Mapletoft.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Volunteers Provide Community Christmas Dinner

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert is a community of people who reach out to help one another and who are always willing to help those less fortunate. One fine example of this selflessness and sharing is the community Christmas dinner. The community Christmas dinner organizing committee is chaired by Sol Sanderson, who is assisted by his family including Andrea Sanderson and Dawn Robins from the Bernice Sayese Centre, by Isabelle Impey, as well as by Kateri House, which is a lay mission association committed to service the First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, five years ago this group of people saw a need to provide Christmas dinner to people in Prince Albert, and the event has grown each year. Their motto is, Christmas dinner is not Christmas dinner if it's not on Christmas Day. Each year the organizers and volunteers sacrifice their own Christmas to serve between 800 and 1,000 meals at St. Mary High School. Some of these people they provide meals to include the homeless, families who cannot afford their own meals, truck drivers who are in Prince Albert on Christmas Day, and families from out of town who have a family member in the hospital. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, they deliver between 350 and 500 meals all over the city to people who cannot leave their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in acknowledging the compassion and work of this group of people who give up their own Christmas to ensure that less fortunate people have a true Christmas dinner on Christmas Day. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Business of the Year Award to Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Saskatchewan Indian

Gaming Authority for being named the 2007 Business of the Year by *Saskatchewan Business* magazine. And if I'm not mistaken, with just 11 years in operation under its belt, SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Inc.] is the youngest company to ever achieve this honour.

Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, SIGA owns and operates five casinos in Saskatchewan, in Prince Albert, North Battleford, Yorkton, on the White Cap Dakota First Nation near Saskatoon, and in my own constituency of White Bear First Nation near Carlyle.

To be named Business of the Year is an honour that few businesses ever enjoy. Like many new businesses, SIGA experienced challenges and growing pains in its infancy, but SIGA persevered and made it through those early days and never looked back. Not only is SIGA a model for other jurisdictions with First-Nations-run gaming entities, but also an organization that supports hundreds of groups and organizations throughout the province annually. Perhaps one of SIGA's top achievements has been its commitment to providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in this province. More than 70 per cent of the 1,700 women and men working at the SIGA casinos in Saskatchewan as well as at its head office in Saskatoon are First Nations heritage.

Again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to SIGA on being named the 2007 Business of the Year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

First Nations Language Keepers Conference

Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend the annual First Nations Language Keepers Conference in Saskatoon sponsored by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. For First Nations people, nothing is more fundamental to the survival of our culture and identity than to be able to speak our first language.

I thank Dorothy Miyo, the executive director of SICC [Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre], and her staff for hosting such an important conference.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Mr. Speaker, a quote from First Nations elders interviews conducted by SICC goes something like this, and I quote:

Each time we hear our life long cultural teachings, we hear our ancestors voices, we envision our rightful place within our creation worldview.

It is time we stand up in unity, to embrace it with a living understanding and be passed on, at every opportunity, to our communities, our people and our younger, future leaders.

Mr. Speaker, a report by UNESCO [United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] in 1996 stated that “Canada’s Aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world” because once they’re gone, they are gone forever. Unlike most Canadians, we Aboriginal people can’t return to a home country to reclaim the language. We are home.

Mr. Speaker, December 10 marked the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But here in Canada and in Saskatchewan we still have a long way to go to ensure that all cultures, in particular the First Nations and the Métis people, have their fundamental rights such as our language respected and supported with adequate resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Citizens Support 15 Wing Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to two individuals who live in my home constituency of Moose Jaw North. The first individual I would like to recognize is Colonel Doug Marr.

Mr. Marr held the position as honorary colonel at 15 Wing Moose Jaw for an unprecedented 11 years. The role of honorary colonel is to serve as a public relations liaison between the community and the Wing to offer advice to the Wing commander.

Colonel Marr recently stepped down from this role, which he performed with pride and with dignity, and has accepted an appointment as a special adviser to the Wing commander. I would like to wish him and his wife Cathy good health and happiness in this new endeavour.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute to Ms. Yvette Moore, who has accepted the appointment as the new honorary colonel for 15 Wing. This appointment requires someone who represents the best in the community, and Yvette Moore fills that description. Yvette is a well-known artist who lives in Moose Jaw and owns the Yvette Moore fine art gallery. In the year 2000, Yvette Moore was named as Moose Jaw’s Citizen of the Year and received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit medal.

Please join me in paying special tribute to these renowned citizens of Moose Jaw, Doug Marr and Yvette Moore. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Salaries for Political Staff

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the very first orders in council that this

Saskatchewan Party cabinet passed and approved was to substantially increase the wages paid to political staff in the minister’s offices. Chiefs of staff to a minister can now — during these, as the Premier calls them, stark financial times — earn double the salary that was previously paid for this position, a top range of over \$10,000 a month.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is a simple one for the Premier. When can all other employees of the Government of Saskatchewan expect their pay increase?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I’ll be happy to take that question on from the member from Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, while we were looking at restructuring and creating a transition period of time where we would create a new structure that would help us build this province, we looked at the structure that was in place before. And there was a necessity to in fact have a level of support within minister’s offices that we have identified as chiefs of staff.

That level of staff that’s necessary is there to ensure that we provide good government to people, that there is the ability for people to feel that their affairs have been looked after. The salaries reflect the kind of people that we are employing. There is a wide range. And above all, Mr. Speaker, the cost of government by the Saskatchewan Party government will be less than the cost of that former government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the very first order of business for this Premier was to almost double the salary for Saskatchewan Party political staffers. That was his priority. So when we take this huge wage increase into account, Mr. Speaker, it explains why this Saskatchewan Party government is such a rush to jam through essential services legislation.

How do you double the wages for government political staff and go into negotiations next spring with thousands, thousands of Saskatchewan government employees whose contracts are up for negotiations and expect them to settle for anything less than the ministers’ staff? Well, Mr. Speaker, this Premier has obviously decided essential services is how you settle for less. No comments about treating people fairly, no attempt at building good relationship — it’s pay increases for political staff and essential services for the rest.

To the Premier: will the Premier and cabinet be approving a pay increase for themselves?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I think I’ve clearly

identified the reasons why the structure has changed. I've identified the kind of people that are now working for the Saskatchewan Party government in the ministers' office, and I've clearly explained why there is a need for a level of chiefs of staff. That opposition, when they were in government, did not have a structure in place that would deal with those kinds of things when a minister was not there.

Mr. Speaker, one other thing. The member opposite, the member opposite makes the point, the member opposite makes the point that we suddenly have a large cost in the Premier's office. Mr. Speaker, the cost when the former member, the current Leader of the Opposition, was in the office of Premier . . . the staff cost was in the area of \$193,000 per month; that is the current salary of our members in the ministers' office. Mr. Speaker, under the former premier, the cost was \$285,000.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite didn't even come close to the question, never mind giving me a straight answer. It was a simple yes or no. Is the Premier and the cabinet going to approve a pay raise for themselves?

Where it's been quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to taking care of their political appointees, they're very good at it. We've seen the massive salary hikes. Some political staffers, on top of having their salary doubled, are now entitled to six weeks paid holidays a year — six weeks holidays on day one. Mr. Speaker, a working person in this province would have to work at the same workplace for 18 to 20 years to receive that same benefit. Double the salary and six weeks of paid holidays on day one, double the salary and six weeks of holidays if you work for a minister; essential services for the rest.

To the Minister of Labour: is this just another example of Saskatchewan Party government's sense of entitlement, or will the minister commit, or will the minister commit to include changes when labour legislation is tabled to give all workers in Saskatchewan the same benefit?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I want to explain again that the cost of government under that administration was in the area of \$285,000 per month. Mr. Speaker, in the Premier's office today the cost will be \$193,000 — a significant reduction. Mr. Speaker We know that there were 20 cabinet ministers in the former government. Today there are 18. We are working with a smaller government. We are working with a more efficient government, and we are working at a government that is going to cost less.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, essential services for government employees, unless you work in a minister's office, and the

Premier won't even stand on this feet and tell this Assembly if he's going to approve a salary increase for himself — for him and his cabinet ministers. No, he's laughs about it, thinks it's a big joke. But mark my words, it's coming because that's the way they operate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at staff in ministers' offices, they now make more than what a minister of the Crown does. So, Mr. Speaker, ministers earn less money than their chief of staff. And you name me one corporation across Canada or in North America the size of the Government of Saskatchewan where the person with the responsibility earns less than the staff that work for that person.

Mr. Speaker, the question is clear, for a Premier who calls himself accountable, are you going to approve a wage for yourself?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I find this line of questioning interesting that when that opposition was in government they clearly had salaries of deputy ministers that were far in excess of the ministers' salaries, Mr. Speaker. That has been a practice that has been in place for years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Wakabayashi report was accepted by this entire legislature. It explains what the salaries of an MLA will be. It also talks about the cost of living for MLAs which came into effect on April 1 of this year, Mr. Speaker. And now that, because the election has occurred, that new system is in place, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd just like to remind members that questions answered are to be placed through the Chair. I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Costs of Dismissal

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After giving their political backroom friends hefty raises, the Saskatchewan Party immediately fires a number of high-ranking civil servants without cause. Among the ranks of those senior civil servants could be found decades of experience in government, immense qualifications and skills, and countless hours of dedication to the cause of public service in this province.

One of those replaced civil servants, Mr. John Wright, has served government for three decades in a variety of capacities including, most recently, as deputy minister of Health. The NDP has learned that John Wright may be receiving close to \$800,000 in severance for being fired without cause. Can the Saskatchewan Party confirm that it has to pay out almost \$1 million to fire one of Saskatchewan's most talented and qualified civil servants?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at each time that there is a change in government there are officials who will be promoted. There are officials who will receive lateral movements, and there will be officials who, after consideration by a new government, do not fit within the objectives of that government, Mr. Speaker.

That has been a long-standing tradition. That has been the policy when that group of individuals across were government. That has happened in every province, and it will continue to happen, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker.

This is an ongoing process that will continue as we assess the human resources that we currently have in all levels of government, Mr. Speaker, and there may be other changes that will occur in the future because this is a process that is ongoing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's good of them to confirm that there will be more firings.

Mr. Wright was not the only deputy minister to have been fired without cause by the incoming government. There were many other top government employees that were dismissed by this new Sask Party cabinet without cause. The NDP has also learned that the total cost of severing deputy ministers in the first month of this government may be in excess of \$4 million — \$4 million. How can the government justify putting the taxpayers of this province with a \$4 million bill?

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: what is the total bill for dismissing deputy ministers without cause?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, individual files on specific individuals, I will not make a comment on. But I can indicate to the House that the Leader of the Opposition, when the results of November 7 were known, the official opposition leader indicated that he would begin by releasing 150 individuals; I believe it was 151. So that process was begun by the Leader of the Opposition.

And there are processes in place to do an assessment of human resources in all of our ministries, Mr. Speaker. And that will continue. That is a process that is going to enable a Saskatchewan Party government to build and put in place the kind of people that we want to serve a better government in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina

Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's good of the minister to confirm that they don't want a professional civil service, one that only reacts to their political needs.

Mr. Speaker, we are already starting to see the cost of dismissing top civil servants without cause. This is costing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan already, Mr. Speaker, and they have only dismissed nine employees.

Could the Minister of the Public Service Commission tell this House and tell the taxpayers of Saskatchewan how many more civil servants are on the chopping block? How much is this going to cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? To the minister: How many more civil servants are going to be dismissed without cause, and what will the total cost be to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've already indicated, the process of assessments and evaluation of human resources will continue. The member has indicated that there have been changes made, and there will continue to be changes made.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out that when the people who have left employment, they all had valuable contributions to the civil service in this province for the time that they delivered those services, Mr. Speaker. And that is why the Saskatchewan Party government is going to put in place other people who have the same kind of credentials and the same kind of responsibility to the Saskatchewan Party and to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Staffing Strategy for the Crowns

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party is off to a slippery start, Mr. Speaker. First, it's wasting money by changing departments to ministries. Second, it's wasting money by firing career public servants without cause. Third, it's wasting money by hiring political chiefs of staff at double the previous salaries.

When will it end? Will the Crowns be attacked like the departments were? To the Crown Investments Corporation minister, please help Saskatchewan people decide who is smarter than a Canadian fifth grader. And it's easy. Simply assure us career Crown employees will not be fired only to be replaced with overpaid Sask Party hacks. Will you give us that assurance?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for

Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. On November 7 Saskatchewan people spoke very clearly. They want for themselves what they want for their Crown corporations. They want growth and opportunity. They want security, and they want us to keep our promises. And that's what we will do, Mr. Speaker. They voted for change, Mr. Speaker, and there will be change within the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. They voted very clearly, and that's what we will do. We will ensure that we operate the Crown corporations — unlike the members opposite — we will run the Crown corporations in a businesslike fashion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Provide the service at the lowest possible cost. End of story, Mr. Speaker. And I know members opposite don't like it because it means they will be in opposition for a long period of time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the answer, the minister has made it official — Canadian fifth graders are smarter. How many people, whose hopes and dreams for their future rest with the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] minister, will be fired?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister Responsible for the Crowns.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people did not believe the scare tactics that the NDP [New Democratic Party] put forward during the election, and they do not believe the scare tactics that the NDP are attempting to put forward today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: you've already doubled the salaries of new political chiefs of staff. What is the budget for firing and replacing competent people in the Crowns with Sask Party hacks who don't seem to be coming very cheaply? What will your firings cost Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister Responsible for the Crowns.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what we will not do. We will not use Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and their employees as political pawns in the electoral process.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I only have to remind members opposite about things like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] that have done irreparable damage to the good reputation of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the hon. members . . . everyone in this House should know this. The new members may not have heard this, but on October 16, 2004, in the *The StarPhoenix* on SPUDCO it was said, and I quote, "To be sure, the scale of this affair — the mismanagement, lies, years of coverups and failure of governing politicians to take full responsibility — cry out for answers and accountability," Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Public Service

The Speaker: — . . . Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well just a word of advice for the members opposite, they should really read Bruce Johnstone, the business reporter for the *Leader-Post*, who advised the new government not to do anything to the Crowns because they were working quite nicely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just have a couple of questions. In the last election campaign, the members opposite said that they — in their political election platform — that they were going to support the development of a professional public service. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's review that. Barb MacLean, deputy minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation 28 years; John Wright, former deputy minister of Health, 31 years; Bonnie Durnford, 21 years; Lily Stonehouse with her regional college, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] employment, and public service, 30 years; Paul Osborne, 22 years — 132 years of professional public service to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, how can the members opposite explain to the public why at least \$4 million in severance pay will be paid to nine public servants, five of whom have 132 years of public service?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, as the Saskatchewan Party government goes through a renewal and a transferring of individuals and a reassigning of individuals and parting ways with certain individuals, we note that a number of individuals are looking at other opportunities. And I do want to identify one individual who has provided many, many years — I believe over 30 years of experience in the civil service — and that is Mr. Dan Perrins who is now looking at providing additional opportunities and looking at that opportunity with the business schools, the Shoyama Johnson business school. And he will continue to provide good advice. He will continue to be an employee of another organization, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm sure that the competence of all of those individuals will ensure them that they will be providing that same type of competent work somewhere else, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we had a political party in the last provincial election campaign that became the government that promised . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — The people of this province that they would have a professional public service, Mr. Speaker. They elected three members of the legislature in the city of Regina because they promised a professional public service.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — They have dismissed five public servants that have 132 years of public service between them. Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite and to the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission: what message, what message does it send to every public servant that works for the Government of Saskatchewan when we just heard earlier the Deputy Premier tell them there's more firings coming?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, I would like to know, is she suggesting that the people who have been hired in the various ministries are unprofessional, Mr. Speaker, because that is what she's suggesting. She is suggesting that individuals who have been hired are unprofessional. And if that's true, she should stand in this Assembly and say so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I call the members to order. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, nice try, Deputy Premier.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, what I can say to the members opposite, nice try, nice try. Mr. Speaker, in the last election campaign they promised the people of this province a professional public service. Five people, deputy ministers who have 132 years of public service between, them have been fired by the members opposite. The Deputy Premier, earlier in question period in response to a question said that more changes would be coming. Well changes means firings, Mr. Speaker.

Can the member opposite assure us that more career public servants will not be dismissed by the government opposite, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated the process of transition will continue. There will be transfers. There will be lateral movements. And there may be people that will leave the employ of a Saskatchewan Party government. I have said that time and time again. The member opposite seems to indicate that that is only going to mean dismissal.

That is not true, Mr. Speaker. And there will be changes that will continue into the future because as I have said, there is a process of renewal. There is a process to ensure that we as a Saskatchewan Party government can move forward and build on a stronger, better, government in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, he says not so, Mr. Speaker, but there will be changes coming. It's kind of like the wheat sheaf, the flip-flop. Not so, but there's more changes coming, Mr. Speaker.

We have five career public servants that have 132 years of public service between them. It's a very simple question. It's a very simple question, and I'd ask the Deputy Premier, who represents the Sask Party, to answer it. Are there more career public servants that are going to be sent down the yellow brick road because they don't quite fit into their version of a public and professional civil service?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the only people in the province that aren't aware about the events of November 7 are those members opposite, Mr. Speaker. On November 7 the people of the province said that they saw through the nonsensical scare tactics of members opposite in that campaign. They saw through pulp fiction deals like we saw in that last-ditch attempt in Prince Albert to try to win votes of the seats there. They saw through that.

Mr. Speaker, what we've found since coming over to government though, Mr. Speaker, is that the government was trying some other things just prior to the election to try to burnish its image to get elected. \$1.1 million — I'm announcing today, Mr. Speaker — we've discovered was spent, unbudgeted money forced on the Department of Health to spend on advertising, Mr. Speaker, on advertising meant to burnish their image — not on nurses, not on doctors, not on wait times, but on advertising meant to try to boost that government's reputation in the province.

The people of the province saw through that, Mr. Speaker. They saw through the tired old tactics and rejected them. Those members opposite, that tired old opposition, finally get the message, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order.

The Speaker: — I just remind the member that points of order will be considered on orders of the day, so if the member could just wait till we get to orders of the day.

[14:15]

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Enhancements to Discount Bus Pass Program

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to inform the House about a very important and positive development for the people of Saskatoon. Last night Saskatoon City Council endorsed the discount bus pass program, based on an enhanced funding formula provided by the provincial government. As a result, discount bus passes will continue to be available to lower-income people in Saskatoon, providing them with access to affordable public transportation for work, school, and community life.

Mr. Speaker, this program was developed in 2003 as a pilot project for the city of Regina and has since expanded to include the cities of Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Yorkton, Swift Current, and Saskatoon. The program provides bus passes at a reduced rate to people receiving assistance through provincial programs such as social assistance, the transitional employment allowance, the Saskatchewan employment supplement, and the provincial training allowance. In the last year more than 60,000 bus passes have been sold at a reduced rate, helping lower-income Saskatchewan people enter and remain in the workforce and participate in community activities.

Mr. Speaker, this program was in some doubt in Saskatoon prior to council's decision last night. During my first week as Minister of Social Services, I met with Mayor Atchison and the city officials in Saskatoon to discuss some options to continue this important program. As a result, we have adjusted the provincial subsidy paid to the city from \$12 to \$18 for every pass sold. This increase does not require additional resources from the provincial treasury; rather the ministry is able to provide the increase based on the savings that have resulted from social assistance expenditures related to transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the enhanced funding will also be available to the city of Regina to ensure the future viability of the discount bus pass program for lower-income people in that city.

Saskatchewan's new provincial government recognizes the importance of affordable public transportation. It provides people with the ability to work and to go to school. It provides access to important goods and services such as health care, groceries, and public libraries. It gives people the freedom to take part in and contribute to all aspects of community life,

making for stronger families and healthier communities. Securing a future for Saskatchewan and the people who live here is a top priority of this government. Continuing the discount bus pass initiative in Saskatoon and other cities across the province is just one example of that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in response to the statement made by the Minister of Social Services announcing the continuation of the discount pass program in Saskatoon. First, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for the courtesy of providing me an advance copy of her statement. This is indeed good news and my thanks to the ministry and the minister for her attention to this issue. Many, many people in Saskatoon can now look forward to better access for public transportation in Saskatoon.

I must say though that since my call for action on this on November 26, many people wondered what the provincial government was going to do. While the minister can take credit for meeting with the mayor, she did not meet with the citizens most affected by this to give them the assurances that this issue would in fact be resolved quickly before Christmas. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's been over three weeks since I wrote her asking for action. I appreciate the minister's recognition that this program has been working in several cities for some time now, but I have some concerns.

The first is really about the increased costs to the low-income people. While retaining the program is excellent, the increased cost of \$5 is significant and many, many people are raising this concern.

The second is: did the minister ask her officials to take an overall look at the issue of access to transportation in Saskatoon, or is this the end of the road? Does she know that last year over 10,000 trip denials happened for disabled folks using the paratransit system in Saskatoon? And the numbers are on track for this year as well. Now will some of the new-found funds go to help this issue?

And the third is about the found money. The statement is very short on details and I look forward to hearing more about these savings and the redirection of funds. Mr. Speaker. This is good news for low-income folks before Christmas, but much more needs to be done for all forms of access for low-income people in our communities. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 4 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2007/Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'Assemblée législative et le Conseil exécutif (élections à date fixe)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2007 be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that first reading of Bill No. 4, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2007 be read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies has moved:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and

Justice, which I now lay on the table. Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice . . . Order.

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, I realize that at the beginning of every session when there are new members in the House, it sometimes becomes necessary to clarify rules for all members. And I noted during statements by members, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Cannington, who just happens to be the Minister of Liquor and Gaming, made a statement specific to his area of responsibility, that is Liquor and Gaming, Mr. Speaker.

And although he mentioned a community within his constituency, the essence of his member's statement was about the responsibilities that he carries as a minister, and not as a member, Mr. Speaker. So I think it is necessary today, Mr. Speaker, for members — whether they are new or have served in this legislature for some time, Mr. Speaker — I think it is necessary to clarify the rules of the House to ensure that new members like the member from Cannington have a full understanding of what it is to represent either your constituency or your role in cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly this House is now getting adjusted to the new rules of the Assembly, and that is a good and growing process. As I recall, the member's statement by the minister didn't have anything to do with policies related to his ministry. It was a congratulations type of thing, and I believe under the rules that that is indeed permissible. But I would certainly encourage the Speaker to review the rules and to help us identify a clear path and direction as to how this applies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I thank the member from Battlefords for his point of order and the response from the Government House Leader. And I will acknowledge that, yes, we are in a period of transition to the new rules. I will certainly take it under advisement, the point of order, and I will review the rules and come back with a response tomorrow. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. Ottenbreit, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Calvert.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand here today and make remarks on the Speech from the Throne that was delivered on the opening of the first session of the twenty-sixth legislature.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by formally offering my congratulations to you on your acclamation to the position of Speaker of the Assembly. While I am new to this House and have not worked with you, I know you will do a fine job based on the positive comments I have heard from people.

Mr. Speaker, you actually received a ringing endorsement from one of my supporters. Following the election we held a supporter appreciation evening and I was having a conversation with a person that originally came from your constituency. When your name was suggested as a possible candidate for Speaker, she thought that this was a fine idea and went on to speak very highly of you. This sentiment was shared by fellow members of my caucus when we heard of your nomination. I wish you the very best as you increasingly become accustomed to your new role.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the members on both sides of the House for winning their respective seats in the provincial election. Elections can be a gruelling and demanding endeavour and members should be pleased in their accomplishments.

I would also like to echo the comments made yesterday by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin concerning our electoral system. For some citizens it is easy to take our democracy for granted. And I'm sure from time to time other members have shared the experience of being confronted by voter apathy on the doorstep. While I agree that our democratic system is not perfect, I am thankful that we live in a society with free and fair elections. We, as members, have been entrusted with the responsibility of representing the interests of citizens in a specific geographic region, and we as members will be held

accountable by these voters. While some may view our electoral system as irrelevant and downright boring, I personally think it is a remarkable process and one that is rightly envied by many around the world.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, as the person charged with the responsibility of maintaining decorum in this House, you know all too well that our Westminster model of government is an adversarial system. From time to time, members of the government and members of the opposition may not see eye to eye on some issues. But I'm certain we can all agree that it is an honour and privilege to serve as a representative in the legislature, and a responsibility we ought to take very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to thank some of the people that are near and dear to me. I would like to thank my wife Ruth, whose support and counsel I treasure most. I would also like to thank my immediate and extended family. As is the case for many members in the House, a life in politics is not a solo pursuit. Inevitably our families are drawn into the fray. And I for one am very thankful for the support and encouragement I have received from my family.

On a more personal note, on the night of the swearing-in for my caucus, it was exciting to be able to flip through the pages of the book where we entered our signature following the taking of the oath. I know my family members appreciated the opportunity to scan through the pages through the 1960s to find the signature of my grandfather, Hans Broten.

Beyond my family, Mr. Speaker, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the volunteers and supporters that were involved in the campaign in Saskatoon Massey Place. The support and involvement of many of these people predates the recent election and goes back to the nomination process that was held for our party in the constituency. Whether it was work in the office, delivering flyers, donating money, making phone calls, or blanketing the constituency with signs, I sincerely want to thank these people for their help.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the previous member for Massey Place, Mr. Eric Cline. As I canvassed the constituency over the summer and fall I was routinely told by constituents, you've got big shoes to fill, as they expressed genuine appreciation for the representation he provided. I would like to thank Eric for the help and guidance he has provided to me and for setting a high benchmark for service as the previous MLA for the constituency.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Broten: — I would also like to thank my very capable constituency assistant, Ms. Donna Rederburg, who has already served the constituents of Saskatoon Massey Place for a number of years. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly and the staff of our caucus office. As a new member, I have found both groups of staff to be competent and professional. I thank them for the welcome they have provided to me.

The final thank you I would like to make is to the constituents

of Saskatoon Massey Place. I think this is perhaps the most important element of today's speech, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the people of my constituency for choosing me to be their representative in the legislature. As I've already said, Mr. Speaker, this is a role I do not take lightly. It is through the support of our constituents that we are elected and it is to them we are accountable. I look forward to working with my constituents over the next four years to defend and promote the interests of Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Speaker, having heard the Throne Speech last week, it has provided me with some time to process the content of the speech and think about its implications for the constituents of Saskatoon Massey Place. Having just recently completed months of campaigning, my thoughts were taken to the people I met through knocking on doors and visiting coffee row. Voter contact is the means by which we, as elected representatives, stay plugged in to the issues that matter to everyday citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass on some of the exchanges I had while out on the campaign trail and share a little bit of information about my constituency. The knowledge gained through the people I have met has shaped my political views. Sharing this information will provide this House with some insight on the constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place and some background on why I hold certain viewpoints.

Mr. Speaker, education was one topic that people often wanted to discuss on the doorstep. I remember on one of the more cold days of the campaign, a woman wanted to talk about how the community school in her neighbourhood had assisted her family. She valued the community school model and was very appreciative of its support.

On another occasion I remember chatting with a mother who lived in Dundonald. She had two children currently studying at the University of Saskatchewan and she was concerned about accessibility to education for her kids if tuition increased.

Mr. Speaker, I also had the opportunity to meet with many students who attend SIAST. One man who lived in the neighbourhood of Westview had just completed his apprenticeship training and was looking forward to receiving the graduate tax exemption over the next five years.

While out canvassing, I also met many small-business owners who spoke of their need for additional skilled workers.

Mr. Speaker, a good number of my neighbours are people struggling financially to make ends meet. Some of these people are on social assistance. I remember speaking to one woman who faced consecutive hurdles in her life, hurdles that I could not imagine having to overcome. This woman stands out in my mind as a person in our society who has no voice.

Mr. Speaker, other people in my constituency are able to work — and do — but earn incomes that only allow them to live month to month. An economic boom only matters to these people if they are able to share in its benefits. I'm not sure a PST [provincial sales tax] exemption on used cars is the most beneficial assistance the government could provide to these people.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents also care about safe neighbourhoods. I know some are working to improve things through neighbourhood patrols and I've had the opportunity to go along on these walks. My constituents also understand that addressing crime begins long before citizens decide to patrol alleys and parks. Mr. Speaker, perhaps this ties into some of the earlier views that were expressed about initiatives like community schools.

Mr. Speaker, another common discussion I had with voters was about housing. These conversations happened in neighbourhoods like Mayfair, Westmount, and Mount Royal, but they certainly were not limited to these three. Many residents have experienced unmanageable rent increases or have found themselves out on the street after their rental accommodation was flipped.

My constituents are looking for long-term solutions on this issue. Some want to keep on renting but simply want to pay a reasonable amount of rent. Others, Mr. Speaker, want to get into home ownership. I found it alarming that the Throne Speech was silent on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the environment is another topic that is at the fore of my constituents' concerns. I remember meeting one young man in my home neighbourhood of Caswell Hill who ranked this issue as his top priority. I know he and I will be watching to see what concrete and substantive steps are taken by this new government.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency is also home to many First Nations and Métis people. I remember being asked by a young First Nations family in the neighbourhood of Massey Place about my views on treaties. I also remember meeting many young Aboriginals who are currently studying at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], SIAST, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, I also remember being confronted by the ugly face of racism and I wish I could say this wasn't a common occurrence. There's much work for our province to do in this area.

Mr. Speaker, there are also many workers in the constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place. I recall speaking with a woman in the new neighbourhood of Hampton Village. And this woman belonged to a trade union. She expressed concern over some of the Sask Party plans she heard about during the election. She and I will be paying close attention to the activities of Enterprise Saskatchewan and what exactly is meant by competitive balance.

Mr. Speaker, there are also a good number of seniors living in my constituency. Some of these men and women live on fixed incomes and many of their concerns are shared by younger people in the constituency. I have learned a great deal through my conversations with the seniors of Saskatoon Massey Place and I look forward to their ongoing advice.

Mr. Speaker, the area of health care was another common topic of discussion. Families interact with the health care system on many different levels and through many different stages of life. While we often look at the challenges surrounding the health care system, I think it is also important to remember the many daily successes and remember the hard . . . people working in

the health care sector.

I remember visiting with a husband and wife, again in the neighbourhood of Dundonald. They told me that over the past year they had five significant points of contact with the health care system, involving different members of their family. In each visit, the couple felt the timeliness and quality of care they received was excellent.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting that there are not some very real challenges facing the health care system. What I am saying is that my constituents have extremely high expectations around health care. I know they will closely watch how any efficiency reviews are conducted and how recruitment progress is being realized. They will also be watching to ensure the government follows its commitment to a publicly funded and publicly delivered health care system.

While on the topic of health care, Mr. Speaker, many residents and staff of Oliver Lodge in Hudson Bay Park are looking forward to the expansion of their long-term care facility. This is a much needed project for my constituents and many other residents of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, my constituency is diverse in its makeup and views. I truly enjoy the people I've met over the months of campaigning, and I look forward to continuing these relationships and fostering new ones.

Having had time to reflect on the government's Speech from the Throne, I'm of the opinion that it does not serve the best interests of my constituents. There are simply too many deviations from the concerns my constituents have raised with me. And there simply is not enough detail in the government's Throne Speech to put my constituents' stated worries at ease. As such, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment to the Throne Speech.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would once again like to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Massey Place for their support and I'm looking forward to working with them in the coming years. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Harrison: — I rise today for my first speech in this Chamber as an MLA. Of course, this would not be possible without the support of the people of the constituency of Meadow Lake which I'm privileged to represent in this Assembly.

But I'd actually like to make light of my colleague's comment yesterday, from Rosetown, about not knowing quite how much of a privilege it is sitting beside the member for Carrot River Valley. All kidding aside, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a reflection of the growing popularity of the member for Carrot River Valley that his colleagues see fit to give him a rough time.

Before I get into the main part of my remarks, I'd like to pay tribute to those who have preceded me as a representative for Meadow Lake. As hon. members know, my immediate predecessor, Mr. Maynard Sonntag, was a popular and long-serving member of this Assembly, sitting for 16 years as an MLA, and serving honourably in cabinet for many of those years in many positions, most recently as Minister of Industry and Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. I've known Maynard for many years. As an indication of his length of service, I think I actually met him when I was in grade 8, when he came in to speak to my class. He served Meadow Lake with dignity and diligence, and I sincerely wish him and his family the best in whatever their future holds.

I would also like to pay tribute to another gentleman who served as the MLA for Meadow Lake, the member from 1978 to 1991, Mr. George McLeod. George served in cabinet from 1981 to 1991 and was the deputy premier of this province by the end of his tenure. George was one of my teachers in high school, and indeed ignited some of the passion for politics that I've carried with me over the course of many years and many elections. George has long been a source of wisdom and guidance, and I know he is remembered with a great deal of fondness and respect by the people he served for so many years in Meadow Lake.

The last four years have been a political whirlwind for me and my family. I've been nominated as a candidate for federal or provincial office five times for three different parties. I've been a candidate for federal or provincial office during three general election campaigns. I've had the honour of serving the people of northern Saskatchewan in the House of Commons during the thirty-eighth parliament as their MP [Member of Parliament]. And now I have the honour of representing the people of the Meadow Lake constituency, and of my beloved hometown of Meadow Lake, in this Assembly.

And through it all, my wife Alaina has put up with it. Through nearly a dozen moves in three provinces, through all the ups and downs, the slings and arrows, the highs and lows, she supported me, and for that I'm grateful.

I'd also like to pay tribute to the rest of my family, who have encouraged me and supported me, and in some cases become political operatives of the first order. My mother Lorna, who was my deputy campaign manager in the last election who, despite having a near coronary every time somebody said something mean about her little boy, has over the course of the last decade of my political journey become one of my most trusted and capable advisers and operators.

My wife Alaina who, despite her oft-expressed indignation with the political process, is a true political professional without whom I wouldn't be here today. My father, Tom, who truly is one of the finest political minds of anybody I've ever met and who frequently tempers my more aggressive political instincts to the benefit of all. My sister, Jennifer, who's been a great supporter and source of advice over the years, and who was utterly mortified to find herself in a picture in *The StarPhoenix* with me during the last campaign. My brother, Jordan, who has been a great supporter and who has built numerous websites and even built a short-lived blog that I ran when I was a Member of Parliament.

[14:45]

Over the course of five nominations and three general election campaigns, we've been privileged to be surrounded by an outstanding political team in Meadow Lake: Denise Dodds, who served as my riding president for many years and managed my most recent campaign; Gary Vidal, who is the current riding president and was my business manager during the most recent election; Doris Young, who was our volunteer co-ordinator and deputy E-Day Chair; Brent Rathgeber, who managed the election day operation; Sharlene Beaulieu, who was my office manager; and Chief Guy Lariviere, who was our campaign Chair. There were countless others as well. On election day we had nearly 200 volunteers working across the riding.

Also I would like to acknowledge my grandfathers, who I'm sure are both watching, who have become legislative channel junkies, and before that CPAC [Cable Public Affairs Channel] junkies who have been a great source of inspiration and support for me as well.

I would like to acknowledge some friends of mine who also worked on the campaign: Robin Speer, who's a close friend of mine who came out from Ottawa to actually work; Ross Clements, my law partner, who has offered great advice and been a great friend to me; Michael Cooper, who has one of the sharpest political minds in the country — remember that name because you'll be hearing more of it.

I'd also like to acknowledge a couple of my former colleagues. I've been privileged to have some true mentors, some great advisors, over the course of my political career. One of whom I'd like to acknowledge, Mr. Jim Prentice, who is the Minister of Industry in the federal government, who is a great friend to me, who I served with on the Indian Affairs committee in Ottawa, and who I also worked for after the last federal election.

Also I'd like to acknowledge the importance in my political career of a man that I had the privilege of working for and with for nearly five years, named, Stephen Harper. I worked on Stephen's first leadership campaign while still in law school, and later worked closely with him while a member of the national council of the Canadian Alliance, watching from the front row as he adroitly managed the reintegration of the Alliance and subsequent merger of the Alliance with the former PC [Progressive Conservative] Party. At his urging I later ran for and won my first nomination in my Churchill River seat. I subsequently worked on his successful leadership campaign for the Conservative Party, served under his leadership as an MP and shadow critic, and later worked for Prime Minister Stephen Harper as a staff member in his government. Stephen's been a fantastic Prime Minister for our great country, and I know he'll continue to be for a long time to come.

As I've already mentioned, Mr. Speaker, my hometown is the community of Meadow Lake — the place where I grew up and the place that will always be home. Mr. Speaker, there are people all over the country that don't want to hear another word from me about Meadow Lake, but I don't really care. Meadow Lake's a wonderful, vibrant community, with great people, a proud past, and bright future. Ideally placed to become a centre of the developing oil and gas industry in the North as well as

other value-added applications of the rich natural resources present in our great province.

Meadow Lake is also a centre of the forestry industry. As members know the forestry industry is going through a difficult time in our province. Many citizens in Meadow Lake have been hard hit but they're confident that our new government will do whatever we can to make things better.

I would now like to turn my attention to more partisan matters, particularly letting members know how proud I am to be a part of the first non-socialist government in this province in the past 16 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Harrison: — Our party ran on a platform of hope and opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan. As we know the socialist party opposite ran on a platform of fear and smear. Indeed they put out a province-wide press release the day before the election alleging that there were mass voter challenges in Meadow Lake and insinuating that the challenges were made on the basis of race.

The press release was completely made up. It was a pure lie on the part of the socialist party. There were no challenges made at the advance polls — not one. A fact which they were later forced to acknowledge, though the people of Meadow Lake have yet to hear an apology from them. If they have any class at all, the Leader of the Opposition will issue that apology to the people of Meadow Lake today and I'm asking that he do so or explain why he will not.

I would also like to let hon. members know how proud I am to be a part of a government composed of such excellent people under the inspiring leadership of the member for Swift Current. The Premier is a fantastic leader who ran an outstanding campaign and in whom the people of Saskatchewan have justifiably put their faith. I know that both he and our new government will live up to that faith.

Also I'll maybe tell a little story about the first time I met the Premier was in about 2000. The Premier was a newly elected member from Swift Current and was speaking at a youth convention of which I was attending. And at that time, Mr. Speaker . . . I've never said this publicly but I used to on the odd occasion chew tobacco. And I had a tin of chewing tobacco and the Premier came up and said, maybe I'll have a little bit of that. He says it's not true. Maybe my memory is foggy, Mr. Speaker. I thought, though, if the Premier ever becomes leader of this party I'm going to run for him because the people in Meadow Lake will absolutely, will absolutely love him.

What we are actually debating here today though is the amendment by the socialist party to the motion made by the member for Estevan and seconded by the member from Yorkton. This amendment tells people pretty much everything they need to know about the current state of the socialists opposite. All they've got left is negativity and fearmongering. The amendment actually talks of a hidden agenda, probably the most ridiculous phrase that the left have come up with in the last while.

And while we're talking about hidden agendas, how about the positions that have been taken by the leader of the socialist party, the member for Toronto-Danforth? What are his stands? More billions for the gun registry, confiscation of all firearms, doubling of gas prices. I guess this stuff plays well to the nut roots of the party opposite but they're clearly not supported by the people of Saskatchewan.

Our Throne Speech lays the groundwork for a new era in Saskatchewan that will secure the future of our province, keep young people at home, and provide for increased opportunities for business. I'd like to tell a story about just one example of how already our government is securing the future. During the campaign, my cousin Kailey had to make a decision of whether to take a job offer in Alberta or to stay here in Saskatchewan. The offers were roughly equivalent. As she's just graduating from university, the commitment made by our party with respect to tax changes for recent graduates was very attractive.

Indeed, her decision was based entirely upon the chances of the Saskatchewan Party forming government. She was sufficiently confident that the people of Saskatchewan would pick hope over fear, and she accepted the job right here in Saskatchewan. And just like that, Mr. Speaker, we have one more talented and intelligent young person staying here in our province.

As some members know I've been practising law for the last year. One of the areas I practise in is residential real estate. During the campaign I heard from colleagues of a number of occurrences where real estate purchase agreements were actually made contingent on our party forming government. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure there were no purchase agreements made contingent on the socialists retaining power.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude I would also like to thank the Premier for the honour of being named the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Resources, northern resources and oil sands development. The potential of northern Saskatchewan is truly awe inspiring. I recently had the pleasure of attending with the Premier, the Minister of Energy and Resources, and the member from Lloydminster a talk by an expert on the global oil industry, Mr. Paul Michael Wihbey. The message that Mr. Wihbey conveyed was both fascinating and exciting.

In simple terms, the world, particularly the great republic to our south, is looking to northern Saskatchewan and northern Alberta as a most important new source of stable and accessible energy on the planet. The reserves present in our northern oil sands are truly mind boggling, rivalling those that exist in any country in the world. Prime Minister Harper has talked about how Canada is an emerging energy superpower, which is very true. And the heart of the future of the energy industry is going to be right here in Saskatchewan. Our government's committed to developing these resources in a sustainable way that will ensure jobs and benefits accrue to all people in our province.

But it's not just oil that presents great opportunities for northern Saskatchewan. Other resources like uranium, diamonds, and rare metals provide tremendous potential. I can't tell you, Mr. Speaker, how many business leaders and citizens I've run into over the course of the last month that have expressed their absolute relief that the socialists have lost power. Many have

been waiting for this occurrence before investing or expanding operations in Saskatchewan. Well we're proud to say, Saskatchewan is open for business.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the people of Meadow Lake for their support. I'd like to indicate that I will be supporting the main motion and opposing the ridiculous amendment. And I thank hon. members for their attention.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in starting I'd like to congratulate you on your election. I must tell you that I believe I spoke with your nephew. We discussed your earlier Swift Current comment with a chuckle but he added that your sense of humour often extends to times in church. I didn't follow up on that but perhaps we could discuss that on a future date, Mr. Speaker. So again congratulations and I look forward to your steady hand in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Fairview is made up of hard-working Saskatchewan families. In our constituency, we have some of the most vibrant community associations in the city of Saskatoon. I have attended many of their community events and, Mr. Speaker, they have wrapped a snake around my neck. I've had pies thrown at me, and I've witnessed multicultural events that were on par with the city of Saskatoon's own Folkfest. Mr. Speaker, this is what makes Saskatoon Fairview, the city of Saskatoon, and our province the best place in all of Canada. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province take a back seat to no one.

The constituents of Saskatoon Fairview have again granted me the privilege of serving and representing their interests in this legislature. Mr. Speaker, I accept their decision and will represent their interests to the best of my abilities.

Mr. Speaker, as members, we are here to represent the people of Saskatchewan but we cannot forget that we got here through a lot of hard work of our supporters before and during the election. I want to thank all those who worked on my campaign especially the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview and the Saskatoon Fairview NDP executive. Thank you for your long hours and your dedication to a belief in making things better for all in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I spent a major portion of my working life — nearly 22 years — working for the Canadian Union of Public Employees, negotiating, and working with the people of Saskatchewan from Sturgis to Ile-a-la-Crosse to Weyburn to Kindersley and everywhere else in between. Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank all those union members who took time out to assist me in my campaign.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the strains and stress our families endure while we tend here at our business and especially during campaign time when the stresses surely become multiplied. And I want to acknowledge my family and thank them for their incredible patience and support.

Mr. Speaker, we all embrace our past and that past, our heritage, gives us strength. It's like the story I tell my daughters of walking to school two miles and both ways were uphill, Mr. Speaker. My daughters have grown weary of that particular story but I want to share another small piece of my heritage. Mr. Speaker, my grandmother came to this country as a very young girl and she would tell us of her one vivid memory of hiding under a table every time it rained because the mud from the lean-to sod shelter would fall on her. Mr. Speaker, visualizing that scene allows me to understand the determination of Saskatchewan people and what makes this province lead in ways that others can only imagine.

Mr. Speaker, we all come to this legislature to work with the people of this province and to do our best. The people of this province have chosen the Saskatchewan Party to be the new government, and I accept their decision. Mr. Speaker, having chosen the Saskatchewan Party, they have in their wisdom also saw fit to support 20 New Democrats to keep the Saskatchewan Party government accountable.

Before going further, I just want to list a fraction of what New Democrats accomplished during my first term as MLA. There are now 506,000 people working in Saskatchewan. We left \$2 billion in money for the new government. We had 14 balanced budgets in a row and 16 credit upgrades. We paid down the debt by 1.2 billion during the period 2004 to 2007. We implemented a new prescription drug plan for seniors; a new statutory holiday, Family Day, in February. We have the lowest auto insurance rates in the country, with a rebate in the spring of 2007. We introduced the lowest-cost utility bundle in Canada and reduced the PST from 7 to 5 per cent — second lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, grain prices are up. Oil is booming. Potash production is on a roll like never other time before. Uranium is expanding. In Saskatoon we have an expanding manufacturing and business sector. The retail and real estate sector is seeing unprecedented growth. We need more workers, and that is always a good sign, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that the diligent and hard work of the NDP governments under Premier Romanow and Calvert has made us what we are today. Mr. Speaker, never before was a new government left with so much.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government is obviously only days old, so most people would allow for the odd glitch and miscue, but most would also say, you can tell a lot about first impressions. Actions speak louder than words, Mr. Speaker.

In the Saskatchewan Party platform, under more accountable government, page 40 of this platform, I quote. It says, "Saskatchewan people expect their government to be open, honest [Mr. Speaker] and accountable." The platform goes on to say how they, the Saskatchewan Party, will be more accountable than any previous government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now direct my comments to the legislation of essential services as most recently announced by the Sask Party. Mr. Speaker, perhaps this is an odd glitch, or perhaps is it a bit more, when on October 1, 2007, the Health

critic from Indian Head-Milestone had this to say on essential services legislation when asked by a reporter very directly, would you legislate essential services? The member from Indian Head-Milestone, now the Sask Party Health minister, had this to say:

No. It needs to be negotiated. It needs to be put in the contract, negotiated into the contract.

[15:00]

The reporter goes on to ask, what's the reason for not going the legislative route? The member from Indian Head-Milestone replies, quote:

Well I'm quite confident that it can be negotiated. I don't think we need to get to legislation. I don't think we need to go there at all. You know, you look back regarding Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have had essential service agreements in place. The government then legislated them back, and it really hasn't been very successful in any of the relationships going forward. I think that there is lots of things we can do through the negotiation process to ensure the needs of the people of Saskatchewan are met.

Mr. Speaker, let me read again from the Saskatchewan Party platform, this time page 19:

A Fair and Balanced Labour Environment for Workers and Employers ... Protecting public safety by working together with the province's public sector unions [working together, Mr. Speaker] to ensure essential services are in place in the event of a strike or labour action.

Mr. Speaker, now the Sask Party government is telling the people of Saskatchewan that they are bringing in essential services legislation. They will not tell us who is covered by the legislation. They'll not tell us who they talk to. In fact the Labour minister's most favourite line speaking to reporters is, I will get back to you.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I want to read into the record some comments made by the Labour minister on essential services legislation. On December 5, 2007, he had this to say to reporters when asked the question, what work have you done to study that in advance of legislation? The minister:

What we've seen is the legislation under consideration. Seven other jurisdictions in Canada have very similar jurisdictions and so, you know, I wouldn't want to be alarmist. It's as far as those kind of remarks. We've given it quite thorough study. It's based on some best practices, so I appreciate the insight but we studied this pretty thoroughly.

Question:

You say you've studied it very thoroughly, but have you actually consulted any labour groups or gone outside of government with any sort of consultations?

I'll get back to you on that.

Next question:

The messaging from Mr. McMorris and Mr. Hermanson was that legislation will not be required to get these agreements. What's changed?

Oh, in essence what we're doing is just becoming consistent with the Canadian norm.

Next question: "Then why did the party say that they wouldn't be required for six months?" Minister: "Yeah, in essence we just want to make sure that our services are covered."

Question:

But then why didn't someone say that six months ago? Rather, two Saskatchewan Party members said that they didn't think legislation would be required. Do you know what the change was?

Oh no. I'll have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a pattern developing. Mr. Speaker you are allowed not to know the odd detail. But when you don't know if you spoke to anyone about the legislation you have been studying for a year, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, is this an odd glitch? Or is this the Sask Party saying one thing before the election and doing something else when elected?

Mr. Speaker, I must say I have heard some creative interpretations regarding consultations and working together, but this is definitely a creative whopper and, Mr. Speaker, and not — I don't think — the kind that they serve at Burger King.

Mr. Speaker, this is the new reply to everything: I will get back to you. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is not rocket science or trying to get used to a new BlackBerry. You either talk to people or you didn't — yes or no. Mr. Speaker, say one thing before the election and do another after you're elected. Quite the first impression, Mr. Speaker.

So here we have it, the member from Swift Current, Mr. Hermanson, and the newly minted Health minister all made it clear that legislation was not the preferred route. The Labour minister says they studied essential services thoroughly for over a year. The member knows for certain, Mr. Speaker, but this member does not know, on an important issue such as this, whether the Sask Party spoke with anyone. Mr. Speaker, the Labour minister's "I'll get back to you" just doesn't cut it. This is absolutely not what Saskatchewan people expect.

Mr. Speaker, on issue after issue, the Sask Party members say they were given a mandate to govern, and that's all the consultation people need. Mr. Speaker, what I know is that this type of consultation is going to make a lot of people very nervous. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party said one thing immediately before the election and did something else when elected. They say one thing and do another. Actions certainly speak louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party did not even have the courage to put their position of legislating essential services in the Throne Speech — nothing, not a single word, not even I'll get back to

you later or I'll give it my best shot.

Mr. Speaker, what is going on here? Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party talks about rebalancing labour legislation to make us competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, everyone can see that Sask Party rebalancing equals workers' rights being stripped away. Saskatchewan has taken pride in leading labour legislation in Canada, and now this has somehow become shameful. It is all now unimportant. I think what is shameful, Mr. Speaker, is the approach the member from Saskatoon Southeast used when speaking of secret ballots on union certification, informed communication, and supervised balloting.

Mr. Speaker, I expected more from that member who I thought understood better the intricacies of the workplace. I had listened to his personal stories of involvement in strikes and collective bargaining which he spoke of here in the legislature. Mr. Speaker, that member went on in his speech here the other day of how he wanted to see the NDP support Sask Party legislation. Or how he could hardly wait and how he would tell the whole world if the NDP didn't support the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, where in the Throne Speech and the Sask Party agenda is the mention of the vigilance necessary for safe workplace and environments? Where is the concern for the working families and their struggles? Where is the concern for workers injured on the job? And where is the concern for the families of workers killed on the job? Where is the compassion, Mr. Speaker, for the working people of this province? That member from Saskatoon Southeast can only think of himself, and now he wants the NDP to vote in favour of Sask Party motions.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in this province contribute to our economy and a lot of those people work very hard, working families who believe in fairness. And where is their fairness, Mr. Speaker? Not a mention anywhere of safety in the workplace. This is what is shameful, and this is what we should talk about to the people of our constituencies and our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end by saying that it's becoming disappointing at the number of times that the Sask Party is saying one thing before the election, and now doing another right afterwards. Their actions are truly speaking louder than their words.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the many working people and families of this province, all my constituents, and our leader for this opportunity I'm offered today. And I humbly accept the challenge before us. Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I'll be supporting the amendment and voting against the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride and a humble heart that I stand here today. I understand the full weight and honour to have this opportunity. It is my foremost goal that I never forget why I'm here nor who I represent. And I thank the people of Lloydminster for their

confidence and this opportunity.

I'm particularly pleased to be able to acknowledge some of the people who have contributed so much to my success and the success of the Saskatchewan Party over the last two years. Firstly, my predecessor, Milt Wakefield.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Mr. Wakefield handled himself with class and dignity throughout his political career. He, throughout his political career, served this Assembly and, more importantly, the people of Lloydminster so well. He has been and continues to be a voice of wisdom I seek out.

And in fact that reminds me of a story that as a cattle rancher I'm fond of. It's a story of when the farmer turns his two bulls out in the spring. The young bull turns to the old bull and says, let's run down the hill and do some work. The old bull, he looks back, and he says, let's walk down the hill and do all the work. Though he chose not to run again in this election, his influence and legacy will long be felt in Saskatchewan through his work with Enterprise Saskatchewan and in our home constituency.

We're all familiar with the sacrifices of running for political office and know how many of our friends, family, and unknowing volunteers that get drug down that path with us. Building a team to fight a late fall-early winter election, I often thought of a quote from Ernest Shackleton's adventure where he was trying to find sailors to sail to the South Pole. His ad in the London newspaper in 1906 read:

Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.

It's hard to believe he found anyone to sign up for his journey — or ours. Luckily I gathered a keen group of young men and women willing to jump with both feet into uncharted waters. James Thorsteinson, Colleen Young, Aaron Buckingham, Cory Rideout, Tara Streleski, Ethan Walker, Karen Webber, and Marilyn and Tom Hougham, and many more — all went above and beyond in the march towards E-Day. I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to them, to my parents, and especially my wife.

Recently, in the first day of orientation, the Legislative Library people handed out a pamphlet to new MLAs with some advice. And something that really stuck with me is political careers last on average six years. The advice was, don't neglect those at home. At the end of your political career, who's standing beside you will be your family. And I plan not to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — It's my beautiful wife, Ali, and two little girls, Reilly, two and a half, and Grace, born just last Saturday.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — They constantly remind me of the task before us as elected members. It is for their future that we must

work hard and make this province the first choice for the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I will next take this opportunity to inform the Chamber of the most exciting region in the province and possibly Western Canada.

My riding stretches from Meadow Lake Provincial Park in the north to Lloydminster, the border city, in the south. Geographically we maybe long and narrow, but productively our base is broad. We excel at fishing, forestry, outfitting, farming, ranching, tourism, natural gas, trucking, manufacturing. Our area's a leader in the world of heavy oil production. Technical advances and exporting that technology around the world is something that we've done a lot of and have become very good at.

Mr. Speaker, through the last two years since my nomination, my family has travelled extensively in the riding. We've enjoyed the yearly fish fry in Pierceland, parades in historic Frenchman Butte, 4-H days, community picnics, rodeos, even bareback horse wrestling at Onion Lake's Canada Day celebrations.

My riding is full of hard-working and welcoming people who wanted to have their say on November 7, to give rural Saskatchewan a voice, and to vote in a Saskatchewan Party government.

As our new Saskatchewan starts to deal with the challenges of a growing economy, with labour shortages, housing shortages, and rising costs, my corner of the province has been dealing with these issues for some time already. When the members opposite were government, they failed to see or at least failed to address these problems. In fact all we heard from the NDP propaganda machine was pumping out anti-Alberta rhetoric. In their haste to warn the rest of the province that we don't want to be successful, at least not successful like Alberta, Mr. Speaker, they missed a valuable opportunity to learn about managing growth and success.

Our riding has been successful in spite of this. I'll tell those members: we share a city with Alberta. They're not to be feared. In fact they've been a partner and a good neighbour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — The city of Lloydminster touts itself as Canada's only border city. As well as being a seamless community under The Lloydminster Charter, we have a provincial divide that runs down the centre. I've already extended an invitation to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to come for a visit as I think Lloydminster will be one of the more complex jurisdictions that he gets to look at.

Mr. Speaker, I have often thought that if a social scientist were to conduct an experiment on political ideologies and how it functionally affects economies and social structures in a community, they might place a microscope on Lloydminster. Simply put opposing ideologies, political ideologies, on each side of a border and sit back and wait 50 years, with similar land, people, opportunities, challenges.

Let's take a look. Investment by individuals and business have told the tale, Mr. Speaker. There are now three Tim Hortons in Lloydminster, all of which have located themselves on the Alberta side, one just feet from the border. In the last 10 years, the west side of Lloydminster has seen subdivision after subdivision built on the Alberta side, with massive investment in the industrial parks, with just modest growth on the eastern side.

[15:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I love my double-doubles. I love coffee. But as a coffee drinker I can't see how the water on the Alberta side makes better coffee than in Saskatchewan, nor the air. I think it has to firmly rest with the policies of the former government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — But this will turn around with the current government, Mr. Speaker. But I want them to recognize that it isn't about where I have to go for a cup of coffee that's important. It's that this is lost revenue that could have been used to make life better for the people of Saskatchewan.

It is with my home community in mind that I evaluate the Throne Speech. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this is the most inspired and visionary Throne Speech in a generation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Our Premier had the task to pick up the pieces after a desperate spending spree from a tired, old NDP government, and mould them into a vision with a positive future for everyone. He had to shift government's focus from rewarding special interest groups to change that benefits everyone.

Yes, the Premier has set a positive course, but he has had some help. He has a talented caucus and staff. He has assembled a lean and productive cabinet, all working for the betterment of Saskatchewan. Our Premier has the support of working people, business, from young and old, in the North and in the South. Mr. Speaker, he has support from both rural and the cities. Through the campaign he spread a positive message to this province and that has carried through this Throne Speech. There is hope and there is optimism and there will be a bright future for my constituency and this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to speak to the amendment put forward by the opposition. Rarely in my adult years have I had the opportunity to hear such drivel. Mr. Speaker, if this is the level of contribution that we are to expect from the members opposite, we are all worse off. I hope they understand that their role in this legislature is an important one, and though not as glorious as their role in the past, the people of Saskatchewan expect them to perform it and to perform it well.

The downfall of their party seems to have gone in vain, Mr. Speaker, for they have failed to grasp even the simplest of lessons: hope beats fear. In the election, in the Throne Speech, today, and into the future — I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker —

hope beats fear.

Mr. Speaker, in the last election I feel our province has turned a corner and thankfully gotten back on track. The Throne Speech may have been penned by the Premier, but I am certain he has just given voice to what lies deep in the hearts of the men and women he represents. He has given voice to those who compete to win. He has given voice to those who work hard to get ahead; to those who want a hand up, not a handout.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca spoke in the legislature several days ago. He stated 13 times in his speech that his former government . . . He stated 13 times in his speech that this government does not care about, and I quote, “poor people,” and that his former party and his former government did. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this government does care about poor people.

I will also concede that his party did care about poor people. In fact he cared about them so much he tried to make everyone poor. I sometimes felt, I sometimes felt that that former government would not rest until every member of Saskatchewan was living in a cardboard box.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a different view. Our government has a slightly different approach. Instead of pulling the many down, we want to lift everyone up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, for too long we have handled ourselves as less than we are. We were satisfied with less than we deserve. In the last eight weeks people have noticeably bigger smiles and a spring in their step. Mr. Speaker, with conviction and love of this province, I am compelled to inform the Assembly I will not be supporting the amendment, for it represents all that we have worked so hard to leave behind.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to inform the Assembly that I will be supporting the Throne Speech, as I support all that is good in Saskatchewan and in its people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to speak on this very important occasion, the reply to the Throne Speech 2007.

First some very important notes of recognition. To you, sir, on your election as Speaker. Your position is, of course, of utmost importance in our legislature and indeed in parliamentary democracy. It is clear that you have the confidence of the House and I congratulate you.

As well my congratulations and best wishes go to the member from Arm River on his new role of Deputy Speaker. Again a very good choice.

I want to also acknowledge our Clerk and staff and thank them

for their good work in preparing for this session and their ongoing diligence to ensure that our legislature works.

My congratulations and best wishes goes to those first elected in this House. It is pretty special to have the confidence of your neighbours to represent them in this legislature. Your duties are important and I wish you all the best as you begin your new journey as an MLA in the Saskatchewan legislature.

And I want to say to those re-elected, good to see you again. I know that elections are hard fought and we all have fought the good battles. But when I do reflect on the good work done in this legislature in the past, it’s often done through the common value of doing what is best for all of Saskatchewan’s citizens. It is my hope that we can keep that core value alive and well in our legislature.

I also want to congratulate the new Premier and the new members of Executive Council on their new roles. It is an awesome responsibility, one that requires much attention and hard work. It is truly a commitment to serve all of Saskatchewan and it is of course our hope you all discharge your duties faithfully and in the best interests of our province.

Now our leader has spoken about our new roles as members of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition, and the Saskatchewan people have given us an important and a very essential responsibility that makes our legislature and in fact our province work. We will hold the government accountable as we listen to the people of Saskatchewan about their hopes and fears about our great province of Saskatchewan. And I am indeed looking forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my new role as critic for Social Services, disabilities, community-based organizations, and the voluntary sector.

Finally and most importantly I must thank the good folks who’ve given me this precious opportunity to serve. I speak of course about my constituents of Saskatoon Centre. Saskatoon Centre is perhaps one of the most urban of all constituencies in Saskatchewan. I believe it is also the most beautiful and scenic along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, home to the Meewasin Valley Authority, and now home to the brand new, beautiful Persephone Theatre. But we don’t stop there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have the Mendel, AKA, Troupe du Jour, and of course the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company. And did I mention the great restaurants downtown?

Now education is a very important part of Saskatoon Centre. It has three major high schools, perhaps with more high school students than any other riding in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize Princess Alexandra School on a very special occasion. On December 8 it celebrated its 100th birthday. It was the first school built in Saskatoon west of the tracks in the booming town that was, in 1907, a city just a year old and two years old in this province of Saskatchewan. The population of Saskatoon at the time was 3,000 people.

Special recognition goes to Roland Dumont, a local community member who attended Princess Alex. His family was instrumental in ensuring a wonderful collection of old artifacts from the school’s history. Thank you, Roland.

Now Princess Alex is indeed a very special school in our core community as it reflects the ever-changing nature of our communities, especially that rich heritage of immigration of Chinese, Ukrainians, and the Vietnamese, and many others, and of course, our First Nations and Métis people. And here's a school that's giving our children hope through learning — some 100 years of learning.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have some of the most affluent people living in Centre but also some who are the most vulnerable. Unfortunately this is highlighted last year in the report entitled *Health Disparity by Neighbourhood Income*, a report that we must keep in mind in this legislature as we go forward, and a report that I hope the Minister of Health has on his reading list. And of course . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yes, I do.

Mr. Forbes: — Good stuff. And of course, a big thank you to my team — Leslie Bennett, Francine, David, Val, Ryan, and my own family — Dawn, Cam, Alison, and Reilly. They were always there for me. Thank you so much.

Questions and answers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but more questions than answers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the prime purpose I see for a good Throne Speech is to provide answers, a sense of direction, a road map of how the province will proceed in first meeting the basic responsibilities of good government. That is a basic obligation of the provincial government, ensuring that laws and regulations are going to be met and enforced, and how you are going to support those in our society who find themselves in troubled times, and of course the responsibilities of health and education and maintaining highways and so forth. Then the government can lay out a plan for ensuring further growth of the economy.

I worry about this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I worry about the Throne Speech. I think my colleague from Regina Lakeview described it best in his speech, using the chilling metaphor of driving past a snow truck clearing the road. There are many, many who are deeply concerned, deeply worried about this new government and the lack of signals and the kind of signals they are sending the people of Saskatchewan in their early days.

I know many have spoken on this side already, but I want to highlight four areas I would argue are of grave concern. This speech gives no mention about supporting those with disabilities. I've had phone calls, conversations with many people in this area, wondering if this is a priority for the new Saskatchewan Party government. Not a word during the campaign, and the silence continues. I give credit to the minister for her December 3 press release marking the International Day of Disabled Persons, but that was it. As she remarked, the theme was decent work for persons with disabilities, but no plan. There's no signal that this was a priority at all. Clearly, a disappointment.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the stats are startling. Over 50 per cent, and some say 70 per cent, of the social assistance and transitional employment assistance cases have one or more disabilities. But what are the minister's plans? Saskatchewan has the dubious record of having the second highest rate of disabilities in Canada of 14.5 per cent. Again, what are the

Saskatchewan Party government plans?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I've said already in the House today, it was brought to my attention that last year 10,000 trips were denied in the city of Saskatoon for those using paratransit services. Those are missed appointments, missed work opportunities, learning opportunities. Is this a concern for this government? Apparently not even on the radar.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my second concern is in regard to housing, a basic need for any measure of quality of living. Again, not a mention in the Sask Party platform and absolutely no mention in the Throne Speech. We read headlines about extremely tight rental markets in our communities, with both the lack of available spaces and the skyrocketing costs, but this doesn't seem any concern at all for the Sask Party government. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this causes a lot of concern about us on this side.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my past work in the voluntary sector I've come to appreciate very much the good work that community-based organizations do. They are an invaluable resource that quickly respond to the needs of the communities they serve. I look forward very much to the summit that will be held in the near future regarding a new direction in social policy. But again, much work has already been done in this sector. My question, will this be recognized or thrown out the window much like our beloved wheat sheaf was almost?

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I find . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, like my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview, I worry about workplace safety. I must say I grew to appreciate the excellent work many partners in government, in business, and in labour had done to meet the challenges of improving our safety record. Saskatchewan, while making great strides, still has a long way to go, and I was deeply disappointed in the Minister of Labour's lack of words in this area.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the toughest things a minister of Labour does in this House is the reading of the names of those who were killed in the workplace during the past year. I can tell you — and I can tell you that many others feel the same way — the names stay with you and you do make a commitment to do better. And I would urge the new Minister of Labour to take some time to do all he can to ensure occupational health and safety is not lost in his new reorg of his department. It is just a basic, decent expectation that working men and women have of the Department of Labour. Again, I must say, a grave concern.

Now I can go on, especially about education and the environment, but we will have more time in the spring budget.

Well actions, and words and actions, are speaking louder than words. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the actions of the Sask Party are very troubling. In the short weeks since the election, numerous examples of backtracking, changing, spinning, ministers misspeaking, have all come to the fore. Just yesterday workers from Prince Albert came here to voice their anger over the ripping up of the MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Domtar. Clearly no consultations, no discussion before this

travesty. And where was the local cabinet minister?

And I want to say again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the disabilities community very concerned over the lack of action, any meaningful action, on the part of Social Services.

And what about this so-called growth and security Bill that was supposed to herald in a new era of accountability? Well not quite. And, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the essential services Bill that's been promised among some very confusing messages — and I'm being kind here — that I think we'll see late Thursday.

Pre-election and post-election seem like worlds apart, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Say anything to get elected and then start backing away. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say shame, shame.

Well in conclusion, in this legislature — the 26th since our province was formed — we do have a lot of work ahead of us. Unfortunately this job-jar approach is just not up to par. It just demonstrates the shallowness of this government. It's a watered-down version of a bad platform. It's just a bad way to start government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment and not the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I also want to congratulate you on being selected as the Deputy Speaker. And I want to thank the residents of the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for their support on November 7 by electing me to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. And I must say that no matter where I go, I get more absolutely incredible hugs from every farmer I meet.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Ross: — I was very fortunate to have a wonderful campaign team. We had the perfect mix of dedicated volunteers, some well seasoned in campaigning and others who had never worked on a campaign before. And I also wanted to thank my husband, Terry, who is my greatest champion . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Twenty-six years. Thank you very much to my family and my friends. It's 37, 36 — 36 years. Sorry. Thank you, all of you, who have worked so hard. You are simply the best.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the course of the election I had the opportunity to meet hundreds of people. I've listened to their hopes for the future, and the message I heard loud and clear is that we can't move forward as a province if we continue to be weighted down by a tired, old government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Ross: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why people of

Saskatchewan made a choice on November 7. They made a choice for positive change. This government, led by the Saskatchewan Party, is listening to the residents of Saskatchewan. The caucus members from the Saskatchewan Party have met and talked to residents from across this province. And this government, led by the member of Swift Current, have developed a plan.

Now two things that I consider to be crucially important to building a better future for Saskatchewan are experience and vision — the vision to dream and the experience to build. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan needs a government whose vision for the future is broad in scope and dedicated to improving the lives of each and every citizen.

Now this Throne Speech contains a new vision for Saskatchewan. The Throne Speech contained three recurring themes — growth and opportunity, security and compassion, and keeping our word.

Enterprise Saskatchewan is our new vision for the economy. It is a plan for lasting and permanent economic growth in Saskatchewan. Enterprise Saskatchewan will be a unique and innovative partnership that will return the direction of the economy to the hands of the people who create the jobs, invest the dollars, and build the labour force for the future. Above all, Enterprise Saskatchewan will have specific goals and targets for the economy. Economic growth and new opportunities are a good first step.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we want is to improve the safety and security of all Saskatchewan people. Growth and added opportunities will help pay for these improvements.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will address health care by hiring more nurses and front-line health care professionals.

We will have patient-first review of the entire health care system and a prescription drug plan covering most seniors and children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was knocking on the doors and talking to the residents of my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, they told me they wanted a fiscal responsible government that would keep an eye on spending and pay down the debt. And one of the most important new Bills highlighted in the Speech from the Throne and in the most recent election platform is Saskatchewan growth and financial security Act.

Now this Act shows a government that is dedicated to the growth and stability of this province by having a balanced budget each and every year. There will be a specific formula for allocating budgetary surpluses that will see Saskatchewan paying down the debt and investing in our future. The Act also states that the public service will not grow at a rate faster than the population it serves.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Ross: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the residents of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley told me, over and over again, they were concerned about education and how upset they were that we pay

some of the highest property taxes in Canada. And in terms of education, we will increase the operating grants to our schools and have an education property tax relief. We will set aside more money for school lunch and anti-hunger programs. We will invest in child care, early learning, and other development initiatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a government that gets it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Ross: — This government, led by the member of Swift Current, has the experience working with business, labour, and community groups. Saskatchewan voted for a new government with a new plan — a plan that will empower our communities and create a vibrant economy; a plan that will strengthen our social programs and create opportunity for our children. The Throne Speech contains that plan.

And as a community and business leader, I meet people from all walks of life. And the people who impress me the most are those who believe in themselves, those who believe they can accomplish anything if given the opportunity. This can-do attitude is deeply ingrained in Saskatchewan people and now we have a can-do government.

Our new government is committed to retaining our young people through several initiatives. Now our son Jon, is one of those kids helping to grow Alberta. And I know that each and every one of you have children or grandchildren who have left the province because they couldn't build their future here. Now this new government has a plan for our young people. There will be tuition rebates for students choosing to stay in Saskatchewan, as well as tax incentives for young entrepreneurs. These incentives are set out in our campaign platform and are reaffirmed in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I got into politics because I couldn't stand by and watch the downsizing of our province. I was tired of watching business opportunities choose other provinces. I was disappointed in a government that had lowered the bar of performance so low they were tripping over it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to raise the bar and build a better Saskatchewan — a Saskatchewan that boasts the most open and accountable government in Canada, a Saskatchewan dedicated to excellence.

As my work as a businesswoman, I have built a successful practice because I value my clients and I respect them. I have spent the last two decades of my life working to build a growing, a caring, and a prosperous Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the Saskatchewan Party shares these values. The people of Saskatchewan deserve a government that treats them with respect. The Saskatchewan government, under the leadership of the member of Swift Current, has the vision to dream and the experience to build. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to enter into this debate to debate on the Throne Speech, the first session of the twenty-sixth legislature here in Saskatchewan. Truly a honour. And I want to take this opportunity at the outset to thank the good folks in Regina Northeast for allowing me the privilege to continue to represent them in this great Assembly. Having been given that privilege in 1999 and 2003 and again in 2007, it is truly an honour, and that's probably the best word that I can come up with in a short order here to describe how I feel about having the privilege of representing the fine folks of Regina Northeast.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you would agree with me that no matter where we travel in Saskatchewan we meet nothing but good, fine people, whether it be the East or West or North or South. But I can assure you there are no finer people in this province than the good folks in Regina Northeast. It's a constituency that's made up muchly of working people, seniors, small-business people. And I've had the opportunity to meet many of them over the years of having the privilege of representing them, as I've always made it a personal goal of mine to door knock and go door to door and campaign, I guess you would say, at 14 polls every summer in my constituency.

By doing 14 polls each summer I am able to get through the constituency once between elections in three years. And I find it interesting to do so because it is a relaxing opportunity — not under the pressure of an election, but in between elections — and you get the chance to talk to people at their doorstep and find out what their concerns are, what their thoughts are. And on many occasions, year after year, you'll meet up with the same people and you can even see how they've grown and how they've changed, and how the world's affected them. So it's really something I've always enjoyed doing. I find it very rewarding myself.

To the Speaker, I want to congratulate him for his election to this Assembly. I think it was a wise choice. I think all the members would agree that he will make us a very fine Speaker. He brings to the role a lot of honour, integrity, and fairness. And I believe that he will not only do his job well here in the Assembly, the Speaker will represent us well throughout the province and internationally on those occasions. I also want to congratulate you upon your election as the Deputy Speaker. It's a role that we know you will fill and fill with honour and dignity, and also you'll bring fairness to the rulings when called upon to make them. We know that. So we appreciate that, sir.

I want to congratulate all the members upon their election to this great Assembly. It is truly an honour. I want to say a special welcome to all the new members from both sides of the House who find themselves representing the good folks of Saskatchewan.

[15:45]

One of the members yesterday indicated a number, and I believe he's probably quite accurate. Somewhere between 6 and 700 people have had the privilege of serving as MLAs in Saskatchewan here since the province became a province. And when you look at the whole scheme of things, that's really a small number of people representing this great province over the century, or a little beyond the century. And it's truly an

honour for each one of us to have the privilege of representing people in the constituency.

And when you think what this really means, it means that you go out at election time and we ask folks there to put their trust in us to be able to convey on their behalf their wants, their needs, their concerns, their thoughts. And when we do so — and regardless of political stripes — when we do so, we are really participating in the democratic process, and we are really honouring that entire process and honouring our province. And for that, I welcome all the new members. I welcome everyone back here, and I do know that we will all work to the best of our abilities to fulfill our roles as MLAs.

I also want to congratulate the member from Swift Current, not only for his personal re-election, but for his election as the Premier and leading his party to the government in Saskatchewan here, truly an honour for him to do so. I think that I want to wish him well because, on a personal note, a lot of water's been under the bridge — and the Premier will appreciate this — a lot of water's gone under the bridge, a lot of time's gone by since he and I shared a limo ride in Washington, DC [District of Columbia] a few years back and had quite a conversation during that period of time. And things have progressed quite rapidly since then. I want to wish him well in his new role as the Premier, and I hope he enjoys his time at the so-called top because I'm afraid that time will be rather short. In the whole scheme of things, I think he will soon be betrayed by the policies of his own party. And that will quite soon start to unfold; in fact we're starting to see some of it happen already.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to take this opportunity to touch on a few high points of the Throne Speech, or more accurately I should say low points for Saskatchewan people. The role of government, Mr. Speaker, is to make things better for the people it governs. That should be the ultimate goal for any government of any political stripe. Well let's just see how this Throne Speech stands up to measurement.

Enterprise Saskatchewan. What is Enterprise Saskatchewan? Well we have a brief, brief glance at what it is the party is proposing, the government is proposing as far as Enterprise Saskatchewan is concerned. But really when you boil it down, what it is, is a hand-picked group of men and women who will be making very important decisions on behalf of Saskatchewan people, very important decisions on behalf of the Saskatchewan economy. And these are folks that are not elected and are not accountable but yet will have great influence on the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, what it really is will be a board that is controlled, a board of hand-picked Sask Party hacks that is controlled by the Sask Party and the individual who'd be more interested in increasing their profits than they are in providing opportunities for all Saskatchewan people to share in the wealth of our province.

Health care. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has for the longest time said that they had all of the answers to the health care problems facing our province and our health care system. Well let's take a look at that.

First, they want to make sure that three out of four people in our

province don't have access to the essential drugs if and when they need them. In some cases, those folks will have to make a choice between filling a prescription or buying groceries. That's their plan. Secondly, the Sask Party said that they would be establishing more training seats and residency positions. Yet with that promise goes no numbers or any time frame in which to achieve this. Thirdly, the Sask Party has said that they would hire all the nurses we needed. In fact during the election campaign, they made it sound like there would be a nurse in everybody's backyard. Well I get up every morning, and I look in my backyard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I don't see a nurse back there yet, nor will I in the very near future. When — comes the big question — when is the Sask Party government going to fill its commitment on 800 new nurses? When?

Labour. Mr. Speaker, it is on the labour front that we start to see the hidden agenda. When in opposition, the Sask Party said that if they were government, they would go to war with labour. Well, well unfortunately it looks like that's one of the promises they're going to keep. This Sask Party government is talking about the need to rebalance labour laws in our province. Rebalance labour laws. What does that mean? This is simply code language for stripping away the rights of working men and women.

Now this Sask Party government is talking about introducing essential services legislation. It's something they never mentioned during the election campaign, something they don't have in their platform document. Interestingly enough the member from Indian Head-Milestone, when asked about this prior to the election, said, oh no, no. No, no. We don't need any legislation. No, no. We can do this through negotiation. It can be done quite well. Then he got called into his leader's office, and he got his knuckles rapped. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look quickly at his knuckles, you'll see that they're still red from the rapping. And he, to his defence, in his defence, he didn't actively misspeak I'm sure.

Even the member from Cannington, who gave us an insight as to what the Sask Party's intentions are as far as the Crown corporations and the dealings with SecurTek are, he got called in and got his knuckles rapped too. And that's all before the election.

Now that the election has taken place, I wonder, is it by accident that those same two members now end up sitting together in the corner of the caucus here? Is it by accident that that's the case? Or perhaps the Premier put them together so he can make it easier for him to keep an eye on them. I think that might be what it is.

Well what's next, Mr. Speaker? What's next? What's next from this group over here as far as labour is concerned? I believe, I believe that we will see from this government over there in next spring's budget, I believe we will see them introduce legislation that will introduce to this province, for the first time ever, a two-tier minimum wage. I believe that. I'm predicting that now, that in their budget next spring they will bring in a two-tier minimum wage.

Why? I'll tell you why. They didn't say anything about it during the election campaign. They didn't say anything about it in their election information. They don't have anything in their

pamphlet. They don't even have it in the Throne Speech, so that tells me that they're going to do it, Mr. Speaker.

My question is why? Why does this government pick on the working people of our province? Why is it that this government is bent on reducing the quality of life for the families of working people in Saskatchewan? Why is it this government is dedicated to the reducing the disposable income of working people when it is those same working people that drives the economy of this province?

Mr. Speaker, at a time of unprecedented prosperity, at a time when government should be sharing all its prosperity with Saskatchewan people, this government has decided to pick winners and losers. Well the first big losers in our province are the working people, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's safe to say that the working people of our province are among the first to find out that the sheep across the way aren't really sheep.

Mr. Speaker, I've been given the critic areas of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] and Highways and Infrastructure. I look forward to following this government's moves on all of those fronts. My fear is that this Sask Party's government's strong desire to privatize the Crowns and their already stated position of selling off STC, that both SGI and STC files are going to be very busy ones. When it comes to Highways and Infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the minister and I will have many things to talk about this spring.

Mr. Speaker, this fall 2007 Throne Speech certainly misses the mark of making life better for all Saskatchewan people. That is why I have been instructed by the majority of people in Regina Northeast to vote for the amendment and against the main motion, and that's what I'll be doing. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am honoured to have the opportunity to address this Assembly on the occasion of the beginning of this, the first session of the twenty-sixth sitting of the legislature. Four short years ago, I had my first opportunity to address this Assembly. And at that time I said I am, however, not a man of many words. The constituents of the new riding of Cut Knife-Turtleford, my community, and my family know that, and I thank them for understanding that and accepting that I might serve them in other ways. With that as an introduction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can almost guarantee that my address will fall within the time constraints that have been agreed upon by our House leaders.

I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his appointment and agree with my colleagues on both sides of this House that we are confident in his ability, based on his distinguished history in this House, to not only be a fair and judicious official but to represent our province in this country, throughout the world, in a distinguished fashion. I also congratulate our colleague from Arm River-Watrous for his appointment as Deputy Speaker. A role . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — A role I'm certain he will also occupy with fairness and honour.

Mr. Speaker, I have been very impressed with the quality of the addresses that have occurred to date in response to the Throne Speech of Monday, December 10. I've been particularly impressed with the quality of the presentations of the newly elected members of this legislature on both sides of this House. And I certainly am pleased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the fact that there are so many more new members on this side of the House than on the other side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — These new members will have a major role in shaping the future of this province.

This address allows us the opportunity to say thank you to our constituents, our volunteers, and our families for their part in sending us here and allowing us to represent them in this Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford for returning me here for them and in doing so with a conclusive majority. It not only confirms for me that what I have been doing for the past four years has been appreciated, but also that there are many more constituents that want me to continue on this path and do even more.

I was heartened by the number of volunteers that came forward with minimal coercion to assist in numerous ways to not only help me get elected but to see that we had a change in government. There were many new faces that came forward and to them and the faithful old faces I thank them all very much . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Older faces — yes.

For me, as well I am sure for all members, our families are what drive us to be here. Without their support and encouragement, we would simply not have the initiative nor the drive to firstly seek office and secondly to honour the commitment of this office. During this term I lost my mentor and my hero when on May 6, 2004, my father passed away. We were not only father and son; we were business partners for nearly 30 years.

Actually my dad was probably the least impressed of my family when I decided to pursue this endeavour. He was a pretty astute business person and well respected in our community. He didn't quite understand why his son would be interested in taking a pay cut and entering into a profession that is just slightly less respected than that of an arms dealer. However after the 2003 election I was never as proud as on that day in late 2003 that he and my mom were able to join Heather and I in this House for the swearing-in ceremony.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[16:00]

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank God for cameras. That moment can and will be with myself and my family forever.

I thank my mom for her continuing support and encouragement in our family's lives. Some 70 years ago, as a young graduate teacher here in Regina, she travelled by train to Ottawa as a

delegate to select a new federal leader who would go on to become a distinguished prime minister. I never forget the story of the adventure and excitement of that experience for her. Perhaps that is where the spark was ignited that has led me here.

Heather and my three sons, Ian, Bradley, and Stephan, have always been there for me. With their interesting array of backgrounds and experiences, they have all contributed and supported me on the journey that has brought me to this place.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is about three significant themes: growth and opportunity, security and compassion, and keeping your promises.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — Over the past 15 years or so, as my sons completed their education and prepared to enter the workforce, the opportunities they sought were quite simply not here in this province. As a result we find ourselves bidding farewell, see you soon, as they make their way back to the provinces to the west where they contribute to those provincial jurisdictions and those provincial economies. We would have — and do to this day — much preferred to be saying welcome home; we are so pleased you have chosen to contribute to this province. These are young men of promise, typical of those young people that this province was not able to retain as a result of a regime that did not focus on growth and opportunity.

Our eldest son, Ian, was a Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year and a representative of this province at the United World College of America in Montezuma, New Mexico, where he completed his International Baccalaureate program. An entrance scholarship took him to the University of Alberta. Upon graduation he spent two years in New York with the American Management Association and then five years on the Isle of Skye in Scotland as the CEO [chief executive officer] of a management and leadership academy of international stature. At this point he was 32 years of age. Ian and his wife, Anne-Marie, now operate their own consulting company in Victoria, BC [British Columbia], specializing in leadership training and management consulting. However, Heather and I realized that their most important role in life is to take good care of our grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, if there are any colleagues in the opposition that have leadership aspirations and if they would like me to provide further information, I would welcome them to please contact me.

Our second son, Bradley, followed his brother's exploits. Bradley was also honoured to be chosen as Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year. He was subsequently selected to represent our province and country at the United World College of the Americas. Upon completion of his baccalaureate, he studied economics at McGill and graduated from the University of Calgary law school.

Upon graduation our youngest son was chosen to be part of the Canada World Youth program, and at the age of 17 found himself in Poland. He then studied broadcasting and is presently the morning man on the Goat radio station in Bonnyville, Alberta. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you're ever in that area I would encourage you to tune in.

My point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not to bore this Assembly with my family situation. My point . . . As my family's sons entered the workforce, the opportunities and jobs that they sought were simply not available in this province. I couldn't in all honesty encourage them to return to the farm where things were relatively bleak. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they weren't interested in pursuing the accounting profession like their dull, old dad. And so, Mr. Speaker, this province lost to our neighbouring provinces another three bright, young men.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that this Throne Speech does in fact address this situation head on. This government will be providing meaningful tuition rebates for graduates choosing to stay in Saskatchewan and providing tax incentives for young entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, during this past campaign we were subject to two very different themes in the campaign. On the one hand, we saw the fear campaign of the NDP. We don't want to be another Alberta was an example of this. We on this side of the House realize that Alberta is experiencing some growing pains that are inevitable in a rapidly growing economy.

These growing pains, Mr. Speaker, we as a government welcome as a challenge because with them also come the beneficial effects of a rapid-growing economy. There will be increasing financial capacity within the economy for the communities and within government to plan for and address these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Alberta situation, I see and ask myself what is so evil and so wrong with lower tax rates, both individual and corporate. What is inherently, what is inherently wrong with no debt in contrast with our situation whereby millions of dollars each and every year from our General Revenue Fund are required just to service debt? What is wrong with not requiring a provincial sales tax as part of the general revenue funding for the province? What is wrong, what is wrong with substantial less waiting times in health care? And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is wrong with increasing property values? Why should our homes and farms be the cheapest in all of North America?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the member from The Battleford's address to the Speech from the Throne, he made the statement that a home in North Battleford three years ago was worth \$70,000, is now \$200,000. This was cited as a problem, a negative. I would maintain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a positive turn of events, not a negative turn of events. It's like what we've sat back as a province and not benefitted from as they have over the past number of years in places such as, places like — heaven forbid — Alberta.

And, Mr. Speaker, our government has addressed the increasing demand within this province for additional housing requirements head on, not for only urban centres but also for rural communities. Funds will be made available whereby both rural and urban municipalities will be able to proceed with much needed expansion of available developed lots on an interest-free basis so the increasing demands can be addressed, without the funds having to come from the operating budgets of these jurisdictions. In effect, Mr. Speaker, instead of the existing property owners having to bear the cost of these new

developments, the new property owners will be bearing these costs on the acquisition of these properties. This new program represents the forward thinking of this new government. So, Mr. Speaker, I would maintain that this government is poised for growth, and we say, bring it on. It's our turn.

On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, during the past campaign there was a choice — a choice between fear and the consequences of change. And on the other hand a promise of hope, a promise of growth. The people chose overwhelmingly in my constituency for the latter, for hope and for growth. We realize, Mr. Speaker, that we are not promoting growth for and of itself. We realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the growth we envisage will result in positive benefits to the entire province and all the residents. We, as government, will be in a position to offer better government in those areas where government should and will take a leading role in the providing of better and more efficient health care; in the providing of increasing support to our educational system; in providing additional funding for our infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, and our municipal partners.

Mr. Speaker, when I consider the decision that I am charged with here — to support this Speech from the Throne or to support the amendment as put forward by the opposition — it becomes pretty clear. This Speech from the Throne presents a program that supports a growth agenda for both rural and urban Saskatchewan, a security agenda for all the constituents of this province, and a promise agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker — a promise to keep the promises that this new government has made.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we have an amendment that reads in part, "That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of this Assembly because it has a hidden agenda that picks winners and losers." Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are the government that will not be picking winners and losers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — There will not be another SPUDCO or Navigata or the like. And exactly when, and exactly when, Mr. Speaker, did the government no longer enjoy the confidence of this Assembly? This Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is representative, by its very nature, of the voice and choice of the electorate, and they have very recently expressed their confidence in this new government and this new government's vision for this province.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I thank this Assembly for this opportunity. And I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and opposing the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a privilege and honour for me to stand here today and represent my constituents, the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook. I want to thank all of them for putting their trust in me in having me represent them here in Regina in the legislature.

I also want to take this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to congratulate you as the Deputy Speaker. I know you've served this Assembly for eight years. And I know your wealth of knowledge and hard working that you have, you deserve to be Deputy Speaker, and I know you will do a fine job.

I also want to take this time to say congratulations to the Speaker, the member from Moosomin, and congratulate him on his appointment as the Speaker. That member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has served in this legislature for 21 years and he has done an awesome job. And everybody I know in this Assembly will feel like I do, that it's well-deserving of him to serve as the Speaker of this Assembly. He also will do a great job.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank or say congratulations to all the members in the Assembly, on their re-election for the old members. And for all the new members on both sides of the House, whether it's the NDP or the Sask Party on this side, congratulate each and every one of them on being elected to the Assembly in the November 7 election.

One thing I've heard over the past few days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the quality of speeches given by the new members, both members on both sides of the House. And I can say as a veteran of eight years, that I guess I've got something to learn from these members. They've done a wonderful job in bringing forth their first speech to the throne.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to say some thank yous. I know that I'm going to probably forget some, but I do want to start off with thanking first and foremost my wife, Sheila, for all the support she has given me through the eight years as elected member. You know, one thing, I think all of us as members in the Assembly realize that when it comes to doing this job and putting a wholehearted effort into it, the ones that suffer the most are usually the family members — presumably the spouse. They're the ones that suffer the most. They have to put up with what we got to do and sometimes they are neglected. Well I can guarantee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my wife has done that. And we've talked about that, but she still sees fit to allow me to pursue my goal to be an elected official. And after November 7, I'm sitting on the government side.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what a great feeling. What a great feeling. And I'm also glad to see that there's only 20 members on the other side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — And the reason for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because the province of Saskatchewan saw fit on November 7 to choose a new government, a new direction, and a new mandate. And we are going to pursue that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also want to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my sons — my youngest, Micky, and his girlfriend, Meagen; my second son, Deny; and my oldest son, Newton, his wife Tanya, and my two granddaughters, Courtney and Shayln.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows what a great feeling it is to have granddaughters. That is the reason why I'm here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's because of the granddaughters. They're the reason why I stand here, take office, and pursue the goal of this province to change it so that it's a better place for them to raise their families and stay in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[16:15]

Mr. Allchurch: — I also want to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my mom. My mom, who is 78 years old, still lives on the farm, won't move, still pursues the goal of farming because that's the backbone of Saskatchewan — has been for many, many years. We've tried many times to move her into Spiritwood so she could pursue family members and friends, but she still wants to stay on the farm. My other brother Robert, the oldest one, lives there with her and they pursue the farming aspect of it. I also have, out of my seven brothers and one sister, five brothers on the farm.

So when farming is tough, I hear about it every day. The members, the members opposite are saying that's good. Well farming has been relatively tough over the past few years and this year was no different. But I know under the government that we have today, with members from rural Saskatchewan, we will definitely look at helping our family farmer friends to make sure they secure a better life.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to thank two people in my office that, not only during the election but during the last four years, have . . . undergo lots of hours of extra work because of the amount of work that sometimes opposition members have to do in fulfilling their needs and their goals and representing their constituency. And these two fine ladies did a great job for me, and that is Jody Henderson and Patty Heisler. Both of them are my full-time secretary and my part-time secretary, and worked diligently over the last four years to pursue my goal, and also in the November 7 election went on to be my campaign manager and my fundraising campaign manager, and did an awesome job to secure my position here in the legislature representing Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency.

I want to talk a little bit about the election which happened on November 7. I was fortunate enough, I was fortunate enough to win by 58 per cent of the vote. I had an increase of over 1,600 votes, which I want to thank the members from the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency for doing that, putting their trust in me. And I know that there's other members, many members on this side of the House that also increased their numbers and their votes and their popularity. And that is why we have 37, pardon me — well 38 plus the Speaker — 38 members sitting on this side of the House to form government for the first time in a long, long time. And I can guarantee you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be here for a long, long time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a few issues that came

out of the election was first and foremost a passion to me and that is health care. And I can well say to all the members in the House that health care, wherever you are, is a passion to your community and the area you represent.

Well it's no different in my hometown of Spiritwood and it's no different in my constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. As you know in the last, well year anyway, we've had some problems with recruitment and retention of doctors. I know at one point in time in the springtime, my area between the Rosthern, or the Shellbrook area, the Big River area, and the Spiritwood area, we were down to literally a handful of doctors. As it sits right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Spiritwood there's still only two doctors. We don't have enough doctors to have after-hour emergency care 24 hours a day. In Big River, they don't have any doctors as we speak right now. Also in Shellbrook, we do now have a full slate of six doctors. At one period of time, there was only three.

That's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I like the plan and the platform of the Sask Party and that's why we formed government, is because we are going to spend the utmost in recruitment and retention of doctors and nurses in this province.

That is an essential need. But it is a must for not only rural Saskatchewan but also the bigger centres, the cities, and I know the Health minister will do an awesome job in redoing what we have to do to get Saskatchewan up and going.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — And I hope he's listening. And we need some doctors, yes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last year I raised issues about the doctors. And the pressure that was put on the Shellbrook Hospital, which then transferred to the P.A. hospital, is because we don't have enough doctors. We need to spend more time recruiting doctors. And I can guarantee you I heard many times the former minister of Health, the member from North Battleford, continuously say, we have the problem solved. Well it's not solved. It got worse.

But that is typical of the NDP. What they say is not what they're doing. They continually say everything is great; everything is running great. Well have a look at rural Saskatchewan and see where our doctors are. Many centres all over the province of Saskatchewan are short doctors. They're short doctors, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And health care, as a passion to each community, we know what's got to be done. And no thanks to the former minister of Health, we are going to change that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are.

Another problem that I heard on the streets of the constituents in my constituency during the election period was the fact that the recruitment or the retaining of young people in our province. The young people are all going to Alberta. I have two there right now. They've often said, Dad, if you ever form government and change some things in this province, phone me and I'll come back. And we will do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — And this is the same for many members, even on the opposition side. They have members also, family members in Alberta, and I guarantee those young people are wishing that we need changes in the province of Saskatchewan, and they will come back also, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, also in my election run this year . . . In 2003 it was a tough time for farmers as we had a lot of rain. It was wet. Farmers couldn't get their crop off. In fact going to visit the farmers, they were in the fields, and they were taking tough grain off. And they were frustrated. They weren't frustrated at the election or the government that may come in, but they were definitely frustrated with the government that we had. And that's why I believe the vote that I got — because of my rural constituency — was so high because of a lot of farmers were tired of the plans that the NDP did not implement.

Farming in this province has been a mainstay for years and years. It is changing somewhat now. But we have the most arable land in the province. We have a lot of farmers, but the farmers are getting big. But we need something in place to sustain a living for these farmers, and I know that we have come up with plans in this platform that will do that. And that is what the people of Saskatchewan wanted in the election, and that's what they're going to get.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard from many members on the other side of the House about our fiscal plan. And this has bothered me for some time. And I spent a couple of days looking through the books to find out what our surplus and deficit is. And the reason I say this is because every member on that side of the House has stated over and over and over, we have had 16 balanced budgets. We've all heard that, right? Sixteen balanced budgets.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm reading from the report from the Provincial Auditor in 2005. And there's a graph and the graph shows, the graph shows, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a . . . Well let's break it down this way. In 1991 there was a deficit. It says right here. In 1992 there was a deficit. In 1993 there was a deficit. In fact, in 1994 there was a deficit. In 2002 there was a deficit. In 2004 there was a deficit. 2005 there was a deficit.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you add the deficit budgets according to this graph — and this is from the Provincial Auditor — we have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven deficit budgets. So why do the members opposite continually say we have balanced budget each and every year? That is not true.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who do we believe in? Do we believe in the Provincial Auditor, or do we believe from the words from the members over on that side of the House? I would have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll put our trust in the Provincial Auditor.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — But I can guarantee to the members opposite, it won't happen again. We will have balanced budgets.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — I also want to speak a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm not going to run down any member in the House, especially from the opposition, especially new members. But I did say that I heard some really good speeches. And I want to say to the member from Regina Rosemont, he gave a great speech. That was an awesome speech. In his speech, and I want to quote, he states . . . and I'm not sure where he got his facts from — whether he wrote it himself or got somebody to write it — but whatever, the facts are not quite true. In his reply, and, I quote:

Saskatchewan is booming as a province, has a pile of money in the bank, and expectations should be high.

Well that is all true. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . I just had it here somewhere where it says we have a pile of money in the bank and expectations are high. That is so true.

But I'm also going to read from the state of the province's finances, November 2007, and on the front page it states that, 2007-2008, there is a \$527 million surplus. Well that is great. That's why there's a pile of money in the bank. But let's go forward for the next four years and see what's going to happen. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look at the 2008-2009, the forecast, there will be a \$740.2 million deficit. More deficit comes into play again. Then in 2009-2010, there'll be a \$1,038.4 billion deficit. In 2010-2011, there'll be a \$1,203.5 billion deficit. In 2011-2004, there'll be \$1,141.4 billion deficit. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the four-year term we will have a \$1,141 billion deficit. If they were still in power, they would still probably say, we have a balanced budget and a surplus. That is what the NDP have been saying for years and years and years.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on November 7 of this last year, the election year, the people said, enough. Enough of the . . . [inaudible] . . . by the members from the government, the NDP. It's time for a change. It is time for the Saskatchewan Party to come forward and do the books the proper way of balancing books, and balancing this proper debt and assets. And we will do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech is about growth and opportunity. It's about security and compassion and it's also about keeping your word. I spoke about keeping your word because we, the province of Saskatchewan, will do that. And I can guarantee you that each and every member that's sitting on this side of the House, our constituents back home will make sure we are accountable; that they will make sure that we're keeping our word, because we believe in honest government. That's what we're going to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the election, on the streets when I was campaigning, many people said to me that they are tired of the fear that the NDP candidates were putting in the minds of people, especially the seniors. I had seniors in my constituency tell me, when you form government, the Sask Party government, what do you expect us as seniors to live on? And I said, what do you live on now? And they told me that they live on old age security. And I said, so what's going to change? And they said, well the NDP said you guys are going to take that away.

[16:30]

That's no different than when I visited the First Nation reserves. Members of the First Nation reserves said we're going to take away the treaties. We're going to take away everything in this province. It's no wonder that there's doom and gloom in the province. It doesn't come from this side of the House; it's always from that side of the House. The fear complex that they put into people, it is . . . had enough and that's why in the election we won.

There's an old saying that our Premier used over and over again: hope beats fear. And I said that to every member I talked to on the street. Hope beats fear. And I guarantee you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this time around hope won. And hope beats fear. Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Hope beats fear.

Mr. Allchurch: — Yes, we'll say it one more time. Hope beats fear, every time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the amendment put forth by the past premier of the province, he said that we have a hidden agenda. Well if we have a hidden agenda, it is that we are going to work to change the province around, so it's better for my grandkids and everybody else's grandkids in the province of Saskatchewan. That is our mandate. That is our hidden agenda. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the speech, but I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I want to begin by certainly congratulating you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on your position. I think you're well-suited to the job. I know that you're fair, and you're diligent, and you've gained much wisdom over the years, and I think you'll do an excellent job as Deputy Speaker.

It is indeed an honour to be back in the Legislative Assembly, back to do what we've been elected to do. It is indeed an honour. And I remember back in 2003 when I was first elected, I considered it an honour to be here, and I do that today.

I have spoken to a couple of members that I've run into in a couple of receptions and they — that weren't successful in the last election — and they've said that they already miss their time in this House. And I think that we will take their advice and treasure each and every day that we're here. That's indeed what I intend to do.

I want to congratulate all members from both sides of the House on their election and re-election. You have worked hard to get here. You have come here to make a difference, and I know that each and every one of us, that that will be our prime motivation. I look forward to getting to know some of the new members in the House and strengthening friendships with some of the veteran members.

As far as the new members go, I can see already that there's a couple of troublemakers on the other side. But I look forward to getting to know them a little bit better. They should know who they are because they're all nodding.

But it goes without saying that there's a few characters on this side of the House as well. My seatmate, the member from P.A. Carlton, it's good to see him here, and it's good to see many, many new members on this side of the House. I won't touch the member from Carrot River or Rosetown-Elrose; I hear that there's some sharp wit over there, and I just wouldn't want to go there in this delivery.

But also it's a pleasure to see members joining the government side of the House from my city, from my home, from Saskatoon — the members from Saskatoon Northwest and Saskatoon Greystone and my neighbouring constituency, Saskatoon Sutherland. It is indeed a pleasure to join with them in representing Saskatoon, that great city, in this Legislative Assembly.

To the new members, I know that members will extend to you the same courtesy as I was extended four years ago in learning the rules of the House and becoming a contributing member to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the people of Saskatoon Silver Springs. They have sent me to this legislature for the second time. I'm humbled. And I thank each and every resident, and I thank each and every voter. It is indeed a humbling experience to be here, to earn their confidence.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I want to thank the opponents that ran against me. Gord Bedient for the New Democratic Party was a formidable opponent, and Karen Parhar from the Liberal Party. They both ran a clean campaign. They focused on the issues. They participated in the forums. And, Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate each of them for their contribution to the democratic process.

As many members will know, Saskatoon Silver Springs has the largest number of voters of any constituency in the province. It's a constituency that has been truly growing. And I know that the member from Indian Head-Milestone, that's a fact that he likes to remind me of all the time. He talks about it quite often, and I'm quite happy to talk to him about the facts of one of the best constituencies in Saskatchewan. The fact is that it is a fast growing area of Saskatchewan. It's an area that is benefiting from some immigration. It's benefiting from those that are returning from Alberta, some young people that are coming back, and also those that have chosen — mostly young people — to make their home in Saskatoon and to make their home in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on November 7, I'm proud to say that we made history with our campaign. I'm proud to say that our team garnered nearly 7,000 votes, the most by any team in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — And I do say team because it was mostly because of the people around me who helped me. It was

very large, very large, and the numbers again, in case the members didn't hear, were close to 7,000. I have so many people to thank.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking my family. Indeed my wife Trish has been there for me each and every day. For that I say thank you. I joke and I say that every family needs at least one responsible parent. And make no mistake about it; in our family it's Trish who is the responsible parent — there every day for our wonderful children. I'm blessed with two wonderful children, Carter and Paige. They have been through a lot over the last few months. Carter's ten years old and in grade 5. Paige is in grade 2 and is seven years old. And both children attend Cardinal Leger School, Mr. Speaker.

As most of you who know me well and are aware, our family is facing some health challenges at this time, and I want to take a moment to thank members from both sides of the House for their wonderful support and well wishes. Cards and letters and flowers have been arriving almost on a daily basis. Your kindness is overwhelming. Trish is doing well in her cancer journey. She is just one week away from her final chemotherapy treatment, and Mr. Speaker, that will be a proud moment for us all. So once again, thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I also want to extend my love and my appreciation for my mother, who is out in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan. I'm sure she's watching television today, as most parents do.

As elected representatives we owe a great deal of gratitude to our constituency assistants. They are the first point of contact when constituents want to reach their MLA, and I am truly blessed to have one of the best. Beth Epp has been with me for four years, each and every day putting up with my new ideas, putting up with my voice mail messages at midnight and the odd email message at 2 o'clock in the morning. Beth, you have been a tremendous constituency assistant. I know that you have been of help and advice to many of the new constituency assistants across the province, and for that I want to say, thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Being an election year, I need to say thank you to my election team. They've been known affectionately as Team Chevy and led by one of the most formidable political couples in Saskatchewan, Ken and Merle Sawatsky. Terrific people. Merle . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's right they come from Last Mountain-Touchwood, Merle does. Merle as campaign manager and Ken as fundraiser — morning, noon, and night they give new definition to 24-7-365. They're there working to make sure that I'm able to do my job and to make sure that I was able to be re-elected to this wonderful, wonderful Assembly.

They were there, but they led a team, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of 300 volunteers who were unstoppable — people that gave of their time. They worked countless hours. They took time away from their families to make sure that the democratic process worked, to make sure that I was able to touch as many of my

constituents as I was able to do. And for that I say from the bottom of my heart, thank you to each and every one of them. I know that the only way that I'll suitably say thank you is to represent the people of Saskatoon Silver Springs to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a couple of minutes talking about the great constituency that I do represent. Silver Springs is comprised of seven neighbourhoods: Erindale, Arbor Creek, Forest Grove, part of Sutherland, University Heights, Silverspring, and the growing area of Willowgrove. All are vibrant and growing parts of Saskatoon and of the province.

It's indeed a pleasure to learn more about . . . And I know all members in this House would feel this way. It's a pleasure to know more about your constituency by door knocking, by going to people's doors and asking their opinions and learning more about your neighbours and your neighbourhoods, and more than that — asking for their trust and their support, being able to put forward your policies, your platform.

And I know members on this side of the House know that we had just a tremendous platform that we were able to talk to people about. It was such a pleasure to be able to bring that booklet along to talk to people about the many, many things that the Saskatchewan Party government would do — many changes that were long overdue, Mr. Speaker. And I would add that we're not wasting any time in implementing those changes as well.

I want to also talk about the great collegiates that we have in Saskatoon Silver Springs: St. Joseph who's been there for quite some time and a contributing member to the community in Saskatoon Silver Springs; and a brand new collegiate of Saskatoon, the Centennial Collegiate in Saskatoon Silver Springs. I want to thank the staff, the parents, and the students of these educational institutions for what they bring to the community. They bring tremendous amount of heart and spirit, and they have done a tremendous job in contributing to the community.

I also want to thank . . . Since my constituency is a brand new area, we've lacked for many things for a long period of time, but it's nice to see the business community coming forward. The business owners are risking their hard-earned money starting new businesses in the constituency and providing services that are long overdue. And for that I want to say thank you to each and every one of those business owners, not only for contributing to the provincial economy, providing job opportunities, but also for the services that they bring to Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've said that I have really treasured my time in this Legislative Assembly the first four years, and it makes you work harder to make sure that you get back here. I enjoyed representing my constituents, but I've also enjoyed my critic responsibilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My legislative career began by being appointed Post-Secondary Education critic, something that I very much enjoyed. I enjoyed learning about the concerns of students across the province, but also to learn more about the great post-secondary institutions that we have like the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, SIAST, the Saskatchewan Institute of Indian

Technologies, and First Nations University, as well as the many regional colleges. That's an area that I didn't know a lot about, but I was able to gain that experience in my critic area.

My second responsibility was being the Finance critic, and I must say that that was a great challenge and responsibility, learning a little bit about every area, the financial implications. I enjoyed that. One of the pleasures doing that is budget day when you get to challenge the Finance minister, critique his budget, but also offer some suggestions for how things could have been done differently. I must say that I've enjoyed asking the questions, and I must say that I enjoyed asking the questions in the House.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I enjoy even more coming over to this side of the House and finally . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Finally, Mr. Speaker, getting some of those answers that we have been requesting for such a long time. It wasn't because members over there gave those answers freely. It's because we found them when we became government.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the former Finance minister, Mr. Thomson to release the fiscal projections for the next four years, what did he do, Mr. Speaker? He refused. He said he didn't know. He said he couldn't. He said he shouldn't. And he knows for political reasons that he wouldn't. Because you know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because it was an embarrassment to the members on that side, an embarrassing legacy for the NDP, NDP government.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, his successor was no different, the member for Saskatoon Nutana. What did she have to say about the fiscal projections of the province? Well not much. There was no interest there. What was her policy? Dodge, deflect, digress, but never answer the question. Now we know why, Mr. Speaker. Now we know why.

When we finally saw the numbers — the same numbers, Mr. Speaker, that members over there have seen for six months — what did they say? What did we see from these projections? Well we saw a good year in 2007 and 2008. You know there's some cash there due to some one-time equalization money and some windfall oil revenue.

However, Mr. Speaker, however, Mr. Speaker, what else did we find? We found projections for 2008-2009 through 2011-2012. They were awash in red ink, Mr. Speaker. It's surprising to members of this House because we didn't hear anything about that from members opposite while they were in government. And I would suggest that's part of the reason why they are no longer here and they are sitting over there, and they will be sitting there for a long, long period of time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I'd be remiss if I didn't go over the numbers, Mr. Speaker. And I know members opposite are

clamouring, and they want to, they want to hear the numbers. What is the projection for 2008-2009, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The projection is a deficit of \$740 million in that one year alone.

Now what did members opposite say when they saw those numbers? Did they challenge the Finance minister? Did they challenge the Premier? Did they challenge cabinet ministers? Did they say that this is unacceptable? I think not, Mr. Speaker. We're looking for that information. We can't find anyone who challenged this information.

In 2009 and 2010, Mr. Speaker, it is even worse, even worse. A projected deficit — and get this — of \$1.038 billion. This, Mr. Speaker, was evidenced, was brought forward to members opposite, to ministers and I'm sure to the government caucus at the time as well, the NDP government caucus, and not one word to the public. Not one word about it. In fact even worse than that, when asked, they said nothing. It was zip. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable. And members opposite are saying shame, and I agree with them.

2010-2011, a projected deficit of \$1.203 billion, Mr. Speaker . . . and members are asking already for the total, but I'm not even finished yet because we have to talk about 2011-2012. As members opposite know, responsible governments give four-year projections; irresponsible ones don't. And I'll leave it to Saskatchewan voters to make the decision for themselves. In 2011-2012, a projected deficit of \$1.141 billion — \$1.141 billion.

And I know members opposite, I know you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and members opposite are waiting for a total. It's kind of like Telemiracle, but it's not as much fun. It's certainly not positive.

Given the forecast assumptions with a total deficit from 2008-2009, because of the policies of this NDP opposition while they were in government, the total was \$4.123 billion — \$4.123 billion. That, Mr. Speaker, that is the NDP legacy for this province. That's the legacy of 16, 17 years of NDP mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. That's where we're at.

The words are coming forward: incompetence, mismanagement. It's all appropriate at this time, Mr. Speaker. And I've said before; it's something that will keep members opposite in opposition for a long, long time because you can bet that we will remind you of this each and every time that we have the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, thankfully there is reason for optimism in Saskatchewan. With the election of the member from Swift Current as Premier of this province, Saskatchewan residents know that our best days are ahead.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne delivered one week ago, December 10, gives every Saskatchewan resident hope. It outlines growth. It outlines opportunity. It outlines security, and it outlines how the Saskatchewan Party government will keep its promises.

Mr. Speaker, I would love to go through the Speech from the

Throne page by page, line by line, word by word, Mr. Speaker, because it's that good, Mr. Speaker. However I'll just highlight some of the areas that I'm responsible for, and then leave my many, many colleagues on this side of the House to be able to expound on other areas.

As Minister of Crown Corporations, I am pleased that the Throne Speech outlines how this government will keep Saskatchewan's Crown corporations working for Saskatchewan people. They are an important part of this government's plan for securing the future. The government will ensure Crown corporations provide Saskatchewan people with the highest quality utilities at the lowest possible costs while directing, Mr. Speaker, directing the Crown dividends towards priorities like health care, highways, and education.

As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, our government will strengthen sound investment in communities, in post-secondary institutions, to build an innovative economy that will help Saskatchewan through initiatives like — like at SaskPower and Sask Energy — providing loans of up to \$25,000 to encourage geothermal, solar, and wind energy. The Minister of the Environment says what a great idea and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must agree with her there. Also SGI will be providing 20 per cent rebates on the insurance costs of newer, hybrid vehicles, Mr. Speaker. This is an innovative plan that people across Saskatchewan have been asking for, and our government is proud to deliver.

This Speech from the Throne will help Saskatchewan people make sure residents have growth and opportunity. It will make sure that they have security, and it will make sure that they have a Saskatchewan Party government for a long, long time to come, Mr. Speaker. For these reasons and many more, I would like to inform this House that I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne and voting against the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Silver Springs has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:54.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
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