



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

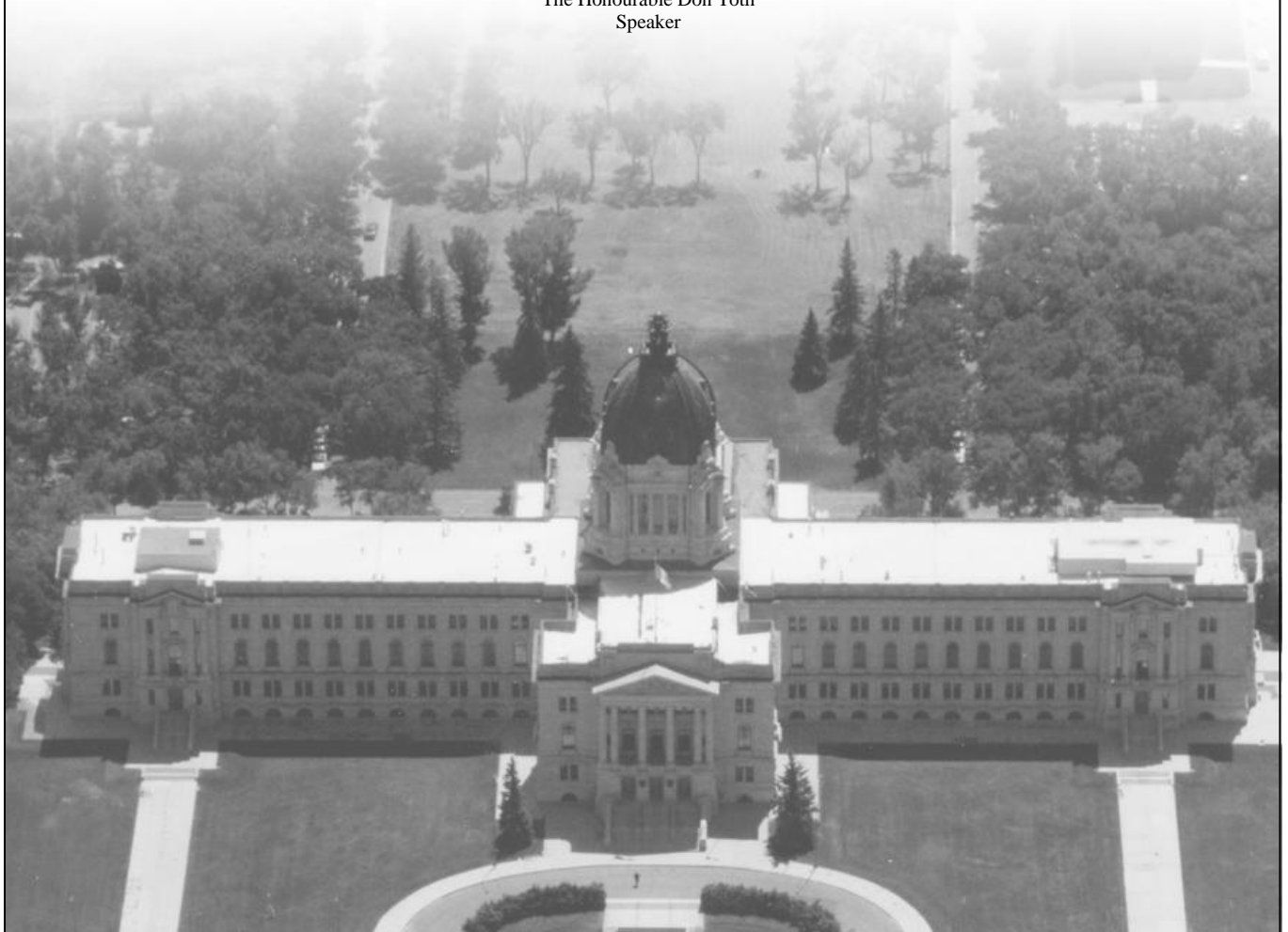
of the

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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

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
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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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
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Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, 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
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 resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by the Hon. Mr. McMorris, seconded by Ms. Ross, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Lingenfelter.]

The Speaker: — Being now 7 p.m., the House will resume its evening session. I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I am voting for our amendment that my leader has moved and therefore voting against the main motion.

[Interjections]

Mr. Vermette: — Just hang on, hang on.

Mr. Speaker, before I go into talk into detail to the Speech from the Throne, I'd like to acknowledge my wife and my family, my wife Sandra and my family, for their support. Truly we've heard from a number of the members it is important to have our family supporting us. And I am very pleased to have my wife, my children, my grandchildren yelling and chanting, and you know every now and then, it's nice to see when you accomplish something they're pleased. Anyway I just want to acknowledge that.

You know, so many of us have a good staff, and I am fortunate to have CA [constituency assistant]. Vicky Sanderson in La Ronge. She does an excellent job, the casework that she does, truly. And I think my colleague earlier said that sometimes the people that come into our office, they've tried to work through the system, and the system for some reason hasn't helped them. So the casework taken on by CAs is crucial, and I'd like to acknowledge Vicky and thank her for her hard work. And that's the La Ronge office.

But also I'm fortunate to have a suboffice in Pelican Narrows where we can deal with a lot of the community members that are in that area, Sandy Bay, Deschambault, and Pelican Narrows. Bernice Custer works there, and she does an excellent job. And we're working through some difficult times, and that community has had a lot of deaths and I guess some serious community problems. And they're dealing with them, and I commend what they're doing. And she's working there and hopefully will do that.

I'd also like to acknowledge Doris Morin who's a part-time CA, and she does an excellent job. She's always there. Whenever you need a hand or things aren't going so good, she'll give you that compliment and she'll give you that pat on the back and let you know that you're doing the right thing for the people. And

that's so important; I appreciate that.

I'd like to thank the people of the Cumberland constituency for their support that they have given me. I also want to make it very clear that it is an honour to serve them in this House and serve them as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for the Cumberland constituency.

I get an opportunity to attend a lot of community functions and sometimes, you know, we have our issues. And I'm going to get into that a little bit more as we go along this evening. And I've got lots I want to say. And I'm going to say what needs to be said from the community that I come from. There are concerns, there are issues, and they're going to hear what I have to say so that it's their voice coming through here very clearly. So bear with me, the members on the other side, please.

I just want to at this time especially thank one of our elders who serves as an elder with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Catherine Charles. I seek a lot of advice — her wisdom, her guidance, her love, her compassion for her people and the community — and I thank her for that.

I want to congratulate the new members of this caucus, Regina Douglas Park and our leader. Very pleased to have the experience he brings with him and the support. It's truly uplifting.

To my new colleague, friend, I wish you all the best, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. You know, you fought a battle, and I say it was a battle. And I just want to commend . . . You truly are an example. When someone's going to go into politics, you truly are a person with the heart, determination, and confidence. You do have it, so keep doing what you're doing. I'm glad to have you here.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge we've had a number of elections — school board, mayor, and council. And I'm very pleased to acknowledge some of our mayors, our councillors. There's new ones. There's also incumbents. There's the ones that were there for a while. Some will . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member from Rosetown-Elrose has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce to you in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, two good friends of mine. Ian McPhadden — Ian is the president of Ag-West Biotech, and a good friend and good supporter. And with him is Penny Aadland, also a good friend. And I'd ask all members to please

welcome them to their Assembly.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by the Hon. Mr. McMorris, seconded by Ms. Ross, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Lingenfelter.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to at this time, also acknowledging the mayors and council, we had just passed the election with a new leadership for FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. And I'm very pleased to see that our member, my colleague, was there to support them as they went through the leadership process.

Anyway I'm very pleased, and I wish them all the best working with the current government. I hope they will work with them. And if they won't, by all means please come and speak to the official opposition, and we'll see what we can do to assist them.

You know, I want to get into a little bit of the speech. And I'll have to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker. You know the speech, to be honest to you, was boring speech I've ever heard, to be honest with you, coming from a boring government and a boring leader. So, Mr. Speaker, it had no vision. And I'm going to get into why it had no vision, and how truly, truly disappointing this was, and to see the vision direction that we're going to go in.

I just want to make a point. Forestry, an industry that is in such dire need, and not much being said for the industry or the families and the forestry business. Not a mention in the Throne Speech. It's almost like they're forgotten. And they're struggling out there and they need some help. I cannot believe that an industry that was as strong as it was has not had support from this government at all. They've turned their back on the forestry industry, on the forestry families, and on the communities that have been impacted.

You know, it's a little appalling that they would actually hold back any community development money, and they've held one point five. Why would you do that? It doesn't even make sense to me. When they need the support the most, that's when you go and work with them. And anyway, I challenge that to the government. Get back to the table with them. Go and have a conversation with them. Work with them.

You know, I want to talk a little bit about roads. Roads are important up north. And I've heard the past minister and the new minister, they're going to have different things to say over the next while. I've served petitions day after day. I've asked questions in estimates. Highway 135, highway 123, 102, petitions have been served, just constantly bringing them up.

And you know, when I think about some of the comments that have been made, and we talk about the industry sector and the

resources in the North, and I hear the comments made that there is such an opportunity up north, and you have so many resources that we have to get into. Then where's the commitment by that government, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the roads that are in the worst shape and getting worse, not better, getting worse under their watch?

And they talk about a five-year plan rollout. Isn't that wonderful? But I'm very pleased, you know. I'll continue to remind the community members back home. The leadership, they're going to continue to fight. They're going to do all they can to make sure the government doesn't forget about them.

I'm so supportive of the roads because of safety. Some people forget about the safety. They don't have a clue, Mr. Speaker. The North has been ignored. And I've already been through my speech about the priorities that were there before. This government didn't fulfill the promises or the commitments — and we're told they don't have to — of a previous government.

So I want to go on to the next thing. And I mean, you talk about a highways advisory for the North, and I believe they're just announcing it. If you look at some of the information, Mr. Speaker, a northern transportation advisory committee has been struck. And I guess at some point they're going to make some announcements, prioritize. Well I'm hoping at the end of that, whatever comes, the government will fund it.

But I'm a little concerned that truly, with what I've seen from the budget, they aren't going to fund it. It's not going to be a priority for them. And that is sad to the people that I represent who need that to travel in and out of their communities. So for that, again, there have been lots of petitions.

But I have to also comment to the staff that work on those roads. They do an excellent job for the resources and the equipment they have. And hopefully we'll continue to fight on their behalf of the official opposition to make sure the resources come to the North. And I think we have a right to travel on safe roads.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment a little bit about addictions. The North is suffering. And I know the rest of the province has its issues with addictions. We're no different. The front-line staff are doing the best they can with the resources they have, but there's so much more work needs to be done.

It's tough when you watch families who suffer and have to go through the loss. It's terrible; it's not good. And I just cannot believe the seriousness of addictions. And I'm hoping that this government will pay attention. And they can talk. And they can go around. And I wish they would start by listening to what I'm saying today — now, because it's important. Addictions is a serious matter. It's affecting a lot of our communities, not just the North. There's a lot of harm coming to our young people, and we have to address it together in a meaningful way.

We also have mental health issues that we have to address. We have too many people who lose their battle with depression — young people, old people — and in the North we've been heavily hit with that. And to that, you know, my heart goes out to the communities that have to deal with that. I'm hoping the government will hear their concerns from the leadership, from

the community, from the parents, and the caregivers to try to help out and do all they can, working collectively, because that is so important, Mr. Speaker. They have to work collectively.

Anyway I want to also go on, Mr. Speaker, to housing. Housing is a huge issue in my constituency, the crowding. You know some of the homes sometimes will have 13 to 16 people living in them, very crowded. So when we talk about housing . . . And it affects health as well, because if you're living in crowded space like that, H1N1, it's just an opportunity there for nothing but harm to come to a lot of people. So we have to address it.

You know, I don't mind giving out compliments to the government and to anyone else when they truly work with the people and the leadership back home. When there are good things to announce, I can acknowledge them. I'm not against that. When someone does something good, we want to say good for the people. And, you know, the government has done some good things in some of the communities, but unfortunately there hasn't been a lot done in the North.

And I'm sorry if the members don't like it, but that's the way it is. That's reality, what people are telling me back home. So if the people are feeling it, then I guess you need to do a better job because you're not getting through to them with your pats on the back you give one another every now. And your cheerleading doesn't work. It doesn't cut it.

You know, we talk about long-term care, and we know that we have a priority. I've been serving a petition in this House for quite some time every day and I'll continue — long-term care for La Ronge. And as other communities come onside, and they want to bring their petitions and their concerns, I'll do that for them because it's important. There's been hundreds of signatures on these petitions. And I know we're working with the health authority, and I'm hoping.

The minister talked about the health authorities have to make a wish list or prioritize what they need for our health region. Well I'm going to work, and I know the community leaders are going to work with them to make sure that not only do we have one list of . . . Just the number one, whether it's long-term care, whether it would be in something like, oh, we have a high number of people with diabetes and dialysis. And there's different things that might be needed as a priority for . . .

[19:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Seated in the west gallery is Mike Owens, a prominent lawyer from Saskatoon. I'm pleased to see

that he's visiting the legislature today. I know some of his political background. It's not always agreed with mine, but I think he's coming around to our way of thinking. So I'm pleased that he's here, carefully studying what goes in the House, and I suspect that after tonight's visit he will be firmly entrenched in our camp. So in any event, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to introduce Mr. Owens. And I want to wish him well in visiting his legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Hon. Mr. McMorris, seconded by Ms. Ross, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Lingenfelter.]

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back into as far as the priorities of the health authority, and we'll identify those priorities as the North and as the Cumberland constituency, and we'll work with the health board in co-operation to make sure that the needs of the Cumberland constituency . . . And I guess, you know, we have a large Aboriginal population and there are many needs, and especially with health.

So I just want to focus on that a little bit and continue working with the constituency and the leader and community members, the things they are saying, Mr. Speaker. And hopefully some of their concerns will be addressed by the government. And I'm hopeful. There's hope there, and I know the people in my constituency have hope. And I'm so grateful that they still have hope because they need it.

We talk about unemployment in the North is very high, Mr. Speaker. And the government talks about patting themselves on the back, about where they're going, and all the vision that they have. And unfortunately we're struggling. There's a lot of communities that have a high unemployment rate. It's not a little bit. It's very high. It's alarming and we need help. They expect help. They expect help from the government, from the official opposition, and from their leadership and industry to develop. And I know there are some good partnerships happening, but we need to do more.

You know, I look at Churchill High School, and it's one announcement the minister came and made. And we've been waiting excitedly to see some construction. And I know they like photo ops. But I will like it when I can take a photo of a new school, not just one that's talked about and one that's released in the press. I would like to see an actual building, and I'd love to take that picture. And someday maybe I will, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we need it now.

I guess I want to stop and focus a little bit, Mr. Speaker, on some of the First Nations and Métis issues where this government has totally, totally lost it. You don't have it. You've lost it. I don't know if you're ever going to get it.

But I hope the duty to consult, once and for all, can be resolved. But maybe now with a new minister, a new voice from the new grand chief, there might be some different things coming forward. And I hope that. There'll be time. And I guess to the minister and the government, Mr. Speaker, there's a time where I think they'll have to develop a relationship. And I wish them all the best doing that.

There's a lot of trappers and fishers that are struggling under the First Nations and Métis issues, and there's a lot of issues have to be addressed and some concerns that I see coming. And the trappers are very concerned. And I know they raised them with the ministers, and I know they raised their concerns with their leaders, but unfortunately sometimes I don't think they're feeling heard. When I go to the meetings, trappers' meetings, they don't feel like they're being heard. And it's time that they get heard. It's time that this government responds to them and go and consult with them and find out exactly what it is they need to continue the lifestyle they're living and the traditions they want to share with their grandchildren and the next generation.

We have the commercial fishermen. And we see that industry . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And, you know, they go on and don't want to talk about some of the new visions they got. You know, the fishers have a right to a market, and they have a right to continue to make a living the way they have done for generations. And I just hope that whatever direction they go, it is truly for them and keeps their industry strong, that they're not being led by anybody down a wrong path that will not assist them, but do more harm to their industry. I hope so. And I hope and I put that trust in them.

We're celebrating 125 year celebration of the resistance, and the government's going to announce, and I'm glad to see that, the Year of the Métis. Being a Métis person, I'm very proud and honoured. And I know our leader made it very clear, if the government didn't deal with it, the official opposition would deal with it. And I'm happy to hear that, and I'm glad to see that the government is moving forward on that.

But having said that, there are so many other issues that Métis need help to address. They have problems with the core funding — \$1.8 million would help them with their core funding — if that would be reinstated and a figure that would assist them to help the area directors do the job that they need to do, representing the regions that they've been elected and asked to represent. So that's important.

I would like to truly see some of the funding that the MNS [Métis Nation of Saskatchewan] has been asking for and needs, that this government commit to it. Core funding, not just talk. It's time. Don't pat yourselves on the back all the time. You guys are good at that; I've watched that. As a government you pat one another. You're cheerleaders. I've watched it. I mean, I'm learning; I'm still young. But you know what? I still like to see once in a while you guys come to the table meaningful, and I mean meaningful, as a government to deal with the First Nations and the Métis, truly in a meaningful way, deal with their issues once and for all.

And I will give you the compliments, but until I see that happen, I cannot give you a compliment on something you have

not done. You haven't lived up to, and you owe it to them to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, you know I've watched over the last start of the session and people responding to the Throne Speech, and to be honest with you the government wants to pat themselves on the back all the time. They have their cheerleading day, and I know they probably have meetings and they develop how they're going to cheerlead and that's great. I hope that does them a lot of comfort because back home where it really means something, people are feeling neglected, left behind. You have no vision. You've left so many people behind.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, they talk about, truly talk about where they're going to go with their vision and their budget. And they talk about the past record, 16 years. And they go around, Mr. Speaker, talking about 16 years, but truly it's time that this government quit patting themselves on the back. And that's enough; let's get some seriousness here. And it's time to stop blaming the NDP [New Democratic Party] on the past 16 years.

It's time the government stand on its own record, and your record's going to come. You're going to get your chance to look at that, Mr. Speaker, very well. And it's going to be kind of late. We're going into . . . And they're going to announce the vision, a budget, and there's nothing left. Where do we go? And they say oh, just wait and watch.

Mr. Speaker, I'm waiting. There's hope, and I'll tell you back home there's a lot of hope. People still see it. I hope that the people back home will get exactly what they deserve. And it shouldn't matter which way and how they voted. Truly shouldn't matter. Saskatchewan people have a right to be treated fairly and equally by everyone, and I guess by that government over there, Mr. Speaker. The government has a right to make sure . . .

An Hon. Member: — An obligation.

Mr. Vermette: — An obligation. That's right. Not only a right, but an obligation to the people it represents. All people of this province, not just ones that voted a certain way. Everyone has a right to have some compassion, have the proper roads, housing, mental health.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time you know, I've actually enjoyed . . . And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this: I will not be supporting, of course, the main motion, but overall with what I see with the Speech from the Throne and the vision that this government has, it's like the song that was sang in here the day of the Throne Speech, "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a great honour to rise in the Assembly and offer a few remarks on the Speech from the Throne. Now before I comment on the Throne Speech directly, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a few well-deserved thank yous.

First, I'd like to thank my darling wife Jocelyn, for her infinite

patience, her unwavering support, and her wise counsel, without which none of what I do here would be possible. And I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate her on winning a second term on Regina City Council. She is, of course, very grateful for the support of ward 2 residents and is very enthusiastically looking forward to serving the people of the Albert Park and Lakeview neighbourhoods for another three years.

Mr. Speaker, a few other quick thank yous are in order. I am very pleased to recognize the great work being done by Kyle Leonard, who does a fantastic job running the Regina South constituency office, assisting with casework, and communications, scheduling, and making everything in our small but very busy office stays on track.

And I appreciate this opportunity to offer sincere thanks to Roland Lafrance, Kim Kydd, Trudy Sigfusson, Dawne Anderson, and the new kid on the block, Jared Dunitz, who look after the legislative office efficiently and cheerfully handling policy issues and referrals, correspondence, reception, and a wide range of other activities as well.

Next I'd like to thank the Saskatchewan Party candidates in the recent by-elections. Corey O'Soup and Kathleen Peterson ran very energetic and very well organized campaigns and came remarkably close to winning in two of what used to be the safest NDP seats in the province of Saskatchewan — used to be is the key word. I think we're going to see more of these bright, hardworking young people in the future.

And I'd like to welcome the Assembly's newest representatives: the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, who I want to congratulate on an excellent first speech here in the Assembly; and the member for Regina Douglas Park, who had just a little bit of trouble getting elected going into a by-election in what was formerly a bastion of NDP support, blowing a huge majority and emerging with a razor-thin margin, Mr. Speaker.

Now, when you look at past election results for Regina Douglas Park, an interesting trend emerges. In 2003, with the current member's affable predecessor, the NDP won with a majority of over 3,000 votes. Now in 2007, even with likeable Harry Van Mulligen at the helm, their lead was cut was to a little over 2,000 votes. Do you see the trend? Yes, we do, too.

And in the by-election, their far less agreeable candidate barely squeaked through by 498 votes. Their future doesn't look good. No wonder he's grumpy.

Mr. Speaker, what's happening in Douglas Park, you might ask? Well it just might be an indicator that voters in this constituency, like other people in Regina, are changing their mind about the NDP. Or it just might be that traditional NDP supporters don't have much confidence in their grumpy new leader.

I call him grumpy, Mr. Speaker, because he is grumpy. Just how grumpy is the new Leader of the Opposition? I'll tell you how grumpy he is. Why, he's so grumpy, he doesn't even like dancing, particularly jigging, and especially when I'm doing it. He actually said so. He said so in his response to the Speech from the Throne, if you can imagine.

Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know is, what is his big problem? Is he simply jealous because I'm a better dancer? Well how juvenile. He ought to grow up. Or does he simply have no appreciation for the important role that arts and culture play in this province? How incredibly mean-spirited. I'm not sure which is worse. Both are deplorable.

[19:30]

Is there anything that makes this man happy, Mr. Speaker? Anything at all? Well yes, there is. He mentioned it in his remarks to the House. Apparently each year he has a gathering with a few friends — a very few friends, I am told — who share his rather unique political philosophy.

And together, while they enjoy a kumbaya moment, can't you just see it, Mr. Speaker? A post-flower-power van full of the party faithful, gathered around the annual campfire under the stars, somewhere in the middle of the 40-or-so quarter sections owned by the Alberta-Conservative-backing, salt-water sheik of Shaunavon, clad in polyester leisure suits and disco boots or rumpled tweed sports jackets with suede elbow patches, jeans and sandals, reminiscing fondly about their party's glory days in government — linking arm in arm, as it were — and singing along with an eight-track tape of hits from the '70s, but obviously not dancing.

Those were the days, my friend. I thought they'd never end. It truly warms the heart, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker? And you say, stuck in the past.

What has the media said about this new NDP leader? He's not new at all. *The Canadian Press* reports, "Saskatchewan NDP turns to the past." *The Sasquatch* asks, "Out with the old, in with the . . . old?" *rabble.ca* states, "New leader, same direction: . . . NDP holds off reform movement," and warns that ". . . the campaign for the leadership and the convention [itself] showed deep divisions within the party."

One letter to *The StarPhoenix* in Saskatoon says, "Having Lingenfelter as leader will lead to a further exodus from the ranks of the NDP . . . I predict the Green Party's vote will double next time."

And perhaps the most telling story of all, the *Lloydminster Meridian Booster* says, "So, Harry Van Mulligen is vacating his seat to allow Dwaine Lingenfelter to run in a 'safe' constituency . . . it appears Lingenfelter is too scared to run in his own rural constituency." Too scared? Can you imagine? No wonder NDP members and MLAs are split right down the middle, Mr. Speaker. And maybe that's the real reason the new leader lost Douglas Park, or just won by a little bit.

I would like to conclude my introductory remarks by thanking a very important and much larger group of people, a group of people who, unlike the opposition, remember the past and have learned from its lessons but prefer living in the present and are celebrating Saskatchewan's new confidence while planning the province's even more promising future. I'm referring of course to the good residents of Regina South.

Now each year we knock on Regina South neighbourhood doors to hear what our constituents' advice might be and listen

to their opinions on the issues of the day. And we deeply appreciate their insight and their interest. Regina South residents have shared their opinions about what is working well in Saskatchewan — like tax reductions, like provincial debt repayment, like investments in infrastructure, and support for vulnerable seniors, children, and people with disabilities. They have also expressed their concerns and thoughts about how to make our province even better than it is today.

Like so many other people in Saskatchewan, the residents of Regina South are keenly interested in health care. They are very aware that one of the most pressing issues in health care is the shortage of nurses, and they welcome the news that Saskatchewan's new government set a bold target of training and recruiting 800 new nurses in four years and has already achieved 70 per cent of that goal in just two years. They're happy about that.

In their minds, the next goal has to be reducing surgical wait times so that everyone can benefit from needed procedures in a timely manner. I want to offer my sincere thanks to the good people of Regina South for their insights on this very important issue because it is due to their advice and similar encouragement from people all over Saskatchewan constituencies that motivated us to set another bold target, as you have heard, to reduce all surgical wait times in our province to three months within the next four years. Now that's why this very ambitious goal, what the Minister of Health has described as a full-court press on surgical wait times, is in fact the centrepiece of the new Speech from the Throne.

As expected, there are many other significant health initiatives, along with exciting new program announcements in other ministries. However I'd like to use the brief time remaining to outline the new work coming out of the office that I have the honour of serving, First Nations and Métis Relations and Northern Affairs.

And I need to begin the discussion by thanking my predecessor, the member for Kelvington-Wadena, whose hard work allowed our new government to build strong new working relationships with our province's First Nation and Métis people for the first time in 16 years. The member from Cumberland can't hear this, obviously.

As the new person in her role, we figured the best way to begin was to continue her wise strategy of visiting as many communities as possible. So far we've been to Saskatoon, The Battlefords, Meadow Lake, and Prince Albert a dozen times in total. We've travelled to Beauval, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Pinehouse Lake, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, La Ronge, the Seabee and Santoy 7 mine sites, Sandy Bay, Flin Flon, Creighton, and Cumberland House. And in the next few days we'll be getting to McArthur River, Points North Landing, Black Lake, Stony Rapids, Fond-du-Lac, and Uranium City.

Along the way, we've met with leadership of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and some of its component regions, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Prince Albert Grand Council, Battlefords Tribal Council, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Yorkton Tribal Council, and File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, along with elders, veterans, senators, chiefs, councillors, and community members

from many of our province's First Nations.

That's a reasonable start, Mr. Speaker, but we're committed to doing more, much more. We have to do more because there is no substitute for discussing issues face to face with people in their own communities. We have to do more because no matter how many places my predecessor got to, no matter how many places I get to, we're still sometimes met with this greeting: thanks for coming to our community, yours is the first government minister ever to visit us. A shame. A shame, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne outlines a number of important initiatives coming forward from First Nations and Métis Relations in the coming months. We are building on the duty to consult framework policy created by the previous minister after very extensive consultation with First Nation, Métis, community, and industry participants. This document is now being revised with recent stakeholder feedback in mind and with a view to completing a final policy in the near future.

The finished document will provide an appropriate framework for respectful and meaningful consultation with First Nation and Métis partners on a wide range of important issues while acknowledging industry needs for clarity and consistency in the process of reviewing proposals for road and resource development. At the same time, we're equally committed to developing policy option tables to explore the issues not included in the original framework and intended to be discussed separately.

By considering environmental stewardship, the mapping of traditional lands and sacred sites, sharing in the province's prosperity, consultation capacity, and the mechanism for dispute resolution, we will ensure that the broadest possible range of issues are addressed and the widest range of interests accommodated.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to constitutional obligations mandated by recent court decisions, we have a vision. We want to see as many First Nations and Métis youth as possible completing their education, and we want to see as many of these young people as possible taking their rightful place in the workforce of our province. With these goals in mind, we are working closely with the ministries of Education and Advanced Education to bring the highest quality of learning opportunities to all Saskatchewan children.

It is also important to note that for the very first time in our province's history — the very first time in our province's history — schools will be providing treaty education so that the coming generation grows up to understand that, as the Office of the Treaty Commissioner says so correctly, we are all treaty people.

In addition to supporting key programs delivered by K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] classrooms, First Nations and Métis Relations applauds provincial funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education to assist Aboriginal students in post-secondary educations to meet their goals. We also need to ensure that when Métis and First Nations youth complete their education, there are jobs waiting for them.

This coming year we'll be adding another very important program to meet this goal. Southern Saskatchewan already enjoys the benefits of well-organized and properly resourced enterprise regions that are working together to bring more economic development than ever to our province. In our next budget, we plan to include funding for three new northern enterprise regions serving the Northwest, Northeast, and Athabasca Basin regions respectively.

This is exactly the solution strongly advocated by northern business leaders themselves. And we're very pleased to be meeting their expectations, very thankful for their wise advice along the way, and we look forward to their continued involvement as we work on this exciting new initiative.

Now the member from Cumberland is calling for assistance for the northern commercial fishing industry. I'd like to ask his party: where were they for 16 years as that industry sadly deteriorated due to an outdated agreement? We're doing more in a couple of years than they did in a couple of decades. We're on the job and we intend to succeed where they failed.

Mr. Speaker, we are particularly interested in economic development in northern Saskatchewan as it goes to the heart of our Northern Affairs' portfolio. And in our extensive travels to northern communities, reserves, we are seeing new energy, new enthusiasm, and new confidence that perhaps the members on the other side aren't aware of. We are also seeing remarkable progress in the development of successful business partnerships between First Nations, Métis citizens, northern municipalities, and industry. We warmly applaud this very beneficial trend that is attracting capital investment to the North, building new business ventures, and creating new training and employment opportunities for all northerners. We will continue to support these fine efforts in every way possible and share the vision of a vibrant economy in the North.

Jordan's principle is another area where considerable progress has been made, and First Nations and Métis Relations is very pleased to be leading our government's work on this important file, together with our partners in the Ministry of Health. I am very proud to confirm that Saskatchewan is the first jurisdiction in Canada where all three parties — First Nations, the Government of Canada, and the province — have endorsed a plan that ensures that all First Nations youth will receive the health care services they need regardless of which funding agency has financial responsibility. It was indeed an honour, Mr. Speaker, to join former Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations vice-chief, Glen Pratt, officials from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and colleagues from provincial ministries to announce this very special milestone.

The final Throne Speech initiative I want to mention is the proclamation of 2010 as the Year of the Métis. This was personally requested by President Robert Doucette of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan in a letter addressed to the Premier. The Premier's response was immediate and enthusiastic. As a result, the Government of Saskatchewan welcomes this opportunity to recognize the unique history and culture of the Métis people along with their enormous contribution to our province as part of the 125th anniversary celebrations of the historic events of 1885.

Quite understandably the response of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan has been very positive. Here's what they've said, Mr. Speaker. From their news release titled "MN-S applauds historical announcement during Saskatchewan's speech from the throne," I offer the two following quick quotations:

There has never been a dedication of this magnitude made to Métis Citizens by the province . . .

And:

The designation of 2010 being The Year of the Métis, by the Province of Saskatchewan in yesterday's throne speech marks a great chapter in moving forward for the Métis Nation as well as The Province.

Obviously we're making unprecedented progress, and this is good news for everyone in Saskatchewan, except, Mr. Speaker, perhaps for the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to warn him in advance that there are going to be celebrations to kick off the 2010 Year of the Métis program of activities. They're going to take place right outside in the rotunda of this Legislative Building on November 4th, and there is probably going to be dancing — yes, Mr. Speaker, dancing. Even worse from the new Leader of the Opposition's perspective, there will likely be jiggling. Worse of all from his perspective, it is just possible that I might be participating if invited.

We're going to have a lot of fun celebrating this landmark occasion, but we certainly don't want to upset the new Leader of the Opposition who, given his declared distaste for dancing and possibly arts and culture of all kinds, now knows which day to be absent. He'll be happy for it, Mr. Speaker, and so will everybody else, I might say.

Mr. Speaker, last year at this time I closed my remarks with an appeal to the bipartisan spirit of the members on the other side of this House to vote in favour of the Throne Speech. In extending the hand of friendship across the aisle, I noted that it was clear that our colleagues in opposition secretly wanted to support its historic paying down of the provincial debt, its landmark tax cuts, its unprecedented investments in infrastructure — like hospitals, like schools, like highways — its dramatic increases in support for our most vulnerable citizens, and, yes, the long-awaited enhancement of provincial revenue sharing for municipalities, including my own town of Regina.

I implored, yes, I implored our NDP colleagues to vote with their hearts and not to be mere slaves to partisan politics. Right in the middle of this impassioned plea, the member from Biggar said they're not going to do it. They're not going to do it, he said, Mr. Speaker. And sadly, he was right. Despite their inner feelings, when the vote was taken, every single NDP member said no to the Throne Speech. You could feel their inner turmoil as they struggled with their consciences, but in the end, they said no towards moving toward a bright future and yes to being stuck in the past.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to believe that a direct appeal to their better nature would succeed this year, but I really don't think so. The reason is simple. They're grumpy — grumpy,

grumpy, grumpy, even grumpier than last year, and their new leader is especially grumpy.

Okay. The new member from Saskatoon Riversdale isn't grumpy, certainly not yet anyway. And the veteran member from Regina Northeast has never been grumpy. He's never been grumpy, Mr. Speaker. These two stand out from the rest. They stand out a lot.

[19:45]

And this has given me a new idea. I think these two ungrumpy members of the opposition would actually be more comfortable on this side of the House. So I'm taking this opportunity to invite them to cross the floor to where they'll be cheering for Saskatchewan, home of Canada's strongest provincial economy, rather than cheering for the recession; where they'll be planning for success rather than planning for failure; and to where we're moving toward a bright future, not being stuck in the past. That way, Mr. Speaker, when it comes time to vote on the Throne Speech, they can follow their inner voice and support all the exciting initiatives and programs it contains. Indeed I'm not asking them to make a decision right away, Mr. Speaker. I'm just asking them to start thinking about it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude by offering this paraphrase of a wonderful old political quotation that comes to mind each and every time I happen to hear the new Leader of the Opposition speak in this Assembly: when I first began this campaign, I just wanted to beat the NDP. Now I want to save the province from them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I of course will be supporting the Throne Speech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just in response to the Throne Speech, I want to point out the member that spoke just before me, the member from Regina South, I understood that he was involved with the NDP in his earlier years. And as a result of his defection over to the Sask Party, they had a motion. And the motion of the Regina South NDP executive is very clear and it's unanimous. And the motion reads, they can have him.

So, Mr. Speaker, they're more than welcome to have that member join that particular party. Because in true fashion, Mr. Speaker, it really talks about his background. It talks about his commitment. And the entertaining he just provided to us, really has no merit or point to what he was involved when we were with him. So in other words, we did not want him any more. So you guys are welcome. You can have him.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the Throne Speech, when I listened to the Throne Speech, I was thinking to myself, this is like a bad joke or badly timed joke because I was waiting for more, as the rest of the members were. They were waiting for more — got to be more, got to be more. And then all of a sudden that was it. That was it. So I'm sitting there saying, well either that's a very boring Throne Speech or it's a poorly timed joke because we're all waiting for more. And guess what? Nothing came in that was exciting and certainly nothing that

really inspired people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look at that and I say to myself, let's do a recap. These guys across the way, this band of Conservatives and Liberals and ex-fired NDP members over there, they got together in the dead of night to form the Saskatchewan Party. And all of a sudden, bang, you come along after the Throne Speech and after two years — two years — they're boring already.

They talk about the NDP being in power for 16 years. And I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan as I've told them time and time again, yes, we were in power for 16 years, but the first 14 years we were busy cleaning up that conservative mess left behind by those guys, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen years we cleaned up their mess. Fourteen years we cleaned up the mess left behind those guys, and all of a sudden, like the pompom group they are, they have followed a new leader and a new party and this new vision.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the outset, that Throne Speech got to be the most boring Throne Speech in the world. And I thought there was more coming, Mr. Speaker. But the worst part about . . . It's not one thing to be boring, Mr. Speaker, as the Throne Speech was. It's not one thing being boring, but when you're broke already, all of a sudden you're going to start losing friends.

So number one is they're boring. They're uninspired, and they're broke. So what are they going to do? They're going to keep waving their pompoms, going to keep waving their balloons and saying, look what we're doing. And they're going to entertain the people and, yes, even the member from Regina South goes to jig.

He goes to jig and makes a spectacle of himself, but he says, oh we're going to declare the Year of the Métis in 2010. But guess what? There is no duty to consult framework that they're abiding by. Guess what? There's no core funding for the Métis Nation. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? They're threatening all the affiliates, whether it's SNEDCO [SaskNative Economic Development Corporation], whether it's Gabriel Dumont, whether it's DTI [Dumont Technical Institute], or whether it's the Clarence Campeau Fund. They never brought one red cent increase on these guys, and yet he talks about the Year of the Métis. Of course we'll celebrate that, but maybe they should actually put some money where their mouth is, Mr. Speaker, because all they're going to do is wave their pompoms and their balloons. Well that's not leadership. That is absolutely boring like their Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

And what I want to also point out as well, Mr. Speaker, is that when you look at some of the arguments that these guys made, and I want to again recap what I think has been a rudderless, leaderless Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. When they came into power they had two and a half billion dollars in the bank. Two and a half billion dollars and, Mr. Speaker, this economy was booming. It was firing on all cylinders. People were optimistic. Things were happening. And these guys assumed that after 16 years the people of Saskatchewan said, maybe it's time for a change. Maybe it's time for a change. Let's give the NDP a break. And, Mr. Speaker, we accepted that role. As the official opposition, we humbly accept that role.

And I want to point out that after 16 years of cleaning up the mess that maybe the NDP needed a time out, but we are rebuilding, Mr. Speaker. So when I say to these guys, you had a booming economy, you had roads being built, you had the debt down — from 15 to \$16 billion down to 5 to \$10 billion dollars with the Crowns — and we reduced the debt. And the 16 years that we're in government, we paid between 11 and \$12 billion in interest and debt, Mr. Speaker, so we had a long way to climb back. And the people of Saskatchewan know that, and every NDP in this province should never be ashamed of that history, Mr. Speaker, never be ashamed.

And the big thing that's really remarkable, Mr. Speaker, when you're sitting down and listen to these guys we said, look, look, we paid down the debt. We rebuilt the province. And yes, we had a hard climb back up, and the people of Saskatchewan stood by us. But we transferred you two and a half billion dollars in the bank and a booming economy. And all we asked as an outgoing administration, all we asked was one thing — please don't screw it up.

And, Mr. Speaker, what have they done? What have they done? Let me show you what have they done. Right now the headlines, and I go from the *Melville Advance*, "Sask full-time jobs drop." Mr. Speaker, "Time to twin highway no. 4, more work and infrastructure." "Travel tough on dialysis patients." It's *Estevan Mercury*, October 14. "Potash corporation announces more layoffs at Rocanville, Lanigan." "Canola production way down." "Canadian hog sector nearing industry wide disaster." Mr. Speaker, "Seniors' affordable housing project opens in Pinehouse." Oh no, this is one of ours, sorry.

But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, they have really messed things up. And the other thing that's really important, Mr. Speaker, as you look at this scenario right now across the way, \$1.3 billion miscalculation by that Finance minister on potash revenues. Who did they ask, Mr. Speaker? They didn't ask the Finance people who have all the experience and all the knowledge, and that's what a good government does. It asks people for advice, the people that they pay.

And what happened last year? The Minister of Industry and Resources was waving his document saying, oh we've got the information from the industry right here. Well, Mr. Speaker, he's now blaming the industry for giving him those figures when they're \$1.3 billion off their mark.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about a rudderless, leaderless Sask Party government, it's absolutely true. It is absolutely true. They inherit a booming economy and two and a half billion dollars, and they brag about the money that they paid down the debt. That's the money the people of Saskatchewan and the NDP handed to you.

And the worst part of all this, Mr. Speaker, is that was their inheritance. They spent their inheritance. And now next year trouble is on the rise because, Mr. Speaker, if you look at all the sectors, all the sectors that are out there, whether it's cow-calf operations, hog, oil, gas — you can go through the entire list — everything is going down. And yet these guys continue spending, and they'll continue spending because, Mr. Speaker, they really, really want to be re-elected.

And I predict today, I predict today that next year there's only three things that are going to save these guys: massive cuts, Mr. Speaker, or they're going to increase debt — which I think they will — or they're going to increase income tax. Those are the three options that they have left. And it is very simple, Mr. Speaker. It's very, very simple. We said, please don't mess it up you guys.

And every New Democrat in this province or person that's looking at the New Democrats right now, they're going to say, you know, people said we were wrong to leave that money on the table. They said we were wrong to leave that money on the table. And everywhere I go I tell people, no, it was the right thing to do because when we took over this government, when we took over government from those guys opposite, Mr. Speaker, the interest on the debt and the interest alone was three times our education budget, Mr. Speaker — three times. Can you imagine that? And when we left government our commitment to education was twice the amount that we were paying on interest. That is a remarkable turnaround, Mr. Speaker, remarkable.

And I pointed out and I look across the way and I say to myself, well where are these guys getting their advice from? Where are these guys getting their advice from? They sure and heck ain't getting it from the Finance people, the bureaucrats that Saskatchewan has right at their beck and call, which are very intelligent people. Where are they getting their advice from?

And I look at that and I say, well the member from Swift Current, the Premier, well he's the one that certainly is pushing the agenda, and he's the one that all of this sits on. And I was thinking, well what background does he have to determine the budget of Saskatchewan — 5 and 600 million there or \$300 million there? So I looked back on the resumé, and I try and see, well where does he get his experience from, Mr. Speaker, to do the budget speech and the Throne Speech? And I understand from basically what I see that he operated a guitar museum, and this guitar museum went broke.

So I was thinking to myself, being a very simple hockey player — a player that's not very good, I might add, before they say it — that if you can't sell country music to the people of Saskatchewan, you shouldn't try and anticipate the global markets for potash demand. I just don't think that's right. You should go down to seek advice from people because at the end of the day, a \$1.3 billion blunder, it's at their doing, Mr. Speaker, at their doing. They did it. So once again, you look at how the scenario unfolds. They brag about paying down the debt with their inheritance. Great. Go ahead. Pay it down. Everybody applauds that.

They also talk about the vision that they have. Well it's boring already, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going through the headlines — headline after headline. And then like I'm thinking about, okay, maybe, yes, people aren't giving these guys a chance. Let's see what they can do. And then I look at some of the efforts of the people that they had in their government.

I particularly look at the member from Cannington, the member from Cypress Hills, from Thunder Creek, and P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton. Those guys waited 16 years to be a minister, and they were fired after 16 months, Mr. Speaker, fired. Why,

Mr. Speaker? Because quite frankly, they're tired. They're uninspired, and they all need to be fired, Mr. Speaker. There's no question in my mind; they all need to be fired.

The other thing that's also important, Mr. Speaker, as we stand up and we give these shots, Mr. Speaker, we give these shots out. I'm told by my colleagues, they said, you'd better be careful; they have their attack dogs out there — people that'll go after you and give you hell. Excuse my language, Mr. Speaker. But they'll give you some extreme grief.

And I tell them, well who is their attack dog? They say, oh the member from Wood River, the member from Saskatoon Northwest, and a couple of the other members. Well to me, they're attack chihuahuas. And of course, my colleagues said, take it easy, take it easy Mr. MLA from Athabasca. Those chihuahuas might know kung fu. And I gave it some thought for about two seconds, and I said, yes, but they're still chihuahuas.

So at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, whatever they would like to do, whatever game that they want to play, if they want to rock and roll, Mr. Speaker, we'll rock and roll. And this Throne Speech, and this Throne Speech is bull. It is boring. It is uninspired, and it just really reflects the fact that all those members across the way are tired after two years. How could you be broke and tired after two years? That's what I can't understand.

And I listened with great interest to some of the members opposite, particularly the Minister of Industry and Resources. He said oh yes, you guys are great economic thinkers over there. But, Mr. Speaker, when I think about who built this economy, when I think about the boom that happened in Saskatchewan — which these guys inherited — when I think of that, Mr. Speaker, I think of people like Eric Cline, our former minister of Finance. I think of people like Eldon Lautermilch, Mr. Speaker. I think about Doreen Hamilton, Mr. Speaker; Andrew Thomson, Mr. Speaker; Joanne Crofford. These are the people who I think about.

[20:00]

I don't give one ounce of credit to that gang across the way, Mr. Speaker, because they don't deserve it. Every bit of good news that they had as a result of the inheritance that they got from the outgoing NDP government is now over. It is now over, Mr. Speaker. Now the crow is going to come home to roost because the fact of the matter is they're tired. They're uninspired, and they're now broke.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, what's the amazing thing about all of that is people are just starting to realize how bad and how tough this whole issue is because the fact of the matter is when you're sitting listening to the Throne Speech, you want to see their vision. They want to see where they're going, how they're going to manage the finances, what they're going to do.

And every time that they get into trouble, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every single time that this government gets into trouble, do you know what they do? They blame the NDP. They say oh it's 16 years.

And my advice to them is, it's time for you guys to grow up and

act your age. You're two years old. Stop blaming other people and start taking responsibility for your own actions and your own miscalculations, Mr. Speaker. My goodness, it's as simple as that. It's as simple as that.

So next time the Minister of Industry and Resources gets up and talks about the economic minds on this side, I'll tell him this, Mr. Speaker, that we had more to do with rebuilding the economy than any single member across the way. And I'm proud of my affiliation with the New Democratic Party and the past administration, Mr. Speaker.

And before you go on, and before they go on, before they go on, they ought to know this as well, that when the tough times came, when the tough times came, that member from Kindersley went home. He was going to go home, back to the farm. And now he comes back here because things are going good. Why not, you know? So he comes back again, and he comes to be the Minister of Industry and Resources out here.

And the problem is, Mr. Speaker, it's like the football game a couple weeks ago. Some of the fans got up and left when Saskatchewan was behind. I think they were behind by six points or a point, rather. And all of a sudden they all left. They all left. And people said, oh no, no. No, come back. Come back. Saskatchewan's winning again. So what he does, he turns around and he comes back.

So I'm going to say to this, Mr. Speaker, that I will not take any criticism from that member from Kindersley, and I'll not take any advice from him either about who built this economy. I talk to the people like Cline, Lautermilch, Crofford, Hamilton. Those are the people that built this economy, and those are the people we should recognize, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, all the way we should recognize them.

So again I go back to the Throne Speech and I'm thinking it's a bad joke, that the timing is off. So why are people out there across the way smiling? Why are they laughing? You think it's a big joke that these problems are coming down the pipe, and they just simply keep floating out these balloons and these pompoms. Well the fact of the matter is the pompoms and balloon days are soon coming to an end, Mr. Speaker. They're soon coming to an end. And who's going to pay the price are the people of Saskatchewan.

And we warned them, Mr. Speaker, we warned them. Don't listen to their speeches. Don't believe anything they say because they'd rather have their little pompoms to deflect your attention from the real issues, from the real issues and from the history of this party, Mr. Speaker.

So again, that Throne Speech, it's got to be the most boring speech I've ever heard in the 14 years that I've sat in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It's got to be the boringest speech.

Now what I'll point out as well, Mr. Speaker, in my closing comments is that the people ought to know, the people ought to know when we lost government in 2007, we lost by 6,000 votes in 10 seats — in 10 seats, Mr. Speaker. That ain't a lot. In this Assembly, we're going to work very hard over the next couple of years to get rid of those guys, Mr. Speaker. And I notice they attack not only the new member from Riversdale, who I

congratulate and say great work, because they never increased their vote. In fact they had 2,100 votes in 2007. They went down to 1,500. So they lost a lot of votes, Mr. Speaker.

And I also noticed how they attacked their leader. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell them this once and I'm not going to say it again, but when our leader began this journey to come back to rejoin the NDP and rebuild this party and become premier, there's four things he had to do.

Number one was he had to really go after the nomination which he worked very, very hard at. And then he had to go after the party executive to embrace him and to bring back all the people that have really come back to listen to some of the things that he has said because of his vision and because of his experience. And then he had to become the leader which he did, Mr. Speaker. He became our leader.

So what's going to happen . . . has one more task to do, one more and that is become the premier of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's going to happen in 2011. 2011 is the date, and we are all looking forward to this. The member from Regina South, the member from Prince Albert Carlton, and the member from . . . wherever they're from, be on notice that the NDP are back. We had enough of your tired and uninspiring work. We had enough of your promises with the money that you inherited, and we had enough of your mismanagement of our finances and of our future, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to point out again, as I pointed out earlier, next year is going to be difficult. We're going to watch where these guys are getting their money from. They already stripped the Crowns already. They blew their 2.5 billion and, Mr. Speaker, the economy is in trouble as you can see from the newspaper clippings.

They have messed up everything that they've touched. Everything that they have done they have messed up. And what's worse, Mr. Speaker; they shouldn't give something to the people and then take it back. That's the worst thing you can do. When you start talking about land tax reform and then two years from now you've got to go back and say, well I can't give you any more; I've got to take it back. You should not have begun that process to begin with. That denotes a lack of vision and that denotes the inexperience on that side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It is much like their Throne Speech. It's tired, uninspired, and they all need to be fired, Mr. Speaker.

Now I say to the people of the North, the people of the North, and they always tell me . . . they say, well we watch the Assembly with great interest. Mr. Speaker, they've all been watching what goes on, and they see some of the roads that have been cancelled, some of the projects that have been cancelled. And they say, why are they doing this to us? Why are they penalizing us? Why are they doing this doing to us? And I tell them the reason they're doing that is they're trying to penalize you guys for voting the wrong way. And when one region of the province begins to worry about their government's treatment of them, then that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. That's a shame in 2009 we're having those kind of activities. That is a bloody shame.

So what they're thinking is, if we continue treating northern

people with disrespect by cancelling projects, then what happens? They're not going to come back to embrace these Sask Party guys. They aren't going to come back and say oh, we're sorry. What they're going to do is they're going to come back. They're going to be mad, and they're going to be more determined, and they're going to start doing things that should be done, and that's to work hard to get rid of any candidate they have in the North, in the South, the East, or the West, Mr. Speaker.

We join my colleague and our leader and the rest of the colleagues in the South, my colleague from Cumberland, and we're going to fight. And what we like, Mr. Speaker, their termination date has been noted by their leader. It's November 7, 2011. We are looking forward to it. We're going to come back. We want to win 2011. It's going to take hard work, vision, and proper planning — nothing that these guys have done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be standing to support the amendment and never the Throne Speech by the motion. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm honoured to be standing here today as the voice of the people from the Kelvington-Wadena constituency to reply to the Throne Speech. It's humbling indeed to be one of the 58 people who've been elected to the legislature, to be one of the 30 individuals who have been given the opportunity to govern this beautiful province. It's a responsibility and an honour that I'll never take for granted.

I thank the people of my constituency for the privilege of being part of the Saskatchewan Party government. I'd like to start by welcoming the two new members — well one new member and one recycled or renewed member. But welcome, congratulations.

Before I address my remarks to the Throne Speech and the members opposite predictable reaction, I'd like to thank and acknowledge some of the very special people in my life.

First of all my family. There's a song I believe we should be dedicating to our family because of the pedestal that we're all put onto when we're elected. It's a Bette Midler song, "Wind Beneath My Wings," and I think all of us know that feeling. To my family, thank you for being there when I need you and thank you for forgiving me when I cannot be there when you need me.

To Linda and Rhonda in my constituency office, thank you for the job you do, not just for the people of the Kelvington-Wadena constituency, but for caring and not just doing your job. Thank you to the special people in my ministerial office here in the legislature. They don't work for me; they work with me. They do more than just the immediate work that's put in front of them, but they do it in a context of governing this great province.

Last spring the Premier asked me to take on a number of different responsibilities, and that change gave me the

opportunity to meet hundreds of people and to add another perspective to my life.

But before I speak about those areas, I wanted to say thank you to a number of remarkable people, and those are the ones of the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations. I know those are dedicated and committed people with enormous responsibility and opportunity. I know, with your new minister, you'll continue with passion and enthusiasm to do the work that's essential to government and the First Nations and Métis people.

To the leaders of the First Nations and Métis people of our province, you have been given a huge responsibility. I wish you the wisdom of the elders as you work with government and businesses to find an acceptable balance of rights and responsibility and opportunity that will result in the positive change that's needed for the people you represent.

Congratulations to the new chief of the FSIN, Chief Guy Lonechild. And congratulations also to Vice-chief Lerat and to Vice-chief Morley Watson. I've had the opportunity many times to speak to Chief Lonechild, and I have no doubt about his convictions to work diligently and passionately for his people. His work within the FSIN was the genesis of a new agreement, first in Canada, where the province and the federal government and the First Nations developed standards around Jordan's principle. And I congratulate him and the minister for working and continuing this work with the federal government.

Together we must diligently close the gap of lower education outcomes of First Nations and Métis people in this province. I know the phrase of education being the buffalo of today is overused, but it's still true. It's the only way we can address poverty issues, the only way we can address issues of under employment, overrepresentation in our justice system, diabetes, and other issues. It's essential not only to the First Nations and the Métis people but to all of Saskatchewan, in fact to all of Canada, that an honest dialogue with defined and achievable benchmarks be agreed upon. This is not about politics. It's not about rights versus responsibilities. It's about improving and enhancing the lives of the First Nations and Métis people, and it's a platform that all citizens of this province can agree on.

I also want to express my sincere thanks to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. President Doucette and his executive have worked hard to earn the respect of the people of this province, and it's an honour to call them friends.

Mr. Speaker, I now have a number of new responsibilities as Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Information Technology Office, ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], and Public Service Commission, as well as the Provincial Secretary. Every one of them is exciting and full of opportunities. I don't have a favourite. It's sort of like children; you don't have a favourite, but they're all unique and extraordinary. They're winners in their fields of expertise.

The individuals in the Office of the Provincial Secretary are justifiably proud of the work they do at places like Government House. I also want to thank the amazing volunteers at Government House. The antique auction, the opening of the

Edwardian gardens, the teas and historical events adds to the pride in our history.

August the 5th to the 7th, Saskatchewan was proud to host the Council of the Federation. The efforts of the protocol office were professional and tasteful, and at the same time they kept reminding us that we really are Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan hospitality shone through. We couldn't be more proud of all of them and the volunteers that shed a really bright light on our province.

I was also pleased to be able to attend the World Acadian Congress in New Brunswick. This event was not only an opportunity to celebrate more than 400 years of French presence on our continent; it was an opportunity to celebrate the current vitality of the francophone culture in Saskatchewan and Canada. I also attended the Fransaskois flag recognition ceremony at Duck Lake, and the event was an opportunity for the Government of Saskatchewan to recognize the Fransaskois flag as a provincial emblem and the contribution of the community of Duck Lake.

As the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation for all the hard-working and dedicated men and women that work not only in that ministry, but within the public service. I thank you for your commitment in providing excellent service to the people of the province. I had the pleasure of attending the long service awards and recognition ceremony on October the 8th. This year I'm proud to say that the public service recognized 235 employees with 25 years service and 259 with 35 years service.

[20:15]

Also as the Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office, I was delighted to receive on behalf of our government a national award last month in Ottawa for the work that the Information Technology Office has done in government on shared services. The ITO [Information Technology Office], in consolidating their services, is saving taxpayers \$50 million a year and is helping to contribute to the province's fiscal responsibility targets. This work is done by a group of professional, leading-edge, state of the art people, and their work is incredible. Their vision for the future of technology in government is going to ensure that that's not the only award they'll ever receive.

Information Services Corporation has in the last year, 2009, provided improved turnaround times for standard land title transactions. They exceeded the target that was asked of 2.5 days, and last year they actually achieved a 1.49 day turnaround on average. They continue to have one of the quickest turnarounds in Canada for land transactions. And despite a slowing economy, Information Services Corporation continue to be successful when they focus on efficiencies and process improvement. Customer satisfaction remains at 95 per cent. Information Services Corporation recently was recognized by *Maclean's* magazine as one of Canada's top 100 employers and by *Today's Parent* as one of the top 100 family friendly employers.

As minister responsible for SGI, I'm pleased to say the

customer polling done found that the vast majority of SGI communities have a very positive image of SGI. Some of the initiatives they continue are the Safe Ride program, child restraint campaign, and the community seat belt campaign. All of this is to promote the safety of our motorists. SGI continues to be competitive with insurance rates across the country while striving to provide excellent customer service.

Mr. Speaker, our Crowns continue to play a pivotal role in our province's success. The priority remains the same: to work for the benefit for Saskatchewan people; to provide top quality, low cost services. The Crown sector are following the government's directive to look for efficiency. For us that means focusing on effectiveness and enhanced service delivery, keeping in mind the need for a Crown to be well positioned to meet the growing demands in the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Crowns are spending this year an incredible \$1.2 billion on capital. Why? They're doing that because of the infrastructure deficit that the members opposite left not only within executive government, within our Crowns. The needs within SaskPower are tremendous. This year we're going to be spending \$885 million for new gas generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades. There'll be \$150 million at SaskEnergy and \$221 million at SaskTel.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, and particularly their new leader, seem to have a major concern on natural gas pricing. And I think it's time we set the record straight. Since 1995 Saskatchewan's buying has been guided by the gas price management strategy approved by SaskEnergy board of directors. This strategy has two simple goals: stability and competitive rates. Now the NDP and the new leader have been calling for all sorts of changes and rebates over the last few months. And this is where it gets pretty interesting.

The Leader of the Opposition was very familiar with how rates were calculated because way back in 1997 and 1998, he was the Chair of the SaskEnergy board when the very same principles and formula were used to price natural gas. In fact, Mr. Speaker, even before that, he was the chairman of the SaskEnergy board for the first time in 1991 and 1992. Now I appreciate that that's a long time ago, and when you get older, your memory isn't always that good. But it's important to remember that nothing has changed in the gas buying strategy for many years, including all the years the NDP were in power. But now they're complaining about some of their very own policies. Mr. Speaker, current practices are working well — well enough in fact that the NDP and the new leader should congratulate this government for continuing their programs and stop complaining about one of their programs.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to listen to most of the members in this House reply to the Throne Speech. There is of course predictability in the replies. My colleagues are supportive, and the members opposite are not. That's not surprising. It's really part of the system. The minority has their say, and the majority has their way.

My colleagues, the government members, are proud. They're excited and they're optimistic. We know and understand the realities facing the world and our province. We know we're not an island, that we're not immune from the global uncertainties,

but we know the sun is going to come up tomorrow.

We know that the world needs oil and gas that lies under the ground here in Saskatchewan, that potash sales will happen, that crops will grow, the businesses will start, the people will be hired, that houses will be built, children will be born, and the people will always be proud to call Saskatchewan home.

On the other hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, members opposite are languishing in their nostalgic memories of nearly two decades when our province was governed by them, or people like them, who honestly believe that the best days are behind us. For nearly 20 years under the watch of the members opposite, our province was in a state of suspension watching the rest of the world go by. The suspension was fuelled by the attitude and the action of their leaders, the government at that time. Maybe even more than action was their words — words like our wee province, words like Saskatchewan can never grow at the national rate, words like it's okay if people leave because there'll be more left for the rest of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people who live here knew in their hearts that they were wrong. They knew that 45 per cent of Canadian grain is grown right here in Saskatchewan. The world's largest potash industry is right here in Saskatchewan. The second largest oil industry in Canada, an abundance of gas and uranium and rare earth minerals and diamonds and fish and trees and the most industrious people in the whole world live here. And we should not be a have-not province ever.

They knew they need not to be ashamed or made to feel ashamed or irrelevant. But day after day, the NDP leaders told them in words and actions that we could never be what our forefathers, the pioneers, believed Saskatchewan could be.

Mr. Speaker, I remember a study commissioned by the NDP: *The Changing Role of Rural Communities in an Urbanizing World*, done by Jack Stabler and Rose Olfert, about the viability of the towns and villages and hamlets in Saskatchewan. I believe at that time there were 570 communities. This report said that there was 60 communities could make it, 60 communities as partial shopping centres to primary wholesale retail centres. The rest would fade away into obscurity as little centres do, and they'll have little to no services — 60 out of 570.

They couldn't envision new communities. Martensville, which is now a city, wasn't even on the list at that time, Mr. Speaker. Meadow Lake, Humboldt, and Melfort are now cities, but when the NDP saw that report, they set out to make the prediction a reality. They just took their little paper and their little pencils and just started X-ing out all the places that weren't on the list. It had nothing to do with people, nothing to do with potential. It had everything to do with meeting the criteria that they had set out, so they slammed the door shut on 52 hospitals. They squeezed the confidence out of all and the life out of some farmers by tearing up the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] project. They strangled municipalities by not just slashing budgets, by downloading responsibilities.

There wasn't a road you could drive on, a hospital you could go to, a cell phone area you could get. Schools were begging for funds for their facilities. University and SIAST [Saskatchewan

Institute of Applied Science and Technology] seats were decreased, leading to our current shortage of doctors and nurses. And people left the province in droves. The wait times for surgery increased. Education costs were transferred to taxpayers on property. And student loans were based on the assets of the farm, not net profits, so in many cases the students and the parents worked off the farm so the children could get their education.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most embarrassing moments for those of us who had to sit on the other side of the House and watch these Wall Street wizards talking was watching on TV seeing a duck swimming in a pothole on one of our highways. That's the kind of memories and pictures that people had of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, the NDP weren't really discriminating. They made sure that everybody knuckled under their vision of mediocrity. Remember when the Finance minister said they didn't want Finance to get too much money because we wouldn't get our equalization payment from the federal government? We had to be careful we didn't lose our welfare cheque.

Mr. Speaker, there are people in this province now, and there were people then who really didn't believe it, but they had to leave our province. We have heroes, winners here in Saskatchewan, but for years and years those winners had to leave our province and go outside of our borders. Writers like Allan Fotheringham, W.O. Mitchell. Singers like Joni Mitchell, Susan Jacks, Colin James. We had hockey players like Wendell Clark and Glenn Hall and Gordie Howe and Hayley Wickenheiser. We had the Bronfman family. Jimmy Pattison, billionaire president of the Vancouver Jim Pattison Group. John Diefenbaker. And also on the list was Pamela Wallin who not only hails from my constituency, she's also a close friend.

I know the leaders of the NDP went outside the province to invest Saskatchewan taxpayers' money, but I never heard of them going outside the province to market our province, to sell the potential of Saskatchewan outside these walls. Marketing our province is exactly what our Premier and our government has been doing for just a few days short of the second anniversary of becoming government.

Our Premier attended the conference of Democratic Governors Association in Montana. They met with officials in Washington, in Chicago, in Houston, and New York. Our Premier was on CNN [Cable News Network] television talking about the hot spot for jobs. They made trips to Calgary and Toronto to promote this great province of ours. We've been part of a trade mission to Kazakhstan. Our Premier went on a trade and energy mission with Alberta to Houston and to Texas and met with the governor of Montana on carbon capture initiatives. Our government recently invited diplomats from eight countries to the unveiling of the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the members opposite say, regardless of how much they'd like to turn the clock back and say life was better in the '90s, the people of Saskatchewan know better.

The secret of Saskatchewan is out. We are on the world stage to stay. The people of Saskatchewan will never return to days of nothingness, to no hope and to no vision. We will never again

be a cartoon or a caricature or a joke as we were under the NDP. We have no desire to be the blunt of every political joke in Canada. They can languish in their wistful nostalgia as much as they want, but those days are never going to return because the secret of Saskatchewan is out. Saskatchewan is alive and well and growing and is the envy of every province and of nations of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will never support the amendment. I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in the debate tonight. You know, I just want to start off with an observation. It's always interesting to be lectured on how old and tired we are over on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the member that was just on her feet, she was into a bit of a tirade on the old-and-tired point, and I couldn't help but notice that the member from Wood River was yawning his head off. So I guess, you know, it's sort of funny for the old-and-tired finger to be pointed over here, but maybe they should look around on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

As I've said, it's a pleasure to enter into the debate this evening. I want to start off by thanking my family and friends, my neighbours, Mr. Speaker. It's quite a job that we do in this Chamber. Many people have spoken about the demands that it places, and if you didn't have that support, if you didn't have that love, it would be hard to get through it, Mr. Speaker. So it's not always perfect, but I very much appreciate the support I draw from my family and the ability I have to take their name forward.

I want to say a word of congratulations off the top to the member from Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as to the member from Regina Douglas Park, you know, as custom in this House, the by-election people coming in to take their chairs. And you know, it was humbling knocking on doors in Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and talking to people that had met our candidate there — our now MLA for Riversdale — or the people that had met her family or knew of the good work of that family, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, she worked very hard, and I know that that hard work will continue on behalf of the people of Riversdale, and I am very, very happy to be serving with someone who I think brings a refreshing and new perspective and a needed perspective to the affairs of this Chamber and to the affairs of our caucus as we build to the 2011 election.

And again, Mr. Speaker, that they have roots in Riversdale going back to '42, you know, it's something that got borne out. And I took a great deal of enjoyment looking at the pride on the faces of her family as they watched on as the member from Riversdale gave her first speech in this Assembly. So I want to say congratulations and keep up the great work. You're going to go far.

[20:30]

Now I want to say, as well, congratulations to the member from Douglas Park. I should state right off the bat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one of the people that encouraged me to get involved in elected life was the member from Douglas Park. And I know some people in the House may not think that's not the best thing to have done, but I certainly appreciated the things that I've learned from that member over the years, as when he served as the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

He's somebody with a tremendous capacity for hard work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very strategic mind. And you know, some of the members opposite like to talk about why, you know, where was that individual in the '80s and the '90s? Well I'll tell you where he was. He was fighting off the destruction of this province in the '80s, and he was helping to rebuild it in the '90s, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know, when it comes to stacking up leader to leader, I am very proud to put our leader's characteristics and record alongside that of the member from Swift Current any day. Because of course when he was fighting off the wrecking crew, the member from Douglas Park and when he was rebuilding the finances of this province, it was the member from Swift Current that was taking his lessons at the knee of the Gary Lanes and the Grant Devines.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we see proof positive of that experience, of that education, in this last budget. In this last budget we see a \$1.3 billion blunder in potash. And we've heard different of the members across the way say that, you know, well who knew? How were they supposed to know? How is it that they should have foreseen this?

And you know, all they had to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was listen to the remarks of the then Finance critic for the official opposition, Harry Van Mulligen. And if they'd taken the trouble to listen to what Harry Van Mulligen had to say on March 18 or March 19 in the budget speech debate, you know, maybe that would have given them some pause for thought. Maybe it would have given them an inkling that this train is not bound for glory, and that good sloganeering and good pompom waving and good cheerleading is not a substitute for good fiscal planning.

And the fact that they carried on ahead anyway, Mr. Speaker, and that the chickens come home to roost at the end of the summer, where we find out that potash was only \$1.3 billion off, that it might be more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we'll have to wait for the mid-term to find out the full extent of the damage that they did with this budget, Mr. Speaker, if you can call it that, if you can talk about the paper it was printed on being worth it.

You know, I shake my head and I worry about what's in store for the people of Saskatchewan because of course, when you screw up the budget, that has an impact. And we found that out in spades in the 1980s and the 1990s in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan said never again.

And I think they look at what happened in this last budget where, you know, it was rolled out with great fanfare, and the member from Carrot River Valley talked about it being the best

budget in the whole world, and all of this overblown rhetoric that was employed to sell and pompom wave for this budget. You know, Mr. Speaker, that they were one point three and counting billion dollars off on the potash projection, that has real consequences. That has real consequences for the people of this province.

And it's one thing to roll out the great measures at the front end of the budget, but it's entirely another to come clawing them back, either in the mid-term or in the next year's budget. So we worry about what is to come, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the measures that they will undertake to correct the path that they're on, or the fact that they've taken the fiscal car and rolled it right into the ditch, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again, I think of another criticism that Harry Van Mulligen levelled against this budget was that the financial growth projections were off, that they were far too optimistic. Well again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other side had a good laugh about the dour Mr. Van Mulligen, and why couldn't he share the sunshine that they're trying to blow around this place.

And again his criticism proved to be right on the money in terms of growth projections. And why is that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because it was based on the private sector growth projections that were available at the time of the budget's tabling in this House. But apparently the Sask Party knew better. Apparently the member from Swift Current knew better, and they thought there was so much more we could be. Well there was so much more we could be, Mr. Speaker. It turns out that we could have a budget that was off by \$1.3 billion. This on top of inheriting \$2.3 billion from the previous administration.

And the members opposite wonder what happened over the 16 years. You know, we made expansions that made a difference in many people's lives, but we also got the finances of this province back in order. And there were a lot of tough decisions that had to be made to make that so, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But the kind of blithe spirit that they approach the budget and, you know, well they can put forward projections that are based on so much baloney, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, there is a price that gets paid for that. And the problem is the price that they'll pay for that doesn't come till election day, Mr. Speaker. But the price that the people of this province pay for it comes in programs being rolled back, and the things that they need in their lives not having the cash to be addressed.

I think of, you know, one of the hallmark items that got ballyhooed in this budget speech was the promise around surgical wait times. And surgical wait times are a big issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But just before they tabled the Throne Speech, they cut \$3 million out of the ambulatory surgical care centre slated for Regina. So how is it that it's a marquee event on one day, but you're cutting \$3 million out of the project, you know, not days before?

And what does that mean? Is it because they want to open up a private sector surgical care centre, and then they can somehow save the money on the front end but have the people signed up for a deal that they pay for and pay for and pay for? You know, is that the thinking going on there, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It's

more than a little strange that they again highlight it on the one hand and then chop it mere days before.

I think about the measures in this Throne Speech around poverty reduction and again there's some things that were improved in the budget. And I acknowledge that, Mr. Speaker, but I also think about what's happened in this province around housing and, you know, I think of headlines like that which was on the front page of *The StarPhoenix*, October 22nd, the headline is this: "Shelter struggles; YWCA turns away 3,300 women in 2008."

And again, Mr. Speaker, that's on their watch. That's on their watch, and it's an increase of 500 per cent over the past two years before that. So in terms of the housing situation in this province and shelter and people looking for one of their basic needs to be taken care of, that it's increased over 500 per cent in the past two years, I think is a terrible record to take to the people.

I think of a headline like, "Gov't fails on shelter issue . . ." October 28th, page A4 of *The StarPhoenix*.

And I also think about a story, "P.A. shelters squeezed by housing shortage; Hundreds turned away due to lack of space." And again this is from October 27th in *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And on top of that I think about a story that ran the week previously in the Regina *Leader-Post* where it talked about the shelter challenges being experienced in Regina, and it talked about the people being turned away from shelters. And it talked about a grandmother who lives in my constituency who's been in a tent in the backyard for the past 11 months.

And again this is in the midst of economic prosperity, record budgets. But even in terms of the things that they've blown around the projections, how is it that in a province like Saskatchewan you've got someone in the middle of the capital city of this province living in a tent for the past 11 months? She's a grandmother. She should be enjoying her golden years, and there she is in a tent in the backyard. And you can check it out; there's tape up on the Internet. It's a study that was done by Dr. Marc Spooner at the University of Regina.

So again, I wonder about these people being turned away from the shelters. I wonder about the people who have been laid off from jobs, and I wonder what they think when they look at this Throne Speech, and they see the self-congratulatory tone that rides through everything that this government seems to do.

And the fact that any sort of criticism that's levelled against this budget or this Throne Speech, well you know, well that's just the NDP being negative. Well maybe it's because the Throne Speech and the measures of this government aren't serving the people that we represent. And maybe in a province as wealthy as Saskatchewan, you know, the fact that you've got a grandmother living 11 months in a tent in a backyard in the middle of this capital city is shameful. And maybe this government should do better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I looked for other things in this budget that I could agree with . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . or in this

Throne Speech, I thank the member opposite. Again there were certain measures around safer communities. That's fine. There's a continued expansion of *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, which of course we brought in, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we were in the government benches.

There's talk around health care improved, the marquee promise around wait times, but again they cut the surgical care centre money for the Regina budget.

Talk around the environment, and again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll see how the record of the members opposite. A lot of the good things that are going on in this province around the carbon sequestration or the test site down at the University of Regina, those were of course things that the then NDP government brought in, and that the members opposite like to pretend that they somehow invented them. But again, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot on the environment that we'll see how it goes.

And the fact that they had the conversion on wind power in the budget in these past few days, Mr. Speaker, again I think is kind of interesting. You know, for two years we've had some good opportunities out there in terms of better pricing on the infrastructure involved in setting up more wind power. And what was the preoccupation of this government, of course, but the expansion of the uranium power cycle and the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership], and then the Perrins report.

And that's what they've been doing when there were a lot of opportunities that have passed by on wind power or on demand-side management or pick your renewable source of energy, Mr. Speaker. But no, they went off on a wild goose chase. And now the member from Kindersley has got his foot on the brake and a foot on the gas, and he's trying to pass his driver's licence with the people in the car along with him. But it's a shame that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they took all this time to take the people of Saskatchewan off on some wild adventure, that again there were important things to be done in terms of the expansion of wind power that they should have been doing years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's my pleasure . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I hear one of the members opposite talk about a rehash. And again my seatmate, the member from Athabasca, talked very convincingly about the tired and uninspired approach that came with this Throne Speech. And I guess it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear something about tired or a rehash from the members opposite because, of course, there were 50-plus measures in this budget that were re-announcements. You know, there was a little over a half a dozen that were new announcements. And it's again, Mr. Speaker, that a government two years in has run out of gas this soon in the ball game. You know, we're welcoming taking them into the closing stretch, Mr. Speaker. We're welcoming that indeed.

I've been granted the privilege of serving as the First Nations and Métis Relations critic for the official opposition by my leader, and I've also been given responsibility for Provincial Secretary. And it's a privilege to pursue those issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, particularly in the Provincial Secretary portfolio.

And the francophone affairs bureau, I've looked with great interest on the action there. Je suis très heureux pour faire cet portefeuille. [Translation: I am very happy with this portfolio.] There's some interesting things to be pursued there. And we'll be paying very close attention to what happens around the expansion of French language services and the funding available to the very important Fransaskois and francophone community in Saskatchewan.

As First Nations and Métis Relations critic, I want to say that, again, Jordan's principle being signed off at the end of summer, that's an accomplishment. And we're glad to see it done. It's something that certainly the federal New Democratic Party, that the members opposite like to deride from time to time, Jean Crowder, the Aboriginal Affairs critic for the federal NDP, moved a motion calling on the House to adopt Jordan's principle over a year ago. And that was passed, you know, again demonstrating leadership on the issue.

And that the province has signed the deal, we think is a good thing. We think that the services should be delivered on the basis of need first, and that you can sort out the jurisdictional wrangling after. It should not cost any other children their lives or their well-being, as was the case in that of Jordan.

[20:45]

I'm also glad to see the announcements on the Year of the Métis. Again, it's the 125th anniversary of the North-West Resistance, and it's good to see that. And we'll wait to see the details in terms of resources that are being brought to bear by the members opposite to ensure that it's not just declaring the year, but there is a good celebration that unfolds as well.

But it occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, you know, this is something they should be doing. It's the 125th anniversary, and of course they should be celebrating. And I know that our leader was very supportive of the request made by the president of the Métis Nation, Robert Doucette, and that on our side, we were quite prepared to move a private members' motion calling for it as such, but we're glad that the government has come forward with this measure and this proclamation.

And again, though, Mr. Speaker, it would be sort of like if we had the centennial and then it wasn't celebrated. You know, of course this is something that should be celebrated. Of course this is something that we should try to achieve better understanding on in terms of the proud history of this province and what makes us who we are as Saskatchewan people. So we look forward to joining with the Métis Nation and all Saskatchewan people in the celebration of 2010, the Year of the Métis.

One of the things that of course was not in the Throne Speech — we've heard a little bit more about it from the minister responsible, the member from Regina South — concerns the situation around duty to consult. And we're watching with great interest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we've heard a lot of things being tossed around in terms of what the members opposite promised before the election and what duty to consult and accommodate would mean to First Nations and Métis people.

And then of course there is the reality of what happened after the election. And since then we've had a process where, you know, there was a great conference held in May of 2008, and since then the interim report got delivered almost on Christmas Eve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about a year ago.

So, you know, when the minister, the current minister says that he looks to bring something forward in the near future and what these tables mean, we're looking not just with great interest, but we're looking with some sense of frustration as well, because certainly it seems that the members opposite and this current minister and the member from Swift Current seem to be more interested in going around and around and around on the issue, instead of actually coming forward with something that is concrete and that will serve to better engage First Nations people and Métis people in the economy and the social and economic life for this province. So we're waiting for that, Mr. Speaker, with a lot of impatience and an awful lot of frustration.

And it's interesting to see that the members opposite continue to use sort of weasel words like, share the prosperity, around the issue of resource revenue sharing. And it seems to me that they want to sort of dangle that out there to try and encourage First Nations and Métis people along because, of course, resource revenue sharing is what they're interested in, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's one of the big points of their interest in the duty to consult and accommodate consultations, their round tables.

And the fact that the members opposite, you know, despite sort of representing one thing before the election and drawing the resource revenue sharing off the table after the election, there's very little patience for that out in First Nations and Métis country.

And in terms of what is needed to be brought forward, I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker. They need to put resource revenue sharing on the table for negotiation, and they need to do that in a very clear and transparent way, and stop it with the weasel words, and stop it with the shadowboxing because the province deserves better, let alone First Nations and Métis people.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if you look around the province and why would First Nations and Métis people be interested in more own-source revenue, in more self-reliance, in more capacity? If you look at the health disparities in this province, if you look at the education disparities in this province, if you look at the economic disparities in this province, you know that First Nations and Métis people are looking for the tools to get the job done.

They're looking for a share of the prosperity of this province . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I hear the member from Regina South chirping from his seat. And I guess my advice to him and to that government opposite is, you know, enough with the chirping from your seat. That member got up and gave a speech that was sort of one-half comedy and not a lot of substance on the First Nations and Métis issues. And again, he's got one of the most important portfolios in this government, in terms of the challenges that we have set out in front of us, in terms of whether Saskatchewan succeeds or fails as a collective. And there should be a great, bright future in this province for the First Nation and Métis people. And that seems to be this gloss and this superficiality from the minister responsible, I can

only assume is reflective of what's going on in that cabinet as a whole, and in that caucus as a whole.

It was a great pleasure to be there for the FSIN Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to observe the proceedings and to congratulate those who contested elections and those, of course, who won. And I can tell you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it's more than a little strange, you think about the importance of an organization like SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], a very important organization, or SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], again another very important institution in this province, and you think about what it says when the government doesn't take the trouble to send not even the minister. Not even the minister. They couldn't even be bothered to send a backbench MLA. They couldn't even be bothered to send a backbench MLA.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's fine for him to say a few fine words in this Assembly, but the chiefs, the First Nations, they're not fooled. And there was talk about that in different of the speeches that were given at the Assembly in terms of, you know, where is this government when it comes time to actually deal with respect and in partnership with the First Nations and Métis people in this province. So it's my hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they tune up, that they smarten up, and that they show up. But again their actions and their absences speak louder than their words.

I'm going to close off by saying a couple of things about my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One thing that is of critical importance to the future of Regina Elphinstone Centre and to the opportunities that are available in my home community of North Central — my home neighbourhood, North Central — is the work that's going on around the North Central shared facility. And this is work that goes back a number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an initiative led by the Regina Public School Board. And you know, certainly we were supportive of the project, and not just in words, but in dollars as well, Mr. Speaker.

In the summer of 2007, Scott Collegiate was number two on the capital list for the K to 12 capital. And I was very glad to see in measures passed where this government has come forward with dollars for the project. But I'll be watching very closely and anxiously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that this project is given the support that it is due, because it's not just a project for North Central — although the need there is great, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but it's a project that embodies the very principles of SchoolPlus from the ground up. It's a project that could be a leader in terms of educational infrastructure in Canada, if not North America, if it's done right.

And there's a lot of people who have put a lot of work and a lot of hours and a lot of hard thinking and hard figuring into making this project what it is. So I'll be watching very closely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that that hard effort, that great effort is supported the way it should be by this government of the day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to recap, it's interesting looking at this budget in the context of the budget speech we went through last year and the great ballyhoo that came from the side opposite. And the way that the mid-term and the first quarter results have come through to show that of course when Harry Van Mulligen

said that, you know, on potash and on the growth projections, you're off, and the members opposite scoffed and laughed. It turns out Harry Van Mulligen was right on the money.

And in terms of what this government needs to bring to bear, they need to be right on the money too. They need to be on the money because if they're not, there are consequences that get played out in real people's lives. It gets played out in the economy that tails off. It gets played out in 5,800 jobs gone down. I think of the Sears call centre in the middle of Regina Elphinstone centre where hundreds of people have lost their jobs with the closing of that facility. And I think about all the families that get to scramble through putting together EI [employment insurance] and their eligibility, and how are they going to put bread on the table to keep the family together, and how are they going to pay their mortgage.

And again, Mr. Speaker, that's why you've got to add it up right. You've got to have a budget that holds water. You've got to have a budget that pays attention to the details, let alone a budget that screws it up by \$1.3 billion. And again we've heard from different of my colleagues in terms of what the commentators have had to say about this, and how this is as bad as what went on in the 1980s in this province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see the same things to worry about in this Throne Speech. Despite the few good things in this budget, I find it to be largely a rehash of 50-plus older announcements; I find it to be tired and uninspired, and I find it to serve the people of Regina Elphinstone not like they should be served, let alone the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be supporting the amendment and voting against the Throne Speech. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much. It is a pleasure that I rise this evening to participate in the Throne Speech debate.

But before I do, it's a great honour and a privilege to serve in the capacity as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, and you don't do it without a great deal of help and support. And first and foremost of those who have supported me over the 14 years I've had this rare and distinct pleasure, is my good wife, Carole. She's very much my confidante and my very best friend, and someone who has through thick and thin stood by and supported me in the endeavours in the service that I provide to the people of Saskatchewan.

I also would like to acknowledge people in my office in Melfort who take care of a lot more of the day-to-day issues than what they used to, in my absence and the requirements of my office. But Laurie and Peggy do a great job of being there for the people of Melfort constituency. And they also have a full agenda there for me most Fridays when I get back to the constituency and can be available. Here in Regina, Kim and Carrie man the front desk, and Fred and Dick are also integral to the operation of the office here in Regina.

I would be remiss as well if I didn't acknowledge at this time the incredible work of the professionals in the Ministry of Finance. You know, Mr. Speaker, when you come to an office, you take very much for granted some of the back-of-the-scenes quality and professionalism that goes back in all of the ministries in government. And certainly I want to acknowledge the very, very high standards of professionalism and dedication to the province of Saskatchewan that exists in the Ministry of Finance.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't take this opportunity as well to welcome the new members to the House, and in particular to welcome the new member from Saskatoon Riversdale. I've been very impressed with the conduct of the member to date, and I know from her words and actions that she's very sincere and will be a very, very good representative of her constituency. And I wish her very good luck into the future.

I also would like to welcome or rewelcome or reacquaint ourselves with the member from Regina Douglas Park. I certainly have been elected long enough to remember when the member left Saskatchewan and moved to a different challenge for a period of time. And certainly there was about, from the time I was elected to the time the member left, about five years, so we had an opportunity to interact as colleagues in the Legislative Assembly. And I wish him well with his new challenges as the Leader of the Official Opposition because I believe it's certainly going to be different than the challenges that he has faced up to in the past.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I find it always invigorating to be able to go home to my constituency and touch base with the folks that you represent. I have the benefit of being in what I immodestly believe is one of the best constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan. And I know that all 57 of my colleagues feel the same way about their constituencies, and rightly so.

But it's very good to go home and spend the weekend at home, to touch base with the folks, to see what's happening in your constituency, to meet officially and unofficially with elected and unelected officials in the community, and to see what's going on.

And you know, it's exciting for the people of Melfort constituency these days. In Melfort for example, people are very excited about the fact that a new Canadian Tire is under construction in Melfort in a new development on the south side, south and east of the community. And there's a great deal of anticipation about what it means for the future of Melfort going forward.

[21:00]

There's a new hotel going to be built on the site. And despite of the wet weather and the muddy weather, I notice that the contractor has got the site prepared for the start of construction of the new hotel. There's two condo projects, multi-family dwelling condo projects. One is over half, I believe, sold out and that's a very good sign. Another one that I was noticing on the weekend is just putting the roof on it, so it's progressing well, and it's a good indication of the things that are going on in

Melfort. And there is in the community a greater sense of optimism and hope for the future.

Certainly one of the major projects in the province that the Melfort area is looking forward to with great anticipation is the Shore Gold diamond project just north of Melfort across the river. I've always said it's been inaccurately described as being east of Prince Albert, but it's a lot easier to visualize if you say it's north of Melfort.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Enterprise has reported that there were a number of companies that accompanied the trade mission to Kazakhstan. And certainly there were a couple or three of them from my constituency mentioned — Schulte and Doepkers and Bourgaults. And they're certainly some of the very strong companies in my constituency that provide a lot of employment and a lot of GDP [gross domestic product] into the whole area.

But in addition to that there's Michel's Industries in St. Gregor. There's FPS [Failure Prevention Services Ltd.] in Watson, and a number of the short-line equipment manufacturers that are very significant to the economy of the province. And they are doing quite well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report. They're looking forward to expanding their businesses. They're meeting the challenges of the currency exchange rates and those kinds of things with a great deal of tenacity, and they are growing their business in spite of the challenges that are happening not necessarily only in Canada but around the world.

In the province, there seems to be a sense of optimism that has not been in this province for a good many years. We became far too used, in my opinion, to being a province that was a have-not province that always felt that we were sort of an hour of extra flight time between eastern Canada and Alberta. And it's kind of interesting and exciting for me to be a part of a province that is actually moving to the forefront of the country in so many areas.

Mr. Speaker, you know, when I look out and see some of the discussions that have gone on in Canada at Finance ministers' meetings that I've had the privilege to attend, it's been really an eye-opener to see the number of challenges other provinces are facing in this global recession. And certainly we've said that we are going to be a part of the global recession, but we felt . . . and the historical record so far proves out that we've been relatively immune compared to other jurisdictions.

You know, when I look at what is happening in Alberta or British Columbia or Ontario and even in Manitoba and in eastern Canada, the whole impact of the global recession has been much more severe on a proportional basis than it has been for we in Saskatchewan. And I think Canada can rightly point with pride to the fact that we have done better as a country than the United States is doing and the United States' state jurisdictions as well are doing. So we're in a relatively privileged position, and we recognize that having said that, it's a good feeling to know that we are perhaps faring better, and there is a basis for the sense of optimism that we're seeing around the province.

But we certainly recognize, at least in one major commodity that has an incredible impact on Saskatchewan, that the impact

is very severe. And I've speaking of course to potash. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a little bit of a perspective of the whole potash scenario. You know, Mr. Speaker, it is a challenge.

First of all, let me say absolutely without reservation that what we were doing was taking the best advice we could get from the industry, from officials in Finance, from officials in Energy and Resources, and from the analysts across the country and those that observe the potash sector of the economy. And it's real easy for us to say . . . It's a lot easier for the opposition to say. But it's also something with a great deal of honesty that we will say as a government, the forecasts we used were wrong. That is of historical truth and there's no sense pretending it was different.

When we went into the budget deliberations this spring, you have to put it in the context of what was going on at the time. At the time, the spot price for potash was \$710 a tonne, and we used 556. There were sales in . . . CIBC World Markets predicted for 2009 that potash prices would be \$700 a tonne. Canpotex in the second half of 2009 had realized sales in the 700 to \$750 a tonne range. And there were forecasts that predicted that potash might be as much as \$1,000 a tonne because there was the belief that the commodity of potash was in relatively short supply and the world demand for fertilizer was going to continue to have a very strong influence on those prices. So there was forecasts as high . . . as the impact for the Saskatchewan budget as high as \$3 billion. We felt on the price that, if we used 556, that that was a reasonable level of prudence in our forecast in terms of the price of potash. And by way of interest, the spot price for potash right now is hovering around that 500 to \$515 level.

The problem is, the problem is we assumed on the tonnage assumptions that from '07-08 we had sold 11 million tonnes, and '08-09, 10 million tonnes. We used 10.3 million tonnes believing again that there was going to be a reasonable amount of potash sold. And that's where we were absolutely wrong.

I can say to you now that, as of the first quarter numbers, we have sold under 2 million tonnes. And that is a dramatic change. It's unprecedented in 35 years of the potash industry. And you have to remember in context, Mr. Speaker, the potash industry has really only existed in Saskatchewan for barely 40 years from start to finish. This is virtually unprecedented in the entire history of the potash industry.

And so it's absolutely true. It's absolutely true that we were wrong. We would have been wrong if we would have used a billion five as the number. We'd have been wrong if we used \$1 billion as the number. We'd have been wrong probably if we used \$600 million as the number. This was simply unprecedented, and I recognize that that is a reality, and it's created much consternation.

I said when I tabled the budget that one thing that was keeping me awake at nights was the potash industry. I'm not sleeping any better these days. But I mean it is also an industry that could have gone in the good way, and you know, if it would have went that way, if we'd have been sitting there now, we'd have looked like geniuses. Unfortunately, it hasn't done that, and the clarity of hindsight is a very, very clear sort of vision to

take.

But I also note with interest, and important to signify, is the potash industry still believes very strongly in the fundamentals. And it's just not idle talk or reports that you get in interviews. The three major components of the potash industry that currently exist in Saskatchewan are all on an aggressive, very expensive expansion program of building the capacity for the future. Potash Corporation is continuing with their plans, and Agrium and all the rest of them are still carrying forward as Mosaic. And they're carrying forward with plans in the magnitude of \$6 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is a strong indication of the belief of the future of the potash industry in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we have the real possibility at the south end of my constituency, around the community, south of the community of LeRoy that BHP Billiton is actively pursuing and progressing through the approval processes the concept of building a brand new potash mine in that vicinity that would be of the magnitude of an investment in excess of \$3 billion. And that's an incredible commitment and belief in the potash industry from a very significant player in the world market because BHP Billiton is the largest mining company in the world. And they wouldn't be making this strong commitment and indication of support of the potash industry if they didn't absolutely believe in it.

So, Mr. Speaker, although we are having very great challenges related to the revenues coming into the province as a result of the potash commodity right now, there's a lot of reason to be optimistic for the future. But I think that the lesson that we have to take from what has happened in commodities is we have to build in even more prudence.

Would we have been able to, in all due respect, to build in so much prudence last year that we would have had numbers down to 5 or \$600 million? I think not. I don't think anybody would have reasonably expected us to go from the 1.4 billion, and in the face of these predictions and in the face of the analysts that were talking about the possibility of 7, 8, \$900 potash, that anybody would have accepted projections as low as \$600 million. We'd have been accused of deliberately lowballing the numbers so that we wouldn't have considered important programs that needed to go forward for the people of Saskatchewan. And I think that what we have done is very important.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have gone over a great many of the list of things, and I could go on tonight. And I want to make sure there's time for the members that haven't had a chance to speak before the vote on the amendment tonight. But I don't want to go through every ministry-by-ministry recitation of the accomplishments that this government has accomplished.

But I want to say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past . . . and I answered in a question during question period last week, but you're limited to a one-minute response. But I want to make the point because it's very important for the record . . . is that when we took office, the balance in the Growth and Financial Security Fund or the previous fund that was there was one point two five six point ten billion dollars. That was the fund on September 30th, 2007. The GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt,

the GRF debt at the time was \$6.8 billion. When we go to today, we have \$840 million left in the Growth and Financial Security Fund, but the debt is down to \$4.1 billion. We paid a tremendous amount of money down on the debt which I would think that we would be complimented for because it's important for the financial future of the province. That's a big part and a big reason of where the money went.

And I would think, I would think the opposition would be very, very interested in seeing that that happens since they've harped on the state of the debt of the province for many, many times, both when they were government and in opposition. But they never did anything about it. We had the opportunity with some unprecedented revenues, and what we did with it is to strengthen the financial future of the province by paying down the General Revenue Fund debt by 40 per cent. And that's just sound fiscal planning and good business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, from a financial perspective, I want to outline a few other things that we did with the revenue that I think is so important. Mr. Speaker, we reduced the income tax payable by low-income taxpayers by \$300 million, not just last year but this year. And that'll be a permanent feature going forward of that reduction. And by increasing basic personal exemptions, it has reduced the take of income tax by \$300 million. That's a good thing for the people of Saskatchewan because it's taken 80,000 low-income payers off the tax rolls entirely. And that's a good thing, and that's where some of the money has gone.

Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of things that are important over and above what has happened in all of the other ministries. And it certainly is the kind of thing that I want to point to with a great deal of pride that what we've done with the money.

Going forward, are we going to be able to keep the spending growing at the rate it has in our first two years? No, we can't because revenue will simply not sustain it. So we're going to have to, we're going to have to reduce the rate of growth of our expenditures. We recognize that, and that is just sound fiscal policy. When we had the unprecedented revenue, we applied it to very worthwhile projects. And when the revenue is going to be less bountiful, we're going to exercise the fiscal discipline that we need in order to make sure that we approach things in a very balanced way.

[21:15]

You know, Mr. Speaker, looking forward to the future, looking forward to the future, Mr. Speaker, I point to one of the latest provincial economic outlook documents that have come to my possession, and this is dated October 30th, 2009, and it's from *BMO Capital Markets Economics*.

In real GDP growth estimations for 2007 through 2008 and 2009 forecast, '10 forecast and '11 forecast, in '09 forecast Saskatchewan is showing a real GDP growth of a small amount of .2 per cent positive. It is the only province in Canada that is positive.

So we lead the nation in GDP growth this year even though it's very modest, based on BMO Capital. 2010, that's going to grow to 2.9 per cent, again not a runaway performance but the best in Canada; and in 2011, forecast from BMO Capital for

Saskatchewan, 4.4 per cent growth, again not runaway growth but the best forecast of any province in Canada.

So while we are being affected and while the growth is slowed — and it's going to take a fair bit of time to move out of these economic challenges that the world has — Saskatchewan is well poised to go forward and meet that challenge, a better position than any other place in the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, the challenges are real, and we're going to have to have the determination to meet them. All in this Assembly have a responsibility to our province to exercise our responsibilities as the very best we can to ensure that government is an engine of growth, an engine of optimism, and an engine in the belief of the great future of the province of Saskatchewan.

I've said it before. I've said it in good times, and I'll say it now, that there's no province in the country that I'd rather be the Finance minister of than Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting in opposition to the amendment and proudly supporting the Speech from the Throne.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour for me to get up on my feet to talk to this Throne Speech.

I wanted to also acknowledge some people that I truly need to thank that are in my life, one of them being my father who has been very supportive of me. And I have to say, the very first election I ran, he didn't vote for me, but I think he does now. But nonetheless he's been hugely supportive of my choices, and I am very grateful for his example and his commitment and devotion and love of this very great province of Saskatchewan.

I want to thank my three daughters. It's hard to believe that when I was first elected, they were 10, 13, and 15. And now 10 years later, I had my oldest daughter get married the weekend before last. I tried to — to a wonderful young man — I tried to explain to her she should remember what her mother does before she plans the date of the wedding while we're in session, but I'm truly proud. It was a beautiful wedding.

I want to thank Susan Dunne, my constituent assistant who's been with me for the entire 10 years I've been elected. She is truly the face and voice in Humboldt and someone that is extremely well liked in the constituency and does a fabulous job.

I want to thank my office staff here in Regina. I have Kelly, Scott, Charlene, Kim, Sherry, and Julie. We are a team that work very well together; they are my co-workers and they truly do a great job as well.

The constituency of Humboldt is an amazing constituency and one that I'm truly privileged to represent. There is some challenges in Humboldt; there is no doubt. We have four potash mines. There are more potash mines in the constituency of Humboldt than any other constituency within the province, and you know, that is causing some concern within the

constituency. It also is a huge agriculture constituency. And no, the crops are very much in the field, and that is causing some concern among the agriculture community.

But you know what? The optimism in the Humboldt constituency is also extremely strong. They know our province is going ahead, and they are excited about it. They're watching the new hospital — that was promised time and time again by the NDP — now under the Sask Party, they're watching it being built. They're busy making plans for the new high school in the city of Humboldt, and they're excited about it because they've been waiting for that announcement for years and years. They are very excited about the renovation to one of the elementary schools within Humboldt.

And the private business in Humboldt is booming. I hate to tell the member from Melfort, who's waiting for their Canadian Tire, Humboldt opened theirs. So there's a lot of new businesses. There's a lot of construction happening in Humboldt, and it truly is a very optimistic, positive group of people that live within that constituency.

I want to take a moment to welcome the new members, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. I agree with the member from Melfort. I think she will represent her constituency very well. And welcome back to the new leader of the . . . or old leader of the NDP Party. He was here many years ago when I was first elected, and it's interesting to see him come back. And it's with words that he has spoken that I want to give my speech to the throne around, because one of the first questions that he asked when he had the opportunity to ask questions was, where did the money go? And he implied that we have simply blown the money.

Now the Finance minister previously talked about our aggressive reduction of debt which I think the entire province has to agree was a good initiative under our government. But he also talked about initiatives that help my constituency such as the amount of money that we shared with municipalities, and every municipality took advantage of that, many of which applied the money to water projects that members on the opposite side say that we're ignoring. But you know what? A lot of the small towns did need that money and desperately, and they are using it for infrastructure needs within their communities and for water projects.

I'm wondering if the members opposite think that the 80,000 people that are no longer paying taxes are better off now, no longer paying taxes, than they were under the previous government. Are they better off after two years of a Sask Party government than they were for 16 years under the NDP government where they were paying income taxes?

I want to concentrate on what was done in my ministry. And I'm very interested, when I am done and throughout, to see if the NDP will challenge that anything that we've done within the Ministry of Social Services was indeed blowing money, if it was indeed something we shouldn't have done. We introduced the low-income tax credit which replaced the NDP sales tax credit with the significant amount of money that people receive. We also increased the income threshold eligibility. The NDP, you only were eligible up until \$13,935. Under the Sask Party government, you are eligible up to \$28,000 a year. Are they

better off now after two years, or were they better off after 16 years where they only qualified for an income level of 13,000?

We increased within my ministry the mileage rates paid to clients for medical appointments and approved travel. Under the NDP, they didn't see an increase for many years. They were paid 13 cents per kilometre. In '06 they did increase that to 17 cents per kilometre, and we immediately brought it up to 22. Were they better off under the NDP government where they were sitting at 17 cents a kilometre? Are they better off with the Sask Party government?

We brought the children under the age of 14 into our prescription drug plan. The NDP campaigned that it would be seniors only that would qualify for that drug plan. So are they better off with the NDP campaign promise or with what the Sask Party did?

The active families benefit was introduced by our government, where children aged 6 to 14 will qualify for a \$150 tax benefit for activities, be it sport, culture, or music programs. There's a number of programs that qualify. That was a benefit that was never, ever eligible under the NDP government.

Our government donated \$20 million to food banks over four years for skills training for those that just need that little help over the barriers to gain employment. Through Education we increased the funding for child nutrition and development programs delivered through CBOs [community-based organization] and schools. Are those children better off through the Sask Party government with those increases to food banks and education programming, or were they better off where that wasn't looked at with the NDP government?

We increased the Saskatchewan employment supplement quite significantly, as well as the income threshold of those that qualify. Seventy per cent of the clients that benefit from the Saskatchewan employment supplement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are single parents. Are they better off with those increases that the Sask Party brought in, or were they better off where it just sat with 16 years of the NDP?

We increased the minimum wage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my understanding that we're one of the highest now in the nation. Are they better off now or were they better off with a lower minimum wage?

For seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we increased the seniors' income plan by 110 per cent. It had been totally neglected and not increased once for 16 years under the NDP. Are those seniors better off with the Sask Party government that increased the seniors' income plan by 110 per cent, or were they better off going year after year after year with the zero percentage increase under the NDP?

Let's talk about shelter and housing. We increased the emergency shelter rates to ensure the financial viability of our emergency shelters. We understand, quite frankly, that there is a housing stress in many of our communities because the province is growing, and that's a challenge of a growing province. We significantly increased the funding to our emergency shelter rates to keep our emergency shelters financially viable and to encourage expansion. In some

communities, we have seen expansions of the emergency shelter spaces. I'm very happy to say that we just recently, in the last week, announced the first ever in the province emergency shelter for youth, and it'll be here Regina.

We addressed affordability very quickly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after the election. And we looked at the shelter rates, again recognizing that shelter was an issue that was very stressful for the residents of Saskatchewan. We increased the rental supplements for families. We increased the disability rental supplement. We increased the shelter rates within the income assistance clients. And we indexed them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that a family right now, if they qualify for the shelter rate and the rental supplement, will receive 100 per cent of the average rate within the community that they live. If there's a family member with a disability or if it's an individual with a disability, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will receive 110 per cent. It is revisited every six months.

We recognize that the marketplace is changing rapidly, and we will also respond rapidly, unlike the NDP who, from 1991 to 2005, never looked at shelter rates once, not once. In that time, there was over 30 per cent inflation rate in the cost of rents in the different cities within our province — 30 per cent increase in the amount of rates, rental rates, and absolutely no increase from the NDP government. Are they better off under the Sask Party government, or were they better off languishing, waiting for an increase under the NDP government?

Availability is an issue, and availability is a little harder to address in a very, very quick manner because of course you have to construct the new housing. Over three years, the NDP delivered 456 rental units within our province. I'm very proud to say that in less than two years, the Sask Party government has delivered 493 rental units. We have delivered more rental units in two years than the NDP did in the last three years of their being government. Are they better off? Are they better off than they were with an NDP government?

Currently we have over 500 units in construction, over 600 units in development and planning stages. Have we accelerated building social housing and affordable housing in our province? Yes, we have. You know, within our housing projects, I am very, very pleased to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have included 1 million to Habitat for Humanity and their program. And they were quite excited to get that funding from their government, and it will mean 20 more houses delivered through Habitat for Humanity because they do an exemplary job in delivering homes.

We also have a unique project that we just announced recently with a group called DH2. It's a partnership specific to housing for disabilities, and we're looking at housing units specific to different needs. We announced earlier in the year the Ehrlo Community Services and Phoenix Residential Society partnership, which will be 32 units specific to people with serious mental illness. And the interesting thing that I was told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we made that announcement, was it was the first time a government had ever recognized specialized housing for people with mental illness.

[21:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to speak for a moment on CBOs. In the last four years of the NDP government, they increased funding for eight years. I have my critic day after day after day read petitions on how they languish behind in being able to address recruitment and retention. And he doesn't want to talk about the past, but that's why they're languishing behind in recruitment and retention of staff.

In less than two years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government increased the funding for CBOs by 12.3 per cent. In less than two years, we funded CBOs well over the inflation rate and well beyond what the NDP had given them over eight, or over the last four years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we held five summits just to listen to CBOs and what they had to say and what their concerns were. And they wanted to have long-term contracts, and we are now entering into those agreements and will do so as they go forward.

I heard quite loud and clear that the food allowance at the group homes for youth as well as the group homes for adults with disabilities was far behind and was left languishing, again under the NDP government, where they couldn't afford to feed the people within the group homes. Tell me, are the group homes better off under the NDP government where they were given \$4.85 per person to feed the individuals within that home? Are they better off with the Sask Party government where we have now almost doubled that to \$9 per person per day for the people that live in the group homes?

But you know what? But you know what? The critic said this, and I quote:

And I can understand that those who work in the group homes are excited about this announcement, but I must say that myself, as critic for Social Services, I'm not happy nor delighted about this announcement. It just represents another ad hoc announcement . . .

Really? Really? You know, I had five summits, and I heard loud and clear what the CBOs wanted and needed. And we cannot do everything that they need overnight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but they don't think this is ad hoc. They think this is filling gaps that was left behind after 16 years of a government that neglected the CBOs and didn't address these urgent issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we increased mobile crisis services, very critical services for families in crisis after hours, by 1.4 million. We increased family support services by 1.3 million. We increased approved private service homes and private care home fees by 2.1 million. We increased sexual assault centre funding and transition housing funding by 1.1 million. Are any of those something that blew the money, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Can the NDP challenge any one of those spending and say that we shouldn't have done it? Or do they agree we far outfunded anything that they did?

I want to speak for a moment on disabilities because it has been something that I've become quite heavily involved with, and I have to say the disability community have been so supportive of our initiatives and so excited about the things that we have been able to do.

For a government that sits and says that, you know, they were

looking after all people and ensuring that all people were . . . no one was left behind, it's interesting that there was a 440-individual wait-list for individuals with disabilities waiting for residential spaces and day programs. And that didn't seem to bother the NDP at all. They didn't mind that this wait-list was growing more and more each and every year.

Well it did bother the Sask Party government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we announced \$76.9 million for residential spaces and day programs for people with intellectual disabilities. And we've been able to make announcements in Maidstone and Wynyard and Outlook and Swift Current and Humboldt and Kipling and Yorkton and Langenburg and Weyburn and Wilkie and Regina and Saskatoon. And we will continue to make announcements, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we make the wait-list go away.

I am so proud to say that in a very short period of time — I made the announcement a year ago and I said that it would take us four years — well by the end of this fiscal year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 264 people that were languishing on a wait-list will languish no longer. Are they better off with the Sask Party government, or were they better off with the 16 years of neglect by the NDP government?

You know, Susie Eidem, from the Elmwood residential incorporated, said this:

We feel so fortunate to have been a part of this amazing period of growth [and I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker]. It is wonderful to have eliminated our wait list and to be able to provide appropriate services to those who need them. Thank you so much to Premier Wall, and Minister Harpauer for recognizing that the needs of people with disabilities have been neglected for [far] too long and for making this a priority in their service to our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that increased funding to the family respite program, to early childhood intervention programs, to intensive support factors through the Ministry of Education, through transit assistance within our cities, to Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program which is also known as SAIL.

I'm happy to be part of a government that for families have doubled the caregiver tax credit, doubled the infirm dependent tax credit, doubled the supplement to the disability tax credit, and significantly increased the amount to the disability tax credit.

Can the NDP say that that was blowing money? Are all of these things just blowing money? Is that what I was doing through my ministry? Is that what we were doing as a government as we gave more dollars to those most vulnerable within our society?

Within child welfare, one of the first initiatives that I announced was to finally have an electronic case file management system within our province. It is stunning to me, Mr. Speaker, that within our province we can trace a library book anywhere within our province, but we can't trace a child in our care. We're working totally off of a paper file system. That is unbelievable to me that that was neglected for so long, and it will be no longer under the Sask Party government.

In addition we're adding 25 million, just in our last budget alone, of increases to the child welfare system to increase the spaces and support for children who come into the care of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like any member to say that none of those things helps those most vulnerable within our society. I would like any member to say that all of the people affected by all of the program enhancements and additions that we have done were better off with 16 years of the NDP than they are with the increases and benefits and supports that we have done under the Sask Party. Are all of those things just blowing the money?

And it's very interesting to have any of the things that I have said that we have done in less than two years challenged by the NDP to say that it was a waste of our money to help those most vulnerable.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say I will not be supporting the amendment, and I will be proud to support the Speech from the Throne.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in the debate for the Throne Speech and the amendment that's up before here today. I'd like to welcome the new members. The member from Riversdale, I'd like to welcome her to the legislature, and also . . . [inaudible] . . . for the Regina Douglas, the member there. I can remember when I was a new member, he had welcomed me to this legislature in 1999. Well now I'm returning the favour and welcoming him back here today.

Also I want to give a thanks to my CAs who have been doing an excellent job. This year we've handled many, many calls, and they did an excellent job. Clark Puckett, Donna Petit, and Lavonne Lyke have worked very well in the office where I have been able to get out and talk to the constituents and, you know, get a feel of what's going on and a feel what's been happening with the last two years. And are they happy with what's been going on? And yes, they are. They have been very happy with what's going on in this.

Speaking about this Throne Speech, "Moving Forward", it's an excellent theme for the province of Saskatchewan. It says what's happening in this province — that it's moving forward and providing optimism.

And as I speak right now, probably the people in Arm River-Watrous and throughout Saskatchewan, probably the most people that have optimism right now are farmers. And as we are speaking, probably right now here today — tonight, as we go — there's combines rolling throughout this province as farmers right now are struggling to get the last bit of harvest off as the weather has turned a little bit nicer. And we're hoping this week it's going to stay nicer. But they are going to need at least a week or more to get the crop off, and I know as we speak right now they are working very hard at doing that.

And I wish them all the best and the Godspeed to get this crop off because it's been a trying year for farmers, especially in my . . . I'll take my eastern, my northeastern part of my

constituency, Mr. Speaker. There is still quite a bit of crop out there. It was a cold, late spring, and they'd been struggling with the crops. The only good thing about, yields are good, Mr. Speaker, and if we can get that off, it will help the province immensely as we go ahead.

This throne from the speech talks about many things and the throne from the speech should be many things. It talks about the things you did in the past and the things you are going to do in the future. It talks about the things that have happened throughout your year, the last year of your constituency. And one of them is the optimism that's out there and moving forward in this time and era, which this province is, moving forward at it.

I know when I look back at . . . When I was first elected in 1999, the biggest challenge that my constituency, my towns were facing was the people leaving. When I'd meet with mayors and reeves and town councillors, the biggest thing that they talked about was empty houses and how were they going to fill them, and towns shrinking and dying. And now we're faced, when I meet with them, is they're talking about doing subdivisions and expanding and all the houses being full.

You know, and I've listened to the speeches from the other side. You know, they talk about how it was like they were turning things around way back and if they'd only stayed in a little longer. Well you know, I can remember. One of them is a news release they'd released in 2003 — shortly before the election was called — talking about "Out migration at lowest level in four years." I mean they were bragging about that or, you know, issuing a news release. That's like the captain of the *Titanic* saying, well I've got some good news and bad news — the good news is we're not sinking quite as fast as I thought; the bad news is we're still sinking.

And that's the message that that previous government had sent out to the province. And that's one of the reasons I ran in 1999 because they'd given up on the province of Saskatchewan. They always felt that it should be described as a wee province and that the towns should die and what few people out there move to urban.

I know the one member had talked about the Stabler report. I can remember going through that and also having meetings about that. And I know the government used the Stabler report in a lot of their theories and policies as they were going. They actually believed that, that there would only be probably 60 communities left in Saskatchewan in 10 years. They talked about education, that they were . . . how to manage I forget exactly how many students. They had figured in 10 years we would be handling less. Well right now in my constituency there's more kids in the schools than there was in 1999.

And that speaks to the government. And also when I'm out there every day, the optimism that there's people moving back, that Saskatchewan is the have province and going to stay a have province. Because they've always wanted to be a have province. They never liked going to Ottawa and getting equalization payments, and struggling, and the jobs always going to Alberta if you want to go work, or if you were going to Eastern Canada. Now we have people coming here to Saskatchewan, working.

Many of my friends used to go work in the oil patch in Alberta. They're working here in Saskatchewan. There's a pipeline that's running out through, not very far from Regina, at Moosomin, up through that area. And that's where I had a couple of buddies staying. I know they were staying at the town, Moosomin. He's been working on the pipelines for 10 years. This is the first year he's been able to work in his home province of Saskatchewan. And that's something to be proud of, that we should be working more towards that, that our people shouldn't have to go to other places to work.

As we talk about agriculture — as is farmers are struggling right now to bring the crop in — one of the things we did was put in, and this Throne Speech talks about covering 100 per cent wildlife damage. And that was an issue out in Arm River-Watrous. When we were in opposition, a lot of the guys would tell me that their crop was being destroyed, especially this year where we sat for a month. Combines out in our area never turned a wheel for a month, a whole month. And that's just about the time that the ducks and geese are making their migration, deer has been coming up, lots of damage. At least they know that the field, the crop out there, they're going to get paid for it if it's destroyed by wildlife. And that's something that they're quite happy that we put in at that end of it, Mr. Speaker.

Infrastructure was another thing that, you know, that we've stepped up to the plate for. We were always short of infrastructure. I can remember in Watrous they applied to this government in 1993 for a long-term care facility. They had their share, and every year they would come to the government and ask, can we get our share to finish this, to build this for the residents?

I remember going there in 2001 — they called me there — and the water was leaking through the roof, you know. They say, you know, every year we go to the government and every year the government tells us no, no. We don't know when we're going to give you the money. We don't even think Watrous is maybe even going to grow. Maybe you're not even going to need one in 10 years. It's almost the message they were giving them. They couldn't even tell them that five years from now you're going to have it or four years, never gave them if they were even interested in it.

[21:45]

In the two short years we were elected, that was one of the priorities we made, was to do the long-term care facilities — to build some, to repair some throughout this province — because there was always a shortage of that and infrastructure that needed it.

The money that we used, one of things was to pay down debt. I can remember the opposition opposite always harping about debt, you know, and there was. There was debt in the '80s and I can . . . Maybe in the first couple of years they struggled as a government, but they never ever worked towards paying it down.

We made that a priority, Mr. Speaker. We made that a priority because that's what the people wanted. When I went around and they said, what's one of the most important things that you

should be doing? And one of them is they were worried about debt and health. They say if you can provide them two, those are the most important things that you should be doing, and that's ones you have done.

Forty per cent of the debt paid down. Forty per cent of the debt paid down in two years. And you hardly hear a word from the other opposite members about that. You know, that's something to be proud of, and that is one of the reasons why we were elected, because we ran on that. We would be addressing the debt and also the waiting list. That's something we talked about in the Throne Speech. And it will be a challenge, but this government is up to it because we've met many challenges since we've been here.

And that is another number one priority, is health care for the citizens of Saskatchewan because everybody deserves good health care. And they deserve not to wait two years on a waiting list for an operation. And those are the priorities that this government has made, and those are the priorities we talk about in this Throne Speech. Those, Mr. Speaker, are the priorities that we are going to run on next election, and we will win with them because those are the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

Those are the priorities, when I'm out there in Arm River-Watrous, that they want. They want a government that can run an economy, that can provide jobs, that doesn't chase away business, and that will provide health care and also has hope in rural Saskatchewan — that they're not writing off rural Saskatchewan, not saying you know what, we're not going to build infrastructure out there.

Our highways were sadly neglected, and I know the first year in the budget we put record amount towards highways. I had some major work done on No. 2 and on No. 20 on that. And they needed it; they were in poor, poor shape. And there's still quite a bit of infrastructure that needs to be fixed out there, and we realize that. But those are one of the challenges we're looking at facing.

On the infrastructure, we spent . . . that would help keep through the tough times we had. As the rest of Canada and North America and the world struggled — you look at what's happening in the States with huge high unemployment — we knew that there needed to be money put into infrastructure where we'll create jobs. And we did a very good job of it. Our Finance minister and the members opposite tried to get the money out there, spread it out through the communities to get the jobs out there for the people working, to keep the economy rolling the very best we can through trying times. And right now the world is going through a trying time, and yet you look at Saskatchewan. We're one of the bright spots in Canada. We're still listed as one of them.

There's people moving here. Throne Speech, we talk about 8,000 people, new immigrants, you know. I can remember when the government opposite talked about 300. They were bragging about 300. And, you know, we're 8,000. And that's one of the things that we're making a priority too, is immigration. I have industries out there that rely on workers coming out because there's jobs for them here, and they need the workers. I have Bergen Industries, I have Drake Meats that

would be struggling without the open policy immigration that we have.

But the main thing with this Throne Speech talks about is moving forward. And that's what the people of this province want, is moving forward. And the optimism that we're going to move forward, that we're going to be over 1 million people, that we're going to stay over 1 million people, it shows in we've announced two new cities. That never happened through the '90s. Even through the '80s, you know, the population growth wasn't that much.

We have a huge potential in this province. Huge potential. And I know we have to, and we have been . . . A challenge to meet that expectations of growing this province, but keep it moving on a steady pace. And we did a good job of it.

I know we've been out there. When I go out to coffee shops, even go outside my constituency, I mean people are happy in the direction that this province is moving in. You know, they talk about improvements we made to infrastructure. They've talked about the improvements we made in health care, and that we're trying to move the economy forward and keep this province growing and keep people working, keep our young people here, and spending money to keep them here through educational programs, through different things.

And the main thing about this speech and the Speech from the Throne is moving forward. And that's what the Arm River constituents want from Arm River-Watrous, and they will not be . . . I can tell you that the residents of Arm River-Watrous do not support the amendment, they will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well in the short period of time I have to speak, I want to put a few comments regarding the Throne Speech on the record for my constituency, Rosthern-Shellbrook.

But before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say some thank yous. And I'd like to thank one special person in my life, and that's my wife Sheila. As all the members on both sides of the House have said, without the support of your spouse, you cannot do the job here. And my wife is no different than anybody else. She supports me 100 per cent.

I also would like to thank my three sons. My first son Newton, his wife Tanya, and the two granddaughters, Shalyn and Courtney. I also would like to thank my youngest son Micky and his wife Megan who just got married here in June. And they are blessed with a son . . . or daughter, I mean. Holy smokes. They are blessed with a daughter, the youngest one, and that's Brooke.

And I also would like to thank my third son Deny for all the support he's doing. In fact he's at home right now helping my wife do all the chores and what have you. The next person I would like to thank is my mom, my mom who turned 80 this year. And of late she's had a few health problems, and I want to speak about the Throne Speech and how it affects her.

But before I get into the Throne Speech and the details of that with my mother, I'd like to welcome to the Assembly the newest member from Riversdale. I listened to her speech today. She did an excellent speech, one of the better speeches from a first elected official that I've heard for some time. So she did a great job. Welcome to the Assembly.

I also want to welcome a member that's been here for a while, then left and came back again, and that is the member from Regina Douglas Park. And we look forward to debate the issues with him, what he stood for with the NDP before, then moved to Alberta —right wing, conservative Alberta — and then came back to run the NDP again.

One of the main reasons that you have a Throne Speech is to give direction as where you're going for the next year, as regard to what you're going to with your budget and the vision of what you're going to do that next year. In order to do that, Mr. Speaker, you have to kind of reminisce of what you've done in the last two years, at least in our time as government, the two years previously of what we've done, and where we can go forward into the future with the Throne Speech today.

And I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that to date we have kept 112 promises. You know, there's an old saying that a promise made is a promise kept. Well we've kept our promises — 112 of them. And as to the promises we make going forward with this Throne Speech, we will also keep them because that is good government, unlike the previous administration when they made promises and never kept them. I'm speaking specifically about my colleague sitting beside me from Humboldt, when I believe the hospital was announced, I believe 11 times or something. It was a promise made but never kept. And that is the record of the previous administration, the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Throne Speech, I'd like to talk about agriculture. The reason is because the good people from the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook live in a constituency that's basically agricultural based. It's a rural constituency. From corner to corner it deals strictly with ag because the people there had a lot to do with ag. And I am so proud of the Minister of Ag. The reason is because he grew up with it. He knows it, and he understands it. He can relate to the people, the farmers that are out there, with the issues that we have. And for him to make a bold comment to move AgriStability from Manitoba to Melville is a bold step.

Now I remember the member from Kindersley talking about what that means to the farmers there. Well it means the same thing to the farmers in my constituency. When they phone up regarding an issue, they're not talking to somebody that's in Manitoba, because the issues are different. They're talking about Saskatchewan issues. Well they have no clue of what's going on in Saskatchewan. Once AgriStability moves to Melville, Saskatchewan, they can relate to the problems that the farmers have.

And especially this year, Mr. Speaker, with the snow coming early in the North. In fact, we had so much snow in the week, and I enjoyed a very nice snowmobile ride on Saturday. I enjoyed it. The phone didn't ring on the snowmobile, and it was just beautiful to drive in the snow. Mind you, I'm in the North, so we're accustomed to that. But there's a lot of crop out there,

Mr. Speaker, an awful lot of crop. In fact, in my constituency, in going east and west, we're probably sitting with some maybe 40 per cent left to combine. And the snow is causing a lot of problems.

I also want to make mention, in the short time I have, about the \$70 million that went direct to the cattle producers and hog producers last year — another bold step that our Ag minister took when the farmers were having a very difficult time in the cattle producing system. Now \$40 doesn't sound like a lot, Mr. Speaker, but to the people in the cattle industry that was a great deal of saying thank you for recognizing the issue we have. If we could only get the federal government and the Minister Gerry Ritz to come on side and pay his share, they'd be doing well. But at least this government under the Minister of Ag thought that we needed help for the farmers and the cattle producing industry, and we did it. A promise made, a promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Another issue I want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and that is regarding the largest farm land property tax reduction on property tax. What a bold vision for the Minister of Education to come out with. Last year we ran on that, and I remember the members opposite, whatever minister it was, saying we're going to get to it, we're going to get to it. Well they never got to it; it never got done. This Minister of Education took it upon himself, along with the help of the new member of Highways now, to produce a document that gave the biggest cut to property tax. A promise made, a promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that our government did was that they gave to the honey producers of the province of Saskatchewan. My brother's a honey producer, and we gave to the honey producers because they needed to be in the crop insurance situation where they were protected under the wildlife damage. The many bee producers are frustrated with the bear damage that's done. It's very costly to them. They'd been to the previous administration time and time again, and nothing was done. This minister saw it fit to put that under the system, and it's helped. With the snowfall that we have in our constituency right now, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of problem with wildlife damage. And the wildlife damage that we've taken upon as the minister did, was paying out 100 per cent.

The Speaker: — Order. I must remind the members that under rule 29(5), it's time to put the question regarding the amendment that is currently under debate.

And so the motion before the Assembly is a motion brought forward by the member from Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, that the following words be added to the motion:

This government no longer enjoys the support of the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan because of this government's lack of vision for the future, and because of this government's woeful mismanagement of the province's finances, and because of this government's failed policies on health care, the Crowns, energy, housing, the environment, and the economy, and because of this government's refusal to listen to the people's priorities.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — I believe the nos have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 22:00 until 22:30.]

The Speaker: — Order. The motion before the Assembly is the amendment. Those in favour of the amendment please rise.

Order. Before we can start, I'll ask members to pay attention and allow the vote to proceed . . . [inaudible] . . . being unhindered.

[Yeas — 20]

Lingenfelter	McCall	Belanger
Harper	Trew	Higgins
Junor	Atkinson	Nilson
Forbes	Vermette	Brotten
Furber	Morin	Yates
Iwanchuk	Taylor	Quennell
Wotherspoon	Chartier	

The Speaker: — Those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 34]

Stewart

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Elhard	Bjornerud	Draude
Krawetz	Boyd	Eagles
McMorris	D'Autremont	Hickie
Cheveldayoff	Heppner	Harpauer
Gantfoer	Kirsch	Norris
Morgan	Hutchinson	Huyghebaert
Brkich	Hart	Reiter
Allchurch	Weekes	Wilson
Duncan	Michelson	LeClerc
Ottenbreit	Ross	Chisholm
Bradshaw	Harrison	McMillan

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 20; those opposed, 34.

The Speaker: — Order, members. Motion is defeated. Being the hour of adjournment, this Assembly will be adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:35.]

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Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council

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

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium Development
Partnership
Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Research Council

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. June Draude
Minister Responsible for Crown Investments
Corporation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Minister of Finance
Government House Leader

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
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Hon. Nancy Heppner
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Water Corporation

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

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

Hon. James Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Capital Commission