



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

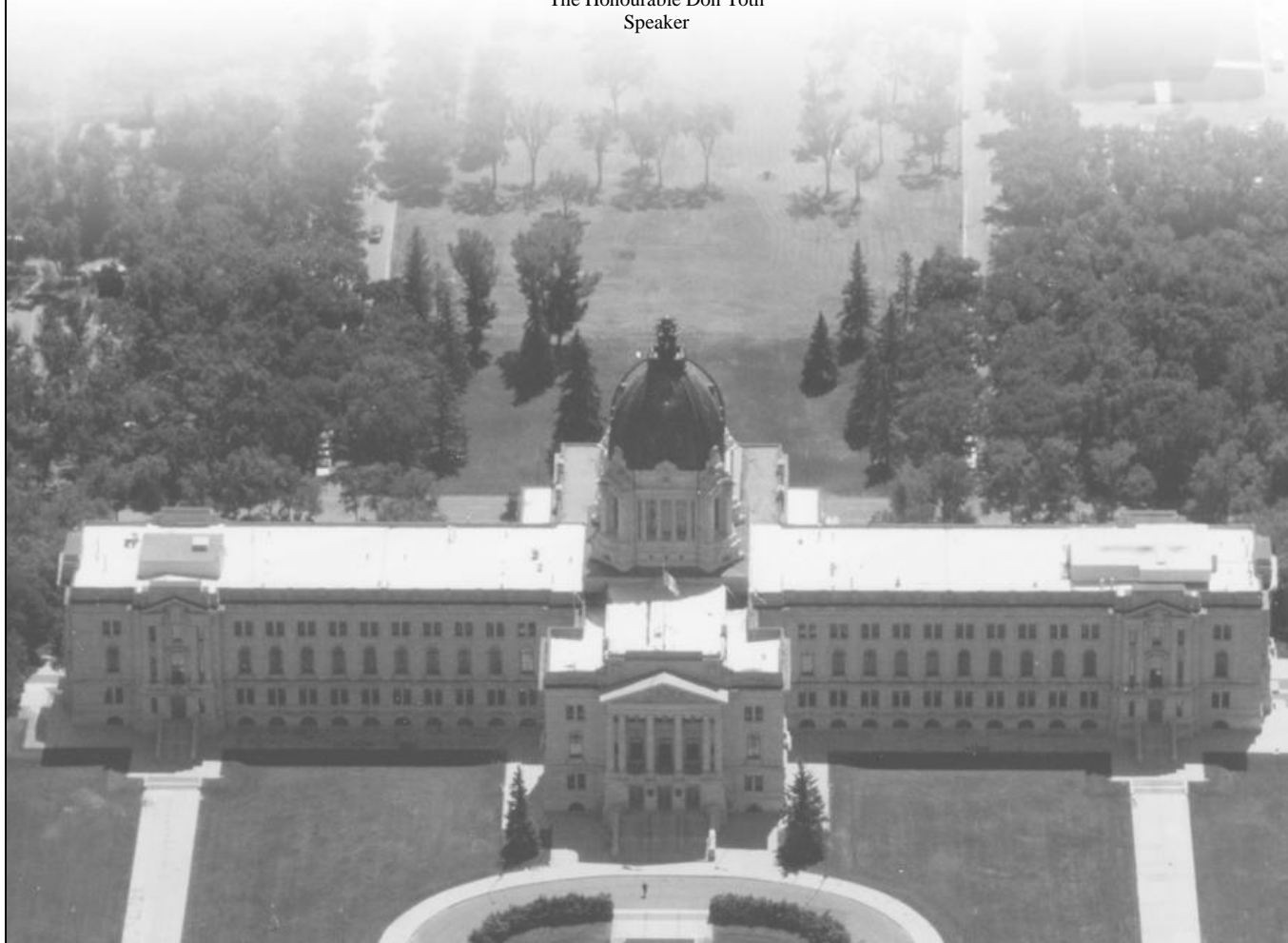
of the

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
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
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
Vacant		Cumberland

[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, an honour for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, His Excellency David Wilkins, the ambassador from the United States to Canada. Seated with him in your gallery today is Mr. Danny Fennell, the post deputy principal officer with the US [United States] consulate in Calgary and of course our own Deborah Saum, the chief of protocol for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, later this day we're going to have the chance, the ambassador and I, to meet and discuss some of the very important issues that present themselves before our province as a major energy supplier, for instance, and the interests of course of the United States.

It'll be I think the third or fourth time I've had the chance to meet with the ambassador, and each time I very much enjoyed the discussion that has ensued, enjoyed the opportunity to hear of the interests of the United States with respect to Saskatchewan and our trading relationship, and also to be able to present some issues on behalf of the province.

No doubt we'll be doing that here this afternoon again, whether it's the issue of country-of-origin labelling or the huge opportunity that presents Saskatchewan and our friends in the United States around energy independence, around energy security for North America. Mr. Speaker, we'll look forward to the chance to discuss again how Saskatchewan sells more oil, exports more oil to the US than even Kuwait, that we are the providers of up to 6 per cent of the electricity in the United States that is uranium-based. We look forward to these discussions.

We have found we agree on much. Not so much on the right NFL [National Football League] team to cheer for, and I hope to be able to make some progress on that issue as well with the ambassador later this day. Will all members join me in welcoming him to this Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier, on behalf of the opposition, in welcoming Excellency David Wilkins to the legislature this afternoon, and Mr. Danny Fennell from the office in Calgary — welcome again.

Ambassador Wilkins has shown since his appointment significant interest in Western Canada and in Saskatchewan. He

has made himself available to Western premiers' meetings, he has met with us at western governors' meetings, and has always shown a very significant interest in the West and in Saskatchewan. And so I, on behalf of the opposition, would invite all members again to join me in welcoming His Excellency David Wilkins to our legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure on this day, the first meeting of the initial board of Enterprise Saskatchewan, for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly the initial board of Enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, I start with the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. And the other members in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask to rise briefly as I introduce them: member at large, Ms. Crystal McLeod; in the Aboriginal category, Mr. Gary Merasty; agricultural category, Mr. Bill Cooper; in the rural and north category, Mr. Dave Marit; urban municipal category, Mr. Michael Fougere; in the co-ops category, Ms. Myrna Bentley; in the post-secondary category, Mr. Mark Frison; in the natural resources category, Mr. Craig Lothian; in the labour category, Mr. Hugh Wagner; and in the business category and the Deputy Chair of the new board, Mr. Gavin Semple.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be associated with this board, and I expect that they will produce great results for the province of Saskatchewan. And I ask all members to welcome them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join on behalf of the official opposition in welcoming the initial board of Enterprise Saskatchewan. I have read that the original meaning of the Greek word idiot was someone who only applied themselves to their own private affairs. Here we have today visiting us a group of people who have a history of public service long before putting their names forward and agreeing to serve in this capacity.

We should take every opportunity we have to thank people who volunteer in democracy to engage in discussion and to engage in public service, and I want to join with the minister in welcoming the members of Enterprise Saskatchewan to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, an individual seated in the Speaker's

gallery. That is of course Avery Kelly.

Avery Kelly is working with me out of the legislative internship program. I have very much enjoyed my time working with her. I find her to be very sharp, a very quick writer, a quick researcher. She comes from the University of Regina where she is just about finished a political science degree. She has worked in the financial services sector before that. I know that the University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts there takes a great deal of pride in terms of Avery participating in the legislative internship program.

She is a world traveller. She's got an avid and an active interest in the world around her, but also as public affairs unfold here in Saskatchewan and in Regina, Mr. Speaker, in food security, in terms of the environment, in terms of the First Nations and Métis issues that we've been working on, in terms of critic duties that I have to bring to bear. All that, Mr. Speaker, and she's from the north end of Regina originally.

So I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Avery Kelly to her Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I present this petition on behalf of my constituents in Moose Jaw, and it's in support of improved health care services and the expansion at the Moose Jaw Union Hospital. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to provide funding for the expansion and renovation of the Moose Jaw Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to present on behalf of Moose Jaw and its surrounding area. Thank you.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present several pages of petitions to the Legislative Assembly today on behalf of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan concerning the withdrawal of the proposed essential services legislation and the withdrawal of the proposed amendments to The Trade Union Act. The prayer reads as follows:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the new government to withdraw both Bills and hold broad public consultations about labour relations in the province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitions are signed by people from Davidson, Kenaston, Regina, and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, so I present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise and submit several pages of petitions concerning the provincial government's recent decision to withdraw financial support from the much needed Station 20 West project in Saskatoon. These petitioners have a sincere hope that the government will reconsider this ill-advised decision. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately restore funding to the Station 20 project.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these citizens come from across the city in Saskatoon. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Women's Equality Dinner

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the evening of March 27 in Regina, I had the distinct honour of joining over 100 guests for a dinner to launch a year-long national campaign by the Canadian Labour Congress to address women's economic inequality. Hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Regina & District Labour Council, and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, the dinner, themed Raising the Wage, Closing the Gap, included a program of entertainment and speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to share remarks with two other panelists, Jenn Ruddy, a professor of women's studies at the University of Regina, and Cindy McCallum-Miller, a strong leader in the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledged the existence of a wage gap between men and women and the significant gender differences in access to income and influence. We also considered the women's movement as a whole and the need to close the wage gap between men and women once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all the members of this House to join with extending support to the organizers and the need to advance women's equality in our own province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert

Northcote.

Hockey Greats

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Wednesday, March 19, athletes across the province were honoured at the Saskatchewan Sports Awards here at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina. I'd like to congratulate the winners and recognize the efforts of one group in particular today.

Today is also a birthday day for Mr. Gordie Howe, Saskatchewan's native and hockey great. He's 80 years old today, Mr. Speaker. Howe played 32 professional seasons and is a role model for young hockey players not only in this province, but around the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert Mintos AAA Midget Hockey Club took home the Team of the Year Award at the Sports Awards and are most deserving of this honour.

Following the national championship in 2006, fans had high expectations for 2007 and the Mintos did not disappoint. After placing first in league playoffs, they went on to capture the provincial title for the second consecutive season. At the 2007 Western regionals, the Mintos again placed first, sending them to the national championships in Red Deer, Alberta. Then, Mr. Speaker, the Mintos went on to do what no other AAA team in Canada has ever done. They won the national championship for a second season in a row.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that 21 young men from small town Saskatchewan did what no one else could do or expected is a true statement of the value of hard work, determination, and teamwork. For the young men and the entire city of Prince Albert, 2007 truly was their season of dreams.

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 congratulating the Prince Albert Mintos AAA Midget Hockey Club on a job well done, as well as wishing Mr. Hockey, Gordie Howe, a very happy 80th birthday.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Constituent's Contributions to Saskatoon

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to tell you about a constituent of mine, Robert Hinitt, who has done so much to promote the arts in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Hinitt was raised in Saskatoon by his mother, a single parent and a former costume maker who supported her family as a milliner and a seamstress. Mr. Hinitt completed degrees in French, English, and education at the University of Saskatchewan, Laval, and the Sorbonne in Paris.

He was a teacher of French, English, and drama for 31 years in the city. Mr. Hinitt developed a lifelong passion for designing, directing, and teaching, and teaching theatre.

During his tenure at Aden Bowman, he designed a theatre for the school, drawing his inspiration from time he spent in Stratford working in the set, property, and design shop. Castle Theatre was the result — a 600-seat theatre set in a circular design, based loosely on the Stratford festival stage. Completed in 1966, it is still in use today.

He was a founding member of the Saskatoon Gateway Players, the Saskatoon Summer Players, and served on the first board of directors for Persephone Theatre, a professional theatre company in Saskatoon. He has won numerous awards including the Order of Canada and the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

In Eastview, Mr. Hinitt will perhaps be remembered best for his wonderland displays at his home every Christmas. He used these displays to raise funds for charity. Every Christmas cars full of children with their parents would be bumper to bumper as they drove past Mr. Hinitt's home on Wiggins Avenue. It became an annual holiday tradition for my family as well, Saskatoon families, and we're going to miss his beautiful creations. I wish him very well in his retirement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Regina Wheel Challenge for Everyone

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful fundraising event. On Saturday the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Paraplegic Association held their 10th annual fundraiser — Regina Wheel Challenge for Everyone — which was hosted by Craig Adam and was held at the new Centre for Kinesiology, Health and Sport at the University of Regina.

Teams of four to six members had a great time while supporting those with physical disabilities. This event raised over \$22,000, which will stay in Saskatchewan to help improve the lives of people right here at home.

This event celebrated its 10th anniversary. This is a testament to its popularity and success. Saskatchewan residents are well known for our charitable spirit, and the continued support of this event showcased this. To that end, our budget helped out by providing over \$20 million to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the social and economic life of our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all members will join me in congratulating the organizers and the participants of this year's event for a job well done for a great cause.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Red Cross Month

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, March is Red Cross Month, and

this is an opportunity to both thank the Red Cross and to raise awareness of the great work the Red Cross does in our communities, our province, our country, and the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Red Cross provides many services in our communities and province, from blood collection services to first aid and CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] training to water safety and child care programs.

The Red Cross makes a difference in our lives. The Red Cross provides emergency services, both here and abroad. Many Saskatchewan citizens help in these very important relief efforts.

Mr. Speaker, in this Red Cross Month it is appropriate to praise the Red Cross for the work they do, and thank them for the hard work they will do in the future. Mr. Speaker, victims of tragedy around the world have seen first-hand the work of the Red Cross. The Red Cross works in difficult circumstances where the need is the greatest.

The Red Cross has a long and proven history of delivering those services in times of war and peace. It has a proud past, an important present, and a very bright future. Mr. Speaker, the world is a better place because of the Red Cross. We thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

More Good News for Saskatchewan

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well well well — more good news for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is expected to take the lead in economic growth in the country. Not Alberta, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan. For the first time in years, there are more than 1 million people living in Saskatchewan. The last time we were at 1 million people was the same year one of the members opposite was elected as Leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party], which is also when our population started to go down. Coincidence? I think not.

There are almost 500,000 people working in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — a new record. We lead the country in several important economic indicators. Saskatchewan is number one in Canada in wholesale trade, international exports, construction permits, residential building permits, retail sales, and new vehicle sales. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says Saskatchewan business owners are the most optimistic in Western Canada and second in the nation.

The stats are in, Mr. Speaker, and they paint a picture that members opposite must find hard to believe. Why is that? Five years ago, one NDP MLA was quoted as saying economic growth above the national average was, quote, “more wishful thinking than statistically attainable.” In 2007, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan economy grew above the national average.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the members opposite to a Saskatchewan where the impossible is possible, where budgets are balanced, where economic prosperity is shared with all, and where we are ready for growth.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

TheatreFest 2008

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Community theatre is alive and well in the province of Saskatchewan. From March 23 to March 29, The Battlefords played host to re-enacting TheatreFest 2008. Seven nights, seven plays from seven community theatre groups proved to be enlightening, entertaining, and exciting. Groups from The Battlefords, Prince Albert, Milestone, Kerrobert, Swift Current, and Yorkton produced dramas and comedies in competition. And everyone who attended were treated to the very best community theatre that this province has to offer.

Congratulations to the major winners, Mr. Speaker: winning entry, The Battlefords Community Players; best director, Donna Challis, Battlefords Community Players; best actress, Sarah Dymund, Battlefords Community Players; best actor, Jim Walls, Battlefords Community Players. Mr. Speaker, also runner-up winning entry, runner-up director, best visual presentation, best characterization, and best supporting actor all went to Swift Current Little Theatre.

For 74 years, community theatre groups in Saskatchewan have come together in competition, making TheatreFest the longest-running event of its kind in Canada.

I urge all members to express their appreciation to Theatre Saskatchewan, its president, Lynn Wagner; the co-hosts of the event, Donna Challis and Barb O'Neal; the volunteers, the sponsors, and the participants who made this week-long event rewarding for all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for Station 20 West

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be to the Premier, and they will concern the government's position on the funding to Station 20 in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, rarely have, I think, we've seen such an immediate public outpouring of sentiment calling upon the government to reverse its decision regarding the funding of Station 20.

Mr. Speaker, within days nearly 3,000 people have become friends of the Facebook site, the Friends of Station 20. Petitions have emerged. I know that cards and letters are being sent to the Premier in mail and by email. I know that in pulpits in churches across Saskatoon yesterday this was an issue.

My question is to the Premier. Will he put this decision on hold, on hold, and respond to this public sentiment that has indicated to the government that this is the wrong decision? Will he put the decision on hold?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 19 our Minister of Finance delivered a budget that is being so well received around the province it's absolutely amazing. But during that budget process, decisions are made. Our government at that time — a new government — reviewed this project, Station 20, and decided at that time it was not a good use of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, for many different reasons, for many different reasons, from the auditor's perspective who had showed concerns with this project to individuals throughout the community of Saskatoon, there were many individuals that showed concern, not to mention the absolute deficit that that former government left us in when it comes to capital projects within the province. There are many, many arguments as to where this money could be better used. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question again will be to the Premier, and I want to say to the Premier and to the legislature this afternoon that this project — this Station 20 project bringing together health services, food services, housing services — this project, Mr. Speaker, is a project of the community, a project that had its genesis within the community. It's not a project of the province of Saskatchewan. It is a project of the community of Saskatoon.

Again my question goes to the Premier. Will he put this ill-advised decision made by himself and his cabinet colleagues, to destroy the funding for Station 20, will he put it on hold and will he meet, will he meet with the proponents of Station 20, with those community members who are leading this project to discuss this project because the people of Saskatoon know how significant and important this project is. Will the Premier put the decision on hold, and will he meet with that group of individuals?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned in my previous answer, the budget that was read on March 19 contains a number of initiatives that are good for not only all of the province, but the city of Saskatoon. Whether it's \$500,000 for the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc. to purchase two more houses for my house, Mr. Speaker; whether it's 500,000 for school lunch or anti-hunger programs in community schools; \$8 million in new money to combat gang activity, Mr. Speaker, were contained in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

There are many, many other initiatives that go towards dealing with hunger and health within our communities — 5.5 million for 80 extra out-of-home spaces, Mr. Speaker, including foster care, stabilizing centres, therapeutic foster care, adolescent group homes, and treatment group homes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many dollars going towards hunger and health in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, these are good initiatives. These are good initiatives coming out of this year's budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — The funding for Station 20 came out of last year's budget, Mr. Speaker. The funding for Station 20 came out of last year's budget. It was in the hands of the community, and there are many within the community who are feeling robbed of the money that had been placed in their hands to build this very significant, very significant project.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some who believe that the government has made this decision based on misinformation. Now that's understandable when the Minister of Finance says in Saskatoon that there needs to be private sector fundraising of \$12 million when in fact the entire project is only \$11.5 million, misinformation when the Premier says publicly that they've only raised 75,000 in private donations when in fact it is 10 times that much — almost 10 times that much, Mr. Speaker — a misunderstanding or misinformation when the Premier of the province calls this project a mall. I can tell the Premier it's not a mall.

Will he do the right thing? Will he meet with the community members? Will he get the right information? Will he put this decision on hold and reverse it ultimately?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there is so much good news in this year's budget that it's going to take three or four more questions till I read off all the initiatives . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — That this government has put towards, Mr. Speaker, whether it's supporting community-based organizations, \$5 million for community-based organizations to provide life skills and job training — Mr. Speaker, and it goes to one of the petitions or member's statement that was read from the opposition earlier — plus 3.3 million to increase salaries and cover operating expenses of these CBOs [community-based organization], something that that government never did, never increased the salaries, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many more initiatives that this

government is putting forward.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is another issue to this whole factor. And that is the deficit that that government left after 16 years of not repairing facilities in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some of our facilities are in desperate need of upgrades, Mr. Speaker, and there's money that will go towards that because it's a new Sask Party government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier, the President of Executive Council, who should bear responsibility for the decisions of his government. Mr. Speaker, Saturday in the Saskatoon's *StarPhoenix* it reads in the editorial and I quote, I quote, "But Wall's clear lack of understanding about the dire needs of core neighbourhoods and the history of Saskatoon demonstrates just how out of touch he remains with urban Saskatchewan."

Now I'm sure the Premier wants to challenge that statement. Here is a chance. I challenge him again: will he put this decision on hold? Will the Premier of the province sit down, sit down with the community members in the city of Saskatoon, talk to them, get the correct information, and then make the right decision and restore funding to Station 20?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, after the last — I believe it is — 34, 36 years out of 40 in that constituency that has been represented by an NDP party, they haven't once dealt with the issues. In fact the only capital improvement they made in Riversdale under his mandate was a new liquor board store, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Now on the 11th hour, on the 11th hour, the 11th hour prior to an election . . .

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, on the 11th hour it doesn't matter whether it was \$100 million into Prince Albert to try and shore up a seat or \$8 million into Riversdale to try and shore up the former premier's seat, Mr. Speaker, because it was on the 11th hour after 16 years of government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the demands and the needs of our health care system are immense. And one of those needs is capital. In fact, Mr. Speaker, that former government commissioned a study last March to look into the capital needs, and I'll be very glad to talk about that in the next few questions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:00]

Mr. Calvert: — My question will be to the Premier. But, Mr. Speaker, is there any wonder they've made a mistake on their decision around Station 20 when the kind of information that the Minister of Health seems to have available to him is so erroneous? Let me just mention one or two things that have happened in Riversdale in the last four years: two brand new high schools, a new W.P. Bate School, a new addition to Montgomery School, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

If that's the kind of information this government has made a decision about this community-based project . . . And let me say again, Mr. Speaker, this is not a project of the province. It's not a project of the NDP. It's a project of the communities of Saskatoon, the university, the College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry, community-based organizations, the community clinic. On and on it goes, Mr. Speaker.

My question again is to the Premier. Will he do the right thing? Will he do the right and responsible thing and meet with the community leadership from Station 20? Will he meet with them, get the facts, get the correction information and then make the correct decision? Will he do it or not?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we talk about capital needs within our system, and that former government knew that there was huge needs within the health care system. Saskatoon in 2006 did a study through a company called VFA that looked at all the Saskatoon facilities and how much was needed, Mr. Speaker. There was about \$404 million needed in deferred maintenance, just in Saskatoon alone. So the ministry under that former government felt that was interesting enough that they would commission a study for the whole province.

Last March, and this is quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, because in their budget they offer about \$5 million for maintenance. But last March, they put \$2 million in to study the whole provincial infrastructure, which I will applaud because what it tells us is there's about a \$1.5 billion deficit in maintenance due to Saskatchewan health care facilities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour fancies himself a champion of Saskatchewan universities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Broten: — Before entering politics, he was a university

employee. His constituency of Saskatoon Greystone is right next to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. He even gave the U of S president a sneak peek at his essential services legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, he's completely offside when it comes to Station 20, a project that is important to all of Saskatoon. As the minister will know, Station 20 would involve the University of Saskatchewan through the College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry, and SWITCH, the student wellness initiative towards community health. U of S students, professors, and administrators were excited about this project, and now the minister has failed them. To the Minister of Advanced Education, why didn't he speak up on behalf of universities when his cabinet colleagues axed Station 20?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there are a number of facilities in Saskatoon, and in the inner city there's a number of agencies that already supply many of the services that would be housed in Station 20. There is a grocery store in the inner city in Saskatoon. There is a community clinic in Saskatoon that may need to be expanded, and we'll certainly be there to help them, Mr. Speaker. There are facilities.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is more important is the facilities that we're operating every day in Saskatoon and surrounding area in their health region that have huge, huge capital needs. In fact they were saying in this study that about 76 per cent — and I'll just look at it here — are beyond their useful life. It's not even that there's maintenance; it's beyond their useful life.

Now the former minister of Health would know this because this study was commissioned in March. We believe there was an interim report done in June or July that that former minister would know all about. Did he turn his back on it? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and put money into something that would shore up Riversdale.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — The Minister of Advanced Education is such a power broker that they won't even allow him to answer a question in this House. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education was supposed to be a voice of reason within that caucus, a supposedly socially progressive voice to bring balance to their right wing views. But the minister, along with so-called other liberals, are nothing more than window dressing.

With the decision to axe Station 20, it's obvious the good old boys still call the shots in the Sask Party. It's clear who's really making the decisions. It's clear who's being shut out of the process. And most of all, it's crystal clear who will suffer. Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised with the Sask Party's decision to go to war with labour, but how on earth can the Minister of

Advanced Education possibly justify going to war with the poor?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many, many projects going forward after this new provincial government's budget was read on March 19, many projects that will help the inner city absolutely. You know, Mr. Speaker, there is a housing project that is under completion in that very area, Mr. Speaker. There's a library that's under completion in that very area. Those projects have gone ahead and, Mr. Speaker, there are more funds going . . .

The Speaker: — I'd ask the members to come to order, and allow the minister to respond to the question that he was asked. Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, then it doesn't matter. There's more money going to other programs, whether it's \$8 million in new money to combat, combat gang activity, Mr. Speaker; whether it's a \$500,000 to the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre to purchase a couple more homes. Mr. Speaker, we heard the minister from Social Services this morning announce a couple more facilities being bought here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. Money is going towards those facilities — absolutely. There is money going to the programs that are needed, Mr. Speaker. Housing facilities are being built in downtown Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. We are filling our mandate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Planning and Consultation in the Ministry of Social Services

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Social Services has some explaining to do. Last week when it was revealed by media that ministry staff told employees that the budget included a plan that would result in about 200 layoffs, the minister used the old deny-and-deflect strategy. She denied that plan was being put in place and blamed her officials for sharing information with employees. But the public isn't buying it, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister of Social Services: why won't she accept responsibility for her ministry?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes I will, Mr. Speaker. When I first learned of the proposal to modernize the income assistance, I agreed to one year's provision of the plan, but I expressed serious concerns that needed to be addressed with some of the elements of that plan. I also expressed that I was not

comfortable with the long-term elements of the plan. I, as the Social Services minister, take responsibility if some of my officials did not understand me.

As such I have taken immediate actions. I have met with the employees in Saskatoon to apologize and to clarify. I have sent email to all of the employees to do the same. I have discussed this matter with my deputy minister, and I will be taking the issue to have a cabinet discussion.

Going forward, I will be having consultations with the front-line workers. I value their opinion. I think they have absolutely important information to add to how we can deliver income assistance that is for the best of our clients.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that just simply isn't good enough. She likes to throw up her hands and say she didn't know and be done with it. I guess the minister's decided it'd be better to admit that she didn't have a clue than to take responsibility. But the facts aren't going to make her little plan so easy, Mr. Speaker. You see, the minister's signed off on her budget which includes a four-year plan. She also sits in cabinet and on Treasury Board. That's three separate and surefire ways that the minister should have known the plan for her ministry. Even the official opposition doesn't believe the minister could be that asleep at the wheel.

To the Minister of Social Services: does she really expect citizens to believe she simply didn't know?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that I did know about the strategy that was being proposed from my official, and I expressed serious concerns with some of the elements of that strategy, and I'm still concerned about certain elements of that strategy.

Ultimately the priority of this minister and the priority of our entire government is that we need to have the best program possible to secure the future of our clients. Those are the people that are in the most need within our society. So I want to consult with the front-line workers. When I met with the front-line workers in Saskatoon, they treated me with the utmost respect and professionalism, and they deserve the same from their minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite ran

on a message of accountable and transparent government. But I guess it was one of their many short-lived commitments.

The minister's knee-jerk reaction to finger point and claim ignorance are not sitting well with Saskatchewan people. The Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* editorial Saturday put it this way, and I quote, "If even after four months on the job the minister was still unable to grasp the ramifications in this case, it casts doubts on her ability to understand how her ministry's other policies impact on the lives of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens."

Mr. Speaker, it is clear people are doubting this minister's ability to do her job. To the minister: why should Saskatchewan people have any confidence in her ability to do her job as a minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I will say once again, as the Minister of Social Services I take responsibility for what my ministry officials did not understand.

The Speaker: — Allow the minister to respond to the question.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But I will not, I do not think that it is productive to point fingers. It is a matter of doing what is best for our clients.

Mr. Speaker, I take responsibility. I will go forward with consultation. We are not going to put through a plan that I and my colleagues are not comfortable with. That is not going to happen, Mr. Speaker. Our clients must come first and the workers must be considered.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — So, Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Premier. Let us review. We have a minister of the Crown that has said very clearly to the public that it's her officials' fault that a proposal went forward to change a system in the Department of Social Services. It's the minister who has to sign her budget documents that go to Treasury Board. She sits on Treasury Board and the cabinet deals with it, and yet she says her officials didn't know.

Well, Mr. Speaker, she knew. She knew. And I ask the Premier, what kind of processes do you have in place where a minister signs off on a document, Treasury Board deals with it, and cabinet deals with it, how can a minister possibly blame her officials for this kind of situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what the process that this side of the House has in government with respect to these matters is pretty clear and markedly different than what we have received, markedly different than what the people of the province received when that member sat at the Executive Council table, when that member for Riversdale was the premier of the province.

Witness if you will, Mr. Speaker, SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. When ministers, when ministers of the Crown, Mr. Speaker, knew that they were not telling the truth with respect to the nature of the relationship, did they take immediate action as the Minister of Social Services has? Had they been frank and accepted responsibility if officials were unclear as to the minister's direction? No, Mr. Speaker. They covered it up for six years. You bet it's different on this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well with all due respect, the Premier didn't answer the question, and I guess I have another question to the Premier given that he didn't answer the last one.

We have a minister of the Crown that has indicated to all and sundry the health status of a public service. And I would ask the Premier this question. Is it the policy of the Government of Saskatchewan to release private information to every newspaper journalist in the province when it comes to the health status of public servants in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I again will say that I was aware of the program. I had serious concerns about that program. I expressed those concerns to the ministry. Those concerns can be reviewed. We could have consultation. It does not change the financial allocation for the '09 . . .

[14:15]

The Speaker: — There are some members who continue to interfere and not allow the members placing the question or the members responding to actually be heard. I would ask the members to allow the minister to complete her comments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My concerns in the '08-09 budget can be addressed without changing the financial allocation in the budget. We are not changing this year's budget, and we can address the concerns that I raised with my ministry.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well you see, Mr. Speaker, here is the

difficulty. The difficulty is that each year in the budget they put forward a four-year plan for the financials. That's what they did in this budget. And in the minister's budget that she signed off on, there would have been a four-year summary of what was going to take place. But the minister says, I guess I understood but I didn't make it clear.

Well she signed off on it. It went to Treasury Board. The cabinet dealt with it, and now what she's doing is she's blaming her public service, and in fact what's she's doing is she's also releasing private, confidential information about the health status of public servants.

I ask the Premier, is that the government's policy — whenever a minister gets into trouble they're going to talk about the health status of a public servant in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I will say once again, as the Minister for Social Services I take responsibility for the ministry officials prematurely, in an internal communication, communicating a strategy that we are not certain that we're going to go forward with in years 2, 3, and 4. Mr. Speaker, they are aware that I have concerns with the out years of this strategy. We will be looking at those out years in consultation with all of the stakeholders involved. Mr. Speaker, these are projections of future years. They are merely that, and they amount to about 1 million in an over \$600 million budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 19 — The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2008

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bill No. 19, The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2008 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Social Services has moved first reading of Bill No. 19, The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2008 be read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, pursuant to section 30(5) of The Members' Conflict of Interest Act, I lay upon the Table a report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my duty to move:

That this Assembly concurs with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's recommendations made pursuant to section 31 of The Members' Conflict of Interest Act:

That the member for Athabasca and the member for Saskatoon Eastview be reprimanded for failure to meet the filing deadlines for disclosure statements as required by the same Act; and further

That this Assembly acknowledges that the members did subsequently file the required statements with the commissioner, and having expressed sincere regret for their oversight, this Assembly accepts the apologies expressed by said members.

I so move.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I call the members to order. Will the members take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure on behalf of the government to table answers to question 416 and 417.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 416 and 417 tabled.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Quennell: — It's a pleasure to re-enter the discussion of the first budget of the Saskatchewan Party government after a spring break in which we had an opportunity to learn about some budget decisions that the Minister of Finance didn't care to highlight in his budget address. One of these decisions that the public became aware about, and supposedly the Minister of Social Services became aware about by reading the newspaper, needs to be put into the context of how our style of government works, Mr. Speaker.

A cabinet minister has a number of roles within the category of policy making and communication of policy, Mr. Speaker. The first is to bring proposals to cabinet as a minister — say you are the minister of Social Services — to bring proposals as that what might take place in that area of government, Mr. Speaker: perhaps a four-year plan, one-year plan, whatever, Mr. Speaker.

The second category or the second role that one plays within the category of cabinet decision making, Mr. Speaker, is to participate in cabinet discussions about all policy areas, and in the case of the budget, Mr. Speaker, to participate in the discussion of the entire budget.

If a member of cabinet — for example, the Minister of Social Services — is also a member of Treasury Board, that discussion is more intensive as the Treasury Board does its work and makes its recommendations to the cabinet, continues on at cabinet where that minister would again have a role in that discussion, as well as the discussion around every other ministry and agency of the government.

The third role of a cabinet minister is to communicate the decisions, once they are made by the government, to the ministry. So we have a minister who would be responsible for bringing forward proposals to the cabinet, discussing them as member of a cabinet committee or in cabinet, and then communicating the decisions ultimately made in that area for which they are responsible to the public servants responsible for implementing those policies. In other words, government officials — public servants — learn about government policy and government decision making from their ministers, Mr. Speaker.

And, of course, the public. The fourth role of a cabinet minister — and I know the member from Wood River is listening carefully in case he ever has the opportunity — and the fourth role of a cabinet minister is to communicate those government decisions to the public, Mr. Speaker. So a decision that's made about funding and organization of the Social Services ministry, for example, may well have been brought forward, in all

likelihood would have been brought forward in the budget context or any other context by the Minister of Social Services. In the case of the budget, would have brought those proposals forward to the Treasury Board on which the Minister of Social Services happens to sit.

Those proposals would be discussed in detail by the Treasury Board and decisions would be made. There's lots of priorities. There's lots of important things that could be done. They can't all be done. They certainly can't all be done in every year. But decisions have to be made about expansions of programs, new programs, and cuts. And I can certainly tell you, Mr. Speaker, that nobody fires 270 social workers, for example, without considerable discussion and review, first at Treasury Board and then secondly at cabinet.

Now after the Treasury Board discussion, the budget would be discussed by the cabinet — and I expect this government is little different from governments in the past — once cabinet has a recommendation for its caucus, discussed at caucus.

So the Social Services budget, Mr. Speaker, and then the ramifications and the consequences of the decisions being made, would come to the minister's attention first of all as the minister bringing those proposals forward; secondly as a member of Treasury Board in this case; thirdly as a member of cabinet; and fourthly as a member of caucus. Four opportunities, four opportunities and four decision-making points at which point the Minister of Social Services would have a chance to say, I want to do this, or I don't want to do this. But of course if she's in the minority, it goes ahead anyways. That's what cabinet solidarity is all about. And again I note that the member of Wood River is paying close attention in case it ever matters to him.

But after the decision-making points, then there's the communication points. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I know the members want to hear this. As I said before, public servants — and they need to learn this lesson, Mr. Speaker, if they haven't learned it yet — public servants learn what public policy is, what government decisions are, from their ministers. It's not the other way around. They don't make decisions and then inform the ministers through the newspaper. It is, as a *StarPhoenix* editorial said, beyond belief that that could possibly happen.

Now I do want to quote at length — and this is one of the few opportunities that I'll probably ever take to do this, Mr. Speaker — but quote at length from an editorial that appeared in *The StarPhoenix* on March 29, 2008, my hometown paper.

And I am going to quote from the editorial and that will involve me stating out the names of a few ministers of the Crown by name, but only within the quotation and only for the integrity of the quotation, Mr. Speaker. But I do want to read it into the record. Quote:

If, as is generally the case, the Saskatchewan Party used its first budget to set the tone for its administration, the province has a growing list to worry about.

Rather than appear to be competent managers of the public purse, Premier Brad Wall's team has been

extravagant in its spending, ham-handed in its communications strategy and incompetent in its delivery.

The latest in a series of embarrassing events include a budget-day announcement of the disruption of hundreds of jobs that now apparently was made in error, and the deliberate cancellation of a much-lauded inner-city redevelopment project in Saskatoon.

That no one from Wall to Health Minister Don McMorris to Finance Minister Rod Gantefoer can get their stories straight about why a previously made provincial commitment of \$8 million to the Station 20 project, which would bring, among other things, medical, dental and community services to one of the most stressed neighbourhoods in . . . [Saskatoon's] largest city, does little to foster confidence in their ability to manage public money.

Until now, the government has requested patience from Saskatchewan citizens, suggesting the four months since it took office wasn't enough time to properly redirect the flow of cash. But this excuse is wearing thin.

Four months is more than enough time for Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer to understand how a major shakeup in her ministry would impact on the hundreds of lives affected by the "four-year modernization strategy" planned for its financial assistance division.

For Harpauer to suggest on the one hand that she approved the first year of the strategy while opposing the rest, and on the other hand to claim she wasn't [told] by ministry officials what was going on, is to ask Saskatchewan residents to suspend all belief. It took the employees but minutes to figure out what was happening after some 400 of them were summoned to a special meeting scheduled to coincide with the March 19 delivery of the provincial budget.

If even after four months on the job the minister was still unable to grasp the ramifications in this case, it casts doubts on her ability to understand how her ministry's other policies impact on the lives of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens.

At least Harpauer is consistent in her proclamations of ignorance. There, however, was no such consistency among politicians when it came to the slashing of the grant to Station 20, which was made a year ago by the former NDP government. Gantefoer offered one reason for the cut, McMorris another and the premier yet a third. Separately, they made little sense. Taken together they look more like a raft of juvenile excuses rather than part of a coherent plan to run the province.

[14:30]

Gantefoer believed the grant was cut because there was little chance the proponents of the project could raise the "\$12 million to \$14 million" needed to come from private interests. By next day he was admitting he was in error, and the necessary private funds were a minuscule portion of that

amount.

Even more incredibly, McMorris suggested the money had to be pulled from a project that would make it easy for inner-city residents to access timely health care because the funds were needed to buy a fire alarm for St. Paul's Hospital and to ward off a mould attack. The decision, he assured us, had nothing to do with politics.

At least Wall's weak excuse was credible, if only because it illustrated an ideological basis to the ill-considered decision. The premier suggested the grant was killed because his government saw the inclusion of a co-operatively run grocery store within Station 20 as a threat to private industry.

... Wall's clear lack of understanding about the dire needs of core neighbourhoods and the history of Saskatoon demonstrates just how out of touch he remains with urban Saskatchewan. Considering the role the province's largest city is playing in the economic revival of Saskatchewan, such ignorance could have dire consequences.

The proponents of Station 20 want a grocery store not because they want to compete with private industry but because many people in core neighbourhoods don't have the wherewithal to keep hiring cabs to go shopping. The last of the downtown grocery stores left more than a decade ago.

To ignore such realities for the sake of political partisanship and ideological reasons is an inauspicious beginning for a government that Saskatchewan people hoped could lead them to a prosperous future.

Mr. Speaker, when the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* thinks that the government has swung too far to the right in its attack on the citizens of inner-city Saskatoon, it's time for the members opposite to listen.

I want to, Mr. Speaker . . . I've received a number of letters. I'm sure members of the government have received a number of letters and emails. I've received a number of emails today. I would like to read into the record, Mr. Speaker, the first email I received today. It wasn't the last. It would be one of many. It says:

Frank, I live in your constituency. I do not need Station 20. Many of the residents of Pleasant Hill do. Do not let the Sask Party off the hook regarding this blatant anti-urban, anti-poor, politically motivated, and utterly foolish decision. This Alberta-style disregard for one's own citizens must not poison one of things that makes Saskatchewan a desirable place to live — social conscience.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I could hardly say it better. I quote this particular email because it's a constituent of mine. It came today, spontaneous concern for his fellow citizens expressed to his Member of the Legislative Assembly. And this is a project — as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out during question period — a project of the community, a project of the people of

Saskatoon, a project that was considered by the former government in a way that a government should consider decisions.

Proposal was brought forward by a minister. Matters were discussed by a Treasury Board. I can tell you that, Mr. Speaker; I was on the Treasury Board that discussed this. It was discussed by the cabinet, and it was discussed by the caucus. No minister of an NDP government would get up and say, I found out about it by reading about it in the newspaper, as the Minister of Social Services says about decisions made by her government, in her ministry, in her area of responsibility. My question to that minister would be, has she figured out yet who is running her ministry?

But to return to the question of Station 20, which the Minister of Health in question period said was an issue of this budget, Mr. Speaker. To return to the issue of Station 20, Station 20 in part came as a result of a study done in 2006 by the Saskatoon Health Region which found that residents of the core neighbourhoods had dramatically higher rates of a variety of health problems. It also demonstrated the link between low income and health issues by bringing non-profit organizations together with larger institutions like the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Health Region, and in the case of the University of Saskatchewan, specifically the College of Medicine, specifically the College of Dentistry which wants to put dental chairs in the inner city, in Station 20.

Station 20 West was intended to provide integrated and expanded treatment services. It will also work to address the root causes of poverty to which the government paid lip service in its Throne Speech, but lip service only, apparently, Mr. Speaker.

Working together in a holistic way, the co-locating partners intended to focus not only upon providing necessary services but also things like food security, adequate housing, access to employment and education which the health study identifies playing a large role in health status. In order for Station 20 to be effective, co-locating partners agreed that they needed to be housed together in a building designed to facilitate integration of services and the expansion of program activities. The Westside community clinic, for example, is bursting at the seams, Mr. Speaker. That is an understatement. And it needs additional space for specialized programs such as prenatal and immunization clinics, addiction treatment, and more.

All subjects to which the government will pay lip service, but which they have now set back a million years in their decision to not allow the Westside community clinic to expand, to not allow dentistry chairs to be put in the inner city, to not allow these other services to come together in what was mis-described as being in the riding of Saskatoon Riversdale. The government can't get the numbers right; they can't get the purpose right; and they can't get the location right — and on this basis they make decisions, Mr. Speaker.

The College of Dentistry requires proper space for equipment used to train dental students, and CHEP Good Food Inc. needs a proper kitchen to enable them to teach neighbourhood women about cooking nutritious meals. Organizations that would be locating in Station 20 include the University of Saskatchewan

dental services program, College of Dentistry. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what an advocate the two deans were when it came to our government, the NDP government, campaigning for Station 20. The Dean of Medicine, the Dean of Dentistry, what strong advocates they were. I know government members have heard from those deans on their decision and I hope that their influence will help the government reverse what they have done.

Outreach clinical services for the College of Medicine were to be located at Station 20. The Saskatoon Community Clinic, Westside, was to be relocated in proper facilities at Station 20. The Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker, the Elizabeth Fry Society, the city of Saskatoon community development services, amongst others. The Station 20 initiative has been driven by the community, Mr. Speaker. It grew out of year-long community forums to identify the needs for better health services, housing, and access to employment in the core neighbourhoods.

It also grew out of the community's distress at losing the last grocery store in the core neighbourhood, and maybe members opposite need to know that those stores are gone, they are long gone, Mr. Speaker. *The StarPhoenix* knows it and I think members know that now, having had the opportunity to hear from opinion leaders and hear from the editorial board of *The StarPhoenix*.

On February 23, 2007 the Government of Saskatchewan provided \$8 million to Station 20 out of \$100 million which had been allocated for inner-city and northern development projects. The vast majority of this money — \$60 million or so, Mr. Speaker — was to go to social housing, non-profit housing, Mr. Speaker.

The government opposite likes to pretend that the previous government had taken no action. We had taken that action among other actions. Some of the money went to skills training in the inner city, Mr. Speaker, and specifically Mount Royal, taking skills training to the inner-city residents in the school, in their high school, so that they could go into post-secondary skills training without even leaving their neighbourhood. That investment was made there.

The cutback of the Station 20 investment highlights the priorities or lack of priorities that this government had in its budget. As I said when I spoke last on this matter, Mr. Speaker, cutting in half the increase in training spaces from what the previous government achieved in the last year of its government, putting no money aside to fulfill or work on the recommendations of their study in housing compared to the work that the previous government had done in its investment in social housing.

The Station 20 cutback — the smallest of the \$100 million — perhaps will have the largest impact certainly in the consciousness of the people of Saskatoon who have, as my constituent who says, I don't need Station 20; I don't live near Station 20. The people of Saskatoon recognize that this is a necessary project for the health of the community, health of the entire community, not just the health of the residents of Pleasant Hill and the residents of west side Saskatoon.

The people of Saskatoon know that this is their project. And if the government has accomplished something, if they restored the funding, the government has accomplished this. The government has given the people of Saskatoon the forum now, the opportunity to speak about their concern for their neighbours, their concern for fairness, their concern for equity, and their priorities as to what a government should do with surplus, Mr. Speaker.

When the previous government had a surplus, \$100 million — housing for low-income people, skills training for people in the inner city, money to address the health needs and health outcomes and the health disparities of the inner city of Saskatoon — you could see the priorities of the previous government. And in this budget and particularly in this decision to attack Station 20, you can see the priorities of this new government, Mr. Speaker.

This \$8 million was targeted for infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and that's something we hear a lot from the government about. We hear a lot about infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. This was for infrastructure for people who do not usually see an investment on the part of their government — have seen investments on the part of the former NDP government, cannot look forward, if this decision is any indication, Mr. Speaker, to investments by this government.

This government is setting a poor lack of priorities, Mr. Speaker, poor choice of priorities. A choice of priorities that, if they follow through in the budget decisions they made, in the words not of a harping opposition, Mr. Speaker, in the words not of a partisan or a particularly left wing commentators, Mr. Speaker, but in the words of my hometown paper, which has never been accused of being a supporter of mine. In their words, this poses "dire consequences" not for the people of Pleasant Hill, not for the people of the inner city of Saskatoon, not for the people of west side Saskatoon, not for the people of Saskatoon; this decision, in the words of *The StarPhoenix*, sets out "dire consequences" for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This, and for the other reasons I've outlined both today and the previous day that I spoke, are reasons I cannot support the budget, cannot support the amendment, but will be . . . why I cannot support the budget, cannot support the motion, but will be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with our government's recent budget prepared and presented under the leadership of our esteemed Minister of Finance, Saskatchewan's ready for growth and ready to play a more creative and constructive role in Confederation. We are fulfilling a promise to help Saskatchewan realize its true, untapped potential. Our 2008-2009 budget takes important steps towards helping Saskatchewan sustain its economic momentum, secure our common communities, and we're beginning to take

some lessons learned from other provinces. We're beginning to put a focus on sharing the benefits of growth with all the people of Saskatchewan while sustaining our growth.

Within the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, we're focusing on setting specific goals and measuring real success, Mr. Speaker. Our focus is first to increase the number of people in Saskatchewan — and you've seen some recent successes there — thereby building more dynamic and cosmopolitan communities and paving the way for future economic growth.

[14:45]

As well we're going to be increasing the number of people with literacy and basic skills training, sector-specific skills, and advanced education, thereby helping to ensure that as individuals meet their full potential, Saskatchewan can better meet its full potential. And, Mr. Speaker, with over 5,000 training seats and opportunities in the recent budget, the people of this province will notice that more people will have more opportunities to engage the economic future of our times.

Further, we're also going to be fostering more fair, balanced, safe, and competitive labour environment, thereby ensuring that essential services are available for families during labour disruptions and that Saskatchewan workplaces are more democratic. Within the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and across the government, we will take these goals and translate them into tangible, sustainable achievements.

First we will work to support and train our people, ensuring that the people of this province have the opportunities they need to develop their talents to participate in and benefit from our new economy. This investment aims to nurture economic growth and foster the success of dynamic communities. As well, as our workforce grows, the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to creating a fair and balanced labour environment that respects the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers.

Second we plan to partner and build. Our government will work to foster strategic partnerships between public institutions, community-based organizations, the private sector, and other entities to help meet our common objectives. The key here is to come up, come together, to develop a skilled workforce within Saskatchewan, and to attract educated and skilled workers from outside the province, thereby maintaining our growth, sharing its rewards with the peoples of this province while learning lessons from other jurisdictions.

As well we will utilize the work under way to take the next step, which is to innovate and grow. We know that the innovation generated by Saskatchewan's advanced education institutions and other centres of excellence is instrumental and integral to the fuelling of our provincial economy. To that end, the Government of Saskatchewan will make a fresh commitment to support science and innovation that contributes to a stronger, more productive, and more diverse economy. We will also be more innovative in the ways that we carry out our business, from post-secondary education and training to career services and immigration.

In a few moments I'll provide some details on my ministry's budget investments but first I want to talk about how important these investments are to our new government and, most especially, to the people of our province.

Saskatchewan leads the country in numerous economic indicators including earnings growth, retail sales, and overall construction permits, as well as international trade, to name but a few. Most notably, we're number one in population growth now in Canada, with an increase of more than 16,000 people over the last year — the largest in 56 years — which stands in stark contrast to the numbers that were racked up between 2001 and 2006 under the previous government.

We also added an amazing 13,300 full-time jobs to our provincial economy over the last 12 months. On the other hand, current forecasts see that Saskatchewan will be short between 10 and 13,000 workers in the next few years, and this number grows exponentially when we factor in retirements. While overly instrumental, this contrast illustrates why we must work harder and smarter to create a labour force that meets the needs of our new Saskatchewan.

With a close eye on fiscal prudence, our 2008-09 budget prepares the province for growth while creating a fair and balanced labour environment, Mr. Speaker. This budget ensures that our message is clear within Saskatchewan, across Canada, and around the world: Saskatchewan is ready for growth.

Advanced Education, Employment and Labour's total budget for the '08-09 time is \$761 million, Mr. Speaker. These new investments include \$12 million for the new graduate retention program which will provide tuition rebates of up to \$20,000 for post-secondary graduates who stay in the province for seven years. This is a platform plus initiative.

As well, Mr. Speaker, 10.5 million to fund a 120-seat expansion for nursing education, which is so critically important in our province; \$3.2 million to train more doctors by expanding medical student training to 100 and residency training to 120 by 2010-11; almost \$1 million to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] for 12 new medical diagnostic technician seats and 42 new training seats.

4.1 million for regional colleges including support for a 200-seat expansion of on-reserve adult basic education to ensure that our First Nations and Métis can better participate and benefit from our provincial economy; \$33 million to enhance affordability for post-secondary learners including supporting a tuition freeze for university students for a final year and additional funding for SIAST; \$5 million for community-based organizations including immigrant training programs, Mr. Speaker; \$1 million to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology for on-reserve adult basic education and skills training.

45.8 million for post-secondary institution capital which was so lacking under the last government, Mr. Speaker, including 6.8 million for health professional training capital; 2.2 million for the international vaccine centre at the University of Saskatchewan; 2.4 million to provide additional settlement and training supports for new immigrants and to quicken processing time for potential immigrants to Saskatchewan.

We've already achieved a 36 per cent increase in productivity within that branch of government, Mr. Speaker, and this investment will help us to do even more.

Saskatchewan people are known for their talent, and we are working to meet the talent challenge of our province. To this end, we are committed to helping students and other citizens meet their education and training goals so that they can take advantage of our province's remarkable job growth. We're investing in a 120-seat nursing expansion. The 2008-09 budget marks the single largest increase in health training seats in Saskatchewan history and will benefit all of Saskatchewan. It is part of our promise to provide a health care system that Saskatchewan people deserve.

In addition we're working to expand adult basic education programming which will provide more learners with the critical first steps they need to engage and succeed in our new economy. The accurate number is over 5,500 new training seats and opportunities, Mr. Speaker, included within this budget. We're keeping our promise regarding post-secondary tuition, and we're committed to working with our institutions and student stakeholders to develop a long-term policy on tuition management in the coming months, an area that the previous government would not even look to.

Mr. Speaker, we're keeping our promise to deliver the most aggressive youth retention program in Canada, providing up to \$20,000 in tuition rebates over seven years for graduates who remain in Saskatchewan. We need to secure the future by doing more to keep our young people in Saskatchewan, again a track record that the members opposite cannot look at with very much success, Mr. Speaker. Between 2001 and 2006, they saw an out-migration of 35,000 people, Mr. Speaker.

As well, we want to make sure that Saskatchewan is and remains a destination of choice for potential immigrants, and we're working to develop new and creative ways to attract more people from around the world and keep them here. In a time when other Western provinces are having significant success attracting newcomers, Saskatchewan is working to overcome an unfortunate deficit, a deficit accrued by the members opposite in building more cosmopolitan communities. Put simply, the province is increasing the 1 per cent share of newcomers to Canada that it currently attracts. We're already demonstrating the promise of Saskatchewan to more people outside of our borders, and we're delivering on that promise.

Of course we're also committed to ensuring that First Nations and Métis peoples participate more fully in our social and economic future. Their youth, perspectives, and energy provide Saskatchewan with a competitive advantage. This is the envy of other jurisdictions, and we will work with First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations to best determine how to achieve mutual growth and development.

Finally we'll continue to market our award-winning SaskJobs website to employers across Saskatchewan and well beyond. With more than 300,000 monthly visits, SaskJobs is a major tool for employers and job seekers alike.

All this said, Saskatchewan people work best when we work together, and we've seen evidence of this where individuals and

organizations have collaborated on programs and services that directly serve our provincial needs. Last month federal and provincial governments, First Nation and Métis organizations, training institutions, and the private sector including Cameco Corporation came together to help Northern Career Quest Partnership take flight. The partnership will enable First Nations and Métis peoples to participate in greater numbers and at higher skill levels in the current economic conditions, especially as it relates to the resource industries in Northern Saskatchewan. It is anticipated that 1,500 people will be linked to counselling, training, and employment and that the partnership, this partnership will result in 750 full-time, permanent jobs for First Nation and Métis workers.

Also through the recently announced Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Agreement or the LMA [Labour Market Agreement], our government will fund a variety of active employment programs aimed at getting people the skills and training they need to work. Through the LMA we expect to serve more than 1,700 people through partnerships with our post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, and businesses. And that number is just a start, Mr. Speaker.

Together the LMA and ASAP [Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership] represent \$123 million investment in about the last 45 days right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, 105 million of that is federal funding, reiterating that there is significant peace dividend for the people of this province since they opted for change on November 7 — 105 million, Mr. Speaker. This kind of investment could only have been made as a result of a new level of co-operation between all parties involved, most especially federal-provincial relations. And Saskatchewan's new government will work hard to create more partnerships that help to sustain this economic momentum.

As well, obviously we're focusing on creating a fair and balanced labour environment that respects the rights of workers and employers and is competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions. This is a critical component and a component that has finally come to Saskatchewan. And Saskatchewan's new government is taking most important steps forward. Through a combination of education, mediation, and assistance in meeting standards, we are working with employers and employees to create and sustain a new culture of fairness, productivity, and safety in the Saskatchewan workplaces.

It's also important to celebrate families and promote work and family balance for workers in the province, Mr. Speaker. The effective balance of work and family responsibilities contributes to a secure and prosperous future for us all. Furthermore we are proud to be part of a global community that celebrates and appreciates the endless efforts of women and envisions a future in which all women are recognized as equal members of our society. As the province moves forward, we strive to further improve the lives and opportunities of women.

These are important statements of our values, Mr. Speaker, not only for our own citizens, but for the world. As we work to build more vibrant, tolerant communities and a safer more productive and more diverse labour force, Saskatchewan will continue to grow as a destination of choice for people here and around the world.

Our government's budget sets a clear course for Saskatchewan and for us all, and I'm honoured to serve this government and the people of Saskatoon Greystone and the entire province at such a pivotal time in our history. I'm also honoured to support our budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — . . . from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A mentor of mine, an old rugby coach, gave me some advice that I think fits this budget very well. He said keep your eyes open and recognize when opportunity knocks on your door. However don't be fooled if he shows up in a hard hat and work boots because he usually looks like work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this certainly has been true in my experience. In this budget, opportunity will be knocking on doors all across this great province. When opportunity knocks, he'll be building roads to haul commodities. He'll be spreading the word of our great lakes and parks, and he'll be standing shoulder to shoulder with our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Saskatchewan Party are not afraid of work. This government recognizes opportunity's knock and has opened the door.

Mr. Speaker, I'm certain that the members on the far side of the House will cackle and squawk about this budget. They will chase meaningless threads and pick around the edges, playing to their special interests and pet projects. They will try to take credit for the hard work of the men and women who have toiled in this province for so long under the NDP's governance, but the reality is even the opposition has found it difficult to pan this budget. In fact the Finance critic's first comment was this is an almost NDP budget.

The NDP know a lot about almost budgets. Sixteen years of budgets they almost fixed the roads. They almost trained enough nurses. They almost raised taxes. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker; after the last election they did raise taxes.

This budget is not an almost budget; it's a finally budget. Finally we have a change in government. Finally. This change in philosophy that has catapulted Saskatchewan into an exciting new era of opportunity and hope. This budget addresses the needs of the people of this province with a focus on keeping the promises that we made in the last election.

Through the election, we put forward an exciting alternative which on November 7 the people of this province stood behind. Keeping our promises seems like a no-brainer, but these are commitments we made face to face on the doorsteps over a handshake. And, Mr. Speaker, we are delivering on these promises. We are focused on building our future, and what a future it will be.

Mr. Speaker, for too long the area of Lloydminster, the Lloydminster riding, has been the forgotten corner of this province. Although the former government was certainly happy to take the taxes and the royalties from this bustling oil hotbed, they would hardly admit that its productive centre was part of

Saskatchewan.

[15:00]

No longer, Mr. Speaker, no longer — this budget brings with it exciting things for my riding. The cornerstone of this budget was \$1 billion for infrastructure, and I can tell this Assembly that during the campaign when I met with groups, towns, the city of Lloydminster, rural municipalities, infrastructure was at the top of that list. They would talk about their roads or their schools. And \$1 billion is a massive investment, and it's in the right place for this province.

I'd like to talk about the 400 million that has been devoted to highways. Mr. Speaker, it's again a massive amount. It's going to do about 1,400 kilometres of highway improvements in this province. That seems like a phenomenal amount of highway work. But when I look at our party's prioritized list of projects, not everything I think should be on there is.

So you look a little further and what you realize is \$400 million, 1,400 kilometres of highway is just a drop in the bucket of the failing infrastructure that we've inherited from the NDP. Now when I think of Highway 55 and access to our parks in northern Saskatchewan from Alberta, it isn't on this year's list. And it's just because our roads are in such terrible state that we're investing a massive amount of money, and we are improving that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also very confident that our party is putting together a five-year plan for road prioritization. And it's based on economics of a road, and it's prioritized in that manner. And I'm left wondering, how did the former government prioritize their construction? They didn't. They didn't invest in it, so how can you prioritize in it? And that is what we have inherited on this side of the Chamber.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about a couple of positive points in this budget. Highway 16 through the middle of Lloydminster, it isn't a twinned highway through Lloydminster. Highway 16 is a national corridor. It runs across most, all the Western provinces. It's twinned almost all the way, but through Lloydminster it narrows down to a single lane. Now in this budget we've addressed that, and it will now be twinned through Lloydminster. And this is a great, great thing for our city, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing I'd like to point out is again \$5 million for municipal roads resources program. The Lloydminster oil field is a heavy oil. It can't be flowlined; it has to be trucked. All the oil in the Lloydminster area is trucked, tri-axle trucks. The infrastructure in the rural municipalities gets pounded out, and the royalties get filtered off to Regina.

Now our Minister of Finance has recognized this issue and has put \$5 million into our local municipalities to make up for the pounding out of the roads from the oil traffic. And that is very welcome news by our municipalities and very welcome news as far as I can see it.

I would also like to address where our government is investing 160 million into education — 160 million is, again, a substantial amount of money to put into education

infrastructure.

And when the rest of the province in the last 16 years was losing population and getting smaller and smaller, the Lloydminster area was getting bigger. Lloydminster has been growing at a 3 per cent growth rate for about 30 years, and all the small towns in our area as well have been getting bigger and bigger mainly due to the oil boom.

Now when I saw the number \$160 million into infrastructure for schools, I thought this is terrific because our schools are getting crowded; they're getting overcrowded. And when we looked a little further, it turns out that there's a backlog of infrastructure debt. There's an infrastructure deficit left over by the NDP government. In fact going back to the 2003 election, that government made commitments for projects which are still in the backlog.

Now I would expect that those commitments were for needed projects, but why that government wouldn't have funded it, I don't know. It's been left on the shoulders of this government, and we have put \$160 million into addressing it. Now it's a starting point, and it's a great investment. It's going to do very good things. But the city of Lloydminster, it's going to continue to grow. And we continue to need more investment and infrastructure, and I'm certain that this government takes it seriously where the other, where the previous haven't.

Mr. Speaker, we also are investing 190 million into health care infrastructure. And it might not surprise you to find out that it is the exact same situation as highways and schools. It seems like a phenomenal amount of money. It seems like if we were to apply this money, it would just solve all the problems, but the truth is we inherited a huge deficit in health care infrastructure.

Now I'll tell you about Lloydminster's situation. I mentioned that it's been growing very quickly. It's a very young, vibrant community. Lloydminster is less than 30,000 people, but we have over 1,000 births a year in the Lloydminster Hospital. Now it isn't built for that. In fact the hospital's undersized in general. But when you look at maternity or some of the more specific needs of our town, we need infrastructure funding. And the deficit we've inherited is huge. And 190 million I am proud to stand behind because it is going a long way to addressing these issues.

Now I make light that the former government wouldn't plan for this. Now the adage comes up, did they fail to plan for this or did they plan to fail? Because the reality is they failed, but I don't know if it's because they planned to or they just failed to plan.

Mr. Speaker, we also committed \$20 million to nurse recruitment in this budget. Now this is one of those promises we made during the campaign. We said 800 new nurses in our mandate — 800. That's a substantial number, and we have had a very successful recruiting trip overseas. And we have answered that in this budget with funding. We're putting money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker. There will be no empty promises. This is promise made, promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, we're also putting \$10 million into nurse training seats. In the mid-'90s that NDP government chopped training

seats down to, I believe, about 135. Now 135 nurse training seats, that was so short-sighted, Mr. Speaker, that as you can imagine, we found ourselves in the year 2008 with a major deficit in nurses. So the government changes. We've taken aggressive action to recruit new nurses. We've put the money in place to fund that recruitment, but we've also put training, \$10 million worth of training for nurses — long-term solution, an investment in the future, forward thinking. And I'm very proud to stand behind that.

Another one that's close to my heart is \$6 million for doctor training seats. Well, Mr. Speaker, this one's close to my heart because in rural Saskatchewan getting a doctor is very difficult. And my understanding is that we've been training doctors for a long time, and once they get to a certain stage in their education, they need to do an internship. But there wasn't enough money provided by the former government to have enough intern spots into Saskatchewan to accommodate them. So we've paid for their education up to almost ready-to-go doctors, and they had to go out of province to do their internship. So the Saskatchewan taxpayer has paid for them to become doctors but yet lost them at the last possible moment. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have put \$6 million into doctors' training, and in coming from small town Saskatchewan, having a doctor in that small town makes all the difference in the world. It really does.

The commitment to a sustainable drug plan. Mr. Speaker, this is something that during the campaign got fairly heated. The opposition or the other party in the campaign, they had a drug plan but it wasn't sustainable. It was just one more example of let's throw money at a problem that's popular today; we won't have to worry about the consequences for, say, 15 years from now. But after 15 years of those sorts of commitments and promises, we find ourselves in a situation where a little more foresight might play the day.

Another thing that I find interesting, Mr. Speaker, is we're investing in patient exit surveys. We're also investing in a patient-first review of our health care system. Now why wouldn't, when we're looking at health care, why wouldn't we look at patient first? Why wouldn't we give it that angle of analysis?

It almost seems to me to be an investment in common sense, that if you're going to be putting people through a health care system, let's look at how those people are being treated by it, being serviced by it, and from there we can start making some decisions going into the future.

Mr. Speaker, the property tax promise that we kept during the campaign — very popular in my area, very popular in rural Saskatchewan, and in urban Saskatchewan. So often they ask when there's a problem in agriculture, everybody says what program can we offer? What program is there? Now as a person that is a rancher, I don't want a program. I just don't want you to take the money out of my pocket in the first place.

So let's look at the basics here. If we are saddling the property owner with an in-proportionate amount of property tax so we can then save money somewhere else to make a program, to get a photo op, to hand it back to the . . . you know, it gets very complicated.

So I'm very proud. We're doing the right thing. We're keeping our promise on property tax, and I'm proud of that one.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the 300 million that we're putting into a loan program for municipalities. I said earlier that Lloydminster area is growing very quickly.

Our small towns are filled up. The lots are all sold and the mayors and councils of those towns are coming to us and saying, we want to sell more lots, people want to live here, but it costs so much upfront to put in sewers, plumbing, water. Now in this budget we put money forward that will allow municipalities to put in a subdivision, put in a group of houses, and over the next five years sell them and pay off the loan interest-free.

And, Mr. Speaker, last week we heard that our population is now over 1 million people. We've had as much immigration last year as we have had since 1952, I believe it is. Now this program hits the nail on the head, allowing small towns to revitalize themselves. It's terrific. I think of Pierceland, Marshall, Paradise Hill, and Greenstreet — small towns that are just doing terrific, Mr. Speaker.

Parks, investment in tourism — all great things. Thirty new police officers, I think that is an initiative — \$3 million — that is good for our province. It's good for the people here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about one last direct thing. Now it isn't, quote, "sexy". It isn't a photo op. It's really rather boring. It's a quarter billion dollars for debt repayment. For most people it is dull, but as a fiscal conservative, it touches me somewhere down deep because I know that is what is going to be good for my children and my grandchildren, Mr. Speaker — a quarter of a billion dollars paying down the debt. It isn't a photo op. You can't stand in front of it. You know, it's the right thing to do, and we have done it, and I'm very proud of our Finance minister for having the guts to do it.

Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that this is a great budget. We're going to debate it here in the Chamber for the next week.

But, Mr. Speaker, in five, in 10 years we will look back, and we'll look back at this budget as the starting point of when Saskatchewan really turned around . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. I have a degree in economics, and I got thinking that students in the future, in that 5- or 10-year range, they will be looking back. They'll be going through the numbers, and they will be writing thesis on the Gantefoer budget of '08. They will. They'll look back and they'll think Gantefoer. It'll have a ring to it.

The Gantefoer budget — it'll be looked at with reverence, and it'll be the starting point of what'll be known as the prairie tiger, in the spirit of the Asian tiger or the Celtic tiger. The prairie tiger will rage. Through the lens of time an investment in our infrastructure made today will be viewed as a substantial building block upon which everything in the future could now stand.

I also expect that those same students writing papers will have to write a quote or an appendix to, what the heck were the NDP doing before 2007? How did you squander this province for so

long? It will make interesting reading I am sure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up, I'd just like to share a story with yourself and through you to the Chamber of a constituent of mine that some of you people know here. Now for 16 years Orval has gone to the roadside coffee shop south of Lloyd, and it's located on the Alberta side. And he'd drive into the gravel parking lot in his beat-up old Ford truck, and he'd have to pull in alongside his rich Albertans' black dually one-tons, and he'd go into the coffee shop. And over a cup of coffee, he'd debate with his Alberta neighbours in good nature that in fact Saskatchewan if managed properly would be the richer of the two provinces. And they'd laugh and they'd dismiss him. And they'd call him a blatherskite, that, you know, you don't know what you're talking about. And they'd denounce Saskatchewan as just a poor, threadbare cousin of its Western provinces.

[15:15]

Well, Mr. Speaker, things have changed. Yes. The vision of Saskatchewan as the envy of the other provinces is now starting to ring true. As of this budget, Mr. Speaker, Orval's life has changed. His favourite football team has won the Grey Cup. Wheat is now \$22 a bushel. The road outside of his house may get paved. He just signed his second oil lease. One of his sons has moved home, and his wife's prescription drugs are now covered under the Saskatchewan drug plan. He's still driving the beat-up truck, for those who care. That's for next year. He's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. One might say that he has an embarrassment of riches, but, Mr. Speaker, Orval is not embarrassed at all. He walks with his head held high into that coffee shop every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is for constituents like Orval that I am proud to support this budget and that I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to participate in this debate. I'd like to say right off the top, to dispel any sort of questions that might be there, I will be voting for the amendment and against the budget.

Although, Mr. Speaker, although it's interesting. In this budget there are a number of hallmarks, a number of — how should we say — planks that this budget rests upon. A number of foundational elements that bear a striking resemblance to things that have been brought forward in budget debates in this Chamber in the past and that the members opposite, to a person, voted against time and time again.

And it wasn't enough to go voting against them, Mr. Speaker; they also had to talk about the Fiscal Stabilization Fund being a slush fund or an NDP election fund, the fact of, you know, lacklustre debt payments. You know, that that was never enough. You know, I think last year the theme was, we're blowing the boom because we had the largest infrastructure budget in the history of the province.

I guess it's like this, Mr. Speaker. I understand that from the money that's put into the Department of Highways, there's enough there — above and beyond what we'd had in terms of the five-year plan that we'd laid out — there's enough there for 30 extra kilometres of highway this year. And I guess, you know, that makes sense in one respect, Mr. Speaker, because it's probably just enough for the road to Damascus conversion that the Sask Party's undergone in terms of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, in terms of balanced budgets, in terms of any number of things that they promised over on the other side of the House that they have not delivered on.

But what they have delivered on is a continued balanced budget. You know, for every Finance critic over there that I listened to talk about how it wasn't a financial, a fiscal . . . it wasn't a balanced budget; it was somehow cooking the books, or there was some kind of jiggery-pokery going on, you know, it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, on this budget they talked about it being one more in a long, long string of balanced budgets. And I guess, you know, that's just travel on the road to Damascus.

They talked about the growth and securing the future fund or securing the finances fund, financial security fund — there we go — as somehow new. And for every backflip that they had their Finance critics go through over on the other side, Mr. Speaker, about the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and about how it was wrong and, you know, again based on some kind of suspect principles, well here they go, Mr. Speaker, implementing the very same thing. So what's changed? Well they've changed the title. They've changed the title, and I guess that's hard work over there, Mr. Speaker, because we know how much they like hard work. They talk a lot about it, but apparently when it comes to hard work, changing the title suffices.

We know that they talked about putting big bucks on the debt. Well this budget, 250 million, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, again given the hype that we've been subjected to in this House for so many years, you'd think it would have been a little bit more than that, but not so much, Mr. Speaker. Instead what we get is talk about how this is a historic budget, how it's, you know, never been seen before. And the hype just doesn't add up to the reality, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the money that they put on schools, I'll be the first to say again, there are some good things in this budget. The province, in terms of education, they have a well-defined capital project system.

One of the things I was very happy to see this past summer was the fact that Scott Collegiate climbed to number two in terms of priorities for provincial capital in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] sector. I was glad to see that it was mentioned in the budget, and I guess I wait to see what happens, Mr. Speaker, because when you drill down into certain of the features of this budget, it's often the fact that the hype over-strips the reality. So I'm happy to see the early . . . [inaudible] . . . on it. I'm glad to see that they've got some dollars earmarked, but we'll see exactly just what they've got there for the expenditure.

You know, the speakers before have been patting themselves on the back about what a historic budget and, you know, how this was so great and, you know, how the light is shining from one

corner of the province to another, Mr. Speaker. And I guess one of the things I found interesting was, you know, if we're so proud of Saskatchewan, how is it — how is it — that when the NDP brought in record infrastructure budgets before, they to a one voted against them? They voted against them, Mr. Speaker.

And again, and maybe this is where the road to Damascus comes in because in the comments around the budget, the Finance minister has talked about how the key to them cluing into the infrastructure situation was that they talked to Alberta. They talked to Alberta, Mr. Speaker. And Alberta told them, well what you should spend on is infrastructure. So Alberta says, you know, go hard on the infrastructure, and suddenly you can't get enough of that, you know.

Then they like to talk about the \$1 billion for the ready to grow and all this. And mind you, 30-plus kilometres, which again is enough to make the road to Damascus up, but apparently not much more than that.

It's funny. We're so proud of Saskatchewan that it takes the Alberta government to tell the Saskatchewan Party what to do in Saskatchewan. But when it's the NDP that's doing it, somehow it's blowing the boom and it's trickery and it's jiggery-pokery. I find that more than passing strange, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — What was the headline?

Mr. McCall: — Oh the headline. Well I guess it's interesting. There are a number of things to talk about in this budget.

You know, they talked about some of their election campaign promises being met. And that's certainly the case in some respects, Mr. Speaker. But I note that in some material that they've got on their website they talk about the promise to strengthen relationships with First Nations in the province, how that's been kept. You know, it's like mission accomplished. You know, it's everything except for the big fanfare with the aircraft carrier and the big banner behind — you know, mission accomplished.

But what did they do in the budget, Mr. Speaker? You know, First Nations and Métis Relations, okay, central management and services, estimate 2007-2008, \$3.8 million; estimate 2008-2009, \$2.8 million. And you know, that \$1 million cut, they transferred that over into duty to consult, and they've proclaimed that as a big victory for the budget, Mr. Speaker.

And at the same time they take the First Nations and Métis business development fund and cut it in half — cut it in half, Mr. Speaker. And this at a time when we've got unheralded economic opportunity in this province, where First Nations and Métis people are crying out to get the tools they need to get the job done, to participate in the mainstream of social and economic life in Saskatchewan. So we take one of those valuable tools and cut it in half, Mr. Speaker. I find that strange.

The promise that was made around strengthening the relationship: there was a feast that was held here in December, which was a good step — and I don't deny that, Mr. Speaker. But that is held up as somehow strengthening the relationship with First Nations and Métis people in this province. And you

know, again, the feast is a good step, but when you take your . . . You know, it's always the proof is in the budget when it comes to politics, Mr. Speaker. And if you want to measure the importance of something, check out the dollars that are assigned to it in the budget.

So what did they do? The only new money in the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that wasn't shuffled or cut, the only new money comes from the gaming agreement that was signed by the NDP government. And that I guess we should thank fortune that the Sask Party hasn't torn that up because, with Station 20, we've seen how they like to take money that's been promised and dedicated and take that away. So I guess we should be thankful for that, Mr. Speaker.

I guess one of the things that's also interesting about this budget is the fact of the steps that were taken around training and providing new training spaces. We've heard a lot in the past few days, Mr. Speaker, from the opposite side about how we should be so thankful that the federal government has put forward some dollars on this file.

The federal government has a treaty obligation, a treaty responsibility, and they have a constitutional responsibility to provide for education for First Nations people in this country. And for them to come forward with half measures and the level least that they can do in terms of bringing First Nations the educational opportunities they need to take place to bring them into the mainstream of economic and social life, I find it, I find it, you know, not hard to understand, given the relationship between the provincial Saskatchewan Party and the federal Stephen Harper Conservatives. You know, that's not hard to understand, Mr. Speaker. But you'd think that they would take these half measures and say, you know, fair enough, but it's not enough.

But what do they do? They celebrate it from one end of the earth. It's like the \$250 million on the clean coal project that was promised in the budget, Mr. Speaker. And from that we find out that, if there are overruns on the clean coal project, guess who's on the hook for that? The people of Saskatchewan. And the Premier's answer to that, Premier Wall's answer to that is that it will be subject to further negotiation. I apologize for using the member's name, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier says that we'll negotiate that with the federal government. And of course this is the federal government though, you know, despite the Premier being the apple of the Prime Minister's eye, despite him being the favoured boy in Confederation, it's interesting that this is going to be negotiated.

So this is a government that signed on in the black and white on paper that they would honour an equalization deal with the province of Saskatchewan for \$800 million. And it turns out of course it's not worth the paper it was written on. But the recourse that we had in terms of the federal court gets traded away in terms of the clean coal project, where we don't know what the meter's going to be at the end of the day.

It's a massively inflationary environment, Mr. Speaker, and that we sign off a blank cheque in terms of whatever the payment's going to be. Don't worry about it, federal government. You know, you want to do something that benefits the whole of

Canada, but we'll sock it out of the people of Saskatchewan in terms of making them pay for this project that should be benefiting the people right across this country. You know, it's hard to understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess it's further interesting when you compare this budget, one of the things that's held up again is the inner-city comparison in terms of the charges and the costs of living in different jurisdictions. And of course one of the things that makes the cost of living so affordable in Saskatchewan, you know — inflation in the housing sector notwithstanding — one of the things that makes it so affordable in Saskatchewan is the low-cost utility bundle. And you stack that up against other jurisdictions, and it's plain to see that the Crowns are a huge advantage to the people of Saskatchewan. And the first sort of shot we've had across the bow from the members opposite is that the low-cost utility bundle, well that's just so much political gamesmanship; we're not committing to the low-cost utility bundle.

And so we've got them doing away with the bundle, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've got them signing blank cheques for Ottawa in terms of what clean coal's going to cost. And I think that adds up to a big, fat problem for the people of Saskatchewan in terms of affordability and the cost of living in this great province of ours.

So is it fair that the federal government off-loads this great expense, this great potential expense on the people of the province? And we get no more than a, well-they-gave-me-some-magic-beans approach from the provincial government. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think that's why I'm sitting on this side of the House and that's why I'm going to be voting against that budget because the reality over there never matches up to the hype.

Four particular areas where this budget fell short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of property tax relief, in terms of new training seats, in terms of housing initiatives for the people of Saskatchewan, and in terms of green initiatives. I mean we'll start off with housing. Today we had a news conference where the minister of housing participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the mayor of Regina. And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That took place in the riding of my colleague, the member from Regina Douglas Park. He was there for the announcement of that project. It's been going along great and it was started under the previous government.

[15:30]

And I guess one of the things that's interesting to look at this budget in terms of money, money that's been set aside for housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that when it comes to actual budget allocation — again the talk versus the walk — when it comes to budget allocation, what did this government across the way do with the budget? They cut the budget for Sask Housing Corporation by \$5 million.

Now I don't know if that's been reallocated as the per diem for the task force or what's been thought of there. But in terms of there being a housing crisis in this province, what's the response of this government? They cut the budget to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

They'll go to the ribbon cuttings today for projects that were started under the NDP, that were nursed along by the NDP, that the previous government put hundreds of millions of dollars towards, but when it comes to actually putting up or shutting up on the other side, they cut the budget for Sask Housing by \$5 million. I find that hard to understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When it comes to training spaces, again there's a lot of back-patting and self-congratulation that goes over on the other side. But when it comes to actually getting the tools in the hands of the people that get the job done, they're falling short, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think of the allocation around the provincial training allowance, you know, what was put forward for the provincial training allowance for people that are low-income, people that want to get out of social assistance, that want to find better lives for themselves and their families, and they want to find that through more education, through adult basic education. And what was done with the provincial training allowance? Nothing, nothing.

And in terms of the costs of expense . . . Oh no, and we've got a member who bears a similar name over in the corner, chirping away from his seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm sure he'll have a chance to get up in this debate and we'll see what he has to say then. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's a poor substitute for the person who used to represent that constituency.

Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they talk about, they talk about the . . . Oh well we seem to have struck a chord there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so you know, I guess we can let the chips fall where they may.

One of the things that's really interesting in terms of the provincial training allowance is the fact that again these are people that are showing initiative. They're trying to make a better life for themselves and their families, and there's nothing in there for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They increased the number of adult basic education seats by a largely negligible amount in terms of the overall scope of the budget. But again when all is said and done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will there be a waiting list for adult basic education in this province? Well we'll find out in estimates, but I'll bet you right now that there is.

They talk about it being a record capital budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again there's some good money put towards the universities, good money put toward SIAST. But in terms of capital to the regional colleges, there was nothing for capital to the regional colleges. How does that work, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

You know, we've got this great advantage in terms of bringing education to students across this province in our regional college system. And what was there for capital dollars in that part of the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Nothing. So again it's hard to cut through the hype to get to the reality, but we're working on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of the other things I found good in the budget was that they finally came forward and said that, you know, maybe we should have some more child care spaces in this budget despite voting

against every other child care space that has been increased by this government, despite the fact that some of them as federal Conservatives ran against the former national child care plan that was put forward by many different levels of government. But I guess that I'm glad to see that they wandered down that particular part of the road to Damascus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and saw the light in that regard.

Here's another one that's quite interesting. In terms of green initiatives, you know, they've kept the targets, but they cut the funding. So how did . . . you know, as they used to say in the Old Testament — some of the folks over there will be aware of this — you know, as the Hebrews said to Pharaoh, how will we make bricks without any straw? And apparently the folks over there think it's fine to keep the targets out there, but we're just going to hope along I guess.

One of the members over there and I were at a lecture given by Professor Tom Flanagan who of course has, you know, a storied career in academia as well as the political science faculty at the University of Calgary, but is a long-time activist and worker for the Reform Party, for the United Alternative, for the Canadian Alliance, for the Harper Conservatives — you know, depending on what year you're referring to, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sometimes it's hard to keep up.

Anyway, what he had to say about the Harper plan on the environment was that, you know, it didn't really go beneath slogans. It didn't really get beyond sort of, you know, talking a bit about it, but they had an environmental virage and the whole thing with Rona Ambrose, and you know . . . Oh, pardon me, pardon me. Of course they're all very close and personal friends over there, so I thank them for the correction in pronunciation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But the thing that he had to say about the platform of the Conservatives, you know, it sort of strikes a chord. It sort of rings a bell when it comes to the approach of the Sask Party across the way when it comes to the environment. It's okay to keep the targets, and we'll try and, you know, sort of keep that hushed down in terms of an issue on the election hustings. But when it comes to the actual plan, I guess we'll find out. I guess they're going to continue making it up as they go along. And of course the clock is ticking, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The clock is ticking.

And you know, this is something where we need to have the funds . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No. And we've got some, again some interest in the speech from the other side, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's fine. But I guess, perhaps what they could yell over is where they're going to get the money from. Where are they going to get the money to meet the goals? Because this budget speaks volumes about their actual commitment to how we're going to meet the goals that have been set out in terms of climate change, in terms of carbon emission reductions. So I guess we'll find out. I guess we'll find out. You know, I guess the response on this is just, trust us. Trust us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we'll see how that works out.

I guess I'd ask the Deputy Speaker if the Minister for Education would like to include his threats in his speech, so then we could get him on *Hansard* . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh no. Well

I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If he's going to threaten us from the floor, you know, maybe he could do it in his speech so then we could get it on *Hansard* and then we can tell people in Saskatoon, where he talks about how we're going to cut schools. Then maybe we can get that straight . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, no, no. And I guess I'm waiting for him to participate in the debate so I can understand him clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker — Order, order. I'll ask the member to direct his comments through the Speaker, and I'll also ask that the members allow the member who has the floor to speak.

Mr. McCall: — Have no fear. Have no fear. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, one of the other interesting points in this budget — property tax relief. And you know, this is something where we've heard so much from the members opposite in terms of, you know, the plan they're going to bring to bear and so on and so forth. And when it comes to this budget, what do the people of Saskatchewan get, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

On average 27 bucks — 27 bucks. And I guess . . . My seatmate is telling that me that's enough to buy a pizza. And I guess that's the pizza politics being practised by the politicians opposite, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things in terms of training in this province, the members opposite in past have said different things about tuition freezes. I can remember well the member from Silver Springs talking about how we needed to have, you know, tuition at the national average at very least; how that got turned around in the campaign. And you know, was there going to be a freeze? Maybe there would; maybe there wouldn't be. And I'm glad to see that there's a freeze in this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There should be. In fact I would of course have gone further and have cut tuition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we ran on in the campaign.

But I find it interesting that what's promised in terms of getting past this stopgap, this one-year freeze that they've proposed, well they're going to study it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're going to study it some more. And I guess what students and their families are going to tell them is that, you know, tuition's too high. Maybe that's what they're going to tell them. Because that's certainly what they told myself and my colleagues as we went across this province, that tuition has gone up too much and that we need to make sure that there's some sustainability there, some predictability for students and their families as they plan to make sure that they can afford their post-secondary education.

I guess again there's a lot of interest in the speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll take that as a compliment. But apparently . . . Oh they're renegeing on that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Anyway I guess again in terms of the speech . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I think the member is protesting too much but, you know, that's perhaps his due.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the fundamentals of this budget, in many ways it's an almost-NDP budget despite a few sort of add-ons in terms of things like the 30-extra kilometres — you know, enough for the road to Damascus. And despite

things like renaming the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, despite things like spending on infrastructure — not because it's the right thing to do and that's what people in Saskatchewan tell them to do, but because they got their marching orders from the people of Alberta or something along those lines — there are things in this budget that are almost NDP. So it's, you know, it's good to see those.

And we look forward to the days ahead in terms of how they play out and how they really impact the people of Saskatchewan because it's always one thing to listen to the hype, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it's another to see it play out on the ground. So we'll be watching very closely on that.

But of course for so many reasons — in terms of what's happened to First Nations and Métis Relations, in terms of the housing portfolio, in terms of property tax relief that doesn't go near far enough, in terms of keeping the goals for climate change but not making sure that there's the wherewithal to achieve those goals, in terms of the overall failure to make sure the training spaces are there to meet the opportunity that is there to bring more people into the mainstream of social and economic life in Saskatchewan — for all those reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be supporting the amendment and voting against the budget. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's kind of nice to get up and speak to the budget after a socialist's been up because now you can actually get some of the facts straight in what the previous member talked about.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — And I'd just like to give a couple, just a couple of short ones right now in favour of what the member . . . or against what the member had talked about. One, he talked about highways and his five-year plan. And the NDP government went 16 years trying to create a five-year plan, and it never was published. I have never seen an NDP five-year plan for highways, and yet the member has the audacity to get up and say something about our five-year plan.

Now he also gets up and he talks about, he talks about tuition freeze. He talks about tuition freeze and rollback of tuition. And I would like to just let that member know some of the facts. It was under the NDP from 1991 to 2005 that tuition rates rose 217 per cent — 217 per cent thanks to the socialists.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we now have a budget that looks forward. We don't have a budget that looks in the rear-view mirror like in the past. We have a budget that has a plan to it.

We have seen for the last 16 years a government that had a failure to plan. Now whether that was intentional that they failed to plan or they purposely wanted to plan to fail, but you look at the 16-year history of the socialist government and identify what they've done and where they've gone, and I would suggest it's both of those. They have failed to plan and

they actually planned to fail. And we could look at a number of issues where that relates to.

All we have to do right now is look at where we're going with this budget. We're going forward. It's a forward-looking budget. One of the first things happened after we got elected — and then we saw what the budget was — it's like there's a great big sign over the province that we're open for business. Finally, finally after 16 years, this province is open for business.

Now we hear the socialists talk about programs. Oh, you cut \$12 from this program. You cut 57 cents from this one. Where did they get the money from? That was the problem with the socialists. Where did they get the money from? The member from Douglas Park yipping at his seat, what does he want to do? Up taxes. What did he do? He upped taxes. And where does that money come from? The pockets of the people. What we have to do in this province is grow. We grow business. We get the number of people up. That's where we get the money to pay for all of the programs.

[15:45]

What did they want to do? Socialize, centralize, demoralize, and get everybody, take into their pockets and give it to them, and they'll try and run it. You almost wonder where they get their doctrine from. Well we have an idea. We have an idea where they get it from. We know what the manifesto, the *Regina Manifesto* was created from. There's only two manifestos that I know of in the world, and one of them's the *Regina Manifesto*.

Mr. Speaker, now we even hear the economy is going well. We hear members opposite. They say, well, well, thanks to the NDP, thanks to the NDP, this is our . . . We set the basis for this. Let me ask members over there — if they want to take credit — what did they do in 16 years that helped create the economic situation that we're in today? I don't know if anybody over there can honestly answer that, what they did to help create it.

They did lower the taxes — that was right out of our platform. That was a positive. We gave them credit for it. What else did they do? Most available hours of work legislation. I'm sure that really helped people outside of the province wanting to come in here. Thank goodness that was scrubbed. How about unionizing management positions? There's a couple Bills that did that. If you were outside of this province and wanted to come in, what kind of message would that lead to if you looked on the website and you saw this happening?

Now if you're a business person from some other country, some other jurisdiction, and you go onto a website and the first thing you come across is the NDP manifesto, the *Regina Manifesto*, and then you further look and you see where they're talking about unionizing management positions — what they did — if you look a little further and you've got a Bill that nationalizes potash and it's still on the books, if you're a business coming into this province, what would you do? You'd say, nope, sorry, sorry, we're going to wait until at least there's a thinking government in this province where we can deal with, and we will do that. And that's exactly what happened.

It's interesting to note members opposite . . . the member from

Douglas Park, he'd like to call this, well it was almost an NDP budget. I will assure that member that this is nothing like an NDP budget. This is a positive budget. This is a budget looking forward. This is a budget for growth.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — This is a budget that is identifying shortfalls, and we are fixing it. Infrastructure. Somebody just said I could go for an hour.

It's very interesting to hear some of the comments from the other side, and again where they're looking at the rear-view, in the rear-view mirror, we're looking forward. Their failure to plan and planning to fail. I found a couple of things very interesting in the last little while. We had the member from Riversdale on the radio the other day, and he had commented on Station 20, which he did in question period today. He commented on Station 20.

Well what really got me, the audacity of that member to say one of the reasons we really need Station 20 is for accessibility for health care for our people. He's the same person that helped close 52 rural hospitals. Talk about accessibility. Accessibility, he is worried that somebody has to go four or five blocks, and we've got people that are having to drive 150 miles to get to a centre. Accessibility, that's the NDP record on health care. Let me tell you; we have a three tiered health care in this province under the NDP. There's those that can afford it go out of province, those in the rural areas, and those in the urban areas; and they created that health care system in this province, and they should be totally ashamed of it.

Another one that I find is very ironic . . . We get the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow gets up and reads a petition, well we want you to do something for the Moose Jaw Hospital. What did she do in 16 years? Absolutely nothing. In the last eight years or last four years she was a member of cabinet. What did she do for the Moose Jaw Hospital? Absolutely nothing. And now she says well the Sask Party better do something for it.

They created an infrastructure deficit so bad in this province it's going to take years to fix, and yet she has the audacity to get up and say something now like, do something for our hospital please because we couldn't. And that's basically what she's saying. That's the undertone of what she's saying . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . She, I said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have an interesting email that I received, and I would like to put it on record because it was not too long ago when the Leader of the Opposition was asked about a report card for the Saskatchewan Party government. And in the report card, he had said, I'm going to give the Sask Party a D. Well I have this individual that was so upset with that he sent me a very long email, and I'd just like to read a couple of excerpts from it, and I'm quoting. It said:

I recently read on the news that Mr. Lorne Calvert gave the "Sk Party" a D grade so far, well here's one for Mr. Calvert and I give him a minus F for his failure to hire sufficient staff to operate the multi-million dollar hospital they built in Swift Current . . . and the waiting period we

the electorate are continued to be put through as a result of his lack of foresight and/or negligence. I hope to face him in person one day and tell him what I think, but until that time I only have you to inform.

Here's another one:

What kind of planning was done there? Was that a failure to plan or was that a plan to fail?

An Hon. Member: — It was a plan to fail.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — And that's very, very sad.

And this fellow goes on and he said, he says:

Millions spent on a building but little or nothing spent on hiring new staff does not make sense to me. For that [and I'm quoting] Lorne gets a -F and thank God he's out of the Premier's office.

That's the sentiment out there by people of Saskatchewan. They are just totally upset with what has gone on in the past, and they're so relieved and pleased to see a government now that's looking forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about when members opposite get up and they talk about spending. And with their socialist mentality, you know, what they've done to centralize and socialize, you can't help but bring to light what the amount of money that they've squandered over some of their business deals.

We have heard of SPUDCO. And where would that 35 or \$38 million go to help out the people in the inner cities that they're talking about? Station 20, would that help? And I'm wondering, I'm wondering if Station 20 was not an issue like SPUDCO, public-private partnership where the public didn't have to put any money in. I think SPUDCO — what was it? — \$49 that they put into SPUDCO? And that was a public-private partnership but the public of Saskatchewan was misled for six years, and the public of Saskatchewan were not told the truth on that whole issue.

But I want to go on, on some of these other ones because we talk about the failure to plan and where this government or that government has gone.

Let's look at, let's look at . . . one of my favourites is Navigata. How much planning went into Navigata? Did they really plan to fail on that one? And what is Navigata up to now, 100-and-some million dollars of loss? 100-and-some million? And they're talking now about well, if you would have taken this \$100,000 or this million dollars. What about the \$100 million that they lost in Navigata? And who was held to account for that? Is there anybody on that side of the House that can tell anybody in this Chamber who was held to account for that? I think not. I think not.

Now here's another one. We talk about the great business acumen of those people on the opposite side of the House. How about ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]? ISC is a very interesting story. It could have

been bought off the shelf for maybe 5 million, maybe 10 million. Put in some unique Saskatchewan enhancements, maybe 20 million. No, no, no, no. No, no, no.

We had a socialist government says we know better. What did ISC end up costing — 110 million, \$120 million? There's about another \$100 million squandered by that group of men and women on that side of the House. And they're now wishing to talk about a couple of million bucks in the budget that didn't get to one of their special pet projects. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot of these.

How about the \$800 million in the Meadow Lake pulp mill? You know I'm waiting for somebody from the other side to yip and say, well that wasn't ours; that would come under some other administration. Well I said this before in the Throne Speech; it's typical of the NDP. It's like them betting on a horse race. The horse loses every race, but they keep betting on it and blame the owner of the horse. That's what they did with the Meadow Lake pulp mill. They threw something like \$700 million more into a losing venture. Why? Because of politics. That's the only simple reason was because of politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a host of business deals that that government went through. And I could list them off. I'd love to list them off — tappedinto.com. Into the dot-com business. Now you look again at the business acumen of those people on that side and how they could justify to get into something like the dot-coms. And look at the dot-coms; what they've got: [tappedinto](http://tappedinto.com), Craig Wireless, Retx, Clickabid, oh my gosh. And their business dealings that . . . These are all losses, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These are losses that those men and women engineered the losses. Were they planning to fail or failing to plan? Again both. They failed to plan and they really planned to fail.

We could go back and look at Guyana and Channel Lake. Fifteen million dollars in Channel Lake — that was brutal, brutal, absolutely. And what do they do about it? Well they say, well in years past somebody lost \$1,200 and we took them to court for it. Add these up.

Oh and I read another one that that I really want to talk about. Talk about a socialist organization to take over the bingo of the province — mega bingo — again the business acumen of those men and women, and they lost \$8 million to try and take over the bingo industry and can't even win at bingo. Planning to fail or failing to plan? Both.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's kind of ironic when you start looking at how the socialists really try and work. Look at the Belle Plaine, look at the Belle Plaine ethanol plant. Was that a failure to plan or plan to fail? And it was both.

We had a photo op — what was it? — \$750,000 photo op. That's what it was. All it was, was a photo op. And I have a feeling. It is my real deep feeling that this was nothing more than SPUDCO in disguise. It was a public-private partnership with no private money in it.

Broe industries were right, front, and centre . . . And notice the people are pretty quiet over there on that side now because maybe they have some more information on it. But

public-private partnership with no private money — what a deal, that's a typical type of a socialist deal.

So anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at all of the failed business ventures, when those men and women wish to get up and talk about \$1 million here, \$1 million there, I would remind them what they have lost. And that what I have just given you adds up to over, well over \$1 billion, \$1 billion in failed NDP ventures. Now when they want to talk about \$1 million here or there, I think they should take that into account.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget that we put forward is a total inclusive budget. It is for the whole province. It's not like the group on the other side that wanted to pick winners and losers every day of the week — more losers than winners, I might add. But this is all-inclusive. And I look at stuff around the province, and I can speak for a long time on it.

The cattle industry is one. I asked in every speech — budget and Throne Speech — what they have done to help the cattle industry. In my seven to eight years here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was absolutely nothing. Now, now at least, with a \$1 billion infrastructure fund, there's some light at the end of the tunnel — finally.

Tourism. We heard members opposite get up and talk about tourism. Tourism is a saving thing for the province of Saskatchewan, and I remember standing up in this House and talking about the infrastructure, road infrastructure in southern Saskatchewan. How do tourists get into this province? They don't come by boat or very few. The flying, we know that the flights in and out of Saskatchewan have, under their regime, have not been the greatest, so I would suggest that by vehicle is the greatest way to get into this province for tourism. And what did they do with the highway infrastructure? It was just totally decimated over the last numbers of years under the NDP.

[16:00]

Now we also look at how the NDP operate. And I just have to touch a little bit because we talk about, we talk about property taxes and we know, we know that we have done more in property taxes. They talk the talk but don't walk the walk. Yes, you know, go right back to big Tommy, and he said in '44 about property taxes were the worst form of taxation. And they talk about that every year, but they didn't really do anything about it. They'd throw out a little handful here and there. We're working on a plan to have property taxes, education portion of property tax, dealt with. In fact our member from Rosetown is looking after that.

But let's look at the NDP record on that. What they did was forced amalgamation . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Member from Moose Jaw Wakamow wants to speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I guess it's her turn next. But let's look, let's look at the forced amalgamation. The forced amalgamation of the school divisions, that was, that was designed by . . . I think that member was actually involved in it. That was designed to save education portion of property tax. What was the result? It cost taxpayers in this province multi-millions of dollars, and all it did was basically centralize and socialize the school districts. Mr. Speaker, another case of failing to plan and planning to fail. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on for a long time, but I will

adhere a little bit closer to the time constraints that we had asked for, so I am going to, I am going to end my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd say I would definitely vote against the amendment to the budget that I think was very not well-thought-out, and I will definitely be supporting the budget which is the most, it's the most progressive and outstanding budget that this province has probably ever seen in its history.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today in support of the 2008-2009 provincial budget.

The first budget of the Saskatchewan Party government outlines our plans to make this province ready for growth. It sets forth the plan to sustain this growth in the coming years to ensure a lasting prosperity for all Saskatchewan people. I can't think of a better time for Saskatchewan than right now. We are leading the nation in key sectors of the economy, and many forecasters are predicting that our edge will grow even greater in 2008 and 2009. We are committed to follow through on our promise of growth and security.

There's a new vibrancy in our cities and rural areas with the growing strength of our economy, and we are all beneficiaries of the high quality of life in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The rest of the country is really trying to figure out what we've known for a very long time — that Saskatchewan is a great place to work, live, play, and do business.

We have all heard just in the last few days that the province is experiencing a rise in the population that it is not seen since 1952. Private sector forecasters estimated that in 2007, Saskatchewan's growth rate was second or third in this country. In the first quarter of 2008, those forecasters are already saying that our growth rate will rank first in Canada. As you heard in the budget address, Saskatchewan is already leading in key sectors of our economy.

There's a whole list, Mr. Speaker, of number ones that we can be proud of. In income growth, we are number one in Canada. In wholesale trade growth, we are number one in Canada. In retail sales growth, we are number one in Canada. In overall construction growth, we are again number one in Canada. In residential growth, construction growth, we are number one in Canada. In new vehicle sales we are again number one in Canada. As many of you have heard the Premier say, when it comes to the great sport of football, we're number one in Canada.

National and provincial publications have recognized our province, our great province of Saskatchewan, as a place for business, a destination for tourism, and an attractive place to live and work. The future does look bright for the people of Saskatchewan. Employment levels went up 2.1 per cent in 2007. We exceeded one-half million working people for the first year ever.

Clearly this is a time of growth for Saskatchewan, and we're gaining momentum. Our government's job is to look at ways to sustain this growth and secure it for the future. I believe that economic growth will attract people, but it is the quality of life that we can offer in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that makes people want to stay here and raise their families.

Saskatchewan's tourism industry plays a vital role in both economic development and in promoting pride in our province. That emphasis on quality of life and pride in our province is manifested in the structuring of the new Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. This structure reflects our priority and focuses strategically on tourism enhancement, quality of life, and economic growth.

The tourism industry is key to our new vision for the province. Our government certainly realizes that tourism is an important economic engine for Saskatchewan. In fact it is a \$1.5 billion industry in Saskatchewan, employing nearly 53,000 people. When you think that one in nine workers is employed in tourism and seven out of 10 workers got their first job in the tourism industry, this is truly significant.

We are taking an integrated approach to developing our tourism industry through bringing together key components such as parks, sport, culture, and heritage. For these activities, the budget, the Saskatchewan Party government budget announced an extra \$8 million, double overall tourism spending. This demonstrates our true commitment looking forward and a belief in our province and in what we can be.

This funding will cover a range of tourism-related initiatives that include increased support to Tourism Saskatchewan, improved signage for tourism attractions on Saskatchewan highways, capital investment in ecological, paleontological museum and heritage facilities, support for Saskatchewan's presence at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, and greater support for event hosting.

Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport will work with Tourism Saskatchewan and form creative partnerships with private sector organizations to promote tourism and attract more visitors.

Another major component of the vision is our commitment to increased funding to Saskatchewan parks. Our government sees a lot of interrelated potential to grow and to improve both the tourism industry and the provincial parks system, and we are excited about getting to work on that agenda in 2008. Our provincial, regional, and urban parks are a source of pride to Saskatchewan residents, and they offer some of the prime recreational sites in the province. We are increasing funding to parks by \$5 million. Initiatives to improve our parks will significantly enhance them as valued tourism destinations.

In order to relieve the pressures of growth and build capacity in our parks, we are committed to several improvements to park programs and infrastructure. New initiatives to meet visitor demand and enhance camping opportunities include adding 1,000 electrified campsites over the next four years, starting with electrifying 274 sites this year in a combination of three parks. We have recently eliminated the campfire fee. We are improving park programming, maintenance, and the

infrastructure.

We are modernizing and expanding the campground reservation service, reserve-a-site. In addition to adding more sites to many of the existing reserve-a-site locations throughout the provincial parks system, now park visitors can also reserve at Buffalo Pound, Danielson, Makwa Lake, and The Battlefords Provincial Park. We are increasing customer service, maintenance, and security in our provincial parks.

We are enhancing conservation and interpretation of natural and cultural resources in the parks. Provincial funding to regional parks will increase from \$75,000 to \$600,000 per year. And we will be consulting with First Nations and key stakeholders to formally preserve more Saskatchewan wilderness for nature conservation and wilderness recreational purposes.

Urban parks, Mr. Speaker, are also an important part of Saskatchewan parks network that contribute to a high quality of life for all residents. We are providing over \$4 million to urban parks this year, 2008. We are making these investments because provincial urban and regional parks are a source of pride to our residents and are a significant tourist draw, especially to our neighbouring provinces.

We also want to ensure that Regina, the provincial capital, continues to remain a source of pride for the people of Saskatchewan and the visitors to the province. The provincial budget earmarked \$700,000 to commence establishment of a new capital commission. The capital commission is intended to make Saskatchewan's capital city an expression and glowing reflection of the province's identity, values, culture, and heritage. It will work to preserve and promote the history and culture of the province through its capital.

Consultations have already been initiated, Mr. Speaker, with the city of Regina, the University of Regina, and Wascana Centre Authority, who will all play an integral role in the development of the capital commission. Broader consultations will also be held in the final creation of the capital commission.

Some of its activities will include enhancing existing tourism and heritage assets and identifying and soliciting the development of new tourism and heritage assets. Saskatchewan's natural advantages and cultural heritage draw tourists from around the world. We will continue to conserve heritage resources of environmental, recreational, and of cultural significance. We will work to promote a healthy and sustainable creative and cultural community that is recognized and valued throughout the province and beyond.

Participating in arts, culture, recreational, and sporting activities benefits children and youth, their families, communities, and indeed the entire province. It also contributes to an enhanced quality of life that increasingly makes Saskatchewan a place of choice to live and raise a family.

Government is keeping its promise, Mr. Speaker, to maintain arts and cultural funding support by providing 4.2 million in new funding to ensure a vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural sector in the province of Saskatchewan. Supporting the commercial development of the arts sector remains a priority of our government. Commercial development is one of the best

means of improving the socioeconomic well-being of the artist and the creative sector workers. Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport will consult with the arts, culture, and creative industries to form and develop a plan for the new allocation of the monies.

We will also be encouraging healthy, active families through sport and recreation. The purpose of the new active families benefit program is to assist families with the cost of their children's participation in cultural, recreational, and sporting activities. We will be providing \$150 per year per child refundable tax credit. It is anticipated that up to 120,000 children will benefit from this program. The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport will be consulting with global organizations involved in cultural, sport, and recreation in order to develop the guidelines for defining eligible cultural, recreational, and sport activities. It is expected that these guidelines and a listing of the eligible activities will be completed by the fall of 2008. This new program will take effect beginning in 2009 tax year.

[16:15]

Vibrant communities are destinations that attract businesses and retain a skilled and creative workforce. High quality of life, tourism growth, parks enhancement, conservation of our vital natural areas, and the nurturing of our cultural resources are all initiatives that will enhance our quality of life.

These initiatives help secure Saskatchewan's future as a great place to live, work, and do business, as do the other initiatives and new plans that were outlined in the budget address. It's about time Saskatchewan stood up and said, here we are; this is what we're about. And this is what this budget addresses and allows us to take our rightful place in this country as a cultural and a great place to raise a family and that we are looking at furthering economic growth in this province and improving our quality of life.

I do not support the amendment proposed by the opposition. Therefore it gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to express my support for the 2008-2009 provincial budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker — The member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and rise and speak to the budget debate. What a great time it is when Saskatchewan's got such a hot economy — just hotter than a \$2 pistol. The real question that people need answered and that will be answered is, can the Sask Party government maintain the momentum that has built up? Can they maintain the economic activity that's happened in Saskatchewan where we've got such a hot economy, where we've got growth in population — 16,000 year over year in the last quarter. That incidentally is just phenomenal. We've got things turned around coming exactly the way we wanted them to be happening in Saskatchewan.

We've got, Mr. Speaker, lest someone thinks that it's just me that says there's a hot economy, I want to point out just for reference the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy authored

Winter 2008 and it is co-authored by Jim Marshall and one Adam Mills. And I just to refer to a few things in this book just so that we understand what I'm saying when we have a hot economy in Saskatchewan.

And I want to refer, on page 11 they have a nice little chart that shows the gross domestic product per capita in current dollars. So we're talking, you know, apples and apples, current dollars, Canada and Saskatchewan from 2001 to 2006.

I'm not going to beat these numbers up, but I want to point out in 2001, GDP in Saskatchewan, gross domestic product per person, was 31,000 and change. For Canadian the average was 35,000 and change; so we were roughly \$2,000 lower in Saskatchewan, gross domestic product per person in 1991; not that long ago.

In 2006 Saskatchewan goes to just about \$47,000; Canada, 44,000. We're now 3,000 per capita ahead of the rest of the total of Canada. That happened in, as I say, a remarkably short period of time, and I'm very proud that that was a period of time that coincided with New Democrats having formed government.

An Hon. Member: — Coincidence?

Mr. Trew: — What a turnaround. A colleague asking, if it's a coincidence — well how can it be a coincidence when we go from below the national average to above the national average during our tenure?

I want to refer to the very next page, and there's an average annual growth of gross domestic product by province and I point out that from . . . this is a shorter time period now, 2001 to 2006, so just a five-year time frame. And Alberta was 7.5 per cent growth in the per capita GDP. We were at 7.1 per cent. The national average during that time when we were at 7.1 per cent growth in Saskatchewan, the national average was 4.4 per cent. Coincidence, I think not. Good management, I think so.

I've got one more chart before I leave the numbers, and then I just ask people to bear with me on this. This one is the value of Saskatchewan exports. This one really ties into how people are working, what they're building when they're making farm machinery for export — be it export to Manitoba, Alberta, Montana, the Dakotas, or Australia. We export manufactured goods all over the world because we've got such good work force and a whole host of reasons. But the value of Saskatchewan exports from 1991 to 2006 grew — now get this — from \$10 billion to, get this, \$30 billion, more than tripled in that time frame. Coincidence that we had a New Democratic Party government? I think not. I think not — a credit to many hard working people around the province, a real credit to the men and women that work in the manufacturing sector but what phenomenal growth.

We had, many of those years we had the second, some of the years the highest growth in the manufacturing sector in all of Canada, some of the years we slid to third but first, second, third all the way through that time frame. And the record, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself. I've already talked about 16,000 people population growth in the final quarter of last year alone. We got population growing like we have not seen for decades,

for decades. We've got things really coming our way.

Then we get to what this budget is about. Now remember I said, and I stand by it, the real question is going to be can this new government opposite, can it maintain the economic activity. Can it maintain the growth? Can it keep the benefits coming for the people of Saskatchewan or, more personally, for the people in Regina Coronation Park that I am so blessed to represent, for everyone in Saskatchewan? Can they keep that momentum up, that economic momentum up? I hope the answer is yes. I suspect that at some point in the future there's going to be a New Democratic Party government asked to clean up the mess from the right wingers again.

In this budget and by their own announcements, Mr. Speaker, we've got things like — I'm not going to beat on anything for very long — but highways, big announcement on highways, lots more money they say, despite that by their very own announcements, less than 30 kilometres of highways, additional to what was paved under our budget, is going to be paved this year — less than 30 kilometres more. Well that borders on deceitful. It is really, really questionable when you can claim victory, and yet the proof in the pudding is going to pave something less than 30 kilometres additional to the total kilometres that were paved last year.

I want to flip to agriculture. And here, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, if you were to check around with most farmers in Saskatchewan, most farmers would tell you that their friends are on the government side — Sask Party. Most farmers would say that. That's their friends. Well, Mr. Speaker, in last year's budget we spent on agriculture \$313 million. What is this year's budget for agriculture? \$302 million, \$302 million. Mr. Speaker, they claim somehow this is more.

Let me say to my farmer friends — and I have farmer friends — let me say specifically to my farmer friends and farmers everywhere in this province, be careful who you call your friends because your friends will have their hand in your pocket, and they're pulling money out just as fast as they can possibly grab it. I say shame on you, shame on you, \$302 million for agriculture at a time when livestock prices are plummeting; at a time when you look at the pork industry, they're experiencing hardship. Farmers are coming off some pretty tough times. Yes, we've got good commodity prices right now, but you know what? That's going to be too late for some farmers. And what's their answer? Go from \$313 million to a total commitment of \$302 million for all of agriculture. I again say shame.

Then we go, in this budget, Mr. Speaker, we go to post-secondary education. And oh boy, I hear; and oh boy, it is. I'm not going to beat on this one. But I want to say, they're proud of what they've done in post-secondary education. They've got a tax credit that's worth less than the tax credit that we campaigned on. It's okay. You won the election. You won the election. You're delivering that part that you promised.

But what they didn't say and what they didn't promise or what they aren't delivering is the training jobs. At a time when we've got an economy, as I've said before, hotter than a \$2 pistol; at a time when the economy is red hot; at a time when we have an opportunity and a need to train people up and get them

absolutely involved working in our economy, and there are people ready, willing, and able; at a time when they need the training spaces — the answer of the government is they increase the training spaces at a rate less than half, less than 50 per cent of what we increased the training spaces a short year ago when we were in government.

Well how is this progress, Mr. Speaker? I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to be scratching their head and saying, how does this help my son or my daughter, my nephew, my neighbour's children? How does it help our province when their answer is trimming the rate of adding training spaces at a time when they should be adding? I say on post-secondary education, I say shame.

Now we turn to health, Mr. Speaker, health care. This one I find particularly galling. In this budget, seniors, to claim the prescription drug benefit, Mr. Speaker, before they can claim any benefit under the new seniors' prescription drug plan, seniors have to prove they're poor, have to prove poverty, have to prove poverty, have to prove that their income is below a certain amount.

Well you know what, Mr. Speaker, I have been so proud all of my life to be a Canadian and from Saskatchewan. Why? Because we have a progressive income tax structure. If you make lots of money, if you've earned it, you should pay it. I have some friends that tell me, oh I paid . . . and they'll name what sounds like an outrageous amount of income tax. To every one of them, I look them right in the eye and I say congratulations because you have to have the income before you can pay the income tax. It's as simple as that.

We need to have an absolutely straightforward income tax structure. And I'm like everyone else; I wish that we could lower it, lower it, lower it. And in fact lower it, lower it, lower it we did, many, many times while we were in government. Many, many times taxes going down.

Anyway so we have a drug plan that . . . it absolutely appals me that seniors have to prove that they have not an adequate income to qualify for the seniors' drug plan. And everybody's circumstance is different.

Then the other question I have is, what is it that happens magically to young people that have their prescription drugs covered under the new plan up to age 14, and then they have a birthday? What a difference a day makes. What a difference a day makes. All of a sudden they can have some catastrophic problem that requires significant drug use all the way through their life, but all of a sudden, they're a day older, a day older. Their drug needs haven't changed one penny's worth, but all of a sudden they and their family are responsible for those prescription drug plans.

[16:30]

Oh and they say well but we've got a plan for that; all they have to do is prove they're really poor. Well isn't that wonderful. I say shame, that when we leave, when we leave a billion and a half dollars cash, that that's the best that the new government can come up with. There's a billion and a half extra dollars left there, left there, and that's the best you can come up with . . . is

let's charge children when they have a magic birthday. Let's make seniors prove that they're poor. Shame.

Then we have the situation, Mr. Speaker, where I want to say on the card, the budget card, they claim, they claim in their very budget card, this year's budget card — here it is; there, I wanted to be able to quote from it, Mr. Speaker — a \$250 million debt reduction. In other words, they're paying the debt down \$250 million. Leave aside what you're going to do next year or the year after, the year after, where you're making no provisions at all for that, but they're claiming, Mr. Speaker, a \$250 million debt paydown in 2008-2009.

Well here we are. The ink isn't even dry on this budget, and what did we get announced? We had the spectacle of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Hon. Stephen Harper came with a wheelbarrow full of pennies, dumped it. And this government said oh good, \$240 million, let us put Saskatchewan taxpayers on the hook for an immediate \$758 million for the clean coal project — \$758 million for a clean coal project. Where is it in the budget, Mr. Speaker?

Here we are debating this year's budget. We're in — what is this, day two? — day two of the budget debate. Day two of the budget debate, they've added \$750 million that's nowhere in these books — nowhere, nowhere. The ink isn't dry on the books. They could take a Magic Marker and put that 758 million in. That's not even talking, Mr. Speaker, if there's a cost overrun in this clean coal project. Doesn't mention that at all. But we do know for sure, we know for sure from the media reports, from the press releases that they put out, 758 million — that's the dollars that provincial taxpayers are going to be on the hook for.

Well you've got to wonder, Mr. Speaker, what this is all about. We've got an unproven coal technology. And I want to say for the record, I think it's wonderful that we have a government looking at clean coal.

When we were in government, we were looking at clean coal. And we didn't sign it; and we didn't sign it. The member from Kindersley points out we didn't deliver it, and let me tell you why, Mr. Speaker. We didn't deliver clean coal because the due diligence wasn't complete. It wasn't done.

Now in three months, they're going to tell us the due diligence is complete and they know everything. I got it, then table it. That's all I ask. Just table it. Show the people of Saskatchewan you've done the due diligence. The member for Kindersley has nodded yes, we have. Table it. Table anything beyond, anything beyond your press release, anything at all instead of trust me, Mr. Speaker, trust me.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. I'm having trouble hearing the speaker that has the floor.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'll have to speak louder. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to leave the clean coal now. I've made my point that they've added three-quarters of a billion dollars to the budget without it appearing in the budget anywhere. And don't say, oh but it's in the Crown corporation sector, therefore

it won't show up in the budget. Not so. The Crowns are fully reported in the budget — every one of them fully reported. So here we are, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we've just come through the Easter break, just come through the Easter break. I'm happy to report that one of my favourite aunts came through some pretty important surgery and the last report I had is she's doing pretty good. I was talking with the uncle of this aunt and he said, you know Kim . . . Pardon me. I used my name and I'm not supposed to do that, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. He said, you know, you started in opposition — and it's true — and now you're back in opposition. He says, what's it like to go back? And you know, we made a few jokes about it. I said well it wasn't plan A, but you know, Mr. Speaker, it caused me to stop and reflect. And so I reflected a little bit on what it's like to go back into opposition.

And what I do know is that the last time I was in opposition we had a government that was adding more than \$1 billion in debt per year, piling that on to the people of Saskatchewan. More than \$1 billion a year their spending was greater than the revenue. And they had no plans, no ability to change that. Saskatchewan was an economic basket case.

Well now after I'd had this conversation with this uncle, we've got a \$758 million bump in debt. They're right on track. This new government is right on track taking over where Grant Devine left off. Right on track on debt and not reporting it. Again I say shame. Day two of a budget and there's nothing in this budget about that clean coal project. Shame. No allowance for borrowing at SaskPower. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, if you had the ability to call up SaskPower and talk to their chief financial officer or anyone else there and said, where's the 758 million coming from, they'd say, well I'm not sure. That's what I think would happen.

So we had a government that was adding debt. We had a government that was in office at a time when we lost population — 18,000 people in their final year. Saskatchewan's population went down 18,000 people. More people left than came in their final year. Things were desperate. Saskatchewan people were concerned and rightly so.

We had job numbers going down. To get a good job in Saskatchewan at that time was difficult. I remember very distinctly driving down Albert Street and thinking, my goodness, how tough it is because there was a significant number of vehicles that didn't have much tread left on their tires. I know it's a small thing, but I remember it. And I remember it and I'm proud to tell you that's not the situation today.

We had a government, Mr. Speaker, that allowed the debt . . . The debt peaked at beyond the wrong side of \$15 billion. I already said they were adding \$1 billion a year. The debt was peaking and there was no plan, no ability to pay it down. In fact, when we first formed government, we had difficulty meeting payroll. We had difficulty borrowing the money. Ah, says the member for Kindersley. Oh I wish, in many ways I wish that they had won the '91 election and seen how badly they'd have bungled it. Mr. Speaker, we had a debt/equity ratio in Saskatchewan that was well beyond 40 per cent debt to our

GDP. Today, it's about 17 per cent — our ratio of debt to Saskatchewan's GDP.

I've talked about our economy being very hot. I've talked about the growth. I've talked about the good things that we were able to do. I've talked about having left an extra billion and a half dollars in revenue and the frustration that I have, Mr. Speaker, the frustration that I have on behalf of my constituents and the people of Saskatchewan, that the best they could come up with is this budget. What a shame.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment but I will not be supporting the main motion. I thank you for your time. It has been my pleasure to again stand on behalf of the people primarily of Regina Coronation Park, but to have my say on the budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of pride that I rise to speak on this first budget of the Saskatchewan Party — pride in our party, pride in our leader, but most of all pride in our province. Our province that has been up until recently been referred to as the have-not province, the place to be from, not the place to be, or as the truckers refer to Saskatchewan, the gap. Today we are referred to as the land of opportunity, the last untouched wilderness, the future economic powerhouse of Canada.

Today the people of Saskatchewan have a new optimism, a new outlook. They now have hopes and dreams for the future. They are now proud to say they are from Saskatchewan. Today people from around the world are watching to see what is happening and wondering how much and how quick they can invest in this resource-rich land, a place they have vaguely heard of and ask, how do you pronounce the name?

On November 7, 2007 the moon was in the right phase and the stars aligned, shall we say, and a paradigm shift happened and a new chapter began. The people of this province made a choice of not just a new government but a new direction, a direction that will cast off the old ways, the loser mentality, the wee province mentality that has loomed over us like a plague for generations. The people of this province have made a choice to boldly go forward with our heads held high and proclaim the new Saskatchewan and all that it can be.

Mr. Speaker, this is their budget, the people of Saskatchewan, yet it was written by the Sask Party and eloquently, I might say, delivered by the member from Melfort. But it is truly the budget of the people, a budget that they have been waiting for for 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, this budget stands on two mighty pillars. The first pillar is ready for growth. The foundation of this pillar is the \$1 billion ready-for-growth initiative. Four hundred and eight million of that is for roads and highways across the province. For the last 16 years roads and highways have fallen into a

deplorable state. The time has come. The new government will act and we will start, shall we say, on the long road back.

Health care has been left on the back burner for far too long by the previous government. The Sask Party has made health care a priority not only with lip service like the previous government but with action — \$191 million to fix hospitals and health care facilities, purchase medical equipment, and continue construction of the new provincial laboratory. Now that's \$191 million worth of action.

Education is key to our future. All our hopes and dreams depend on the education of our youth; therefore 164 million for new K to 12 school projects and post-secondary capital projects in this budget.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, at last the government that can take the stand for rural Saskatchewan and deliver 139 million for municipal infrastructure, and there's almost 100 million worth of other initiatives. They include forest fire renewal, FleetNet, fire towers, parks, provincial correction centres, and numerous other endeavours. This is an abbreviated list for the first pillar for growth that will launch us on our new and exciting future.

The second pillar is keeping promises. This is a major shift in the political style and philosophy of this new government over the previous one. The previous government had no problem in making promises, but there was no follow-through with keeping the promises. In fact the opposition happened when in '03 election the NDP promised not to raise taxes, but in their first budget — yes their first budget — the NDP raised PST [provincial sales tax] two points.

Our new government has decided to rise above that style of politics and set a new benchmark in Saskatchewan. The standard of this new government is, a promise made is a promise kept. Our government is barely five months into our mandate and in our first budget 40 of our campaign promises kept. Mr. Speaker, this is a statement worth repeating. A promise made is a promise kept. This is an unprecedented step by a new government.

Following are some of the promises made and kept in this budget: 12 million graduate retention program; up to 20,000 tuition rebate for post-secondary graduates from Saskatchewan institutions who make their career here; 38 million funding increase to post-secondary institutions; 25.5 million to continue the university tuition freeze.

These are all key to the future of our province. We must stop the outflow of our youth in order to grow, and these are giant first steps. These steps are a balanced approach to bringing our youth home and keeping the ones we have.

For generations the NDP have claimed to be the keepers of medicare. This has been their mantra, their sacred territory, but no more. From the province that gave birth to medicare, health care has been eroded to the point where we have the longest waiting lists in all of Canada, plus huge doctor and nurse shortages. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] says 800 nurses alone. In its first budget, the Saskatchewan Party has

made the following gains: 20.7 million for nurse recruitment and retention; and already we can proudly say we have recruited 300 new nurses.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — 10.5 million for more nursing training seats; 6.1 million for physician training seats, recruitment, and retention; at last a drug plan for children; 10.7 million increase for cancer care. These are just a few of the highlights for health care. As you can see, once again we're already making huge progress.

In our first budget the Sask Party addressed First Nations and Métis relations. The most prominent issue that showed the weakness of our previous government was the duty to consult which too often did not happen. I have stated before, we must arrive at solutions with the Métis and Aboriginal people, not for the Métis and Aboriginal people.

In this budget there is 1 million consultation fund increase, 200,000 consultation round table, 1 million for additional training funding, 235,000 to the Dumont Technical Institute, 1 million adult basic education, 3 million special needs funds. These are a few of the first steps taken by our new government. With careful and deliberate negotiations on both sides, it will lead to a brighter future for all.

The next item we shall address is agriculture. For far too long, agriculture has been neglected. And the Sask Party has started to address the issue: 91.5 million to fully fund agriculture risk management programs, 129 million for crop insurance. Our government is also addressing the education portion of property tax, and this is just the beginning for agriculture. The government is continually looking for a new program and ideas to help agriculture reach its full potential in the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to address the needs of municipalities, and the Sask Party has: 300 million in interest-free loans to municipalities over four years; a 7 per cent increase to municipal revenue sharing. There's also 3 million to hire new police officers. There's also 7 million in new funding to toughen security in prisons and improve rehabilitation. To show a balance on both ends of the spectrum, we have 5.1 million for addiction treatment.

Because green is the colour of our future, our government will invest 10 million in green initiatives.

One of the most important items in our budget I have left until last, and that is debt reduction. We have to have a balanced approach to debt reduction in order to achieve full value for our economic wealth and at the same time reduce our debt. Therefore our government will pay \$250 million to debt reduction, and finally a balanced budget balanced with real dollars, real money this time.

There are some things you won't find in the first Sask Party budget. You won't find 100 million given to a private company in a last-ditch, pre-election attempt to save our political hide. We have seen the results of such tactics. I am of course referring to the infamous SPUDCO.

You will see careful and conscientious negotiations that will

give rebirth to an industry that will make us both productive and sustainable. The member from Prince Albert Northcote keeps referring to the Sask Party's forest report and says he hasn't seen it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't write it for him.

The member also stated, and I quote from March 18 *Hansard*, "with their government's embarrassment of riches . . ." Why should any government be embarrassed with riches? This embarrassment is going to pay for highways, hospitals, schools, and health care. If that member thinks this is embarrassing, then he better get used to bigger embarrassments . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — Because the days of that socialist rhetoric are over. A new day has dawned. And it is time to be proud of what we have — not embarrassed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — To sum up the history of our economy's ups and downs, the more government intervention in the economy, the less economy happens under that government. As I said in my maiden speech here in the legislature more than four years ago, let governments govern and business do business.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, life is often referred to as a voyage. I would like to draw on that parallel now. You might have the best ship in the fleet but if you don't have a captain, you are no better off than a ship without a sail. It is not the size of your ship or the number of guns or the size of your crew. And, yes, these are all factors to your success, but it is the captain who determines the destiny of the ship. It is the captain who leads you to victory. It is his skill as a leader. It is his ability to make decisions in the heat of the battle that will lead to victory. It is the captain's ability to chart the right course. It is the captain who moulds his people into a crew that will determine the final victory. It is the captain whose decision determines whether you sail or sink.

The Saskatchewan Party is led by such a captain, a young man with the vision and determination to stay the course, to stand at the helm through fair and foul, to lead Saskatchewan into the future. Mr. Speaker, I am of course referring to the member from Swift Current, the Premier of our province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget launches the new ship Saskatchewan Party. We have put into place the right people to do the job both in this Chamber and in the offices in this historic building. We have brought together the right ideas and plan for the future to lead ship Saskatchewan into the unknown waters of our destiny, to chart a course that this province was destined to sail 100 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, this course that we are embarking on will have its sunny days, its blue skies, but it will also have its challenges. We will be besieged by pirates of the left who will try to alter the course of ship Saskatchewan but we will not be deterred. We have a vision of the new Saskatchewan, a bright and prosperous Saskatchewan and it is waiting on the horizon.

So let's hoist the sails, raise the green and yellow flag to our topmost mast, and let us together sail into the future. And for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget and not the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to get up and speak on the budget that was presented here a short period of time ago by the Finance minister of the province. It was a great budget that's being heralded all across Saskatchewan as visionary, certainly one that the people of Saskatchewan have looked at in a very favourable way.

The \$1 billion infrastructure program is something that is needed dramatically here in this province, as everyone knows. We have infrastructure crumbling all across Saskatchewan, whether it's highways, whether it's education facilities, whether it's health care facilities. And people across this province certainly recognize that.

We've got a long ways to go, and everyone, I think, understands that in terms of the amount of infrastructure deficit that there is. I think the Minister of Finance has indicated that it's probably somewhere in the magnitude of \$15 billion deficit in terms of that magnitude, of that nature. It's going to take a long, long time to make that up. Even at \$1 billion a year, at 15 years we'll have another 15 billion at that point in time. And I dare say in another 15 or 20 years when we decide to turn over to another premier, perhaps at that time we'll have another 20-year run at things.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — But the fact of the matter is it's a budget that is very visionary for the people of Saskatchewan. And it is precisely the reason why we see the level of optimism that we see in Saskatchewan these days, where we have people moving back to Saskatchewan in unprecedented numbers, where we see investment in Saskatchewan in unprecedented numbers.

The Premier and myself were in Washington and New York the last little while, last couple weeks ago, speaking to investment opportunities, investment bankers. And they were certainly very familiar with what's happening in Saskatchewan. And I can say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was a tremendous amount of interest in the opportunities that there are in Saskatchewan. And I think we will literally see hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in Saskatchewan in 2008 that we weren't likely going to see prior to this year.

So it's a tremendously good news story for Saskatchewan, the amount of oil and gas activity, the amount of potash activity that there is in Saskatchewan. I understand there's going to be some further announcements coming up very soon in terms of expansions here in Saskatchewan that are going to be in the magnitude of billions of dollars once again.

So there's tremendous optimism. And if you go around Saskatchewan — doesn't matter whether you're in Regina; doesn't matter whether you're in Saskatoon or smaller cities or

smaller communities all across Saskatchewan — you see an unprecedented level of optimism, houses being built all over Saskatchewan, investments in businesses all over the province, tremendously successful times for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I couldn't help but note with interest when the member from Coronation Park wanted to talk a little bit about agriculture and the concern that he has for agriculture. Well I can tell you that in agriculture today we have never seen the level of optimism that there is in this province right now. In 35 years of farming in this province, I have never seen the level of optimism that there is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you went to dealerships across Saskatchewan, farm implement dealerships, you can't buy a new combine. You can't buy a new four-wheel drive tractor. You can't buy a new two-wheel drive tractor. You cannot buy a high-clearance sprayer. And the reason is really quite simple — because they're all sold. They're all sold.

The Deputy Speaker: — It being 5 p.m., this House now stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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