



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

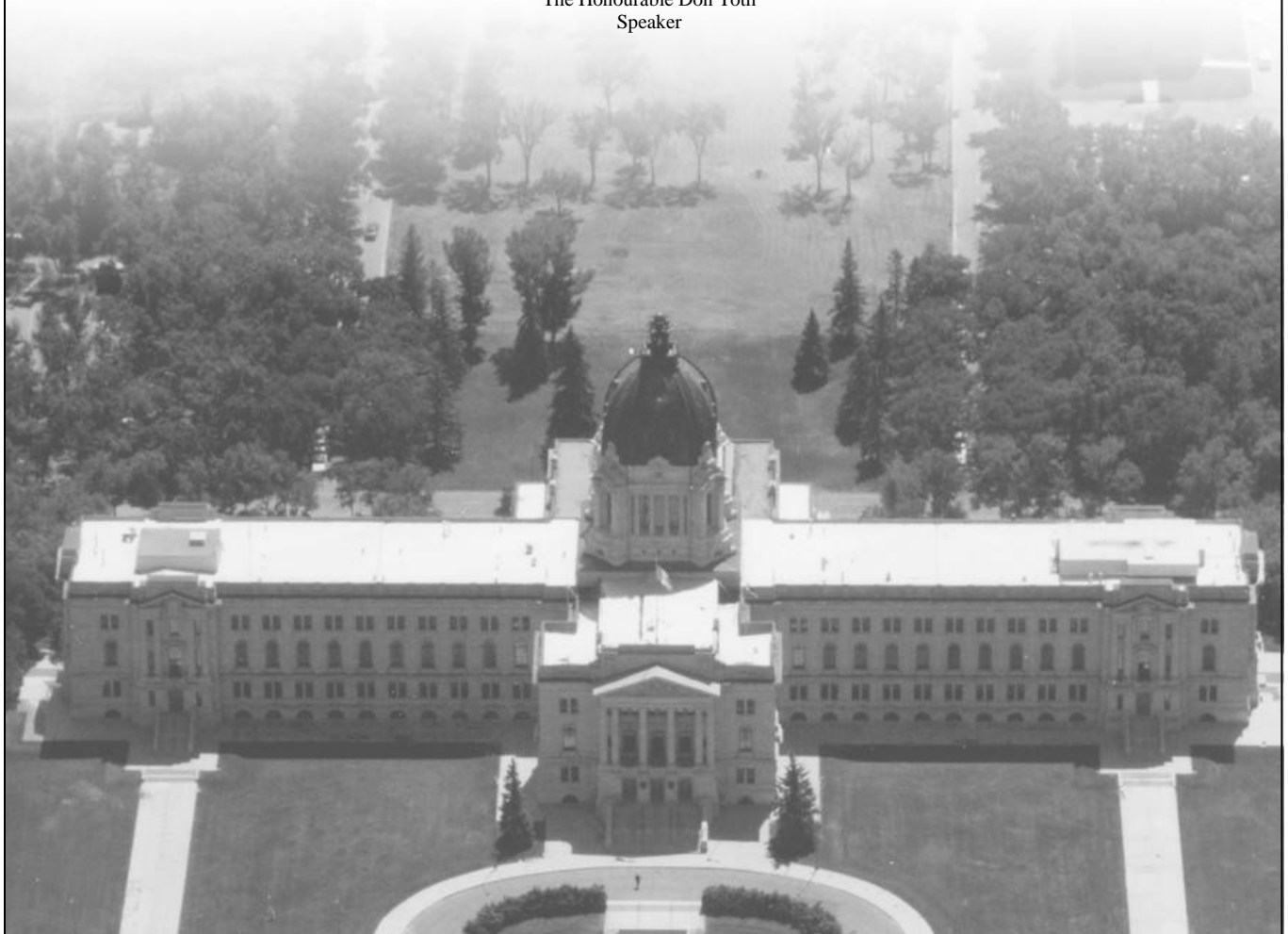
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

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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
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
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Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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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
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Before I move to introduction of guests, I just want to take a moment and indulge the members. Thank you. Last week we had a request for an extended introduction of guests and leave was granted. But after having listened to the introduction, I would just like to ask members that when you're doing introductions, to introduce people directly is appropriate; a short comment is certainly appropriate. However I've found that . . . In the future, the extended introduction could have been part of a member's statement as well. So if members would keep that in mind, that would be greatly appreciated.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to members of this Legislative Assembly, it's a great pleasure and an honour for me to introduce to members His Excellency, Tsuneo Nishida. Mr. Nishida is Japan's ambassador to Canada and he joins us today in the Speaker's gallery. He is accompanied by Mr. Koji Tamura. Mr. Tamura is the second secretary in Japan's embassy in Canada.

And joining both of them today is someone who is no stranger to this Assembly or to really any government building in the city of Regina. Mr. Arthur Wakabayashi has joined these two. Mr. Wakabayashi is the honorary consul for Japan in Saskatchewan and of course a very distinguished public servant here in the province.

And may I say on a personal note, he was willing some years ago to provide some accommodations to a well-meaning summer student who had yet not made the proper rental arrangements, and something that I'm still grateful for today.

It's going to be my pleasure to meet with the ambassador and the second secretary and Mr. Wakabayashi a little bit later on. Of course the relationship between Saskatchewan and Japan is very important and we want to further it. We want to see it develop and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the meeting. But I'd ask all members to welcome our very special guests to this Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier in welcoming His Excellency the ambassador, the second secretary, and Mr. Wakabayashi to our Chamber this afternoon on behalf of the official opposition, and to thank the ambassador and the people of Japan for the hospitality that you have shown to the province and the people of Saskatchewan when we've had opportunity to visit in Japan. We hope that you feel the same hospitality here. And with the Premier, we look forward to building the relationship between your great nation, our great province and nation.

And a vivid memory that I have of my own opportunity to visit in Japan was the warm reception we were given in regard to the Saskatchewan barley that appears in every can of Sapporo beer. So we hope you enjoy the hospitality as you have extended hospitality to us.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly I would like to introduce, seated in your gallery, Senator Rich Wardner and his wife Kayleen of North Dakota. Their hometown is Dickinson. And Senator Wardner was here today to have various meetings with government officials and members of the opposition to discuss the relationship between North Dakota and Saskatchewan.

As well he was here on the weekend to watch the Rider game and to see Weston Dressler perform. Weston Dressler, as everybody in Saskatchewan knows, is from North Dakota, and played his college ball in Dickinson. But also, as well Rich Wardner and Kayleen both went to college with Ken Miller who is the coach of the Riders. So I'd ask everyone to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, I too wish to welcome the senator and his wife from North Dakota. I had the opportunity to spend some time in North Dakota this summer. I've had the opportunity with members of government in the past to visit the North Dakota legislature, and I find the similarities between the state of North Dakota and the province of Saskatchewan to be very similar.

It is a great pleasure to have the senator and his wife with us today, and we join the members of the government today in welcoming them here to our fair province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the new assistant commissioner of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] for F Division, Dale McGowan, and his second-in-command, Chief Superintendent Randy Beck, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Assistant Commissioner McGowan joined the RCMP back in 1978. In those days I was 14 years old and didn't have a clue what I was going to do in my life, Mr. Speaker, and I have to wonder how many people in this Assembly were even born

back then, Mr. Speaker. And over his 30 years with the RCMP, Assistant Commissioner McGowan has acquired a wealth of operational, northern, and First Nations experience, making him the perfect candidate to lead our provincial police force. This summer we were extremely pleased too that he accepted the highly sought after position of Commanding Officer of F Division.

Chief Superintendent Randy Beck started with the RCMP in 1975. He served in British Columbia and Alberta before moving to Saskatchewan earlier this year with his wife, Lois. He's currently the officer in charge of criminal operations in this province.

Over the past few weeks my ministry officials and I have met with these two gentlemen on several occasions. Assistant Commissioner McGowan and Chief Superintendent Randy Beck are full of new, innovative ideas that I believe will help this government in the goal of creating a safe province for all.

So I want to say to the assistant commissioner, welcome to Saskatchewan and congratulations on your new position. We are incredibly fortunate to have someone with your experience and background leading our provincial police force and I'm confident with your abilities and I . . . We'll both look forward to seeing a very safe, secure province in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you again, I want to welcome our new guests, F Division commander Dale McGowan and Chief Superintendent Randy Beck.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the minister in welcoming our guests today — Assistant Commissioner McGowan, Chief Superintendent Beck. We wish you well in your endeavours here in our province and we all, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome you to Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I had the honour of meeting with 14 individuals who have given tirelessly of themselves, their time, and their knowledge to work with people on our various housing authorities. We had a long service awards luncheon and many of them have joined us today in the legislature. And I would like to name the recipients who received long service awards, and if I could get them to wave when they are named, that would be great.

So with us today from the Borden Housing Authority, we have Jean Hryniuk who served for 25 years. From the Edam Housing Authority, we have Minard Thom who served for 30 years. From Lake Lenore Housing Authority, we have Bernadette Schemenauer who's served for 25 years. From the Leroy

Housing Authority, we have Dianna Knaus who has served for 30 years. From the Ogema Housing Authority, we have Garnet Eden, who has served for 25 years.

From the Pelly Housing Authority, we have Peter Negraeff who has served for 25 years. From the Radville Housing Authority, we have Darlene Lund who has served for 25 years. From Rose Valley Housing Authority, we have Rose Gandzalas who has served for 25 years. From the Theodore Housing Authority, we have Violet Luciw who has served for 25 years. Also from the Theodore Housing Authority, we have Sheila Koshman who has served for 25 years.

From the Turtleford Housing Authority, we have David Wooff who has served for 30 years. From the Warman Housing Authority, we have Elmer Boehr who has served for 30 years. And from White Fox Housing Authority, we have Ruth Davis who has served for 25 years.

Someone who couldn't join us today, Mr. Speaker, from the Parkside Housing Authority, was Stewart Johnson. I would like everyone in the House to join me in thanking these individuals for all of the work that they have done to serve those within their various communities.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in with the minister in recognizing these outstanding individuals for their long service in making these programs in Saskatchewan Housing Authority work right across this province. So thank you very much on behalf of her loyal opposition. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would like to introduce to the House today 22 grade 11 history students from the town of Kelvington, Saskatchewan. One student that I'd like to point out in particular is a young man that came from Holland. He joined with us this morning. We had an opportunity to discuss what we do as elected officials. And I assure you that there was a lot of not only interest, but there was a lot of enthusiasm. And these young people are watching what we are doing as elected people.

I would also like to welcome Jim Lissinna here again. He brings his students here every year, and I appreciate that. And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to welcome the people from the housing authorities and the people that drove them today from our constituency. Please welcome these people to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you three visitors who are seated behind the bar on the floor of the legislature. They're here from The Bentley, which is a retirement and care facility on Hillsdale in the constituency of Regina Douglas Park. These visitors are Janice Kerr — she's the activity director for The Bentley — Jerry Deshaye and Jean Smith.

And I would ask all members to join with me in extending a very warm welcome to our visitors. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce a young lady seated in the west gallery. The young lady's name is Gabriela Ivascu. Gabriela joined the Ministry of Education as a communications consultant earlier this month.

But more interestingly, Gabriela immigrated to Canada from Romania in June 2007. She lived in Toronto for one year and then moved to Saskatchewan two months ago. Gabriela visited her friends in Regina twice while she was still living in Toronto, and this gave her an excellent opportunity to get to know this city and the province of Saskatchewan. Gabriela decided to move to Regina because of the growing economy of Saskatchewan and the welcoming nature of its people.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Gabriela to her Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a couple sitting in the east gallery, George and Bernice Adolph. They're in the city visiting friends. They're constituents of mine. They are avid viewers of the legislative channel, and they've come here to take in the live proceedings.

But I think what is specially, and what gives me some pride in doing this, is that they have come here and they are celebrating their 52nd anniversary with us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, they were married in Duff on October this day in 1956. They have two children and five grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, I think it is because of people like this that democracy is alive and well in Saskatchewan. And I ask all members to welcome this great couple to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I was remiss when I was on

my feet earlier to introduce a special guest that's joined us in the west gallery, a constituent of mine, an individual from Swift Current who dedicated much of his life to education and then in education administration in Swift Current. In fact when I was at the comp high school, this gentleman, Menno Martens, was the vice-principal there — in charge in part, to be sure, with dealing with kids who were truant. And I'm happy to report today, Mr. Speaker, that I really never got to know him in a professional capacity.

But he's also undertaken a number of leadership activities in our community, and undertaken some very important leadership work within the Mennonite brethren conference of Canada. And I just want all members, if they would, to join with me in welcoming Mr. Martens to his Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine seated in your gallery. Ken Sutherland is the mayor of Torquay. And he's also on my executive, Mr. Speaker, and he's very involved with several boards in his area. So I'd like everyone to welcome Ken to this legislature. And while I'm on my feet, I would also like to again welcome Darlene Lund from the Radville Housing Authority. And I hope you both enjoy your visit here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before we move further, I'd just like to remind our guests that we're really honoured to have you with us here today, but we would ask that you refrain from any further involvement or participation in the debate.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan families that are struggling or unable to find child care spaces for their children. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to add at least 2,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan by the year 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of citizens in Moose Jaw and Regina. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — I offer a petition in support of public safety and

security in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker:

That public safety and security of our communities is of critical importance to Saskatchewan families and residents; that as dangerous escaped inmates were loose in our communities, residents and families feared for their safety; that responding to concerns over the jail break, the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing denied that gangs are a problem; that this displayed the minister's lack of understanding of the risks and challenges that street gangs pose to our communities and to our correctional institutions.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, in the interest of safety and security of Saskatchewan families, residents, and communities to immediately cause the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing to undertake a thorough consultation with a broad group of stakeholders including the policing community, the corrections community, community agencies, organizations, and educators that interface with gangs and understand the risks and challenges that gangs present to our communities.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition concerning tuition fees in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to addressing the burden placed by high post-secondary tuition fees on Saskatchewan students.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Thank you. Just another reminder to members: in presenting petitions it's been a standing tradition that we only read the prayer, maybe just a brief outline of what it is, but we don't read the whole petition. So if we can keep that in mind. For those members who did follow the rules, thank you very much.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Achievement in Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I was pleased to attend the 25th annual Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards,

recognizing business excellence in our province.

The winners in the various categories were: Terminal Systems International Inc. of Saskatoon for new Saskatchewan-made products, Millennium Directional Service Ltd. of Carlyle for new venture, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority for job creation, Cowtown of Regina for marketing, PSI Technologies of Saskatoon for physical environment, Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw for service, Partners In Motion of Regina for capital investment, Seed Hawk Inc. of Langbank for exports, and Cameco Corporation for Aboriginal business.

Dennis Goll of Westwind Aviation LLP, Saskatoon, was recognized as Business Leader of the Year; while Jessica Williamson of Hoopla Clothing in Moose Jaw was recognized as Young Entrepreneur of the Year. The Mosaic Company was a double winner for community involvement, and it was recognized as overall Business of the Year. Finally, Mr. Speaker, Doepker Industries Ltd. was inducted into the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame for their contribution to the province's economic well-being.

I would ask members to join with me in recognizing the winners and all finalists of these ABEX Awards, as well as the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and all the sponsors who made for a successful awards evening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Expression of Deep Concern

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 23, 2008, the Premier of Saskatchewan wrote a letter to the Governor General of Canada expressing our deep concern over the case of the late Master Corporal Jeffrey Scott Walsh. Master Corporal Walsh, formerly of Regina, died on August 9, 2006 while on patrol near Kandahar, Afghanistan. He died just six days after being redeployed, just one day after he celebrated his 33rd birthday.

Walsh's father, Ben, works in this building. That means Master Corporal Walsh is not only a member of a proud military fraternity; he is also a member of our family here in the Legislative Assembly. The family has been told that Master Corporal Walsh is not eligible for the recently announced Sacrifice Medal since his death was not the direct result of hostile actions. We respectfully disagree. As the Premier wrote in his letter, and I quote:

I would argue that the origin of the fatal wound is entirely irrelevant. Master Corporal Walsh put himself in harm's way in a field of battle in response to a direct order from his military superiors . . . [He] died serving his country in a combat theatre. He made the ultimate sacrifice for you and me, for our country and in the selfless service of others.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. and Mrs. Walsh for attending our Speech from the Throne last week. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they continue their healing journey.

In closing I'd like to read a few lines from a poem that Master Corporal Walsh wrote to his six-year-old daughter when she asked, why are you going to Afghanistan? And the poem reads:

I know that they are out there
I will not be ignorant any more
Pulling the blanket over my head will not keep them from
coming ashore.
Instead, I choose to confront them, as afraid as I might be.
Because if I don't stop the monsters, our children will
never be free.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Nashi Fundraiser

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, poverty in the Ukraine has created a society in which children have become that country's greatest social concern. Economic instability is at the heart of this issue contributing to high unemployment rates in Ukraine.

Due to this extreme situation, children as young as eight are being forced into the sex trade. Nashi, a Saskatoon-based volunteer organization, has made the injustice of human trafficking the centre of their focus. Their projects address poverty, but their goal is to ensure that children do not become sex trade workers. It is their belief that this can be achieved through education and awareness.

Four years ago Nashi partnered with the Pochaiv project in Ukraine to establish a small trade school that taught sewing and computer courses. The school was moved into a larger facility in Ivano-Frankivsk, and now over 50 young women are enrolled in sewing and computer classes daily.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the privilege of attending the Nashi harvest brunch at St. Philip School auditorium in Saskatoon. Over 200 guests and volunteers at the event were given an opportunity to bid on homemade harvest auction items from the silent auction, as well as enjoy a delicious brunch.

All proceeds from the event will be used in the establishment of an educational living model project. The Klenovi Lyst or Maple Leaf Centre in Ukraine will have an educational component coupled with a strong emphasis on building social and economic life skills.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in recognizing Nashi and its devoted group of volunteers for taking on the daunting task of fighting the exploitation of children of Ukraine.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Achievement in Business Excellence Awards Dinner

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 25th annual ABEX dinner Saturday night in Regina gave us an opportunity to recognize businesses which have made great achievements and contributions to our province.

The Mosaic Company, one of the largest potash producers in the world, was named Saskatchewan Business of the Year as well as the winner of the ABEX award for the community involvement category.

The New Venture Award, presented by the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation, was won by Millennium Directional Services of Carlyle. And as a member of Moose Jaw North, I watched with pride as Jessica Williamson of Hoopla Clothing of Moose Jaw won the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Inducted into the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame was Doepker Industries. After starting as a small machine shop in Annaheim, Saskatchewan 60 years ago, Doepker now serves Western Canada and the northern United States with manufacturing locations in Annaheim and in Moose Jaw.

The ABEX awards for exceptional performance in creating new permanent jobs was won by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority. The Business Leader of the Year was presented to Dennis Goll of West Wind Aviation and the Aboriginal Business Award was won by Cameco Corporation.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I congratulate the award recipients and extend congratulations to all businesses and organizations involved in the ABEX awards. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Education Week

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this week marks Education Week, intended to celebrate and thank all who contribute to education within Saskatchewan.

I would like to thank the parents whose support of and involvement with their children's education is so valued. I would like to recognize the many community partners, agencies, groups, and businesses that rally to support education and students within their respective communities. I would like to thank all of those employed to ensure excellence in education in Saskatchewan — from the custodians who keep our facilities safe, clean, and inviting; to the teacher assistants who support our most vulnerable students.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our educational administrators for their direction, innovation, and leadership; our school board trustees for their governance and commitment; and our professional civil service for their work.

I would like to specifically thank our teachers within Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan teachers are of envy around the world for their leadership methods, education, and commitment

to, and care for, their students — our future.

Mr. Speaker, education is the backbone of a healthy society, a democratic nation. Education is integral in progressing the social and economic circumstance of each student, our communities, and our province as a whole. Mr. Speaker, as Education critic for the official opposition, it is my honour to highlight, celebrate, and thank all who contribute to education in Saskatchewan. And I ask members on both sides of this Assembly to join me in extending this recognition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Women's History Month

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, each year in October Saskatchewan joins with fellow Canadians to celebrate Women's History Month and to recognize how women have shaped our history and continue to make vital contributions to the economic, social, political, and cultural fabric of our country.

October is also the month when we celebrate the 1929 Persons Case — a court challenge that fundamentally altered and advanced the status of women in Canada. It began with five women who sought to overturn the 1876 court ruling that women are persons in matters of pains and penalties, but are not persons in matters of rights and privileges. They succeeded. For the first time in Canada, women could serve as elected officials on school and hospital boards and in politics.

As you look around this legislature today, you will be reminded of the role women are playing in shaping the future of Saskatchewan. In 1919 Sarah Ramsland sat as the first female MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in Saskatchewan. Today there are 11 other female MLAs sitting in the legislature with me, all striving to make a difference in their province.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to take the time to honour the women in their lives and ensure that future generations of Saskatchewan women have equal opportunity with men to enjoy security and prosperity in our province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month which presents itself as an added opportunity to provide information on breast health and breast cancer, as early detection and treatment remains instrumental in fighting back.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women. One in nine Canadian women is expected to develop breast cancer during her lifetime. In 2008 an estimated 5,300 women and 50 men will die from breast cancer in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that in Saskatchewan the efforts being undertaken to raise funds to deal with the many aspects of breast cancer are monumental. I'd like to mention a few of them. The CIBC Run for the Cure was yet again a major success despite the inclement conditions. Approximately 2,100 participants raised more than \$360,000 to contribute to the national total of \$27 million.

Saskatchewan Roughrider Mike Abou-Mechrek, whose mother is diagnosed with breast cancer, along with his wife Kathie and the help of the Riders organization raised \$30,000 to date with an ongoing option at www.abou67.com. Runner Ted Jaleta, whose sister lost a battle with breast cancer at the age of 31, donated \$2,000 raised from the sale of his book, *Never Give Up*.

Having lost my mother, Marianne Grobmeier, to breast cancer only a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, I commend the efforts of all those who help make these fundraisers a success.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Utility Rates

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]: why did the Sask Party care about the affordability of utility bills in opposition but now is completely insensitive to people's immediate needs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I will attempt to answer it the best I can. Mr. Speaker, nobody likes to see utility rates when they increase or they go up in our province. It's happening across the country; it's happening across North America. What we do have in Saskatchewan is a commitment to keep the rates as low as possible. And that's what's been happening.

If we use SaskEnergy for an example, Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy does not make any money on the commodity itself. Rates have gone up recently, but if you look at it over a two-year period, the rates went down 11 per cent. They went up 19 per cent. They went up an average of 10 per cent over a 24-month period — 5 per cent per year. That's the reality of the situation here. But we do have a commitment that we'll keep rates as low as possible for Saskatchewan residents.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the government's Throne Speech, which is the blueprint for the coming year, there's not one mention at all about Saskatchewan families struggling with higher home heating bills this winter. From north to south, Saskatchewan people are trying to figure out how to pay their bills and heat their homes this winter. All these people are being ignored by this minister. Why does the Sask Party minister insist on hoarding the surplus when people are in need of help this winter?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — It seems like we're going to get more doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, from the opposition, the members opposite. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to . . . I'll use SaskEnergy for example. Saskatchewan residents paid the lowest cost across the country in the last 12 months when it comes to SaskEnergy.

Furthermore to that, Mr. Speaker — and I know that the member opposite will know this because of what happened in the legislature last week — but Saskatchewan residents, because of this government, saw the largest tax decrease ever in Saskatchewan's history.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, a family of four with an income level of 25,000 saw their benefits increased \$1,440 — that's what they will be receiving from them. Mr. Speaker, this is a commitment from this government to ensure that all people in Saskatchewan will join in the prosperity that we're seeing in our province today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Public Safety Procedures

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing held a news conference to announce that yet another dangerous offender from the Regina Correctional Centre was unlawfully at large — the second time this has happened in less than two months. During the scrum, the minister said, the first priority I have is public safety and letting the public know when a dangerous offender is unlawfully at large.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: if keeping the public informed is indeed his first priority, why was the public kept in the dark for several hours after his officials realized that a dangerous offender was on the loose?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank

the member opposite for that question as well. Public safety is this government's priority, Mr. Speaker. And just on that note, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Dewdney back in 2006, when talking about notification of the public, Mr. Speaker, in *Hansard* — a great research tool we have here — said that, quote:

When an escape occurs at the provincial correctional centre, Mr. Speaker, the RCMP are immediately notified and it is the purview of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to notify the public, Mr. Speaker.

Really, to let the RCMP notify the public is one step, Mr. Speaker. This government changed the policy that we will in fact do one measure higher. We will in fact notify the public as well, Mr. Speaker. As well, Mr. Speaker, unlike that other government and that previous minister, this government takes public safety seriously, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, in late August the minister unveiled with great fanfare a so-called new policy that would ensure the public was kept informed. Now it appears that the minister's hand-picked deputy minister failed to implement his new policy. Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: why has this so-called new policy of public disclosure failed at its very first test?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the members opposite and I want . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Justice has been recognized and has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the members opposite for the question. It is the position of this government that we wish to be open, transparent, and accountable. The most senior official in my department, Douglas Moen, has been tasked with doing a review not only of the first incident but of the second incident which happened in a Saskatoon courthouse. Mr. Speaker, that review and examination will be careful and thorough and will determine what problems existed before, what problems existed now, and what changes need to be made.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise you that that senior official, Douglas Moen, worked through the weekend with officials from Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; Justice, and the various courts, to ensure that there is an interim protocol put in place. And that protocol, Mr. Speaker, has been put in place effective today. We will work forward from, and we will improve that as we go on, as we learn from that protocol, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate they won't let the minister answer his own questions.

Mr. Speaker, this was not the only incident last week where the public was kept in the dark about an offender being unlawfully at large. On Saturday Saskatchewan people learned that an individual who had been sentenced to eight months in jail was mistakenly released at the Saskatoon Court House last Monday. That's five days, Mr. Speaker, that the public was kept in the dark after the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety assured us we'd be notified immediately.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: why did it take so long for the minister, and more importantly the public, to be informed that a person convicted of violence was unlawfully at large in Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House, when the incident that happened last Monday happened in a Saskatoon courtroom . . . It did not happen in a correctional centre; it happened in a courthouse with Ministry of Justice officials. There is no doubt there was a mistake made on that date. It was a mistake, Mr. Speaker, that should not have happened.

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the troubling aspect of that was that the matter was not brought forward for several days later on. It was troubling for me personally to learn about it at a Crime Stoppers event later on in the weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the House that that incident is included in the review that Mr. Moen has undertaken, and I can advise this House that we have already put steps in place to try and ensure that this does not happen again.

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that when those members were in government that there was no such process in place, and what happened when they were in government was they left it up to the police. There was no protocol, there was no sharing of information. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was nothing that they did on their watch, and they sloughed it off and did not take it seriously.

Mr. Speaker, this government will be open, transparent, and accountable.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It seems

once again the Premier doesn't have enough confidence to allow his Minister of Public Safety to speak.

Mr. Speaker, the only reason the public learned that a person convicted of violence was unlawfully at large in Saskatoon is because the Minister of Justice went to dinner with Crime Stoppers. Mr. Speaker, it's deeply troubling and disturbing, to say the least, when matters of public safety depend on a minister's social calendar.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: why has the minister failed so utterly in his responsibility to keep the public informed of threats to their safety?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite were in government, there is a series of troubling repeat events where they had done nothing about it, nothing to indicate. And I can go back, Mr. Speaker: May 2006, Provincial Court in Regina, individuals switched identity and were wrongfully released; 2007, January, the serving person released; July '07, serving person released by . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. It's not only difficult when the opposition interferes, but it's extremely difficult when members of the minister's own caucus are interfering with the response. Order, member from Regina Dewdney. The Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the events go back until May 2006 that we've located so far, and I'm sure that there are many more of them that go back even further, where individuals have switched identity, were released while serving, and were improperly released.

Mr. Speaker, the people across did nothing when they were in government. The difference with this government now is that we will take responsibility for these things. We will ensure that proper protocols are put in place. And we will take steps, Mr. Speaker, to try and reduce the risk to the public by having people at large when they should not be at large. Public safety is paramount, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, they need to come clean. In last Friday's scum, the minister stated, and I quote, "It sure makes me wonder who is running the ship over there." Mr. Speaker, I had assumed that the minister and his hand-picked deputy were running the ship over there. But it appears I was mistaken.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: did his investigation manage to find out over the weekend who's steering the ship at Corrections, Public Safety and Policing?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for

Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well just to once again clarify the record here, Mr. Speaker: from 2002 to 2007, 21 inmates escaped under that previous government's watch, Mr. Speaker. And in not one of those cases, Mr. Speaker, did that government notify the public, Mr. Speaker. The RCMP . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not one?

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Not one.

So, Mr. Speaker, after the escape in August, our government put a new policy in place, Mr. Speaker. While I was notified about the offender that was released at 4 o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, I directed my officials, Mr. Speaker, to do that and the media policy was followed, Mr. Speaker. This government takes public safety very seriously, Mr. Speaker, once again.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the public can rest assured that he is in control of his ministry. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, recent events — and in some cases the minister's own words — call that into question.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: who should the public hold responsible for the fact that a dangerous offender was unlawfully at large for more than a day before they were informed?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members in the House that it is our intention to find out who is responsible. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the House and I want to advise the members that our intention is not just to find out who is responsible, but to ensure that we have good protocols and proper protocols to ensure that public safety is protected; that when inmates are released, they are released in a timely and appropriate manner.

And, Mr. Speaker, if there is a problem with somebody escaping or a problem where a mistake has been made, that people advise their superiors immediately, Mr. Speaker, so that we can, where appropriate, issue a news advisory or a public advisory, so that the public is not unduly put at risk. Mr. Speaker, for this government public safety is the absolute paramount requirement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The

Minister of Corrections and Public Safety can't be in charge of his department because he doesn't understand what his job is, Mr. Speaker. We saw the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety two months ago — two months ago, Mr. Speaker, in a scrum — tell the public that he didn't understand we had a problem with gangs in our correctional facilities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he didn't read the mandate letter from the Premier which clearly indicated that. He certainly didn't read their own budget which indicated additional resources to deal with the issue, Mr. Speaker. And he certainly didn't read the Ombudsman's report dealing with the very issue that he received just days before. Mr. Speaker, this minister does not know his file.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety: why should anyone believe that you have public safety as your first priority?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The day of that press conference, Mr. Speaker, I made an error and a mistake, Mr. Speaker. And immediately after that mistake was made, an error on my part, Mr. Speaker . . . I do recognize we have a gang problem in our prisons, Mr. Speaker — briefed very well by my staff. It was an error on my part. I took immediate action, Mr. Speaker, to notify the media, all in attendance that day, that I made a mistake and I apologize for that error, Mr. Speaker.

Through them to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, that's what I can say today. And I have no problem admitting that publicly, Mr. Speaker. I am only human. And I made an apology, Mr. Speaker, and I moved on.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you something else. This government did numerous steps to ensure public safety. We met with the mayor and town council of Fort Qu'Appelle. We issued an external investigation team in this matter, Mr. Speaker. We issued a new public notification policy, Mr. Speaker. We also issued a province-wide search of all our correctional facilities, Mr. Speaker. And the most important thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we in fact now are going to ensure the integrity of this ministry. The Minister of Justice, his officials will look at why the mistake happened last week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ministerial Responsibility

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in governments and parliaments that follow the Westminster system, there has been a long-held constitutional convention called ministerial responsibility. Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that the current Minister of Public Safety does not understand the concept of ministerial responsibility. That long-held convention holds that ministers of the Crown are ultimately

responsible for what goes on in their departments.

My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier support the convention of ministerial responsibility?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, let me just say to you, to the members of this Assembly, and to the people of the province that the Premier — myself — and this government has complete confidence in this Public Safety minister, this Corrections minister, and the Minister of Justice.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I will also say this, Mr. Speaker, that what we have seen in the last number of months on this particular issue, on the issue of corrections, is a government that has prepared to take responsibility.

You've seen a government, Mr. Speaker, who's been prepared to say, look when these sorts of events happen, the number one obligation of the Government of Saskatchewan is not a political obligation; it's an obligation to the people of Saskatchewan to ensure safety.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And we saw, Mr. Speaker, during the time that that member was the premier and that member was the minister responsible, where they just simply refused to put in a policy for their government to be transparent, to notify the public in the case of an escape. Maybe that was good enough for them; it's not good enough for us, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question was not regarding the Premier's confidence or lack of confidence in the minister but the question about, does he support the convention of ministerial responsibility?

Mr. Speaker, late Friday afternoon this government announced that it was suspending the deputy minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, with pay, pending a review.

Now we're told today that the Minister of Justice — the Attorney General — and the deputy of Justice are undertaking a review into the circumstances to inform the public of a threat to their safety.

I'm going to ask the Premier this question: who, Mr. Premier, ordered the suspension of the deputy minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The premier will know that that is the duty and the obligation of Executive Council, which was exactly the case in this particular decision that was taken.

This government wants to send a very strong signal that public disclosure in events like this, and public safety, is our number one priority. I would suggest this to the hon. member, that he may want to review the 21 cases of inmates who've escaped between 2002 and 2007 and determine whether or not public disclosure was his number one priority, was the minister's number one priority — or was it something more akin to what was in their interest in terms of their political interest, Mr. Speaker? I advise that hon. member to do that, to take that trip down memory lane and ask himself about the priorities that his government had.

As for our government, we're prepared to move forward. We're going to determine exactly what went wrong here. We're going to ensure that the policy that this government has instituted in terms of disclosure is implemented and followed by all of us, both the elected and the official side of government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has indicated that it was his office and Executive Council that decided to place the deputy minister of Public Safety under suspension during the process of the investigation. And, Mr. Speaker, that in fact is only fitting.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are questions here to be answered about the minister's ability to control what's happening in his own ministry. Today we learn that the Attorney General and his deputy are conducting a review, an investigation into what's happened here.

So my question to the Premier is this: he has expected the deputy minister to be suspended. He has enforced that. Will he today then hold his own minister to the same standard? Will he today suspend his Minister of Public Safety while the Minister of Justice and Attorney General conducts his review?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the events of last week were certainly troubling, troubling because our number one priority is public safety. And we now have a policy in the province of full disclosure by the government, not waiting for the police to notify as was the case when that gentleman was the minister, Mr. Speaker, or the person that just asked the question was the premier.

And so what was troubling last week is that, when there was knowledge within the Government of Saskatchewan about the mistake that meant that someone was at large that should not have been at large, and that information was not passed along per the policy to the minister, Mr. Speaker, that is a challenge.

That is a problem. It is troubling.

As for the minister, when he became aware of the situation, he took immediate action. He followed the policy of the Government of Saskatchewan. And when the Minister of Justice at a Crime Stoppers banquet was informed that something similar had happened last week in Saskatoon, I guess he could have said, well no one's reported on it so far so we don't have to disclose it. No, he did not. I was aware of it on Saturday. The government took action on Sunday. That's the kind of transparency people should expect from their government, and they will expect it from this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier claims he supports the notion of ministerial responsibility. The Premier then suspends the deputy minister of Public Safety for a review into what's going on in that department. The minister in charge of that department stands in front of the people of Saskatchewan and says, I don't know what's going on over there but I'm going to find out. Well now the Premier has instructed the Attorney General, Minister of Justice, to find out what's going on in that department.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again, why does the Premier not hold the minister to the same standard that he is holding the deputy minister and the public servants within the department? Why does he not ask the minister to step aside — suspend the minister today while the Attorney General does his investigation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Under the minister's leadership, this government implemented a policy of immediate disclosure to the public. The policy was not followed by officials and so action was taken. The policy was followed exactly by the minister. As soon as he became aware — all too late, mind you — but as soon as he became aware, he followed the policy of the Government of Saskatchewan. Therein lies the answer to that hon. member's question.

Another question that might be asked by the people of the province today is, what happened prior to this policy being in place? What did this government inherit in terms of public disclosure from that party opposite when they were in government? There was no policy, Mr. Speaker. They took no steps to ensure that the public was protected, that public notification happened, maybe because it would be a political embarrassment to that government. That is not how we will operate on this side of the House. Public disclosure, public safety will be our number one priority, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — The Premier claims, the Premier claims that the minister in charge of Public Safety and Corrections in fact put in place a new policy. Well how's the policy working so far? That's what the people of Saskatchewan are asking. That's what we're asking. And in fact that is what, I think, now the Attorney General is asking.

Again I ask the Premier, why does he hold the deputy and the department to one standard and not hold to the same standard that minister whose policy it apparently was? There's something wrong here, Mr. Speaker. There is something wrong here. The Attorney General is supposed to find out on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. It's only right . . .

The Speaker: — Order. If members are not prepared to come to order, we will move on with further business. Allow the member to put his question.

Mr. Calvert: — It is only right and fitting, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier today suspend his Minister of Public Safety and Corrections while the review is undertaken by the Attorney General, Minister of Justice. I ask the Premier again, why will he not do that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The answer, Mr. Speaker, is this. The answer to the hon. member's question is this: because the minister followed the policy of this government and put public safety ahead of all other considerations and, for that matter, so did the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice. This perhaps is vexing to members opposite because they left this new government with no such policy.

That particular government was about oh for 21 from 2002 when there were escapes, when there were identity switches. Did that member who asked the questions earlier, who was the minister, did he disclose this to the public, Mr. Speaker? Did that member when he was premier say, people of Saskatchewan, this has happened under our watch; it's important that we protect ourselves. No, he didn't, Mr. Speaker. Maybe because they put politics ahead of good public policy. We will put the interests of the public in terms of transparency and safety first every time, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Technology Infrastructure Funding for Schools and Libraries

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week Saskatchewan is celebrating the achievement of our schools, our teachers, and our students. Today is the first day of Education Week 2008 which also coincides with the last day of Library Week. These events provide an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the successes that take place every day in Saskatchewan's libraries and schools.

The learning success and achievement of our people is vital for securing the future of our province. And education plays an

important role in the growth and success of Saskatchewan and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce in the House today that the provincial government is making a significant investment to benefit education and lifelong learning. This morning I announced the allocation of nearly \$10 million to improve technology infrastructure for schools, regional colleges, and public libraries.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the province is investing \$5.2 million over four years to implement a single integrated library system — S-I-L-S, SILS for short, Mr. Speaker. The funding includes \$1.3 million for the purchase of local computers.

Presently each library system operates independently on different platforms, often using outdated hardware and software. The new system will connect all public libraries, making it possible for them to share their resources no matter where they are located in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the system will ensure easier access to library services for the province's 500,000 users.

Mr. Speaker, the province is also providing over \$4 million for three primary education infrastructure components, and they are the live satellite network, CommunityNet, and the blackboard learning management system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the live satellite network will be upgraded and enhanced and will be expanded to include all pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] schools in the entire province. CommunityNet, the province's high-speed data network, will be made available in all schools, public libraries, and regional college. At the same time, many of the existing connections will be upgraded. Blackboard learning management system will be available to more students and teachers and will offer new features such as collaborative tools, courses, and resources. People across Saskatchewan will benefit from these improvements to the technology infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, our province is growing. Our economy is growing, and we are making investments today in our province that will prepare us for tomorrow. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This certainly is a needed and good investment into the communities of Saskatchewan. Certainly I think it's been quoted in the past that

when the sun is shining, it's time to fix the roof. This certainly categorizes this announcement. It's good movement, needs to happen.

I would like to highlight the single integrated library system which is a real good step that's been long worked towards by Saskatchewan libraries and Saskatchewan government. I also want to recognize the advocacy of the Saskatchewan libraries' association who have been calling all year long through, kind of, letter after letter to the minister for these needed programs. So it's important to pay credit to the libraries' association, highlight individuals who have been working so hard to see this announcement come through — Mrs. Verna Brenner, the Churchbridge library board Chair who has long been calling for this needed funding.

The library system has the potential of becoming a model in Saskatchewan, being more accessible and equitable than many other regions, and we, the opposition, certainly supports the continued action on this front.

The dollars into education are valued as well. I know that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association value these dollars. Divisions do. I know that we had some concern and still do have some concerns with the canning of the technology supported learning and the correspondence school, that equity had been attacked in rural Saskatchewan. Certainly we're hearing those concerns across rural Saskatchewan, in particular communities like Unity who no longer have the same access to courses that they once did. So it's important that we see this capacity being invested back into the divisions so that we have an accessible and progressive education system. So that's very good.

On the blackboard management systems, you know, I know my wife's currently teaching with one here in Regina. My wife teaches grade 6's, and she really adores the process of learning this blackboard system. She feels it enhances education in the classroom. It's good to see these dollars are coming in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House always supports equity and advancement in education. It's a good announcement. The dollars are needed and it's a good day for education.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I hereby table in accordance with the Board of Internal Economy directive #22, the members' accountability and disclosure statements for the year ended March 31, 2008. And in accordance with directive #23, I also table the audited financial statements and auditor's opinion statements for the New Democratic Party caucus and for the Saskatchewan Party caucus for the year ended March 31, 2008.

As well pursuant to subsection 4(5) of *The Election Act, 1996*, I lay on the Table the resignation of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The minister responsible for First Nations and Métis affairs has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Minister responsible for First Nations and Métis affairs.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to all my colleagues. In the Speaker's gallery is a young lady who I am delighted . . . who has come back from Alberta to Saskatchewan. She used to live in Edmonton. Now she's brought my grandson back. They're living in Warman, and I'm absolutely delighted that she's at the legislature and in our province. Welcome home, Jeanette, and I ask all my colleagues to welcome her as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure that I am able to enter into this debate, to rise on this the second session of the twenty-sixth legislature. It is indeed a privilege to represent the people of Saskatoon Silver Springs, and it's a job that I take seriously.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank those at this time that help me do my job in this legislature — certainly my wife, Trish, and my constituency assistant, Beth Epp, and those in my ministerial office. I know more than ever that you just cannot do this job on your own. You have to rely on good people around you. And I want to thank Marlin and Karen and Jacquie and Tamarha and Luanne for all that they do in ensuring that the Crown corporations operate in an efficient manner and people across Saskatchewan are able to get the answers that they deserve.

It's with great pleasure that I join today to voice my support in what will truly be remembered as a Speech from the Throne focused on and for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the title of the speech. and an interesting title that it is, "A Stronger Saskatchewan. A Better Life." This sets the stage for a firm commitment from our government to the people of

Saskatchewan to make positive changes that truly benefit people across our province. That's what my constituents want in Saskatoon Silver Springs. That's what they want. They want a better life for themselves, for their family, Mr. Speaker, but more importantly for their children and for the future of this province. And that's what this Speech from the Throne sets out in spades, Mr. Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne before us today offers support for everyone in the province, from youth to seniors. It contains a commitment that celebrates and shares the incredible economic momentum we are experiencing today in our province and into the future. Saskatchewan is enjoying unprecedented success and our success stands out amongst a world full of economic challenges and uncertainty at this present time.

Since 2003 when I was first elected, I have listened to many speeches from the throne, but none have come close to epitomizing the pride and pleasure that I feel today when discussing the 2008 Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne today clearly outlines how everyone in Saskatchewan will share in the benefits that our prosperity brings through lower taxes — I know members opposite will be interested to know lower taxes — increased infrastructure spending, some \$1.5 billion, a record amount . . . Well I know that the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote is fully aware of that. And further, major reductions to the province's debt. Some 700,000 tax filers will benefit directly and their children will benefit and every person in the province will benefit by reducing the debt by 40 per cent in our first year in office.

I know the fine people of Saskatoon Silver Springs are extremely pleased with our government's announcement this week. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, it was indeed a unique day when I went in my constituency on Tuesday, when the Premier made his announcement, and people were coming up and saying, right on, you guys did the right thing. I was quick to say that it wasn't just this government. It was the people that worked hard over the years to make sure that we had the resources to do what we were able to do.

In fact we were giving people back some of their own money, that what we're doing is securing their future to ensure that we pay down the debt of this province and to ensure that we also have a rock to stand on in the future because there might be some stormy seas ahead, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last few months, I have been in my constituency talking and more importantly listening to people, listening to constituents' opinions on where Saskatchewan's windfall revenue should be spent. And the vast majority of them said exactly that, exactly what we did, Mr. Speaker: cut taxes, reduce the debt, and improve our infrastructure because the infrastructure deficit in Saskatchewan was huge. They realize that and they know that there is work that had to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I know that they will be very pleased today not just for the announcements before us, but they are pleased that we consulted, pleased that we listened, and pleased that we acted upon their opinions and suggestions, Mr. Speaker. We asked them what to do. We listened and we acted, Mr. Speaker.

The residents of Saskatoon Silver Springs have spoken, just as residents of other constituencies have spoken, and the results are before us, Mr. Speaker — the largest single-year income tax reduction in Saskatchewan history. Absolutely huge, Mr. Speaker. The largest amount of debt reduction in Saskatchewan history, some 40 per cent in the first 10, 11 months in office, Mr. Speaker, and of course the largest investment in infrastructure in Saskatchewan history, some \$1.5 billion — \$1,500 for every man, woman, and child in our province.

Mr. Speaker, indeed October 22, 2008, will be remembered for a long time in Saskatchewan history as the day that everyone in Saskatchewan shared in this province's prosperity.

Just a few of the details that are important and should be noted by everyone in this legislature includes 80,000 low-income taxpayers will be dropped off the tax rolls altogether and no longer pay provincial income tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hear some chirping from the members opposite, but I want to remind them just very recently when we were in opposition and I had the opportunity to serve as Finance critic, we recommended that this be done. And what did members opposite say? They said it couldn't be done. It couldn't happen. It wouldn't happen. And they were right about that. It wouldn't happen under an NDP [New Democratic Party] government. It wouldn't happen under an NDP watch.

Those making \$30,000 or less, Mr. Speaker, you know what they did? Do you know what they did, Mr. Speaker, those making \$30,000 or less? They paid the highest rate of provincial tax of anybody in the country under that NDP government.

An Hon. Member: — Shame.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Shame, Mr. Speaker, indeed. It is a shame, Mr. Speaker. That should not happen in Saskatchewan, and that's why this Finance minister and this government took immediate action to ensure that that NDP legacy is erased once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, the refundable tax credit for lower income individuals is doubled. And eligible families will receive an additional \$600 per year, Mr. Speaker — \$600 that can be well-spent in the pockets of those individuals, well-spent by those people who know how to spend it best, those moms and dads who can spend it on their kids and on their families, Mr. Speaker. And I know even members opposite will agree with that.

Our family-based tax exemptions are now the highest in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Never mind Alberta, never mind talking about NDP Manitoba, never mind talking about any other province — here it is right here in Saskatchewan, the largest exemptions in the country. A couple with two children earning \$50,000 will save \$1,320, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the members opposite will listen very carefully as we explain that.

The basic personal exemption and the spousal exemption will both increase by \$4,000, Mr. Speaker, and that's a huge increase. From \$8,945 to \$12,945, all in one step. Never mind phasing it in, never mind talking about it and saying what we're

going to do in the future. Do it today. But there's one way to do it even better than that, and that's to make it retroactive to January 1, 2008. And that's exactly what our government did, Mr. Speaker.

I've often said it's either lead, follow, or get out of the way. And we're leading, Mr. Speaker. We're leading the way. Mr. Speaker, the child tax credit will increase by \$2,000 per child. And that's also a huge increase, and I know members opposite will agree with that. It's increasing from \$2,795 to a whopping \$4,795, Mr. Speaker — again the largest increase in the country, the largest deduction in the country.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on from this major tax reduction, I want to point out that a working family with two children — and that represents a lot of what is in my constituency, representative of that — can earn up to \$41,300 before they start paying tax in our province. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed an accomplishment for a government in its first year in operation. Mr. Speaker, that's the highest level of any province in Canada and we should be very proud. All members should be very proud — even members of the opposition should be very proud that we are able to do that in Saskatchewan today because it benefits all Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. It means people living in our province benefit, but it also means more than that. It means that there will be an added attraction for people to move to our province.

We saw members introduced today in this legislature that have moved back for our province. And because of this initiative that's what's going to happen in our province — more and more people are going look at their own finances and say Saskatchewan is the place to be. Under a Saskatchewan Party government, Saskatchewan is the place to be, Mr. Speaker. It means more nurses living in our province, it means more doctors. It means more teachers, it means more taxpayers.

[14:45]

When I was collecting advice from Saskatchewan people, and particularly those in Saskatoon Silver Springs, many seniors told me in no uncertain terms focus on reducing or eliminating the provincial debt. And that happened wherever I went in my constituency. When I went to Mackenzie Cole or to Reggie's or to Robin's or to the Tim Hortons, there was no shortage of advice from people telling me make sure that you take care of that debt. The NDP talked about it for 16 years — they talked about debt, but they did very, very little in those 16 years.

And I'm happy to say that we've done more. We've done more . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I'd be interested to see your numbers. I'd be interested to see your numbers. Members opposite will have the opportunity to bring those numbers forward and to bring them into the debate. But I would challenge them that we have done more in the first 10 months than they have done in 16 years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — That's the truth. That's the truth. They can ask the Provincial Auditor. They can look at the documents from the Department of Finance. And I hope that they do that.

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — It's amazing that the additional billion dollars . . . This government has now reduced the debt by 40 per cent in a short period of time. I'm hoping members opposite aren't arguing with that fact, but if they are, I'd sure like to see their numbers. There's a reduction of \$2.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, from 6.8 billion to 4.2 billion. It's an enormous achievement welcomed by the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, by the end of March, we will have reduced the debt down to 4.2 billion. And the challenge, Mr. Speaker, and the challenge for all of us, is to take it from there and to reduce it even further.

And I dream — like I'll be honest with you — I dream about the day that we can totally eliminate the debt within a few years. It seems like a real possibility. And all members of this House will have to work together to ensure that this does happen. But I know it will happen with the leadership here shown by the Finance minister, the Premier, and my colleagues in cabinet, Mr. Speaker. As our Premier's pointed out, this is an unprecedented opportunity to leave a mortgage-free house to the people of Saskatchewan, to our children and our grandchildren, to take care of that mortgage.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important to note that along with reducing taxes and eliminating debt, we are also investing in infrastructure. The previous government left a large infrastructure deficit. That's one fact that the members opposite may want to research, and they certainly will find evidence. Paying off a debt without dealing with the infrastructure deficit would be like paying off the mortgage on your house while letting your house fall into disrepair. It will take a lot of hard work and money to do the repairs that were not done by the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, there is indeed an infrastructure deficit and we know that. We know that there was an infrastructure deficit in hospitals, in schools, and even in the Crown. And a member opposite who was a former minister of SaskPower, there is even an infrastructure deficit within the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite talk about the Crowns all the time, but when you look at what the commitment was from that government, they did not make a commitment to renewing the infrastructure in Crowns like SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

Anyone who has driven over our roads over the last number of years doesn't need this explained to them. We have done a lot of work on our roads this year and will continue to do more into the future.

We will fix roads. We will build hospitals. We will build schools. And yes, we will honour our commitments to the Crown corporations, and we'll honour our commitments to things like the Saskatchewan children's hospital. Instead of just putting forward news releases like the members opposite did, we will put our money where our mouth is and ensure that that does happen.

In fact we are increasing infrastructure spending. It's an exciting prospect to see what a budget of \$1.5 billion can do, and \$1 billion dedicated to rebuilding and improving our roads,

highways, schools, and hospitals. It's an exciting time to be in our province to watch it flourish, to watch it build, and to watch our province prosper, Mr. Speaker. And more importantly, more importantly it's an interesting time to watch the public attitude in Saskatchewan change. We are now living in a positive-thinking province, Mr. Speaker — a group of citizens eager to grow with Saskatchewan and eager to see our economic momentum continue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've even noticed a different tone from the opposition. They're just not quite as negative as they were even a few months ago. Now maybe that'll change, Mr. Speaker. I don't know, but I think they're seeing the light. I think maybe their constituents are having an effect on them and bringing them along, albeit begrudgingly. That was easy to say — begrudgingly. It's about attitude. It's about commitment. It's about building. And above all, it's about ensuring the people of Saskatchewan have the opportunity to realize their dreams right here in our province, right here in this year country, Mr. Speaker. This year country, that's what Saskatchewan is. For 16 years we heard about next year country from the NDP opposite, but not this year, Mr. Speaker.

About one year ago we were on the doorsteps of Saskatchewan voters. We were asking for their support, and we were asking them on how they felt. And what they told us, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite — I can tell by their interest in my speech that they are very interested in what I have to say, but it's something that I certainly hope they haven't forgotten the last year — we learned that hope beats fear, Mr. Speaker. Hope beats fear. We heard that in spades on November 7, 2007, and it's true today. No matter what the opposition tries to bring up, Mr. Speaker, hope beats fear every time.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne promises a better future: a better future for seniors; a better future for children and their parents; a better future, as we learned last week, for people with disabilities; and a better life, Mr. Speaker, for children at risk.

A better future for seniors is possible with the new tax cuts, the new Saskatchewan low-income tax credit. And through an increase in Saskatchewan income assistance program, the first increase — now I just want to spend an extra minute on the Saskatchewan income assistance program — the first increase, Mr. Speaker, in 16 years.

Members opposite, they had a lot of time to do all they wanted to do. Nothing happened for 16 years. These people had to wait till there was a Saskatchewan Party government in place to ensure that this increase happened, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a shame. And that's one of the many reasons why members are sitting on that side of the House, and will continue sitting on that side of the House for many, many, many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, our children are our future. The plan before us today includes an increase in licensed childcare spaces, a dramatic increase in pre-kindergarten programs, and more capital spending on our schools and universities. Our children will also benefit by better co-operation between our universities, regional colleges, and technical institutes.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have not forgotten about our most

vulnerable, the children at risk. We are committed to renew and improve Saskatchewan's *Child and Family Services Act* as we will renew and improve *The Adoption Act*, Mr. Speaker.

The plan before you today will improve Saskatchewan lives, no doubt about it, through better and accessible and more affordable housing, through better health care, and through building safer and stronger communities, Mr. Speaker. That's indeed what this plan does. That's what this Throne Speech does.

Mr. Speaker, we'll strive to improve our environment by developing cleaner forms of energy to fuel our province and to maintain our economic momentum. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Crown Corporations and being responsible for SaskPower, I take the challenge of reducing greenhouse gases very seriously. We are developing an energy plan to meet our future demands. We are closely studying and moving forward on cleaner forms of energy, Mr. Speaker. We see the future as a blend of energy sources made up of wind, hydro, clean coal, natural gas, and yes, Mr. Speaker, hopefully nuclear energy in our province.

We made a major step forward last week with the announcement of the uranium development partnership which will make recommendations on where Saskatchewan can add value to the uranium we mine. Mr. Speaker, there was only one voice — only one voice, only one critic, only one person in the entire province — that I heard from that was negative on that and that was the member from P.A. Northcote. I just couldn't believe that a member that comes from a city that supplies this industry, that relies on this industry for its vibrancy, was critical of studying the development of nuclear energy in our province of uranium development. And I just can't, I just can't understand that, Mr. Speaker.

On the clean coal front, we are taking large steps to pursue the technology needed to develop a clean coal system of creating energy. A world leading approach, Mr. Speaker. We're also investigating options to further opportunities increasing hydro sources in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our future is bright, challenging, and full of opportunities. Innovation is one of the most important factors in maintaining and growing our economy. We are innovative people and history will remember us as such.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the development of Innovation Saskatchewan and the potential that it brings to our province. Our Crown corporations are an important part of our economic growth. Through innovation and change, our Crowns will continue to be vitally important to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne outlines the importance and clear focus of Crown corporations. Very shortly I will announce a new policy for their investments, a policy that takes them from making high-risk investments around the world to focussing on the economy, Mr. Speaker, that we know best — Saskatchewan. It will be a Saskatchewan-first policy, Mr. Speaker. And I very, very much look forward to making that announcement and sharing that information with all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, with one of the strongest economies in Canada, if not the strongest, renewed focus on Crown corporations and their investments through a Saskatchewan-first approach will help create jobs and continue the momentum of our province well into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the plan before us today, the Speech from the Throne 2008 will lead us in an exciting and rewarding direction. It will lead us to an exciting future, Mr. Speaker. No longer will we talk about Saskatchewan being next year country, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier said last week, next year has arrived.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate and I look forward to the presentations by other members. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When speaking to the first Saskatchewan Party budget, I recognized the difficulty that a government has in making choices. I was a member of a treasury board; I was a member of a cabinet; and I understand the difficulty that a government has in making choices. I recognized that when I spoke to the Saskatchewan Party budget, and I want to recognize that again today, speaking to their Throne Speech.

It is no longer possible for the current Minister of Agriculture to say anything, as they say he did when he was in opposition, and not to have to back it up. The circumstances have changed for the member and now the Minister of Agriculture. He can no longer just say anything in opposition. He now has to back it up, and he has to make real choices, to make real trade-offs.

It is no longer possible for the member from Swift Current to call for government solutions that he now, as Premier, can say are gimmicky, as Premier, Mr. Speaker. As Premier, now his proposals are gimmicky, and now of course he's got to make real choices and he has to stand by them. He can't do that any longer. No longer can they say anything and not back it up. No longer can they rely on gimmicks and not back those up.

And so choices have to be made. And choices have to be made even in circumstances of rising government revenues, perhaps record government revenues. Still choices have to be made.

And I understand that to a certain extent, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I wasn't too surprised by a Throne Speech that covered all the bases or practically all the bases, that addressed practically all the issues. The Throne Speech almost does that, Mr. Speaker. It almost includes everything but the kitchen sink.

That is perhaps why the silence on forestry, in a Throne Speech that covers so many topics, rings so loud. And that is why the statements from the Minister of Energy and Resources over the last almost year now about discussions and imminent announcements ring so loudly hollow, Mr. Speaker. After all these discussions, after all these announcements in just a few days that the minister referred to, now are there no announcements. Not only were there no discussions, apparently,

but the word forestry does not make it into the Throne Speech. But governing is about priorities and I want to concentrate on a couple that were mentioned in the Throne Speech but deserve more than mention, received notice in the Throne Speech but deserved far, far more than that.

[15:00]

And the first I want to talk about is affordable housing. Unlike forestry, housing was mentioned in the Throne Speech. And I think government now recognizes — although they didn't when they were campaigning; it wasn't mentioned in their platform, and didn't seem to immediately recognize upon becoming government — that housing is in a crisis in this province.

And it's not an issue just in Saskatoon Meewasin or Saskatoon Massey Place or Regina Coronation Park, Regina Dewdney, or in Prince Albert or in North Battleford or in Moose Jaw. It is an issue in Kindersley and Biggar and Rosetown and Weyburn and Estevan and Nipawin. It is a circumstance, a difficulty in every municipality, every community in this province.

And it's not just an issue of people having decent, affordable housing. The consequences move out further than that. When a couple of members of the opposition and I were in Kindersley, one of the interesting meetings we had was with the volunteers at the Kindersley Food Bank and we were told that one-half, one-half of the people using the Kindersley Food Bank are working, are employed, and would drop off the list of people using the food bank in that community if there was affordable housing in Kindersley. And this issue of affordable housing, of having a decent place to live, is probably most acute in those parts of our province that have the most economic activity.

The other statement that was made to us was a very interesting one which is that . . . They used the example the Tim Hortons in Kindersley had dropped a shift, and truckers driving through and people wanting to use the Tim Hortons at night could no longer do that. And the reason the shift had been dropped is because what you get paid to work at Tim Hortons doesn't rent you a home in Kindersley.

And so it's not just a matter of, as serious as it is, of people having a decent, affordable place to live. The issue of housing goes to hunger, people who can't afford both their rent and their food. And it goes to our economy, people who can't afford to take jobs that they would like to take, can't afford to serve people that they would like to serve because they can't afford to live in the community where those jobs exist because there is no affordable housing.

Now a regulated market, Mr. Speaker, is a wonderful thing. And I say a regulated market. I don't think even the members opposite, after the last few weeks, would disagree with me about the value of a regulated market. And if they were, if they were, some of them might, the member from Cannington might, but I would in my defence call upon the words of one of the greater of the Republican presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, who said when a similar crash happened in the 1870s in Europe and then in the United States, that we need to constrain capital the way that we constrain force.

Now I hope that if, having quoted a Republican president and I

think a hero of the member of Cannington's, that he might cut me a little bit more slack. But a regulated market provides a lot of things. And a regulated market is very good at providing a \$500,000 house to a person that can afford a \$500,000 house. But a regulated market does not provide low-income housing, decent low-income housing to people. And we have learned in Saskatchewan that at a time of increasing economic activity, the pressure on housing becomes much, much worse and the dark side of the boom — in large part, not entirely — but the dark side of the boom is the availability of low-income, affordable, decent housing. Mr. Speaker.

And therefore a public investment is required. And what is the government's response to the requirement for a public investment in housing? They actually cut money in their budget to the Housing Corporation in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is some suggestion that there is something forthcoming at some point, that there's something forthcoming from the government in housing when they can put their own political stamp on it, when they can claim this is not the NDP program. This is not the NDP money that was invested in housing in 2007. This is our investment. This is our program.

If indeed that is what we are waiting for, Mr. Speaker, is the opportunity to put their own stamp on housing programs that, Mr. Speaker, is shameful because in the meantime, in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, people do not have a decent place to live. They are being driven from communities where they would be employed. Mr. Speaker, the economic activity — putting aside that the huge pressures put on those individuals' lives — the economic activity that could be again promoted in those communities that are some of the most prosperous communities in the province of Saskatchewan is also being hampered, Mr. Speaker, by the failure to make this public investment, which must be a very large public investment, Speaker.

Another aspect of the housing of course is keeping the house warm, Mr. Speaker, and I only want to speak about this for a moment. But it is passing strange, Mr. Speaker, to say the least, that as natural gas goes down in price, what we pay to heat our homes goes up.

I guess this is what happens when you elect a business government, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that says that we want to run the Crowns on a businesslike basis, so as natural gas drops in price, we will increase the price paid by consumers, Mr. Speaker. That's the approach of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. And they want to pick up a slogan or a motto or a principle from the previous government and say, the best service at the lowest possible cost. Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to natural gas, not so much, not so much.

The lowest possible cost is the market price, which again dropped today I think while the rates went up, Mr. Speaker, and that's because of forecasts made by the sensible business minds across the way in the government, Mr. Speaker. And it just seems passing strange that they would get up today in question period and defend, and defend Saskatchewan people paying more for natural gas while the Crown corporation is paying less, on the basis of the principle that we're providing the best

service, the best product at the lowest possible cost. Well again, Mr. Speaker, not so much.

The other matter — and it's a serious one, Mr. Speaker, not so much the immediate although it's immediate in going into the long term — that received considerable notice in the Throne Speech and even in the minister's statement today, is a matter of early childhood learning and early childhood care and intervention in some cases, Mr. Speaker.

There is notice in the Throne Speech, if one reads between the lines, the current government has a lot of good to say about the previous government, commending it for community schools, commending the NDP government for KidsFirst, commending the NDP government for pre-kindergarten. The current government seems to recognize that these are all good programs and that while we're spreading around the money and spreading around the notice of what we care about, that they deserve some mention in passing.

Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan, we have an enormous challenge. Today we have an enormous opportunity. There is only one other component that is missing to bring those two together and that is the vision. Much has been made of some of the divisions in our province between conservatives and progressives, rural, urban. I think sometimes way too much is made of those. Democracy requires politics. Politics requires tension and conflict sometimes, and those require differences. And I think you can make too much of some of our differences.

But the difference that I don't think we can make too much about, be too concerned about, is the growing gap of inequality in our country — that as the rich grow richer, the poor grow poorer, and the distance between them becomes much greater. And in our province, we have a majority, the majority of the population descended from European settlers who lead lives of some relative affluence even in times of crisis, even in times of uncertainty. And we have a minority, largely the descendants of our Aboriginal population, who even now in this time of prosperity have employment conditions similar to what people at large were used to suffering during the Great Depression, Mr. Speaker.

We have now the opportunity with early childhood learning, with pre-kindergarten, with interventions in the case of vulnerable children, to make this the last generation that suffers from this divide so that 20 years from now a Justice minister and a Corrections minister and a Health minister is not trying to explain that there aren't simple solutions because of serious investments that were not made 20 years before, Mr. Speaker.

There is a Russian proverb that the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and the second best time is today. And we know 16 years ago, Mr. Speaker, where our province was at. Sixteen years ago, Mr. Speaker, our province was on the very brink of bankruptcy. That's where we were 16 years ago. We were not in the position to plant these trees, Mr. Speaker, and every member opposite knows it. Now we are. Now the need is here still, Mr. Speaker. The opportunity is here, Mr. Speaker. And only the vision is lacking, Mr. Speaker.

It is not unimportant to argue about what sentence a 13-year-old young offender should receive, Mr. Speaker. It's not. But isn't

it more important to debate now and discuss and seriously consider, when the resources are available, what can be done for the three-year-old so that he does not become the 13-year-old young offender, Mr. Speaker?

There's some recognition on the government side that this is, I think, a time when we have these kind of opportunities. There seemed to be some notice paid to it in the Throne Speech, but not enough in my view, Mr. Speaker. Some members opposite, I think, are nodding on occasion, Mr. Speaker, when I mention this. But now comes the second-best time to plant that tree, Mr. Speaker. And now that the resources are available, Mr. Speaker, I think the government doesn't have the will.

In this province there is a need. There is an immediate need in respect to housing — safe, decent, affordable housing — in the immediate time. There is a need to build a province that is not divided between the rich and the disenfranchised. And there is the opportunity, both in housing and in the education and the future of our children, to meet these needs. The need is there; the opportunity is there; all that is needed is the vision. The vision is not there, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I'll be supporting the amendment and will not be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:15]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in support of our impressive Premier, our new government, and of course the visionary and far-reaching Speech from the Throne.

I'd like to take a moment to note in this Assembly the significance of obviously family, especially my wife, Martha Smith-Norris, and my dear daughter Jacqueline who is in grade 4 at the Saskatoon French School. Just the other night she accompanied me to an event that involved ... [inaudible interjection] ... She didn't go to that event ... With the Fransaskois community. And it's amazing to see how fast she's growing and maturing.

As well, I extend my thanks and appreciation to our friends and many supporters in and beyond Saskatoon Greystone. And I certainly appreciate the support which has poured in from Greystone, around the province, and from right across the political spectrum in recent days.

As we focus first on the Throne Speech, the themes are clear. Our government is creating a more prosperous and a more generous Saskatchewan — a Saskatchewan which is playing a leadership role in the new West and across the country, and most especially a province which is offering a much better life to its citizens.

It outlines a clear, fresh and prudent vision for our fine province. It outlines a vision of Saskatchewan that is resplendent with opportunities, a vision of a province that is a full partner in Confederation. Our obligation to our constituents,

our neighbours, our friends, our family members, and most especially the future generations, is to realize and maximize our potential to meet the promise of Saskatchewan within a framework of fiscal prudence and sound stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor noted that in a province whose people refer to their home as next year country all too often, our next year has finally arrived. Indeed, Saskatchewan has become this year country.

As His Honour noted, this year Saskatchewan is expected to lead the nation in economic growth. This year Saskatchewan is number one in wholesale trade growth, export sales growth, and retail sales growth. This year more people are working in Saskatchewan than ever before. Mr. Speaker, that number is well over 520,000 people.

Not only that, but they are working in higher quality jobs, Mr. Speaker. A July report from CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] reinforced that the highest quality jobs in the country are now in Saskatchewan and they're earning more money. This is a clear indication that the people of Saskatchewan are benefiting from our remarkable economic momentum.

This year our population is growing at its fastest rate in over 50 years. This year more of our young people are choosing to stay in Saskatchewan and moving back from other provinces, and we've seen witness of that today.

Because of this tremendous growth and new economic activity, government revenues continue to grow. And based on our dialogue with the people of this province in recent months, as a provincial community we stand ready to take on various challenges — mostly to overcome the legacy of lethargy that was the signature of the last government — and seize the opportunities presented by our prosperity.

In my role as Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour with responsibilities for immigration among other various serious duties, including the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] and the Status of Women, along with my legislative and executive colleagues and our highly capable ministry staff, together we are working to meet not just the government's goals but the objectives for the people of this province.

Our challenge is simple in its intent, and far and wide reaching in its execution. Together as practical and possible with partners like the federal government as well as various institutions of governance within our First Nations and Métis communities, and municipalities across our own provincial government, with community-based organizations who in the Throne Speech received a commitment of long-term stable funding agreements thus strengthening their ability to contribute to the peoples of this province, in the post-secondary sector, and where we can with organized labour — a door that remains open — and of course with industry, we shall continue working in a diligent and disciplined fashion to build an even stronger Saskatchewan and create an even better life for the people of our fine province.

Focused, strategic partnerships are vital in helping to transform our communities and our province. For example, partnerships will be vital to addressing our labour market needs. We are challenged by key characteristics of a very vibrant labour market. Put simply, we need more people with increasing levels of skills training and education to participate in and benefit from the growth that's under way.

First, like many other jurisdictions, we face the threat of losing a major portion of our skilled and seasoned employees to retirements as baby boomers begin to transition into a new stage of life. And we must work with employers and other stakeholders to extend more opportunities for these people to have on core careers.

Second, until recently, Saskatchewan's sad trend of supplying skilled and educated young people to growing economies in other jurisdictions created a void in our own labour force — an out-migration that numbered 35,000 people under the previous government alone. While I'm pleased to note that this is no longer the case — Saskatchewan has grown by over 16,000 people recently — we are aware that we now must work diligently to fill that void, to grow our population, and enhance the education and skill sets for the people in our province. This will help to inform not only the decisions we are making today but those we will take in the future — decisions to offer conditional but very real support, for example, for the First Nations University.

Third, we're obviously facing increased competition for workers from other jurisdictions, most notably other Western provinces. But our recent missions across Canada — for example into Ontario where we were joined by 50 employers — have demonstrated that we are more than capable of competing.

We view these circumstances as a clear call to action. Saskatchewan no longer has a job shortage. We have a people shortage. We need more people with skills and training. We need more people making contributions to our communities, and we know that the work that is required must go on at several fronts at once. To that end the ministry that I have the honour of serving has already fulfilled a number of promises made by the government, and we are rolling up our sleeves to do even more.

Our province now has the most aggressive youth-retention program in Canada thanks to a tuition rebate of up to \$20,000 over seven years, and in the coming days we will announce improvements to this program so that even more post-secondary graduates will build their futures right here in Saskatchewan.

We have taken steps to address the need for employees in key professions. Our post-secondary system has the capacity to educate and train more than 67,000 students, but we know we must work to ensure that these students are ready for the workforce. That is why we have created more than 6,000 new training and workforce development opportunities for Saskatchewan's people.

Our commitment is of \$100 million to improve health science facilities, a commitment that was questioned by the official opposition, that was questioned recently. And I'd like to know what the position of the official opposition is. Maybe in the

coming days we'll have an opportunity to explore that.

To help train new opportunities for physicians and nurses, to enhance recruitment strategies which will allow our province's health care system to be in a much stronger position than it was when we assumed office ... just this morning another announcement in Saskatoon regarding nurse training.

We are and we'll continue to look for greater co-operation between universities, regional colleges, and technical institutes to help ensure that our advanced educational system produces the talented, skilled graduates our province needs to propel our knowledge economy forward. The greatest resource we have in the province of Saskatchewan, our people. And we will continue to search for innovative means to deliver programming to more Saskatchewan people wherever they are.

Speaking of innovation, through the creation of Innovation Saskatchewan, our government's new focused commitment to research and innovation will provide new opportunities for our universities, our students, and our scholars to excel across new frontiers of the knowledge economy.

Of course we will continue to build on and benefit from an improved relationship with federal counterparts, an area that was too often underdeveloped by the previous government. As the members of this Assembly will know, earlier this year we secured a labour market agreement. We were among the first provinces to sign such an agreement with the federal government that provides \$90 million over six years for skills training. That type of funding is only possible through a productive relationship with the Government of Canada.

In our first budget we provided a significant funding increase to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions with a range of support increasing from between 8 and 50 per cent. And last month we announced an additional \$3.5 million investment to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission to provide an additional 900 new training opportunities for more apprenticeships. That is \$3.5 million for 900 new apprenticeships. Again we're waiting from the response from the official opposition.

We also continue to seek out and build new partnerships with businesses, community-based organizations, the post-secondary sector, and with other governments — partnerships that have the ability to create new programs and initiatives that help build the labour force in key areas of our economy, but as importantly, help to ensure that we're building more diverse, dynamic, cosmopolitan, and creative communities.

The labour market agreement is one example of that, but certainly not the only example. The Regina and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centres make education and skills training more accessible to unemployed and underemployed youth and young adults in order to prepare themselves to engage more fully in our economy and across our communities. The centres represent a partnership between the province, the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, school boards, training institutions, First Nation and Métis institutions in communities, business associations, among other stakeholders. Program availability is based on immediate labour market needs as identified with the help of local business and industry.

I'm proud to say that the graduates of the Regina Trades and Skills Centre, for just one example, who entered the labour force following graduation last spring, almost all of them obtained gainful employment. Now that is a significant outcome, Mr. Speaker.

A second example was announced earlier this year as federal and provincial governments, First Nation and Métis organizations, communities, training institutions and industry came together to form the northern career quest partnership under the Aboriginal skills employment partnership. The partnership represents a major investment — \$33 million — in the future of First Nation and Métis employment in northern Saskatchewan and will link 1,500 First Nation and Métis peoples to training and employment opportunities.

We acknowledge the crucial role that First Nation and Métis peoples will continue to play in the future of Saskatchewan, in our workforce, across our broader communities, and we are committed to providing First Nation and Métis people with enhanced educational opportunities, skills training, and employment options to become full partners in our common future. We recognize the importance of working with First Nation and Métis communities and institutions to assist and support basic adult education, employment readiness, and skills development initiatives.

To date, participation rates by these communities have been lower than hoped for, but recent statistics suggest that some progress is being made. For First Nation and Métis peoples living off-reserve, employment went up 2,500 to a total of 35,600 in September 2008 over September 2007. What a difference a year makes.

Once again we are working with our partners in Saskatchewan's post-secondary system to help ensure that more progress can be made in short order. A broad range of education and training programs for First Nation and Métis learners are offered at First Nations University, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], Dumont Technical Institute, as well as the U of R [University of Regina], the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], and regional colleges.

At this time it seems only appropriate to say how pleased we are with the recent installation of the new president of the University of Regina, Dr. Timmons. We're delighted that she has opted to move from Prince Edward Island and come to Saskatchewan. She follows in the footsteps of another esteemed scholar and leader within our community, Dr. Peter MacKinnon, who made a very similar migration from PEI [Prince Edward Island] to Saskatchewan.

Overall Saskatchewan's post-secondary system currently educates and trains more than 12,700 First Nation and Métis learners. We know there's more to do, but there's a solid foundation in place and we've made a major effort to build a strong relationship with Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis peoples based on mutual respect and understanding within our ministry and well beyond. We continue to support First Nations University because we know that the future well-being of this province depends on the full participation of First Nations people within our economy and across our community.

[15:30]

When we began to review the circumstances in and around First Nations University over the summer, we focused first and foremost on the students. Our young First Nations and Métis peoples provide Saskatchewan with a cultural, a cosmopolitan, and a competitive advantage that ought to be the envy of Confederation. Through the full range of education and employment services, our government is committed to working with First Nations and Métis peoples to enhance their ability to engage more fully in our growing economy and diverse communities.

At the same time, even when successful in achieving a goal that enhances participation, the work will be more than the population is presently within Saskatchewan. We know we need to grow our communities. We need to create an ecosystem of innovation — to borrow from Thomas Friedman — and build a knowledge economy that allows our province to meet its full potential, the demand for highly skilled and educated citizens, a demand that will only increase. As a result, we are listening to Saskatchewan employers and engaging in public-private partnerships that allow us to reach out in a meaningful, measurable way to skilled people beyond our borders, across Canada, and indeed around the world.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Premier, the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation, and myself had the opportunity to attend a national job fair in Toronto, along with 50 Saskatchewan companies — 50 employers, Mr. Speaker. Those companies did not return empty-handed. We're surveying those employers. Out of 50, we've heard back from 18. They've collected 2,600 resumé's. They have short-listed 220 people and hirings are already under way. We're measuring the results . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They're updating. We've implemented an aggressive strategy.

You know, importantly, last year, the previous government did go to the National Job Fair and they had one organization: 50:1 — kind of sounds like a recent score in a football game. We'll take that number any time. We have implemented an aggressive strategy to attract skilled newcomers to Saskatchewan from other parts of Canada and from abroad by significantly improving the processing times under the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program.

We're also providing additional funding to support settlement agencies. And for the first time ever, for the first time ever, we're designating staff to help ensure that the transition into the labour force is as smooth as possible for workers and employers alike. That was something overlooked by the previous government. To date we've seen an 81 per cent increase, year over year, in nominations from the same time last year. And soon we will be implementing an even more aggressive strategy to ensure we receive and welcome even more newcomers in the years ahead.

Through these measures we're delivering a clear message to all those who are looking to new opportunities right across our province: Saskatchewan is a great place to make a living. It's an even better place to make a life.

Beyond that we've followed through on the government's

promise to create a fair and balanced labour environment. When this government was elected just under a year ago, we promised to ensure that both the rights and obligations of employers and employees were acknowledged and clearly understood by all. Our intention was to proceed in the public interest, and this is what we've done.

We passed essential service legislation right here in this Assembly that was necessary to protect the health, safety, and public assets of Saskatchewan's people. We know that over 70 per cent of Saskatchewan people support that measure. Saskatchewan was one of the last provinces to put essential services in place and, you know, if I recall correctly, last spring in committee even one of the members from the official opposition said, yes, it's probably a pretty good thing.

We've also passed amendments to *The Trade Union Act* that we believe are necessary to assure democracy and freedom of information in our workplaces and provide for the renewal of the Labour Relations Board. Seventy-five per cent of the people in this province, based on a poll in the *Leader-Post*, supported — supported — secret ballots.

We will continue to review our labour laws, regulations, and policies to ensure they're transparent, fair, effective, competitive, and up to date in a routine manner. Our objective is to ensure that we have a fair and balanced labour environment for the people of this province.

This is ultimately part of our government's effort to create a stronger democracy that serves the need of Saskatchewan's people. That effort also includes restrictions on government advertising in the period leading to an election and giving Saskatchewan people a real say in our province's next nominee to the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has turned a page on the past and has confidently started a new chapter, a chapter represented by the announcement today — the support for libraries, too long in coming but finally arrived with the new government.

Our economic growth has captured the attention of the nation. Incomes are growing, and thanks to our tax cuts people will be keeping more of the money they earn. Let's just review this.

Debt reduced by 40 per cent. Since taking office, our Premier's government has cut the province's debt by about 40 per cent, from nearly 7 billion to 4.2 billion, saving taxpayers millions in interest costs over the coming years.

The largest income tax cut ever, saving a family of four \$1,320 a year and removing 80,000 low-income earners from the tax rolls.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Record investment in infrastructure: 1.5 billion next year to ensure Saskatchewan's infrastructure contributes to our province's growing economy. And responsible financial planning. You might want to look that one up in a dictionary, responsible financial planning. Have a read. You'll make reference to this.

We know there's more work to do. But as we've noted already, there are over 12,700 First Nation and Métis peoples enrolled in our post-secondary institutions. People who moved away years ago to find work are coming home to great jobs. Joining them are residents from other provinces and country who are looking for new opportunities in the new Saskatchewan. Our government is committed to ensuring Saskatchewan is a great place to live and raise a family, a place where people have confidence in the future and are assured that they will share in the benefits produced by a growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, as noted in the Throne Speech, our government also remembers the men and women of this province who have sacrificed everything in the service of this country and of their homes. Well beyond the gifts of providence that have propelled our province into prosperity, that sacrifice lies at the very heart of why Saskatchewan is such a great place to make a life. I am humbled to reference that during this session, we will introduce measures to honour returning soldiers as well as the sons and daughters of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice with a scholarship for post-secondary education. I sincerely hope that this small gesture will help to contribute to a life and a future that our armed forces members and their families, that is reflective of the efforts they make on a daily basis. All of this is good news for Saskatchewan as we reflect on the very real losses that we know families are experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, in short, this has been a remarkable year for the province, and I'm confident that as we look across this Assembly, we see many more years like this in the future — prosperity through the right policies.

Finally I'd also like to express my gratitude to the people of Saskatchewan, most especially in Saskatoon Greystone, for their continued support over the past year. As they say, in recent days it's nice to see that support reaffirmed by so many regardless of political stripe, regardless of orientation. These good people have been helpful and supportive. They're reflective of the people of our province. In a time that we've had a very unique opportunity to ensure that the foundations of growth are in place, we can see right across the province a sense of optimism, a sense of optimism too often overlooked by members opposite.

I think sometimes some of their own internal fractures keep them from seeing the broader picture of a sunny Saskatchewan. Too often they're confused by the internal divisions that they confront when they go out and see a Saskatchewan that is optimistic, that is moving forward.

Most especially as I thank my colleagues, especially within the Assembly, I'd like to ensure that we also extend a very sincere thanks to our Premier for helping to ensure that we, the governing party, have the very best interests of the people of this province in mind as we undertake the decisions to sustain our growth and share the benefits of this growth with the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favour of the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Arm River.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . be back here in the House addressing another Throne Speech in my career.

First thing up, I'd like to welcome the new member from Cumberland on his recent by-election. And I hope that you find your time here fulfilling and rewarding, because unfortunately with your party you might only have three years here. So use them well.

Talking about the Throne Speech, you know, this is a Throne Speech of the people. The Premier had asked us to go talk to our constituents, but that's something he didn't have to tell me and many MLAs on this side. We've been doing that for many years. That's why every election we've gained more seats every time, because we're out there talking to people day to day.

And this is what we've been gathering. We've been listening to them bringing it in, bringing our inputs in, bringing our policies forward, and that's why every election we've gained more seats than the opposite party since I've started this election, since I've started with this party, since I started in this legislature.

And it's always been interesting to go out and listen to your constituents. That's where we gather the ideas. And one of the many things that we gathered here when we were talking about our things was debt reduction. You know, when we talk to people about debt reduction, that was very important, very important to most of our constituents.

In fact every constituent says, you know, if you have extra money, pay down the debt. Because nobody likes to be holding debt, you know, for any period of long time. And we've been struggling with debt in Saskatchewan for many, many years. And other provinces have paid them off. Our neighbour has paid them off in Alberta and it showed dividends.

The money you're saving in interest on our debt, I think this year it's going to total somewhere close to \$100 million. I don't have the exact numbers here. But I think over a four-year period we're looking at, if we stay on the same course, saving \$190 million. That's very, very huge. That's money we have every year. And I know that that was a priority that the other MLAs had heard when they went around, to pay down the debt. So that was one of the main things that our focus of our government was working towards — debt.

And we've paid off, I think, close to 40 per cent of it in the short period of time we've been here. We haven't even been here a year. We've paid down almost 40 per cent of the debt. I mean that is huge. That's significant. And the people appreciate that. When you talk about that, that is like . . . They can hardly believe that we paid that much down. And keep going, they say, if you can.

And also setting aside extra money in the . . . We used to call it the rainy day fund. This money is actually there, close to \$2 billion. And that is real dollars. Those are dollars that are there. Those are money that can be used in case there's an economic downturn.

We're right now, I think, we're saving probably \$5,000 a minute in interest rates as we speak of the debt that's paid

down. So probably in the few minutes I've saved, I think I must be up to 20,000. And I can tell the members opposite I don't think we're going to save \$1 million with my speech. I'll tell you that much.

But that was a big part of what we were hearing when I was going door to door. That was, you know, if I brought that up and say debt.

The next thing was infrastructure, you know. The infrastructure in my constituency, many constituencies throughout rural Saskatchewan, through the cities, have been neglected over the number of years, and they say extra money should be used for infrastructure, whether it's highways or hospitals, universities, road repair, schools, whatever. Like towns, water and sewer, subdivisions is one of the issues that have come up.

[15:45]

When I was first elected, when I used to meet with the mayors in '99 and the RMs [rural municipality] was a concern of people leaving vacant houses. Like you know, that was a concern to them. How are we going to deal? Our tax base is shrinking in these towns. People are leaving. We've got empty houses. What are we going to do?

Now when I meet with them, the problem is subdivisions. Every house in my constituency, in every town — every town — when I was about this summer and this spring, every house is sold. There wasn't a vacant house that was left that hadn't been sold.

And subdivisions, I've got my bigger towns looking at expanding subdivisions. And we were addressing that through programs and that is huge there, like in my time, to have that turnaround. That's one of the main reasons that I ran, was to see Saskatchewan become a have province. And it has — it has.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — And you know what? It's going to stay a have province under our government. It's going to stay that way permanently. We're not going to be in and out of equalization. We're not going to be flirting from, you know, struggling. We are part of what they call the new West — a new West in Canada and Confederation.

We are a province basically that has respect now throughout the country, you know. And at one time, we didn't. You know, down east, I have, you know, friends and relatives. They used to joke about Saskatchewan. You know, like calling it, you know, the wee province. You know, you're struggling all the time. You know, not any more. Not any more. We have respect through Canada.

And that's one of the reasons that our party has grown so much and our government has grown so much in seats and in strength and keeps growing out there. Because the people of Saskatchewan, that's what they want. They want to be in a have province. They want to be a province that's growing. They want to be a winning province. They want a province that has strength.

They also want a caring province, a province that is spending money throughout the province, looking at all sectors of people, you know, and not just looking more at one sector. Or it seemed like under the old government, the NDP, was city.

Rural Saskatchewan seemed to get neglected. And it did through highways. Every highway in my constituency was beat up, as most of them know. In our short term, we've worked on No. 2 and we worked on No. 20. And what we did on them highways, we fixed them right, and we fixed a length of them.

Under the NDP, they used to patch. By Watrous there was, between No. 2, between the junction of 15 to town of Watrous, it was in bad shape ever since I first got elected. And what they'd do, they'd go out and fix 1 kilometre and leave it, you know, and then next summer go out and fix another kilometre and not fix the first one even that great. So what we did, what the people told me, they says, if you're going to fix . . . We realize you can't fix every highway in the first year or two. But when you're going to fix a highway, go out and do it right. Spend some money on it and do it right and fix it from one point to another point so that we know that that whole section is fixed.

What the old government used to do, the NDP, they used to fix sometimes . . . on 15 Highway from 2 west, they'd fix the first 5 clicks. And you thought gee, you're on a pretty good highway, and then the centre of it was just beat to crap.

Now No. 20 was another highway that we fixed, and we made it primary weight. That was the people out there since I was first elected said, if you're going to do some work on No. 20, make it primary weight because there's some businesses in the area that need it. There's some expansion. There's a feedlot going in there. We said, we need primary weight highway. We listened to the people. And that's what we're doing. That's what this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is dealing with — is dealing with a province that's growing, listening to the needs and the wants of the people.

Another one it deals with is tax cuts. You know, the people say if you have extra money after that, you know, give us some money back; try and help us. And we made the most significant tax cuts that's ever, in one single year, that's ever happened. I won't go into the numbers. Other members will. The Finance minister, he'll have the numbers; he'll be reciting them off. But that's still the biggest single thing that we've addressed in one year — that significant tax cuts. And that is huge. That is something that passing on back to the people, giving them some of the extra money that we've taken in in revenues, and it helps all sectors. It helps low-income and it helps middle-income people. And that's what a government should be doing, is helping all sectors. It's also going to help the province grow. It's going to keep it moving in the right direction.

Agriculture is important in my constituency as it is through most of them. And one of the things we're working on is the crop insurance. I've heard that since '99, is we have to look at making crop insurance a better program — either more affordable and also better coverage, moving with the times. Pretty near all the farmers now continuous crop. And you're going to have to work that in when you're working your crop insurance review on your rates. And I know that this review

that's going to be coming out — it has come out — is going to be . . . I'm looking forward to providing a better program through crop insurance because that's what the farmers want.

They want a program that covers them, you know, as your cost of inputs are going up. That's what we have to be looking at, is at least covering the cost of production. They don't want handouts and that's probably not the way to go. And they realize that. But they want a decent insurance, long-range insurance program that we're working on.

One of the ones is CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. At least they know that we're going to fully fund CAIS at the beginning of the year. And I can remember making speech after speech and this government hardly ever, ever fully funded CAIS in the budget, at the beginning of the budget. They would near the end. I think it was 2003 you didn't fund CAIS at all.

But there was years you waited till the fall — till the fall — before you announced that you were going to fully fund it, put in your full share, because in the budget a few times you just put in a set amount. I remember the one year it was \$80 million. It was capped. That was it. And I think it was also . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not sure of the year — I think it was 2002, you didn't put in the full amount. So the farmers only got . . . I think I had farmers that got 60 per cent of the federal share. Our share was 40 per cent. We only funded up to, I think it was 31 per cent, 30 per cent. That's all they got. So they were missing 10 per cent the other provinces got.

You did that a number of years. There was a few years, the last few years you fully funded CAIS. You fully did that. I think there was only two years you ever announced that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they ever announced it right in the budget. We're doing that every year. We're going to fully fund it so at least the farmers know that they're going to fund the full amount. It's not going to be a set rate of only pulling in 80 million or 90 million — I think the one year it was 100 million, on that side.

Another one is bringing back the administration of Saskatchewan. I know we talked about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've talked that in the House before. Why aren't we running it like Alberta is? But, you know, the government never seemed that interested in doing that. And I think that's going to help the farmers and talking about CAIS and talking to somebody that understands farming.

One of the things in the Throne Speech, talking about, is expanding the agrologist services and also expanding services that will help understanding your CAIS programs. I think they're going to be expanding that in rural Saskatchewan.

I can remember when this government took out every rural service centre in rural Saskatchewan — took it out, moved it to Moose Jaw, I believe. And I know that's what we're talking about, is expanding those services back to rural Saskatchewan. And one of them is talking about helping the people fill out their CAIS forms, helping them understand it because there's going to be a long-range program that's going to be implemented for a long period of time. Farmers are going to need that. They need to understand how it works. And I think we have a duty as the government to help them understand how

it works and to work with them. And we're willing to help them. That's one of the ways, through agriculture.

Another one, listening to the people, is the library, is the integrated system that we just announced today. I remember getting letters talking about that. I can remember that three or four years ago that people wanted that. And I think it was just mentioned today. We were talking about that, that it was presented first about four years to the other government, the NDP government, about that service. And they just kind of, well we'll see; we'll get to it. We're going to get to that, you know. We're going to get to it. But they didn't. We did that in the first year. We've gotten to more things in the first year than that government ever did in 16 years.

And that is why this is a great, great Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's even better than the one last year. But I mean what it is, is it's a speech; it's a Throne Speech from the people. This is what the people brought to us. This isn't something that was just written by a bureaucrat here in Regina. This is written by all of us, and it was all written by our constituents because this is what they want. These are the things that they wanted, to see the direction that their government is moving in.

And that's what's the most important. And that is why, you know, I can't believe the other side's not going to . . . vote against it. There is great things in this speech that's going to help this province grow, keep moving it in the right direction.

I know that adjusting the program for the seniors is one of them. And I forget the exact . . . Excuse me for a sec while I just go through here. I forget the exact . . . We're adjusting the income program for them, for low-income seniors. We're adjusting that. Because I've had a lot of calls over the years and that's never been increased. And we're looking at that. We're getting that in our first year. And you never, never got to that in 16 years. You never helped that, you know.

Those are one of the many, many things. The CBOs [community-based organizations], the extra money going to community-based organizations, that was a great, great thing. That's helping throughout the province.

This is a Throne Speech that reads like a budget — I mean, what we're doing. But it's a great Throne Speech, and it deals with things that are important to the people here in Saskatchewan, not just in my constituency, in all the constituencies spread out through the province.

I know when I was home on the weekend, we were talking about it. And I, you know, tried to talk to as many people as you can about the Throne Speech and the many things that are in it. And I don't think I had a negative word against it.

It touches on all bases — the debt reduction, these huge tax cuts, the extra infrastructure going in, the ready-for-growth infrastructure program. It's the largest capital commitment in Saskatchewan's history, and that's what we need out in rural Saskatchewan. You know, we've been neglected for many years out there, and the people could never understand why that government would never want to spend money on infrastructure. And that's something that we're committed to —

to build. That's what I'm committed to. That's what we're all committed to, you know, to growing Saskatchewan.

That's one of the great things about this present government. That's why I enjoy being here. It's why I spent two long terms in opposition to work towards this, so we could put our plan in effect and see this province grow. To see it to keep growing, to make it a have province. To make it what it is today, and what it is going to be in the future.

I'm very excited about the potential of this province: the growth of it; the people coming back; the expansion in the oil and gas; the mining; all the other things that are going on. We've had interest in feedlots out in our way, ethanol plants. I mean people are looking at investing money in Saskatchewan, and they want to come home.

We've got people working now. There's a pipeline that's running up by Regina right now, going up to the Manitoba border. And there's a guy from Bladworth that's always worked for that company that's building it. He's always been in Alberta. This is the first time in I think 12 years since he's been away working that he's been actually working on a pipeline in Saskatchewan. He's working a few minutes or a few hours from home instead of a day or two days from home. You know, that is what is very important. That is part of this province growing. That is the new reality, the new West, the new Saskatchewan. And that is why this is a great Throne Speech.

This is a great Throne Speech. And I will be supporting this Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

[16:00]

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my distinct privilege to stand in the House and represent the residents of Regina Walsh Acres for a second term as their MLA. Regina Walsh Acres is a constituency in Regina's vibrant northwest end and is comprised of the residential subdivisions of Normanview West, Normanview, Regent Park, Walsh Acres, and McCarthy Park. While the majority of housing units are stand-alone homes, the constituency also boasts two condominium complexes and several rental properties. Also the constituency is home to the bustling Normanview Crossing mall.

It is adjacent to the Normanview Crossing mall where, on September 10 of this year, a major fire destroyed several condo units leaving a total of 20 units damaged. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to confirm that everyone managed to escape safely from the fire. Nevertheless the residents of these units continue to face significant challenges and uncertainty.

It does not go unnoticed, Mr. Speaker, among the principal causes of bankruptcy in this country is fire and accordingly a lack of fire insurance to protect property owners from hardship. Some residents have been fortunate to be assisted through

insurance policies; others are coping with financial loss on an unprecedented personal scale.

The warm-hearted residents of Regina Walsh Acres, prompted by an appeal of the *Leader-Post* . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's funny how the members opposite think this is funny when people are suffering absolute devastation and hardship. These people have no insurance, no belongings because they were completely damaged in this fire. And the members opposite sit there and laugh — member from Cannington and member from . . . Minister of Environment. Unbelievable.

The warm-hearted residents of Regina Walsh Acres, prompted by an appeal in the *Leader-Post*, have responded with abounding generosity. Indeed even my local MLA office has been very active in coordinating donations to fire victims with the management team of Medford Mews. I would like to take a moment to commend the outstanding efforts of Valetta and Linda in particular at the Medford Mews office who have absolutely dedicated themselves to this, Mr. Speaker. It is through their practical efforts and personal commitment to the welfare of their neighbours that such a successful donation drive continues. I would also like to extend thanks to everyone who has contributed donations of money, clothing, household items, and furniture, with special thanks to the members of my own caucus for their efforts, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that donations are still being accepted, and I'd be very willing to coordinate this for the contributors.

Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign I had the humble opportunity, along with my dedicated supporters, to knock on the doors of hundreds of people and talk to each one of them on their doorsteps, in their living rooms, garages, or in the hallways of their rental units. It was during these conversations I had the opportunity to listen and to convey the New Democrat vision for a fair and caring Saskatchewan.

I talked to pensioners trying to cope with rising prices. I spoke to renters young and old who live each day hoping that they will not receive yet another rent increase notice that they cannot afford. I spoke with families who are concerned about the price of medications for their loved ones. And I met with students who are studying to fulfill their dreams while at the same time are worried about their huge debt load they will accumulate over the course of their studies.

Each of these people told me that they were happy to see Saskatchewan booming and expressed hope that with this prosperity their quality of life, along with the lives of their families, friends, and neighbours, could be improved.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the residents of Regina Walsh Acres have once again chosen to have me represent them. And I pledge to work very hard every day to promote the interests of the residents of Regina Walsh Acres. Saskatchewan's hard-working families deserve representatives that fight first and always for their interests. And that they can be assured that I, along with my New Democrat colleagues in the House as well as our newest member from Cumberland, will fight for the principle of fairness and equity each and every day.

It was the New Democrats, and in particular the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, who protested the Sask Party

government's callous, mean-spirited cut to Station 20 West in Saskatoon . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Again they laugh, Mr. Speaker. If that doesn't tell you what they're made up of, I don't know what does.

Our leader and our member for Saskatoon Riversdale stood up for the members of Saskatchewan when the Sask Party government accepted the broken equalization promise of their ideological cousins, the Harper Conservatives in Ottawa. Our member for Saskatoon Riversdale and our leader was a lone voice in this province because none of the MPs [Member of Parliament] that were elected to this province from the Harper Conservatives nor anyone from the Sask Party said anything about it. All you could hear was the crickets chirping on this subject, Mr. Speaker.

It was again the New Democrats who called on the Sask Party government to be accountable and respect parliamentary democracy when they hastily attempted to pass a Bill that would have given cabinet unquestioned, record-breaking spending authority with virtually no paper trail for anything up to \$350,000, Mr. Speaker. Hard to believe after the history that they left this province with — \$15 billion debt in 1991 just to be precise — and yet they think that they should be able to pass legislation to be able to spend what they want, unaccountable up to \$350,000. Shame.

While the Sask Party government picks winners and losers, declares war on working people with Bills 5 and 6, and enshrines the rights of the private profit to come before the interests of working people with the creation of Enterprise Saskatchewan, New Democrats have demanded accountability, fairness, and results for working people. I am pleased to work alongside with the member from Saskatoon Riversdale for a principled opposition that provides a voice to those that the Sask Party government has already chosen to leave behind.

Throughout the summer months, Sask Party MLAs were told by their Premier to go out and make a list of how they could spend \$3.1 billion of Saskatchewan's hard-earned money. And may I remind everyone, Mr. Speaker, that is money that was earned by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. It is something they toiled for, for the many years that we have been trying to rebuild this province since it was left devastated in 1991.

It is my hope that they receive the same phone calls, read the same letters, and listen to the same concerns that have been brought to my attention, heartbreaking stories of personal challenges of hardworking people struggling to get by as a result of the Sask Party's ideology. A recovering cancer patient struggles to afford the dietary products he requires because the Sask Party government — despite the fact that they have record windfall, despite the fact that they were left with \$2 billion when they took office — because the Sask Party government decided to cut the nutritional products program, a program that allowed patients that require medically necessary supplies to purchase them conveniently and affordably from the hospital. Just another way a Sask Party government leaves ordinary working people behind.

A pensioner worries about paying her winter home heating bills since she heard the Sask Party government approved an increase on average of 20 per cent a month for home heating

bills. Meanwhile the Sask Party government refuses to provide any direct rebate as they called for when they were in opposition — apparently they've forgotten that — and cancelled the NDP's lowest cost utility bundle guarantee, despite the fact that there were \$3.1 billion in the bank and there still exists a \$2 billion rainy day fund that they originally thought was unacceptable. All this woman hears from the Sask Party government is that broad-based tax cuts are the answer. Meanwhile she wonders why the government, if they have Crown corporations, can't just provide a guarantee to keep rates affordable. Again just another way a Sask Party government leaves people behind.

Or what about the student who faces ever-rising tuition costs? He found out just last week that the Sask Party government doesn't believe in freezing tuition rates. Unfortunately that same student struggles to afford rent as he watches the Sask Party government's inaction on the most basic need, which is shelter. Just another person who is left behind by the Sask Party government.

It is the story of too many people being left behind by the Sask Party government that serves as the context for a Throne Speech that spends more time trumpeting the wearing catchphrases about growth and selling the province, and too little time actually ensuring that people can afford to heat their homes, purchase their groceries, or pay their rent.

This was a Throne Speech that tries to make up for the most insensitive and callous cuts, callous cuts already made to the most vulnerable in our society, but falls short of making a real difference. This was a Throne Speech that casts into serious doubt the future of Saskatchewan's Crown sector and its capacity to provide affordable goods and services to the people of this province. This was also a Throne Speech where the future of the publicly owned and funded medicare was put on notice, Mr. Speaker, that it must pass a vague patient-first review, an ideological bone-picking of a sacred program that people, now more than ever, count on when they're in need.

I stand as a New Democrat today in opposition to the Sask Party precisely because I believe that economic prosperity without significant social progress undermines all that we have built together in this great province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — It denies people the dignity they deserve, and it squanders the promise of a better, brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party ultimately wanted this Throne Speech to detract from the reality that, with billions of dollars in the bank, the Sask Party opposite has spent more effort over their year in government finding ways to provide significant pay increases for their friends, while finding programs to cut rather than deliver any real long-lasting relief for Saskatchewan people who today are struggling to make ends meet.

It is a true shame that this government gave up on those counting on the success of Station 20 West in Saskatoon. It is a shame that this government has essentially given up on the tools available to deliver affordability through the Crown sector. It is a shame that this government has decided to attack working

people by constructing legislation that does unprecedented harm to trade unions and further takes away the very rights that the people in this province have fought so long and so hard to achieve.

All of these actions describe a government that harbours an ideology that prevents Saskatchewan from achieving any true qualitative sense of a better life. Indeed these actions underscore Conservative, quote, “you’re on your own” type ideology that is proven to lead to unacceptable levels of social disruption and hardship, and undermine human well-being.

The Throne Speech delivered on October 22 offers exaggerated assurances in light of the uncertainty Saskatchewan people, and Canadians by extension, face as they watch an economic crisis of historic proportion unfold. The crisis is marked by volatile markets and credit shortages and is strongly associated with the subprime mortgage fiasco in the United States.

Governments in some of the most prosperous nations in the world are providing billion dollar taxpayer bailouts to banks. In the United States, Britain, Belgium, France, Italy, and Netherlands and Iceland, governments have responded to the worrying economic situation and at the same time have admitted uncertainty and volatility may prevail. Today there is mounting evidence of a slowdown across the developed world. It is in North America and in countries that follow the model of continental Europe. It affects countries that have had housing market bubbles and those that did not. And it is materializing reality that no part of the developed world will be completely immune.

The Harper Conservatives, fresh from a less-than-substantial majority win, are now admitting that Canada may not be spared and have stopped, at least for the present moment, from preaching their free-market, laissez-faire, do-nothing approach as Canadians’ pensions, savings, and jobs hang in the balance, Mr. Speaker. After all, they have stopped because they know that they have blatantly jeopardized our jobs, our savings, our pensions through their own leave-it-to-the-market ideology, that Conservative brand which has led the irresponsible financial deregulation here in Canada that they have commenced as early as 2006.

In 2006 the Harper Conservatives invited US [United States] financial corporations into Canada’s mortgage insurance market and they doubled the amount taxpayers would be on the hook to insure. We should all recall that it was during 2006 when housing prices in Canada peaked to a median higher than even the top of the US market. Further, Canada domestically witnessed weakening standards for mortgage insurance.

Later in 2006 the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation started to insure no-down-payment, interest-only, 40-year mortgages, stating in the *National Post* that, quote, “We’re the third guys coming up to the plate with these products . . . AIG has done it . . . We’re just doing something that’s in the marketplace.” Guess what, Mr. Speaker? AIG [American International Group, Inc.] has since bailed out. To be sure, this was a consequence of the vague, purposely misleading Conservative agenda to promote competition that in real terms compromised Canada’s economic stability and effectively trapped Canadians who struggle to fulfill their dreams of

owning a home.

[16:15]

In 2007, one year after the deregulation by the Harper Conservatives, it was reported that 40 per cent of all new mortgages in Canada were amortized over 40 years, Mr. Speaker. Despite the emerging disastrous effects of the same type of financial deregulation in the US, the Harper Conservatives stood by the folly of greater choice, innovation, and increased competition, selling this vulgate of free market ideology as good for Canadians.

This summer the Harper Conservatives have already moved to correct their own irresponsible deregulation by requiring the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to at least obtain a 5 per cent down payment from potential mortgage holders, acknowledging the hazards associated with Conservative leave-it-to-the-invisible-hand ideology.

Mr. Speaker, the economic damage of the Sask Party’s ideological cousins, the Harper Conservatives, has yet to be fully determined. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that in this light the 11 Sask Party MLAs that currently hold Conservative Party memberships may rightly decide not to renew next year. But I suspect not; I won’t hold my breath.

Mr. Speaker, this economic spectacle necessarily raises some important questions here at home in Saskatchewan. Yes, Saskatchewan may still boast growth as other regions suffer losses, but economists agree that Canada is not immune, neither Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan people are right to question whether the Sask Party government can be trusted to make the right choices to guide Saskatchewan through the world’s economically turbulent times ahead or to make the right choices for our long-term prosperity.

The evidence already suggests otherwise, Mr. Speaker. While people struggle to make ends meet, the Premier spends his time making football announcements or walking the booths of job fairs to lure workers. While pensioners are sent a nasty letter telling them to prove they are alive and given only a matter of days to respond or the government will cut them off, the Premier preaches about an emerging powerhouse at the Empire Club in Toronto. While Saskatchewan people try to understand the unfolding problems in a globalized market, the Premier announces that he wants the esoteric body, Enterprise Saskatchewan, to reduce the vague yet undefined enemy to Conservatives all over the world, which is regulation, red tape.

Woodrow Stanley Lloyd, a former premier, who instituted Tommy Douglas’s vision of medicare in Saskatchewan, once said the following about governments, quote:

Governments [he said] exist in order that we may create those conditions without which people cannot be at their best.

And I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, the words, quote, “without which people cannot be at their best.” In this sense Woodrow Lloyd saw the possibility of government working not in the backrooms or in the secret, esoteric bodies like Enterprise Saskatchewan — or the latest, coming to a legislature near you,

Innovation Saskatchewan — rather a government with principle, a government that respects parliamentary democracy and professionalism of the civil service, and a government that genuinely seeks to achieve things like health care, education, and Crown utilities that are publicly delivered and affordable so that people can be at their best.

The Sask Party does not, however, share in this vision. They instead believe in an ideology that is much more individualistic, that does not care that society's rewards are unevenly distributed, and an ideology that is being put on trial today as the world's nations come to terms with a market system that left greed and irresponsibly unchecked as government chose to be absentee from its role of ensuring equity and fairness.

Instead the Sask Party government passes laws without proper public consultation to deny working people their rights. Instead the Sask Party government conducts massive civil servant firings to purge the civil service of anyone whom they suspect doesn't share their ideology. As the Public Service Commission identified in their latest ruling, quote:

When competent employees are dismissed without cause, there is no return on investment to the public, only increased cost and loss of competence and the creation of instability to the public service.

Last week the Minister for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour gave a speech to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention and stated that his government, that is the Sask Party government, is a great place to live and raise a family.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — I'm glad they're clapping because they've just endorsed what I heard. I found it very, very, very disturbing and very interesting to note that the vision under the previous NDP government was that Saskatchewan was the best place to live, work, and raise a family. Under the new Sask Party government, it's live and raise a family. Somehow we've now lost the word work.

The Sask Party dropped the word work from its vision. They have dropped the word work from its vision. The Sask Party has dropped the word work from its vision. Could it be because the Sask Party government has declared war on the working people of this province? Could it be because they are so ideologically driven that they don't even realize that rather than attacking legislation that protects and attracts workers to this province, that they actually need workers in this thriving economy to provide stability?

Last week we also heard the Premier say that, no, they likely wouldn't be able to succeed in meeting their greenhouse gas emission targets, with the first one being stabilizing emissions by 2010. He said they couldn't meet this. Whoa, whoa, hang on. They couldn't meet this inherited obligation. Perhaps the Premier and the Sask Party government need a refresher course, although I'm sure they prefer to stick with their revisionism when history doesn't fall in favour with what they would like to portray.

The greenhouse gas emission targets that the previous NDP government announced in the spring of 2007 were adopted, not inherited, by the Premier and the Sask Party government. They were actually in their election party platform. And if they don't have one handy to look at, I'll share mine with them because I managed to get my hands on one. And the Minister for Environment is barking right now because she knows that she hasn't been able to say anything over the past year about meeting those targets.

Well let me tell you what they did inherit. They inherited \$2 billion when they took over government, the largest inheritance of any government coming into power in this province. That's what they inherited, Mr. Speaker. They also inherited something called the Prebble report, an extensive report done on how to address climate change issues and issues of the environment in this province.

They also inherited a \$320 million fund to deal with the issues of climate change. They also inherited the green strategy on how to address the issues of climate change. And what did they do with that \$320 million fund? They gutted it, Mr. Speaker. They cut it down to \$40 million, \$40 million to address the issues of climate change and issues of the environment. Well can anyone wonder why they can't meet their obligations that they adopted in their platform?

Or was that simply numbers? Did they just throw numbers in their election party platform, or did they do any research when they adopted those numbers? Or was it just another gimmick as the Premier referred to last week about his obligation when he said that he wanted to reduce the gas tax once it hit a certain price? Last week he was quoted as saying it was just a gimmick. Well was this just another gimmick adopting these targets?

They implode the Office of Energy Conservation. They didn't even leave intact an office that was already addressing the issues of conservation. They absolutely disintegrated it. And they also gutted the climate change secretariat — another great initiative that was supposed to house a number of experts to deal directly with the issues of climate change. And what did they do? They completely eradicated it. This is the vision of this Sask Party government — no vision, I suggest, Mr. Speaker.

Time and time again, Saskatchewan people have witnessed the Sask Party government prove the folly of growth for the sake of growth and undermine the ability of people to be at their best.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Regina Walsh Acres, I stand opposed to the Sask Party government's Throne Speech and stand in favour of the motion passed by the members of the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to respond to the Throne Speech today, and I must say it was a very positive Throne Speech.

But before I focus on that speech, I would just like to publicly

thank my family and my colleagues and my constituents for their support over the past few months. It has been an extremely difficult time, and I do appreciate all the kindness that's shown me and my family.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member from Regina Rosemont respond on Thursday. And it was like he wasn't even aware that it was his socialist, NDP government that were in power for 16 years preceding the Saskatchewan Party victory last November.

He spoke of financial difficulties people are having — housing issues and rent increases. He forgot or didn't realize that it was his NDP government that were booting seniors out of their beds when they were raising long-term care rates. It was then NDP MLA Mark Wartman that yelled across, it's the right thing to do.

The member from Rosemont then attacked the city of Estevan — a city that I am very proud to represent. He spoke of the housing concerns. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are housing concerns in my constituency, and that's because more people are making their home there. Of course when the NDP were in power, they were driving people out of the province with their policies.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, measures are being taken to address housing issues and other issues renters are facing. Communities are developing more lots. And in fact we are acting on recommendations put forward by the task force on affordable housing in which a former member on the opposite side was a part of that team. That same member spoke of, and I quote, "Boom times in Estevan mean a busy time for police." Mr. Speaker, I think that any time a community grows, that situation arises.

Perhaps if the NDP would have kept their promise of 200 police officers, communities would have an adequate number of police officers that would deter mischief.

Again that same member questions what we want our communities to look like in 5, 10, 15, 20, or 50 years from now. Well we all know how our communities would look like if, God forbid, the NDP had their way. They'd be ghost towns.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the NDP failed to plan, they planned to fail, and sadly, they succeeded. They were happy to settle for mediocrity. To them growth is a bad thing. And that's just like a farmer sowing his crop and then praying for a crop failure because he doesn't have bin room.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you how I feel about Estevan. I know there's a housing shortage and concerns that stem from growth. We were left with an infrastructure deficit, but I can walk down any street in that city and feel safe. I am proud of the generosity of my constituency and just last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Estevan was again number one in Canada for reaching their goal for the United Way campaign.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — And incidentally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the goal was \$275,000 and they raised \$292,782 in the 34-hour telethon,

so Estevan has been number one in Canada 31 times in the telethon's 32-year history. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may I would like to congratulate Alan Hamann and all the volunteers for all their hard work.

My constituency is in the much-talked-about Bakken play and the Estevan-Weyburn area is number one with oil and gas land sales. The southeast corner of this province continues to contribute very generously to government revenues. This constituency is one of hard-working, proud people — whether they are involved in business, the oil industry, agriculture, or professional services. They are the backbone of this province and it irritates me to no end when someone who has only visited this community once or twice stands and focuses on the negative when this community has so much to offer.

Just last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Resources and I attended an Oilfield Technical Society awards dinner in Estevan. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to publicly recognize the recipients for their lifetime achievement: Graham Shirley, Jim Coulter, and George McGillicky for their contributions to the oil industry. Mr. Speaker, many attendees at this function commented on how happy they were with the tax cuts, debt reduction, and infrastructure commitments as well as the \$1.9 billion put in the Growth and Security Fund.

Many people were amazed that the minister would come to Estevan for this event. People can count on one hand the number of times the premier and/or cabinet minister of the former government ever visited my constituency. The present Premier and at least seven cabinet ministers have been to my constituency, sometimes on more than one occasion, since we formed government.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be part of this government. I am proud to be a part of a government that doesn't wait until an election year to make positive changes in the lives of hard-working people, historical announcements regarding tax cuts, debt paydown, and infrastructure commitments while putting almost \$2 billion in the Financial Security Fund.

And as you have heard from those who have spoken prior to me, the Premier asked each of us for feedback from our constituents on what they wanted from surplus revenues. This Throne Speech delivers on those responses. Over this past weekend I spoke to many people in my constituency and they all had very positive responses to these initiatives.

The increase in the basic personal exemption and the spousal exemption will increase by \$4,000 each. The child tax credit will increase by \$2,000. And this is retroactive to January 1, 2008. Approximately 80,000 residents of this province will no longer be paying provincial income tax.

An increase to the Saskatchewan income assistance program for seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the first increase in this program since 1992. And as you can see, Mr. Speaker, this targets those who need it most — those with families and low-income earners.

I remember last spring when we made announcements

regarding tax cuts, the member from Regina Douglas Park went on about the tax cut only amounted to the value of a pizza and he was going to get a cute little T-shirt with some stuff written on it. Well maybe even he'll see fit to support this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, this government has also directed an additional payment of \$1 billion towards the provincial debt. This, along with previous commitments, means that this government has paid almost 40 per cent of the provincial debt in the one year's time since the election. Every minute meant the debt has been decreased by \$5,000 in interest payments. The hundreds of millions of dollars saved on interest alone — and I believe it's around 900 million over the next five years — will be a benefit to all Saskatchewan taxpayers.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, there is 1.9 billion in the Growth and Financial Security Fund and in today's global economy that reserve is security, an insurance policy that will benefit every citizen of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I was also very happy to see increased commitment to highways and infrastructure. There is a huge infrastructure deficit in this province, a result of 16 years of NDP rule, and I look forward to the five-year rolling plan for highway construction. We must make safe highways a priority.

Parents of young families were pleased that additional money was targeted for child care spaces as well as the increase in pre-kindergarten programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government proves its commitment to agriculture by full participation in AgriStability.

We all remember the guessing games and the gong show that the former Agriculture minister Mark Wartman played with the farmers. Finally we have an Agriculture minister who understands agriculture and the needs of farmers. We all remember it was the NDP who tore up GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] contracts, made changes to crop insurance that forced farmers to opt out because it was unaffordable. And the NDP were the ones that closed down the rural service centres. The way farmers in this province were treated by the NDP was absolute proof that they didn't understand agriculture or didn't care about agriculture or perhaps both.

Property taxes were another issue. We had to implement the recommendations of the Boughen report in order to have property tax relief, while the government of the day increased the PST [provincial sales tax], but they didn't provide any tax relief. They cherry-picked.

Then we had to wait until school board amalgamations took place. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? Tax relief still didn't happen. This government looks forward to the report on the education property tax system in addressing these issues. This government is also committed to a long-term revenue-sharing program, something that municipalities have been asking for, for a long time. This is expected to be in place by the next budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that this government is saying thank you to those who serve in our Armed Forces. The words as read in the Throne Speech say it best, and I will quote:

While 2008 has been a tremendous year for our province, we have also been reminded that the freedom and way of life that we enjoy comes with a cost.

We are truly blessed to have so many brave young men and women willing to pay that cost on our behalf.

Today, the people of Saskatchewan and my government say thank you.

Thank you to all who serve our country.

... during this session my government will introduce measures to honour returning soldiers as well as the sons and daughters of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

This will take the form of a scholarship for post-secondary education.

And, Mr. Speaker, it just seems inadequate no matter what we could do to repay those who serve our country and ensure that we have the freedom that we all enjoy today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and the motion put forward by my colleague, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is always a pleasure to stand in this Assembly and talk about our government's passion for our great province, although today I am particularly excited to rise, relaying renewed sense of optimism my constituents feel about the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech outlines strong initiatives delivered by a driven, focused government who have aggressively brought forward fundamental change to the provincial landscape. Through prudent debt reduction, dramatic income tax relief, and historic infrastructure investment, our government is building a stronger Saskatchewan and a better life for those who live here. Mr. Speaker, it is this year country.

Mr. Speaker, a year has passed since I was elected and my, how things have changed. In reflection on the past year and what has been accomplished, I came to ponder the value of time. I thought about the historic announcements we had made and the improvements they will mean for the lives of my constituents in just one year's time.

With this in mind I thought, wow! Given more time, what could be accomplished — say 16 years? Some great accomplishments have been achieved in 16-year periods. The CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] railroad was built in less than 16 years. The Montreal Canadiens won 10 Stanley Cups in a 16-year period. In fact, in fact this building was built in a fraction of that time.

So it begs the question, what did the former NDP government accomplish in their 16 years in power ... [inaudible interjection] ... That's right, Mr. Speaker — very little.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at it. They let our common infrastructure fall into a state of shameful disrepair. Through their stagnant policies they drove out 35,000 people from our great province, including a generation of our young people. They even raised taxes after an election. They resigned themselves to being a wee province that would be in and out of equalization.

It seems the former government could never have envisioned what could be accomplished in just one year under a Saskatchewan Party government, so it is no wonder that they now oppose this Speech to the Throne. Because of the historic investments we are making in this province, we will build us past the limitations of a wee province and we will strengthen us beyond equalization.

Mr. Speaker, in just one short year we have reduced the debt by over 40 per cent. Yes, 40 per cent in just one year. We have reduced a \$7 billion debt to 4.6 billion. That works out to — as my counterpart tells me — about \$5,000 per minute paid down towards future prosperity.

Now debt repayment may not be a glitzy government spending. You can't stand beside it and get your picture taken. There is no ribbon cutting when you pay down the debt, and not many votes come your way because you've paid down the debt. It is an abstraction, an abstraction for most people in their daily lives. But, Mr. Speaker, it is the right thing to do. In my mind it may be in the long term the measure that has the greatest impact on the lives of our children and our grandchildren.

Further, in one short year we have implemented the largest single-year income tax cut in our province's history — not before an election, not in some vote-buying scheme, but for the betterment of this province and the people who call it home. This tax cut will make our province the lowest tax jurisdiction in Canada for most families. It will completely drop 80,000 people from our tax roll. And everyone who works hard gets a little more of their own money in their own pocket.

In just one short year we funded the ready-for-growth initiative which injected \$1 billion into this province's infrastructure. And we will monumentally increase this again this coming year to \$1.5 billion. This commitment will improve public safety and support growth and opportunity across this province.

The NDP planned for decline; we are building for the future. In one short year we set a vision for our province as an innovation leader where we can leverage our natural advantages and utilize our resources to catapult us into the future. With strong direction we will make the uranium industry more than just selling rocks, the environment more than just a photo op with Al Gore. Most importantly, this Throne Speech will support those who need it most.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP claim to be the advocate for those in need. Well their record suggests otherwise. The wait-list for people with disabilities had grown under the previous NDP government to include over 400 women and men. This year this Throne Speech has committed the resources to address 16 years of neglect of these citizens in just one short year.

Furthermore, the Saskatchewan income assistance program, designed to support low-income seniors, was not increased by

the NDP since 1992. And times have changed since 1992. Let's remember.

In 1992 the Internet had never been heard of; Al Gore hadn't invented it yet. Cellphones were still the size of a brick, Johnny Carson had retired, and clear Pepsi just hit the market. I was just out of university, and the member for Saskatoon Massey Place was in grade 9. This was the last time income assistance programs for low-income seniors had been adjusted until now.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech not only addresses debt repayment, infrastructure, tax reductions, but also affordable housing, security for CBOs. It trumpets health care and the environment. Mr. Speaker, this is a thoughtful, well-rounded document. Even senior members of the opposition caucus and the Leader of the Opposition himself were publicly extolling many of the initiatives as good for Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, they were right.

Mr. Speaker, there must be quite a bit of confusion within the NDP ranks, the inevitable discussion of how can we oppose something so positive for our province. It is only out of their duty to the past that they are so negative at this time of positive change. I do get a sense that the opposition to this Throne Speech is mandatory. There might be some fingers crossed behind their backs. Mr. Speaker, I even saw the hint of a wink-wink on a few occasions when the members opposite were truly trying to fight this Throne Speech.

It is evidently good for their constituents. However it seems the only reason they can find to oppose these measures is that they are bad for them politically. This bold vision sets out a new course for our province. In fact they struggled to find a person that these announcements didn't help. They even worked so hard to find someone that had been harmed by our prosperous and growing economy that their member for Regina Rosemont found himself having to quote from a newspaper published several hundred kilometres from his own riding. He was referring to a letter to the editor from a person who was talking about a friend of his who got a note about a rent increase.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is sad. They are so out of touch with their own constituents that they need to find a letter from a guy, who has a friend who got a note a few hundred miles from where this member's constituency is, to pit their image of doom and gloom on this prosperous times for this province.

The opposition is correct, Mr. Speaker. There are challenges with growth. There really is challenges with growth, Mr. Speaker, one of which is the cost of housing. Another is the labour shortage. Another is the increased demand for infrastructure.

So I encourage that member to put down his skim, decaf, no-whip, chai tea latte and stop by Tim Hortons for a double-double and talk with the families who are meeting these challenges head on.

[16:45]

Speaking of good measures, speaking of feel-good measures that are out of touch, just this past Thursday in this very debate, the Leader of the Opposition espoused spending billions of

taxpayers' dollars to end world hunger. While I applaud his well-meaning nature, a walk around his own constituency would show him that there are some priorities close to home. There are in my riding.

It is incumbent upon me to analyze this Throne Speech through the Lloydminster perspective. Given we share a city with Alberta and that citizens of that province have enjoyed a far lower taxation scheme for some time, it is no surprise that the Saskatchewan side of the city has saw more modest growth in comparison to the Alberta side. So, Mr. Speaker, we can understand how this is welcome news for those who live on our side on the border. There will certainly be a celebration when they file their tax returns this year.

I am also excited to note that some families will be in the most competitive tax bracket in Canada with this announcement, as my community is full of growing, young families who we want to continue to make a better life here in Saskatchewan.

I can also inform the Chamber that the renewed commitment to infrastructure will be well received. With the demand of the heavy oil industry and agriculture, our roads and highways are continually in need of repair.

Further it is worth noting that while one-third of Lloydminster's population lives on the Saskatchewan side, the city's entire education and health care needs are administered by our government. With continued population growth, our schools in Lloydminster and the surrounding area are full and more space is needed. Additionally our hospital has grown to serve more people, and there is now over 1,000 births a year in Lloydminster.

It is no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that it is the farmers and ranchers who so often take me aside to tell me how important it is we take debt repayment seriously.

While I am holding the floor speaking about my hometown, I would like to address a comment made last week by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. I proudly rose to read a member's statement trumpeting the recent honour bestowed on Lloydminster as the best city in Canada to start a small business. The member from Nutana tried to call me down with shouts of Alberta — Lloydminster, Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could not understand why the member was shouting, Alberta. Surely she realizes that Lloydminster is a border city. I can only conclude that she has a case of prospera-phobia. Now I'm not a doctor but prospera-phobia is defined in the Canadian medical dictionary as a rare exotic disease — as the fear of prosperity, a fear of those who are successful. It's not surprising the disease is highly contagious on the left; it is often characterized by a clinging to the past and protectionism.

The medical association also warns it is similar to another disease called Alberta-phobia. In hindsight this did not surprise me because those members when they were in government, they ignored Lloydminster. They wrote us off as an Albertan city. That is why the Saskatchewan Party received such strong support in the last election. Our government is proud to champion the needs of our border city. Unlike the NDP and

their federal cousins who want to ban the oil sands development, we applaud the hard-working people of the entire Lloydminster area. In fact actions of the last 11 months have put our city back on the provincial map.

We hosted the first ever Alberta-Saskatchewan joint cabinet meeting which laid the groundwork for a lasting partnership. Lloydminster also hosted a meeting between health ministers which has been very well received and has some concrete results to prove it. Lloydminster women under the NDP's government had to travel to Regina or Saskatoon to get a bone density test. We were sending our oldest, most frail women to those cities to get tests when Lloydminster had their own bone density clinic which we would not fund. As of this meeting, we can now allow our senior citizens to go and get a bone density test in their own city, walking across the street.

Another area in Lloydminster which we have been very proud of is Lakeland College. When that government was in power, Lakeland College was viewed as a gateway for us to lose our young, trained people to Alberta. Why would we fund a college which is just going to lose us our young students? Mr. Speaker, that is not how this government views Lakeland College. Lakeland College is a tool that we will use to make Saskatchewan prosperous. It will be a gateway to bring people into this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about a couple of the initiatives on the we-got-it-done list, not the we-were-going-to-get-to-it list. Now I think that it's important that when you're looking at next year country, it's easy to say we were going to do it because we were going to do it next year. We're now in this year country, Mr. Speaker, and we have a concrete document about what we got done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly happy with the democratic changes that this government is going to make. The fact that we are going to look at electing a senator from Saskatchewan, that is a fundamental right and I am proud that our province is taking a lead on this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think that as I'm talking about democracy, it was interesting the member opposite was speaking about the past provincial election. I think a look in the mirror would do them well. Their party was able to elect a person in every province except one — this one, Mr. Speaker. I think that is telling.

Mr. Speaker, better health care: \$100 million into improving health facilities, 40 new physician undergrad seats, and 60 seats — 60 seats — Mr. Speaker, for residency positions. For too long under that government, Mr. Speaker, we were training doctors and losing them at the last possible moment. We spent all the money to train them, but when they needed to do their residencies, that wasn't available here. They'd move away and they never came back. We have more residency seats, Mr. Speaker, and that is very positive.

We are also making initiatives so that rural doctors have more supports. And coming from a rural area, Mr. Speaker, the doctor shortage is acute, and I am very proud to stand behind a document that points at it as a priority of this government this

year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — It's this year country, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're looking at stronger Crowns. There's going to be a report come out shortly that talks about the success of that government in their out-of-province Crown investments. And I think that that document is going to be a powerful read, and maybe another moment that they could look in the mirror, Mr. Speaker, because I don't think that their record is all that great.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that we've done this year is the pre-kindergarten spaces. We have a few pre-kindergarten spaces in my riding, and they are extremely well received. Any one who is involved with them says that they are going to do very good things for the young people that attend them and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up here fairly quickly, Mr. Speaker. But at the end of my budget speech I spoke about a person I know back home, Orval. And at that time Orval had come into a little bit of good luck. He bought a new truck. His road outside his house got paved. His son moved back from Alberta, if you would remember correctly. And they drilled four more oil wells on his land. Things went very well for Orval in that last time. I would just like to repeat to the Assembly that Orval is still doing fairly well, and that the prosperity of this province is certainly shining on Orval again.

But I would like to point out Karen, a good friend of mine back home. She's got two young girls that are in school. And her husband works in the oil field. Karen, she works out of the house. The tax changes we made are going to have a definite effect in her family, Mr. Speaker, right in her pocket.

Also her girls go to a school which is overcrowded, Mr. Speaker. It's been cramped for a long time. Lloydminster's been a growing city, and up till this point there hasn't been a lot of desire from the former government to do anything about it. This government is going to look at building more capacity in every realm, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and now I'm sure Karen appreciates it — the debt repayment. That is something that her daughters and her granddaughters can look back at, you know. Why is Saskatchewan a rock, a solid foundation for us to build our lives in? You know, a generation ago people were fleeing it like there was a sinking ship. Now — a year from now, 10 years from now, 50 years from now — the foundation that is being laid today with this debt repayment is going to pay off tenfold, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, as we're moving towards 5 o'clock, I would like to say one last comment, that I will certainly be supporting this Throne Speech. It's based on everything that makes Saskatchewan good. It is a bold vision for our province and is making a better life for everyone.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment as it represents a view of the past, a time of out-migration and

decline by an NDP government with . . . So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech, and I will not be supporting the amendment.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Lloydminster has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:56.]

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