



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**  
**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce a group of women and men seated in your gallery that represent the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors. They're here today and yesterday to discuss government affairs and put proposals both to us and to the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the group of women and men that I met with this morning and informally last night were very, very pleased to hear of our great tax cut in the Throne Speech. And also this group was very, very supportive of the Throne Speech. So Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors to their 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, through you and to you I would also like to join with the member opposite in extending a warm welcome on behalf of my colleagues to the realtors that have joined us here today. In particular I see Karen Krawczyk, Al Didur, Cliff Iverson, Bill Madder, many others. I don't see my old broker, Mr. White. I think he's off making a living somewhere.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that groups like the realtors can come to the Legislative Building, put their case for improvements in public policy. This helps us as members to learn more about the issues that affect groups in our province, and therefore we appreciate the presence of the realtors here today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me today to stand and introduce two individuals that are seated within a group of citizens that helped build our province. We have a number of representatives from senior citizens groups. Among them are Lois Borden who's the former chairperson, Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons, and we have Bev MacLeod, executive director of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism. I don't know all of the individuals that accompanied them today, but I want to welcome them all to their Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in with the minister welcoming these guests to our House on behalf of the opposition. They have made a huge contribution to making our province what it is today, and we welcome them to the House. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly, a group of people assembled in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce 44 grade 7 students from Greystone Heights School in Saskatoon Greystone. These bright and invigorated students are accompanied by their teachers, Steve Vincent, Lindsay Olson, and Deanna Fast. I look forward to meeting with them immediately following question period, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming these students and their teachers to your legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome the students from Greystone, but in particular I would like to welcome their teacher, Mr. Steven Vincent, who is my first cousin. So it's a pleasure to have him in the Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the legislature my good friend, Andrew Scheer who's the Member of Parliament for Regina-Qu'Appelle, who defeated NDP [New Democratic Party] stalwart Lorne Nystrom not once but twice, Mr. Speaker — 2004, 2006 — and was recently re-elected with over 50 per cent of the vote in his riding and has done a fantastic job representing his constituents and will continue to for a very long time.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege for me to be able to introduce some special guests that are seated in your gallery this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery is the president of the Canada West Equipment Dealers Association, Duane Smith who is a constituent of mine from Swift Current. In addition to his current duties, he's also a very a successful entrepreneur with Jay Dee Farm Equipment Sales in southwest

Saskatchewan. And before all of that he was president of the comp high school SRC [student representative council] and was ably assisted by a vice-president. And he managed to succeed despite that vice-president's assistance, Mr. Speaker. And so I want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

Joining him is the executive vice-president and basically the executive director of that association, someone who's no stranger to this building or this province — John Schmeiser has joined us as well. We welcome both of them to this Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the petition that I present speaks to the struggles of Saskatchewan families who are unable to find child care 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 . . .

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, 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 2011.

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

Mr. Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of citizens in Moose Jaw; Regina; Maple Creek; Abbey, Saskatchewan; Langenburg; Esterhazy; Melville; Duval; Carnduff; and also more from Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — I'd like to present a petition in support of public safety and security in Saskatchewan:

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, and community agencies, organizations, and educators that interface with

gangs and understand the risks and challenges that gangs offer to our communities.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present petitions today to the Legislative Assembly from the people of the province of Saskatchewan. The petition deals with the cuts to the Station 20 project in Saskatoon which affected some of the most vulnerable citizens of that city. The petition reads:

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

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

The petition is signed by the residents of Saskatoon.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions in support of a reduction in the education portion of property taxes. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop withholding and to provide significant, sustainable, long-term property tax relief to property owners by 2009 through significantly increasing the provincial portion of education funding.

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

These petitions are signed by good folks in Regina.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Education Week: Howard Coad School

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is of course Education Week, a very special week to mark great things our schools are doing throughout this province. One very special school in my constituency is Howard Coad School. Howard Coad celebrated its 50th birthday this past spring and Mrs. Douglas, the principal, proudly remarked that last year on registration, they had about 116 students. This year they have

164 and today, October 29, they have 190 students and they continue to grow, welcoming new students and families.

They have just established a brand new ESL [English as a second language] program this year, currently supporting about 27 students. The arts are very important in this school as they have an outstanding music program led by the very talented Richard Dubé. He engages the students with songs, drums, and flutes. The student leader core has just recruited its membership for the school year, and in the spring the voyageur club will be well under way. All staff members including educational associates are all about the kids. They work very hard, on the clock and off, to provide caring support and direction for our young people, believing very much they are a true community school.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Howard Coad School staff and students on Avenue T — and that's "T" for terrific — and wish them the very best. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Funding for Community-Based Organizations**

**Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my honour today to speak to the recent announcement by the government to increase funding to community-based organizations or CBOs. The 7 per cent increase has been celebrated by groups across the province. Combined with the 2.3 per cent from the spring budget, the total increase represents 9.3 percentage over the year.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it's better to let the words of the CBOs speak for themselves. Quote:

What terrific news! These improvements mean we will be competitive in recruiting staff, and much more able to retain our current and future staff.

Or quote, "In this one initiative, you have rectified the travesty that a succession of NDP governments perpetrated on NGO service agencies throughout Saskatchewan." Or quote, "In the 28 years our Executive Director has been here this is the largest increase ever given to the staff of our agency." And finally quote, "Now we will be in a position to support the staff who do this very demanding and important work for children and families in their critical time of need."

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier stated when making this unprecedented announcement, community-based organizations do the heavy lifting in supporting so very many people across our province. The government is proud to be able to partner with all these important groups and their over 6,000 staff in creating a better life here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Academic Education and Physical Fitness**

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A teacher at City Park Collegiate in Saskatoon, Ally Cameron, has conducted a nationally recognized study in combining academic education with physical fitness training.

Minds in Motion puts six treadmills and six stationary bicycles not in a gymnasium, but in the classroom. Three days of the week a language arts class began with a 20-minute cardio workout at the beginning of a 90-minute double class, and on the other two days math students arrived at the classroom with a math problem on the board to think about as they did strength training.

The questions being studied are whether physical fitness increases academic achievement, and whether improved physical fitness levels will decrease symptoms of attention deficit disorder. Increasing the oxygen consumption of the students as the class commences is an important and innovative part of this study.

Similar research outside of Canada has seen a decrease in absenteeism, improved academic performance, and increased social skills in the participating students. Ally Cameron who undertook this innovative programming, and Grant Roberts of Mecca Fitness in Saskatoon who donated the required exercise equipment, are both to be commended for the contribution to our community and to its students.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **25e anniversaire de la Fédération des aînés fransaskois 25th Anniversary of the Fransaskois Seniors Federation**

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Merci, M. le Président. Je suis heureuse de souligner le jalon important d'un organisme francophone provincial cette année. L'année 2008 marque le 25e anniversaire de la Fédération des aînés fransaskois de la Saskatchewan, la FAF.

Samedi dernier à Saskatoon j'ai eu l'occasion et le privilège d'être invitée et de participer aux célébrations de 25e anniversaire de ce regroupement, en compagnie du secrétaire provinciale, député de la circonscription de Cypress Hills, and du ministre de l'enseignement supérieur de l'emploi and du travail, député de la circonscription de Saskatoon Greystone.

[13:45]

Pendant la soirée nous avons eu la plaisir de faire la connaissance de certains des pionniers qui, grâce à leurs temps et à leurs coeurs, ont réussi à créer et à développer leur fédération dans l'ensemble de la province. Je tiens à remercier plus particulièrement la fondatrice Mme. Jeanne Leblanc de Zenon Park, qui a fait preuve d'une grande détermination dans la poursuite de son rêve même si de nombreuses personnes, à l'époque, pensaient qu'il était impossible.

Aujourd'hui je tiens à souligner leurs efforts auprès de cette

Chambre. Merci.

[Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to acknowledge an important milestone for a Francophone provincial organization. The year 2008 marks the 25th anniversary of the Fédération des aînés fransaskois de la Saskatchewan, the FAF. Last Saturday in Saskatoon I had the opportunity and the privilege to be invited and to attend the celebration of the 25th anniversary of this group in the company of the Provincial Secretary, the member for Cypress Hills, and the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

During the evening, we had the pleasure to be introduced to some of these pioneers who gave their time and their heart to create and to expand their federation throughout the province. I want to particularly acknowledge the founder, Madame Jeanne Leblanc of Zenon Park, who had the determination to follow her dream that many saw as unrealistic at the time.

I would like to acknowledge their efforts today in this Chamber. Thank you.]

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Remembering Founder of the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum**

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A week ago Saskatchewan lost, if not one of its most significant citizens, then certainly its most enthusiastic baseball fan in the province. Dave Shury, whose lifelong passion for baseball led to the creation of the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame in 1983, passed away on Wednesday, October 22. He was 78 years of age and had lived with multiple sclerosis since 1955.

Dave Shury's love of Saskatchewan's proud baseball history, the communities which supported it, and the many talented and dedicated players, coaches, builders, and fans resulted in a commitment to document and celebrate that history, a commitment that has now spanned decades.

The Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in the town of Battleford continues to draw hundreds of people every year to relive the past and bask in the glory of this sport that once dominated small town Saskatchewan. The stories that have been preserved and that are still being unearthed tell a tale of settlement, of love and love lost, of courage, of glory, of comedy, of tragedy, and of community.

Dave Shury's commitment and passion has been shared with all of us. It has and will continue to make us better people and remind us of the simple fact that indeed baseball is life. Dave Shury's life and his passion will be celebrated by his family and friends on Thursday, November 6 in Battleford. Donations in lieu of flowers can be sent to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. His legacy to the people of the province of Saskatchewan past, present, and future must continue to live on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **A Stronger Saskatchewan and a Better Life**

**Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to report to this House the reviews of what our government announced last week for the people of Saskatchewan continue to pour in, and they are extremely positive, Mr. Speaker. The latest to sing the praises, the *Winnipeg Sun*. In a recent column entitled "Saskatchewan shows the way," the author suggests that Manitoba's NDP government would do well to learn from the example set by the Saskatchewan Party government. To quote:

For years we had a stronger economy than Saskatchewan . . . But oh, how times have changed . . . last week Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall's government delivered a speech from the throne that included massive tax reduction commitments that leave Manitoba in the dust.

How things have changed indeed, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan leads a country with the highest year-over-year increases in average earnings, the biggest drop in the number of people collecting employment insurance. Under our government, Saskatchewan is leading the entire country in economic growth. To quote further from the *Winnipeg Sun* column:

The Saskatchewan government has clearly demonstrated that when the economy is strong paying down debt, investing in key priorities and returning money to the individuals in the form of huge tax breaks is the right recipe to ensure that strong economic growth continues.

Mr. Speaker, this means a stronger Saskatchewan and a better life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Before I recognize the next speaker, I know there are some members' statements that tend to draw a lot more attention and intervention. However this Chamber isn't always the easiest place to hear and especially for our guests. So if our members could keep that in mind so the guests can hear what's being stated, it would be greatly appreciated.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

#### **Nashi Fundraiser**

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview, I too was privileged to attend the Nashi harvest brunch at St. Philip School in Saskatoon Nutana on Sunday.

In Saskatoon Nutana there are several constituents who work tirelessly to end the vile global practice of trafficking women and children for the sex trade, most frequently from Ukraine. My friends and constituents, Savelia Curniski, Nashi president and co-founder, and Marianne Hladun and Carol Cisecki are among the many volunteers who are devoted organizers of fundraising events in support of Nashi's initiative to build a safe house and training centre in Ukraine.

These women and others speak at local meetings to raise awareness of this terrible human rights crisis. They educate us about the naïveté of the young people who believe they are crossing borders to find positive economic opportunities, only to be degraded and traded abroad to those willing to harm others for their own insatiable appetites.

I invite my colleagues to inform themselves of this social crisis for women and children living in poverty, especially in Third World countries and in Ukraine. To learn more about Nashi's mission and purpose — along with information about other fundraising events we can attend — to support this important organization, I urge people to go to the Nashi website, [www.nashi.ca](http://www.nashi.ca).

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Public Safety Procedures

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, in late August the Minister of Public Safety announced a policy he assured us would keep the public informed when dangerous criminals were unlawfully at large. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we learned that the minister's new policy was in fact not a policy, but an email from the deputy minister to some senior officials. The minister has no idea whether the information was ever passed on to front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: will he table that email in this legislature today so that Saskatchewan people can judge for themselves whether the minister's new policy should be taken seriously?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for that question. Public safety is one of the most important concepts this party has, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important issue that deserves the attention of this Legislative Assembly. As I've stated publicly and in the House, the public has a right to know if the offenders are unlawfully at large. A new policy was established to make certain this notification took place. It is clear that things didn't work as planned, Mr. Speaker. However we are taking the necessary steps to make certain the policy is fully and effectively implemented.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between drafting up new policy for distribution to employees and getting an official to dash off a quick email so that you have something to say in a media scrum. Mr. Speaker, the minister admitted in his media scrum yesterday that he assumed that his officials had

passed along the email, but he took no personal responsibility to ensure that the information was properly communicated to ministry staff.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety: given his failure to ensure that his so-called new policy was properly communicated, will the minister now admit that he bears some responsibility for the incidents this past week?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Mr. Speaker, public safety is important to this government. To be clear, as minister, I identified the policy that I felt needed to be followed — namely, inform the public immediately when an offender is unlawfully at large. The ministry has responsibility for implementing the policy. This includes communicating the policy and developing the appropriate procedures for use throughout the system.

We are now reviewing the incidents of last week. The review is being conducted by the deputy minister of Justice. Our goal in this review is to find out why things didn't work, so that we can make the necessary changes. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, we learned back in August that senior officials at the Regina Correctional Centre were told in advance of a potential jailbreak, but the minister and his department took no action to prevent it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, management lifted security restrictions that had been placed on the unit a couple of weeks earlier for security reasons.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: given the advance notice, why did he fail to do anything to prevent these escapes?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member opposite for that question. I can answer it today, Mr. Speaker, that when information like that is communicated up the chain of command, it stops with the officials in the head central office. Actions are taken by the director of the institution to make sure that security is implemented. Procedures are followed.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I want to also clarify a point, again recalling from the last two days. When that government was in power for the last 16 years, their policy was to not tell the public at all when someone escaped, Mr. Speaker — not at all.

That particular member from Regina Dewdney was the minister in fact of this ministry at one point. He could have developed the policy. He could have asked his officials to put in the right

procedures, Mr. Speaker. He did nothing, as his caucus colleagues did nothing back then, Mr. Speaker.

We have a policy now. Public safety is the most important thing in this government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, the staff in our correctional centres do an outstanding job of protecting the public. They deserve a minister who will stand by them and give them the tools and the information they need to do their jobs. Mr. Speaker, in fact front-line staff were not informed about a possible escape.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why was the staff at the Regina Correctional Centre kept in the dark about a possible threat to their safety and that of the general public?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite again for those questions, and this last one. We have now initiated an internal review and an external review, Mr. Speaker, investigation. Those two processes will come out with recommendations that we're going to implement and follow, Mr. Speaker.

What's critical here is if the members opposite think that the staff at the correctional centre weren't informed of any possible jailbreak, that will be part of the actual investigation, Mr. Speaker. I am looking forward to that result and the recommendations that come forward. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — There's a pattern forming here, Mr. Speaker. The government fails to share information with front-line corrections workers that they need to do their jobs, and the public servants are getting all the blame for the failure of the minister's new policy to come. But nobody holds the minister himself responsible to the same standard.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why does this government have one standard of accountability for deputy ministers and other public servants, and others for members of its cabinet?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's be clear on this. Public safety is very important to this party and this government. Everything that's happened for the last 16 years

was under their watch, Mr. Speaker — policies they implemented, Mr. Speaker, procedures they took part in devising, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. However, clearly we know there was no policy to inform the public on escapes. So I have to wonder, did they have any policy direction whatsoever from that side, Mr. Speaker, over 16 years?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Clean Coal Project

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's clean coal plan was announced on February 27, 2008. At that time we had many questions about the costs of the clean coal project and we asked them. That was eight months ago and we're still waiting for the answers.

In the government's new spirit of open, accountable, honest answers, to the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]: what will the total cost of the clean coal project be, and what will this cost Saskatchewan's electricity users?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to talk about the clean coal project that we are undertaking in Saskatchewan, using some \$240 million from the federal government for a \$1.4 billion project. It will be leading the way in the country. It'll be leading the way in North America.

I'm happy to advise the hon. member opposite and all members of the House that presently SaskPower is entertaining proposals from companies across North America to come forward with the technology necessary. We've engaged in that. In early December we'll be analyzing those proposals and making decisions going forward on this very important project to greenhouse gas emissions in the province and to the whole province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — All I want to know is how much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on September 29, the Premier was speaking to the Empire Club in Toronto, and this is what he had to say on the topic of clean coal. This is the Premier, and I quote:

We're going to coordinate with Alberta because they're



looking at a few projects as well. We know there's a risk.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of CIC tell us what the risk is that the Premier spoke about? More specifically, is the risk that the ratepayers will be on the hook for all of the cost overruns? How much more will Saskatchewan people be forced to pay?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a leading-edge technology that's taking place right here in Saskatchewan. It's a demonstration project and yes, news flash, there is risk involved in this project, Mr. Speaker. But there is also responsibility that's necessary. Saskatchewan is leading the way, taking this responsibility on. Yes, we're communicating with the province of Alberta and all provinces in the country, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity this summer to attend the Midwest Legislative Conference where people from across midwestern United States are looking to us for leadership on this. That's what they'll get, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're committed to.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, we just want to know how much. The minister is on record as saying that the cost does not matter. When asked on August 8 of this year if there was a point where the clean coal project becomes unaffordable he said, and I quote from the minister, quote "We are committed to the project and we are committed to seeing it through . . ."

To the minister: how much is too much when it comes to cost overruns for the clean coal project? Is there any amount of money that will cause the minister to change this project or will he insist on passing the cost on to Saskatchewan ratepayers no matter what?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, of course there's risks involved in a project like this. We're leading the way; it's a demonstration project that is necessary. Mr. Speaker, members opposite when they were in government, they undertook the carbon capture project in Weyburn, and we commended them for doing that. There was risk involved in doing that. Mr. Speaker, it was the right thing to do. We said it then and we say it today. Right now clean coal technology is something that needs to be done, not only for Saskatchewan, but to be leaders in North America. We're embarking on that. It's a \$1.4 billion project. The federal government is there with

\$240 million . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — There seem to be a few members who seem to be really interested in entering the debate and I would like them to give some consideration to the individual who has been recognized. The member from Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, all we want to know is how much. Well, Mr. Speaker, the full quote, the full quote of the minister of August 8 was as follows, and I quote from the minister:

We are committed to the project, and we are committed to seeing it through, what I do know is that this is a very important project to the federal government.

So what Stephen Harper wants, Stephen Harper gets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if that costs the ratepayers of Saskatchewan billions of dollars, that's just too bad, according to the minister. Well we're with the people of Saskatchewan who say, what Stephen Harper wants, Stephen Harper should pay for.

To the minister: why does he insist on putting the needs of Stephen Harper ahead of the needs of Saskatchewan families? How much more will Saskatchewan pay for his misguided loyalty?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Misguided loyalty, Mr. Speaker? Are members opposite against clean coal? We know where they stand on nuclear energy — well we know where some of them stand — and we know where some prospective leadership candidates stand, but there seems to be all over the spectrum, Mr. Speaker. Where do you stand on clean coal? Yes, it's an important project. It's an important project to this Premier. It's an important project to this government. It's an important project to the residents of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, yes, it is an important project to the Prime Minister of Canada and to the President of the United States, going forward.

We're leading the way. We're breaking new ground here. There's risk involved, Mr. Speaker, and we're happy to be taking on that responsibility with this new government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, we want to know how much. Yesterday the minister said SaskPower was looking for \$5 billion for future infrastructure needs. He has said before, in this very Chamber, SaskPower will no longer build, own, and operate electrical generation for SaskPower. So what does he

need \$5 billion for now?

To the minister: is that the new price of the clean coal project, or does it include the cost of building new power lines for your buddies at Bruce Power?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect, here is some numbers for the member opposite. The clean coal project is budgeted at \$1.4 billion. Here's some additional numbers, Mr. Speaker. Over the next 12 years, we will need 2000 additional megawatts because we have the strongest economy in North America going forward.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — I'll give the member opposite some additional numbers. SaskPower in the past has invested 4 to \$500 million in capital expenditures. That hasn't been enough. We have an infrastructure deficit in SaskPower going forward. We're going to be needing to spend upwards of 500 to \$1 billion a year to ensure that we have safe, reliable electricity in this province. That's the responsible thing to do; that's what this government will be doing. And I hope those numbers have satisfied the member opposite.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Management of Crown Corporations

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, when exactly did the Minister of CIC lose faith in the professional managers who've run Saskatchewan's Crown corporations?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, I've said before and I say again, Saskatchewan's Crown corporations are operated in a professional manner by professional employees who have run the corporations in a positive respect.

We've gone beyond that; we've put in boards in place to oversee Crown corporations. We've asked people that are some of the most successful business people in Saskatchewan to sit on those boards, to help with that guidance. And the response that we've been getting back from senior management of the Crown corporations is that they appreciate that direction and that will indeed strengthen the Crown corporations going forward. And that is the commitment of this government, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's disregard for these professionals was evident yesterday. When asked directly if the minister had consulted with Crown presidents and CFOs [chief financial officer] on whether his changes would help or hinder the Crowns, he refused to answer directly, instead talking about what he directed the Crown heads to do.

Mr. Speaker, when did the minister decide that he knew more than the talented men and women who run our Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, for the information of the member opposite, I consult with those individuals on a daily basis on a wide range of topics. The Crown corporations in this province have \$9 billion of economic activity. I have direct responsibility for most of them and I continue to consult with them on a daily basis.

In reference to that specific question, I consulted with my deputy, Mr. Ron Styles, and he was able to articulate the policy to all of the Crown heads. And I can tell you that there is much support amongst the Crown heads for a Saskatchewan-first policy because there is much work to do here in Saskatchewan. Whether it's SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SaskPower, the work to be done is here in Saskatchewan and that's what they're doing today in their offices.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the minister is imposing his agenda on the Crown corporations. And we'll remember that last April that minister said, and I quote, "Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear for the members opposite that yes, we will impose our views on the Crown corporations."

Well now since the minister's now calling the shots, to the minister: exactly how many years experience does he have at the helm of a utility company in this country?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 2007 we were given a great responsibility by the people of Saskatchewan to ensure that the Crown corporations are run in an efficient manner and that utilities are provided to the people of Saskatchewan at the lowest possible cost when they are run in an efficient manner. And that's the guidance that we've been given; that's the guidance that I've been giving to the Crown corporations; that's the responsibility that I've accepted; that's

the job that I'm doing, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the minister is disregarding the advice of Crown management and charting his own direction. Mr. Speaker, we've already begun to see the outflow of talented experts as a result of what that minister has said.

To the minister: is Jon Schubert's departure from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] in two days related to that minister's decision to stifle Crown corporations in the province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, as I've said earlier in the House, we have some fantastic, talented people that run our Crown corporations at the chief executive officer level and at the vice-president level and at every level within those Crown corporations.

What has happened here is that the talent of Mr. Jon Schubert has been recognized. It's recognized outside Saskatchewan's borders, but it's recognized by this government and inside Saskatchewan as well. He's a talented individual who has run SGI in an efficient manner. He has had the full support of this government and full support of this minister. And he continues to have our full support and good wishes as he moves on to further his career, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well that's an interesting observation, given that the minister and Mr. Schubert had a difference of opinion at a press conference a few months ago.

We'll know that Mr. Schubert's departure after 27 years of service is a great loss. Mr. Schubert is an expert in the insurance industry. The minister has said, and I quote, on May 5 he says, "We'll run Crown corporations like a business."

To the minister: what other successful businesses does he know of that ignores the advice of the people who run those companies?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, in this particular reference, Jon Schubert has provided excellent advice to this

government over the first 11 months in operation. I have been happy to take his advice. I am happy to see the way that he has run the Crown corporation over the last 11 months.

I would like the hon. member opposite — and I know members of the media have spoken to Mr. Schubert directly — if you don't have faith in what I'm saying in the House today, you can contact Mr. Schubert and ask for his reasons why he's moving to British Columbia to be the head of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. He's done a great job here. I wish him well going forward.

Yes, we have other talented people that we will bring into Saskatchewan to ensure that this corporation is run in an efficient manner. And that's the job that we're doing. That's the job that we've been tasked to do, and we'll do it with the best possible people we can. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, we have a number of talented people that are in charge of our Crown corporations. And the previous administration worked extremely hard to have experts in their field manage and run those Crown corporations.

Can that minister today assure this House and the people of Saskatchewan that the person that is appointed to head up SGI will in fact have expertise in the area of insurance?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The person that will be chosen will have the credentials to run the corporation in an efficient manner.

I know that she's trying to get at a political inference here. I don't know if that person's going to be an NDP supporter or a Liberal supporter or a Conservative supporter or a Saskatchewan Party supporter. That is immaterial. That person will have the . . . We'll conduct a national search. Right now Mr. Earl Cameron, a 35-year veteran of SGI, is the interim operator. And I would remind members opposite that people do leave the province from time to time to explore other opportunities. Mr. Lingenfelter comes to mind, and others.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we welcome them when they leave, but we welcome them when they come back. And we'll be looking forward to that individual coming back to make his contribution in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say this. The minister has indicated clearly that he is breaking his own commitment to run Crowns like a business by ignoring the advice of his own Crown managers and by openly imposing his views on the Crowns. At the same time, he refuses to guarantee that his plans will not harm the bottom line of those Crowns.

To the minister: will he finally admit that his plan has nothing to do with sound business management, nothing to do with ensuring Saskatchewan people continue to benefit from a strong Crown sector, and everything to do with his decision and his party's decision to undermine those Crown corporations?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, why all the doom and gloom from the members opposite, especially from that member? We had a great day in Saskatchewan yesterday. We finally turned the corner with the Crown corporations — no more bleeding red ink. Saskatchewan . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Today again it's been reaffirmed we have the strongest economy in North America, the largest increase in wages — year over year, 5 per cent. Saskatchewan is leading the way. Mr. Speaker, 10 per cent reduction in EI [employment insurance] recipients in Saskatchewan this year. That's good news for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

One year ago, the NDP opposite was running around during the election talking about the big bad wolf and using some really suspect commercials, Mr. Speaker. That was so last year, Mr. Speaker. This year, we're moving forward. The Crown corporations are strengthened. The province is leading North America. Mr. Speaker, there's more to come and it's all positive for Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Members will come to order.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

#### Enhanced Income Plan for Seniors

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this summer the Saskatchewan Party government asked the people of Saskatchewan what we should do with our surplus revenue, and we listened.

One of the suggestions we heard is that we must care for those who helped build our great province. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the House about a very important and positive enhancement to the support program for

Saskatchewan's seniors. We are making a \$19.5 million commitment to assist approximately 20,000 low-income seniors in our province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — To support our seniors, our government is announcing that the maximum benefit for a senior receiving the seniors' income plan, formerly called the Saskatchewan Income Plan, will increase by 1,200 per year to a maximum annual benefit of \$2,280.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — For a two-pensioner household, the new maximum benefit will be \$1,860 per member. Those changes, Mr. Speaker, more than double the previous level of benefits.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that there has been no adjustment to this benefit program since 1992, and as a result, 10,000 fewer seniors currently receive this benefit. That is until today, Mr. Speaker. With these new changes, an additional 10,000 seniors will now be eligible to receive the supplement, bringing the number of seniors benefiting under this program back to the 1992 levels.

Not only did the lack of attention to this benefit result in so many fewer seniors receiving the benefit, but with the inflation of nearly 40 per cent over that same period, Mr. Speaker, low-income seniors were forced to spend their retirement savings at a higher rate.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that seniors receiving the seniors' income plan also receive additional health benefits. As the number of those who qualified for the program was reduced, those same seniors lost these health benefits, which included chiropractic services, eye exams, and a home care subsidy.

My colleague, the Minister of Health, was pleased to join in making these changes, and as a result, 10,000 additional Saskatchewan seniors will now qualify for these additional health benefits.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Eligibility for the seniors' income plan is automatically determined based on your income tax return, so there's no need for our seniors to apply. These changes are to come into effect January 2009. And seniors will see the increased payment or perhaps even their first payment under the program by January 28, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, these are the people that built this province, often in tougher economic times and without the benefit of many of the pension plans and financial planning tools that are available today. Our government is committed to ensuring that everyone benefits from the prosperity of our province. This announcement will help create a better life for 20,000 Saskatchewan seniors.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, how appropriate that they should benefit through the strength of the great province that they helped create. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the minister for sharing her statement prior to the sitting of the House today. And I too join in saying this is a good news announcement. This is hopeful for seniors. But I do want to say some remarks. And so I appreciate . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member from Saskatoon Centre has the floor.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I do appreciate the floor on this occasion. Of course there is a historic surplus in this province in this year, and this is a very good thing to be doing. And in fact it was on April 17, if the minister recalls, I asked about this in committee meetings. Now the reason I asked about this, I asked about why was that budget line cut.

There was a cut in that Saskatchewan Income Plan last year by this government. Of course they were saying fewer, fewer recipients only needed a less amount of money. So before they clap too, too much and congratulate themselves too much, this is an important thing to remember.

I also have to remark, Mr. Speaker, on the name change. This is the third name change in less than a week on this program. I hope the minister gets it straight when she gets out there.

I do have three concerns. Of course seniors are living in challenging times. They are living in challenging times because of issues like property taxes that have not been yet addressed by this government. They need to address — as seniors do want to stay in their homes — but they're not addressing an issue that's very important for seniors.

The other issue that they have not addressed, and I hope this minister addresses this, is about indexing this. Is she willing to index this increase so we don't get into this political game again? The federal government has indexed it so it goes up every year to the costs of living.

But the third point, and this is one that I will make sure I ask questions because this is a question I know several thousand seniors will be asking this February. If you're living in a Saskatchewan housing authority house or apartment, this will be clawed back because we know the amount of rent that you pay is based on your income.

So will that minister guarantee today that she will make sure that seniors will not lose this benefit through the clawback in their rents in her housing?

Mr. Speaker, this is very, very important. Because when she talks about this as 19.6 million, I'm wondering how much will

she get back through her rent. Mr. Speaker, when she talks about the increase that seniors will be getting, they will be losing several hundred dollars in their rents if they live in a Saskatchewan housing authority apartment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm anxious to see the details. This is very hopeful, but I'm not sure it's completely well thought out yet. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 48 — *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008*

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 48, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 48, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### Bill No. 49 — *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008*

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Act, 2008* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 50 — *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 50, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 50, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 51 — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2008***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 51, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 51, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order.

**The Speaker:** — What is the member's point of order?

**POINT OF ORDER**

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday there were some comments made in the Chamber that I did not hear at the time they were made. Overnight I had an opportunity to review *Hansard*, and I wish to bring to your attention these comments, Mr. Speaker, and ask that the member who spoke

them withdraw those remarks.

The remarks come from the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing yesterday afternoon, Mr. Speaker. They appear on page 1421 of *Hansard*. The quote that I refer to, the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing said:

Last week in the House, the member from Regina Rosemont read some quotes from the August 29 *Leader-Post*. I will take a moment now to address those false accusations.

And, Mr. Speaker, in case there's some discrepancy and thought as to whether or not this comes from the media or the member of Regina Rosemont, later on that same page the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing says, "So clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont should get his facts straight before making baseless . . . [allegations]."

Mr. Speaker, in Beauchesne's both the following statements are considered unparliamentary: false statements and deliberate falsehoods. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. To say that the member from Regina Rosemont was making false accusations is tantamount to claiming that he is making false statements or deliberate falsehoods. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, since the language is clear, it's reported in *Hansard*, I ask that you call upon the minister to withdraw his remarks and apologize to the member of Regina Rosemont and this House for making those statements.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw those comments, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I thank the member for apologizing to the House.

Why is the member on his feet? I recognize the Government House Leader.

[14:30]

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a point of order as well.

**The Speaker:** — The member may state his point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the member from Regina Northeast made a comment in his remarks that suggested this government is engaged in violence against seniors and that our government would engage in elder abuse. On page 1413 of yesterday's *Hansard*, the member said and I quote:

. . . how did this government treat them? With the back of their hand, that's how they're being treated.

Mr. Speaker, the members of this side of the House find these remarks offensive. Members on this side take elder abuse very

seriously as we do any type of violent behaviour. We find it offensive that an hon. member would make these kinds of comments, and it's certainly been a long-standing tradition in this House that all people are treated with integrity and respect.

I think these remarks violate that long held principle, and I'd ask the member to unconditionally stand, withdraw those remarks, and apologize.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw those remarks, and I apologize to all the members in the House if I offended anybody through my speech. It was not intended to do so. I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would first of all like to thank the two House leaders for bringing forward the points of order and in the way you've done it. And as well, to say thank you to the two members for responding to the points of order. Greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek, the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate and support the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Thunder Creek are very pleased with the contents of this Speech from the Throne. Saskatchewan's greatest strength is our people, Mr. Speaker. They always have been. The same can be said for the people in Thunder Creek. They are a great strength of this province. They're the salt of the earth.

As well people in our business community are very pleased with the Speech from the Throne, and people across this province have responded very favourably, Mr. Speaker. Initiatives in the speech make us more competitive and will attract many more people to the province. Mr. Speaker, innovation is a fundamental building block of our economy and one of our core economic sectors.

This is why we are now busy building the twin sister of Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, Innovation Saskatchewan. In this session of the legislature, I will have the pleasure of introducing an Act to establish Innovation Saskatchewan as a special operating agency. Our government

wants Saskatchewan to be at the very forefront of research and innovation. The establishment of Innovation Saskatchewan will be the next step towards achieving this goal.

Innovation Saskatchewan will be an agency that will be pivotal to the continued creation of a knowledge economy by focusing and supporting research initiatives that will attract interest from around the world. Innovation Saskatchewan will assist in coordinating, focusing, and supporting research activities in our province, Mr. Speaker. It will place a special emphasis on facilitating the commercialization of innovation and technology. The goal of Innovation Saskatchewan will be to enhance our competitiveness and productivity, which will ensure growth and prosperity now and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, a Saskatchewan where innovation flourishes will be a stronger Saskatchewan. And this will allow us to build a better life, not just for the people of our province, but also for Canada and the world.

Mr. Speaker, through the formation of new partnerships, Saskatchewan will begin to explore the advantages and innovations that can come from the value-added processing of this province's uranium resource. A few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I, along with the Minister of Crown Corporations, had the pleasure of announcing the establishment of a new 12-person Uranium Development Partnership. This partnership will advise the Government of Saskatchewan on the further development of our vast uranium resources.

As the world moves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, many countries, including Canada, are looking to nuclear power as a source of clean, reliable energy. The expansion of the nuclear industry around the world offers an opportunity for Saskatchewan to add value to our raw uranium resources, grow our economy, create new jobs, contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Led by Dr. Richard Florizone, Mr. Speaker, a nuclear physicist and vice-president of finance at the University of Saskatchewan, the mandate of the Uranium Development Partnership is to identify, evaluate, and make recommendations on Saskatchewan-based, value-added opportunities in the uranium industry. The partnership includes representatives from the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, urban and rural municipalities, business, labour, First Nations, the environmental community, and Canada's nuclear industry.

The partnership will provide a final report to government by March 31, 2009. Also, Mr. Speaker, in the near future we will be receiving the findings of a feasibility study into nuclear power from Bruce Power, a leading company in nuclear energy production.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that Enterprise Saskatchewan has been established and has been functioning very effectively over the past number of months. It's a special operating agency, Mr. Speaker, led by key economic development stakeholders to coordinate the province's growth agenda — its bold and innovative approach to creating lasting and permanent economic growth like the kind we are currently seeing here in Saskatchewan.

The priorities of Enterprise Saskatchewan are to coordinate and

develop programs and policies to encourage the growth and expansion of our economy. In this regard, the Premier has requested that Enterprise Saskatchewan provide advice to the government about future priorities in terms of tax competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, our campaign platform from a year ago requires that a priority be placed on the long-term solution we promised to education property tax burdens. However personal income tax rates, corporate tax rates, and small-business tax rates are also important factors in any growth agenda. We will be, Mr. Speaker, conducting a complete review of barriers to economic growth presented by the taxes in this province as they exist at their current levels.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has also requested that Enterprise Saskatchewan work with the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, or STEP, to develop a strategy to diversify our export markets and capitalize on the global demand for Saskatchewan resources and products. Saskatchewan is relatively less dependent on the United States market for our exports compared to other provinces. But diversifying our trade interests is key, given emerging markets and market opportunities, particularly in Asia, Mr. Speaker. In a period of growing economic uncertainty centred in the United States, it is prudent that we capitalize on the opportunity to increase exports to new and emerging markets and diversify our trade relationships.

Mr. Speaker, we have always known that greater things were ahead for this province through our innovation, vision, and hard work. Recent economic growth figures put us in this province in the economic driver's seat in Canada's new West and indeed the entire nation.

In a recent report, Statistics Canada released its data on the growth in value of our international exports as of August 2008. They were worth \$3.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, making the growth in our exports, over the preceding 12 months, 104 per cent. That was more than 10 times the national average, Mr. Speaker, and by far and away the best record in Canada. This, this, Mr. Speaker, is the Saskatchewan of today.

This is a Saskatchewan that has what the world needs. We're the world's largest producers of uranium and potash. We ship more oil to the United States than does the nation of Kuwait. And we have seen the petroleum industry invest more than \$1 billion and counting in Crown land rights this year alone.

This is a Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, built upon trade — both domestic and international. The growth in our international exports is phenomenal. We possess half of Canada's arable acres of farm land and have a world-class ag-bio industry to go with them. This is a Saskatchewan with the top two fastest growing cities in the country — Saskatoon and Regina — and that's according to the economic rankings from the Conference Board of Canada. Mr. Speaker, a recent report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business rated more than 100 cities on business friendliness. Saskatchewan placed four cities in the top 10 as being the most business friendly. Lloydminster placed first, Saskatoon fifth, Moose Jaw eighth, and Regina ninth.

As a result of our province's new prosperity, Mr. Speaker, our

Premier has made a very significant announcement last week. He announced the largest amount of debt reduction in Saskatchewan's history. In less than a year, our province's debt has been reduced from \$6.8 billion to 4.2 billion — almost, almost, Mr. Speaker, a 40 per cent decrease.

The Premier also announced the largest investment in infrastructure in our history at \$1.5 billion for the next fiscal year. This is a \$500 million increase from this fiscal year's record infrastructure investment. Mr. Speaker, he also announced the largest income tax reduction in Saskatchewan's history, under which 80,000 people will be removed from provincial income tax roles. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this announcement is retroactive to January 1, 2008. Mr. Speaker, the Premier also announced the fiscal insurance policy that will maintain a \$1.9 billion real cash balance in the Growth and Financial Security Fund.

The message to everyone, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan is open for business.

This is an exciting time of change for Saskatchewan people. Our population is growing. There are more people working in Saskatchewan than ever before. We lead the nation in economic growth, and forecasters believe we will continue to lead the country in economic growth next year. Though hard work, commitment, and dedication, we will deliver on our plan for building a stronger Saskatchewan and a better life for all people in this great province.

But, Mr. Speaker, a stronger economy is not the only thrust of this government. Today the Minister of Social Services announced a program that will more than double the seniors' income plan or SIP [Saskatchewan Income Plan] benefit from \$90 to \$190 per month for single seniors and from seventy-two fifty to \$155 each per month for couples.

This, Mr. Speaker, alarmingly is the first increase in the SIP benefit since 1992. Prior to this change, \$15,953.64 was the maximum increase for a single senior to be eligible to receive benefits. The new maximum is raised, Mr. Speaker, to \$18,593.64 for a couple. And the previous maximum was 25,964.64 for singles, and the new maximum, Mr. Speaker, is \$30,188.64. As a result of this new \$19.5 million investment, the number of Saskatchewan seniors eligible for SIP will double from about 10,000 to 20,000.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, our Health minister has announced an addition to the financial benefits. Seniors eligible for SIP will continue to receive the following health care services: a free eye examination every year, free chiropractic services without charge, reduced deductible on prescription drug plan, home care subsidy, exemption from many of the charges under the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program, and the loan of some low-cost devices through the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, lower cost private and dental services, an additional supplementary health benefits for SIP recipients living in special care homes.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of government that we are in Saskatchewan now, this in contrast, Mr. Speaker, to those members opposite and the government that they ran before the last election.



Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this Hon. Assembly, the member from Regina Northeast said these words, and I quote from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. He said, referring to our government, Mr. Speaker, he said, “They handed us a province of prosperity and how did this . . .”

He’s referring to seniors in this quote.

They handed us a province of prosperity. And how did this government treat them [he said]? With the back of their hand, that’s how they’re being treated. And that’s shameful, Mr. Speaker, shameful.

[14:45]

That’s what he said, Mr. Speaker. I’ll tell you, Mr. Speaker, what I think is shameful. I think it’s shameful that in 16 years this bunch opposite didn’t have the decency, didn’t have the decency to raise the SIP benefits for the last 15 of those 16 years. That, Mr. Speaker, is shameful. And for that member to stand and call our government shameful, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I am reminded of the fact that members are not to comment on Speaker’s rulings or any rulings in the Assembly, and I would ask members to be mindful of the rules and procedures of the Assembly. Member from Thunder Creek.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to supporting this Speech from the Throne, and I will not be supporting the politically based amendment to it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak on this important occasion to reply to the Throne Speech 2008.

I also want to take a moment and join in the welcomes and best wishes to our newest MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], the member for Cumberland. I have every confidence that he will do an outstanding job representing the good folks of the North. He has a lot of experience and good common sense that will serve this House well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I represent several diverse communities in Saskatoon Centre — the downtown area, parts of Mount Royal, Westmount, Riversdale, Pleasant Hill, and of course my home neighbourhood, Caswell. In fact I believe we are all about community — healthy, vibrant, growing, safe, fun, nurturing, and inclusive places to raise our families and to work.

Of course there’s been many successes in my riding, and I think of the River Landing as a wonderful example and the role that the provincial government had in that through the UDA [urban development agreement], Persephone, the AKA art gallery, the Open Door Society. But of course there’s some extreme disappointments. Station 20 West still hangs a pall over the neighbourhood. And there are some current challenges. We look forward to the St. Mary project being completed. That’s a

very important one, and we look forward to that.

But I do have to raise the concern about what many describe as a food desert in the centre of Saskatoon. Ironically this morning as some of you were listening to the radio, you would have heard somebody talk from the neighbourhood about the two liquor stores that the government has, but will not take part in any food initiatives, any retail food initiatives in the core communities. In my own neighbourhood, Mayfair Pool is one, and it really demonstrates how important infrastructure is.

And of course we read last week about Saskatoon and how it may be operating in a deficit soon, and they need help. This province is sitting on historic surpluses, and they need to deliver on the municipal revenue sharing. This is an important issue when we talk to people.

But, Mr. Speaker, the number one issue this winter around the kitchen tables in Saskatoon Centre will be affordability. I’m very concerned about how quickly the new government and this Premier has grown out of touch with the cost of living facing so many in Saskatchewan. Of course the news last week was encouraging. The news last couple of weeks was encouraging. The income tax cuts and the application of part of the surplus by the provincial debt — that’s very important. That’s good news. But of course this is a continuation of the strategies of the NDP in 2000 and years since.

But I can point to a number of areas which affordability is affecting the quality of life for everyone, including food, fuel prices, utility rates, local taxes, and housing costs. They’re all increasing, yet the Sask Party continues to provide very little focused relief to many vulnerable families. We’ve seen very little property tax relief, no commitment to the lowest cost bundle, and a flip-flop on a promise to lower the taxes on gas. And in fact they made this promise to reduce the tax on gas when they were in opposition. In fact last week the Premier acknowledged that this promise was, and I quote, a “gimmicky” program.

Now we can only ask what others, what other promises and commitments were only a gimmick to get elected. Was his pledge for permanent property tax relief a gimmick? Was his pledge to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 a gimmick? And for the member from Silver Springs who talked an awful lot about indexing the minimum wage, was that a gimmick?

Now I have to quote the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I’m not used to quoting them, but in a recent news release they said, and I quote:

This about-face on gas taxes reminds us of Agriculture Minister Bob Bjornrud’s recent confession. “In opposition, I could just say about anything I wanted and I did on a lot of occasions for 12 years.” Lots of opposition thunder, [but] no government rain.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is clearly going to be a topic around my kitchen tables in my riding this winter and one this government seems to be turning a deaf ear to. Shame, shame.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the critic for Social Services I want to

spend some time now reviewing the vision or lack thereof of the Ministry of Social Services. Clearly the government under the leadership of this Premier is failing here, after a very rough start last year by not recognizing the critical issues of those living with disabilities in last year's Throne Speech, and since careening through the spring budget by rewriting sections of it regarding the modernization fiasco — and I do have to ask what's happening with that — and a last-minute housing task force.

And then this summer was marked by the demise of a very important housing program, NHOP [neighbourhood home ownership program], running out of cash in less than six months and absolutely no new housing starts out of this government — and in fact a cut of some \$5 million in the housing budget, something that is not lost on our post-secondary students as they wonder what do they have to do to get the attention of this government. And now we hear in the news over the last couple of weeks issues being raised about the safety of children in foster care by her own employees.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this government with a historic surplus now had an opportunity to do really something very momentous, but they chose not to. So many are talking in Canada and this province — in fact around the world — about the elimination of poverty. This is a real challenge for our country and our province and I challenge this government to make real history and join in and make poverty history.

I want to focus my remarks on the lost opportunity. In fact many will look back at this time when the Premier was talking about, and I quote, "a better life." But he only meant that for a few, not everyone. Well everyone is talking about this and asking, what is this government's plan to eliminate poverty? Sadly there is no plan and with the historic resources we have in this province, the opportunity to really make history was lost.

Now the member from Regina Northeast quoted, and I want to quote this news article that came out on Monday from Ottawa. It was about a poll. It says, "Majority of Canadians want gov't action, study finds." And I quote:

The vast majority of Canadians want the federal and provincial governments to lead a war on poverty . . .

It goes on to say:

Ninety per cent said they would be proud if their premier took the lead in reducing poverty in their province, it noted, adding that 88 per cent also said they want Canada to be a leader in poverty reduction, and 77 per cent said that a recession is all the more reason to act now.

Well the National Council of Welfare says, and I quote:

A renewed response to poverty in Canada must come from not just feelings of charity towards "the poor." It must also come from a strong commitment to an equitable and just society, and must address the underlying reasons why poverty exists in the first place.

The National Council of Welfare, which advises the federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, talk

about a four-cornerstone approach to eliminate poverty, and I challenge this government to think about this.

The first thing they talk about is a long-term vision with measurable targets and timelines. The second is a plan of action and budget. Third is a government accountability, and fourth — and I think this is a very important one — a set of agreed poverty indicators that will be used to plan, monitor, and assess progress in this very important issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the government to make the commitment to end poverty now and work to make this a reality.

Mr. Speaker, the speech talks a great line about children and those at risk, but here we have a minister being allowed to break a key promise, being allowed to break a key promise of this government to reconvene the Special Committee To Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade. This is very, very important. And of course you've all seen the letters, and the letter is very public, about the mandate each minister is required to do. So we do have that in front of us. But, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this report — and I know many people in this House were part of that — it really is a time to take a look at it.

Mr. Speaker, there's two words not in this report that I think are very, very important. Now I wonder if people could take a guess what those two words are. Mr. Speaker, the first word that's not in this report is gangs. This report does not mention gangs. This is really amazing — nine years ago, what's happening with that?

Mr. Speaker, the second word — and the Premier would be very interested in this because I know last week in his backyard in Swift Current there were examples of this very thing — the other word that's not mentioned in this report is the Internet. The Internet is not mentioned in this report, but we know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And it needs work. This report needs work, so reconvene the committee. It needs work. Clearly it's time to keep that promise. Don't break that promise.

As well, Mr. Speaker, this summer in June the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate called for the adoption of child-centred principles by this government. In fact we heard a former member of that caucus stand in the House a couple of years ago, talk about the principles, and it seemed like they were on the verge of endorsing that. But clearly the minister is backing away. She said this summer that she is going to hire a senior official. We're looking forward to hearing what the senior official will do. And I've asked questions — in fact today, written questions — to find out if she's actually making any progress on this.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we were delighted to hear last week that the announcements made by the ministry around those living with disabilities are coming forward. I was encouraged that now the minister's actually paying attention to this issue. I think the work in terms of group homes and the income security for those living with disabilities is a very important issue. We do not want to see her falter. We want to make sure this is well thought out, all the angles are covered off on this, and we look forward to seeing more about this. But I know many of us are concerned

about the lack of details.

Mr. Speaker, as well this fall saw a series of CBO summits were held across the province. That was a very important occasion, a very good occasion for people to get together. I do have to say the process was good, but it's creating some concerns about, will this continue on? Will this continue on? The CBO sector, I met with some of the folks yesterday who were very concerned that this was just yet one more gimmick in the government's many list of gimmicks, and do they really have the will to make this happen?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we heard today . . . And it was another very hopeful announcement in terms of the Saskatchewan Income Plan, then it became the Saskatchewan assistance income plan, and now it's the seniors' income plan. I'm very hopeful that this will be well received by seniors, but I know that there are some concerns. And I would urge this government to consider indexing it like their federal counterparts so it is not a political issue — that seniors will know that every year that it will go up with the cost of living.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said in my remarks earlier, I do have some concerns — very much, very deep concerns about what will happen in January with the rents of many seniors, in fact thousands of seniors, who live in Saskatchewan housing authority units. And will they see their rents go up accordingly? And it should be no surprise to the folks over on the other side. In fact all of us will be receiving phone calls from seniors about drastic rent increases in February. So I would ask them today to make sure that doesn't happen because I can see that train coming down the tracks.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago there was the release of the 2008 Saskatoon homeless count. And this was the count of the folks who had, by no choice of their own, been forced out of homes and they were out on the streets or in emergency shelters. And this was taken on May 22, 2008. Very interesting results here, Mr. Speaker. They found that there was about 260 people in Saskatoon — 228 adults and 32 children — who were counted as being homeless. What I found most amazing though and shameful was the fact that 70 per cent, nearly 70 per cent of the people interviewed in shelters were actually employed. And so here's a very drastic example of people who cannot afford housing on their own. And this really underlines the issues around housing.

[15:00]

And we know, particularly this week as we come close to the end of the month, many are going to be faced with that challenge of paying rent or being evicted or the challenges of paying the bills. And so we worry about this. We worry as the second winter of this government comes forward that what are the families going to do? We know for example Alberta is divvying up \$254 million for affordable housing, and Calgary alone will get 48 million. But what did we see in this past budget? It was the cut of \$5 million. So with historic surpluses, why didn't they act this fall? This is truly tragic.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a lot of work done on this. And as official opposition, we saw that there was very sound strategies right across Canada. And we talked about the

Federation of Canadian Municipalities sustaining the momentum, recommendations for a national action plan on housing and homelessness that called on three levels of government as partners to come forward — both the provincial, federal, and the municipal levels of government — to come together and make housing a priority.

We know, we know — and I'm looking forward to this year's budget — that the federal government's commitment to homelessness ends on March 31. Will this government pick up the slack, or will there be no resources for those who are forced to live on the streets? Now we don't want to see that happening at the end of winter. Here's the second winter of the Sask Party government coming forward. We want to see action today.

And I've outlined some of the fiascos that have happened: the NHOP program this summer — students are wondering what do they have to do to get more housing in Saskatoon and Regina, right across the province — and of course this homelessness count.

Well, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down, there's two issues I do want to talk about, issues that are very near to my heart and people that are talking about it across the street. I do have some concerns.

The environment. The comments that were made about environment were in fact very weak in the Throne Speech. And I do worry very much about the weakening commitment regarding reducing greenhouse emission targets. This is worrisome. The whole concern about water and their view on water . . . And of course I am very concerned that in the Throne Speech there was not at all a mention about recycling.

Last night we were at the SARCAN reception. But in the Throne Speech, not a word about recycling. And I know when we travel about — whether it's Humboldt or Melfort, North Battleford, Melville — recycling is a priority. And I can't imagine why did it not make it into the Throne Speech.

And I do have to say that I share the concerns from my colleague from Prince Albert regarding the panel on nuclear energy. This panel I think . . . I think we have to do a lot of good work in this area, but clearly this panel, the way it is made up is not very balanced at all. And with the three million fund to minister, this seems like . . . And he called it a \$3 million rubber stamp, and I have to tell you, I agree. I wonder about the fullness of the discussion in allaying the concerns of citizens across this province. Will they have confidence in this panel? I have some real concerns.

Three points about labour before I sit down. One, I am so glad to see WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] is taking a Mission: Zero, but I hope that doesn't mean a Mission: Zero reducing statistics. We want to see reduction in injuries. This is very, very important.

I also want to make sure when they talk about youth in the workforce, that they make sure youth are in schools and doing the things they should be doing in terms of education and training.

And I am concerned about what's happening with minimum

wage. I have not heard anything about that, and the noise from over there is deafening on this. There's just absolutely no talk about indexing. They were big on indexing when they were in opposition, here they have something they can do for seniors and those working for minimum wage.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to, before I sit down, say of course this is Education Week. And I want to wish the students and staff in my schools the very best and right across this province. There are many challenges facing students and families and teachers, and we want to make sure that this government gives them all the support that they need.

Mr. Speaker, hopes are being nurtured here with historic surpluses. This government has put forward some very bold and, I think, encouraging ideas, but I want to make sure that they don't dash them on the details. Details are very important. Be very clear about that.

In my riding, a lot of people have heard the talk about next year country, and they're saying next year country should be this year, but you know some are saying they're worried that it's actually last year.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I say, I see too many questions are being raised by this Throne Speech, not enough details and so just a don't-mess-it-up approach. And so I will be voting for the amendment, and I will be voting against the main motion. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise and speak in favour of the Speech from the Throne. We've entered a new mindset in Saskatchewan, a new understanding, and a new direction in this province. These are exciting times and I'm proud to stand here, with my elected colleagues in government, to support the Speech from the Throne.

I'd also like to express my gratitude to the people of Moose Jaw who have shown continued support and encouragement to me and to this government. I'd also like to recognize my wife, Debbie, who has occasionally had to change plans quick to come and support me at some of the functions that we attend together.

In the Speech from the Throne there are great benefits for all the people of this great province. The potential of Saskatchewan's resources are not new, but now this wealth is being developed and transformed into a benefit for all our citizens, even our country, and even in fact benefiting parts of the entire world.

We have a responsibility to do the right thing, using a common sense approach to develop our resources and to grow the province, making it a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life for all our citizens.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Michelson:** — This really is a beautiful province. What I

don't understand is why the members opposite believe that they're the saviours of Saskatchewan. Perhaps they do deserve a little bit of credit for addressing the deficit back in 1991. However as any business knows, you cannot cut your way into prosperity.

The NDP cut services. They raised taxes. They discouraged investment and rejected growth. Unbalanced labour legislation; huge regulatory roadblocks that stopped investment; overtaxation; overregulated, unbalanced labour laws did not allow this province to grow and to advance. Why was our neighbour to the west allowed to get so far ahead of us in growth and benefits to its people when Saskatchewan is a province that has a huge resource revenue in a variety of sectors that need to be developed for the benefit of our citizens?

Let me say this. Our biggest consumer, our neighbours to the south, are the biggest consumers of natural gas and petroleum products. They're relying on foreign producers, and they are working day and night with their scientists trying to find alternatives to the gas and the oil that we possess. And as technology increases and the prices come down from the new hydrogen cars and electric cars, there will be less value in the product that we are marketing to them today. We need to capitalize on the market while it's there, or forever leave what is a valuable commodity in the ground and lose the benefit for our people. And this government is expanding on that.

Saskatchewan has a magnificence that is unparalleled, and our biggest asset of course is our people. We're a hardy bunch. We're aggressive. Willingness to work, and eager to provide with passion and caring and with an innovation spirit. There are dozens of manufacturers that help support this economy, and I would like to recognize Doepker Industries and congratulate them, after 60 years in business, of being inducted to the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame at the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] awards last weekend.

Our people in towns and cities and rural Saskatchewan conduct business, attend schools and colleges, and worship together, caring and sharing. People whose origins come from several countries of the world developed a uniqueness of community, built an understanding of culture differences, and a commitment to share, co-operate, achieve, and assist. Many people who struggle through drought and depression, and with determination and perseverance were able to fashion a society of acceptance and understanding in this blessed province of Saskatchewan.

My parents and grandparents were these kinds of people. And whereas my parents have since passed away, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have my mom's sister, Frances Keller, attend the Speech from the Throne last Wednesday. It was her 92nd birthday. This was the first time she had the honour of being seated in your chambers and hear the words presented on the progress of the new direction of our great province.

This province has more potential than most countries. Consider the advantages we have over every other jurisdiction in the world. We have an abundance of farm land; almost half the arable agricultural land in Canada is in Saskatchewan. The world's largest potash deposits, the world's largest uranium deposits, gas, oil, coal, forestry, diamonds, and even other

precious metals. Mr. Speaker, this is our province. This is our people.

This is the rebirth of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan — considerate, caring, and a wealth potential from a huge resource base. And now a government with compassion, a government with a strong sense of forward thinking to benefit all the people of Saskatchewan. This was the message of the Throne Speech, “A Stronger Saskatchewan. A Better Life.”

Over the weekend I had the opportunity to do some shopping in my hometown of Moose Jaw during the Christmas in October promotion. I was finding that a 10-minute shopping stop was taking 40 minutes, an hour, as people were stopping and commenting on the progress of this province. Saskatchewan is on a roll, they’d say. Keep on going. We really like what you’re doing. Saskatchewan has never done better. Thanks for doing what you’re doing because we don’t ever want to go back.

People would actually go out of their way to express their appreciation for what this government has and is doing to create a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life for everyone. Yes, Saskatchewan has been enjoying a rebirth — a rebirth that has initiated wealth creation, investment, job opportunities, security, and a renewal of social consciousness.

During the summer I met with some of the community organizations that were pleading for help. Their stringent budgets had drastically limited the support programs. And even with their dedicated efforts of many of these community-based organizations, they had a difficult time reacting to the needs of the people they were serving. I was told that the basic food budget for an individual was \$4 and change, per day, per individual.

They were having a very difficult time keeping qualified staff, as these community-based organizations were unable to compete with wages. And as you know, a change of staffing every few months has a negative effect on the people that they were trying to support.

Well early last fall these community organizations received the largest single-year increase to assist recruitment and retention. And in this Throne Speech, the government is prepared to enter into a long-term, stable funding agreement to assist these community-based organizations. A stronger Saskatchewan. A better life.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[15:15]

**Mr. Michelson:** — Moose Jaw has, I suppose, arguably a higher than average percentage of senior citizens. Many of them do very well for themselves, like my mother-in-law, Mary Sinkewicz, who incidentally celebrated her 97th birthday on Friday.

However, Mr. Speaker, some of our seniors have been faced with significant challenges as living costs increase. We have heard the cry of many of those seniors, and I am so delighted that this government, announced by our Minister of Social Services today, said that the seniors . . . announcing a senior’s

income plan benefit will be increased from 90 to \$190 per month for singles and from 72.50 to \$155 per month for doubles. That’s a great announcement. This doubles the amount the seniors will be receiving.

This government has also increased the maximum income for seniors to be eligible for receiving benefits, doubling the number of seniors eligible for seniors’ income plan — doubling the amount and doubling the numbers of seniors on the plan. This is significant. This is very significant. This is perhaps the most significant humanitarian announcement we have made for these people who rightly deserve the dignity and respect of a province of plenty.

What is difficult to understand is how the NDP ignored the seniors of this province. For 16 years, seniors have not seen an increase, and it was because again of the uncaring performance of the NDP. Since 1992 the NDP did nothing for seniors’ assistance. Sixteen years and did not increase the income plan. Sixteen years they ignored the seniors even though there was a serious need. And the gall to say that we are treating them poorly when it was that government that refused to address the urgent necessity. Mr. Speaker, this is outrageous and disgraceful.

Today we announced the need that seniors were looking for. Today seniors will be able to live a lifestyle of respect and dignity because this government cares about our seniors. A stronger Saskatchewan, a better life for seniors.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Michelson:** — Mr. Speaker, families and family life is the future of our society, and they will be assisted with an additional investment of \$1.7 billion for increased licensed care child spaces.

There’s been a need for support programs for people with disabilities and the Speech from the Throne has addressed this along with an increase to the amount people can earn before their support payments are reduced. Support for people with disabilities is a priority of this government, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Saskatchewan benefits from the province’s prosperity.

Increase in tourism funding, cracking down on crime stemming from activities of gangs, new witness protection — it’s all part of a strong Saskatchewan and a better life.

The rebirth of Saskatchewan started almost a year ago when the ready-for-growth agenda came into being. An unprecedented investment to Saskatchewan’s infrastructure was committed and has proven to be a strategy for growth. With the financial world in an unstable situation as hasn’t been experienced before, Saskatchewan has been positioned for growth and is forecast to lead the country in economic gains again in the coming year. It has been that foresight, that positive, forward thinking, and the strategy for growth that has set us apart from most jurisdictions in North America. We are looking at continuing the growth agenda and even greater investment in infrastructure.

Growth is impossible without infrastructure to support it. After years of disrepair and neglect, we are a government that really

gets it. Highways will continue to be rebuilt and repaired. A significant proportion of the 1.5 billion infrastructure commitment will go toward fixing highways. Travel will be safer. Products can be transported to and from supply centres and marketing points. Travellers and vacationers can tour Saskatchewan to enjoy the parks and recreation facilities. Highways build a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life.

Through this infrastructure program, schools will be built where needed. Repairs will be made as required. So far over \$117 million has been committed and an additional \$60 million has been announced for projects to begin in 2009.

My constituency in Moose Jaw has received funding for health and safety upgrades at Central Collegiate, improved accessibility at Peacock Collegiate, and mechanical system upgrades at St. Agnes School. We are also committed to ensuring schools have the best technology available. Education providing skills and knowledge build a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life.

The city of Moose Jaw was approved for industry loans to help meet the growing demands for residential lots and infrastructure. And Moose Jaw is really no different than many of the Saskatchewan communities where the challenge of growth are becoming burdensome, and this government is committed to helping with the growth initiative program and is further committed to a long-term solution for a new revenue-sharing agreement with municipalities. Supporting municipalities creates a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life.

Health care has continued to be a challenge and our government has moved to provide additional nursing staff with the recruitment of 300 Filipino nurses and more to follow. We have increased the number of undergraduate seats and new residency seats. And we have unveiled plans to add 40 new undergraduate seats and 60 new residency positions, as well as a comprehensive physician recruitment strategy, and a patient-first review to measure the quality of patients' experience with the health care system.

At this time I want to assure my constituents and all the citizens of Moose Jaw, and in fact the citizens of the Five Hills Health Region, which include the constituents of my colleagues in Thunder Creek and Wood River, that the plans for the Moose Jaw Union Hospital are moving forward. The plan for the union hospital is not like any other construction project. The planning stage encompasses time of identifying, planning, and processing the needs of the city and the region.

Understanding the needs, calculating the current structural conditions, assessing the outlook of the entire Five Hills Health Region, and creating a plan is part of the preparation steps, and these are being done. The Moose Jaw Union Hospital is a priority, and for the local health board this has been an important issue for years. The city has also recognized this and added a hospital levy to the residential tax for the city portion of the upgrades.

It is unfortunate that the former government had no record, no intentions of upgrading the Moose Jaw Union Hospital. It is apparent that the NDP agenda was to move the services to Regina and close the medical facilities in Moose Jaw just as

they have closed dozens of rural hospitals in the 1990s. The plan for the upgrades of the Moose Jaw Union Hospital, Mr. Speaker, are moving forward. Quality health care makes a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life, and we're working towards that.

Infrastructure is an important part of the rebirth of our province. I've been told by numerous constituents that we are on the right course. However infrastructure is only part of the growth agenda for a stronger Saskatchewan and a better life. The reduction of tax is a major step to a better life. Now everyone over 18 who files a tax return in Saskatchewan will benefit from this tax reduction. That's over 700,000 residents.

If you pay income tax currently, you will see a significant tax cut. If you are lower income and don't pay income tax, you will see a larger refundable tax credit payment that you will receive every three months. Some residents will benefit from both measures, depending on the income, and 80,000 Saskatchewan residents will no longer pay provincial income taxes at all. A stronger Saskatchewan, a better life.

Another significant part of a stronger Saskatchewan is the debt reduction. This government has paid down the provincial debt by one-third and will continue to work toward debt reduction. The debt reduction will save \$90 million in interest over four years . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 900 million. Debt reduction, tax cuts, infrastructure investment are important points for the growth of this province. Along with this growth is the caring of our people, our less fortunate, our aged, our disabled, our First Nations and Métis. As Saskatchewan continues to grow everyone is entitled to benefits. The Speech from the Throne provides benefits to all citizens of the province in an affordable, caring concept, enriching the lives of every citizen.

This government is committed to the common sense of making our province a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life, and these values are reflected in the Speech from the Throne.

I am in support of the Speech from the Throne for a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll just check my little watch here and away we go. It's a privilege to take part in this debate and I'm glad to do so. The good people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre have sent me to speak to some of their concerns, and I will certainly try to live up to advocating in their interest in this speech, as I do in the job that I have the privilege to do day to day, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to start off by saying thank you to my wife, Kelly, to my father and my mother, to family and friends. As is often pointed out in this House by a number of MLAs, it's very hard to do that job with its varying demands and pressures on schedule, on family time, that you couldn't do it without the support of your family. So I want to say thank you very much to my loved ones right off the top, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say thank you to Colleen Smith and the folks who help me do my job, the constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. There's always a lot going on there, Mr. Speaker. And I am very well served and the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre are very well served by the diligent, compassionate work of a person like Colleen Smith. And I want to go on record stating my thankfulness for being able to work with her.

And lastly, for the immediate thank yous, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre for again sending me to this Assembly to work with them, to work for them. Regina Elphinstone-Centre is such a diverse place. It's a very exciting place. It's got its problems to be sure, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of diversity, in terms of down-to-earth people that are generous, that are caring, that are compassionate, that are community minded, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't ask for a better place to live or to have grown up and to make my home there, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say some congratulations, off the top, as well. And first off is to the new member for Cumberland. And I've known this individual for a number of years. When he stepped forward for the by-election or for the nomination, it wasn't the first time I'd met him. But I've always been struck by his thoughtfulness, by his passion for people, by his down-to-earth nature. I think he brings a lot of common sense to this Assembly and to our caucus, and certainly a lot of grace under pressure as well, Mr. Speaker. I'd seen him work very hard in the by-election, and I know that that work has continued from there.

And I know that the constituency of Cumberland, it's such a varied and beautiful place. And again, in terms of the different issues that face the people of northern Saskatchewan and the people of Cumberland, I think they've chosen well in terms of selecting somebody that's going to work very hard on their behalf and on their interests.

And I know as well he's also a proud Métis individual and is tied very well into the First Nations communities of Cumberland as well. And I guess in terms of the work that I strive to do as the First Nations and Métis Relations critic for the official opposition, I look very much to Doyle in terms of advice and to help me in the job I do as a . . . [inaudible] . . . politician. But I'm very glad to be in this Assembly with the new member from Cumberland, and I look forward to the great work that he's going to do in caucus and on behalf of the people who sent him here.

[15:30]

I also want to say a word of thanks to my leader, to the Leader of the Official Opposition, the member for Riversdale. Of course there's been a great deal of interest in the House as to what are his future plans and what's to come with the NDP. But I want to go on record saying that this is an individual who's done so much for the province in advancing the cause of social democracy in Saskatchewan and in Canada. This is an individual who led a government that was very much guided by his maxim that you must have economic progress to secure social progress but that you must not make economic progress that doesn't bring social progress.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — So we weren't always successful. We had our failures certainly. We had things that we would have liked to have done more of. We had things that certainly we look with great interest on the resources at the disposal of the members opposite and the choices that they have the great fortune to be making in terms of public policy.

But I know this for a fact, Mr. Speaker, that under the leadership of the member from Riversdale, we had more than our share of victories won and progress made too for the people. And that son of South Hill, Moose Jaw led us well, served the people of Saskatchewan well, and I want to thank him for it. And as we determine the next leader for the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party, we know that the current Leader of the Opposition has done much to add to the very high standards that we've got in the CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] for our leaders.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — I'd like to say a bit about the way that the Throne Speech intersects with the issues that are raised with me in Regina Elphinstone-Centre and the way that I think it's being received by the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

And it's always interesting to listen to political speeches, Mr. Speaker, depending on who's giving them of course. Credit for everything good is taken by one side and blame is given to the other side for anything bad. Of course I'm not going very much in that course, but I am going to try to be somewhat thoughtful in pointing out where I think good things are being done and equally thoughtful in pointing out where this government needs to pull up its socks and where I think the job isn't getting done.

And I'll try to do this first in regards to how I see the Throne Speech affecting the constituents I represent, the issues that they bring forward, and then I'll move into some commentary based more in my critic duties around First Nations and Métis Relations.

In the announcements that immediately preceded the Throne Speech, there was talk around paying down debt and the debt actually paid down. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I think that's great. I think that they should pay down the debt because of course, as has been owned up by members opposite in some of their more honest moments, they had something to do with it being racked up in the first place. So I'm glad to see the debt paydown.

In terms of infrastructure, again it's good to see. You've got the money; you should be investing in infrastructure. In terms of the \$1.9 billion in reserves, well you know, Mr. Speaker, how the times have changed. I haven't been in this House for 100 years, but I've certainly been here long enough to recall the members opposite practically losing their minds about the Fiscal Stabilization Fund — how it was a slush fund and a mountain of money and a card trick and so on. And that of course was when we put aside a few hundred million dollars. Of course \$1.9 billion, you know we had no idea, Mr. Speaker, how much you could put aside. So how things have changed.

Tax cuts, again okay by me. Good to see some of the money

coming back to the people of the province. Glad to see the benefits to families, and also glad to see the increase to the low-income tax credit. Glad to see today's announcement around seniors, but a number of questions arise.

First, how will this net out? Will we see the government giving with one hand only to take with the other? The cost of living is going up dramatically. Taxes are one very important component of the cost of living that the government controls. For example, Mr. Speaker, the Crowns provide another important cost-of-living advantage for the people of Saskatchewan. We went forward with the low-cost utility bundle. It was mocked at the time by the members opposite. And of course they've chosen to do away with that.

And again we see continued games with the Sask Party as it relates to the Crown sector and as it struggles to realign itself with the history and the beliefs of members opposite in terms of the virtue, or lack thereof, when it comes to the Crowns. So we're going to be watching very closely. And I think today was a fine example of the good work by the member for Coronation Park in terms of holding those members to account around the Crowns.

I think of students, Mr. Speaker, I think of students and the rise in tuition that will almost surely come this spring. Again maybe it's the member from Silver Springs, who says a lot of colourful things, but commenting on behalf of the then official opposition, he talked about how tuition in Saskatchewan should be at the national average at a minimum. And of course, we saw how that evolved into the campaign. And they promised one year of a freeze, but we'd see after that. But you know, Mr. Speaker, students pay an awful lot of tuition.

We put forward a plank in our platform that we thought spoke to that. And we still think that members opposite, if they're looking for a tuition-management plan, they should look closely at something like tuition cuts and in terms of pegging it to the rate of inflation because again, in terms of the investment that a society can make, there are few investments more important than what you put into education and post-secondary education.

There's a lot talked about on the other side about the innovation economy, the knowledge economy, and if you don't have people getting that post-secondary education or if they're held back, if they're barred at the door because they haven't got the finances to do it, then we all suffer for that, Mr. Speaker. So again I am interested to see what's to come in the days ahead, but I fear that of course tuition's going to go up and whatever gains are made on the one hand in terms of government measures will be wiped out on the other.

I think of the cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing. Many stories are hitting the press about this, and it's certainly the number one issue raised by a landslide in my constituency office, Mr. Speaker. Yet last year the members opposite cut the budget for Sask Housing by \$5 million. And when they finally woke up to the crisis that many people are facing in housing, they threw a task force at the problem. Some good has come of that, but the fact remains that this government has not turned a single spade of dirt on new affordable housing units in inner city Regina.

The only new building going on in my home neighbourhood of north central Regina is because of Habitat for Humanity, and thank goodness for them, Mr. Speaker. But they should not be going it alone. One of the things I take great pride in are the housing projects that have played a critical role in improving the quality of life in inner city Regina.

When we finally got the money together, Mr. Speaker, when we finally had the financial wherewithal to go forward with housing projects, the first large-scale outbuilding of social housing in inner city Regina in two decades, Mr. Speaker . . . And we couldn't build in the '80s because we had a government that could care less, and we couldn't build in the '90s, Mr. Speaker, because we of course didn't have the money.

So in terms of the building that's been able to go forward under the leadership of the member for Riversdale, you know, I couldn't be prouder. And I find it passing strange that of course one of their first priorities is to do nothing in terms of the capital project around housing.

I think of things like the Renaissance retirement village. Government partnered in with private sector, securing the availability of a number of affordable units in that great new building — or that great reused building. It used to be the Derrick Building, Mr. Speaker. People called it the derelict building. I can remember the then minister, Joanne Crofford, at the first meeting for it. I can remember being there for the grand opening with the member for Athabasca, and I'm glad to have that housing available in downtown Regina.

I think of the Regina Rescue Mission Souls Harbour House on the 1400 block of Angus — again another great project, the partners with the Porters, the Carrolls, and government partnering in with them. I was very happy that that was a decision made in terms of the allocation of money. And I was very happy to see that project go forward and come along, Mr. Speaker. And again the members opposite were happy to be there for the ribbon cutting.

And they're also very happy to be there for the ribbon cutting at Maple Leaf Estates in Regina Douglas Park. But you know, it's just a bit outside of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, Mr. Speaker, but it's right in the middle of core community, one of the larger neighbourhoods in my constituency. And I know that that is having a good impact in terms of some housing being made available and affordable in inner city Regina. But again that was a project that we turned sod on, that we put the money forward for, and they were of course very happy to show up and cut the ribbon.

But would that they could turn some sod on other projects. I think of the upwards of 70 units of stand-alone affordable housing, two of them right on my home block in the middle of north central, Mr. Speaker. I think of the new Canadian family from Somalia that lives in the one and the Aboriginal family that lives in the other and that — you know, one had been a slum house on that lot before, that burned down; the other had been a vacant lot that was filled with weeds — and the difference that that new affordable housing has made to the block and to the neighbourhood and most importantly to those families and to those young children that are being brought up in a decent, safe, affordable unit of housing instead of being



brought up in squalor.

I think about the work that had been done in conjunction with *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* and the bylaw standards enforcement team in terms of, you know, going through chapter and verse, root and branch in terms of going after problem housing, substandard housing and the great strides that were made there. And of course those entities are still doing their work.

But the problem now, Mr. Speaker, whereas before if you had a family in a house that needed to be placarded, that should have been placarded . . . in some cases they were placarded and then demolished, Mr. Speaker. The problem now is that when you've got people living in substandard housing, there's a bit of a dilemma because there's no place for these people to go. So you get civil servants that are confronted with a choice of do I leave people in substandard housing that I know to be substandard, or where do I move them to?

So again, Mr. Speaker, the fact that before those people were able to be moved into other rental housing or into some of the new social housing that had come on stream, the fact that there hasn't been sod turned in a year in inner city Regina on new affordable social housing, it's a big problem, Mr. Speaker. And it's a big problem that plays itself out in terms of people living in conditions that should not be lived in and neighbourhoods not being able to live up to their full potential.

So again the members opposite . . . There's an old adage, Mr. Speaker: to whom much is given, much is expected. And of course they like to holler back and forth about what did you do, and this, that, and the other thing. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I think that we did what we could with the resources we had, and we worked to build economy, and we worked to build that social safety net.

And you know, I'll have to admit I can't imagine what it's like to have a mid-term where it's \$3.1 billion in surplus, and the kind of choices that you'd be able to make in terms of housing and the important issues like that. But if they're not making those decisions, Mr. Speaker, it's very hard to see how that benefit is going to translate to the great many instead of the privileged few.

Other great things, the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] bus depot, the shared facility at Scott Collegiate, the new treatment centre over on Victoria, the skills and trade centre, the increase to PTA [provincial training allowance], the CBO [community-based organization] increase, child care spaces in pre-K [pre-kindergarten], I was glad to see them address that in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and we'll see how those come along. They weren't in the platform of course, but glad to see them catching up. Measures on disabilities — sincerely, my compliments — we'll be watching very closely to see how they work out. There are many other things to comment on in this regard, Mr. Speaker.

But I guess the last things I'd like to talk about deal with First Nations and Métis relations, and there are some . . . I can't think of another sector in or another area in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, where the challenge is as great. And when you go to First Nations and Métis communities and you talk to First

Nations and Métis people, they know the problems. They know the problems in terms of standing on the outside looking in. They know the problems of being plagued by poverty in the midst of plenty. And it's not surprising, Mr. Speaker, that you see the patience and the goodwill in those communities is rapidly coming to a halt.

This past summer . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . If the member from Saskatoon Northwest wants to shout me down, I'm not going to be shouted down, Mr. Speaker. In the past year, in 2006 and 2007, the off-reserve Aboriginal employment numbers increased by 4 per cent the one year and 4 per cent the next.

And you know what happened in the first six months of them being on watch, Mr. Speaker? Do you know what happened in the first six months of them being on watch? They went down by 4 per cent. They went down by 4 per cent. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I shake my head that you've got this prospering economy and you still got First Nations standing outside, you've still got Métis people standing on the outside saying, you know, shouldn't we be participating? Shouldn't we be sharing in the abundant wealth of this province?

[15:45]

And so it's no wonder that you have an FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] assembly where you have the chief of the FSIN, Lawrence Joseph, get up and say, you know, the Premier's turned into an invisible man. You have headlines like "Joseph rips [and again this is from a press article] rips Wall," rips the Premier; that the bridges are being burned. You see the blockades at Enbridge and again in Treaty 4 territory. Even in Oka there weren't blockades, Mr. Speaker, that were condoned by the leadership of First Nations. So that you see the leadership of the FHQ [File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council], of Treaty 4, Treaty 6, you see those people coming forward and saying enough, enough.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's not hard to understand why, when you see the gains in employment being walked backward, when you see the increases being made to things like PTA and adult basic education. You still got a waiting list for adult basic education in this economy, Mr. Speaker. And there are many First Nations and Métis people on that list.

You see the federal government rip up the Kelowna accord. And in the wake of that, Mr. Speaker, we try to move forward with things like taking post-secondary education on-reserve. We try to move forward with things like funding for SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and we want to see them go further with it, Mr. Speaker. They're not going far enough.

We want to see things like Jordan's principle that we called on them to adopt last February. We're glad to see it in the Throne Speech, but you know we'll see how it plays out because we know when push comes to shove with the federal government and Stephen Harper, we know how these people opposite act, Mr. Speaker.

So there are a lot of issues in First Nations, Métis relations that we're going to be raising in the days to come. Duty to consult

ties up a lot of these issues. And you know, you had individuals here yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that were here for another round table. And you get the sense that those people are starting to feel that it's not so much round tables as round and round tables. So where's the benefit for them? Where's the sharing of the prosperity in this province? They're very anxious to see that, Mr. Speaker.

And when you visit the communities and when you know the statistics and you know the grim reality on the street, you know why they're desperate in this circumstance, Mr. Speaker. So we're going to be looking very close to see what action comes from the members opposite.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting for the amendment, but I'll be voting against the Throne Speech because it doesn't do enough for the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased and honoured to rise today and enter the debate on the 2008 Speech from the Throne. I would like first of all to congratulate the new member from Cumberland on his election. I'd also like to sincerely thank my family, my constituency assistants, and my constituency for the support they have shown thus far.

A fitting theme indeed, Mr. Speaker. It does speak of a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life for Saskatchewan people. This Throne Speech is surely a victory for our people of Saskatchewan. In this speech we see more promises kept, more preparation for growth, continued vision for the future, and making certain all Saskatchewan residents benefit from our new prosperity.

Saskatchewan has transitioned, Mr. Speaker, from a have-not to a have province. We have experienced a rebirth to become this year country, in the words of our Premier. This change in large part I believe is due to the change in attitude and policy of our new government. A positive attitude and a balanced policy shift, a feeling of optimism, one that formerly one had to travel outside of our borders to feel, Mr. Speaker, but now one has to come to Saskatchewan to experience. Is it a shift in the tapestry, Mr. Speaker? I'm not sure. Now I'm not certain if this is a paradigm shift, I'm not sure if this is a nexus, or an aperture in time. But I have to check with the member from Saskatoon Greystone, because I'd have to check with that member to know for sure. But the people of the province are liking it.

I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about the people with this new positive attitude, which I'm so honoured to work with on this side of the House, the members of our government caucus, Mr. Speaker, members with such diverse backgrounds it gives us a wide range of knowledge and experience to draw from. Members who believe, as I do, we most approach the affairs of the province as we approach the affairs of our own homes and businesses, in a sound and balanced manner. Individuals with backgrounds in health, business, agriculture, corrections, municipal administration like my friend from Rosetown over here; military, as the member from Wood River; education, government background, social advocacy, law. We

have one baby lawyer. Apparently he hasn't practised yet, but I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, a young man so intelligent, so capable, that it's hard to describe. And some with such diverse backgrounds, they are almost impossible to capture. For that I would have to point to my friend from Saskatoon Northwest here — diverse background indeed.

And, Mr. Speaker, on a serious note, a Premier with traits only that can be described as those of a true leader. One with only the people of the province's best interests at heart. And quick to remind us of why we are here. One occasion I would like to talk about, Mr. Speaker, in joking with the Premier as he walked past my desk one day last spring, a passing comment I said to him was, I'm here for you, buddy. He stopped in his tracks, he turned, and with all sincerity he looked at me. He says, no, Greg, you're here for your kids; you're here for your family. And that's the type of man I respect, Mr. Speaker — a man that speaks from the heart and reminds us of why we're here.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — But, Mr. Speaker, back to our province's turnaround. Sure this prosperity and economic growth does bring with it some challenges, but I feel it's better to face the issues of growth rather than the hardships of decline. It has been mentioned many times how the Premier has asked his MLAs to go out and talk to constituents, to the Saskatchewan people, to see where they wanted their government to focus. And that exercise is the basis for this year's Throne Speech.

A majority of the people said they liked our balanced approach so far but wanted to see more in the way of debt reduction, of tax cuts, of infrastructure investment. They wanted us to help those in need, to be prudent in our planning.

From this, Mr. Speaker, developed what I would refer to as the foundation, the four pillars of this year's Speech from the Throne: record tax cuts to benefit all; record debt reduction that benefits all, that in large offsets the tax cuts to the residents; record investment in infrastructure to help keep the economic momentum and benefit all; and an insurance policy for the people of Saskatchewan in the provincial savings to benefit all.

Mr. Speaker, those tax cuts that benefit 700,000 people in the province who file a tax return; 80,000 people will no longer pay any provincial income tax — all retroactive to the beginning of this year. Cuts that benefit the lowest income people the most, the ones that need the help the most.

Debt reduction of 2.6 billion in the first year. That's nearly 40 per cent off the debt, Mr. Speaker — 7 million per day, \$300,000 per hour, \$5,000 per minute. That's about 50,000 bucks so far, Mr. Speaker. A reduction that, as I stated earlier, in large offsets the tax reductions due to the interest savings of the debt — a truly sustainable plan.

Infrastructure investments up 500 million next year to 1.5 billion. An investment in hospitals, schools. An investment in our roads and highways of which close to 1500 kilometres were fixed this spring and summer. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I travelled the province this summer extensively, I really had to stop myself from being frustrated. I found myself almost cursing the Minister of Highways' name a couple of times, this

because, Mr. Speaker, of all the road construction delays I had to run up against. I wasn't accustomed to seeing that much improvement. I'm looking forward to upcoming and exciting announcements, further promise, and, no doubt, for my constituency of Yorkton.

And, Mr. Speaker, a fiscal insurance policy of \$1.9 billion balance in the Growth and Financial Security Fund to ensure and protect the future of our province in unstable world economic environment, an environment that in large has impacted Canada less than other countries of the world due in part to the federal government policies which now places Canada at the top of the G7 countries for its economic stability and Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the strongest economy and growth forecast of all provinces in that Dominion of Canada.

Our province with its strong presence in agriculture and food, resources, energy capacity, innovation, I would argue, Mr. Speaker, the safest place to invest in the world.

I'll touch on a few more things from the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, just generally. There's exciting news in almost every avenue you could imagine. Enterprise and innovation — exciting new investments in that respect. Investments in energy and resources, Mr. Speaker, an expanding energy and resources sector.

Our environment. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to applaud the Minister of Environment. I'll tell you the way she's been moving along so far has been really exciting. I've got to draw your attention to a story I personally experienced in Yorkton during the federal candidates' debate at the Wellington West Room at the Gallagher Centre where, Mr. Speaker, the Green Party candidate — a very young, smart, forward-thinking young girl — three times, Mr. Speaker, congratulated myself and my government and specifically the Environment minister and the Premier on our environmental plans. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is the Green Party candidate congratulating the Saskatchewan Party on our initiatives. Now that deserves applaud even from the member from Athabasca. Thank you very much.

Investments in advanced education, employment and labour, Mr. Speaker, in education, ongoing movement in treaty education in our schools, additional investment in our schools, announcement on Monday about the investment in our library system.

The exciting investments just recently, Mr. Speaker, in regards to our disabled population. Shorting a 440-person waiting list, more money for capital, Mr. Speaker, initiatives to move those off of social assistance to a long-term disability plan to just encourage them and to give them some humility, Mr. Speaker, just to give them some dignity.

And now today, the announcements today by the hon. member from Humboldt, the Minister of Social Services, doubling the amount of people, the seniors that can apply for that low-income assistance — doubling the eligibility, the income, Mr. Speaker.

Now if that isn't a step in the right direction. You know, I've got parents, I've got parents-in-law that are seniors, Mr. Speaker. All of them, Mr. Speaker, will benefit from this as

well as some of my other aunts and uncles getting up in years, and very shortly a few members on this side of the House possibly would be able to apply.

I'd like to talk about the initiative we took on through Social Services this summer, Mr. Speaker, the summits of the CBO, community-based organizations, able to go out to them to have them give their input on the direction we should take. And, Mr. Speaker, I touched base with some of those at the SARC banquet last night. Very excited group of people, Mr. Speaker. They were so happy with the initiatives we've taken. They're astounded, simply astounded as to how quickly things are moving. They expected us to drag our feet.

I heard one comment about cotton batten in the ears. The cotton batten must be out of the minister's ears, which I can assure you, the minister from Humboldt does not have cotton in her ears. And it's proof in the pudding is the announcements that have come out since that CBO summit, Mr. Speaker — a very short time — delivering on a lot of those aspects that are already here.

We'll move on to some more initiatives. There's just so much, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be hard to get through all this. Exciting initiatives in health care, more investment in physician seats, more investment in infrastructure.

Some movement on First Nation and Métis issues, Mr. Speaker. As the member across is pointing out, Jordan's principle. We'll be moving on that very shortly, continued movement in that.

Investments in culture and sport, our provincial parks. It's astounding the way the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport is moving on that file, Mr. Speaker. Parks people are excited.

We're moving on the arts professions Act, which will encourage a lot of the artists in the province and give them ownership of their property, Mr. Speaker.

Exciting movement on the Crowns. The member from Saskatoon, the Minister of Crown Corporations, some exciting announcements, moving in the right direction as he termed today, stopping the bleeding of the red ink. And, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to many people that I know in the Crown corporations and saying, this is a very positive move to make these Crowns more positive, more strong and sustainable, and delivering the proper services and good services to the people of the province. This is a move in the right direction. So we've got some agreement there.

Movement in agriculture. Municipal Affairs. Yorkton has benefited greatly from the last Municipal Affairs initiative, Mr. Speaker. The SIGI [Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative] announcement, Yorkton getting almost \$12 million in low-interest loans to help with the water treatment plant and lot development for the expanding borders of the city of Yorkton. So exciting news there, and my hat's off to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Continued commitment in revenue sharing.

The Minister of Policing and Public Safety, some really good initiatives there. More police on the street. At least 30 this year he's committed to and, you know, hoping to get some of those

in Yorkton which will be very well appreciated.

Strengthening democracy, Mr. Speaker. We are fulfilling our promise on fixed election dates, proceeding with some other initiatives and moving towards an elected Senate, Mr. Speaker. Just all exciting news. All exciting news. A hear, hear from the Premier. That's very well received. Thank you very much.

The opposition attempts to take credit for this rebirth, Mr. Speaker, and I suppose that's to be expected. Months ago we heard how we were handed a resource-rich province and shortly after how we were left \$1 billion. Now we inherited \$3 billion surplus. Every time things get better the opposition lays claim.

[16:00]

Now the resources, I believe, no one can take credit for except for the Lord, and through his blessing of this truly great land, this province. However I could introduce to members opposite, to many people, investors that I personally met over the past 10 months, 11 months, that quite frankly say if not for the philosophy and policy change along with a new government, they simply would not be here, Mr. Speaker. And I could introduce those members opposite to a lot.

I'm not going to expand on the potash Act. The member from Wood River — I think he did a very good job explaining the potash Act. But quite simply, Mr. Speaker, if that wasn't repealed we wouldn't be seeing the investment we do now. It sets a bad tone; it sets a really sour tone for resource investment coming to the province. When people coming to invest billions and millions into our province, Mr. Speaker, and they look at that potash Act in 1977 — not that it was ever going to be used again — but it sets the tone and it sets a fear with those people wanting to invest. They're simply scared to see any socialism, nationalism of industries happen again.

Our policy and legislative changes in the past number of months is, in large, why the people of Saskatchewan are now enjoying this new growth in prosperity and opportunity.

Let's just look at what some of the people of this province are saying, Mr. Speaker. Well here we have something from Marilyn Braun-Pollon: "It's a well-rounded package, looking after the debt, looking after infrastructure and also making sure that we're competitive (on taxes.)" Another one from Marilyn: "It puts purchasing power in the pockets of workers, and it's the best way to put money in the pockets of lower-income earners." CEO [chief executive officer] of Sask Chamber of Commerce, Steve McLellan: "This is great for them, great for the economy and certainly great for a labour situation."

Now I'll admit, Mr. Speaker, these are, you know, business-minded people. So let's move on. Larry Hubich, president of the Sask Labour Federation:

If they're putting money into the pockets of low-income workers and their families, that's positive. It's hard to criticize the government for doing that.

Larry Hubich again, Mr. Speaker:

There are a couple of ways you can improve the lot of

those who are at the lower end of the earning scale, and one of them is through the kind of initiatives that the government has decided to embark on. The other one is through the provision of services . . .

That's funny, Mr. Speaker, we're doing both. Here's another one, Jack Vicq. Well Mr. Vicq is well respected by both sides of the House, and I know that, Mr. Speaker. Jack Vicq:

"I think it's the right thing to do." Said Jack Vicq, now director of the Saskatchewan office of the Canada West Foundation. "If there was one thing to do with the personal income tax system, this is it, because of the number of people involved that you can help and because the marginal tax rates at that low end are equally high."

Just a few more, Mr. Speaker:

It's important to pay down the debt. It's important that citizens somehow are rewarded as well and the income tax changes I think are wonderful.

Mayor Pat Fiacco. That's the mayor.

Let's listen to some of the members across. The Leader of the Opposition, Lorne Calvert, simply "It's good news." And Harry Van Mulligen, a member across "Well I think by and large it's good news for Saskatchewan people to have these particular tax changes." And I'm mentioning the names of those members, Mr. Speaker, because they are specified in the quote.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency of Yorkton, the third largest trading area in the province, are very happy with this Throne Speech.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out my friend, the member from Lloydminster, him and I have this debate as to who's the third largest. I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, Yorkton is the third largest trading area. It is larger. But I know the hon. member from Lloydminster is very proud, as are his constituents, of the fact that Lloydminster is probably the third strongest economic region in Saskatchewan as well as currently being voted the best place to start a business in Canada. Hats off to the member from Lloydminster and the people from Lloydminster.

There's no grudges here, Mr. Speaker. We all equally share in the gladness and the glee and the opportunities that are happening in all different areas of the province — the optimism across the province, Mr. Speaker. I know they're equally proud of this Throne Speech.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my comments by saying that I will not support the amendment, but I will support the main motion put forward by the hon. member from Weyburn-Big Muddy and seconded by the hon. member from Saskatoon Sutherland. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased this afternoon to stand and participate in the Throne

Speech. Mr. Speaker, to deal with this Throne Speech you have to put it in the context and the time in which this speech is delivered. Mr. Speaker, this speech is delivered at a period of time when we have unprecedented wealth. And that unprecedented wealth should be returned to the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, for this Throne Speech to be truly examined, you have to look at it in the context of its time and what it's doing for people.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into my comments, I'd like to congratulate the member from Cumberland on his election and like to wish him many, many years of service to the people of his constituency and to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take the opportunity to once again thank the residents of Regina Dewdney and those who day after day support those of us who are in elected life. It's not an easy life necessary for any members of the House; it's very time-consuming. But nonetheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Regina Dewdney continue to support myself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to start talking about this Throne Speech from the perspective that when this government was put in power just about one year ago, they were left with unprecedented amounts of money in the bank, Mr. Speaker — nearly \$2 billion between the money that was in the Crown corporations and that was in the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government came to power at a time when there was ample money in the coffers, Mr. Speaker. And it's kind of ironic that they want to talk about paying down debt, Mr. Speaker, when much of the money that they're using to paying down that debt was in fact money that was left behind by the previous administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concept of paying down debt, of course, is a good concept. People enjoy seeing their debt paid down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and of course that benefits all Saskatchewan people. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at where we came from.

Mr. Speaker, in 1991 we had nearly \$15 billion in debt. And, Mr. Speaker, when this province had \$15 billion in debt, we were also facing a situation that this province was nearly broke. This province was at a point in its history in 1991 where we could barely afford to pay our bills, or it was about making choices between paying the salaries of those people who work for the government and for paying down any portion of the debt, Mr. Speaker.

But over a period of time through careful management we got ourselves to a position where, when there was a change in government, that we had been able to pay down about \$8 billion worth of the debt and also been able to put aside \$2 billion roughly to be there after the election for whoever was the government, Mr. Speaker.

Today, Mr. Speaker, paying down \$1 billion additional debt, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan appreciate that. I think everyone would appreciate that. That is what they expect of their government. But, Mr. Speaker, people need to understand in the

context in which that was done.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing unprecedented economic growth. We had about \$3 billion midway through the year in surplus revenue, Mr. Speaker, and that's largely attributed to the decisions made many years ago, many years ago to change oil royalty rates, to put money into the base and the stability of our economy, in lowering business taxes and lowering the PST [provincial sales tax], and broadening and diversifying our economy, Mr. Speaker.

This didn't happen in the last year. The benefits we're seeing today happened because of things done over a very long period of time, done by the previous administration. Now that's not saying anything negative about what the current administration is doing, but the reality is the foundation for what happened today was built long before this government came to power.

So, Mr. Speaker, we all enjoy paying down debt. We all enjoy seeing less going in interest to debt payments, but, Mr. Speaker, that isn't the whole picture, and we need to talk about the whole picture.

The people of the province also enjoy infrastructure spending, but the people of the province also realize that it is a balance between putting more money into infrastructure and driving up the costs of actual construction because that occurs when there's more available tenders in the market than there is companies to actually perform the work. You can actually artificially drive up, you can artificially drive up the pricing. Now, Mr. Speaker, so it's a balance, and every government has to in fact work with that balance.

So it's necessary, when a government's looking at ramping up its infrastructure spending, to ensure that we have the capacity within the province to continue that growth without artificially increasing prices. And we need to work together to do that. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will always be happy if we have better infrastructure. But, Mr. Speaker, once again we need to ensure that the government is working to balance that with increased costs that may come from not having sufficient capacity within the province to deal with that ramped-up expectation of infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to deal with the issue of taxes, lower taxes for everyone, Mr. Speaker. People do appreciate tax relief. Who wouldn't appreciate lower taxes? But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again we need to look at this issue in this context. With a \$3.1 billion surplus we have a \$300 million tax cut. So the people of Saskatchewan will get a 10 per cent return on what is their money.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out when the personal income tax changes were made by the previous government, the average family got about \$1,000 return — the four-member family — when we had a surplus of only \$9 million, not \$3.1 billion, Mr. Speaker. So we see a very small return of what actually is there of the people's money at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, the previous government, the NDP government cut taxes for the average family of four by \$1,000, and this government cut it by \$1,320. But the situation was vastly different, Mr. Speaker, because in the first case when the previous government did it, we had a \$9 million surplus — not

a \$3.1 billion surplus.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to point out that the previous government cut the sales tax, that cost \$400 million in a period of time which we didn't have a \$3.1 billion surplus. We cut business taxes, Mr. Speaker. We cut business taxes, corporate taxes, in order to make a competitive environment for business. And, Mr. Speaker, they liked those cuts.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from an article that is written by Mr. Seymour who is director of the Frontier Centre for Public Policy. And it says:

Judging the consequences is subjective [talking about tax cuts], but one way to assess them is a comparison to what has happened in the past, what is happening elsewhere, and what the government's stated goals are.

The previous administration [referring to the previous NDP administration] vastly simplified the income tax system but also significantly reduced rates, in line with what other provinces have done and are considering doing. With considerable political bravery, it slashed taxes like company, corporate, and capital taxes. Cutting these has little short term voter appeal but great long term economic benefit. It's called leadership.

And that's what the Frontier institute is talking about the NDP government, the previous government, that made some pretty brave decisions about cutting corporate taxes at a time where it was necessary to build the economy so that we can benefit from the surpluses we have today. And now that we have these surpluses today, Mr. Speaker, now that we have those surpluses today, people have the right to have an expectation, to have an expectation that those benefits will be returned to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, we heard for months and months and months when the current government was in opposition about the need to cut property taxes, Mr. Speaker. And we haven't yet seen any cut to property tax for the majority of Saskatchewan citizens. Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, today with a \$3.1 billion surplus, the people of Saskatchewan have a right to expect that property tax cut now — not a year from now, not 18 months from now, but now. Mr. Speaker, they have a right to get that money returned to their pockets rather than remaining in the pockets of the government, Mr. Speaker. Because after all, governments don't have money that don't belong to the people.

And, Mr. Speaker, they need to act quickly on property tax as they have said they would in their platform, Mr. Speaker. They need to do it. They absolutely need to see this government act on its commitment to property tax and significantly lower the property tax rates in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, if they were brave enough, they would completely remove property tax on education, Mr. Speaker. They would take that entire portion off, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, they can afford to do it. It's a matter of having the leadership and the bravery to do it. And as the Frontier institute said about the previous NDP government, they had that leadership. They had that bravery to do what was necessary to make this province a better place and to build that economic foundation that allows us to have the size of surpluses we have today, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are yelling from their seats and they're chirping, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is, the tough decisions about our economy haven't been made by this government. They were made by the NDP administration many years ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, so we have a tax cut where the people of the province got 10 per cent, 10 per cent of their dollar value back. They got \$300 million out of \$3.1 billion, Mr. Speaker. They got 10 per cent. I don't know. We do appreciate anything, Mr. Speaker. The average taxpayer does appreciate any benefit. But, Mr. Speaker, they need to do much more. They can afford to do much more. And the people of Saskatchewan have a right to much more from this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few minutes talking about education, Mr. Speaker. Education was a primary concern of the people of this province and is of major concern to families in this province today. We heard prior to the election, time and time again, that schools shouldn't be shut down in rural communities. Mr. Speaker, today we still have schools being shut down in rural communities. This government talked about changing. They had this grandiose plan to improve education in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Those people are disappointed today. Schools are still shutting down in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This government isn't living up to what it committed to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to now talk a little bit about post-secondary education. Those young people who have had the opportunity to go to university have had a tuition freeze for a number of years. They've had their tuition being held constant for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, we hear today, we hear today rumblings from the minister that we may see that freeze on tuition being lifted — that we may actually see increases in tuition fees to students. And, Mr. Speaker, that's shameful. That is absolutely shameful that we actually see tuition increases for students in universities, Mr. Speaker.

We should be striving to open the door so that more students go to post-secondary education, so every student has the opportunity in this province to reach their full potential. But, Mr. Speaker, tuition increases are a barrier to many students being able to go to university and we shouldn't increase that barrier. In fact we should continue the freeze on tuition in this province, Mr. Speaker. We need to freeze the tuition, Mr. Speaker, for the foreseeable future, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to spend a couple of minutes talking about children and families. Mr. Speaker, today we still have far too many children living in poverty. Far too many families living in substandard housing because there isn't adequate housing available. Mr. Speaker, we are facing a significant issue with those who are most vulnerable in our society, Mr. Speaker, both in the issue of housing and, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing poverty rates going up in our province. Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with these issues. We need to deal with poverty and we need to deal with, Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with affordable housing for those most vulnerable in our society.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it can be argued, why didn't we deal with all these things, Mr. Speaker? Well, Mr. Speaker, we didn't have the money that's available today. We started, Mr. Speaker, from a situation where we had to build the foundation and the base of an economy in which to get the surpluses we're experiencing today. And, Mr. Speaker, it is about making choices, and we made choices to build this economy so that we would have surpluses like this. And today we have them. Let's spend them. Let's do it for those in our society who need it the most, Mr. Speaker. Let's deal with poverty. Let's deal with affordable housing for the most vulnerable in our society, Mr. Speaker. We need to do that.

We have families facing 4 and \$500 a year increases in rental situations in some of our cities, Mr. Speaker. We have cities like Estevan where you can't rent a property, you can't find a property in the city of Estevan to rent, either an apartment or a home. We have communities like Saskatoon and Regina facing virtually the same situations, Mr. Speaker. And these people, Mr. Speaker, deserve — now that we have the money to do it, now that we have \$3.1 billion in surplus — they deserve to get their fair share and they deserve to be treated with the dignity and respect that this government isn't showing them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also see today assessments going on in cities and towns across the province, seeing significant property tax increases. Now, Mr. Speaker, those affect those who are most vulnerable the most. And, Mr. Speaker, we've had a commitment about property tax that hasn't been delivered on, Mr. Speaker. Let's get that delivered on as soon as possible. Let's let the families of this province enjoy the benefit of what they've built. Because, Mr. Speaker, they made the sacrifices in the past for us to be able to build this economy and they should be the ones that benefit from what we've done. It shouldn't matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that anybody in this Assembly doesn't want those who are most vulnerable to be better off. And the foundation has been built and that foundation meant that they made sacrifices like every other Saskatchewan citizen to build that foundation. Today, they need more than any of us to feel the benefit of our fruits, Mr. Speaker, the benefit of what that foundation has delivered.

Mr. Speaker, we need significant new injections into multi-family housing, affordable housing, a homes first program to help low-income people get the opportunity of home ownership. We know how important the issues like home ownership are to individual people, Mr. Speaker, and we need to strive, Mr. Speaker, to open the doors to allow those young people today that are entering the workforce, wanting to buy a first home, and can't buy a first home, Mr. Speaker.

We need to develop and look at programs that help families, young families, have the opportunity of home ownership, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had a HomeFirst program which money was set aside; the demand far exceeded the dollars. And people have called my office in the last year talking about how they went to seminars about the homes first program, were approved, go to the bank, Mr. Speaker, and then find there's no money, Mr. Speaker, for that program any longer because the money has expired.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about health care. We had a promise from the previous government that health care would be improved. Yet we saw a report this year from the Fraser Institute this year that said waiting times have actually increased in many surgical areas and diagnostic areas, Mr. Speaker. Now you can't necessarily fix everything overnight, Mr. Speaker, but this is another area where significant resources need to be put in order to put the people's health in our province first, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we hear the Environmental minister and the Premier talking about the potential of a carbon tax because they're not going to be able to meet their own targets in greenhouse gas emission reduction, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, are we having a carbon tax or aren't we? We need to know, Mr. Speaker. This government needs to come clean and let us know what their true intentions are.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks talking for a few minutes about our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. Our Crown corporations have delivered for the people of this province for many years a very, strong, viable product and services to consumers, Mr. Speaker. We've had the lowest utility rates in the country.

You could afford to drive a vehicle here as a young person much cheaper than you could in most jurisdictions in Canada.

Our natural gas rates were among, if not the lowest in Canada year after year. Our power rates also were competitive, Mr. Speaker, not to mention our telephone and telecommunications, Mr. Speaker, the most, shall I say, competitive environment for a Crown corporation in Canada, Mr. Speaker, remain competitive, remain profitable, and deliver services for the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we can do nothing that erodes that base, that confidence in these Crown corporations, or do anything that leads to the privatization or the losing of the fundamental base of these Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan need to be concerned after the changes made this week by this government.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be concerned about the future of our Crown corporations and we do actually . . . I, Mr. Speaker, implore the government to be very careful in what they do with the Crowns so that these Crowns remain profitable enterprises in our province, delivering the cheapest possible utilities to the people, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan today has the opportunity to live . . . We have the opportunity to live, pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a province with prosperity like we've never seen — but prosperity that was built through the sacrifice of the people of the province and built largely by the previous government. Now, Mr. Speaker, we can't squander this. We have to use that benefit very carefully for the well-being of all the people of our province, Mr. Speaker.

And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, there are several things that have not been addressed by this government. There are things that they have not said that they would do. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the most obvious is, Mr. Speaker, we have not seen the

property tax cut that was promised during the election, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to have, Mr. Speaker. It should be done now, not a year from now, not 18 months from now, not two years from now, Mr. Speaker.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to support the Throne Speech. But, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member from Carrot River.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to start by congratulating our newest member from Cumberland. And I'm sorry that, or I imagine he feels sorry, he didn't get a choice of seatmates. But I know what it's like, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when I take a look around here, us backbenchers sometimes just get caught with, you know, whatever.

I would like to bring greetings to this Assembly from Carrot River Valley which, as everybody knows here, is the nicest constituency, the best constituency in all of Saskatchewan. And I would like to thank the people, I would like to thank the people of our constituency for supporting me. I would like to thank our executive. I especially would like to thank my CA [constituency assistant] who does all the hard work in the constituency. And I would like to thank my family for letting me do this job and stay away from our homes for quite some time.

I would actually like to have a quote here. Now this is actually on a little bit more serious basis, but I have a quote here and it actually goes for all members of our Assembly here. It's a quote that was done by Alexander Sanders, who is the circuit court judge in South Carolina, and he gave this quote to the graduating class at the University of South Carolina. And I quote:

As responsibility is passed to your hands it will not do as you live the rest of your life to assume that someone else will bear the major burdens, that someone else will demonstrate the key convictions, that someone else will run for office, that someone else will take care of the poor, that someone else will visit the sick, protect civil rights, enforce the law, preserve culture, transmit values, maintain civilization and defend freedom. You must never forget that what you do not value will not be valued, that what you do not remember will not be remembered, that what you do not change will not be changed and that what you do not do will not be done.

This is a great quote for all the members of this Assembly. And I know that we sometimes sit here and we have our differences — actually more than sometimes — but I think everybody in this Assembly tries to work their hardest and move forward. A good example is this Throne Speech. It is a very, very exciting Throne Speech, and I think it should be well supported. I know I certainly support it.

We were challenged, we were challenged by our Premier, Mr.

Speaker, to go out into our constituencies this summer and travel our constituencies and find what the people wanted — what was best for Saskatchewan, what was best for their constituency. And I think that is exactly what we did, Mr. Speaker. We came back, we came back and that is what the Throne Speech reflects.

The reason I got into politics, the reason I got into politics, Mr. Speaker, was because of our children. We've all seen over the years where our children have moved out of province, have left this province with less and less people at all times. And how, how, Mr. Speaker, are we going to support our infrastructure if we keep on seeing businesses leave, people leave? How is this going to support the infrastructure that we so desperately want in Saskatchewan?

Well guess what? Since we have changed this government, since we have gotten in, since back in November 7 of last year, Mr. Speaker, we have seen our population increase by 16,000 people — 16,000 people. My son came out of university and got a job. Got a job right here in Saskatchewan. He doesn't have to go and work in Alberta like I did and a lot of my friends did. This is great. I have a daughter who is in university, in her second year of university. I am expecting her, I'm expecting her to be able to stay in this province and get a job when this is done.

[16:30]

You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan is leading the country. We're leading the country in wholesale trade growth. We're leading the country in export sales growth, retail sales growth, and we've got so many other numerous achievements. Who would have thunk it just a few years ago? We are moving forward.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I was just at a CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] meeting a couple of weeks ago in Winnipeg. And there, of course as everybody here knows, they had members from all across Canada. Everybody, everybody there was talking about Saskatchewan; how Saskatchewan is moving forward, how Saskatchewan is moving ahead.

You know, coming from a farm background, it's been well said; you know this is next year country, Mr. Speaker. Well I, along with the members on this side, sit back and say, next year country is here. Next year country is here, Mr. Speaker.

A real good example, being from rural Saskatchewan, our regional parks were suffering. Our regional parks were basically going broke. They just couldn't supply what we needed in rural Saskatchewan. Our minister increased it from \$75,000, the grants to regional parks, to \$300,000 in just one year. Just in one year.

**An Hon. Member:** — They took away the wiener roast tax.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Yes sir, Saskatchewan right now is set to weather the storm. You know, we're being prudent. We're lowering debt. By the end of this fiscal year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will have lowered the debt just about 40 per cent, 38 per cent. That's going to mean hundreds, hundreds of millions of dollars to save in the years to come. Moving



forward.

On top of that, in case something may go wrong, in case maybe the economy does slow in Saskatchewan somehow, although I don't know how, we're putting away almost \$2 billion in the Growth and Financial Security Fund.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's real money.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — You're right. You're right. This is real money. This is actual money, not just a place to go and borrow money from. It's cash. And as our Premier has said, Mr. Speaker, many a time, cash is king. This is our insurance policy. You wouldn't have a house without insurance. You wouldn't have a car without insurance. And I know that my wife insists that I have lots of insurance on me. Mind you I won't tell her how much because I might not be around if I did. And I do want to be around for a while. That being said, this government will not run this province without an insurance policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about infrastructure, \$1.5 billion in this Throne Speech going into infrastructure. Now I don't have to tell anybody about the road systems that we had in this province or lack thereof. And you know something? Nobody, nobody is complaining, Mr. Speaker, about having to stop on the roads because of construction. In our area everybody's saying, attaboy; that's a good job. Fourteen hundred kilometres, 1,400 kilometres of road being done this year — this is absolutely fantastic.

Also we know about our health care system, Mr. Speaker. Our health care system . . . I've spoke about hospitals before. I originally was born in Arborfield and Arborfield's my hometown. And then we moved to Carrot River when I was young. A matter of a few years ago, the previous administration shut down the hospital in Arborfield. They shut down the hospital in Arborfield and told everybody don't worry, don't worry; Carrot River is only 15 miles away. Four years later, four years later they shut down the hospital in Carrot River and said, don't worry; Nipawin is only 25 miles away. Boy am I glad that we won the last election because they probably would have been saying, after that, don't worry; P.A. [Prince Albert] is only 117 miles away.

We are moving forward. We're moving forward on the health system, and we're also, our government is committed to putting in support programs for rural doctors. We've taken action. Our government has taken action on recruiting and retraining. We said during the election campaign we would put 800 new nurses into the province within four years, Mr. Speaker. We've already done half of that in only one year — half of that in one year, Mr. Speaker. We're moving forward, and we have to. We have to because — let's face it — our province is increasing in population. Let's get the people in here. We've got to service the people.

We also added 24 undergraduate seats and 24 new residency seats, and that's soon going to be upgraded to 40 and 60 respectively. This is a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that this government has made.

Just the other day we had an historic announcement from our Social Services minister of \$76.9 million for people with

disabilities. Now, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly relate to this. Our first-born had cerebral palsy, so I know first-hand how much this is needed and how much this is appreciated. It's just another example of good government on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to also mention the monies allocated to our local municipalities. You know we originally said that we would give them 7 per cent to help with their infrastructure. Then we went up to 15 per cent, all within one year. Do you realize what this is going to do for our local municipalities, for our bridges, for our roads? Not only that, we threw in \$75 million interest free so these towns that are expanding now can put in new lots, new residential areas, because this province is growing.

Mr. Speaker, since the province is growing, we're going to need more power. SaskPower's going to need more power. I think last winter we were at something like 98 per cent capacity when it was very cold. Mr. Speaker, we have 30 per cent of the world's uranium sitting here right in Saskatchewan. Now what we should do, what we should do is look at getting a nuclear reactor set up within this province. Let's do the enrichment of uranium. Let's go. Let's go full hog. Let's make it move.

We're also talking about having the world's first carbon capture sequestration plant for the coal generating. Now I know that the other side has complained about this quite often. But they sat there and they said, you know you're putting a whole bunch of money into this; what are we getting out of it? But yet they wanted to help protect the environment, and yet what did they ever do? They didn't do anything. We're trying to move forward. This is brand new technology that is going to move Saskatchewan not just into the forefront of Canada, but in the forefront of the world.

Mr. Speaker, another thing near and dear to my heart is involving our First Nations people. We have two First Nations communities within the Carrot River Valley constituency — Red Earth and Shoal Lake — Mr. Speaker. We need the training, and we need the education to help them move forward, to help them move forward and help improve Saskatchewan and our population in total.

We also have said that we are going to teach the treaties in the schools. This, Mr. Speaker, is going to help alleviate some of the misconceptions that are out there amongst non-First Nations people. And I give a lot of credit to our minister from Kelvington-Wadena for moving a lot of this stuff forward.

We all know that Saskatchewan seniors have offered much in the past, Mr. Speaker, for this wonderful province and they still do. Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to them. Unfortunately income assistance program for low-income seniors has not increased since 1992. 1992 was the last time that some of the most important people within this province have had an increase.

This government has just made a huge announcement for low-income seniors that's going to improve their quality of life by providing them with as much as \$1,200 more per year. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to making life better for everybody in the province. And let's do absolutely everything, the determination to provide our seniors with nothing but the

best.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of our seniors also come from an agricultural background. Now we, we as a government have not forgotten our roots, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to help our farm families. You know, we have a Minister of Agriculture who understands what agriculture absolutely is in this province, who has people working in his department who come from an agricultural background. We're going to be moving the ag stability administration right here to Saskatchewan, so when farmers call up, when farmers call up, the people in the office actually know what they're talking about. We had a commission to go around the province to study the crop insurance, and that is another commitment we have made to move our crop insurance forward, to move it into a new type of crop insurance for Saskatchewan that is more benefiting to the farmers.

Another thing we've done for the farmers is looking for long-term, secure water supplies for southwestern Saskatchewan where they've had a drought for quite some time. These are things, Mr. Speaker, that our government is moving towards.

Another bone of contention in this great province of ours has to be income tax, and this Throne Speech has certainly addressed that. For far too long, far too long, Mr. Speaker, we have stifled our economy. We drove out business, and we created a loss of not only opportunity but population and prosperity. To say that this has been addressed is an understatement, Mr. Speaker. This is the largest, the largest tax cut this province has ever seen.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[16:45]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, 80,000 people will be taken off of the tax rolls — some of the lower income people who really, really need the money. A family of four in Saskatchewan will have the highest level of personal tax exemptions in all of Canada — not just the Western provinces, not the Eastern provinces, but in all of Canada. These measures will reduce taxes for Saskatchewan people by \$300 million per year.

And that is not all the good news. That is not all the good news from this government, Mr. Speaker. To top it off, this government will introduce a new low-income tax credit which will increase the amount of money that the people at the low end will receive from our government.

I guess my time is moving up here, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Do you want more? Do you want more? Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about Saskatchewan. Now we've all heard over the years how Central Canada was always the economic driver, the economic driver of Canada. You know something? It's here right now, right now. The Ontario government announced Wednesday that they probably will be having problems with their economic house, and here in Saskatchewan we are just doing so well.

One of the reasons we're doing well is we're diversifying. We don't have to sell strictly to the United States. We don't have to sell strictly to Eastern Canada. We've got overseas markets.

That's why Saskatchewan is doing so well. We're doing well on oil. We're doing well on potash. We're doing well on grains. We're going to be doing really well on uranium, and hopefully within given amount of time, we'll be having enriched uranium going out to help the world supply their power.

Mr. Speaker, we want as a government to assist every aspect of every man, every woman, and every child in this great province called Saskatchewan. This Throne Speech is higher, broader, and nobler than any other Throne Speech I have ever heard. That is why I support the Throne Speech and I do not support the amendment. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to make comments on the Throne Speech. First of all, before I make my comments I would, as everyone has, like to extend my congratulations and my sincerest welcome to our newest member from Cumberland. Also would like to thank my constituency assistant, Tracy Goodheart, for all the work that she does for the constituency and the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview.

I want to make special mention today of the Parkridge Centre and the staff and volunteers at that Parkridge Centre. The staff have over the years put together different programs for fundraising. They hold a fall country hoedown, and last year I was here making a statement on Pennies for Parkridge. And most recently, they have installed computers for the residents. They have computers and the ability to also have video connections through the Internet, Mr. Speaker. They have their own print shop. The residents work on developing cards for all occasions and all seasons. And our office, Mr. Speaker, has made use of those cards throughout the year. And with that, I do want to commend all the staff and the volunteers at the Parkridge Centre.

Mr. Speaker, on another front I'd also like to make mention of, at one point in time we had some overcrowding in some of our high schools on the west side of Saskatoon. And the previous NDP administration was able to assist in building two new high schools, Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas. Both are connected with a world-class pool and gymnasium. Mr. Speaker, all this came by because of the result of work between the city of Saskatoon, the two school boards, and the previous administration working together to make this a reality.

Both the Parkridge Centre, its activities, and the high schools and the new pool, which is a state-of-the-art pool with stainless steel bottom, Mr. Speaker, which allows the swimmers to get the best speeds . . . And we expect that we'll have many people travelling for meets across the United States and Canada to improve their speeds. And both of these have brought great benefits to the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Speaker, after the election, I had over the past few months had the opportunity to do some door knocking and I met a good number of people. And a good number of those people were potash workers who are constituents of mine and unfortunately they're involved at present in a strike. This strike is causing

hardship for their families and I want to acknowledge those potash workers at this time — and some of whom were here, Mr. Speaker, and who I had an opportunity to introduce at the legislature. And I just want to say to them that everybody in Saskatchewan is watching and hoping that there is an early resolve to their situation that they find themselves in. Mr. Speaker, this is a great province with a lot of resources and I only wish the best for our people.

Mr. Speaker, when I was also out door knocking, I heard from the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview. And we've heard many speeches here today — the government taking credit for the wealth that they find themselves in their coffers. I must point out that the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview tell me they're not fooled by the Saskatchewan Party at all.

And in fact what most of them on the doorstep . . . They're actually quite livid and exasperated, Mr. Speaker, because they want to say things like, can somebody please tell them that it was you that created this wealth that they are now enjoying? Can somebody please convey this message, convey this message to the Premier? It is absolutely, if I may, driving them to distraction that the days that they listen, when they turn on their TV and hear the Sask Party saying, Mr. Speaker, that they have created this wealth. How did they arrive at this, they ask me. How did they arrive at this? In which province were they living before they were elected?

Now one of the things that they also say is, could you please remind them that it was the NDP Premier Romanow and Premier Calvert who brought us from, Mr. Speaker, what I would say what we were is an economic basket case of the '80s to where we are today? And that's plain and simple. The Conservative . . . Sask Party, whatever the name of the day is, drove this province into debt and it was the NDP that got them out. Simple. They drove us into debt, we got them out.

But, Mr. Speaker, I accept that there was a fair and democratic election. And I accept, humbly accept that the people of this province chose the Saskatchewan Party. But in finishing, in discussions also at the doorstep I just tell the good people of Saskatoon Fairview to be patient because November 2011 will be here before we know it.

And, Mr. Speaker, this summer I had the good fortune of travelling throughout the province, and I was driving through Weyburn. And, Mr. Speaker, it does look like there is good fortune around Weyburn. The oil patch activity . . . And I think the member from Big Muddy, Weyburn talked about that and we hear the new Bakken play is driving exploration and Crown sales through the roof.

But, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy making his address to the Throne Speech. He's come a long way. Some people said, great job. But I think I want to talk about what he said . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I did learn something. I did.

Here's what he said. Mr. Speaker, here's what he said. I'll quote:

When you look at schools, and I know Weyburn Comprehensive in Weyburn for one example, the

Weyburn Hospital is another, that is a really pressing concern in Weyburn and area. We're a growing community and we have a quite old hospital facility and so I'm sure the Minister of Health will be listening very closely to this . . .

Now he clearly says, Mr. Speaker, that he hopes the Minister of Health is listening. Now isn't that something? I would just say go — he's sitting close to the Minister of Health — and talk to him. Talk to him. Talk to the Minister of Education. Tell them you need a high school. Tell them you need a hospital. Tell them. Maybe he could get two, two high schools for Weyburn. Maybe he could.

Now the member says he hopes that the minister was listening. Now I can recall that it was the Sask Party on an ongoing basis would talk about nothing coming back to their communities from the oil and the resources that were there. And now here we have the member from Big Muddy, Weyburn saying nothing is happening in the community. We don't have schools, we don't have health care facilities, and on top of that he hopes, he hopes, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Health is listening. He's hoping that he's listening.

Now I know that they're not listening to the people of this province, because we've been talking about certain issues all year and they haven't been listening. Now I don't recall seeing the Minister of Health dozing off, so I don't think it's because he was dozing off that he's not listening, but maybe he doesn't care. Maybe he's just tuned out. Maybe he knows all the answers, and he doesn't think the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy needs assistance.

But I also understand and hopefully, hopefully I can assist the member from Weyburn get muddy — Big Muddy — to get his needs. Because obviously the Minister of Health is listening now. He's listening now. I've obviously got his attention. Now maybe, maybe he can ignore his own members, but he's obviously listening now, and that's good.

Now unfortunately maybe the words . . . maybe he will treat, maybe he'll treat, maybe he will treat the member the same way he does us, and so I would wish all the best of luck to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Now also the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. He went on to highways. On highways he was talking about, he said, and I quote, "You drive around places in parts of my constituency, and it is quite evident that the highways have little if no, next to none, next to zero." Mr. Speaker, they have been here almost a year and there's been zero. They've had zero done in their communities.

And they're sitting, sitting there together, and I see the Minister of Health, he's chirping from his seat. In fact I see them smiling. They're sitting there smiling. They think this is actually funny. Well I don't think, I don't think it's funny, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's funny at all.

Mr. Speaker, soon they'll be blaming. Soon they'll be blaming and taking out and saying it's the NDP's fault; it's the NDP's fault for leaving them \$2 billion. That's our fault too. Everything is our fault. And maybe, Mr. Speaker, maybe the 3.1

billion pile of money . . . And they'll still say somehow that's our fault, because now what can they do? They don't know what to do with it.

Obviously the member from Weyburn Big-Muddy is saying, could you fix our roads, build a school? How about a hospital? Is he going to be sitting there next year saying, build a school, fix our roads? We're waiting. We're waiting. I'm waiting with a bated breath to see what'll happen here. This is very interested.

Well I would just have this to say, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. How's it working for you? How's it working? How's this working for you?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the constituents from Saskatoon Fairview and the people of this province are also waking up to the fact of a 20 per cent increase in their SaskEnergy rates, natural gas rates. And they wondered, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — It now being past the time of adjournment, the Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
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**Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff**  
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