



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

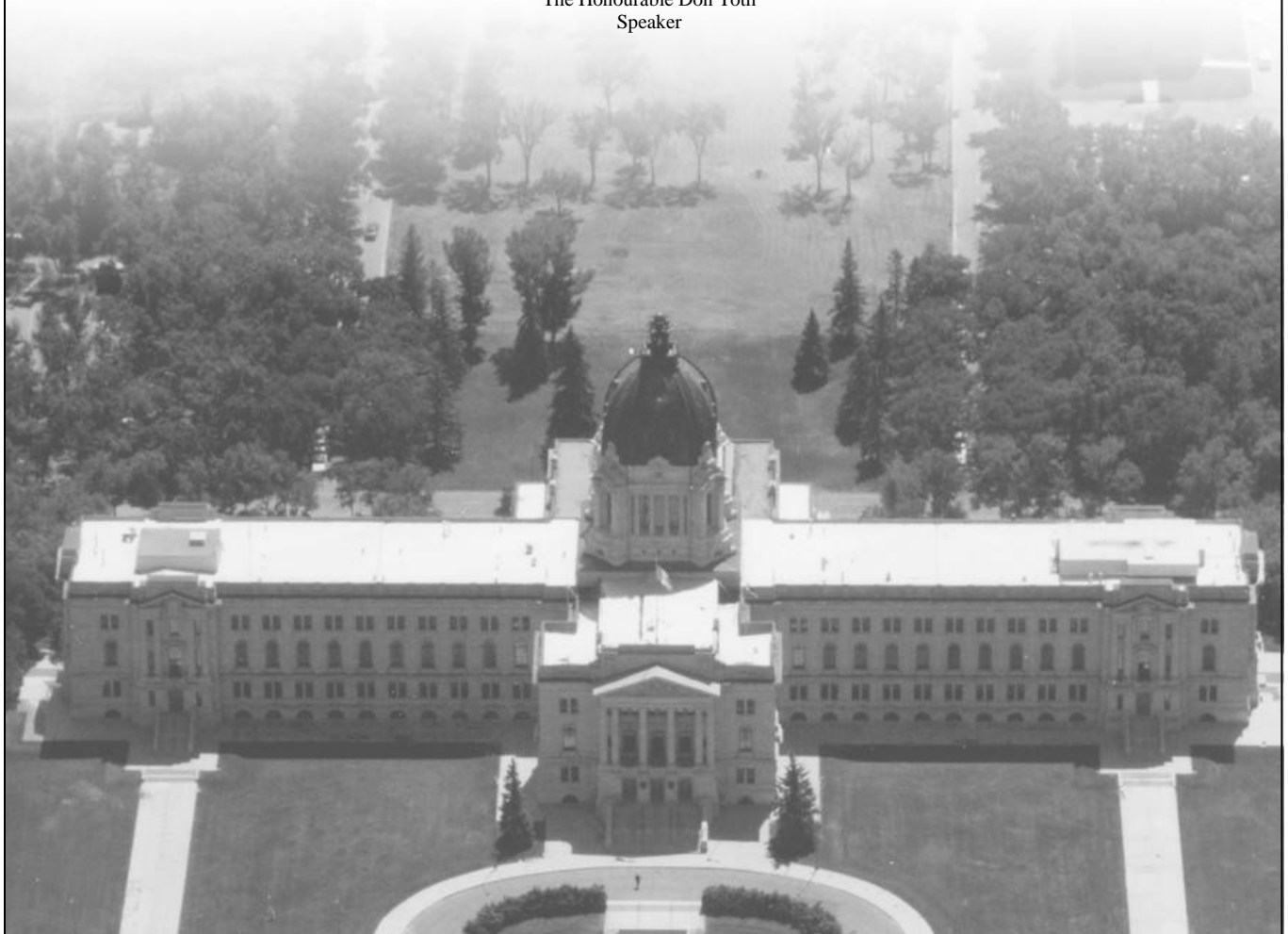
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the other members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my pleasure to introduce a special guest seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, joining us today and spending the day with me here at the legislature is Rita Hallberg. Rita, can you give a wave and stand up?

Mr. Speaker, Rita and her husband Dennis live in Weyburn, and they've been married for 58 years. Rita is a very strong supporter, a great supporter during our campaigns, one of our best door knockers. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is a funny story about Rita outrunning a dog that was chasing her one afternoon, Mr. Speaker. She's a shirttail relative actually, and a very humorous person. And I'm looking forward to spending the day with her, and I would ask all members to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you several leaders from Saskatchewan's business community who are in attendance today seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Mike Wainwright and Steve McLellan of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce; Jenn Nelson of the Regina Regional Economic Development Association; Doug Folk of the Saskatchewan Construction Association; Marilyn Braun-Pollon, CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], Pam Schwann of the Saskatchewan Mining Association; Doug Simon, Brandt Industries; Gary Mearns and Larissa Dagnone from the Federated Co-Op.

These individuals are symbolic of the thousands of employers across our great province who, like their employees, are at the forefront of the wave of economic momentum we see taking place across Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition, I would like to join with the minister in welcoming the representatives from various business sectors. I hope they have an enjoyable day in the legislature and that their meetings

are productive.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature this morning, I'd like to introduce three individuals in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who are here representing the Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan. Joining us today are Shantel Lipp who is the president of the Road Builders Association, first vice-chairman, Ron Smith, and with him is Jim Short, the past chairman.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals are here to witness the announcement that we'll be making about the tender release that's coming up very shortly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Furber: — Once again I rise in support of a petition for 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, community agencies, and organizations and educators that interface with gangs — so that he might understand the risks and challenges that gangs offer to our communities.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of Station 20, an important project in Saskatoon. The prayer 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.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition, some are from my constituency, Saskatoon Massey Place, and other individuals are from across Saskatoon, from both sides of the

river. Thank you.

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 and concerned citizens of Regina.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Autism Spectrum Disorder Services

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to provide my fellow members with an update on what our government is doing to address autism spectrum disorder, or ASD.

Mr. Speaker, one in every 166 children born in Saskatchewan is eventually diagnosed with ASD. For years parents have told us how difficult it is to get effective autism treatment. Mr. Speaker, these voices have been heard. Our government is taking action to improve autism services for children in the province. We commit to provide \$3 million annually for autism services.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we have the framework and action plan for autism spectrum disorders services in Saskatchewan, coming from the work of the provincial autism advisory committee.

Mr. Speaker, our action plan will see 15 ASD consultants throughout the province acting as the first point of contact for families seeking ASD services. These consultants will design individualized intervention programs for their clients and act as case managers. They will make sure that children with ASD get the right services from the right service providers.

Mr. Speaker, this plan is an ambitious undertaking. It's not a quick fix and we won't change the system overnight, but with the help of the committee — and we thank the members of the committee for their service — we are headed in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Homeless Count

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been hearing a lot in the news lately about homelessness in our communities, especially with winter knocking at our door.

One group decided to find out more about this in Saskatoon. On May 22, Community-University Institute for Social Research, CUISR, conducted the first ever count of the homeless in our city. Tackling a very difficult issue with an even more difficult challenge, CUISR released its findings during National Anti-poverty Week.

A total of 260 people — 228 adults and 32 children — were counted as being homeless on the night of May 22, 2008. Of those, 199 people — 169 adults and 30 children — were housed by service providers, emergency shelters, and transitional housing; and 48 people — 46 adults and 2 children — were counted outdoors.

Most respondents wanted help finding housing and reported they were not currently receiving help from housing, health, or justice providers. Perceived housing affordability and availability were the key barriers to finding housing. Also of interest was that nearly 70 per cent of those in shelters were employed, with most working full-time.

Many volunteers helped out on this survey, believing that knowledge is power and knowing the facts will help us all make better decisions. CUISR is planning further research in this area, particularly in the hidden homelessness area, which many think particularly relevant to Saskatchewan and our climate. Mr. Speaker, let's all renew our commitment and work towards the day no one is homeless in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Moose Jaw Housing Co-operative Celebrates 25 Years

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize the residents of Crestview Manor who, along with their friends and families, celebrated 25 years of co-operative housing in Moose Jaw last Saturday. The celebration included greetings from dignitaries and entertainment by Brett Young, a grandson of one of the residents. Special tribute was made to Gladys McKenzie, Char Ayers, and Hazel Powell, who are original residents of Crestview Manor.

The idea of co-operatives is a Saskatchewan tradition where people with common interests work toward a common objective. This was the concept in 1981 with an idea to construct an affordable housing development that would be available for superannuated teachers of Moose Jaw for retirement living. The Crestview Manor Housing Co-op was

formed, and Crestview Manor opened its doors in 1983 with 63 residents made up of superannuated teachers and other retirement area residents applying for quality housing in relaxing accommodations.

Even after 25 years, Crestview Manor is a comfortable, modern residence overlooking the Hillcrest golf course where residents can enjoy the scenery of all four seasons of the year. The complex operates with a number of volunteers who take care of the maintenance, the social activities, finance, and membership under the board chairman of George Axon. Any of the residents would be pleased to tell you that the quality of life they enjoy is very well received in this well-situated and well-maintained facility. Congratulations to all of the residents of Crestview Manor and best wishes for many years of health and happiness. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Congratulations to *Wapos Bay* and Raven Brass

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to the made-in-Saskatoon series *Wapos Bay* for winning a Gemini Award last week for its vocal talent. Winning Best Individual or Ensemble Performance in an Animated Program or Series were Gordon Tootoosis, Raven Brass, Trevor Cameron, Lorne Cardinal, Taylor Cook, Eric Jackson, Andrea Menard, and DerRic Starlight, for the episode “The Guardians.” Great talents all of them, Mr. Speaker, but I want to draw special attention to one Ms. Raven Brass.

Raven Brass is 15 years old. She’s in grade 10 at Tommy Douglas high school in Saskatoon and has been part of the cast of *Wapos Bay* since she was in grade 6. Raven went out to the auditions for *Wapos* and it’s like it was meant to be. The name of the role she won was Raven. When she’s not working on *Wapos* with the likes of Gordon Tootoosis and Andrea Menard, Raven is a very busy teenager. She’s done some boxing, played football, and works at Mariposa. She’s got an impressive arts resumé, having taken ballet at five, attending several theatre camps at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company, and has been a cast member of Saskatchewan Express for three seasons.

And I know as well that Raven comes from a First Nations family that is very strong in First Nations tradition and culture. She’s a good daughter. In a story from *The StarPhoenix* in the lead-up to the Gemini win, Raven’s dad, Mervin Brass, had this to say, “Raven is such a good kid . . . She helps me at home . . .” And on the Gemini he had this to say, “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for my daughter. A lot of aboriginal kids don’t get a chance like this . . .”

Well Mervin and Raven’s mom, Faye Whitequill, were on hand when Raven and the rest of the cast from *Wapos* won the Gemini, and I know they are very proud of their daughter. I know Raven’s mushum and kokum are very proud, as is the whole family.

And I want to let Raven know, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and her home MLA [Member of the Legislative

Assembly], the member for Saskatoon Fairview, and for the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, that we are all very proud of her. Again congratulations, Raven. Ēkosi, megweech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Seniors’ Income Plan

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in replying to the Minister of Social Services’ announcement concerning changes to the seniors’ income plan, the member for Saskatoon Centre made some remarks that suggest he isn’t really aware of how the program operates. And I thought it important to bring him up to speed.

The member opposite might also have learned the details of the program by asking one of several NDP [New Democratic Party] former Social Services ministers, including the member from Riversdale. It is not surprising since they have ignored the program for 16 years.

The member opposite suggested that the increase would be merely clawed back through rent increases within seniors’ housing managed by the Sask Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite would have been able to know with a simple call or a look at relevant material, is that the benefit senior receives under seniors’ income plan is not included in the income calculation used for setting the rental rates for seniors. Mr. Speaker, the member went on to suggest that the benefit be indexed to the cost of living. Had we done that, the increase would have been 40 per cent. We thought 111 per cent would be better.

The member yesterday said he wasn’t sure that this was well thought out. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that these changes have been thought out and, perhaps more importantly, seniors of the province thought of. Who is taking care of the citizens? Our government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

Saskatoon Young Men’s Christian Association Anniversary

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today and extend my congratulations to the Saskatoon YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association] on its 100-year anniversary. Last Friday I, along with the member from Saskatoon Centre, had the opportunity to attend the YMCA’s 100-year gala at TCU Place. The dress code was business attire, but the mood of the evening was kept light as attendees were invited to wear their running shoes — a hat tip I suppose to the influence the YMCA has had in helping people stay active over the past century.

Mr. Speaker, the YMCA plays a very important role in Saskatoon. Each year over 6,000 citizens access services

offered by the YMCA. These services range from child care, summer camp programs, and year-round fitness activities. But, Mr. Speaker, the YMCA is about so much more than simply keeping people fit and helping make the summers more enjoyable for youth. The YMCA is about building community. It's about making our city a better place to live.

This invaluable role was evident to me through hearing from the people who attended the event. People genuinely spoke about how the Y helped them as a youth or how it provides the current friendships that make life enjoyable. Through stories and conversation, it was clear to me that friendships and community are central to everything that occurs at the YMCA. Members shared how they are encouraged by fellow members to not miss their regularly scheduled workouts. That's the type of encouragement we all need and appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the Saskatoon YMCA for 100 years of making a difference in Saskatoon and also join me in wishing them all the best in the next 100. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Leadership Candidate

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see that the member for Regina Dewdney has fulfilled his duty. He has lined up the required number of supportive NDP MLAs that the Alberta oil executive, Dwain Lingenfelter, demanded. The member for Athabasca says that he supports Mr. Lingenfelter because he has experience diversifying the economy. He sure does, Mr. Speaker.

He diversified our economy with Channel Lake. That lost millions of taxpayers' dollars. He diversified our economy with SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. That lost millions of taxpayers' dollars. In the five years that Dwain Lingenfelter was deputy premier, Saskatchewan's economy was pretty much stagnant. We were losing jobs; we were losing people. In fact during his tenure, nearly 20,000 people left Saskatchewan. Dwain Lingenfelter's record is so bad that even he quit our province and moved to Alberta.

And now that things are going great, the NDP are begging for him to come back. And why — so he can mess it up all over again? Mr. Speaker, the NDP is stuck in the past, and Dwain Lingenfelter is just more of the same. The people of Saskatchewan have seen this movie before. They didn't like it then, and they have no interest in the sequel. While we now have a province, a government, and a Premier all looking towards the future, the NDP is all lining up behind yesterday's man.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Public Safety Procedures

Mr. Yates: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems there's an awful lot going on in Corrections, Public Safety and Policing that the minister doesn't know. We learned last week that he didn't know that dangerous criminals were being wrongfully released. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the minister didn't know for 11 days that a prisoner has been wrongfully imprisoned for an additional 6 months.

Mr. Speaker, a very simple question to the minister: what exactly does he know about what's going on within his department?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for that question. I'll get to that question in a moment. But before I begin I want to offer a very heartfelt, sincere apology to Mr. Dufresne on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan. This is a very unfortunate incident, situation that occurred with him and it's one that never should have happened, Mr. Speaker. The province of Saskatchewan will look into this through the review being conducted, and the ministry officials will provide answers, Mr. Speaker, to Mr. Dufresne and to the province of Saskatchewan.

Now on to the member from Regina Dewdney's question. When we have a situation like this, Mr. Speaker, the morning after Mr. Dufresne was released from the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, officials began an internal review, as is policy, Mr. Speaker. They are conducting a review, getting to the bottom of what happened. I was notified on Monday, Mr. Speaker, because this individual posed no risk to the public. That's the way that things are supposed to operate, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of bluster coming from over there. And we all know why people bluster — it's to cover up when they don't know something. Mr. Speaker, is this minister who didn't know that there was a gang problem in Saskatchewan jails despite numerous reports, his own job description from the Premier, and his own party's platform? Is this the minister who doesn't know why his own policy failed and doesn't know if it was ever communicated to front-line workers in his ministry?

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will he have answers to at least some of the questions we've asked this week? Or is that yet another thing that he doesn't know?

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 you to the member opposite for that question. One thing I want to make perfectly clear is, this government inherited a system of problems, Mr. Speaker, that we now have to deal with — in various ministries as well as my own, Mr. Speaker, in Corrections.

I will tell you the difference between this government and that government, Mr. Speaker, is we have no problem in being open and transparent in how we do our business, Mr. Speaker. Reviews are being conducted into all the serious situations since August, Mr. Speaker. I will await for the recommendations from those reviews and investigations before I make any comment at all, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Cost of Living

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Social Services announced an increase to the seniors' income plan and this of course was welcome news. But seniors know, Mr. Speaker, that the government often gives with one hand and picks their pockets with the other. Yesterday I asked if the benefit increases will be clawed back in the form of rent increases for seniors in Saskatchewan housing units, and the minister was unable to answer. Now a source in today's *Leader-Post* suggests they will not be — and of course we've heard from the back bench on this — but I would like to get the minister officially on record.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services: will she stand and guarantee that her increases to the seniors' income plan will not be clawed back for seniors living in Saskatchewan housing units?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to stand and answer that question. But first I would like to clarify, the member opposite did not ask the question yesterday, so I did not have the opportunity to answer it. However, no, it is not clawed back.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now yesterday a representative of the Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees put it best in a media scrum about this seniors' income plan when she asked, and I will quote, "Are people going to see real dollar increases in their pockets?"

Mr. Speaker, rents in this province are skyrocketing. SaskEnergy rates are rising by 20 per cent. SaskPower rates are

going up in the near future, and we have yet to see any action on the education property tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: given the historic surplus this government now enjoys, will she guarantee seniors today will see real dollar increases in their pockets and not see this money swallowed up by the cost of living? Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I have told this House and what I'm very proud that our government's been able to do is to stop 16 years of neglect to the seniors of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — For 16 years, inflation, the cost of living has gone up 40 per cent in those 16 years. And did that government or NDP when they were in government even look at it? They didn't give the seniors one red cent. Is this going to be in their pocket? Yes, Mr. Speaker, it will be in their pocket. It will be delivered in the same mechanism that it's been delivered in the past. They don't even have to apply. It will be a cheque that they will receive in the mail, and it will be \$110 over and above what they gave the seniors when they were government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we could talk a lot about the things we've done. The universal drug plan would be one example. But one way to guarantee that this money won't be eaten up by utility rate increases and rising house costs or the rising costs of prescription drug plans would be through indexation. Mr. Speaker, the federal government provides regular increases to the guaranteed income supplement, or GIS, intended to address the rising cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will she commit here today to the indexing of the seniors' income plan, or SIP, to the cost of living?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sixteen years of neglect meant that the cost of living went up 40 per cent. We decided to give them 110 per cent, Mr. Speaker, which is quite considerably better than zero per cent, which is what they received for 16 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, what does that member not understand? We have indexed the shelter allowance for our clients. We have indexed the rental supplement. That is unprecedented in this country. The NDP, when they were government, indexed absolutely nothing for those that are most vulnerable in our society.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course this government has used a small portion of its historic surplus to index certain benefits. We agree with that. But of course, considering the size of their surplus, that is as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, another group of Saskatchewan people who are struggling to keep pace with the rising costs of living are workers earning minimum wage. Those workers experience the same . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you. These workers are experiencing the same utility rate increases, the same rent increases, the same inflationary pressures as anyone else, and they deserve a government who will ensure that they are able to live their lives in security and with dignity.

To the minister: will he commit today to indexing Saskatchewan's minimum wage?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the member opposite forgot, but earlier this year we substantially increased the Saskatchewan employment supplement, which goes to those individuals who are at a lower wage. And many of them, Mr. Speaker, are single parents. We also — because the working, low-income individuals qualify for the rental supplement — well gee, Mr. Speaker, we increased it and we indexed it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Political Advertising and Government Advertising

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party made a commitment in its 2007 election platform that government advertising would be, and I quote, “. . . have to be non-partisan and intended only to inform the public about programs and services for the public benefit of Saskatchewan people . . .”

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan citizens are now being mailed a leaflet extolling the virtues of the Sask Party government and directing people who want more information to the Government

of Saskatchewan website. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: who paid for the leaflet and how much did it cost?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well the hon. member is referring to a card that has been sent to every person in the province of Saskatchewan, highlighting some important information. Highlighting the fact that this government last week introduced the single largest tax cut in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker. Highlighting the fact that in our first year 40 per cent of the debt will be reduced in this province, Mr. Speaker. Highlighting the fact that there will be a half billion more in infrastructure in next year's budget, and then inviting people to respond to a website if they have questions about other government services.

Mr. Speaker, it was paid for by MLA communications expenses. I would expect it's the same sort of budget that paid for a similar piece from members opposite that, Mr. Speaker, spends time running down what's the prosperity of the province of Saskatchewan. It's got a picture of a very sad baby on the front, and it says, “Boom times?” And those NDP MLAs spent their taxpayers' money telling people how bad Saskatchewan is. We're going to tell people something a little bit different and also inviting them to respond to this card if they need more information about government services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have said that they want clear lines between political advertising and government advertising, but here we have a leaflet that clearly blurs the line. The leaflet uses government language and directs people to the Government of Saskatchewan website which is paid for, Mr. Speaker, by all Saskatchewan taxpayers. Yet the leaflet is clearly partisan and was paid for by the Sask Party caucus dollars. Why are they wilfully attempting to blur the lines between the Sask Party and the Government of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what is blurring the lines in the province of Saskatchewan is the fact that those NDP MLAs opposite use their allowances, use their communications allowance not to invite people to request information about government services, not to phone their offices in the event that they needed their help to deal with government issues, but to run down the prosperity that's going on in the province of Saskatchewan, to minimize the great momentum that we have going on in Saskatchewan.

This card did go out right across the province. MLAs from our side of the House decided it was important that Saskatchewan people knew about the priorities of their government for debt

reduction, for infrastructure investment, for historic tax cuts, and for important programs and initiatives such has been announced by the Minister of Social Services. And if they'd like more information about that plan — our plan for Saskatchewan — they need only go to the website which is also listed on the card, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite were so interested in providing information to Saskatchewan citizens that they used Sask Party colours, Sask Party photo of the Premier's face used in the last election campaign. And nowhere is there Sask Party MLA phone numbers, which I do notice on the back of the NDP MLAs' leaflet.

Mr. Speaker, just days after their most recent Throne Speech, where they clearly said that they wanted to ensure that there were clear lines between government resources and partisan resources, we see a Government of Saskatchewan website on their clearly partisan leaflet.

Mr. Speaker, this is a big mess. Should we now assume the government website is the Sask Party website?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the colour, we used the colours of the flag of the province of Saskatchewan — green and yellow. They happen to be also the party colours certainly, but we used the colours of the province of Saskatchewan. I've seen I guess similar steps taken by MLAs opposite with respect to their signage in their information.

Later this session we're going to have some legislation introduced in this Legislative Assembly that seeks to ensure an end to what we saw from members opposite when they were the government, where in the dying days of their government, they spent \$2 million of government taxpayer-funded advertising trying to burnish a tarnished image, trying to turn things around for what was at that time a very tired and old and lost government, Mr. Speaker.

Given the line of questioning here today, given the fact that they would want to run down Saskatchewan with their own MLA communications, I think the opposition is as tired and as rundown as the government, Mr. Speaker, was that we replaced.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question to the Saskatchewan Premier: is the Government of Saskatchewan website, paid for by all Saskatchewan taxpayers, now the

website for the Sask Party caucus and Sask Party membership?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the government website, the website for the Government of Saskatchewan is a place where the people of the province can go to find out about programs and services that this government offers. It is a website that details the priorities of the government, where the government can be held accountable and people can see quite transparently the plan.

And so is that the right place for a government to talk about historic tax cuts for the people of the province? The answer is yes. Is that the right place for a government to talk about the priority it's put on debt reduction, reducing it 40 per cent in its first full budget year? The answer's yes. Is that the place for a government to talk about, Mr. Speaker, record investment and infrastructure? The answer is yes. Is that the place to talk about reducing a wait time people with physical disabilities have had for services and a place to live? The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

That website is full of the priorities of this government. We're going to do whatever we can to communicate it to the province of Saskatchewan and also to accept their input and to answer their questions. That exactly should be a priority of a Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Crown Corporations' Utility Rates and Investment Policy

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a series of questions for the Premier around utility rates and our Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know today that their SaskEnergy rates are going up 20 per cent. They also know that their SaskPower rates or electrical bills are going to go up at least 5 per cent, and the minister responsible says perhaps more.

They also know that our Crown utilities today are showing record profits of \$696 million, and they also know that this government now has a rainy day fund, a bank account of \$2 billion.

So my questions is to the Premier: why is he opposed to using a part of these record profits and this record surplus to help Saskatchewan families with their utility bills?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest utility bundle in the country. Mr. Speaker, this government continues to strongly support our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And

yes, we do continue to make investments in the Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier announced earlier this fall the largest tax cut in the history of Saskatchewan. Those tax cuts, Mr. Speaker, help every individual in this province. It helps them pay for those power bills, those energy bills, Mr. Speaker, should they rise. Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy does not make a profit on the sale of gas. It's a neutral exchange, Mr. Speaker, based on the cost of natural gas. So, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's utilities are doing very well for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, I just ask all members to be respectful of the person placing the question and the minister responding to the question. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my question is again going to be directed to the Premier. Now the minister who responded just told us that SaskEnergy rates are tied to the price of natural gas. Well I think most of us see the price of natural gas falling; we see this government increasing the rate for natural gas consumers. I don't know how that works.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we listened to the Minister Responsible for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] commit again that the clean coal project will cost at least \$1.2 billion. We also have a guarantee from the federal government that they will not fund any cost overruns which can be predicted. We also heard the Minister of CIC inform the people of Saskatchewan he intends . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we also heard the Minister of CIC tell us that he intends to spend quote "\$1 billion a year in SaskPower alone in coming years."

So my question to the Premier is this: these cost expenditures — clean coal, 1.2 billion and rising, 5 billion — how will these cost expenditures affect rates in utility bills for Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the cost of natural gas from SaskEnergy is set in the same manner as it was set under that administration when the person asking the question was the premier of this province. The gas cost is set every six months, Mr. Speaker, based on the average price of gas.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the former premier asks about the cost of SaskPower in the future, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost going to be associated with the necessity for increased generation in this province. Because over the last 16 years the former administration did not invest in increased generation because it

was their belief, Mr. Speaker, there could be no growth in Saskatchewan. They were managing for a decline, Mr. Speaker, not the growth that we have seen happen in the province of Saskatchewan since the new government was elected last November 7.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, again the minister and government will not answer a very specific question about how these cost expenditures are going to affect Saskatchewan rates. And what the minister of course fails to report to this House this morning is when the former government faced this kind of a circumstance and saw what it was going to do to Saskatchewan families, we intervened. We used, we used some surplus to limit, limit the energy increases on Saskatchewan people.

Now this question, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Premier, and only the Premier can answer it. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the situation of rising energy costs, the situation of future energy increases in utility bills are facing the people of Saskatchewan. Will the Premier today do the right thing, guarantee to the people of Saskatchewan that they will enjoy down the road the lowest cost bundle of utilities of any people in Canada?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will continue to enjoy the full benefits of the Crown sector in Saskatchewan into the future, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this province grows, all of our utilities gain new customers. New customers, Mr. Speaker, mean that there are new revenues available to the province of Saskatchewan to the benefit of us all, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we will be growing the new customers in this province, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite who continued to invest outside of this province in foreign misadventures and gambling that lost hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those investments, Mr. Speaker, would have benefited the people of Saskatchewan right here at home, Mr. Speaker. This government, Mr. Speaker, believes in our Crowns, and we're going to invest in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is not only busy raising the rates for Saskatchewan utility customers, not only are they finding new ways to spend the revenues for the Crowns, now they're finding ways to actually reduce the revenues for the Crowns. We've heard this week this new policy called Saskatchewan-first policy, where our utilities are going to be prevented from earning profits outside the borders of Saskatchewan, and they're going to be prevented from competing with entities within this province.

Now we know what the reviews are. Read the headlines in *The StarPhoenix* this morning, Mr. Speaker. Headline: “Sask. First policy will hurt viability of public utilities.” Headline: “Restricting Crowns short-sighted.”

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants the people of Saskatchewan to believe this is a good policy, then he can do it this morning by standing in this House and guaranteeing that the people of Saskatchewan will enjoy — today and down the road into the future — the lowest cost bundle of utilities in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I think it was one year ago this evening that the hon. member for Riversdale and myself were involved in a television debate in the last election campaign. And I think I ended that election debate by inviting viewers to consider the fact that there was a choice between, Mr. Speaker, those who were promoting and offering fear and those who are offering hope. And a year later nothing has changed, Mr. Speaker. A year later, and we’ve seen it this week with respect to these questions on the Crowns, nothing has changed.

The Crowns will be publicly owned in this province, Mr. Speaker, number one. Number two, we are going to focus their investment in Saskatchewan to the benefit of Saskatchewan. We believe that a growing province means there is great hope and reason for optimism for the Crowns to be able to expand by investing here. Moreover, we’ve got to deal with an infrastructure deficit in the Crowns left behind by that member when he was sitting over here, Mr. Speaker.

And while he wants to talk about the negativity all the time, why he’s focused on gloom and doom and sending out pieces like this, Mr. Speaker, the *Leader-Post* today headline says, “New data proves Sask. continues to boom”. We are leading the country, Mr. Speaker, in almost every economic category. It’s good news for us. It’s good news for the government. Most importantly, it’s good news for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Expanded Graduate Retention Program

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the individuals I introduced earlier who have joined us in the gallery today are employers who represent many different business sectors. But they do share a common commonality, one that has brought them here today. While fuelling Saskatchewan’s remarkable economic momentum, they and many others are feeling the pinch of our province’s talent challenge. In fact our government has heard from employers and other stakeholders from across Saskatchewan who are embroiled in a highly competitive labour market, and we have responded with innovative, concrete, measurable ways to turn the tide in Saskatchewan’s favour.

Today I am delighted to announce a continuation of that response.

Mr. Speaker, when it was first introduced, Saskatchewan’s graduate retention program was the most aggressive youth retention program in Canada and it remains so. Today we are announcing an expansion of this program. The Government of Saskatchewan will now provide a refundable income tax credit to rebate up to \$20,000 in tuition fees to graduates of post-secondary institutions across Canada and beyond for those who choose to pursue their careers in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — We’re taking a strong retention tool and creating an equally strong and compelling recruitment tool for our province and . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It’s difficult for the Speaker to hear. It would seem to me members would want to hear as well, at least down one side of the House. I recognize the minister.

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This expansion represents our government’s commitment to the attraction and long-term retention of the best and brightest young people from across Canada and well beyond. We want to send the message loud and clear to graduates: Saskatchewan is the best place to establish your careers and the best place to make a life. We believe that the expanded graduate retention program makes our province an even more attractive destination for post-secondary graduates, and we are pleased to extend this support to young people and employers across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to thank the minister for being kind enough to send his remarks across earlier so I had a chance to gather my thoughts.

It’s true, Mr. Speaker, as we’ve been hearing in the last few days here in the House in the Throne Speech, that our province is doing well financially. And it’s true that that’s been going on for some time, and it’s due to the hard work that the New Democrats have done on this side over the many years. It’s also true that the government inherited a strong economy, and with that strong economy, Mr. Speaker, they inherited billions of dollars.

An important part of the NDP program that was in place — that has been in place for some time — was the graduate tax exemption program, a program that provided \$100,000 of tax-free income in the first five years of employment. The beautiful thing about that program . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Prince Albert Northcote will come to order, and the member from Moose Jaw North will come to order and allow the member to respond. The

member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The beautiful thing about the graduate tax exemption program was that it was available to students in Saskatchewan and students outside of the province, so for the Saskatchewan students that had to go to another province because of programs not offered here in Saskatchewan, they had the option of coming home. It made good sense. It also made good sense because for students who were studying outside of province or abroad and were looking at Saskatchewan as a good place to live. They were eligible to receive this grad tax exemption.

So when the minister introduced the tuition rebate program that the Sask Party has put in place and is being gradually rolled out to students, our main criticism on this side of the House was that it was not available to students outside of the province, whether they were students that were forced to move for a program or students that wanted to move here. To us, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, it did not make sense to limit that type of program to students that are outside of the province, especially in a time when our economy is doing so well and we need people coming to the province.

So I am hearing news of this change, Mr. Speaker, that the program will now be available to a broader range of people. I'm glad that the Sask Party heard the criticism that came from this side of the House — and not from this side of the House, really the feedback that was received from people around the province and around the country. So this, as it stands now, it looks like this is good news, Mr. Speaker, that the program is available to more people. We'll see what the details are. And I'm glad that the Sask Party on this one are starting to accomplish some of the things on the program that the NDP program was already accomplishing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Tender Release for 2009 Construction Season

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to inform the Legislative Assembly that this year's initial tender release for the 2009 construction season is worth \$168.6 million — the largest tender release in the history of this ministry. Today's announcement proves our government's commitment to infrastructure in this province. Over the past five years, the phase 1 release has averaged about \$84 million. Today's tender release is twice that amount.

This initial tender program will improve 484 kilometres of provincial highways. Some highlights of the tender release include 165 kilometres of grade and paved projects to completely rebuild highways from the roadbed up; 284 kilometres of resurfacing projects to maintain the quality of some of the province's most heavily travelled highways. There'll be three bridge replacement projects and 374 000 tonnes of aggregate stockpiling.

Today's release is being announced earlier than usual in order to mitigate industry capacity concerns and inflationary pressures through proactive measures. Some of these measures

include introducing new delivery methods such as project bundling, partnerships, contract extensions, and the tendering of work earlier in order to secure contractors at more favourable prices. These are just some of the actions we are taking to deal with the predicted challenges associated with heavy construction in a very competitive environment.

Mr. Speaker, we have been fortunate to date because we have not deferred nor delayed any projects due to inflationary pressures or capacity concerns. This has not always been the case with other jurisdictions or other levels of government. The timing of this tender is our response to our continual discussion and contact with the road building industry in order to best use industry capacity. An early tender release is a prudent move to provide the best value to the Saskatchewan taxpayer. Furthermore it allows the road building industry the time needed to plan their work for the upcoming construction season. Now is the time for us to improve provincial infrastructure, which has been neglected for too long. Today's release builds on the momentum that began in the last construction season and which is just now wrapping up.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very eager to share with the House that within a few days time this government in our first full construction season will have completed more than 1500 kilometres of highway improvements. This is a tremendous record of achievement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — This is a tremendous record of achievement on behalf of the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure and the contractors with which we work. This government's commitment to economic growth is demonstrated today by this substantial infrastructure investment, and we're very proud of it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for providing me a copy of his comments earlier this day.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say that any time there's an announcement of increased funding to our infrastructure capacity in this province, it's certainly good news and welcome news. As we believe that the infrastructure is a very important part of maintaining a strong and vibrant economy — and if we plan to continue to grow our economy and have a strong economy — we need the infrastructure.

We need the infrastructure to ensure that we have safety capacities on our highway system for our motoring public. We need to ensure that we have the infrastructure to support our growing tourism industry.

The industry and manufacturing in this great province needs the arteries of our infrastructure in order to move their products back and forth. Of course our traditional agricultural economy moves its products both to the farm and from the farm on our infrastructure system. So any time that there's an improvement

to our infrastructure system, I think it's welcomed.

It pleases me to see that the minister and his department continues to build on the foundation as set forward by the ministers of the previous government on this particular topic.

There are some questions of course arise: will there be a continuum of the construction in the northern part of our province — as that's a very important part of our province as far as our industry and as far as our economy is concerned — will there be a continuum of that construction? Or will there be increased work up there?

There's also concerns about the capacity within our system. Will the increased amount of work being done by the Department of Highways create a problem for our cities and our municipalities as far as their ability to attract contractors to do their work?

But overall, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that today's announcement of increased funding to our infrastructure is something that'd be welcomed by Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 52 — *The Trustee Act, 2008*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 52, *The Trustee Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 52, *The Trustee 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.

Bill No. 53 — *The Medical Profession 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. 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 53, *The Medical Profession 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. McMorris: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 54 — *The Vital Statistics Act, 2008/ Loi de 2008 sur les services de l'état civil*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that *The Vital Statistics Act, No. 54, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that Bill No. 54, *The Vital Statistics Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 55 — *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 55, *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 55, *The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendments Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 56 — *The Trustee Consequential Amendment Act, 2008/Loi de 2008 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Trustee Act, 2008*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 56, *The Trustee Consequential 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. 56, *The Trustee Consequential 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.

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 Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have worked hard in preparing their homes for this winter to save on heating costs, but this government is grabbing the money they had hoped to save. The member from Saskatoon Silver Springs, when he was in opposition, would go on for days raving about how he was in favour of rebates to consumers. Now, Mr. Speaker, with a smile, he hands the people of Saskatchewan a 20 per cent energy rate increase and says he opposes rebates.

Mr. Speaker, on this side we watch in awe the transformation and the arrogance of this government. When the NDP made income tax cuts, Mr. Speaker, we made cuts equalling \$1,000 with a surplus of 9.4 million — most of which we left them. The Sask Party has in excess of \$3 billion, and most of which

we left them. And they gave the people \$1,300, and they tell us, look what we've done for you.

They sit on \$1.9 million surplus which is exactly what we left them, and the other day I read in *The StarPhoenix* the article on homelessness, homelessness, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon. We have been raising this issue with the Sask Party for the last year, and the reply is a deafening silence and inaction. Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the Sask Party, they did act. But their action was to cut funding to Station 20 — cut funding to a community, cut funding to the hopes and aspirations of most of the vulnerable people in our city.

Mr. Speaker, daily the Sask Party shows itself to be a party of meanspiritedness and a party quickly becoming completely out of the touch with the needs of the residents of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about an article in *The StarPhoenix* October 28. The article talks about people working and having to stay at the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Crisis Shelter in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, we have raised this issue of rent increases, and what do we get from the supposedly caring Sask Party government? As usual, Mr. Speaker, a deafening silence. But here's what Barb MacPherson, executive director of the YWCA Crisis Shelter had to say, and I quote:

“Quite regularly, there is one person staying in the shelter who is working,” she said in an interview Monday.

We're also seeing more families — so moms with their kids who had housing, but then the rent gets jacked up and they can't afford it so they buy groceries instead of paying rent, and then they get evicted.

Mr. Speaker, the article goes on to say, and I quote again:

“Homelessness has been growing in this city in recent years and it has been further impacted by Saskatoon's economic boom that saw last year's rental increases reaching 13.7 per cent over the previous year.”

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government sits on \$2 billion of money inherited from the NDP administration, and mothers and children live on the streets.

Mr. Speaker, I see the members over there smiling, and I wonder. This is very serious — not funny at all. Mr. Speaker, the people from Weyburn are waiting for hospitals, schools, and roads and there are people in Saskatoon community groups who had funding cut to their project — a project to help the most vulnerable, and now there are homeless people in my city, the city of Saskatoon. And they sit there smiling and holding on to \$2 billion which we left them.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is only the Minister of Health who is not listening. The entire Sask Party is frozen — frozen, Mr. Speaker, in inaction because they don't know how to run the province.

Mr. Speaker, I at this time like to turn to the issues related to my critic duties. But I first want to start by giving you a few

memorable quotes and perhaps you can guess where these diamonds in the rough come from.

- (1) "We're working through a matrix, and that matrix isn't in place yet."
- (2) "So I hope what I've done is offered a mutually reinforcing frame of reference, that is a frame of reference that allows us to see a horizon of significance."
- (3) "... going back to that metaphor or analogy or simile, these colours begin to fade."

Mr. Speaker, and this is one of my favourites, and I quote:

When asked by the reporter whether the minister had consulted, he had this to say. "Did I consult? I'll have to get back to you on that."

And finally, Mr. Speaker,

- (5) "It has been my eye for the obvious that paid off here."

Amazing, Mr. Speaker. Amazing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think this quite captures the Sask Party approach — the approach they are taking to the working people of this province. Mr. Speaker, the working people of this province create the wealth that is shared by many. And the phrases I quoted would be amusing, as I hear some members laughing, but when you think that these are answers to serious questions, this dismissive arrogance displayed to the working families of this province, these families who are concerned about paying their bills, paying the mortgage, buying the food, and having some extra money for the kids.

Mr. Speaker, it is beyond disrespectful. Mr. Speaker, the member from Swift Current once told a radio interviewer that he was prepared to go to war with unions. And I think — in fact, I can see — that that is one promise that he has delivered on. And one part of that going to war with labour is appointing a Minister of Labour who has completely alienated himself from the working people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, rational people have told me when I speak to them and tell them, they tell me, Mr. Speaker, that this minister simply is in over his head. I agree with that. I agree with that. He clearly does not understand the basic tenets of labour relations and in particular, Mr. Speaker, he does not understand collective bargaining and how that fits within a democratic society and how important that basic right is, the right of collective bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, what I've seen is that this government, that this government feels that it is the right to infuriate labour leaders; by doing so, they somehow endeared themselves to the Saskatchewan public. Mr. Speaker, be they labour leaders or working people of this province, they are taxpaying members who create not only the wealth, as I have said, but make purchases of homes, cars, vacations. They pay tuitions, buy clothes. They too are part of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, regarding Bill 5 and 6 passed in the last session, I have been talking to a number of people and they are starting to see some of the effects of this legislation. We are seeing these effects where negotiations are being stalled, the system of collective bargaining is being bogged down in constant negotiations, and people's high expectations are turning to resentment. All this is a result of unnecessary legislation brought in, Mr. Speaker, without consultation and with little or no understanding of the collective bargaining regime by a minister, Mr. Speaker, who people say is in over his head.

Mr. Speaker, any clear-thinking person knows that you do not put forward a contentious issue in such a way that incenses your opponent when you're trying to begin a dialogue with the goal of mending fences. This is negotiations 101, Mr. Speaker.

But unfortunately, but unfortunately that is exactly what the Minister of Labour did at a recent SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention. He raised the issues of Bills 5 and 6 in such . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I've obviously caught the attention of the minister there. He's singing. He's singing an answer here. Anyways, but just listen up a bit.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the Minister of Labour doesn't understand negotiations 101. And he comes to the Federation of Labour convention . . . And, Mr. Speaker, if you and I went to our neighbour's house and we raised an issue — perhaps it was the placing of a fence or something — that we knew would incense them, and if we started on that, would we expect a different treatment? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker. Any normal person would not expect different.

Mr. Speaker, he provides fodder for all sorts of things. You know, at some point in time the laughter and the disbelief is okay. But, Mr. Speaker, these are serious issues. And so, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what he provides fodder for is the newspapers. He provides fodder for the public. And we all discuss these things, and we spend time on the things that he does. But, Mr. Speaker, we all lose. We all lose. We all lose because of this minister.

Mr. Speaker, it is this type of approach, the type of approach which is completely unprofessional that is destructive to a relationship.

Mr. Speaker, the disrespect and outright hostility of this government to the working families of this province is unacceptable. Governments are elected to govern the people. There are responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, that come with this and, as the quotes I earlier said, I again say they would be laughable. They would be laughable except that we are dealing with very serious issues.

Mr. Speaker, I want to personally thank the working families of this province for their dedication and commitment to our province. And I hope for them that the Workers' Compensation Board's Mission: Zero program is a success so that no more workers are injured or killed on the job. I hope that they can resolve their workplace disputes and I wish for them the wages they so highly, rightly deserve.

Mr. Speaker, we are in serious times and we deal with serious

issues. The minister in charge of Labour has completely alienated a good portion of this province's residents that fall under his ministry, completely alienated them, Mr. Speaker. And I would still hope that the Premier would see fit to place someone in this Ministry of Labour who most rational people would say is not in over his head, not in over his head, Mr. Speaker. The minister is completely in over his head — no understanding.

Mr. Speaker, I would be supporting the amendment to the Throne Speech and voting against the government motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. LeClerc: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to stand up and speak to the Throne Speech. I am honoured to be the MLA for Saskatoon Northwest. And it is a constituency that, well, I think comprises all facets of life in terms of socio-economic status of our population. It has business owners. It has blue-collar workers, university professors, stretches into the rural areas.

It has union members that I've been privileged to speak to at the doors, and it is a riding that the NDP put the most union money behind their candidate during the last election. And I had many of the people at the door who were union members apologizing on their own behalf that they didn't support the fact that their union dues were taken for political reasons without their permission.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased this morning. Last time I spoke to the Throne Speech, the leader, House Leader of the Opposition was up and down in his seat like a toilet seat in a . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I would just ask that members have a little more respect for other members in the Assembly and in their speeches. And it doesn't encourage the decorum in the Assembly to have negative comments towards other members. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. LeClerc: — The performance, the pernicious performance of the opposition has brought this to a theatre of the absurd. It is a shameful performance and a stand against . . . And I'm sorry if they don't understand the words. It's too bad they haven't expanded their vocabulary.

But let me give a statement by the member from Saskatoon central, quite frankly, who was little more than a . . . [inaudible] . . . when he says that the Sask Party is calloused and a mean-spirited government neglecting Saskatchewan's most vulnerable and poor.

Mr. Speaker, as a man who was born a product of rape in an abandoned building to a teenage girl, who grew up in the inner city of Toronto and was taken away from his mother at eight years old to be placed in the most violent and brutal training school in the history of Canada, to have spent my life as a social advocate in the last 20 years, beginning to deal with the social policies, and to have these members criticize us . . . In a

previous government where the Leader of the Opposition stood there in making his speech that they were going to eradicate poverty, and to stand there in such an ingenuous manner to say that he hoped that we would eradicate global poverty, when in his government, under his policies, they grew the poverty level of this province to lead the nation, that established Saskatchewan as being the no. 1 province in Canada for child poverty; that established this province to have the largest number of children prostitutes with the youngest age level; to establish this province to incarcerate more children than any other jurisdiction in North America; to establish this province as the no. 1 incarcerator of men; to establish this province as the no. 1 province for youth gang recruitment; to establish this province as the no. 1 province for the most tragic inner cities in Canada rated by *Maclean's* magazine; to perform a national disgrace in their policies, in their social policies.

The ingenuous statements by the opposition as they stand forward for the most violent social policies of our country and the reactions and the outcome of it, in a province that has a First Nation young man having equal opportunity to commit suicide as to graduate from a post-secondary education, to stand there as a group of popinjays to criticize the most socially conscious Throne Speech ever given in the history of our province . . . We gave 1.1 million for transitional houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen in the service to women who are victims of domestic violence in a province that again, is no. 1 per capita for domestic violence.

And yet the NDP history is that they did not increase in 15 years social shelter rates. In a province that purchased two homes for Egadz to provide vulnerable youth stable and supportive places to live, and as a young man that lived on the streets beginning at the age of 12 and to see the services that Egadz performs and does, to be able to build houses that will take street youth and be able to move them from dependence to independence and have the opposition criticize that record makes me wonder what . . . [inaudible] . . . planet are they on that they don't understand the reality of the social policies within this Throne Speech.

We increased to help lower income working families with the Saskatchewan employment supplement, to help families with the cost of children in a province that has the highest number of child poverty — with a 50 per cent divorce rate among the First Nation population — to help single mothers raise their children. This is a policy that the opposition stands against in our Throne Speech. We increased child care subsidy to ensure that licensed child care is affordable for all Saskatchewan parents. We created a task force on housing, on affordable housing.

[11:15]

And yet this is the opposition that would rather pork-barrel and earmark a project called Station 20 — that would spend five times the amount of money on a building while strong-arming the Westside Clinic to sell their property, to spend \$75,000 a year on lease — so that they can have this pork-barrel situation that would staff by NDP ex-staffers rather than create a new inner-city school that had been delayed for eight years on the working paper and to fulfill and honour a deal that they made with the city of Saskatoon to build houses that the city had purchased from slum landlords. And they stand there to criticize

it. And yet Station 20 is now one-fifth of the cost and has partnerships moving into it to have a reality base rather than a pork-barrel service to our inner-city people.

And you know, the interesting thing about it as the popinjays are over there just chattering away, none of them have understood the reality of the culture of poverty within our provinces. And when I met with the First Nation along with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] and the File Hills justice committee, they advised me that in their history, and I'll quote Chief Joseph, that this is the first time that a politician has ever sat down with them and told them the things that they have been telling to the NDP politicians for years about the things that happen in their own community.

Now it isn't because my mother was Cree that I understand this reality. It is the reality of anyone that gets away from the union rhetoric, that gets away from political rhetoric and actually begins to look at taking care of the folk of the province, to put in substantial services that will deal with the reality of what we are doing for low-income families and seniors within our province. A social reality that in our Throne Speech has done more for the people of this province in one short year than the 16 years that it took the NDP to grow the social problems of our province.

We've increased the shelter rates for 6,500 households on the SAP [Saskatchewan assistance plan] and the TEA [transitional employment allowance], and we've increased it by 110 per cent. We've increased the rental housing supplement from \$36 a month to 136. Twice a year adjustment for the above housing projects. Increased daily rates paid to CBOs [community-based organization].

Mr. Speaker, when I came here I was the founder and regional director of Teen Challenge. And I was shocked to see that a government that professed to have the heart of the people in mind in the things that they did would starve the workers of CBOs across this province, the lowest rate of any province in Canada. We have begun to deal with that to make sure that workers that help with our most vulnerable people are paid accordingly to their skills and that we have the best people that can work with these, of the most vulnerable of our society.

And what the previous government did under the NDP policies was grow government bureaucracy by 30 per cent in 16 years to the highest level of government bureaucracy per capita in all of Canada. Their idea of helping the vulnerable is to grow government bureaucracy, to grow union-base support for themselves, and yet it's the union members themselves that failed to support the ingenuous programs that the NDP has put forward. It is they who are apologizing on behalf of their union leaders who have lost their way and have become part of the NDP political process instead of taking care of the folk.

We have put a half a million dollars towards school lunch and anti-hunger programs in community schools. And for the gentleman from Cumberland who's laughing over there, you might want to know that the kids that are in these schools are First Nation kids. This is a program that the NDP never did. You never did it. Five hundred thousand dollars within there to increase the mileage rate for social assistance clients moving from reserves into the cities to go to doctors appointments, to

social appointments. This was a new project that was done under our government.

We put \$400,000, 320 000 kilograms of pork into our food banks so that the most vulnerable of our citizens in the inner city could have meat — not just carbohydrates, but actually have protein.

We put \$1.1 million in increased funding for transition homes and sexual assault homes. In a province that boasts the highest rates of sexual assaults and child prostitutes being victimized, we have increased the funding for mobile crisis units to roam those streets, to help the most indigent and the most vulnerable of our society.

One of the things that I did as an executive in a CBO was to wonder why this government under the NDP failed to work with faith-based community organizations as they provided services throughout the population of our province. They never held a summit. They never talked to the people that were doing the work. They never supported them in the work that they were doing. For a government who calls themselves socialists, who are supposed to help in their social programs, the most vulnerable of our society, they did nothing to join in partnership with the community-based organizations of our province.

And yet in the short period of time that we have been in government, we held three, four CBO summits, five CBO summits with over 800 representatives from community-based organizations across this province to listen to their needs, to begin to start a dialogue with them as to how we could support them in the most cost-effective manner, to help the most vulnerable and again those most in need in our society as we go forward so that we can bring everyone with us.

Mr. Speaker, in my lifetime I spent over 20 years of my life as a drug addict. When I came to this province, I was recruited to come to this province to start a long-term addictions program to help combat the addiction rate within the province which is in the highest of Canada. They in all their times did nothing in the 16 years that they were running government to deal with the addiction problem, to install treatment beds within our . . . In fact the Leader of the Opposition, when he was the minister of Health, closed the most cutting-edge program in Canada to deal with young offenders with addictions problems called Whitespruce.

We in the short period of time that we have been in government have earmarked 5.1 million for an additional 88 beds for addictions to help our children and to help the First Nation community deal with the no. 1 problem that is plaguing them.

We have put \$2 million increase to the employment supplement for over 6,000 low-income families. Eighty per cent of those are single-parent homes. This is new programming that the previous government never did.

Three million dollar increase to the intensive support factor, providing programming for students with learning disabilities — disabilities and disadvantages. And part of the disadvantages, Mr. Speaker, is . . . The majority of my life, for 40 years of my life, I had a grade 5 education. I had to try to combat in a world with an education that was functionally

illiterate. And yet we have begun to deal with this functional illiteracy by putting money so that the most disadvantaged children in our society can have an opportunity for a leg up, for a proper education to be able to make their way in life, to be able to combat or compete in everyday society.

Five million dollars for 30 additional child protection care workers. Now, Mr. Speaker, when I was eight years old, I was taken away from my mother under a wrong-headed social policy, a social policy that said First Nation mothers were not equipped to deal with boy children in the inner city; a teenage mother who couldn't read and write — illiterate. And to have a system in our society and our province that didn't protect our children with proper foster care homes, with the proper amount of child protection caseworkers, was an abomination and something that the opposition should hang their head in shame, as any time that it is mentioned, that they try to assume the cloak of respectability as a socialist party.

Fifteen per cent increase into the funding of foster care homes. Forty-one per cent increase for extended family caregivers; \$5.5 million for 80 extra out-of-home spaces that includes foster care, stabilization centres, therapeutic foster care, adolescent group homes, treatment group homes.

Mr. Speaker, this is only part list of what is involved with our agenda in the Throne Speech that has been outlined. With the most compassionate leader this province has ever had in our current Premier; who has come with a balanced heart and a high moral initiative to make sure that not only do we balance the protection of our society and the future by having a rock, a savings account, in this most turbulent of times; that will make sure that we will have the money there to protect the most vulnerable of our citizens, but also to have shown the compassion to begin to deal with the people that the party across the way has neglected for 16 years, with the audacity to call themselves socialists.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me no greater honour today than to stand up to support this Throne Speech, to support this government, to support this Premier as we go forward in making Saskatchewan not only a better place for everyone to work and to live but to make this province a better place for the most vulnerable in our society to grow and to have life.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the Throne Speech. And I thoroughly condemn the NDP's proposition, this non-confident vote for the most moral, the most compassionate Throne Speech ever in the history of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Point of Order

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the member from Athabasca, just reviewing *Hansard* yesterday, the member for Corrections and Public Safety had been asked to apologize and withdraw, and the member had actually withdrawn his comments. Unfortunately, as Speaker, I made the mistake of saying apologize rather than withdraw. So I just want to, for the sake of *Hansard*, indicate that I acknowledge the withdrawal of

the comments by the minister responsible. Member responsible for Athabasca.

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.]

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to point out, Mr. Speaker, that as I listened to the member from Saskatoon Northwest — he's sputtering from his chair, Mr. Speaker — I want to point out the first statement that I heard him make in the Assembly was he came in from Ontario. And, Mr. Speaker, I think he should have stayed in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

One of the big things that I think is really important, Mr. Speaker, and I want to point out to the members opposite — and that member spouts from his chair again — is that, number one, is when the Tories across the way talk about what we haven't done for 16 years, I want to point out to the people of Saskatchewan, to every New Democrat that's listening, the bottom line is, number one, is that people like . . . And I hope I do this with all respect from the family. But people like the former Finance minister, Ed Tchorzewski, people like Romanow, they rebuilt this province from the mess they left, those guys left behind in the late '80s.

And you'll notice, Mr. Speaker, they have never, ever spoke of pre-1991. They've never spoke about that. They all of a sudden forgot. They all of a sudden forgot. And every New Democrat in Saskatchewan's going to say to those guys, and to the public out there, you left a big mess. It took us 16 years to clean up your mess, Mr. Speaker, and we're still cleaning up after you guys.

And they have the audacity to get up and say, oh you guys never done this for 16 years. You never done this for 16 years. We were so busy cleaning up your mess we couldn't do the things we wanted to do, Mr. Speaker. And we still made progress, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

And I'll point out as well that every New Democrat wants to say to these guys we have a booming economy. We have a booming economy, and they got 3 billion bucks in the bank. And they say, oh after 11 months in power, we've got 3 billion bucks. Look at us now. Big, loud message. You guys had nothing to do with that. You guys had nothing to do with that. Mr. Speaker, they had nothing to do with the billions of dollars you've got in the bank, the reduced debt, the booming economy. You had nothing to do with it so stop trying to fool the people because they're not buying it.

And every little bit of announcement you make, people say, oh yes, whatever. Mr. Speaker, loud and clear — the Saskatchewan

Party had nothing to do with the inheritance they got today. And I want to make that very clear. The people of Saskatchewan, again I say with all due respect — Tchorzewskis, the Romanows, the Blakeney — people that built this province and regained this province, those are the people who we should pay respect to, not the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

The selfish thing that they have done since they got into power was spend money, and they can't even do that right, Mr. Speaker. As we have pointed out, they give on one hand and say, oh we're going to help the seniors. We applaud that. We're going to help low-income people. We applaud that. But guess what? They're going to jack up the prices in power, insurance, heat, food. And at the end of the day, net effect is the people aren't getting any further ahead, Mr. Speaker. They're not getting any further ahead.

And I want to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, I'll point out that a lot of people brought this province back. And today I tell the people in my area, as well as the New Democrats out there and the people that have a progressive mind, number one is that when we assumed power from those guys, we had fifteen and a half, if not \$16 billion, debt left by them, left by them, Mr. Speaker. And today you contrast to what they inherited. They had nothing to do except spend money because they inherited \$3 billion from the people of Saskatchewan. That's what they got, Mr. Speaker. They had nothing to do with the good times right now that Saskatchewan enjoys. That was built on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan with the NDP government, Mr. Speaker, of Romanow and Blakeney.

And of course there's thousands of papers that will quote Mr. Calvert, and I'll use any of those papers. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out a quote from the *Ile-a-la-Crosse Times* where it said, "Calvert cares, Calvert delivers." Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is we had leaders in the NDP that brought this province back from the depths of despair and debt from those guys, and they built a new economy. And guess what? Calvert left money in the bank. That is a true New Democrat, Mr. Speaker, because he's not going to break the province. He is going to make sure that things are going to move forward long after he may be gone. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a sign of a true leader. Again I quote from the *Ile-a-la-Crosse Times*: "Calvert cares, Calvert delivers."

Mr. Speaker, the other point I would point out and I want to raise, I really want to raise, is that that party opposite, as far as I'm concerned, misled the people of Saskatchewan. Because, Mr. Speaker, number one, they introduced Bills 5 and 6. They said they wouldn't do that before the election. They also are looking at selling the Crowns. They said they wouldn't do that before the election. They also talked about private nuclear power. They didn't say that before the election, Mr. Speaker. And the list goes on as to the things they said they would not do or they wouldn't say they did before an election. If they were so confident, Mr. Speaker, why didn't you say that before the election? You know why? Because they would have lost, Mr. Speaker. They would have lost.

But they're still doing it. They're still doing it to the people of Saskatchewan. They introduced Bills 5 and 6, even though they said they wouldn't. They looked at selling the Crowns. They

said they wouldn't. They're doing it.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan have long memories. They have long memories, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to point out that they will not forget. The union movement will not forget nor will the people that want to protect the Crowns. And the people in the inner city, the North, east, west, south, they know that these guys misled them. And come next election, 2011, we're going to come back, and we're going to teach these guys a lesson, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point out as I listen to the member from Saskatoon Northwest, you know, spouting out these \$10 words, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to him that his linguistic ability is somewhat discombobulating to me, so I'm going to use plainer language.

Number one is you can cry all you want about the issues that you think were caused by us. But the bottom line, when the NDP assumed government, we had a tough time even meeting payroll, Mr. Speaker, for our employees. That's how bad they left this province, Mr. Speaker. We had a tough time trying to reclaim this province from the banks and from Wall Street. Do they recognize that? No, the only response is 16 years, 16 years. And the member from Moose Jaw North, he wasn't even around then, and he's still going hey, 16 years. I don't know what school those guys went to, but I can tell there's not an advanced school of politics. That I know, Mr. Speaker.

Now the other point that's also important I think is the Crowns. The Crowns, you know, they said, oh we're not going to sell the Crowns. Now this new minister is saying, oh we're going to look at certain Crowns.

It reminds me of that movie *The Jerk*. If you watch the movie, Mr. Speaker, you watch the movie *The Jerk*, he's actually acting as a carnival worker and then he's going to be . . . It's like the people of Saskatchewan go to this booth and say, okay what do I do here? Well you win a prize if you hit one of these targets. So the guy hits the target. You know, what do I win? So Steve Martin who acts as the jerk in the movie says, well everything this side of the erasers and everything that side of the pencils and below the note pads and above the little dolls. Well all there was in there was thimbles, Mr. Speaker, thimbles that the guy won.

And so the guy who I think is the people of Saskatchewan is saying, well how does that work? We're selling our Crowns, but what do we get? Well everything below the note pad and everything on this side of the erasers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not an economist. I'm not an economist. I'm merely a hockey player. I am merely a hockey player. But I want to point out, I want to point out in terms of my experience, in my experience, one of the things that people have to know is that — in my assessment as a hockey player — that if you want to build a company, you don't strip out the retained earnings. You don't do that to a company. You don't reduce investment to that company because if you reduce investment, you're killing that company. You don't limit the customer base, as Steve Martin did in the movie *The Jerk*, you know. You don't fund the competing interests of your company. Mr. Speaker, you don't send negative messages out there, Mr. Speaker. You

don't send out negative messages out there about your company. And you don't limit growth potential of your company.

Well guess what? These guys are using the guise of Saskatchewan-first to severely hamper our Crowns. There's no question about it, Mr. Speaker. That's what they're doing. That's what they're doing. And as they walk around telling people, how do we spend our inheritance? Well you know you're going to have a lot of friends when you have money. But when that money runs out, that's when the facts will come to bear as to whether you really truly had it or not, Mr. Speaker. And I would suggest to the people of Saskatchewan I have zero confidence in that government, and I have zero support for the Throne Speech because all they're doing is using the good deeds and the good intentions of Saskatchewan people for their own political agenda.

Now I look across the way, Mr. Speaker, I look across the way and the Throne Speech . . . I look across the way and I see liberals and I see reformers and I see conservatives. I even see some progressive conservatives, Mr. Speaker. But you know what? I think there's reformers over there. That's all they are over there.

And my poor former colleagues and liberals out there are saying, oh no, we're liberals. And what they don't realize is right behind them, they're the most right wing conservatives playing with them as puppets. You know, it's a puppet show. Those are not liberals over there. The liberals say, oh no, we're liberals. No, you're not liberals at all.

You start selling the Crowns and you start doing things, dismantling what was built in terms of this province for private corporate interest. Mr. Speaker, you begin to realize there are no liberals over there. It's all reform or extreme right wing conservative, Mr. Speaker. That's all it is. And no matter how much they protest — oh no, I'm a liberal — Mr. Speaker, there are no liberals over there, Mr. Speaker. They're pure right wing conservatives and that's what they are. So stop trying to fool the people of Saskatchewan. And there's no question in my mind that they're not fooling the people of Saskatchewan.

Now what I'll point out as well is, today now, the Saskatchewan Party is touting their new-found social plan, and it's all what the NDP put in place. So they are following what we did and they're saying, but we're going to put more money in there. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell the people of Saskatchewan that that so found new social plan, it's actually a smokescreen because what they want to do is they want to have private corporations developing nuclear power in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's what they want to do.

And what happens, what happens when you bring a private power generator in this province? What happens to SaskPower? What happens to SaskPower? Is SaskPower gone? Mr. Speaker, they're not answering that question.

Their member from Meadow Lake was spouting off of nuclear development or uranium development. I support uranium development. The New Democrats have supported that. But he said, I don't want to talk about nuclear waste. Well guess what? Guess what? The bottom line is nuclear storage. Waste storage

is part of the nuclear cycle, and you better have that discussion as well as all the other discussions. And I think it's really important, Mr. Speaker.

And I would point out that the NDP in the mid-90s, through some of the fine work and some very fine people, rebuilt this province, Mr. Speaker. We rebuilt this province. And I was not a part of that till 1998. But I look back in that and some of the tremendous amount of work that was done was no thanks to those guys across the way. They tried to kill Saskatchewan in the '80s, and now they come under this other guise of the Saskatchewan Party to finish off the job, Mr. Speaker. They're here to finish off the job, put us back in debt, and oh, by the way, we're going to sell your Crowns. We'll do it very subtly. We'll do it very subtly. And we'll use the elders, we'll use the Aboriginal people, we'll use the low-income people as a smokescreen. And in the meantime, the advantage goes to those in the back rooms that are slowly but surely planning the demise of our Crowns.

And what do you do? You use the most vulnerable people to achieve their political goals. And half of them don't even know what's happening, Mr. Speaker. That's the sad part. Half of them think, oh my goodness, we've done all these wonderful things. Man, we must be good. Well 11 months in power — you don't have \$3 billion in your account in 11 months. What government gets that? Absolutely no government except this government, and they inherit it from an NDP party.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll point out again, the attack on the Crowns, you know, and their 10 per cent decrease . . . or a commitment to the tax reduction and the reduction of debt, Mr. Speaker, we all applaud that. Support for low-income people, support for the middle-income people — we all applaud that. But I'll say to the people out there, watch very carefully what they do because they have a hidden agenda. They have a hidden agenda. I'll say it loud and clear. And all the great news that's out there, they had absolutely nothing to do with it.

Now their biggest problem is, how do we spend this 3 billion bucks? And the first thing they do is they put 2 billion away for themselves. And then we get the member from Northwest saying, oh we got 125,000 going to this and 200,000 going to that. Well let's do a percentage analysis. I'm not a mathematician and I'm not an economist, but what is 125,000 of 3.2 billion? How much is that? Anybody know? And that's the level of commitment that those members give the social agenda.

And that same token, they all say, oh we're here to help. And the big issue right across the board is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, right. That's exactly what we say. Yes, right.

Mr. Speaker, I'll point out again in my closing remarks that these guys are off. They're back to finish off Saskatchewan. They are back to finish off Saskatchewan. And the problem is half of them don't even know, don't even know it. And the other problem is you get these rookies, like Moose Jaw North there, spouting off every five minutes. Well, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't he at least know what he's talking about before he spouts off?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — And his biggest comment is, 16 years. Oh my goodness. That guy's brilliant. That's what I say, you know, from a point of looking at politics. But what's behind that? What's behind that?

And the member from Kindersley makes little comments from his chair, you know. He was gone, Mr. Speaker, when the tough times were being fought by this government. He went back home. And all of a sudden they come back and they're going to win government? Guess what? He's back.

The bottom line is there were some tough things that we had to undertake, and we have done a lot of tremendous things that the NDP could be proud of. If anything, if anything, the NDP gave back this province to the people of Saskatchewan from Bay Street and from the banks. And when we had trouble even paying our payroll, Mr. Speaker, we had trouble paying our payroll, you contrast to what they got today. And you will know, you will notice, Mr. Speaker, every time they talk, they always forget about pre-1991. It's always 16 years. And the people of Saskatchewan are not that simple. So if I was you, I would stop insulting their intelligence. They know what went on in 1980s. The people of Saskatchewan know full well who we owe a lot of credit to, and it ain't a band of political mercenaries across the way. It is the NDP government working with the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's how that works.

[11:45]

And I would point out, my final comments, is you look at what's happening with the Throne Speech — the intent. There is 10 per cent of all this money going to tax breaks — 10 per cent, 10 per cent. Then you look at nothing for the Métis Nation area directors. The Métis Nation area directors aren't getting a penny from this government despite the Minister of Métis Relations saying, we're going to work with them. The area directors are thinking of going to the Social Services office for extra money because this is their new-found support for the First Nations and Métis people. Area directors aren't being paid. They're getting nothing for First Nations' budget needs — nothing at all.

There's nothing for the teachers, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing for municipal governments. Municipal governments want to be partners, and they couldn't even deliver that, Mr. Speaker. So you go down the list. The civil servants, the civil servants, they're wondering what are they going to get.

So as they sit on \$2 billion, as they sit on \$2 billion on their election slush fund . . . is what they called it when they were in opposition; now they call it a stabilization effect. Well, Mr. Speaker, we simply don't buy that. They had nothing to do with this money they have. They inherited the booming economy. Their biggest problem is getting money . . . is how to spend that money correctly.

But I do have a favour to ask of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. I really do. And I'm just going to ask them, please — and I say this with all honesty — please, please . . . You know I'm not going to support the Throne Speech, obviously. But please, you only have 36 more months before we take over, so please don't mess things up, okay. Please don't mess things up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Please don't put us into debt. Please don't give us back to Toronto, Bay Street, and the banks. Please just coast. And you've only got 36 more months of coasting, and then we're back and then we'll show you what the NDP can do with real money. We'll show you what the NDP can do with some real, real support for the people instead of just using them. And we'll show you what we can do without the \$16 billion debt hanging over our head.

If we had \$3 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'd do a heck of a lot more than those guys across the way. We'd build that brave, brand new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we've got 20 members on this side of the House. And it's our time out. It's our time out. But the only thing I would ask is, please don't ruin things, you guys. You've got 36 more months. Enjoy it, then get the heck off the way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I don't say this lightly, but I think that was probably the worst speech in any Chamber in any time that's ever been delivered. That was something else, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll tell you, I don't usually do this but I'm going to comment on a rumour that's been going around this place and that is that the member for Athabasca is actually wanting to be the first member to ever be a member of every party in the Chamber, and that was actually paving his way into this caucus. Either that, or he's launching his leadership campaign. I don't know which one, Mr. Speaker.

But I found it interesting too, the member for Athabasca saying he's interested in getting into a discussion on nuclear storage. I'm sure there'd be many of his constituents that would find that interesting. I haven't heard that from him before, but we'll note that and remember that he's interested in having that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, it really is a pleasure for me to be able to rise on behalf of the citizens of Meadow Lake — a fantastic community, fantastic riding which I grew up in. My hometown is Meadow Lake. I feel a great sense of honour and responsibility to be able to stand in this Chamber on those people's behalf, and a great sense of honour to be able to rise and speak on this Throne Speech which is truly an outstanding document, probably one of the best — I think the best — ever delivered in this Chamber and in this province. A Throne Speech that delivers on all manner of very positive things.

One thing I wanted to comment on though before I get into some of the major highlights of the Throne Speech, and I think that the member for Athabasca really highlighted it, is the anger. What's wrong with the members opposite, Mr. Speaker? You would think listening to their speeches — the member for Athabasca, the member for Regina Walsh Acres, the member for Saskatoon Fairview who launched a bitter personal attack on the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy — you would think that they are living in the worst place, the worst place imaginable,

Mr. Speaker. Things are terrible. Listening to those members that's what you would think.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I think things are going pretty darn well, and I think the people of this province think things are going pretty darn well. But you know those members don't think so. And we just today had a document that was mailed out from that party opposite with a picture of a very sad little girl and talking about how the province is doing terrible and how things are awful. And I really think it speaks negatively of the members opposite that they would seek to run down our province, that they would seek to run down the economic activity in this province. I really think it's an unfortunate thing, Mr. Speaker, especially when you look at our Throne Speech, an incredibly upbeat document.

We're paying down debt, Mr. Speaker. Nearly 40 per cent of the provincial debt has been paid down in the first year . . . 11 months of our government — a truly incredible accomplishment which I think speaks very well for this government. And just to put that in perspective, Mr. Speaker, that's \$7 million a day paid down on the debt since we took office — 300,000 per hour, \$5,000 per minute — which is basically the only thing that has kept any of us sane listening to some of the speeches opposite, knowing that every minute that those members are talking, we're paying down debt at the rate of \$5,000 per hour.

Other incredibly important things — cutting taxes. Mr. Speaker. We have put forward the biggest tax cut in the history of Saskatchewan, something which I think should be applauded, not run down. The members opposite are saying that it's terrible and it's no good. Well I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. Eighty thousand people have been taken off the tax rolls with this one move — 80,000 people off the tax rolls. You think that would be good news. Not to those guys — they think it's terrible.

We're talking about infrastructure investment — \$1.5 billion of investment in infrastructure this year on top of 1 billion which we put forward last year, having very, very real benefits and very real impacts in ridings right around the province, including NDP ridings.

Just as an example, in my constituency of Meadow Lake, I'll make reference to a famous highway which I'm sure those listening from St. Walburg or Loon Lake or even Meadow Lake would be very aware of, which is Highway 26, Mr. Speaker, which the NDP had ripped up in an almost impassable state for four years — four years. And the member for Athabasca who was minister of Highways, I'm sure would be very aware of that particular goat trail. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? In one year we fixed it. We got it paved. We got it done. And not only that, but we're paving the next 13 kilometres on top of that, Mr. Speaker, and that'll be done next summer. We're getting the job done. They didn't get the job done and we are.

You know and another major part of the Throne Speech was an insurance policy, Mr. Speaker. We've seen in the last month or so significant instability in the global financial markets, particularly in the global capital markets. We felt that it would be a prudent move to have an insurance policy. What do they call it? They say it's a mountain of money. We should be spending it. That's what their solution is — spend it. We don't

need an insurance policy. They call it a mountain of money, dismissively, Mr. Speaker.

Well you know what? We see that as being a very, very important rock to build our financial future on. And you know frankly, Mr. Speaker, I've heard very positive comments from people in my riding and from around the province about the very positive, prudent, thoughtful approach that our government has been taking towards the financial management of our province and on this particular issue, which they call a mountain of money, nothing but positive reviews, Mr. Speaker.

You know the other thing I want to talk about is, you know, the NDP, the NDP wants to take us backwards. They want to go back to the past. We saw it again this morning. They have yesterday's man — apparently the front-runner in their leadership race with the overwhelming support of the caucus apparently, including the member for Saskatoon Nutana, I guess. I mean that's fine. They can support who they will. But you know, apparently the member in question, Dwain Lingenfelter, said that you know, he wants to run on a platform of change. Well you know what, Mr. Speaker, I don't think people want a change to go back to 1978.

I think people are happy with how things are going. It really is morning in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We're looking forward to a bright day, a bright future. We have an incredibly charismatic, forward-looking Premier. People are proud of this province. People are proud of this government. Anywhere you go in Canada, you tell them you're from Saskatchewan, what do you hear? You guys are really doing well. It's great to see. It's great to finally have Saskatchewan leading Canada, which we are for the first time in the history of our country. And what do we hear from the opposition? Doom, gloom, and I mean just a general attitude of negativity. I mean it's I think a very, a very negative thing when you have that coming from your opposition.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker, we've heard some, I think some very disturbing messages coming from the opposition. As an example, on resource royalties, we've been clear that we are not going to be hiking royalties in the foreseeable future. We believe that, you know, the regime that we have in place is fostering development in the province of our natural resource industry, whether it be in potash or uranium, oil and gas, or any of the other commodities and minerals that we've been blessed with.

What do we hear from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, including the Energy and Resources critic from the official opposition? We hear we should be hiking these royalties. That's what we hear from the opposition and the member for Battlefords, the bear-hunting, oil man from Battlefords, you know, has said in committee that he's committed to looking at reviewing the royalty structure.

And frankly, Mr. Speaker, that party has formed government in the past and they aspire to do so again in the future, presumably. You know, talk like that from that opposition has an impact. I mean people are listening, industry is listening. And, you know, even in opposition, Mr. Speaker, the crew opposite are able to slow down the growth of this province and, you know, it speaks to kind of their attitude.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — For leave for the introduction of guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave granted for introduction of guests?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, seated in the west gallery there are three guests that are very important people here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Bill Doyle, the president and chief executive officer of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan; Garth Moore, the president of PCS Potash of Saskatchewan; and I believe the other gentlemen is Wayne Brownlee, executive vice-president and chief financial officer for PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan].

As all members of the legislature would know, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan represents a very significant company in Saskatchewan, employing literally hundreds of people in our province. They have a tremendous amount of investment in Saskatchewan. They've also indicated in recent months that there's going to be a huge amount of expansion in our province. This is obviously a very, very good news and success story about a company in Saskatchewan that's doing business and creating wealth, opportunity, and business interests in the province of Saskatchewan.

So I would want all members to join with me this afternoon in about 30 seconds here to welcome them here this afternoon. And the Premier, along with the Finance minister and myself, will be meeting with them to talk about the interests of the potash industry which is extremely important to the people of our province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, by leave to also welcome the guests to the Chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Granted. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I also want to recognize and welcome the guests in the Chamber today from Potash Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I want the members to know, and the members of the public to know, that the official opposition supports the arguments that have just been made by the Minister of Energy and Resources across the way. We have always valued the relationship between government and the potash industry in this province. We look forward to continued and successful

investments by the corporation and by the sector in this province, Mr. Speaker. And like the Minister of Energy and Resources, we wish the industry great success in this province for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:00]

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

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.]

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would also like to join with the Minister of Energy and Resources and the official opposition critic in welcoming the gentlemen from Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan to the Chamber. And I think it's actually timely — and it fits in with what I'm talking about — to note that PCS was once a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker.

That corporation was privatized, and we've seen incredible, incredible results. PCS, which is a true success story in Saskatchewan, not too long ago was the biggest market cap company in Canada — a tremendous success story, expanding as we speak. I think that's something that speaks very well to the ingenuity and to the leadership of a Saskatchewan corporation, given the opportunity to compete in the marketplace and succeed. And I think that's an incredibly positive thing.

And, you know, the other thing I was just talking about prior, Mr. Speaker, was resource royalties. And it is concerning when you hear the official opposition musing about instability in the royalty regime, potential increases in royalties down the road. Corporations are making decisions on capital investment based on factors like what they're hearing from the official opposition. And like I said, I think it's a very sad commentary on the official opposition that even in opposition — not even in government which they held back development — even in opposition they're playing their role and holding back development in this province. You know, really a sad day.

Another issue, nuclear, where do they stand, Mr. Speaker? We don't know where they stand. We know that they have members like the former member, Peter Prebble, who was opposed to even uranium mining. I would suspect that there's members sitting in the caucus over there right now that are uncomfortable with uranium mining and very, very uncomfortable with any further developments in the nuclear cycle, you know. And we've heard comments from members to that effect.

It's interesting to note as well that one of their leadership

candidates who's taking quite a bullish position on nuclear, how that's going to play out when he has members — if he is to be the next leader — in his caucus who fundamentally disagree with him. An official opposition that can't get its act together frankly, Mr. Speaker.

You know, like I said, we know that they've held back development on the nuclear file over the course of their 16 years in government. We know that there were some very real opportunities that were missed, or that were not just missed, but deliberately blocked by that party opposite and by that government opposite.

We know the member from Prince Albert across the way had talked negatively about a recent nuclear partnership agreement which we had announced. And I think it should be concerning to the people of Saskatchewan that they have an official opposition that really has no stated policy on any of these things. They have members going off in every direction on it. I think it's important that we get those members opposite on the record as to where they stand on the nuclear issue, Mr. Speaker.

Another issue where we don't know where they stand — oil sands development. We've had some very negative comments from that party's federal leader. That party's federal leader actually, on the second day of the federal campaign, flew over the oil sands in Fort McMurray and said, I'm going to shut it down, shut them all down. One of the engines of economic growth in Canada, a critical component of energy security for North America going forward, we had the NDP leader saying he's going to shut it down. And it's a concern.

I mean we have opportunities here in Saskatchewan up for oil sands development, Mr. Speaker. And the Axe Lake project which most people are familiar with — 3-plus billion barrels of oil in a proven state resulting potentially in a 10 to \$15 billion project, and what do we hear opposite? Doom and gloom and an attitude of, well we can't do this. We shouldn't do this. They are always looking to the past, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to move forward. They don't want to see development. They don't want to see economic activity.

We're open to looking at these things. We're going to do them in an environmentally responsible manner. We insist on that. That's a critical component of anything that's going to be happening moving forward, is that they are going to be environmentally sustainable and friendly.

But the members opposite, well their record speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker. Their federal leader's been very clear in saying that they want to shut it down. And we can only presume that that's the position of the members opposite as well because we haven't heard anything different.

Another issue which I think is important is the issue of a gun registry. We don't know where that party stands. We know where their federal party stands and their federal leader, which is that they would like to spend even more billions of dollars on the gun registry. They want to make rural, average, law-abiding Canadians criminals. We don't agree with that, Mr. Speaker. We think that's a wrong-headed policy. Actually we would encourage those members opposite, if they actually believe that this policy is wrong-headed, why don't they call up their federal

leader? Why don't they tell Jack Layton, the member for Toronto-Danforth, that, you know what; we don't agree with this; you should be supporting the Conservative government in eliminating the federal firearms registry. Will they do that? I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, I'm not holding my breath. Because I think fundamentally those members agree with the gun registry. We haven't heard any different. We haven't heard any different.

Biofuels. Biofuels. Where do the members opposite stand on biofuels? We know where their federal leader stands, again, and that's to say no, we don't want biofuels; we don't want an industry. This is an industry that offers great potential for our province, that offers great benefits for our agricultural community, that opens new markets and new opportunities for our agricultural producers. And what do we have from the members opposite? They say no. No, we're not interested in that; we don't want that to go forward. So again, something where the NDP are looking to the past, are out of touch with the reality of modern Saskatchewan.

Even the NDP amendment, Mr. Speaker, calls for no confidence in the government. Frankly I think that's an irresponsible position to take. Let's just assume, Mr. Speaker, that that amendment actually was passed. What would that mean, Mr. Speaker? It would mean there'd be a general election right now. Ask those members opposite, do they actually want to go into a general election right now? How many of them would be left, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you. There'd be about three of them.

Irresponsible opposition. They're bitter. They're angry. They reflexively oppose anything that this government puts forward. They're not happy to see the tremendous development and growth that's happening in this province. They say, oh it was all because of us. Mr. Speaker, it was not all because of them.

The number of people that have moved back to this province this year, a net growth of about sixteen-plus thousand people. I can tell you, the member for Athabasca said in his speech last session that, you know, do you think those people were just all standing there waiting to come back into the province? Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, absolutely they were. Absolutely.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Harrison: — So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I obviously am going to be supporting the Throne Speech. I think it's a bright day for Saskatchewan. We have a bright future in front of us. We have a forward-looking government looking to the future and we have a backward-looking opposition looking to the past. So I will be supporting the Throne Speech and opposing the amendment. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland, who I understand is about to give his maiden speech in the House. Congratulations.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very happy to be here today to talk about the Throne Speech and to introduce myself to the members that don't already know me. I was born

in Prince Albert, spent a lot of time as a kid in the Duck Lake area. My grandparents were Métis, and we're very proud of our Métis heritage. I also lived in the Prince Albert area, and many years my family has been involved in the forestry industry. In these three communities — and I'm currently living in La Ronge — the three communities that I talk about for over 100 years more have had a genuine interest and had an opportunity in the industry, in forestry, and a very, strong . . . Within my family's business, the communities, the forestry industry was an opportunity to take care of the family needs.

At this time, I'd like to go into thanking some of the people that got me here today and explain to you, I guess, the issues and some of the struggles we faced as, I guess, young people growing up and the values we were taught. And I truly mean this. My values I mean from my heart, I try to work with and will work with individuals.

I'd like to thank my grandfather who was a Métis veteran. He's not with us any more. He's passed on, but he instilled a lot of pride in us. We are a large family; 13 kids he had, many grandkids. And he was a farming person. He taught us the values back then about working together as a community on the farm. We didn't have a choice. You did the job you were asked to do. And at the end of the day, you know, when he would gather his harvest and work hard and do everything he did, he would make sure that part of what he gathered he shared with everyone else, those that needed stuff. That's where I believe and truly in my heart I get my values on a social, and being the social person that I am, we have to share our wealth. I believe that.

I'd like to acknowledge my grandmother, Lillian, and also my father for his guidance and help. He's not with us any more. He passed away four years ago, but I know he's here and watching me and proud. I'd like to acknowledge my mother who still lives in the Prince Albert area, and my six brothers.

I'd like to especially acknowledge my brother Perry. He's a very proud entrepreneur. He works hard, and he tries to work with people in a positive way. He's inspired me, and I just want to acknowledge him. I'd like to thank my wife and my kids for their support. It is not easy to get involved in this process and I guess to get elected here. I've learned that and I commend all of you who have got here. In 1990 I moved to La Ronge where I had a blended family with my wife. We have five children; we have nine grandchildren.

And I've had an opportunity to understand some of the issues and the concerns of community members. I've had an opportunity to serve on boards — some were elected, some I volunteered, some I guess I was asked to serve and do my part. I've been elected as an alderman. I also was a Chair of Northern Lights board of education. I sat on the board of education for eight years and I just left recently as the board Chair. I also had an opportunity to serve Gabriel Dumont Institute as acting Chair for the last four years and that was an opportunity that . . . I am grateful that the people gave me an opportunity to learn more and to work with the Métis education and how we can work together through training. And that has given me a good opportunity to speak here today and bring their concerns forward. They have many challenges, but I know I can bring those issues forward and at least have the concerns surfaced

here, and to meet with the ministers and bring information to those ministries that need to hear the issues working with them. I will do that.

As a person who also has a disability, I was proud to serve as the Chair of the Gary Tinker Federation. I've also served as the president of the Métis local in my community. I also currently serve as a board member for the Kikinahk Friendship Centre. This has given me an opportunity to get to meet many people, learn about the issues, sit at the tables, different communities. We're a large group when we come together.

Some of the issues I want to share with you today that are facing my constituents . . . And I believe this, that there are some good things that were in the Throne Speech. But we have a lot of work to do.

[12:15]

We definitely need more affordable housing in the North in the constituency I represent. It's crucial that we have this. Going around visiting the community members, seeing some of the conditions, the crowding on the reserve, off reserve, some of the conditions of the housing, those issues have to be addressed. And maybe they got there for different reasons. I'm not here to debate that; I'm here to say we have to work together and move on.

Highways and roads in my constituency are huge. You know, the highway to Cumberland House, definitely that road, I will lobby, work with the community members to bring those concerns to the minister's attention. I will do that as I've been asked to represent the community. You know, Highway No. 2 North to Southend needs to be addressed. Highway 165 West needs to be addressed. There's a number of the roads that actually have and need improvements immediately for safety, not the economic boom, but at the end of those roads are communities, a valuable resource to this government and this province.

And the minister was up there, and I know he was flying around and checking out some of the highways and some of the communities. And you know it's good that he's doing that; he's flying into the North and having a look at some of the conditions. But I also say, drive into some of the communities that at the end of them is a community with valuable people. Not valuable resources, valuable people — they are our resource.

Some of the other items we're faced with and the cost . . . And right now affordability is huge. For food, some people, you know, can go to the market and you can get the fresh vegetables. You can go to the grocery stores and you have an opportunity, there's so many of them in some of the bigger centres. But in some of our small, isolated communities there isn't a lot of opportunity for affordable vegetables. You want to talk about the foods like that. It's tough. And hopefully with the resources that the government has behind it, it can address some of those concerns. And I will work with my communities to bring those issues to the ministries again, and hopefully in good faith have some of those things addressed.

I guess my reason for wanting to be here . . . You know you do

a lot of thinking when you have an opportunity to come and address you guys, and sometimes I have to admit it's very intimidating, but I know at the end of the day we have to work together. This province asks and demands that of me and of all of us to do what's best for Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan people. We have an obligation to them, and I truly . . . Being young, learning the process in this House I have seen some things, and the debate goes back and forth. But at the end of the day I know it's about the people and it has to be about the people. Yes, there are certain agendas and there's certain things go on.

I'm going to have an opportunity to debate and to get into the debates with the members opposite, and honestly I look up to that challenge. We'll work on the issues that have to be addressed. And I know that there's a lot of revenue out there.

And I truly hope that we can continue to work with the First Nations and Métis. Duty to consult is a huge, huge issue, and it has to be addressed. It's not going away, and it won't go away. People are tired of hearing, yes, we hear you, yes, we hear you. I'm new so there's a new flavour to me, and I'm saying that we have to move forward today. So through the First Nations and Métis ministry, I hope those duty to consult and accommodate issues for Métis and First Nations will be addressed, and we can start on that today.

I want to actually acknowledge a few people that I . . . I had a list of them. I just want to acknowledge them. They were very helpful. They're community members that care about our communities. Vickie Sanderson I'd like to acknowledge, an elder in our community. Catherine Charles, you can go to this lady and you can get the advice you need. She has a heart of gold and she's caring. Doris Halkett, Angie Merasty, Norma-Jean Angus, Alf Wiens, Lyle Brooks, Bernice Custer — these are individuals that put a lot of work into what they believe, and I just want to thank them and acknowledge them at this time. I feel an obligation to help others. I want the economic prosperity to be for all of us, not just some of us — all of us. I definitely want to work for a better future for the province, for all of our residents.

But when we talk about certain rates, I sometimes have to wonder about, you know, the boom and the big boom. And I look at the Aboriginal population and the percentage of unemployment that they're faced with in the North, the isolated communities. That has to be addressed and hopefully we can address that over the next 36 months, bringing those concerns forward to the ministries that have to hear those things.

I guess I want to read something to you. Just thinking about it, and people have made comments about the resources and the natural resources we have and the abundance, but I've been told from some of the Elders to be cautious. So I read this to you:

Only after the Last Tree has been cut down,
Only after the Last River has been poisoned,
Only after the Last Fish has been caught,
Only then will [we] . . . find that Money Cannot Be Eaten.

I just wanted to read that to you and say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm getting ready to close. And I just want to say to the members and all of you, thank you for allowing me to address you. And thank you for respecting it was my first speech, and to

that I am grateful. And to the members, as I heard some of you talk about your speeches and your response to the Throne, and you welcomed me here. I mean that, truly, the ones that did it with respect. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for that, thanking you for making me feel welcome to this Assembly.

And, I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to close with this. When the by-election was called, the member of Swift Current said he wanted a strong voice from the North. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to assure him that the Cumberland constituency does have that strong voice and it is on this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I begin I would like to welcome our newest member to this Assembly, the member for Cumberland. And I congratulate him on his recent election victory and for just delivering his maiden speech. It wasn't too long ago when I stood as a brand new elected member after a by-election and delivered my maiden speech, and I know that it's a bit of a daunting task. And he did a great job, and I want to congratulate him for that.

I would also like to thank my staff, Whitney Friesen, in my constituency office. He has been serving MLAs for that constituency for 15 years. He's extraordinary. He's one of the hardest working, most dedicated people I know, and I would like to thank him again for his service — not just to me, Mr. Speaker, but to the constituents in Martensville.

I'd also like to thank my staff in my minister's officer here, Krista, Kelly, and I have two Drews — so I'll thank Drew one and Drew two, they know who they are — and thank them for their work over this past 11 months. It's been a big adjustment for all of us, and they've been very helpful.

It's my pleasure today to stand in support of my government's Throne Speech. I would like to thank our Premier for his leadership, and our ministers and MLAs for their input. But most importantly I would like to thank the residents of Saskatchewan who offered their suggestions on the issues that were most important to them, because, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is their Throne Speech. The direction, programming, and funding outlined in last week's speech is for them. It reflects the values of Saskatchewan people and implements many of the ideas that we received.

And the response to this fall's Throne Speech has been overwhelming. We have received positive feedback from all across this great province. We know that some within our province are facing challenges. It's the government's responsibility to address these and make sure that our policies reflect the needs of those residents, and that is what this Throne Speech has done.

The NDP would know that challenges are facing the people in

this province. We know that over the summer NDP MLAs were out and about in our constituencies to see what challenges they are facing. I would like to commend the opposition members, not for taking these summer road trips, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but for actually being able to find our constituencies. After ignoring us for the last 16 years, I'm surprised they could even find them. I'm pretty sure that the NDP researchers were busy on Google maps trying to track us down.

And I'm sure we all know what the NDP heard over their summer travels. The NDP would have heard that roads need to be repaired. Why? Because the NDP neglected to fix them. After 16 years they are crumbling and many are unsafe. I know that many of the roads in my riding have suffered over the past few years.

The Highways minister has a big job, and I want to thank him for the attention that he's given to the roads in my riding over this past year. While there is still work to be done, these roads are now better maintained than they have been in years.

The NDP would have heard that schools need to be built. Why? Because the NDP refused to believe that our province would grow and ignored the growing population in my constituency and the need for additional capacity. Warman and Martensville are two thriving towns with populations of around 6,000 people each. Young families continue to move into these towns, and space in schools is cramped.

The NDP turned a blind eye to the growth in my constituency and refused to plan ahead. The NDP would've heard that hospitals need to be fixed. Why? Because the NDP failed to fund these capital repairs. They would have heard that seniors were having a hard time on fixed incomes. Why? Because the NDP failed to increase the seniors' income assistance program since 1992 — 1992, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the NDP aren't embarrassed by this abysmal record, they certainly should be.

They would've heard that those with disabilities were facing waiting lists for services and shortages of housing. Why? Because the NDP allowed the growing lists, the waiting lists to grow, and refused to address this important issue. I'm sure they heard an earful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know that these and other issues are of a great priority for people in this province.

And even after hearing all of these concerns and knowing that announcements by this government over the past two weeks addressed these issues, it would appear, Mr. Speaker, the only ones who are not pleased are the NDP. And I can't really blame them. Last week's Throne Speech, plus additional announcements by our Premier and Social Services minister, all pointed out the glaring shortfalls of the NDP over the last 16 years.

After committing a record \$1 billion to infrastructure in this year's budget, we are committing additional dollars. This money is needed to address the massive capital infrastructure deficit left behind by the NDP. The NDP apparently weren't worried about keeping up to growth in this province because they never truly believed that growth would continue. The status quo was always good enough for them. Mr. Speaker, the status quo was not good enough for us. The people of this province expect and deserve more.

Because of the personal income tax reductions we have introduced, 80,000 people will no longer be paying income tax. By increasing the personal exemption levels, people will have more money in their pockets. People in this province work hard for their money and they deserve to keep more of it. As a government, we committed that everyone in Saskatchewan would benefit from our new-found economic prosperity and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are keeping that promise.

Recent announcements by our Social Services minister also pointed to the NDP neglect of those who are often in the greatest need. The minister announced almost \$80 million in additional funding for persons with disabilities. That will, among other things, eliminate the 440-person waiting list that grew unchecked under the NDP.

I had the opportunity over this past weekend to go to a dinner for Sunshine Housing in my constituency. The great folks at Sunshine Housing provide homes and care and programming for those of intellectual disabilities. During the comments at the supper, one of the board members said that in her 10 years of working in this industry, she has never seen a commitment by government like she's seeing under our government, Mr. Speaker.

It is humbling to know that the decisions that we are making every day have a direct impact on the lives of people in this province. These are the right things to do, and they are long overdue. And we will continue to work hard to make sure that everyone in this province benefits.

[12:30]

And just this week the Social Services minister addressed the unbelievable neglect by the NDP of our seniors by increasing the seniors assistance program, something the NDP never did. The NDP failed to increase this assistance program. Hadn't touched it for 16 years — not while the cost of living increased, not while seniors were wondering how to pay their bills on a fixed income. I congratulate the minister for her dedication, for her time and energy, and all that she has put into this portfolio to ensure that our seniors are looked after.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to represent the people of the constituency of Martensville. They work hard, raise their families, and contribute to their local communities. And even with the unprecedented growth in my constituency, people have been able to maintain a sense of community and keep their towns places where you know your neighbours and are willing to lend a helping hand.

It is also an honour for me to serve this province as Environment minister. It is a challenging portfolio. It covers hunting and fishing, environmental permitting for exploration, water safety, forest fire fighting, conservation, recycling, and climate change, just to name a few.

Over the past year I've met with stakeholders, Saskatchewan residents, and business owners. There is something that all of these people have in common. They all wish to leave our province in better shape than what we found it. I want to commend them for their dedication to our province. We are better able to do our job because of the commitment of others.

I have now been in this position for almost a year, and while I have the opportunity to do so, I would like to publicly thank the amazing men and women who work within the Ministry of Environment. I cannot begin to say how much I appreciate their help, suggestions, and input over the last 11 months.

We are undertaking some major projects within the ministry, and staff has stepped up to make sure that we achieve our goals. As outlined in the Throne Speech, we are working on a comprehensive water management plan. Water is our most vital resource. Without it we could not survive. Without it business and industry could not operate. We'll be working on identifying quality and quantity measurements to ensure that we have a secure, safe, long-term supply of fresh, clean water for Saskatchewan residents. We will also continue to promote water conservation. So much is wasted every day, and every one of us can make a difference by changing our behaviour in small ways.

Also outlined in the Throne Speech is our commitment to delivering a real plan for addressing climate change. I know that the NDP and their Environment critic love to say they had a plan in place. But, Mr. Speaker, if they did have a plan, they certainly didn't leave it behind when they left.

We know that former NDP cabinet ministers took home their correspondence files with them, and perhaps the last NDP Environment minister took home this plan as well. Maybe it's hidden in the basement between the potato bin and last year's Christmas ornaments. Or maybe, Mr. Speaker, the NDP's plan was to think happy thoughts, wish really, really hard and we'll reach our targets. Because, Mr. Speaker, the only thing they did leave behind was a glossy brochure with pretty pictures containing a greenhouse gas emissions target. What they failed to provide was a path forward. There was no plan to get from point A to point B.

The NDP failed to have targets for industry, for oil or gas, or for SaskPower. And we know that SaskPower's one of the worst emitters in the entire country. According to a letter I received of August of last year while in opposition, from the former NDP Environment minister, the NDP plan was to simply to buy their way out of it. He estimated that SaskPower would purchase a minimum of \$45 million in offset credits, a cost that he planned to pass on to ratepayers. There was not one word of actually reducing SaskPower's emissions. No emissions reductions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just higher rates for SaskPower subscribers.

The NDP also failed to introduce any regulations or legislation. Mr. Deputy Speaker. They set targets and walked away. We are now doing the heavy lifting that the NDP failed to do. We are working on regulations. We are working on how to get from point A to point B. And I can guarantee you this, Mr. Speaker. We are not working on glossy brochures with pretty pictures. We must do better and we will do better.

The NDP lack any credibility on this file. Even though they did set targets, it didn't take them long before they abandoned those. Just this past spring during a media scrum, the NDP Environment critic was shilling for the Conservative government and demanding that we adopt the federal Conservative targets for emissions. They can't keep their story straight on so many things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just last year the opposition leader said, and I quote, "The further development of a biofuels industry is an extraordinary opportunity for Saskatchewan . . ." And then just this spring his leader, Jack Layton, voted in the federal House of Commons against Bill C-33 which legislates that fuels have to contain 5 per cent content from biofuels.

And you know what we didn't hear, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We didn't hear this opposition party stand up to their federal leader and support Saskatchewan and support the biofuels industry in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Last year the NDP were bragging about spending almost \$2 billion on a clean coal project. I actually have at home a fridge magnet that the NDP had printed on clean coal. I forgot it today, but I'll bring it along next week because I'm sure the NDP would be interested in the paraphernalia that they were printing in promotion of their own clean coal project. And now suddenly, Mr. Speaker, they're not in favour of clean coal for Saskatchewan and SaskPower.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP are against clean coal. They are against nuclear energy. They had no intention of actually reducing emissions at SaskPower. They are now content to support dirty coal, I guess, and buy their way out through offsets. I'm not sure how the environment actually benefits from that approach.

Last year the former NDP Environment minister said that people were willing to pay for greenhouse gas emissions in this province. Now the NDP is complaining that reducing emissions might cost some money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP Environment critic couldn't even keep her own story straight during the course of one media scrum. On April 22 of this year, the NDP Environment critic said that intensity targets don't work, but then demanded that we adopt the federal Conservative plan which is based on intensity targets. Just a short while ago, the NDP leader was praising the benefits to our province of oil sands exploration and development, and then this spring stood on the steps of this legislature to protest oil sands. Perhaps the NDP Environment critic should check with her favourite leadership candidate before she continues her attack on oil sands exploration because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while she was standing on the steps of this legislature protesting oil sands, the newest leadership candidate for the NDP was in his office tower in Calgary trying to figure out the best ways to promote oil sands in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a member of a government that understands that industry and business development can go hand in hand with environmental protection, and that is what we will do. We welcome new business to this province. We see new interest in investment every week. It is encouraging for us to know that others are seeing what we've always believed — that Saskatchewan is a great place to be. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we recognize that is because of the hard work of the men and women of this province that Saskatchewan is leading the nation in growth.

The NDP apparently have a very different view. The member for Saskatoon Fairview yesterday, and the member for

Saskatoon Massey Place today, said that the NDP is solely responsible for Saskatchewan's success. How absolutely arrogant. We don't believe that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that it is the people of this province who are helping to make sure that we have a prosperous future.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP shows an absolute disregard for those who work tirelessly each and every day to put food on their tables, to build up their businesses, and to dream of successful futures for their children.

We welcome the thousands of newcomers to our province, people who are moving here with hopes and dreams for the future. And as a government, we will continue to work hard to make sure that the policies and plans that we put in place are there to benefit all who call Saskatchewan home.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment. We've had enough of their backward-looking ways and their doom and gloom. I am proudly supporting my government's Throne Speech because it is the path forward towards a stronger Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm once again . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — With leave to make an introduction, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave granted for introduction?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Agreed. Carry on.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I thank the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

It's my pleasure to introduce to this Hon. Assembly Mr. Dave Marit, the president of Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, SARM, and also very much appreciated board member on the Enterprise Saskatchewan board. I hope all members will extend a warm welcome to Mr. Marit.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, also with leave to join in introduction of our guest.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is that leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the minister in welcoming Mr. Marit to our Legislative Assembly. Certainly he's no stranger to both sides of the House by virtue of his position with Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. We welcome the work that Mr. Marit does on behalf of municipalities and we very much welcome the contribution that he continues to make to the development and good growth of this province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

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.]

Mr. Furber: — I'd like to thank the constituents of Prince Albert Northcote for their continued support, and as I travel through my constituency, they chat a little bit about the Throne Speech and a lot about this government. And it's my pleasure to represent their interests in this House and I'll continue to work hard to do that.

I'd like to also thank my partner, Michelle, for being so understanding and supportive — a better partner you could not find. I know that these jobs are difficult and the time that we spend apart is difficult on everybody. I'd also like to thank her family for welcoming me into their family and treating me like one of their own. It's a great pleasure to spend time with them and I look forward to many years of doing that.

I'd like to thank my own family for being supportive, for providing me a place to stay and a home-cooked meal which I don't get when I'm down here. Thanks to my constituency assistant, Rose. If there were rankings for constituency assistants, she'd be right at the top — always works hard, extremely dedicated, and does her best to make me look as good as possible. It's a difficult task, but she does it as well as anybody could.

I'd also like to take this time to congratulate the member from Cumberland. I think people that go through an election and choose to let their name stand for public office know what it's like to take a chance to want to make a difference, and the member's done that on numerous occasions already throughout his life and I think he'll continue to move an agenda forward that helps his own constituents. And I appreciate an opportunity to watch him do that while he's elected in this legislature.

I'd like to say hi to the folks in Prince Albert who I play soccer, slo-pitch, and football with. Soccer's a game that takes a lot of skill to play, and you should be in good shape to play it. And I thank them for accepting me even though I've got none of those attributes and for carrying me while I do that.

The most amazing part of the Throne Speech, I thought, was the part where the Lieutenant Governor read that this government wants to take credit for doing nothing. I found it interesting. They brag about how smart they are as business people, and all this acumen, this business intelligence leads them to the conclusion that when it comes to royalty rates, the NDP are the ones that got it right.

Now during the election, the now Premier and the member from Kindersley went around the province talking about, we're going to do a review. It was their words — not, as the member for Meadow Lake would suggest, our words. It was their words when they said that they would do a review of royalty taxes as it pertains to this industry. Now shortly after they said it, they went and talked to the folks in Calgary, and the folks in Calgary said, whoa, guys, this isn't healthy for the industry. What you need to do is do what the NDP did. Keep them where they are. We like them where they are, and we appreciate the work that they did to get them there.

Now apparently this business acumen is also true when it comes to setting royalty rates for uranium, potash, for corporate income taxes, the small-business threshold, the corporate capital taxes, and taxes for our manufacturing sector. Maybe they should signal how smart they really are and pledge that they are also going to keep these NDP policies in place to help the businesses in Saskatchewan grow.

Now based on this policy of doing nothing as it pertains to the economy, I can't believe that they are not embarrassed when they take credit for the economy and where it is now. What changes have they made to business taxes in this province that leads them to believe that they should take any credit for this? Nothing. They've done nothing. The only policy change they've made is to beat up union brothers and sisters.

Now they did create Enterprise Saskatchewan . . . well or so we think. What have they done?

An Hon. Member: — It's only been a year.

Mr. Furber: — It's only been a year. The Premier has quotes to the North Saskatoon Business Association saying within a month of taking power, Enterprise Saskatchewan is going to be providing guidance to this government on business in Saskatchewan. It's been 11 months. What a failure from this government. They haven't even organized the boards in the regions yet. How is it that they can't organize a board in a year? Shocking. I'm not surprised though because we're living by NDP policy as it pertains to business taxes and royalty taxes and royalty rates, and that's why we're doing as well as we are.

[12:45]

Now what is a Throne Speech? A Throne Speech signifies your intentions for the next year in office. And I listened intently throughout the Throne Speech. It was 50 minutes long and I

think it was a drain on most of the people in here to listen that long to not much . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes, well the room was essentially empty. But I'd like to talk about what the Throne Speech means for the people of Prince Albert and many of the residents represented by the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Now let's talk about the promises made to the people of Prince Albert by the Premier and by the member from Prince Albert Carlton. The now Premier stood on a bridge with the then mayor, Jim Stiglitz, two years ago and said, by gosh, we need to win votes in Prince Albert here in the next election. I think I've devised a plan. What am I going to do? I'm going to promise the people of Prince Albert a second bridge if we're elected. Prince Albert's the size, it's got the economic activity that it should have a second bridge.

So where are they on that promise? Nothing in the first year, nothing in this Throne Speech, nothing to signify that they've done anything or are interested in doing anything on that file.

Additionally, more scheming to try to get elected, and what is it? The Premier gets in a plane, schemes the whole way up to Prince Albert about how he's going to get elected in Prince Albert, get a member elected in Prince Albert, so what does he do? What does he do? They land in the airport there; they hold a press conference. They don't even call the mayor and talk to him; they just phone the media. Let's not talk to anybody in there.

So who shows up? The media shows up and they say, Prince Albert needs huge upgrades to this airport and if we're elected, gosh darn if we're going to provide them for the people of Prince Albert. So we've had a year in office. We've had a Throne Speech that signifies their intention for the next year and what have we got on airport improvements for Prince Albert? Nothing. It's an embarrassment to this administration with \$3 billion in the bank that they can't fulfill any of the promises they made to Prince Albert.

During the campaign, the person that ran against me for the Saskatchewan Party promised the city a tertiary health care centre. Does the Premier stand behind the word of this candidate, or was it just another empty promise to get elected?

I'm thankful that everybody in Prince Albert remembers this quote, and I quote: "A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working." I don't go around Prince Albert any day without people talking to me about this quote. He took out an ad. Unsolicited, he took out an ad to say that a vote for him was a vote for the mill open and people working.

And every day the member from Athabasca asks him about that quote and where he sits with that quote. And you know what his answer is? It worked. That's his answer — it worked. So there's no pulp mill open but it worked, because he's seated there. What an embarrassment for this government. What a mistake to have him seated there.

And so where is that member from Prince Albert Carlton standing up for the people of Prince Albert in his cabinet? Where is he? He's nowhere to be found on a second bridge for Prince Albert. He's nowhere to be found on the forestry centre,

diversifying forestry or standing up for the workers in Prince Albert that worked at that pulp mill, and some of whom helped elect him to this Chamber today. Where is he? You can't find him. He's at the lake with his phone shut off.

Why doesn't he stand up for Prince Albert on the pulp mill where hundreds of families in Prince Albert want to be at home, working in the community? Instead, they're divided and working elsewhere.

We have an Iogen plant in Birch Hills. Where's the member from Prince Albert Carlton? He built what is now a sarcophagus at a pulp mill in Prince Albert. Where is he to get that Iogen plant from Birch Hills to Prince Albert? He doesn't speak for Prince Albert when he's in cabinet. I don't know what he's doing there.

The P.A. [Prince Albert] *Herald* said, is he going to be a voice of cabinet to Prince Albert or a voice of Prince Albert to cabinet? We know the answer already.

Where is he on the Highway 11 twinning? The Highways minister comes in and says, geez, we can't stick to the NDP plan of having a timeline to get that thing done by 2011, no. Unless there's great weather, we're still going to be delayed by five years. Where is he to ensure that that's a safe highway to drive on, on every Friday and Sunday during the season when everybody is going to the lake? Where is he?

Where is he to make sure that economic development is at the forethought of people in Prince Albert as it pertains to that highway? It's a huge highway. Where is he? He doesn't speak for Prince Albert to cabinet obviously.

Where is he on federal funding for the soccer centre? He went around Prince Albert for weeks getting his picture taken regarding the soccer centre opening and the fundraising that the good people of Prince Albert did for that soccer centre. Oops, I'm sorry. You'd think he actually had something to do with it. Instead of having his picture taken, why wasn't he trying to procure more money from this government?

It was the last government that funded the whole entire thing, including the Art Hauser Centre. Where is he? He's having his picture taken. Instead of having his picture taken, why isn't he trying to procure money from the federal government, their cousins, brothers, sisters, whatever you want to call them? Where is he trying to procure money for the soccer centre from the federal government? They haven't got a dollar in it.

When we built the Art Hauser Centre and some of the other projects, there's federal dollars in there. He's headed up to donate money to the soccer centre, and where is he? Silence.

I want to talk about now, if I could, the Premier and his relationship with Stephen Harper. On equalization, how is it that you can have all of their brethren promise during an election that equalization would be taken out of the formula? We stand to gain \$800 million a year, every year. Why don't they stand up for the people of Saskatchewan?

When he should have been fighting for this province holding Conservative members — of which the member from Meadow

Lake used to be — to account for their promise, he instead tries to fool the public into believing that he'll have it made up to us by the Prime Minister. Instead what do we get? Instead we're burdened as a province by another commitment for an experimental clean coal plant described by *The StarPhoenix*, September 20, this way, and I quote:

... to suggest, as Mr. Wall has, that the offer by Mr. Harper to contribute a miniscule share in the expensive experiment to find a way to separate and sequester carbon dioxide is a gift to the province rather than what it is — a huge risk with associated costs — makes it appear the premier's political allegiances have blinded him to the welfare of the province he was sworn to represent.

Also in *The StarPhoenix* that day, and I quote: Mr. Wall and his ministers turned their back on the province by dropping the challenge they promised over the federal Conservatives — are you listening, member from Meadow Lake? — breaking their promise on equalization.

And in the *Leader-Post*, July 26, again I quote:

... after Wall's handling of the equalization file, most Saskatchewan voters are ... well aware that the Saskatchewan Party ... independence from the ... Conservatives is pretty much a façade.

What an embarrassment that they can't get anything done on equalization or any other file as it pertains to the federal government.

There's a community development trust fund, a \$1 billion dollar fund put in place to help displaced forestry workers. And what happens? We get \$36 million worth out of a billion, with a huge industry. They accept per capita funding instead of funding as it pertains to the amount of economic GDP [gross domestic product] of the forest industry in each province — an embarrassment. So the Prime Minister comes into Saskatchewan to announce what amounts to the death of the forestry sector in Saskatchewan because they refuse to support it, as does the provincial government, and the Premier can't stop kissing the feet of the Prime Minister when all that he turns over is \$36.4 million to this province.

Now what do workers get out of the \$36.4 million? You'd think they'd get 36.4 for retraining and to help them move on with their lives in another industry and to join the workforce doing something else. What do they get? \$2 million — \$2 million, unbelievable — a slap in the face. And yet the Premier wants to make us think that it's a great deal just because the Prime Minister brought it here.

In opposition the Premier stated that he'd do something about gas taxes. After the election, some months later, he said that it was a gimmick. Now why would you trust him? He devises a plan in the middle of the night on what seems to be a cigarette carton or package or a napkin, and he says, this is what we'd do if we were in government. Well they're in government. And what are they doing? I'm sorry, it was a gimmick. Unfortunate.

Well another gimmick was the promise that they'd support schools when it came to closing. Now what's in this Throne

Speech to support schools and support their promise to keep them open? Dead silence, dead silence, nothing — another gimmick.

In opposition the Premier called the Fiscal Stabilization Fund a slush fund. Now this fund is supposed to be the foundation rock that we can use to build this province. Well apparently slush turns to stone. What was once a slush fund is now a rock. When it was a slush fund it had a couple of hundred million dollars in it, and now that it's got \$2 billion in it, it's a foundation rock. Disingenuous. Is this a gimmick or not?

They had a promise during the election to change the education portion of property taxes. Now there's been study after study done on this. They've got them in their own ministries. Would they implement them? No. Instead they commission a study . . . [inaudible] . . . there's a real need now? They give you a pizza rebate two years ago.

An Hon. Member: — Half a pizza.

Mr. Furber: — Half a pizza rebate. And now they want to study it for another year. It smacks to me of electioneering and making promises that you never intend to keep.

Now I do want to put the good things in the Throne Speech in context, and there were some good things. I think people appreciate income tax cuts, certainly appreciate paying down a debt. The paying down the debt, it's a great thing, wonderful. Forty per cent, they're paying down. I think that amounts to about 25 per cent of the debt that they built up while they were in government — so 40 per cent of the debt where it is now, but about 25 per cent of the debt that they accumulated while they were on this side.

So to say, should I support this Throne Speech or not? We've got no commitment for a tertiary health care centre in Prince Albert, no commitment to keep their promise on airport upgrades, no commitment for the pulp mill or the forestry workers in Prince Albert, no commitment for a second bridge in Prince Albert, no commitment from the member from Prince Albert Carlton to look after Prince Albert's interest in cabinet. Instead he reports from cabinet to Prince Albert. For those reasons I'm going to support the amendment and not the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that I move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate. Is the motion agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The leader has made a motion that this House now stands adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Agreed. This House now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

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

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Minister of Finance

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Environment

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Workers'
Compensation Board

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Enterprise and Innovation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Capital City Commission