



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

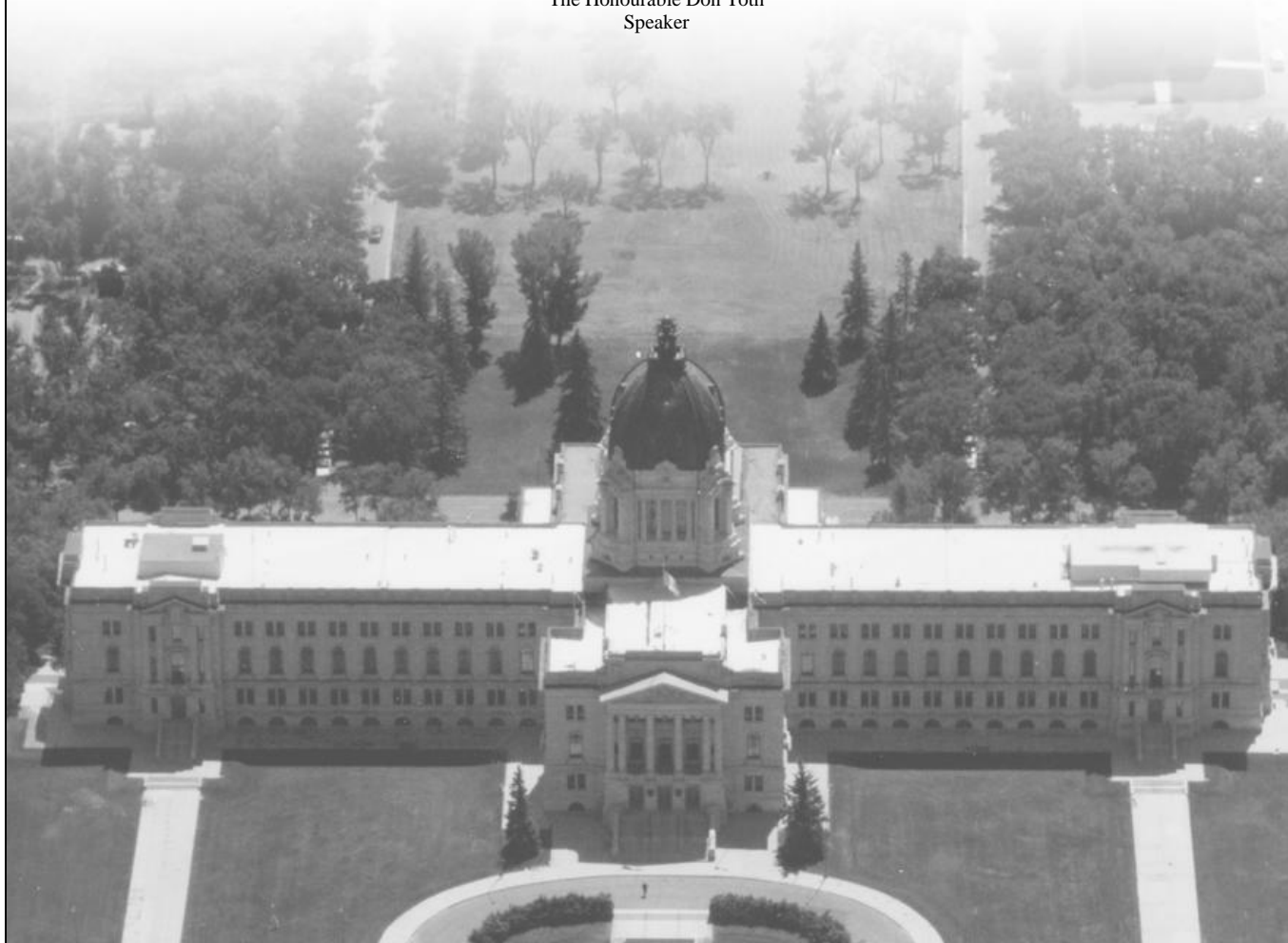
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, it's my pleasure today to introduce 20 students that are joined us in the west gallery. They come from Canada's hotspot, Yellow Grass, Saskatchewan. They're students at Yellow Grass School, and they're accompanied by their teacher, Jane Peters, and chaperones Dee Garvin and Sharylyn Weisgerber, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to meet with them after question period ends, and, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that before the proceedings the member from Regina Rosemont and one of the students had a conversation about hockey teams, and that student said his team was the Vancouver Canucks. But I know, Mr. Speaker, that the students I'm sure have an interest in what happens with the Boston Bruins, seeing as the hometown hero, Peter Schaefer, starts in the playoffs this evening with the Boston Bruins. And so I'll be meeting with them afterwards, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members to help me welcome them to their Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it's my pleasure to introduce in your gallery a good friend of mine, Norm McIntyre. Norm's a farmer from the Wiseton area. He's also been a long-term school board member and is currently the Vice-Chair of the Sun West School Division. And I'd like all members of the Assembly to please give him a warm welcome.

**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's with pleasure I rise to present a petition on behalf of Moose Jaw residents that seeks the government's support in improving health care and health care services in the Moose Jaw and surrounding district. And, Mr. Speaker, 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present petitions today on support for Station 20 and in opposition to the government's withdrawal of funding. And the petition reads as follows:

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.

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

The petitions are signed by people of Saskatoon and area. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on behalf of Saskatchewan residents. Mr. Speaker, the petition deals with the government's Bills for The Public Service Essential Services Act and Bill 6, the Act to amend The Trade Union Act. The prayer reads as follows:

That we respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the new government to withdraw Bills 5 and 6 and hold broad public consultations about labour relations in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of The Battlefords. I so present.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have today a petition in support of expanding options for student housing. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to aggressively working with partners to expand on-campus and off-campus housing options for Saskatchewan students.

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

And these petitioners are from the Queen City of Regina. I so submit.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### 2008 Saskatchewan Country Music Awards

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Starting tomorrow Prince Albert will play host to the 19th Annual Saskatchewan Country Music Awards this weekend. This is a chance for residents of Prince Albert and all of Saskatchewan to see and support this province's homegrown talent. Mr. Speaker, the event is really about promoting Saskatchewan country music artists and providing recognition for what they have done throughout the year.

The weekend starts off with a kick-off party Friday night followed by a weekend long showcase leading up to Sunday evening's award show. The award show will include performances by top country artists and winners from last year.

Mr. Speaker, as MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Prince Albert Carlton, I can guarantee that Prince Albert will host an unforgettable weekend that is sure to highlight the city's most and many attractions. This year there are dozens of Prince Albert and area residents up for nomination including Rich McFarlane, Dennis Adams, Larry Krause, and Garry Larson, just to name a few.

I'm looking forward to being a part of this weekend's events and seeing what Saskatchewan artists have to bring to the country music scene. I encourage residents all across Saskatchewan to make the trip to Prince Albert this weekend to support and enjoy your local country music talent. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in wishing all the 2008 Saskatchewan Country Music Award nominees the best of luck this weekend.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Before I recognize the member from The Battlefords, I just want to ask members if you could refrain from speaking across the floor. It was difficult to hear the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton, so it would be appreciated if we could at least acknowledge and give the person on the floor the ability to speak. Member from Battlefords.

### Annual Meeting of Provincial Fire Chiefs Association

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. North Battleford fire chief, Mike Saunders, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs and members of the North Battleford fire and emergency services organized and hosted the 2008 annual general meeting of the provincial fire chiefs association this past weekend in The Battlefords.

At that meeting, Chief Saunders, who was honoured with a distinguished service award, talked about the association's government relations lobby days for MLAs. Among the things that the fire chiefs of Saskatchewan are lobbying for include (1) provincial government funding of fire service initiatives; (2) an expansion of the role of the office of the fire commissioner; (3) the expectation of a mandatory level of fire protection; and (4) the development of a long-term inter-operability communication strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs was

formed in 1950 and is made up of approximately 200 chief fire officers from across the province. It is the only association that speaks for all aspects of the fire service in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, the association's AGM [annual general meeting] was a huge success. I congratulate Chief Saunders and the organizers for making it so. I urge the government and all MLAs to review carefully and take steps to address the pressing issues outlined by the fire chiefs as their priorities for 2008-09. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Junior Achievement Awards

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending the Junior Achievement awards for southern Saskatchewan, to present the Volunteer of the Year Award on behalf of SaskTel.

Junior Achievement was established in Saskatchewan in 1977 by the Saskatoon Rotary Club, Ken Sawatsky, Ross Harwood and Wade MacBain. Today it now has offices around the province and its programs are delivered to more than 5,000 of our young people. I have had the privilege of sitting on their board and helping to deliver their programs into the schools. It is vital that our youth learn the skills involved in being an entrepreneur, and the experience gained by running their own business will benefit them throughout life.

I am especially proud to note the achievements of students from the high schools within my constituency, Riffel High School, Winston Knoll Collegiate, and a wonderful teacher at Winston Knoll, Tracy Houk also walked away with the Educator of the Year award.

I would like all members to join me in congratulating the coordinators, the volunteers involved in this event, but most importantly the young people who, through their hard work and dedication, are the real stars of this event.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Outdoor Hockey League Celebrates 15 Years

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to thank the Outdoor Hockey League otherwise known as the OHL here in Regina. It was my pleasure to attend its 15th anniversary celebration with the member from Elphinstone and the mayor of our city.

Mr. Speaker, the OHL provides accessible recreational hockey to Regina's inner city. It removes the cost barriers of hockey such as equipment and ice time. The OHL is facilitated through Ranch Ehrlo's sport venture library and is led by director, Ms. Kim Langston. The league supports over 400 players each season. The rinks are staffed by a dedicated group of volunteers

from our community.

Next year, Mr. Speaker, the OHL is planning expansion to the Rosemont community within my constituency. I've served the OHL many years as a volunteer coach. I look forward to skating with my constituents. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more beautiful than a crisp game on a cold outdoor sheet. The very level of skills even allow a hack like me to pop the odd goal. The OHL has a rich history of corporate support from within Regina as well as support from the NHL [National Hockey League] Players' Association.

Mr. Speaker, the OHL melds all which is wonderful about sport: the basics of sportsmanship, challenge, and team. I am proud to thank Ms. Langston, Ehrlo's sport venture, outgoing title sponsor Conexus, the many dedicated volunteers, participants, donors — past and present — for their meaningful contributions to our community. I ask all members to join with me in extending thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Peacock Collegiate Students Win Junior Achievement Awards

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to rise and speak on the aspirations of the Junior Achievement Awards last night and to reiterate the comments of my colleague who spoke eloquently on the program.

Mr. Speaker, the Junior Achievement program is expanding throughout schools and should be encouraged throughout the province as the province's economic momentum increases. These talented young individuals gain valuable experience on building business concepts from the idea, the planning, the growing, and understanding of business challenges.

Mr. Speaker, if you're worried about the future of our province, it's in good hands if you look at what these young people have accomplished. I was especially excited about the 11 students of Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw. It was the first time that they entered the program and created a company called Chug-a-lug-a-Mug. Chug-a-lug-a-Mug. Peacock Collegiate won five awards including the Company of the Year Award. Their company produced and sold gourmet gift mugs packaged for the Christmas season. Community members took notice, and the local businesses chipped in helping Chug-a-lug-a-Mug set a record of 1,000 units.

I'd like the members to join me in thanking the company's members: Paul Belisle, Brayden Broadis, Bryden Casemore, Ashleigh Gawley, Sam Heisler, Morgan Johnson, Brandon Keys, Joey Lavallee, Desiree Markewich, Sarah Wicks, and led by the encouragement and enthusiasm of their teacher, Barbara McKinnon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Protesting Homophobia and Intolerance

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, I stand in the Assembly today in full and unequivocal support of the goals of the B team, a group of Saskatchewan citizens — gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, and transgender — who protested in front of MP [Member of Parliament] Tom Lukiwski's office this week. Like the B team, I note the very clear disconnect between Mr. Lukiwski's comments on a now infamous video tape, his voting record in the House of Commons, and the attitude of tolerance that he now says characterizes his opinions of the lesbians and gay people.

In 2005 during the equal marriage debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Lukiwski spoke of the same-sex marriage as being quote, "... a slippery slope ... [that] could affect societal change in a very adverse way." Mr. Speaker, those words of Mr. Lukiwski's are neither tolerant nor accepting. And along with this truly awful team A, team B comment, they underline an essential truth that cannot be ignored — that too many people in this country still consider gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people to be second-class citizens, undeserving of the same rights as others.

[10:15]

That is the reason why members of the B team called on present-day politicians to show through actions, not just words, that they don't share the views expressed on that tape. That is why the NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition is challenging this provincial government to heed the call of the B team to end bullying in schools and to provide funding for health services for people who have suffered emotional trauma as a result of homophobia.

Talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker. The B team said that apologies need to be backed with concrete actions to end homophobia and all forms of intolerance once and for all. Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition agrees. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Amendment to Extended Hours Motion

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, apparently the members opposite got a little punchy after two days of listening to the member for Regina Dewdney. I find it passing strange that, after two straight days of that member rallying against working till midnight, the NDP moved an amendment to work until 1 a.m.

But, Mr. Speaker, the flip-flops and the stunning incompetence didn't end there. Last night the NDP members stood in their place and voted against their own amendment. Mr. Speaker, I'm really at a loss to explain the leaps of logic the NDP had to take to vote against their own amendment.

I can only guess that it's this. Last November the majority of Saskatchewan people voted against the NDP. We all see now how much better off Saskatchewan is. So now even the NDP is voting against the NDP. Mr. Speaker, I'm actually happy for the

members opposite. Last night they got to enjoy something so many of us have been doing for years — voting against the NDP. Now that the members opposite know how much fun it is, I look forward to the NDP continuing to vote against themselves in the future, as this government continues to introduce policy and legislation to move Saskatchewan forward.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Essential Services Legislation

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday about a Ministry of Labour document which contradicts just about everything that the minister has ever told us about essential services, by referring to Bill 5 as the broadest in Canada.

As is often the case with this minister, he pleaded ignorance both during and after question period. But after he left the rotunda, it was revealed that the individual who wrote the document was John Boyd, the former executive director of planning and policy for the Department of Labour. You heard right, Mr. Speaker, I did say former executive director.

To the minister: when was the note written? When was the decision made to fire Mr. Boyd? And were the two incidents in any way related? And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, how many officials did he have to fire before he got the answer he wanted?

**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:** — Mr. Speaker, I can reassure this House and I can reassure the people of Saskatchewan that there was no connection between the dismissal of the individual in question and his view. In fact what I'd like to do is introduce that on December 5 the said official actually said:

Our essential service legislation does not remove the right to strike or eliminate any bargaining provisions of a collective agreement. Accordingly, we feel that it is fair to all concerned.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister's excuses don't hold any water. This wasn't the opinion, Mr. Speaker, of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour or the Saskatchewan Union

of Nurses. This was the opinion of the executive director of planning, policy for this government's Labour ministry. The government is now claiming that Mr. Boyd's comments refer to an earlier draft of Bill 5.

But Mr. Boyd's comments weren't the only ones released yesterday. There was also an email calling Bill 5, quote, "quite broad" and specifically mentioning CBOs [community-based organization]. That email was sent by an official in the afternoon of December 18, just one day before the legislation was introduced in this House. Is the minister honestly claiming that during the 24 hours between the sending of the email and the tabling of the legislation, Bill 5 went through quite broad to really just middle-of-the-road?

**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:** — The key element of the question really relates to what makes this Bill moderate, and, Mr. Speaker, there are four criteria. First, it doesn't take away the right to strike, Mr. Speaker. Second, it applies primarily to public services and there are four key criteria that we can then point to, that is, focuses on the right to safety and security of life, property, environment, and the courts. As well it allows for unions and employers to have the opportunity to negotiate.

In fact the way to conceive this legislation is actually as an enabling piece of legislation that offers greater security and predictability for the people of this province so that their public safety, in balance with the right to strike, we can actually begin to see before a labour disruption.

Finally, we can see that this legislation is based on best practices from other provinces in Canada. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the public . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll just say for those four criteria, this legislation remains very moderate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, there's a curious double standard at play here. The Minister of Agriculture yesterday announced the details of his crop insurance review. The review includes, Mr. Speaker, a targeted website, a toll-free telephone line, and an outside auditing agency, a producer survey, and a series of public consultations.

Compare that to the Minister of Labour who introduced his legislation without talking to a single stakeholder other than the president of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and whose legislation actually breaks a Sask Party promise. Apparently consultations aren't good enough for the Minister of Agriculture but good enough for the Minister of Labour.

To the minister: why was he not able to secure public hearings for this Bill? Doesn't he have much clout at the cabinet table as

the Minister of Agriculture does?

**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:** — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to having clout, Mr. Speaker, I wish the member opposite would have some clout. Maybe he could have reinforced to his colleagues that they shouldn't be voting against themselves last night. But, you know, Mr. Speaker . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — To the point, to the point, Mr. Speaker, we said that we would table legislation. We did that, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask the members to come to order so that we can hear the response to the question. The minister responsible.

The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. Order. The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. The minister responsible.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we tabled the legislation, we said that we would hold consultations. We went forward with consultations, Mr. Speaker. We advertised in nearly 100 newspapers.

**The Speaker:** — The minister responsible, conclude remarks.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll simply say that the consultations were quite extensive. In fact, one of the members opposite last night in her remarks even hinted that there were consultations under way. So, Mr. Speaker, what we can say is they were extensive. They stretched right across, right across the policy community, Mr. Speaker. And from that, Mr. Speaker, we said that we would be moving forward with amendments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, consultations for agriculture, but not for labour. Mr. Speaker, this part-time Minister of Labour keeps digging himself deeper and deeper. They admit that they spent over a year in their backroom studying this legislation. They met with stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, only after introducing the legislation. And they're treating their amendments like a state secret.

What's more, there's a huge disconnect between what the minister has been telling the public and what his advisers, some of whom have since been fired, are telling him — all the more reason to shed some light on all these discussions; all the more reason to get out of the Chamber and bring this debate out into the open. Will the government finally listen to reason and hold public hearings on Bills 5 and 6?

**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:** — Mr. Speaker, the consultations were actually quite extensive. They were very helpful. And again, you know, the members opposite may have trouble actually getting out of the legislature, but when we go out we talk to stakeholders right across the community. We heard from people that have favourable things to say about this legislation. We heard from people that don't have favourable things to say about the legislation. In fact I even went to a certain convention and heard directly. And, Mr. Speaker, we are out hearing about this legislation. That's why we came back and we said that there would be amendments to this legislation, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Liquor Store Closure

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was an article in the Moose Jaw media the other day that the Minister Responsible for Liquor and Gaming might find interesting. The title was "South Hill businesses expect closure of liquor store to impact on trade." I'll give the minister two guesses whether that impact is good or bad.

Members of the South Hill business community say the unexpected closure of the South Hill liquor store is a big hit for the community. The members opposite say they are pro-business . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The member has the right to place her question. The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite say they are pro-business, but I guess the temptation to make vindictive cuts and play partisan politics is just too great to resist. To the minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member from Prince Albert Carlton will allow the question to be placed. Thank you. The member may place her question.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well the members opposite say they are pro-business, but I guess the temptation to make vindictive cuts and play partisan politics is just too great to resist. To the minister: why is he making decisions that are hurting business in Moose Jaw?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

**Hon. Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I read that same article as well and the businesses that were interviewed were commenting that they expected this to happen at some time, that they had been expecting this for a number of years because a new liquor store had been built on Manitoba Street, Mr. Speaker, which more than met the size of both of the previous stores. The businesses in that area were expecting changes to happen.

With the economy happening the way it is, Saskatchewan, with the growth in the economy of Saskatchewan, there will be new business opportunities in that building that will benefit all of Moose Jaw, not just the Liquor Board store, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. While the minister talks about lots of opportunity in a growing economy, he's doing his best to stifle it in Moose Jaw. Yesterday in the House, or the other day in the House he used some information from 14 years ago, talking about the new liquor store being opened and the possibility that the South Hill liquor store would close. But, Mr. Speaker, over the years that liquor store has been profitable. Could the minister please explain why he's using 14-year-old information to make a business decision, and can he please table for this House a list of Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming's least 10 profitable stores across the province for this House?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Services.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I used 14-year-old information because the business case hasn't changed in those 14 years. Mr. Speaker, this was a very small store. In 1999 the previous administration built a 13,000-square-foot store in Moose Jaw, closed a 6,000-square-foot store. This was a 4,500-square-foot store. There's more than a 20 per cent increase in total SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] size in Moose Jaw.

The members opposite believe that economic development in this province is SLGA and government businesses, Mr. Speaker. The economy of Saskatchewan is proving them wrong right now because it's private entrepreneurs that are the driving force in this province in growing the economy, not that previous minister's SLGA stores.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, when the minister tables the information that we requested in the House, which I'm sure he will willingly do, then we'll see if the store was profitable or not.

Not long ago, Mr. Speaker, SLGA under this government's administration was having a record year and the South Hill store was bringing in double-digit increases year over year. But now it seems that the minister is scrambling to cut costs in this booming economy, closing profitable and — I may remind you, Mr. Speaker — freshly painted stores. In just four months, in just four months SLGA has apparently gone from having a banner year to being in need of having drastic cuts. Clearly the minister has mismanaged SLGA to the point where store closures are necessary.

To the minister: can he please commit today to letting someone else call the shots in SLGA, perhaps someone who makes decisions based on accurate information?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if anybody or anything needs a new coat of paint, it's the campaign signs of those members opposite because they have been faded for the last 16 years of their broken promises, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess that type of, the question of the member opposite kind of indicates why, because there is no concern about being efficient. There is no concern about maximizing the potential return. Blow out \$150,000 a year because, well that liquor store is in her constituency. It's not about the efficiency of the system. It's not about service to the people. It's about her constituency, Mr. Speaker, and that is not an acceptable way to run a government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### The Government's Performance

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the honeymoon seems to be drawing to a close. This week things have gone from bad to worse for a Sask Party laden down with bullies and incompetent ministers.

Since the beginning of the week, we have seen a Premier who will bully the media the moment he doesn't like something they've done. We heard about a petty move to close a liquor store in Moose Jaw. We learned that the Government House Leader, who also happens to be the Finance minister, doesn't seem to be able to add and multiply. And we witnessed a Sask Party that is so inept that they couldn't even axe — axe, cut —



the Aboriginal connections program properly.

To the Premier: do you have any confidence in these ministers?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question because I very much enjoy her weekly wrap-ups. She always provides a nice summary of what is, in her view, the week's events here in this Legislative Assembly, and I want to thank her for that. We may agree to disagree on what was actually the truth about the summary that she has just provided.

The wrap-up for the week that most people in this province would be familiar with would include things like continued and unprecedented economic momentum for the province of Saskatchewan. What that summary would also include, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, is the fact that this government is working very hard to maintain the support of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, to represent them well. We've seen a recent poll where our support's gone up. We had a leader's dinner this week — a record-setting leader's dinner — in Saskatoon.

And I would also say, I would also say an adequate summary of this week's events, Mr. Speaker, is that tired, old opposition has as recently as last night voted against themselves on a procedural amendment in this place. That's the summary for this week's activity.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, what else happened this week? We learned that almost 2,500 people walked through the streets of Saskatoon and that wasn't enough to change their mean-spirited decision about Station 20. We heard the incompetent mixed messages from two cabinet ministers that could cost the people of Prince Albert their pulp mill. And then we even witnessed the Minister of Labour that can only respond to questions with scripted answers.

Now, we're in the middle of an economic boom. The actions of the government do not demonstrate . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I'm just having a little difficulty actually hearing the question and the member isn't far from the Chair. The member may place her question.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're in the middle of an economic boom.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — The actions of this government this week do not demonstrate confidence . . . The actions of this government

do not demonstrate confidence and competence, so I would ask this question: when are they going to get their act together so that the people of this province can have confidence in their government leaders?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think, Mr. Speaker, I think two important measures, two important measures of competence that my friend the Deputy Premier will be interested in are whether or not you're keeping promises that you made in an election campaign. I think that's a pretty important measure of competence. Now 60 promises kept since the last election by this new government, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — That's a pretty good measure. I also think in a growing economy a good measure of the competence of a government is to whether or not it's preparing, it's readying its province for the growth that is coming now and will be coming into the future. Is it investing in infrastructure? Is it dealing with an infrastructure deficit left behind by who, Mr. Speaker? Left behind by the previous government. On both of these counts, Mr. Speaker, our government is moving forward — 60 promises kept, historic investments in infrastructure, ready for the growth of the province of Saskatchewan, ready to lead the country, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier can spin it all he wants, but the reality is that taxpayers of this province are going to see increases in education property taxes. They're going to see increases in their municipal taxes, Mr. Speaker. We had a government that promised hope for these people. They give us a \$27 pizza rebate on education property taxes, and we know darn well that our taxes are going anywhere but up, Mr. Speaker.

We have a government that promised the community-based organizations that there is some hope for them. And, Mr. Speaker, with the growing cost of doing business in this province, all they could give them was 2.3 per cent. And we'll have more to say about that next week, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — So my question is this: why, why at a time of unprecedented revenue in our coffers, why can't these people show some competence when it comes to running this government?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think a measure of the effect of a government is whether it's keeping its promises, and I take every opportunity to repeat the fact and thank the member for Nutana for her rodomontade, the rant that we just heard, because it's a chance for me to say that we've kept 60 promises that we made only months ago in the election campaign. It's a chance for me to say on behalf of the government, we're working hard to make sure this province's economy is ready for growth.

She mentions property tax. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have kept the letter, the letter of our commitment on property taxes, and we will keep our commitment for a long-term solution for property taxes, and that solution will include not just people that live in urban Saskatchewan but it will include farmers, a group of people they were prepared to throw over the side with respect to their property taxation.

On community-based organizations, Mr. Speaker, this government is prepared to compare its track record already in five months against theirs, including \$5 million in new money for CBOs on life skills training and employment skills training. I'm looking forward to the next question, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Budget Provisions

**Mr. Calvert:** — I'm pleased to hear the Premier, I am pleased to hear the Premier say he's looking forward to the next question. And I hear in his last response he talks about a rant. Well I tell you, it takes one to know one.

Mr. Speaker, it is very telling, it is very telling, Mr. Speaker, that over the course of this past two weeks this government has spent an immense amount of time defending against their mean-spirited cuts as opposed to talking about the virtues of their budget. We have seen, with a government that has something like a billion and a half dollars in the bank, we've seen cuts to northern Saskatchewan. We've seen cuts to literacy. We've seen cuts to social programs. We have seen cuts to inner-city projects.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier: how can he defence these kinds of cuts to the people of Saskatchewan in a budget that is unprecedented in its wealth?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. He mentions some specific items there. I think they bear a response, including his reference to some cuts in northern Saskatchewan. Let's be very clear what we were talking about here, Mr. Speaker: a closure of a

government-operated kitchen that supplied a very important fire service for the province and a continuing of a trend, by the way, started by who? By their government. When they were sitting here, they made the same cuts exactly, Mr. Speaker.

He also mentions a number of other things in his question, does the Leader of the Opposition, including a question of funding of education. In this budget that he and his members voted against, an unprecedented \$250 million increase in education. Now there's more work to be done there, to be sure, because what we've seen from that party opposite when they were in power is downloading on to municipalities and underfunding in education. We are making progress on dealing with what was left behind by that member opposite when he sat over here, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, people across this province are saying that there's a mean streak, that there is a mean streak in this government, that they are mean-spirited. They look at what happened when they came to government. They fire long-term, valuable public servants. They give their political staff big increases. They get rid of a competent Labour Relations Board. They appoint their political friends. They attack a project in the inner city of Saskatoon.

People in Moose Jaw are saying the only reason that the Liquor Board store in South Hill is closing because it's in an NDP constituency. People in Saskatoon are saying . . .

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatoon are saying that the only reason Station 20 has lost its funding is because it's in an NDP constituency. People are, across this province, are saying there's a mean streak in this government, that they are mean-spirited with the kind of cuts they're inflicting with the kind of resources they have available. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier: don't the people of Saskatchewan deserve something better than this mean-spirited government?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker. I know the NDP will just keep saying something over and over again, even if it's simply not true, in the hopes that people will believe it. The budget is evidence of the fact that the premise for the Leader of the Opposition's question are false.

We see in this budget a significant increase in the school-based anti-child-hunger programs — additional money, more investment that was needed when they were in office but never provided.

We see \$5 million, \$5 million in a new investment for community-based organizations like food banks to provide life skills training. We see new child care spaces in record numbers, Mr. Speaker. We see addictions treatment, additional investment in addictions treatment.

We see more police resources to fight gang activity in our inner cities, to make sure we're stopping predators on the Internet — those who would prey on our kids. Mr. Speaker, that's the record of this government.

Now the surest way to make sure we have a tax base that can afford to provide that quality of life for Saskatchewan people is a booming economy. And in just minutes we're going to hear how this government's policies with respect to energy are paying off in terms of new oil and gas development, in terms of securing the future of Canada's best province, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

#### Record Sales for Oil and Gas Exploration Rights

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I've recognized the Minister for Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I'm thrilled to announce an overwhelming vote of confidence by the oil and gas industry in our province, in our economy, in our new government, and in our new Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, up until the end of 2007, the all-time record for a single oil and gas sale, rights sale, was \$85 million. That was set back in 1994. That record stood for 14 years until it was shattered back in February. The February land sale more than doubled the old record, coming in at \$197 million.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that record only lasted for two months. This morning, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I'm pleased to announce the April land sale raised an astounding \$265 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — What's more, Mr. Speaker, the \$265 million collected in one land sale is more than the \$250 million collected in all six land sales in 2007.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — The Bakken oil play, one of the hottest oil plays in North America, continues to attract a lot of these exploration dollars. That's reflected in over \$207 million in

bonus bids for dispositions in the Weyburn-Estevan area alone. But the industry is continuing not just to look at that area but other areas as well.

[10:45]

Swift Current is a significant play as well. The Lower Shaunavon oil play it's called. Companies have invested nearly \$53 million for dispositions there. There was healthy activity in the Kindersley-Kerrobert area — \$3 million. Lloydminster area, \$2 million.

Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that my officials and myself have been absolutely astounded by what we have witnessed in the revenue generated in the two last land sales. We joke that we are now grasping for the right words to describe the land sale records that are being set in our province. Do we use the word astounding, or do we use the word amazing for the record \$2,725 for the average price paid on a per hectare basis? And what word will we describe the \$26.3 million paid for a single parcel in the Lampman area or 32,500 per hectare paid on 130-hectare parcel near Stoughton?

Mr. Speaker, you can call it amazing. You can call it astounding, fantastic, unprecedented. We on this side of the House just simply prefer to call it growth.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, it's also remembering that the economic activity and investment in our province does not stop with the land sale. In fact it's only just the beginning. Each of these land sales will result in more investment in our province, more jobs, more economic activity for the surrounding communities like Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current, Kindersley, Lloydminster.

Mr. Speaker, this level of interest is unprecedented and speaks to the incredible optimism that abounds across this province for the economic prospects for our province and for our now number one industry in Saskatchewan.

The Premier and I have been delivering this province's energy messages to audiences across Canada and the United States. Investors nationally and internationally are looking to Saskatchewan, and they're liking what they see. They're not only seeing energy, but they're seeing opportunity, Mr. Speaker. And their confidence in us, in our province means only a bright future for the oil and gas industry, but for jobs and prosperity for all of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I know all members of the Assembly would join with me in thanking the companies and their investors who comprise our oil and gas industry. Thank them for making the April land sale the best ever. And it's just more to come, and I wish everyone involved the best in their exploration activities and their investment efforts on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords, the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister of Energy and Resources for providing me with a copy of his remarks prior to delivering them in the Chamber. I appreciate that practice and welcome the information.

When I received the information, Mr. Speaker, I was looking for a new announcement or a new program to be brought forward by the government because traditionally, Mr. Speaker, ministerial statements are about new programs, not necessarily about what's happening in the province, Mr. Speaker. So I was expecting something new. The only unhappiness I have right now, Mr. Speaker, is there's no new program, no new direction. What the member opposite is doing is simply announcing that the programs that were put in place by this government over the last four years have resulted in some significant changes in growth in the Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has a right to crow about what's occurring in the Saskatchewan economy, and we are all proud of the expansion of the Saskatchewan economy. And we remind the government that with that comes their responsibility to ensure that all citizens will benefit from that growth. Certainly we've been talking, Mr. Speaker, about Station 20 and the dollars that they need to meet the needs of the people of the inner city in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, there are dollars available as the member opposite is so proud to point out. They can address the needs of the Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, before the minister crows too loudly, he should acknowledge that while the oil and gas sector can move quickly, their investment decisions are not made lightly or without significant thought. Where do these investment decisions come from, Mr. Speaker? First of all the oil and gas sector has been very proud of the royalty structure in the province of Saskatchewan, and it said so over the last four years, since our government, Mr. Speaker, made significant changes to the oil royalty regime.

Mr. Speaker, also we remember the Centennial Summit that the then premier called, the centennial economic summit. What did the resource sector say at that summit, Mr. Speaker? They said deal with the corporate capital tax.

**The Speaker:** — Order. It's difficult for the member to be responding when the noise is just escalating, and that's inappropriate. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. So we do remember the economic summit that the Saskatchewan Party members boycotted. But, Mr. Speaker, this government, our government was told very clearly by the resource investment sector, you need to deal with the corporate capital tax. And within a year, Mr. Speaker, we had dealt with the corporate capital tax to great praise, Mr. Speaker, from the resources sector — the investors in the growth in the Saskatchewan economy.

And even outside Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, decisions are being made affecting the investment by the oil and gas sector. We all recall just a few months ago, the Government of Alberta talking about a new royalty review, Mr. Speaker, and the oil and gas sector says, if you do that review, we're moving our

money to Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, they looked at the situation in Saskatchewan, and they have begun to move money into this province, in addition to the decisions that were made here, decisions that were taken in the province of Alberta.

And let's remember, Mr. Speaker, let's not forget that one of the very first things after the November 7 election that the new minister of Energy and Resources said was we need to refer to Enterprise Saskatchewan the whole issue of the royalty structure in Saskatchewan, the exact thing that was going on in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, that drove investment out. The minister said we need to have Enterprise Saskatchewan review those royalties.

Well thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, they changed their mind. They flip-flopped on this issue, and they announced that they were not proceeding with a royalty review in Saskatchewan because, Mr. Speaker, that measure alone would have driven some investment outside of our province. So, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member has the same opportunity as the minister had to respond. I have the clock in front of me. I recognize the minister to wind up his comments.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I only have one more thought to put on record here. We just hope, we just hope, Mr. Speaker, that the minister who has enthusiasm for the new land sales today can share the enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker, that we have for the contributions that we made in government to assist the oil and gas sector to make these very important decisions. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the government will ensure that they use the resources available to the Saskatchewan people for the Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### SaskEnergy Extends Natural Gas Service

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to inform the House of an important and positive development in a project that is bringing new energy source and new economic growth and opportunities to northerners. Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy is extending its natural gas service to La Ronge, Air Ronge, Weyakwin, Ramsey Bay, and the Lac La Ronge Indian band.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to announce that the steel pipeline construction contract has been awarded to Timberline Industries Inc., a Saskatchewan-based pipeline contractor from Pierceland. Timberline will be an important contributor to our government's goals of delivering significant Aboriginal and northern content to this project. Mr. Speaker, we believe that the construction of the pipeline will create a foundation of expertise amongst northerners for new and exciting opportunities in the energy industry in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the major steel pipeline work along Highway No. 2 will begin in June and continue through October. SaskEnergy

crews will be working in the communities through the region, starting next month, preparing customers for natural gas service. Natural gas is scheduled to flow to the communities of Weyakwin and Ramsey Bay by this fall, with service to La Ronge, Air Ronge, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band beginning in 2009. Customer facilities will be developed over the next two to three years.

We are excited to move to the construction phase of this project, Mr. Speaker. Delivering the benefits of natural gas to this region has been over 10 years in the making, and we are getting it done, Mr. Speaker. Energy savings of 30 to 40 per cent will be available to customers — savings that will be delivered each year with safe, reliable, and environmentally friendly natural gas service. The long-term benefits to the community through service to homes, businesses, institutions, and community facilities will mean hundreds of thousands of dollars will stay in the communities to improve quality of life for all residents.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes in ensuring all of Saskatchewan is ready for growth, and that includes northerners. The economic and environmental benefits of a natural gas fuel source will further unlock the tremendous potential of northern Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the well-in-advance copy of his ministerial statement, but I'd like to thank the former government for the even much-more-in-advance copy of the ministerial statement as this is a re-announcement of what was announced about a year ago.

I want to be clear on this, Mr. Speaker; this is good news. This is good news. The natural gas project continues to enjoy broad support. My colleague, the member for Athabasca, I know, worked very hard to make this natural gas service even more widely available. I hope I've got, Mr. Speaker, I hope I've got this committee name correct because as I understand it, the Anglin Lake-La Ronge natural gas committee was one that saw the benefit of this, the potential of this service and worked diligently and very hard over quite a period of time to make sure that it happened.

So we thank this committee and literally everyone who's been involved in making the vision of this natural gas service option much more readily available to many, many people in the North. And I very much look forward to the continued expansion of SaskEnergy's natural gas service into the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

#### Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

it's my pleasure to advise on behalf of myself and my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, that the Government of Saskatchewan is participating in a first-time pan-Canadian literacy forum.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people can be proud that our province is playing a leadership role by hosting the Aboriginal literacy session in partnership with the Northwest Territories. This national interactive webcast literacy forum will be held on April 14 and 15. Here in Regina we are starting the celebrations early with a grand entry and opening ceremony on April 13.

The theme of the forum is Literacy: More Than Words. Regina is one of five interactive host sites. Approximately 3,500 people at nine total sites connecting all 13 provinces and territories across Canada's six time zones will be linked together using interactive technology to discuss literacy across the country.

Mr. Speaker, we are very excited that Saskatchewan's site will feature three-time Juno Award-winning recording artist Susan Aglukark as keynote speaker. Keynote speakers from other locations include Adrienne Clarkson discussing community literacy, Fraser Mustard discussing early childhood literacy, and Frank McKenna discussing literacy for prosperity.

This forum is the result of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada's literacy action plan. Each of the provinces and territories has committed to working closely together to raise awareness about the importance of literacy and to increase literacy levels across our great country.

Mr. Speaker, this forum's unique structure will ensure that Aboriginal literacy becomes a national conversation. Saskatchewan's portion of the forum will focus on Aboriginal literacy initiatives with literacy success stories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and communities. Traditional sessions will focus on the best practices among Aboriginal people and promising new initiatives by literacy service providers, businesses, educational institutions, health services, and government.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have a young, dynamic, and growing First Nations and Métis population. The learning success of all of our young people is vital to securing the future of our province. It is through forums such as these, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to look at creative ways to eliminate the achievement gap between First Nations and Métis and non-Aboriginal learners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I guess I'd like to say that dialogue focused around the challenges and opportunities that exist within Aboriginal literacy is definitely welcomed. A forum of agencies, educational institutions, businesses, health services, governments across the board instituting or striving toward best practices is a wonderful event no doubt. Bringing stakeholders together for broad consultation is really good, and

it's something that this side strongly supports, and I guess we strongly support it across the board. And I would maybe mention to the side opposite that they look for this kind of consultation on other issues, broader issues and I would, I guess, encourage the Minister of Labour to think about that.

There are, I guess, as well some challenges here. We've got a good forum here, and there's going to be some recommendations. A big challenge is going to be, how are we going to implement those recommendations? When we look at a time here with over a billion dollar surplus and we've seen a literacy budget that's been cut by over a fifth, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about approximately \$500,000 removed from a time where we're talking about connecting First Nations and Métis people with the opportunities they so deserve and engagement in our economy that they so deserve, happiness and life that they so deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I guess it also speaks further when we're talking about these issues that this forum goes far beyond literacy itself. It goes far beyond education itself. It connects to other shortcomings of their budget, and we're talking about affordable housing, training opportunities. And again I guess it shows how out of touch the other side truly is with the challenges facing literacy, the broad issues of our population particularly to First Nations and Métis individuals and urban Saskatchewan.

So I welcome a forum. It's a wonderful event bringing together consultation, and I hope we're able to invest and to act on those recommendations. I hope we're able to understand all the other broad pieces that connect in the success of literacy within our province. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 26 — The Midwifery Amendment Act, 2008

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 26, An Act to amend The Midwifery Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Health has moved first reading of Bill No. 26, The Midwifery Amendment Act, 2008 be now read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### 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 questions 549 to 554.

**The Speaker:** — Questions to 549 to 554 tabled.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### Station 20 West

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my remarks, I'll be moving a motion that the government restore funding to the Station 20 project in Saskatoon, and it's interesting that this debate comes up after three ministers have spoken, one about increasing the vast amount of money that is now coming into the government. In fact I cannot think of a superlative word good enough to describe how much money is coming in, so restoring the funding to Station 20 really fits in with that as well.

The other remark that was made by another minister was that no one should be left behind, and I think the 20,000 people that marched last Saturday think that there are people that are being left behind . . . 2,000, 2,000. Sorry. I was actually there. It was 2,000-plus according to all the reports in the media.

The third comment made by the minister that made me think about how pertinent it is to this motion is to talk about literacy and the piece of the puzzle in Station 20 that is dedicated to increasing literacy in our core neighbourhoods. So it's good timing for this motion to be coming before the House, Mr. Speaker.

Station 20 West in Saskatoon is a project that began five years ago, more than five years ago in Saskatoon. And I do want to dispel the myth that this was on the eve of an election, and I will get into that in a little further in my comments.

This project came about in response to not only the growing health needs of the residents of the core neighbourhoods, but the growing number of people who are living in core neighbourhoods. Health is determined . . . And this is one of my really key beliefs and one of my passions, is that health is determined not only by access to hospitals and doctors and nurses but by many factors commonly referred to as the social determinants of health. And those social determinants of health include housing and food, access to good food, education, safety, and supports within your families and your communities. Station 20 addresses all of those, all of those broad health determinants in one site which the Premier has dismissed as merely a mall.

The planning for Station 20, as I said, had begun many, many years ago, and it was actually as a part of a vibrant community's

planning process which began in 2003, so certainly not in the eve of this election in 2007. This was a long-term, vision-creating process that had three partners, one of which was Quint.

And I'm going to explain what Quint is, because many of the people watching the debate and the questions in the House over the last few weeks are not all from Saskatoon and don't understand or don't get the significance perhaps of what Station 20 means to Saskatoon and the core neighbourhoods and the people that live there. So in my remarks today I'm hoping that I will give some insight into what the planning process was, what Station 20 is, who the partners are, and why it is so important to the community, and indeed why it is important to the health of our province.

The partners in Station 20 are Quint, or the first partners were Quint and CHEP [child hunger and education program]. And as I said I'm just going to explain about who they are in a moment. And they developed this long-term, vision-creating process in conjunction with or in partnership with the Community University Institute for Social Research at the University of Saskatchewan. So this wasn't something that just grew around a coffee table. It was something that had a genesis in really sound planning and visioning.

To further explain the partners as I promised, Quint is a Latin word for five. And they used the name because there's five core neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. And that was chosen for the non-profit development corporation. And their mission was to strengthen the economic and social well-being of Saskatoon's five core neighbourhoods. And it was founded in 1995.

CHEP is the children's hunger and education program, Good Food Inc., which works with communities to reduce child hunger and to improve access to good food. It operates a variety of food security initiatives including children's nutrition programs, community gardens, good food boxes, and collective kitchens. So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see these are solid partners in dealing with issues that are endemic in our core neighbourhoods.

The five neighbourhoods that I mentioned for Quint include Riversdale, Pleasant Hill, King George, Westmount, and Caswell Hill. And they have many things in common, these five neighbourhoods. They have caring people. They have character homes. They have mature trees. They have a diversity of residents of all ages and many cultures. And over the years as I've said, the communities have seen a rising number of rental accommodations, absentee landlords, aging house stock, and many vacant houses. And many more people are moving into these core neighbourhoods because of stresses on their income and on their sustenance. They have to move into lower cost housing and into areas where it is not as easy to get access to food, transportation, any social supports, any education, and even any jobs.

And it's interesting when members of the government mentioned that this was on the eve of an election, the *Hansard* from March 19, 2007, when the then member from Indian Head-Milestone questioned the Minister of Health about the \$8 million for Station 20, there was many questions and answers in *Hansard* recorded for all to read or look at, that certainly

defines what the project was and the \$8 million, where it was and why it was put there. And it was basically held in trust by the Regional Health Authority in Saskatoon which was also in the paper following the minister's unfortunate remarks about it being on the eve of the election.

CHEP and Quint are the two lead organizations in the co-location partners, and they decided to call the project Station West because it blends the location with the history. It is on 20th street, and it is of course in the west side of Saskatoon. And it's referred to as a community enterprise centre. And it has more than . . . It has the housing now. We've all talked about the housing complex that is already up, that has been announced and is, I think, 55 units. Those are up on one side.

The library is going in. So we talk about access to education, literacy programs; they're going to come in there. Read Saskatchewan wants to go in there. We also have many things that are talking about like a market, so there's a green space for people to gather. And people have that community spirit if they have a place to gather.

Also one of the things that is really key to this is that this is definitely going to be access to food. And it started off, I think, in response to the fact that many people were starting to call the core neighbourhood in Saskatoon — those five neighbourhoods — a food desert. And the west side core neighbourhood's access to grocery retail establishments is not very good, and it has diminished greatly since the mid '80s.

So right now, since then actually, six major grocery retailers have moved out of that area and closed on the west side, including three within the core neighbourhoods. So inner-city residents don't have access to a major grocery store within their neighbourhood. They're living in what has become known as a food desert, an area with limited access to healthy and affordable food.

And the Quint Development people, they are talking about the synergy generated by co-operation among different organizations improves, improves the services and it also builds community. They're sharing spaces. It does have a flavour of a mall because it is a one-stop shopping. You have housing, affordable housing. You have library, a library access, so people can actually read books, can start reading to their children, can access literacy programs that can be developed and delivered through the library. We also have the food, the good food thing, and it started off as access to food but it has gone far beyond that because now there is a major health component coming into that.

Station 20 West, it does have the sharing of programs and services and it does have a social enterprise model as a non-profit, the non-profit or associations that are partners, but it also has the College of Dentistry, the College of Medicine, and SWITCH, which is the student wellness initiative towards community health. This is something that we have never seen. The students in programs like medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dietary joined together and actually they organized themselves to deliver off-hours services through the Westside community clinic in Saskatoon and they also have partnered with their deans and in their colleges so the work that they do at SWITCH is part of their learning experience.

This was started in 2006, I believe, and is an integral part of the health services delivered on 20th Street in Saskatoon. The Westside community clinic, which is bursting at its seams in the building that they own on 20th Street, was going to be a co-locator as well. They would have more space. SWITCH would be able to offer more services and everybody was going to be, everybody was going to look forward to actually adding dentistry to the services that were going to be needed, that were going to be delivered.

Getting back to the food issue, Mr. Speaker, many residents in the area don't own a car so when they talk about going for groceries and the bus is your only means of transportation or a cab . . . And if you have to take a cab, then you're using money that you could use for other things, including better food. But can you . . . I can only imagine — having raised two children and gone for groceries — how I would get those children in their strollers, on a bus, with my groceries. I don't think that that's really a realistic expectation of young mothers and young families.

We also talked about the health disparity study that was done in the core neighbourhoods in the Saskatoon Health District. There was some alarming statistics about how the health disparity or how health is impacted by where you live and what you have access to. Many of the things that we saw were clearly, clearly impacted by where they live and what they eat and what their education is and what access to services they have.

[11:15]

Hospitalization for diabetes was three times higher in low-income neighbourhoods than the rest of the city, and nearly 13 times higher than our eastern suburbs. Only 46 per cent of inner-city children are up to date on their immunizations, and this was another piece of the puzzle that was going to be strengthened in Station 20. Babies born in Saskatoon's lower-income neighbourhoods are five times more likely to die than an average city baby.

These aren't things we can make light of, that we can dismiss by saying that this just about a grocery store or it's merely a mall. These are significant issues to people that live there. And the people that live there have developed over five years a plan to address their needs. The 2,000 people that were walking last Saturday were talking as they walked. I walked with them, and they were talking about the hope that this project has given to these neighbourhoods and to these people. And this hope . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Just a little too much debate when one person's been recognized. I would ask you to give the member from Saskatoon Eastview the opportunity to present her remarks.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're used to, in this House, having comments yelled back and forth and I try to ignore them because usually they're not that useful.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Members realize they're not to comment on Speaker's orders.

**Ms. Junor:** — I apologize. I do also want to talk about that there's four times as many people — I'm going back into the

disparities in the neighbourhoods — not only . . . There's 15 times higher suicide rates. These are issues in these core neighbourhoods that can't wait for another study. This has been started in 2003, and has resulted in this project developed by the people that live there and the people that deliver services there, and this has got a major amount of support from around the city and even the province.

This is something that can't wait. When you talk about babies dying, when you talk about suicides — these are the end of life. We don't get these back because we waited to develop another program that fit more with our political ideology or because we've been so mean-spirited as to think we'll punish this neighbourhood for electing an NDP member. This is way past that, when people are dying and when people have no access to the services that you and I take for granted. This is way past that, and we should be able to move past that with revenues, as I've heard, that are astounding and stunning and into the superlatives that we can't even think of. We've got those revenues. Eight million dollars is what this project needs — \$8 million. Eight million dollars will buy a lot of good for this neighbourhood. It will save a lot of lives, and it'll change a lot of lives.

The income disparity in these neighbourhoods is equally astounding. When the average household income in an east-side neighbourhood in Saskatoon is over 133,000, an average household income in Pleasant Hill, which is one of the five core neighbourhoods, is 22,000. That's a significant change in income. These people cannot wait. They can't wait for someone to decide how else to deliver a program so it fits better with their political ideology.

These solutions are there already, developed by the community and ready to be delivered. The tenders were going to go out this month. This project has moved along significantly with all the partners and the pieces have come into place. The city is there. Many of the partners are there already, ready to get this project going with a tender. There's many, many single parents living in this area that need our help.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think after hearing three ministerial statements that talk about how much money we have, our commitment to literacy, and our commitment not to have anyone left behind, \$8 million is not a lot of money to give this neighbourhood so they can too be included in our prosperity and growth. So, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Massey Place:

That this Assembly call on the government to restore funding to the Station 20 project in Saskatoon.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member from Saskatoon Eastview:

That this Assembly call on the government to restore funding to the Station 20 project in Saskatoon.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.



**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice that following my comments I will be moving an amendment, Mr. Speaker. And the content of the amendment that I will be moving is this:

That all of the words after “That” be removed and the following be substituted:

this government is committed to improving the social and health service delivered to persons in our inner cities and communities and to address the social problems that were not addressed under the previous government.

This is the amendment that I will move.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Mr. Speaker, I have talked about social conscience previously in this House, and I’ve talked about behaviour and what that means in relation to words that describe behaviour like having a social conscience.

I know that I’m a rookie. However I just, I can’t believe the sanctimonious, better-than-thou attitude of the members opposite. Today the members opposite are using poverty as the catchword and that . . . You know, do they really care about poverty or are they using the poor as a means to their end?

Mr. Speaker, I spent 18 years working in and around the inner city of Saskatoon. I have seen the suicides. I’ve seen the domestic violence deaths. I’ve seen the overdoses. I’ve seen the prostitution. And I didn’t see, you know, for the last 16 years, a lot of solutions. And the member from Riversdale, you know, he had all the time and power to make positive change and failed to do so. And I’m just wondering if he is or was — I guess he still is — incompetent or mean-spirited, you know.

So let’s, let’s look at that disparity study, and let’s talk about what was done by the former government after the study to address the disparities. And, you know, we’ll talk about sexually transmitted diseases. People in the inner city or in the group that was studied are 300 per cent times higher to get chlamydia than the wealthier neighbourhoods. They are 700, the inner city is 700 per cent times higher for gonorrhoea.

So one would think that the former minister of Health would have made sure to do something — and the something would be, supply condoms in a harm reduction program to the people in the inner city. Egadz works very closely with the inner city and the people in the sex trade, and they give away condoms as a harm reduction program to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted disease.

Now the former government and the former Health minister failed to give monies and supply Egadz with condoms. Egadz had to go to Alberta, to the Muttart Foundation to get funding to give condoms away in the inner city. Now, Mr. Speaker, I’m just wondering if that former Health minister is incompetent or just mean-spirited.

So you know, there are many examples of what the government, the former government, the members opposite failed to do in the inner city. In 2001 Saskatoon was excited and

had all the parties involved in the issue of children not in school, which crosses into substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual exploitation. I read the statistics off in my response to the budget.

Now in 2001 we needed a tracking system. We needed to know where these children were and how big of the problem really is it because we didn’t have a central tracking system. The then minister of Education under the former premier, the minister of Education was I believe at the time the member from Nutana. Now in 2001 her ministry said, yes we will build you a tracking system; it’ll be done in a year. It wasn’t done in 2002, ’03, ’04, or ’05, Mr. Speaker. And I’m just wondering if that member, if that member from Nutana was incompetent or just mean-spirited, Mr. Speaker.

Around that time also, Mr. Speaker, looking at studies in the inner city, it was a former MLA, Arlene Julé, that pushed the former government into looking at children in the sex trade, children that are exploited in the sex trade. And yes, Mr. Speaker, I have seen those children as young as nine selling their bodies in the inner city. The premier at the time was the member from Riversdale. It was occurring in his backyard, under his watch. He had the power to do something, Mr. Speaker, and he failed to. He chose not to. Now is that behaviour, Mr. Speaker, incompetent or just mean-spirited?

Now the former MLA, Arlene Julé, and the Sask Party pushed the former government into striking a committee to look at the sexual exploitation of children issue. And that committee was struck and travelled throughout the province and made 49 recommendations, Mr. Speaker — 49. Now since then . . . Peter Prebble co-chaired the committee with Arlene Julé, and they made 49 recommendations. Less than 50 per cent of those recommendations were made, Mr. Speaker, under the members opposite’s watch. Again I ask, you know, is that incompetence or are they just mean-spirited?

One of these recommendations was:

The Committee recommends that the Attorney General create an integrated 5-member special police unit, reporting directly to the Attorney General to work with police departments to use the full weight of existing and proposed laws to stop the sexual exploitation of children.

The Committee recommends the establishment of a joint RCMP-City Police . . . in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert to investigate and lay charges against johns and pimps. The unit would report [directly] to the Attorney General, or his/her designate, on a quarterly basis. The unit should be set up similar to the precedent setting Integrated Drug Units in Saskatoon and Regina. The Province should provide targeted funding toward positions . . . [and to attack the johns and pimps].

Now, Mr. Speaker, that wasn’t done, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, it’s pretty clear how to do it. The recommendation’s there. It’s all laid out. But they chose, Mr. Speaker, not to do it. The former government, the people pointing their finger across the way at this government — has the audacity to do so — and they failed to act. So are they, are they incompetent, Mr. Speaker, or are they just mean-spirited?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the amendment which I read out earlier, and that is that I move:

That all of the words after “That” be removed and the following be substituted:

this government is committed to improving the social and health services delivered to persons in our inner cities and communities and to address the social problems that were not addressed under the previous provincial government.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[11:30]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from Saskatoon Sutherland has moved an amendment:

That all the words after “That” be removed and the following be substituted:

this government is committed to improving the social and health services delivered to persons in our inner cities and communities and to address the social problems that were not addressed under the previous provincial government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? Debate will continue on the amendment and the main motion. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Health for his concern. Mr. Speaker, the last speaker ended, or almost ended, on a discussion of a proposal that there be a special unit of police attacking a social problem, a criminal justice problem in large part, Mr. Speaker, and reporting directly to the Attorney General, and wanted to know where this was, and suggested that if such a thing was created, or not created, Mr. Speaker, not created, that would be proof of incompetence and mean-spiritedness.

So I wonder where the government member can point to this program in her government’s budget. I wonder when the Minister of Justice is going to announce, coming out of this budget — the first budget of the Saskatchewan Party government — I wonder when the Minister of Justice is going to announce his program that the person who sits almost immediately behind him just said would be an act of incompetence and mean-spiritedness not to bring about.

I wonder when the member who just spoke is going to realize that she just attacked her own government for not implementing a program that now they have the power to implement and now they have the resources to implement and did not address in the budget that she voted for, Mr. Speaker. I wonder when all these things are going to happen.

I expect, given the pace of realization, how long it takes things to dawn upon the members opposite, it might take a little while, Mr. Speaker. It might take a little while. It might take some time. But it was a very interesting ending to the member’s comments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the genesis of Station 20. It was a few years ago when members of the community in Saskatoon concerned about the different health . . . [inaudible] . . . and other disparities in the inner city of Saskatoon approached members of the Saskatoon caucus about this concept of bringing together decent housing, health care, and access to good nutritious food into one place in the inner city, Mr. Speaker.

And these were a group of individuals. They weren’t policy makers within government. They weren’t public employees. They weren’t civil servants. They weren’t politicians, and they didn’t understand necessarily how government works. I think they had a better understanding, Mr. Speaker, how government works than many ministers of the Crown do today that sit in this Assembly and answer questions about how their government is working — think they had a better understanding than that. But they didn’t have that sophisticated an understanding, Mr. Speaker, as government members of the day may very well have had.

And they came to the Saskatoon caucus first, I think, Mr. Speaker, to talk about how this might be done. And in fairness to them, the project is a little unique. The project would be unique maybe in Canada, perhaps not in Europe where there are projects on which this is modelled, perhaps not in the United States where there are projects like this on which this project was modelled, but unique in Canada, bringing together not just formally considered health care services, Mr. Speaker, not just doctors, not just dentists, but other aspects of wellness around literacy, around good housing, around good food, Mr. Speaker, and so a little different than what government had been used to doing in the past, Mr. Speaker. And certainly not the charity model, which I do not criticize, Mr. Speaker, but the government members who’d proposed that as an alternative, and it’s not an alternative, Mr. Speaker.

We don’t have to make that choice, Mr. Speaker. We don’t have to make that choice. We can have a community economic development model like Station 20 West, and we can have the other measures the government wants to brag about and boast about. And perhaps they should brag about them, and perhaps they should boast about them, and I would commend the government for doing those. But we never had to make that choice.

And so when members of the community came to the Saskatoon caucus and said, we want to do this, I think one of the difficulties that I certainly had, Mr. Speaker — and it’s sort of reflected I think in some of the comments that come from across the way from the government — some of the problems I had, Mr. Speaker, is that it would be a very, very different thing for a government to operate or even fund a grocery store, and that was a little difficult.

There’s no doubt, there is no doubt that given the people’s circumstances who live in the area where Station 20 West would be built, people who have little access to reliable private transportation and who have now for years lived the furthest away from a grocery store that provides fresh fruits and fresh vegetables and good nutritious food, there’s no doubt that there’s no neighbourhood in Saskatoon that needs a grocery store more than this neighbourhood, Mr. Speaker. And for it to

be held up as a criticism of the project, Mr. Speaker, is a little strange, Mr. Speaker. A little strange. But the win-win solution is, Mr. Speaker, that this is an economic development project, an economic development project, Mr. Speaker, which needs revenue because \$8 million was capital, Mr. Speaker, and it wasn't all the capital. It's some of the capital.

A project that needs revenue was being built, Mr. Speaker, was being built in a neighbourhood which needs a grocery store. And so an actual tenant would be a grocery store co-op, Mr. Speaker. And so that since the government would be financing the community economic development project, financing the area in which a community clinic could be housed, dental chairs could be housed, other health services could be housed and they would be looking to the services — the types of services that provide good food, whether it's a café or a grocery co-op as tenants — that there was really no dramatic, radical change for what the government was going to be asked to be funded here. I least I was convinced of that, Mr. Speaker.

And then after these community groups had this vision, Mr. Speaker, others joined in. And one of the groups that certainly joined in was the student wellness initiative toward community health, Mr. Speaker, which acts out of the Westside community clinic, which does not — I don't think anybody would believe that it does; nobody would say that it does — does not have room in its current space for the services it provides to people of the inner city including the students of SWITCH, who on their own initiative created this initiative and who help provide wellness and medical services to the people of the inner city of Saskatoon. And who are . . . were looking forward to, Mr. Speaker, were looking forward so eagerly towards the construction of Station 20 West.

The others that joined in, Mr. Speaker, were leaders in the university community and specifically the deans of medicine and of dentistry, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell this Assembly, this group that the tipping point for Station 20 West was when a number of individuals involved, including the dean of dentistry, met with me when I was in cabinet, in government and then minister of Finance, and the dean of dentistry spoke in favour of this project — the Station 20 West project — as enabling him to put dentistry chairs where they were most needed, where dentistry services were least accessed, and that is in the inner city at Station 20 West — Station 20 West, Mr. Speaker.

And so we had the group from the community . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, if the member from Swift Current, the Premier of Saskatchewan, wants to join in the debate, I'd be happy to listen to him when he's on his feet, Mr. Speaker.

We had together, we had together, we had together the members of the community who wanted to bring these services, these necessary services in inner city. We had the idealism of the students, Mr. Speaker. We've the idealism of the students and we had the commitment of leading academics in health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

Because the university is not just teaching, it is not just research. It is community service. And those two deans of those two health colleges saw an opportunity, an opportunity working together with others in Station 20 West. And that's what tipped the balance and that's what caused the provincial government of

the day — in a budget that pre-dates the election by a year, Mr. Speaker — to put aside \$8 million. Not enough for the funding of the entire project, but to put aside \$8 million for Station 20 West.

And what has happened, Mr. Speaker? We have a government that can't manage its current affairs, is incompetent to do so, has had to change the budget in respect to social services because the minister can't manage it. But can manage to reach back in a petty, vindictive way to money set aside in a previous budget — a small amount of money in comparison to what the budget was, Mr. Speaker — and grab that \$8 million away. And people wonder what was the wolf in sheep's clothing campaign about, Mr. Speaker? It was about this.

**The Speaker:** — Member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak today on this motion and this counter-motion. I'd like to speak specifically on the NDP record which is really what prompted me to run as an MLA in the first place. And I'd like to quote from a number of sources the report card on child poverty in Saskatchewan.

In Canada, the incidence of child poverty is 17.7 per cent. In Saskatchewan, it's 20 per cent. We have one in five children living in poverty in this province, and it is during the period of time that the NDP were in power. Fifty-seven per cent of Saskatchewan children who live in female, low parent families are poor.

When we begin to take a look at the issue of poverty within our province, we must always be reminded that in the last 16 years it was under the NDP's policies and their lack of social conscience, their lack of social programs that influenced and the reality of that. You know, they made a promise at one time that somehow they were going to eliminate food banks, but the food bank use has gone up and they never funded it.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I got to tell you that under the NDP, their record in addictions treatment, which is particularly concerning to me, is they talked a lot about it but they accomplished very little. In August 2005 with much fanfare, the premier announced, the then premier announced Project Hope. I wasn't invited to that announcement but I was there and I listened to it. It was a managed, stage-managed photo op, with all of the government's bureaucrats running around with these lapel pins, Uniting to Heal, but they forgot one thing. They forgot to invite the grassroots organization that was kicking it all off, which was Families Against Meth — the families that had lost children in this province to crystal meth.

One commentator at the time said that that was quite telling and what he went on to say was the challenge now is for Project Hope to live up to its grandiose title. It did not live up to it. Saskatchewan still has the highest rate of substance abuse than any other province. This information comes from no less than the authority, the Centre of Addictions and Mental Health.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would venture to say, as I know, having been the director of Teen Challenge Saskatchewan, that they did not in fact create one bed. With that three and a half million

dollars that they spent, they created not one bed. They created a research chair for \$750,000 at the University of Saskatchewan to research what any 15-year-old could have gone on the website and researched and what every specialist in this country was talking about. Of course they were the workers, this was the government, the NDP government, who said there was no crystal meth epidemic. They said there was nothing. The minister of Education at that time said there was no crystal meth epidemic in this province while we had children dying.

In fact I'd like to quote a number of things. When the Health minister some years ago, who later became the premier under the NDP government . . . they closed Whitespruce, a 45-bed treatment facility for youth. Under that premier and that party, Saskatchewan ended up with the highest rate of alcohol and drug use in Canada. The premier then disbanded the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission when he was the associate Health minister in 1993.

[11:45]

And only after the Saskatchewan Party continually raised the issue of increasing crystal meth abuse did the NDP reluctantly announce Project Hope. And of course that was done under a past member of the legislation whose daughter had got involved with crystal meth addiction, who decided to campaign against the mean-spirited and the blindsided views of the NDP government at the time that brought it to the forefront.

The constant cuts and reductions in treatment facilities have adversely affected many lives in Saskatchewan. People who wanted to receive help couldn't receive it. Instead of taking a proactive approach to the growing addiction problem, the NDP were in denial. I had the Health minister at the time telling me in writing there was no crystal meth epidemic. We didn't need more addiction beds. I had the premier telling me the same thing as I was the director of Teen Challenge. When the Saskatchewan Party raised concerns about crystal meth addiction, the minister of Learning at the time said it's not specifically an issue with crystal meth. And that was stated in 2004. And yet the centre of addictions says we have the highest rate.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I listen to the rhetoric on the other side by the NDP who say that they are the party who cares; they're the socialist party. Well if they were the socialist party, I don't know why we rank in the number one social problems across Canada in child poverty, in addictions, in child prostitution, in youth gang recruitment. This is under their watch. We've only been government for five months. Under their watch, we rose to be number one in the nation. And in some categories like child incarceration rates, we're number one in North America.

You know, they talked a lot about helping the poor and helping those with addictions. But the reality and the fact of the matter is that their record is the worst in Canada. People in Saskatchewan are tired of looking back, and that's why they elected a new government. We provided \$16 million for addiction services. Not a Project Hope but real money. Not rhetoric or lapel pins but real money. An additional 100 long-term addiction treatment beds will be funded by that money. They will be operated by community-based and First Nations organizations and — dare I say? — faith-based

organizations where that prior government seemed to be so discriminatory against. We will establish an independent provincial addictions agency again for what? We will talk the talk and walk the walk as opposed to the NDP who are really good in talking the talk but only did that. We have organizations in the core at Saskatoon that have been neglected for funding under that previous government.

The Girls Action Information Network under the Communities for Children who are the only organization and charity of non-profit organization working in Saskatoon for exploited children in prostitution, who are about ready to close their doors because they underfunded them . . . They wouldn't give them any funding, period. Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op group that is working with young men, giving them education, allowing them to learn a trade in the woodworking and furniture industry, self-supporting themselves, and the only funding that previous government gave them was a paltry \$40,000.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I've got to tell you that the NDP in 1991 made a promise to eliminate the need of food banks in Saskatchewan. But you know they've got 16 years to complete the promise under their government, and they didn't do it. In fact there was a 95 per cent increase in the number of people using the food banks in Saskatchewan. By the hunger count 2006, there was a 95 per cent increase. There was a number of children using food banks in Saskatchewan under the previous government rose by 84 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP failed to act on this problem and instead had more people relying on food bank when they were the government. The premier of that government said, "We in this government dream of a province where at the turn of the 21st century, like the soup kitchens of the 1930s, the food banks of the 1980s and 90s will be a thing of the past." They blew it.

Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment put out by my fellow MLA that it's time to end the rhetoric and the talk. It is time to stop playing politics with peoples' lives, with the highest suicide rate in the country, and to put our money where our mouth is which is why we're directing this massive amount of funding to go into the inner city.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to join this debate, Mr. Speaker, on the idea to carry on with the good work that has begun around Station 20. I believe Station 20 is something that is an important discussion for us to have here in this legislature because it's something that is so important to the people of Saskatoon but not only the people of Saskatoon, the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to organize my comments around three things that I think we know about Station 20 West, and this is after the presentations that I've heard from my caucus colleagues from Saskatoon Eastview and Saskatoon Meewasin as well the contact I've had with constituents and people of Saskatoon out in the community.

The first idea is that we know Station 20 is the right thing to do. The second idea is that we know axing Station 20 was the wrong decision, and the third thing we know is that it's what Saskatoon and the province want, the people of Saskatoon and the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

As the member from Saskatoon Eastview remarked Station 20 is indeed a unique approach, and it's an innovative approach. And the important thing to remember about Station 20 West is that the genesis of the project really did come from the community. And that's an important point to remember, that it was the people that are involved in the community, the people that are facing the challenges, the people that are working for improvement, the notion of how to do this came out of their work.

We also know it's the right thing to do because we see examples of how organizing clusters of activity in one area, how that's able to bear a lot of fruit and have a lot of success. One example I like to highlight is for the research sector, Mr. Speaker. At the university we have Innovation Place. Innovation Place is one spot where people working for a common goal, while maintaining their own interests, are able to gain from each other. And there's a synergy that's created when services or activities are located in one area, not unlike the Station 20 West model.

We also know that Station 20 West is the right thing to do because the work around Station 20 West is already underway. As members have identified this morning, the housing portion of the project is near completion as well as the plans for the library are underway. So there's already a good amount of activity, a good amount of investment occurring in this one spot, and it's only fitting that we carry on and maintain that momentum, Mr. Speaker.

Another reason we know it's the right thing to do is that the money was already set aside for this project, Mr. Speaker, and it wasn't set aside from this year's budget. It was actually from the previous budget, Mr. Speaker, last year's budget. The money had been sitting in trust. It was earmarked for this activity. People were planning. Things were underway. So that's another reason why we know it's the right thing to do.

I'd like to move on to my second idea that I'd like to discuss, where we know that axing Station 20 West was the wrong decision. And we can tell, Mr. Speaker, that it's the wrong decision because the way in which the decision was communicated to the people involved in Station 20 West and to the wider public. Station 20 West, the organizing group, receiving a notice at the end of the week and then the news sort of trickled out through the community. And there was an event the following week where the community was able to come together and discuss what to do.

But the interesting bit is how the different messaging by government, by ministers, and the Premier was sent out to the public. It reminded me of a story. In some of my summers I've worked as a cabin leader at a camp in northern Saskatchewan. And it's always a good learning experience to hang out with youth. I don't have children of my own, so interacting with youth you learn a few things.

And there was one incident one summer where a group of students, or a group of campers, were up to a bit of mischief, Mr. Speaker. There was a flooding that had gone on in the bathroom, and there was quite a bit of water all over the place. It was a huge mess to clean up. We got to the bottom of what happened, Mr. Speaker, by interviewing and talking to the individuals that were involved.

So we took the three boys and talked to them in separate corners. The one boy said, oh well actually the toilet paper just fell off of the shelf, and it was just a mistake. We didn't know what happened. The next boy said, oh well I don't know what you're talking about. It's ridiculous. I don't know what you're talking about. I wasn't part of any of it. I have no idea what went on. The third boy said, oh I was bored. Don't know. I just was up to no good. I was bored.

In the three different messages, none of them held any water, Mr. Speaker. It was in seeing the three messages that did not agree with one another, three messages that were not consistent with each other, with the stories, it was clear that the boys were just up to mischief. It was clear that there was a deeper motive behind what they were wanting to do, and that was just to cause some trouble in this incident. They're fine boys and they were good campers, but hopefully they learned from that experience.

In the same way following the Station 20 announcement, we saw an ad hoc response, a response that was made on the fly. We had the Finance minister saying one thing. Oh well the fundraising hasn't occurred at the level it should, and we've got a problem there. We had the Health minister saying another thing altogether, saying oh well it's actually about priorities and what we want to do. And it's about fire alarms, and it's not about building this project. And then we had yet another story, Mr. Speaker, from the Premier himself who said, well actually at the end of the day it's more of a mall issue, and we're not into malls — even though I believe that's a horrible case of misinformation and a misconception about the project, Mr. Speaker.

I'll move on to my last point, Mr. Speaker. We've identified how Station 20 West is the right thing to do. We've identified how we know that axing Station 20 West was the wrong decision. And now we'll discuss a bit about why the people of Saskatoon, the people of this province want Station 20 West.

I had the great opportunity to be part of the march that occurred a few Saturdays ago — was that just last Saturday? — just last Saturday. And I myself haven't been part of a march with that much, that much momentum and energy and people around it.

The interesting thing about that march, Mr. Speaker — I honestly could not see everyone because there were over 2,000 people there — but the people that I saw from my time door knocking and from my involvement in the community, they represented a huge cross-section of the political spectrum as well as the social spectrum. There were people that I know voted Liberal there. There were people that I know voted Green there. There were people that I know voted NDP. And I saw people who I know voted Sask Party at that event. And I think that's an important point.

I also saw a huge spectrum of the types of people involved.

There were health professionals. There were students from the U of S. There were residents of core neighbourhoods. There were residents of the suburbs. There were unions involved. There were business people involved. It was a broad cross-section.

And we can see how much wide appeal there is for this just by some of the editorials we have seen in the *The StarPhoenix*. From April 3, a column that's read, "Let's get real." And I quote:

Calvert didn't need Station 20 West to win Riversdale, and Wilkinson isn't getting rich off this project. This is simply a good project whose genesis was in the inner-city Saskatoon community.

An important point to remember, made by the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*.

I've also had, Mr. Speaker, very interesting conversations with people in the community. I was at one function in Saskatoon. It was a supper, and I met a young woman there who is a student at the U of S. And she's a student of one of the health professions that are taught at the U of S. I didn't bring up Station 20 West at the table because I didn't think it was appropriate.

She brought it up to me. And she said, do you know what? In the last election, I'm a resident or a constituent of Saskatoon Southeast, and I did not vote NDP. I voted for the Sask Party, but I am so outraged at this decision. I just know this is the right decision. It's the thing that should be occurring. And I'm really dismayed and disappointed at this decision. And I encouraged her to go talk to the Premier at the event, and I think she did that, but I don't know the outcome of their conversation.

Another incident that I'd like to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, was a few nights ago I had the opportunity to attend the Whelan Lecture supper. The Whelan Lecture is an annual lecture that's provided at the U of S, and there was an end of event supper. At the same event, I had people coming up to me from the university community — people from students, staff, faculty — coming to me and expressing their outrage at this decision, Mr. Speaker. I do wish the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour was here for the discussion because I know he's had so much . . . I apologize for that remark.

[12:00]

I know this Minister from Advanced Education, Employment and Labour would have some things to say about the role of the university in this project because I know he has spent a lot of time dealing with those people. And I know that he knows that their concerns about the project and how desperately they want to see this project go forward.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we know this project is the right thing to do because it came from the community and it is sound. We know that its basis for being axed was due to ideological reasons, and we know that the people of this province want the project, want Station 20 West to go ahead, Mr. Speaker. So I thank you for the time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

**Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following two eloquent speeches from our side of the House — both were insightful, both were thoughtful — I'm proud to speak to this amendment to the motion. Mr. Speaker, I do find it, in passing, strange that this motion was put forward by the opposition being that, you know, for 16 years where have they been on this issue? Now all of a sudden they're trying to take ownership of it, Mr. Speaker? I find that more than strange.

Yes, I would find it a misguided attempt to connect with some voters. But, Mr. Speaker, an example of their inability to act on this issue when in power, the first one that came to mind was Oyate. It isn't that far in the past, but it's a poignant example. And what really struck me in that whole issue was that government at the time spent, I don't know if it was 16,000, 30,000, to train their minister how to dodge questions about . . . Now if they would have just governed and done a decent job in the first place, maybe they could have put that amount of money, that amount of money into the people, into the program. They could have solved the problem instead of training an actor to avoid a question, Mr. Speaker.

Another one, Whitespruce. It was mentioned eloquently by my colleague over here and, you know, one of the first things they do when they get into government is start closing beds. They spent 16 years. They stagnate, and then they wonder why the problem, why the problem hasn't got any better. Well, Mr. Speaker, if they don't know themselves, I can't believe they couldn't hire some experts that would have told them. They talk about math often, and I think this is somewhat of a math. You subtract that number of beds; you don't have them anymore, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the former premier, the current Leader of the Opposition, he recently was quoted, he was quoted quoting the former premier of Alberta. Now that very popular leader, populist leader, he used to say, you know, find a parade and jump in front of it and lead the parade wherever it's going. And I find that that's what the opposition has done on this very issue. They said, hey there seems to be something going on here. So they run out. They jump in front of the parade. They don't have any ownership of it. In fact they've caused most of the problems that they are championing. But I think if our left wing, radical former premier is taking quotes and advice from Alberta's former right wing leader, I find that more than passing strange as well. Yes I do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other angles that this government wasn't able to accomplish, and I think that they all tie together, Mr. Speaker — you know, their record on the economy and their record on the infrastructure, on everything. It wasn't that they were just poor at social issues and social programming, but they spread the wealth around when they were in government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our government is not, is not going to follow their lead. Our government in just four months have brought out a progressive Throne Speech. We put money behind that in our budget. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention, and through you to the members

opposite and the greater province of Saskatchewan, a few of those positive initiatives that this government, through our leader, through our Finance minister, are standing behind for the betterment of people of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, \$32 million, major upgrades to Saskatoon mental health, Oliver Lodge long-term care facility, and major renovations to St. Paul's. Mr. Speaker, these are bread and butter. Why did that government, when they were in power, not recognize the needs of these facilities and so many more?

Now, Mr. Speaker, \$500,000 to go to school lunch anti-hunger programs. Now they voted against it. Now what did they have against the young people who may be going hungry at lunchtime in school? I think there is study upon study that says that if a student isn't properly nourished, they won't learn. Now that opposition voted against that. Mr. Speaker, it's more than passing strange.

Mr. Speaker, \$3 million increase for initiatives with people with learning disabilities, difficulties and disadvantages. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that's putting our money where our mouth is.

Eight million dollars of new money to combat gang activity. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you live in a community and you're not safe, I think if you want to access services, if you want to go out in your community and build a community, if you think that it's not safe, there's gang activity, it is going to put a serious dampening on anything going on that is positive in that community. Now we're putting \$8 million directly into anti-gangs. And they voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

In this budget we put \$30 million into police, police officer retention. We're going to hire 30 more police officers this year and put them on the streets, Mr. Speaker. And they voted against it. In fact that government made a promise four years ago to put more police on the street, and they didn't keep it. They didn't put the police on the street that they had committed to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government has taken great pride in keeping our promises, keeping our word. We've made 60 promises that we've kept in this short time of government. And I'm very proud to say \$30 million for police that, that, Mr. Speaker . . .

Housing initiatives. Across the province 856 social housing units, Mr. Speaker, will be available in 18 months. I would like to also bring forward the initiative by our minister . . . Mr. Pringle and Mr. Merriman, two former members of this House that sat on opposite sides, have got together for the betterment of our province. They are going to be directly addressing the issue of the cost of housing, and they are going to be addressing it in Lloydminster, my riding. I know the need there. I appreciate this initiative, and it is what needs to be done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to, before my time expires, share a couple experiences I had door knocking to people in my community. When I door knocked before the election, you meet

a lot of people with a lot of issues, but what really sunk into me, what really . . . what I thought about at night when I got home were those doors that I knocked on where families might not be, might not be experiencing life to the fullest nature.

Now some of these families, I can think of a couple that had special needs children. And they had a group in Lloydminster, a well-organized group, and I thank them for kind of taking me in and educating me on services that were available and the holes in those services. And they told me that their group was actually getting smaller. There was less and less of them all the time. Because the Saskatchewan support was so poor, they were moving across the border to Alberta. They were willing to sell their houses, Mr. Speaker, and buy new houses in a different province because the services in Saskatchewan under the NDP government were that poor, Mr. Speaker.

Now when the solution to our disadvantaged peoples is to move away, that is disgraceful, and I think they need to answer for that, Mr. Speaker. This government, this government does not share that philosophy, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an embarrassment that that government will have to live with, and now they have the gall to stand in front of a parade, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a men's shelter in Lloydminster. It just opened last month, and it's a great facility. It's servicing a need in our community. The Alberta government generously contributed. They saw the need. They asked the NDP government of the time, you know, will you help us out, we're organizing? You know what they heard, Mr. Speaker? The NDP government said no, we will not help you out. They didn't get a thin dime. Not one, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm proud to stand here. This government is doing the right thing, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time has expired for the debate part. We're into the question and comment period. I recognize the member from Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Northwest. I have an open letter here to the Government of Saskatchewan, in particular to the Premier, from the executive director of an inter-church agency. And he says, I quote:

My understanding of the Saskatchewan Party is that it is a grassroots party which encourages community engagement and the promotion of self-sufficiency. [He goes on to say that] Supporting Station West fits with the Sask Party's core values. It would put tools in the hands of the poor to help them help themselves. The Saskatchewan Party also, [he goes on to say] I think, believes in fairness and integrity. A decision to cut funding which has been promised and committed on the basis of which so many organizations and businesses have expended time and resources appears to lack both fairness and integrity.

I ask the member, what is his answer to this minister?

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

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. But you know, quite frankly I really think the issue and the question ought to be what the NDP did in their record under the past, previous government. The premier of that past government during the last 16 years who ended it said, “We in this government dream of a province where at the turn of the 21st century, like the soup kitchens of the 1930s, the food banks of the 1980s and ’90s will be a thing of the past.”

The NDP failed to act on this problem and instead have more people relying on food banks while they were in government. Saskatchewan has the highest per capita food bank usage in Canada “. . . located in the Premier’s riding. I haven’t been able to get the Premier here for two-and-a-half years . . . I’ll just say it the way it is,” Bob Pringle, executive director Saskatoon food bank and former NDP cabinet minister.

I would like to ask that member why this record exists under their government?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Saskatoon Eastview. I had the opportunity before, but again yesterday, to drive through down 20th and through the area that we’re talking about. I have a pretty good idea, a very good idea where Station 20 was going to be. I was at the community clinic and I’ve been before.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I really found interesting, I really found very interesting is one building that stuck out more than any other, was the building that that government put in. They had \$8 million just before the election to put up for Station 20. I ask how many dollars did they have to put up for a brand new liquor store right in the middle of Riversdale?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we’ve pretty much dispelled the myth that this was a pre-election thing since it started in ’03 and the money was there in the ’07-08 budget. So that’s clearly not the case in this funding.

What is in Riversdale that is a jewel of Riversdale, that came in under this government, is the White Buffalo Youth Lodge right across from the Westside Clinic, which the member from Indian Head-Milestone must have also driven by. This White Buffalo Youth Lodge is something that is clearly a benefit to the community. It does have primary health care services through the district. It has the tribal council involved. It offers life skill classes. It addresses the needs of education, getting more kids to come into that facility so that they will maybe put back into the school system. This is something that is a jewel of the Riversdale area and came in under this government. If he drives down 20th Street, if he’s only looking for Liquor Board stores, that’s a comment on his capacity, not ours.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from

Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my remarks I identified how the university community is truly on board with the notion and the concept of Station 20 West and are big supporters of it. We know the College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry, as well as SWITCH, the student wellness initiative toward community health, all were hoping and planning to be part of Station 20 West, SWITCH encompassing many different faculties and programs.

My question to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland: what discussions has she had with individuals from the university community, whether that be students, staff, or faculty, and concerning the cut of this funding, and what has their response to her been?

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

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the very interesting question. I don’t think he’s aware of the facts. SWITCH has been around for some time now, and they work with the community clinic. They exist in and of themselves right now.

I think a much better question, a much better question, Mr. Speaker, is what has that government done in the inner city when the health disparities report came out in 2005, Mr. Speaker? How could they have failed, failed miserably in addressing the health disparities study in 2005-2006?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[12:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the questions today and the discussion today is very interesting. It’s around Station 20 and all of us recognize there are needs there. A number of years ago I had the opportunity to be on a committee that was dealing with the exploitation of children in the sex trade. And I think that’s something that was mentioned here today through Project Hope and I know we have some information on that.

But then I think about one of the main recommendations there and that was the wraparound program within our committee’s recommendations. And that was shown very well. It was working very well in a centre called Whitespruce youth addiction centre. That was outside of Yorkton. That was the centre that the NDP government closed down. It was a centre that had wraparound opportunities to help children who had addictions and have their family involved.

So I want to know why this opposition would bring up an issue when we know very well we had a shining example of success and they closed it down. To the member from Eastview, please answer.

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



**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's a really nice way to deflect the focus off of Station 20. That is in Yorkton. And I understand that the member would like to not talk about Station 20 because this is in Saskatoon. But the questions today and the motion today is to restore the funding to Station 20, which is a needed — needed — facility within the communities in the core neighbourhood of Saskatoon.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member of Batoche.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the member from Saskatoon Eastview. She talked about Station 20 taking the funding. Well where were you if you're building a liquor store? Where were your priorities when you built a liquor store instead of doing your project? Your whole project could have been done, so why was that liquor store built at that time?

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

**Ms. Junor:** — I guess the members in the Sask Party only are interested in liquor stores. There's many things that have been done in the Riversdale area, including the W.P. Bate School, the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, the SWITCH program. Many of the things that are done there are directed to the health and wellness needs of the inner-city neighbourhoods and the core neighbourhoods. Those things have been addressed and this culmination of Station 20, the planning began in 2003. So these things have been building. The community has been building its response. This is the community's answer to the things that they perceive as wrong in their areas and this is their solution, and I don't think the Sask Party will be welcome in those communities imposing their solution.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the previous debates on Station 20, the Premier is recorded in *Hansard* of saying that his government will focus on providing investments in food banks. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Sutherland: can you explain to me why your government would rather invest in food banks rather than invest in people, giving people the tools to equip themselves to take a meaningful place in our economy so they don't have to depend on food banks?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, members opposite, for a very interesting question. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the questions are very poorly researched in the sense that I don't think the members opposite know anything about the inner city. They have no idea. And the food banks, we're working with the food banks and increasing funding with the food banks because they're doing life skills programs, Mr. Speaker. They're doing education programs on

life skills, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite, I just don't understand . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The 75-minute debate has drawn to conclusion.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar.

##### Motion No. 2 — Infrastructure and Sustained Growth

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to . . . first to move the motion. I'll move it right now, second by the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook. The motion reads:

That the government be commended for recognizing the immediate and future need to invest in the infrastructure of the province, neglected under the previous administration, and to ensure Saskatchewan sustains its growth.

I so move.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to speak to the motion . . .

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member eloquently stood on his feet, moved a motion, handed the motion forward, Mr. Speaker. The proper process would be to read the motion, and then at that point, Mr. Speaker, another member should be on his feet.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — On the point of order, the member hadn't given up the floor. He just hadn't sent the paper by Page yet, so the member from Biggar can continue on.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to speak to the motion that I will move later on.

The motion clearly, clearly speaks to two fundamental points. One is the past, and one is the future. The future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that in our budget that we recently introduced, over \$1 billion ready-for-growth initiatives will sustain economic momentum by upgrading hospitals and health facilities, schools, roads, and highways. And the time to invest is now. The new government elected last fall, so far we've kept 60 of our promises to the people of Saskatchewan, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget is committed to benefiting everyone in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, contrast that with the record of the former NDP government over the last 16 years. And when I'm finished describing and explaining what's happened in the last 16 years, everyone will understand, if they don't already know, why we have a huge infrastructure deficit in this province. Look at the NDP record on highways and infrastructure.

First the NDP government had collected \$1 billion, or actually more than \$1 billion in gas tax than it had invested in roads over the last decades. The former premier admitted they had no long-term highway spending plan. The funding to cities were cut in half by the NDP in the 1990s. Revenue sharing is just \$2 million more now than in 1990s, and that was much more than the rate of inflation. And as everyone knows, Saskatchewan highways voted the worst in the country — specially Highway 55 — by the CAA [Canadian Automobile Association]. And also the NDP increased fees for long-haul trucks due to increased damage on highways, but none of it was reinvested in highway repair and maintenance.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP converted highways to gravel rather than fixing them. Many of the highways were rated as poor or worse by their own Highways department. And in 2003 the government estimated nearly 11 000 kilometres or 41 per cent of the highways network was not in good repair.

The NDP, in their 16 years, closed section shops. They increased the distance crews had to travel to clear highways, risking both workers and the public. The then minister of Highways, Mr. Eldon Lautermilch, said the road system isn't sustainable as recently as in 2006.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP passed a resolution in 2002 not to increase the speed limit on divided highways and then minister of the day Wartman rejected the idea and the next year they flip-flopped and raised the limit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the Canada-Saskatchewan infrastructure program there was over 1,300 applications in three years but less than 300 were approved. And, Mr. Speaker, even the local media had started calling the highways an embarrassment. Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure of this province was truly left in really a disgraceful, not only a dangerous and embarrassing but a disgraceful shape after 16 years of NDP rule.

Mr. Speaker, our new budget that we brought down began the process of addressing that. On November 7 the Saskatchewan people made a choice. They chose a Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Now Saskatchewan has been always blessed with natural resources. Our resource-rich yet diversified economy is red-hot as we know and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're certainly as a government going to take the initiative to take advantage of the resources of this province and the abilities of the people and the optimism of our citizens to grow this economy.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget was a budget ready for growth — the ready-for-growth initiative — and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we as a province must be ready for growth. As we know, we're in competition with jurisdictions all around the world, not only the next door neighbours in Alberta but all around the world.

And as we know, we learned in our first days in office that our public infrastructure was worse than expected and the revenues are considerably higher. It's interesting to know that the NDP were hiding a lot of revenue in their estimates.

Simply put, Saskatchewan is ready for growth; our infrastructure system is not. Many of our schools, our hospitals, and health facilities are in need of repair or to be rebuilt entirely. Our roads and highways are crumbling under the weight of heavy traffic with heavier loads, and our government must make significant investments in the future. And as we outlined in our budget, the time for that investment is now.

Our Finance minister brought down a budget, ready-for-growth initiative, the largest capital investment in Saskatchewan history. Our government is investing \$1 billion in infrastructure across Saskatchewan. One billion dollars to build and repair hospitals, our highways, and our schools ensures Saskatchewan is ready for growth.

Nearly \$200 million will pay for the key repairs and upgrades to our hospitals and health facilities and will help to purchase new medical and safety equipment. Over \$160 million will focus on important upgrades and repairs for schools in rural and urban communities and make improvements to our universities and training centres.

Over \$400 million will help strengthen our roads and highways, for they are important to carry the loads that's necessary. The ready-for-growth initiative also includes capital spending plans for municipalities, parks, and other priority areas. It is necessary to make this investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government believes that investment is critical to the future direction of this province, and we are going to do something about it. As we know, if a government is really truly serious about expanding, about growing, infrastructure is a fundamental part that must be not only maintained but rebuilt after 16 years of decline by the NDP. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is going to do this all within a balanced budget. We can't afford to ignore infrastructure flaws hoping things will get better on their own, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And once again our government believes the time is now. We are ready for growth. And as I spoke earlier, our government has already kept 60 of our promises, which is, I believe, is just, just absolutely amazing considering the former government on the other side, they would make many promises and promises and break them again and again and again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'd like to just speak to some of the infrastructure announcements that we've made since the last election. And I'm sure everyone is aware of the MRIF [Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund] funding — and that's the Canada-Saskatchewan Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund which involves joint funding between the federal and provincial and municipal governments — have benefited the communities across this province.

I had the great pleasure to attend a number of announcements and also a number of communities in my constituency have benefited from this program, like Langham. They extended an area to serve FirstSask Community Hall, \$68,000; Radisson, a pool reconstruction for just over \$110,000; Wilkie, another community in my constituency, a community centre, washrooms accessibility, water meters for households to promote efficiencies, over \$193,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And

the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[12:30]

Nipawin Evergreen Centre, energy efficiencies, \$250,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Melfort, Spruce Haven Park, washroom facilities, over \$35,000. Tisdale, RECplex Aquatic Centre, ceramic tile replacement, solar heating, over \$214,000. In my home town of Biggar I got a funding from MRIF for a solar heating in the local pool, which was greatly appreciated, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The list goes on and on of projects that we are funding now in the effort to get caught up to all the lack of funding and the infrastructure deficit that's taken place across this province over the last 16.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only community halls and those types of projects, but the infrastructure deficit really showed up with the, really, the infrastructure deficit in the hospitals and health care facilities around the province. We are working to give children the best start in life. The government will increase the funding for the expansion plans at the maternal children hospital, Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon.

In health care, contrast what the Saskatchewan Party government is doing to what the NDP did over the last 16 years. Under the NDP government, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region hit crisis mode and was asked to discharge patients to free up beds. One of many, many examples under the NDP.

NDP plans for universal drug coverage was called unsustainable by their own former Finance minister, Janice MacKinnon, which suddenly the members on the other side don't seem to get along with. But she always told the truth and always told it the way it was. And unfortunately they never took her advice after the former government came into power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the then minister of Health always denied there was ever a real shortage of nursing in the province. He always refused to set targets to retain and attract new nurses. And under our Saskatchewan Party government, we have a commitment to bring in 800 new nurses over four years, and we've already fulfilled most of that commitment by bringing in 300 new nurses by this year. And I think that's outstanding because we all know that health care professionals are the root of, the fundamental part of the health care system. Nurses is really a big part of that and for some reason the former government never did recognize that as a problem and never did anything to address the shortage of health care professionals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the NDP many hospitals were forced to temporary shutdown, even close permanently and that is a big problem with our health care system. How many communities never knew from day to day, from week to week if the hospital or the emergency aspect of the hospital was going to be open after 5, or was it going to be open on weekends? And again that really created uncertainty and pessimism in many communities in the province.

We talk about nurses and attracting nurses and retaining nurses. Under the NDP they slashed hundreds of nurse training seats. It's incredible that the NDP would do such a thing when all studies, everyone . . . You don't have to ask anybody living in the province that there was a problem in health care and we

needed more nurses — and they were slashing training seats.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak of infrastructure, most people think of highways and that's the big aspect of it. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, our highway system is crumbling, and it wasn't not only due to increased traffic in the province, but neglect by the NDP government. There were years that the NDP government did no highway building at all in this province. And it finally caught up to us. There's truly a crisis in our highways system and a little later I'll go into what the Saskatchewan Party government is going to do about the highways situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we learned in our first days of office that the public infrastructure is worse off than we thought, and the revenues were stronger than expected. And through the MRIF program and other programs which I'll mention, we are beginning to address this.

In our budget we are committed to highways and getting our infrastructure ready for growth in this province. And its fundamental theme of our budget is to get ready for the future growth of this province and there's just no way around it. You have to have the infrastructure in place to take advantage of the growth that is happening now and in future days and weeks and years ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is committed to looking further, developing further economic growth. Further economic growth in Saskatchewan demands an improvement in our transportation system and all the connectors to that system. I mean not only the highways, finishing the twinning, upgrading highways, but improving the highways and the road network in the North, in reserves, or up to reserves. But also obviously it's very important that we address the infrastructure deficit in cities. And we look at bridges and overpasses and all those things that bring the whole highway structure together.

In our budget there is \$408 million for roads and highways across this province. And it's a huge part of the largest capital investment in the history of this province. A \$513 million highways infrastructure budget is a 15 per cent increase from 2007-2008; \$513 million is equivalent to 140 per cent of on-road fuel tax revenues. There is \$5 million in this budget to assist rural municipalities affected by truck haul traffic and heavy oil production.

And it's so fundamental that we keep the infrastructure up in the, really the resource-rich parts of the province. As our Premier has said many times, there's no oil pumpjacks on Albert Street or on Idylwyld Drive. They're out in the resource-rich areas and the rural areas. And that's where we have to keep our infrastructure up, upgraded, adequate for the industry to produce the wealth which in turn produces revenue for the Government of Saskatchewan, where the Government of Saskatchewan can pass that on into more upgrading, improving infrastructure, into health care, into social services, building hospitals, schools, and to the benefit of everyone in the province.

Two million dollars is earmarked to maintain and repair, resurface provincial highways — the largest preservation budget in Saskatchewan history. This budget fulfills our

promise to use \$140 million over two years from the NewGrade Upgrader sale for roads and highways.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again compare that, contrast what the Saskatchewan Party government is doing now to what the NDP government did in the past. Well the question was, what was the NDP plan for highways and infrastructure? Well good question. Even the then premier didn't know. He's quoted as saying, "How we have been doing things in the past has been, in many cases, ad hoc without a long-term plan . . ."

And the now Leader of the Official Opposition, then premier, stated the obvious. No one had to tell the people of Saskatchewan that they didn't have a plan. They were surprised to be re-elected in 2003 and didn't have a plan and didn't know where to go. But one thing that they didn't do, did not plan for growth, did not plan for the future of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party, we have outlined our plan for the future now in our first year, in our first budget, to improve the infrastructure of this province — not late, to make announcements three, three and a half years into the mandate and try to win the next election based on promises which could have been met earlier. And the NDP government in the past did that consistently, made promises, then broke them after the election. And it just shows in the infrastructure of this province that things started getting rundown. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government in our first budget will end the embarrassment that the Saskatchewan roads have become in many areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the KOA Campground — a multinational corporation — they actually have in their offices, places to avoid in North America, and Saskatchewan is on their list of places to avoid. Well I bet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, soon Saskatchewan will be off that list and people will be encouraged to travel to Saskatchewan, to our many beautiful parks and resources in the North, and fishing and hunting and our beautiful cities. Because now we will be on the list of places that you can actually travel across without wrecking your vehicle. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's, you know, Saskatchewan became a joke under the NDP, being actually on a list of places to avoid.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, now we have an optimism in this province. Well now the media is talking optimistically about the future, businesses are talking optimistically about the future, and the people are talking optimistically about the future of this province. This is a place to come to to make a living and to live and raise children in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We don't have to any more worry about our children leaving to other parts of the world to find a job and only coming back to Saskatchewan to visit their parents and grandparents. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can come and live here.

And in the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people that were my age that graduated from high school went to Alberta or went elsewhere around the world. In many cases their parents and grandparents followed them to Calgary and to Edmonton to live, and not only lost the innovation but we lost the tax base that comes with that type of migration out of the province.

Now things are reversed. People are coming back to

Saskatchewan. People I've known that left the province for 20 and 30 years now are coming back to Saskatchewan. And once they see their friends coming back, more are saying, well is there opportunity in the province? Yes, they're going to come back to join their friends and again they're coming back to be closer to their families or they're going to bring their parents and grandparents back to Saskatchewan.

And at the end of the day we see it in the price of housing in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's skyrocketing. People have well-paid jobs in this province and they're buying and building homes and condos not only in Saskatoon and Regina, but in communities in my constituency — Biggar, Landis, Vanscoy, Langham, small communities — and not only in the communities but out on the, on the acreages out in the rural areas.

There's a place actually called Springwater which may only have six or eight people living there two years ago. There's many abandoned buildings and lots and now all those lots have been purchased and people are actually building houses and moving into places like Springwater, and it's incredible.

With that growth of course comes the demand for sewer and water. And we look at these small communities — and not only the Springwaters of my constituency but the Vanscoys of the constituency — that cannot, without the investment in the lagoons and the water treatments and water system, they do not have the capacity to take in more, more development and open up more lots.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not going to happen overnight. It's going to be a lot of strains on the system, on the finances, to put in enough adequate funding to upgrade our lagoons and sewer systems in the smaller communities in this province. That's a challenge but we are prepared to deal with it over a number of years because we need to invest in the small communities so that more homes can be built and more people can live in the province to take up the jobs, the new jobs, that are out there.

As I was saying, municipal funding provides many opportunities for municipalities to improve the infrastructure as I outlined. Infrastructure improvements are necessary to ensure that municipalities in Saskatchewan are able to support economic growth.

[12:45]

And it's amazing how the economy has changed now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's many people fly into mines in the North. They were flying into Fort McMurray and many still are. But they don't have to live in a large city or even close to where their jobs are. They can live in small communities and travel. Many people are in the trucking industry. Again they are buying up these lots and acreages around the province so that they can enjoy the rural aspects of the province and still be able to go to work in the areas that they have employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan people have a strong sense of community and our government shares that belief. As I had mentioned, investment in municipalities ensure that communities of all sizes continue to prosper with the growing

economy. And our government wants to ensure everyone in Saskatchewan benefits from the current economic growth.

And that's very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that everyone shares in the growth of the province — young and old, people in the North, people on First Nations. And we're working together with everyone in our society to share in the growth of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget provided \$300 million over four years for five-year, interest-free loans which makes funds available for municipalities to take on more infrastructure programs. The new Building Canada Fund shows teamwork between the federal and provincial government for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

There's a fundamental point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the past the NDP government fought with the federal government. They fought over everything. They made a point out of insulting and fighting with the federal government of all stripes, quite frankly. And at the end of the day we see that that wasn't a good policy to do that.

The Saskatchewan Party government is prepared to work with the present federal government and any future federal government that is in power because we believe through co-operation and dialogue we can benefit Saskatchewan better than having a confrontational attitude and only fighting for political reasons with the federal counterpart.

I know it's sometimes convenient for provinces to pick a fight with the federal government. But at the end of the day it's not a very worthwhile project, while co-operating and working and having a dialogue right across all aspects of our shared responsibility with the federal government is the best way to proceed into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government provided an initial 25.7 million for the municipal rural infrastructure program, MRIF, to help fund rural infrastructure projects in Saskatchewan.

Also in our budget — this is very important — our government committed to a 7 per cent increase in municipal revenue sharing that will provide municipalities with sustainability. Municipalities will be able to budget their spending because they know that they will receive from the provincial government. In contrast the NDP funded on an ad hoc basis.

Another important point: there's never enough money to go around, and even with all the abundance that we have with this budget and in this province there's still shortfalls because there's such a backlog. As I said the infrastructure deficit in communities . . . I know in my constituency they are going to, this money is available to them. It's still not enough. They are going to have to raise some of their taxes to do these projects.

But these communities also know that in the future there's going to be sustainable, predictable funding to the local communities. And they can count on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Under the NDP they never knew from year to year whether they were going to have any increases in funding. And this is very clear. We're all working together, from the federal government to the Saskatchewan Party government and the municipalities,

working together to address this infrastructure deficit.

As I said, urban and rural people will equally benefit from increased infrastructure funding to municipalities. As we know, the NDP neglected rural Saskatchewan because that wasn't their voter base. And it's very unfortunate that the former government, who sits in opposition now, did that. It created a lot of cynicism in the political process and system. And one of the fundamental things that our Premier and our government has always said, that we're going to govern this province as a whole. We're going to do the best thing for the province as a whole. We hope everybody will benefit from the improvements in growth in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the former NDP government took a confrontational role as I said with the federal government, and it was a big problem because so many projects are jointly funded. And you know from every level of government, every level of government is looking for help from another level of government or from the private sector, and it's only natural and it's right to try to address the funding needs by getting money from another level to try to reduce or keep the tax rate down.

And that was the terrible thing, that what happened under the NDP government is that the fighting with the federal government really affected these joint ventures and it hurt the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is so much material that we can talk about. I haven't even touched on the highways yet — the individual projects that we are developing and we are growing this province by committing dollars to individual highways. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talked about the MRIF program, but under the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative, we have provided \$300 million over four years, as I had mentioned, for interest-free loans of five years. And again that's to address the shortages of lots in the province. And through our health announcements approve the first leg of construction of an all-weather road to Wollaston Lake — 35 kilometres. And these projects go on and on.

I think one of the things . . . To hear the comment from media, it's not the media that's cynical but other people. They may be cynical about whether the Saskatchewan Party can deliver and certainly . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to read a few headlines from the important stakeholders in the province. "SARM Pleased with Provincial Investment in Infrastructure." It goes on to say:

"Infrastructure is key to the future growth and development of this province . . . we are glad to see this government is committed to following through on its election promises and make a provincial investment in infrastructure."

Headline: "Chamber Supports 'Strategic' Investment to Promote Future Growth."

This budget provides for . . . [a million dollar] investment in capital which will help ensure Saskatchewan has the infrastructure ready to support an increased . . . [motion] and enhanced economic activity.

... "The new capital investments in post-secondary education, roads, municipalities and health care as outlined in this budget will help the province realize sustainable strategic growth, not only in the short term, but in the future as well," ... [said chamber president Steve] McLellan.

Another headline: "CFIB Says Provincial Budget Paves the Way to Prosperity."

"Saskatchewan business owners will be nodding their heads when they see their priorities addressed in the provincial budget. Measures introduced today will maintain and [re]build upon Saskatchewan's positive economic momentum," ...

Said CFIB's [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] vice-president, Marilyn Braun-Pollon.

Another headline from the Saskatchewan Trucking Association. Their president endorses Highways budget. Highways budget on the right road.

The Saskatchewan Trucking Association today endorsed the Department of Highways and Infrastructure proposed budget as a progressive initiative for attacking a weakening infrastructure. This is an exciting time for our truck transport. "We're seeing a government that wants to lead change," said STA President Denis Prud'homme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the accolades just keep pouring in, and we only need to look at those types of comments to know that we, as a government, we are on the right track.

I'd like to quote from Paul Martin, business commentator:

Last fall when the province's two major political parties duked it out in the election, the key theme that emerged was centred on the way the parties would deal with the buoyant economy.

The NDP said it was time to harvest economy. In effect it was big enough and that we should take the extra money generated by the economic activity to underwrite an expensive drug plan.

The Saskatchewan Party on the other hand argued a different vision saying that the growth pattern had just begun, and it was time to invest in building a bigger economy not halt its progress. Well the new government got its first chance to put our money where its mouth was in yesterday's budget.

With the title, Ready for Growth, the Saskatchewan Party directed its attention to infrastructure, the foundation for economic growth as we build a new platform to continue building upon. And the government's promise in the last election that it will deliver a growth agenda took a giant step forward.

By Mr. Paul Martin.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just find some more information

that I'd like to put on record about how well our government is doing. In our promises that we have kept, 60 promises that we've always kept include \$400 million for roads and highways across the province, \$191 million to fix hospitals, health facilities, purchase medical equipment, to continue construction of new provincial laboratory, 164 million for new K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] school projects and post-secondary capital, 139 million for municipal infrastructure, 102 million in community facilities; 137 million through the building communities program; 98 million for other initiatives.

\$27 million for forest fire fleet renewal and fire towers; 6 million for parks; 65 million for various government-owned investments such as completing construction of the Regina provincial corrections centre; replacing FleetNet with an up-to-date emergency communications system; maintaining other government buildings and replacing equipment. That's just the promises that we made in the government, that we've kept on \$1 billion ready for growth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the projects just goes on and on that we have committed to. Just as an example, \$100 million increase for school capital will allow major and much needed maintenance upgrades to proceed across the system including new school projects in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Oxbow, Porcupine Plain, Duck Lake, La Ronge, Maple Creek, Balcarres, Humboldt, and upgrades and progress at Norquay, Naicam, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Gravelbourg.

17.6 million in base school capital will fund maintenance and renovation projects across the province, will enable the ministry to work with school divisions on enhanced capital planning initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on. One quick point before I move the motion. In our budget we have introduced a Bill, The Growth and Financial Security Act, and that really speaks to the future of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our surpluses will be divided half between debt reduction and future investment in infrastructure.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to read the motion. The motion reads, second by colleague from Rosthern-Shellbrook:

That the government be commended for recognizing immediate and future need to invest in the infrastructure of the province, neglected under the previous administration, and to ensure Saskatchewan sustains its growth.

I so move.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Biggar has moved a motion:

That the government be commended for recognizing immediate and future need to invest in the infrastructure of the province neglected under the previous administration and ensure Saskatchewan sustains its growth.

I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased in the few seconds that I have . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — . . . now 1 o'clock, that this House now stands adjourned. Pursuant to the order of the Assembly, this House now stands adjourned until Monday morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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