



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — 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 |
| Elhard, Wayne | SP | Cypress Hills |
| Forbes, David | NDP | Saskatoon Centre |
| Furber, Darcy | NDP | Prince Albert Northcote |
| Gantfoer, Hon. Rod | SP | Melfort |
| Harpauer, Hon. Donna | SP | Humboldt |
| Harper, Ron | NDP | Regina Northeast |
| Harrison, 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 |
| Iwanchuk, Andy | NDP | Saskatoon Fairview |
| Junor, Judy | NDP | Saskatoon Eastview |
| Kirsch, Delbert | SP | Batoche |
| Krawetz, Hon. Ken | SP | Canora-Pelly |
| LeClerc, Serge | SP | Saskatoon Northwest |
| Lingenfelter, Dwain | NDP | Regina Douglas Park |
| McCall, Warren | NDP | Regina Elphinstone-Centre |
| McMillan, Tim | SP | Lloydminster |
| McMorris, Hon. Don | SP | Indian Head-Milestone |
| Michelson, Warren | SP | Moose Jaw North |
| Morgan, Hon. Don | SP | Saskatoon Southeast |
| Morin, Sandra | NDP | Regina Walsh Acres |
| Nilson, John | NDP | Regina Lakeview |
| Norris, Hon. Rob | SP | Saskatoon Greystone |
| Ottenbreit, Greg | SP | Yorkton |
| Quennell, Frank | NDP | Saskatoon Meewasin |
| Reiter, Hon. Jim | SP | Rosetown-Elrose |
| 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 met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well to you and through you we have a number of welcomes to offer. And obviously if we were to list all of the very special guests we have in the legislature today, even by the groups they represent, we would take up all the time of routine proceedings, and I know we don't want to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me just say on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan a hearty welcome to all those who have gathered here to, I'm sure, to hear the Minister of Finance rise in his place in just a short time and deliver the budget of the province of Saskatchewan. They represent of course the business community, labourers across the province, the municipal sector, school boards. They represent the many, many partners of government in health care, in delivering social services for the province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in addition to welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan I want to thank them very much for what they do each and every day. Welcome.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming here today people from all over the province and even from out of the province, a few friends who have come from other parts of Canada to be with us today, a historic moment when the budget of the province is brought down for the coming year.

I hope everyone enjoys the debate surrounding the budget. It's an important day, and I welcome everyone here and wish them all the best and hope all members join with me in welcoming the group here today.

The Speaker: — And I certainly want to extend a welcome to our guests as well, and just to ask our guests to not participate in any form in the debate from here on in. We certainly appreciate your presence here with us today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition concerning the reinstatement of the domestic abuse outreach program. The prayer reads as follows:

... to cause the provincial government to reinstate the

domestic abuse outreach program as a provincial government service and make it available in all parts of Saskatchewan.

This petition is signed by citizens from the good city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition of Highway 310. The petition states that the condition of Highway 310 has deteriorated to the point where it's now a safety hazard for those who have to drive on it each and every day. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 310 that the people of Saskatchewan so need.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Ituna, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce a petition put together by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition. The petition is in support of the implementation of a Saskatchewan scholarship fund that would be the scholarship fund promised by the Sask Party in the 2007 provincial election. The petitions reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement the promised Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on the petition today are all from Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on maintaining quality health care services in the province. And the petition speaks to the government's need to recognize the value of all health care providers and provide adequate funding and good faith in provincial bargaining. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to negotiating a fair and just collective bargaining agreement with health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today to present a petition signed by thousands of people from around Saskatchewan concerned with the possible elimination of government funding for chiropractic services. And the petition reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan honour the agreement negotiated between the Ministry of Health and the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan.

And again, Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from communities around the province and I'll read into the record their situations: Vanguard, Limerick, Earl Grey, Harris, Vonda, Chamberlain, Truax, Spruce Home, Bellevue, Medstead, Tramping Lake, Stoughton, Shaunavon, Frontier, Viceroy, Mortlach, Meacham, Cabri, Kyle, Maidstone, Birch Hills, Elbow, Ravenscrag, Hudson Bay, Kisbey, Chelan, Prairie River, Christopher Lake, Estlin, Kelliher, Emerald Park, Lang, Lipton, Rouleau, Lestock, Bienfait, Alameda, Leoville, Shellbrook, St. Louis, Waskesiu, Hoey, Holdfast, Sandy Bay, Henribourg, Spiritwood, Grayson, Macrorie, Loreburn, Air Ronge, Tessier, Hillcrest Colony, Sunny Dale Colony, Scott, Debden, Crooked River, Mildred, Albertville, Moose Jaw, Meadow Lake, Regina, Lumsden, Creelman, Fort Qu'Appelle, Tisdale, Carrot River, White Fox, Porcupine Plain, Archerwill, Zenon Park, Melfort, Ridgedale, Mistatim, Weekes, Nipawin, Hudson Bay, Kelvington, Wadena, Prince Albert, Rhein, Pelly, Kamsack, Veregin, Markdale, Norquay, Stornoway, Togo, Endeavour, Yorkton, Wroxton, Runnymede, Buchanan, Sturgis, Stenen, Preeceville, Balcarres, Willow Bunch, White City, Climax, Hodgeville, Herbert, Beechy, Waldeck, Swift Current, Wymark, Kyle, Hazlet, Abbey, Morse, Pennant, Aneroid, Gull Lake, Webb, Saskatoon, Bethune, Wynyard, Langham, Martensville, Colgate, Osage, Trossachs, Weyburn, Ponteix, Bracken, Dundurn, Martensville, Waldheim, Kinley, Osler, Rosetown, Zehner, Humboldt, Pilger, Yellow Creek, Middle Lake, Muenster, Carlton, Laird, Carragana, Bjorkdale, Eastend, Cadillac, Bracken, Tompkins, Simmie, Govan, Duval, Regina Beach, Bulyea, Southey, Dilke, Bladworth, Davidson, Strongfield, Findlater, Craven, Silton, Redvers, Wapella, Moosomin, Rocanville, Manor, Estevan, Lampman, Midale, Carievale, Sinaluta, Central Butte, Mossbank, Hanley, Chitek Lake, Clavet, Blaine Lake, Jansen, Leask, Colonsay, Lajord, Sedley, Lake Lenore, LeRoy, Lang, Lipton, Bredenbury, Ituna, Cut Knife, Handel, Unity, Conquest, Borden, Invermay, Clair, Watrous, Kronau, Disley, Quill Lake, Drake, Guernsey, Bruno, Pense, Deer Valley, Kylemore, Margo, Rose Valley, Fosston, Rama, Wishart, Glidden, Lloydminster, Wakaw, Gravelbourg, Coderre, Churchbridge, Pleasantdale, Beatty, Fairy Glen, Indian Head, St. Gregor, Burr, Quinton, Carmel, Lafleche, Glenbain, Scout Lake, Rockglen, Battleford, North Battleford, Mayfair, Biggar, Rabbit Lake, Wilkie, Unity, Paynton, Cochin, Mervin, Candle Lake, Grenfell, and Hazlet. I so submit.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition in support of maintaining educational assistants. As people will know, the Ministry of Education has published a document that significantly reduces the number of educational assistants in the province. And the prayer reads as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the support they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all students.

And this petition is signed from citizens from Kamsack, Sturgis, Yorkton, and Veregin.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition protecting renters from unreasonable increases. And we know that Saskatchewan renters are facing a combination of rising rents and low vacancy rates right across this province. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protect Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the cities of Regina and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of new long-term care bed facilities in La Ronge, with almost a waiting year for our seniors to wait. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition that has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition, a petition in support of affordable undergraduate tuition, a request that the Saskatchewan government's actions match its rhetoric. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause

the government to implement a long-term tuition management strategy in which tuition is increased by an average of 2 per cent or the most recent increase to the consumer price index.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise and present a petition in support of reducing the interest on fixed-rate student loans to prime, and it's a petition that's been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition. It's in support of the fact that students in Saskatchewan are paying the highest amount of interest on fixed-rate student loans in Canada at prime plus two and a half per cent. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reduce the interest on fixed-rate student loans to the prime rate of borrowing so that students can accumulate less debt and focus their finances on building their lives here in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water, resulting in a minimum monthly bill of \$165. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the residents of Saskatoon and Duck Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of withdrawal of Bill 80. Mr. Speaker, we all know that the existing construction industry labour relations Act, 1992 has provided a stable environment for labour relations in the construction industry in our province. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its ill-conceived Bill 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* which dismantles the proud history of the building trades in this province, creates instability in the labour market, and impacts the quality of training required of workers before entering the workforce.

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

The petition is signed by residents in North Battleford, Colonsay, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to present a petition in support of a new Saskatchewan Hospital, signed by residents of the province of Saskatchewan who note that in February of 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan committed funds to the development of a new hospital in North Battleford. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners call upon the Assembly to ask the Government of Saskatchewan:

To immediately recommit funds and resources for the continued development and construction of a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford and provide the Prairie North Regional Health Authority with the necessary authority to complete this essential and much-needed project.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the shameful \$1 billion deficit that the Sask Party's created. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

These petitions are signed by good folks from Estevan, Saskatoon, Sifton, and Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present again today a petition in support of the expansion of the graduate retention program. Again this petition is about fairness, how we treat post-secondary students, and about ensuring we maintain our best and our brightest here in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

This petition is signed by the good residents of Saskatoon. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Ford World Women's Curling Championship

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to pass up the opportunity of a full gallery here to discuss something that's happening in Swift Current that's been occurring since the weekend. Mr. Speaker, I had the chance to attend the opening ceremonies of the Ford World Women's Curling Championship being hosted in the city of Swift Current for 2010.

Mr. Speaker, the event is already a huge success, not just in terms of what's happening on the rinks. And by the way, the iPlex now in Swift Current, the hockey rink has been replaced by four great curling rinks. And on those rinks, Canada is doing very, very well, last night defeating the United States with a record now of 8 and 0 as they make their way through the round robin.

Mr. Speaker, this event is being made possible of course by the sponsors, by Monsanto and by Ford, by local businesses who have come forward, by 464 volunteers and counting who are making it happen, Mr. Speaker, led by two very able Co-Chairs in terms of the host committee — Bryan Tallon who was a teacher of mine, back in about 1922 I think, and Barbara Walter who's a well-known community leader as well.

They've done a great job, they and the team of volunteers, to make sure that Saskatchewan puts its best foot forward, not just to the rest of the country through networks like TSN [The Sports Network], but also to the world through the world curling television channel that's covering the event.

Mr. Speaker, it's a proud moment for the province of Saskatchewan whose provincial sport of course is curling, and it's a great moment for Swift Current. I acknowledge the sponsors and the volunteers who are making this happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Public Access to Information Regarding Tommy Douglas

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas served our province and our country with great distinction as the first social democratic leader in North America. His legacy to our promise and country is extensive.

He can be credited with bringing us old-age pensions, family allowance, rural electrification, central Bank of Canada, civil rights legislation, and our Crown corporations. And of course he's remembered fondly by many as the leader of medicare. Introducing universal health care in Saskatchewan was his proudest achievement and became the cornerstone for a national medicare program. Many of these social programs and institutions that we sometimes take for granted, we owe to Tommy's hard work, dedication, and courage.

Yet the Government of Canada, CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service], and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] refuse to release the complete intelligence file of the former premier despite having no legitimate security reason. We have twice brought forward a motion in this legislature to release these files, and this Premier and his government refuse to support that motion. We owe it to Douglas's memory, to his family, and to all Canadians to ensure that the full intelligence file is released, yet this Premier refuses to grant citizens the opportunity.

Today as we gather on budget day in Saskatchewan, it provides a tremendous backdrop to reflect upon the legacy of Tommy Douglas and think about how he made life better for Canadian families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Rural Women's Month

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recognition of their significant contributions to this great province, our government has proclaimed March, Rural Women's Month. From the very beginning of our province's history, rural women have been settling the land for future generations. It was not only the men that came to and settled our great province. Women shared in the hardships of all the earliest pioneers as they made their long journeys west. Saskatchewan has prospered, and the rural women in this province have and continue to play a pivotal role in our province's success.

The contributions of strong rural women can be seen whether through working the land, educating our youth, tending the sick and elderly, or providing commercial services. Rural women are also vital volunteers to their communities, be it umpiring, refereeing or working booths for hockey and ball tournaments, working bingos for fund-raising or being a 4-H club leader.

As Saskatchewan takes its place as a leader in the new West, our rural areas will continue to be areas of strength and vitality. The rural women in Saskatchewan will continue to play a prominent role in the success of our province, and we would not last long without them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

A Tale of Two Leaders

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is a day for comparisons, and we'll compare the Sask Party's new budget with the budget they presented last year, and we'll also compare them to the balanced NDP [New Democratic Party] budgets of previous years. We should also take time to compare the current leadership of the two parties.

Mr. Speaker, it's a tale of two leaders. The Premier, Mr. Speaker, is well known as the character who turned the best of NDP economic times into the worst of Saskatchewan Party fiscal times, taking the province from a \$2.3 billion surplus into a \$1 billion deficit. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition played a leading role in restoring the province to fiscal health after the particularly dark chapter in the '80s and 1990s.

In his private life, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is a successful grain and livestock farmer and has been for his whole life. He's been a successful businessman with extensive experience working with business and government from around the world. By contrast, Mr. Speaker, to read up on the Premier's business experience, we'd have to turn our books to Chapter 11.

Mr. Speaker, today's budget will write the next chapter in the story of these two leaders. If, as we fear on this side, it's written with too much red ink, we can take comfort in the fact that the people of Saskatchewan will be holding the pen, or should I say, pencil, when the concluding chapter is written in November 2011.

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

Big River Shiver and Ice Fishing Derby

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This previous weekend I had the pleasure of attending the 10th annual Big River ice fishing derby. This was a great opportunity for the people of the community to meet, socialize, and to attempt to catch as many fish as possible. The fishing derby took place at Cowan Lake where 12 fish were caught with the winning fish weighing over 3 pounds. At this derby, Mr. Speaker, I was informed about another annual Big River event that is garnering national attention.

I would ask that this Assembly recognize Mr. Jack Hills for organizing the 3rd annual Big River Shiver polar bear swim. For the previous two years, several brave souls have actually volunteered to jump into ice-cold water to raise money for local organizations. This event has received so much recognition, the Canadian Tourism Commission has listed it as one of the nation's top 13 must-experience-now winter places.

Though this event is a great display of community spirit, the main purpose of the Big River Shiver is to raise funds for local projects. This year it's estimated that each participant raised roughly \$2,700 that will go to the local senior centre.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Big River Shiver is another example of a small community showing big Saskatchewan spirit. Thank you.

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

Reaction to Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We wait with bated breath for the presentation of another Sask Party budget, delivered on the heels of last year's budget, that has proven itself disastrous.

The Sask Party's budgetary record is summed up in a recent issue of *Canadian Business*. I quote, "For all its reputation for being attuned to business, the Saskatchewan Party government of Premier Brad Wall has a terrible track record of budget forecasting."

That's what business is saying about the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, and economists agree as well. U of S [University of Saskatchewan] professor, Eric Howe, says in today's *StarPhoenix*, I quote, "The thing about the deficit is that it wasn't caused by a revenue problem, the deficit was caused by a spending problem."

This Premier took a \$2.3 billion surplus and in only two short years has turned it into a \$1 billion deficit. We've seen cuts to programs and services and a string of broken promises already. It's clear that he is forcing Saskatchewan people to pay the price for Sask Party mismanagement. Because as Eric Howe notes, I quote:

... the economic costs are straightforward. We are the ones who are going to pay. There is no one else there. So the costs will end up coming out of our standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, this is mismanagement that Saskatchewan families, businesses, and communities can ill afford.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Entrepreneurial Spirit in Saskatchewan

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to talk about the entrepreneurial spirit of our great province. Last year *Birth of a Boom: Lives & Legacies of Saskatchewan Entrepreneurs* was published by the Prairie Policy Centre. It is a book that chronicles the struggles and successes of many of the entrepreneurs that helped build this province.

These are the family-run businesses that have grown over decades, often handed down from generation to generation. The stories range from an Irish immigrant, saving his paycheques for years to take a chance and open Wallace Construction in Saskatoon, to the beginnings of Morris Industries in 1921. George Morris went from local mechanic to agricultural machinery manufacturer.

This book also has, Mr. Speaker, a very personal story in it for me. *Birth of a Boom* tells the story of my great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and now brother who have all worked in my family's business, which was started in 1930 by my great-grandfather, Jacob. My great-grandfather was a dray man,

Mr. Speaker. He delivered coal with a team of horses all day. In the evening, to make a few extra dollars for his family, he mixed concrete by hand and made concrete blocks one at a time. This book is full of tales of these types of stories, Mr. Speaker. The people in these stories epitomize the hard work and dedication you will find in people across the province from Prince Albert to Lampman.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Suzanne for collecting these great stories for Saskatchewan achievement and wishing continued success for all entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Spending Reductions

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the government has indicated that there will be necessary cuts in the budget that we're going to be hearing in a few moments. Mr. Speaker, the last time we were in a situation where we had a huge budget, following the Devine government, billions of dollars in deficit, the Romanow government of the day started the tough process of balancing the books. But Premier Romanow started at the top. He cut the cabinet from 16 to 11. He cut the salary of cabinet ministers by 5 per cent and removed and took away many political staff in this building.

My question to the Premier is this: in this tough time of deficit, will the Premier today use that by way of example and will he start in his own office? If there needs to be cuts, will he make cuts at that level, at that level in his office?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Leader of the Opposition's question, Mr. Speaker, I can say this: the government hasn't waited to start to find efficiencies in terms of the political staff of this building, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is we have already cut the number of political staff in this building versus what was . . .

[Interjections]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well they laugh, Mr. Speaker. Already 27 fewer political staff working for this government than worked for the NDP government, a cut of 15 per cent. That's the fact.

Here's another fact, Mr. Speaker. Advertising used to be about \$16 million. You remember that when the NDP tried to burnish their image with taxpayer-funded ads, Mr. Speaker, they used to spend \$16 million a year on advertising. We've cut that in half, to \$8 million.

Mr. Speaker, we haven't waited for the return of the Opposition Leader or this budget. We have already started saving from the very top, Mr. Speaker.

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

Budget Forecasts and State of the Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, last year's budget was a disaster, with revenue forecasts that bore no resemblance to reality and out-of-control spending increases, all resulting in a budget deficit of more than \$1 billion. Everyone agrees that the budget unveiled by the Premier last year did not provide an accurate picture of the province's finances.

To the minister: will today's budget be any more accurate? And why should Saskatchewan people trust the Premier this time around?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments from the Finance critic from the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. He has been very consistent in this line of questioning. He raised a petition today with respect to government restraint, but he ought to share his memo with the Leader of the Opposition who just, I think, just very recently as it's reported in *The Sheaf* was saying that no, it's not the time for the provincial government to engage in restraint. He's now saying it's no time to make a cut.

There's quotes here right from *The Sheaf*. What he said yesterday to the media, Mr. Speaker was no, no, the resource revenue projections are actually going to be much higher this year, so you shouldn't engage in restraint, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago it's restrain. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's spend some more money from the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, not long ago the Opposition Leader was saying the economy's too hot. Now he's saying it's too cold, Mr. Speaker. He's like Goldilocks's grandpa on this issue.

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

Chiropractic Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's see if the leader can dance around this one. Mr. Speaker, more than 125,000 Saskatchewan people received chiropractic treatment last year. These people depend on this treatment to relieve their pain and help them live a healthy life. Mr. Speaker, many of these chiropractic patients are here in the gallery today, and we have received and submitted and presented to this legislature petitions with tens of thousands of names on them for more of those patients.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will the budget today make chiropractic care inaccessible to these people, forcing them to live in chronic pain?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of chiropractic care in the province is debated in this Assembly, and so it should be. And people have become engaged in terms of both petitions and letter writing, and the

chiropractors themselves have been very progressive and aggressive in making the case.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of chiropractic care in the province. We also understand the importance of priority setting, Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by this government target for nurse recruitment and retention which we're more than halfway to completing, as evidenced by this government's priorities with respect to physician recruitment and retention. We're already under way with respect to this government's commitment to reducing the surgical wait times we inherited from the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, there are not a lot of provinces today in the country that provide chiropractic care. We'll find out in a few moments . . . A subsidy for chiropractic care. We'll find out in a few moments if Saskatchewan remains one of the places that does provide some assistance.

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

Funding for Health Care Facilities

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On November 9th of 2009, the government announced that construction of the children's hospital and 13 long-term care facilities would be "deferred."

When the opposition asked the government about these deferrals, the government said it was because the projects weren't ready to proceed. The Minister of Finance told the *Leader-Post* on November 20th, and I quote, "It's our clear plan and commitment that as these projects are available for moving forward we will provide funding as construction requirements dictate."

To the Premier: will there be funding for the children's hospital and for the deferred long-term care facilities in today's budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it was the practice, it was the practice of the previous NDP government to make a lot of announcements about health care projects, not actually do anything about them. Case in point was the Preeceville Hospital. I think the minister announced it seven times, Mr. Speaker, before it actually got done.

I make this commitment to those who are working very hard with respect to the children's hospital, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government and the taxpayers. More than just issuing press releases, our commitment is to that facility, and as money is needed it will be there. Money for the long-term care facilities in many respects is already in the regions. It will be there as the local funds are raised, as that money is needed.

Those facilities will be built, and well they should, Mr. Speaker, because, because, Mr. Speaker, there was fully a decade of neglect for rural long-term care in the province of Saskatchewan. That's going to end now, Mr. Speaker.

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

Coverage For Dental Treatment

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, Charlene is looking for help. She's unable to wear any type of dentures due to multiple allergies. Her dentist writes, "The only treatment possible to restore her masticatory function is implant-retained prosthesis."

Charlene suffers every day, but the government doesn't care. She writes:

This is a medical procedure, not a cosmetic procedure. Wearing my dentures causes pain, bleeding, coughing and constant clearing of my throat. I cannot find the words to tell you how much this procedure would improve my quality of life.

To the Premier: why is Charlene forced to live in constant pain and suffering because of Sask Party government fiscal mismanagement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member, I thank the member for the question. I'm not familiar with this specific case. If he would like to forward it to our office, we can look into it.

I know that obviously the Government of Saskatchewan, as it has in the past, provides dental care for those who are on low income, Mr. Speaker. It is not a universal program, certainly, but as I said earlier on in my answer, if the member would send over the information, we could have a look at it. I haven't seen it.

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

Support for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many post-secondary students are in the gallery today anxious to hear what this government has to offer them. Last year tuition increased 3.5 per cent. This year when the Sask Party government is facing a \$1 billion deficit, students are afraid of huge tuition increases.

To the minister: will he listen to the students here today and ensure that tuition increases do not exceed 2 per cent? Or will they be asked to pay for this government's fiscal mismanagement again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the hon. member raises an important question. The premise of his question is wrong. Although, Mr. Speaker, when we took office there was \$6.8 billion in debt in the province; there was a billion two in the savings account — that's what we inherited.

Today, Mr. Speaker, there's \$4.2 billion in debt, \$700 million cash in the savings account after historic income tax cuts, after historic property tax cuts, after \$2 billion to fix the infrastructure pothole left behind by those members, Mr. Speaker — a net improvement in the position of the province of

2 billion. That's why we've been able to invest over a billion two in post-secondary education in this province. That's why we've been able to implement the graduate retention program, which of course could constitute almost a complete refunding of tuition.

Mr. Speaker, low, affordable post-secondary education is a priority for this government, and I think that will manifest itself when the Minister of Finance rises to present the budget.

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

Funding for School Boards

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we did leave them with \$2.3 billion in cash, and this year they have a \$1 billion deficit. It doesn't make sense to us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Regina Catholic School Board attended this legislature. They were asking, through the opposition, about the funding difference between the Regina Public School Board and the Regina Catholic School Board, and there's a difference of about \$275 per student or about \$2.6 million. Now school boards, Catholic school boards have said publicly, if this inequity between them and their public counterparts isn't fixed in this fiscal year, they're going to have to resort to the possibility of program, staff cuts and so on.

So a very simple question to the government: in this budget today, is it the intention of the Sask Party government to fix the inequity between Catholic school boards in the province of Saskatchewan and their public school board counterparts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've listened to the member opposite. I've listened to the Regina Catholic School Board. In fact I visited the Regina Catholic Board to talk about what she calls an inequity, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no inequity. Because I want to tell you that in the area of administration, in the area of governance, in the area of instruction, Mr. Speaker, those are the three areas that provide dollars to boards of education to make sure that there are teachers in the classrooms and that there are provisions of materials, etc.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the board member today, not more than an hour and a half ago, in fact the Regina Catholic board of education receives \$200 more than the Regina Public in those areas. Mr. Speaker, in the area where they do not have exactly the same dollars is in the area of physical structure. The age of schools in the Regina Public are older and the cost of maintenance is over \$400 per child more than the Regina Catholic.

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

Aboriginal Employment

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As of March 31, 2009, the Aboriginal employment development

program helped 4,465 Métis and First Nation people to get a job. It has provided skills training for nearly 2,000 employees and Aboriginal awareness training to 36,000 individuals.

And since 1995, more than 100 Aboriginal employment development agreements have been signed with a multitude of community partners, many of whom are represented in this room today. The government's own ministry has told us that this is a "sustainable and focused approach to First Nations and Métis employment and economic development." Can the minister or the Premier tell us if this valuable initiative will survive the budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. The issue of Aboriginal employment, First Nations and Métis employment, is very important to this government, Mr. Speaker. In fact the employment record of the province of Saskatchewan is second to none in the country, Mr. Speaker, and of course that's going to help anyone who is looking for a job.

Mr. Speaker, I would just say this. The budget's going to be tabled very, very shortly. The minister will rise in his place. I think he will be talking very specifically about some initiatives with respect to First Nations economic development. In the meantime we will continue to partner with institutions like the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology that have seen their funds increase from this government because, Mr. Speaker, they take those funds, they provide the training, and then those who are trained are finding employment and a bright future in this province of Saskatchewan.

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

Attrition and Job Tenure

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, this government has talked for weeks now about their so-called plan to cut the civil service through attrition. Mr. Speaker, this is no more of a plan than their potash revenues were last year. Does this mean that if our highway workers retire, snow won't be removed from the highways at Christmastime? Does this mean cuts to home care workers and an elimination of home care services for our aging mothers, fathers, and grandparents?

To the Minister of Finance: if he retires, does this mean that we won't have any more deficit budgets?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I know, based on the net improvement of the fiscal health of this province of \$2 billion in two years, Mr. Speaker — the strongest economy in the Dominion of Canada, the best employment rate, Mr. Speaker, the best population record — I know the people of this province because I've seen the polling, their position with respect to the Minister of Finance is this: they say, I hope he's doing this job for a long, long time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Riversdale.

Film Industry Issues and State of the Provincial Economy

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's been a 70 per cent decline in film production under the Sask Party government. The industry has called for changes to the film employment tax credit to make Saskatchewan more competitive with other provinces. They also need opportunities to showcase their work to an audience.

To the minister: will this government take steps in today's budget to help the film industry address the decline in production, or will they continue to drive the film industry jobs and investment out of our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, we know that there are challenges in the film industry right across North America. The minister highlighted that in answers to the questions earlier on this day . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I think members are, from their seats, shouting out points that may be in the budget, for which they've signed an embargo, Mr. Speaker. I think the member for Nutana just did that from her seat, which shouldn't surprise anybody in this Assembly if they have seen how this opposition has conducted their affairs since the return of the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Speaker, that member has been running down the province of Saskatchewan . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — That member, that Leader of the Opposition, has been running down the province of Saskatchewan. He said the economy of the province of Saskatchewan is in a free fall, Mr. Speaker. He said we've moved from boom to bust.

Mr. Speaker, that's why there's this great disconnect between the people of the province — whether they work in the film industry or others that are less challenged — that's why there's this gap between the people of the province and the NDP. They're familiar with the old Saskatchewan that led in out-migration and had the worst job creation record in the country. This new Saskatchewan is a different story, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Contract Negotiations for Health Care Workers

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, before that Premier should point fingers, he should . . . He understands, and now people of Saskatchewan understand, the mismanagement of the finances of this province today.

Mr. Speaker, health care workers from across the province are in the gallery today. They are representing the 25,000 of their colleagues that are still without a contract. They provide care and support to patients every day, yet this government has shown them nothing but disrespect.

To the minister: will the government be including funding for pending negotiations with health care workers in today's budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, those health care workers are very important to the system, the health care system, obviously. They're important to the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the collective bargaining process is still unfolding in the province of Saskatchewan, and whatever agreement is reached, it'll obviously be funded by the health care provider in Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the end of December this government cut the domestic abuse outreach program without consulting the community. This program provided a number of valuable services to women victims of domestic violence, including helping women find emergency shelter, accompanying women to their homes, court, the hospital, or the police station as needed. It was a model that should have been copied throughout the province, but instead it was eliminated.

To the minister: will the government restore funding for the domestic abuse outreach program in today's budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we know that the specific services the member raises are being provided in a different way, but they are being provided. We also know this. We also know this. This party campaigned in the election on a commitment to increase funding to transition centres, to assault centres, Mr. Speaker, in this province. We campaigned on a promise to increase funding by \$1.1 million, a long-neglected area of service delivery by members opposite, Mr. Speaker. In the first two years of this government, Mr. Speaker, that promise for \$1.1 million has been kept and has been delivered.

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

Support for Seniors

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, there are many senior citizens in the gallery today who depend on the rural recreation facilities for their physical and mental well-being. But due to skyrocketing costs for utilities, insurance, taxes, garbage disposal, and the maintenance of these facilities, about a quarter of these centres will close in the next 18 months. Will the budget today provide much-needed funding for these seniors to

keep their recreation facilities open, or will these seniors be forced to pay more and get less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, in just a few moments the Minister of Finance will take his place in the Assembly and present the budget, and that member's question will be answered as the documents are tabled.

I can tell the member this: that the measures that this government took in previous budgets, for example to increase the seniors' income assistance program for the first time in 16 years, that will be sustained, Mr. Speaker, in the budget.

I can tell the member this as well: that the 80,000 low-income people dropped from the income tax rolls because of the tax cut measures this government took, many of them seniors, that will also be sustained, Mr. Speaker.

I will also inform the member, who used to be a minister of Health, that this government's plan, this government's target to reduce the wait times for surgical care that we have inherited from those members opposite — many seniors waiting for hip and knee surgery — we will begin to deal with that. And I expect you might hear the Minister of Finance talk about that in just a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reduction in Provincial Debt

Mr. Furber: — The truth about wait-lists in the province of Saskatchewan is that they've doubled under this Premier. It's a sad state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker, last year's budget surplus turned out to be a \$1 billion deficit. Under the Saskatchewan Party government, debt increased last year. There's been a lot of rhetoric leading into today's budget about the government tightening its belt. Most Saskatchewan families believe that to mean the budget will result in a decrease in the overall provincial debt.

Question is simple. To the Premier: will the province carry less debt after today's budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the member has taken the place, I think, of his former father-in-law, Eldon Lautermilch, a friend to this Assembly, someone we know well. Someone once gave him the nickname of angry Homer because he always seemed to be angry. And sometimes, sometimes he engaged in information that wasn't necessarily truthful.

This member is clearly too young to be described that way, so maybe he's angry Bart. I don't know. But here's what they have in common. Here's what they have in common. They engage in information, and offer it, that's not completely the truth, including what that member said about wait times in this province which is absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker.

In answer to the member's question, I will say this. This side of the House, together with the people of the province, have reduced the debt of the province by almost 40 per cent. And that will be sustained in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would ask members to choose their words wisely and not reflect on the integrity of other members. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Selection of a Chief Electoral Officer

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Attorney General stood in the Assembly, pretended that he could unilaterally change the rules to appoint independent officers of the legislature, the reason being the Sask Party has said that the candidate recommended by a bipartisan committee for the position of Chief Electoral Officer is off the table because the Premier doesn't want him.

To the minister: is he saying that the Premier, through his caucus, can fire an independent officer of the legislature?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to provide some clarity to this issue. Mr. Speaker, the selection of the Chief Electoral Officer for this province is not made by the committee, a subcommittee of the Board of Economy. It is not a choice made by the Board of Economy. It is not a decision made by the opposition. It is not a choice made by the government members, Mr. Speaker. Nor is it a choice made by the media. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is a choice made by all of the elected members of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there is advisory roles provided by that committee. However, Mr. Speaker, this is a position that must be voted on by all of the members. And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I made the offer that I would work with Chief Justice Klebuc so that we could have an overseer and a facilitator from the outside. Mr. Speaker, that offer has not been taken by the members opposite. And I want to have a fair, democratic, and impartial process and would ask the members opposite to try and join in that.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General endorsed the recommended candidate, saying that his "qualifications would appear to make him the ideal candidate."

Despite this recommendation from the Attorney General, the Premier, for no apparent reason, has rejected the recommended candidate. Will the minister agree to hold a public inquiry into the decision not to hire the candidate recommended by the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I fail to see the humour, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister agree to hold a public inquiry into the decision not to hire the candidate recommended by the Board of Internal Economy for the position of Chief Electoral Officer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to be holding a public inquiry. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General has also offered to engage either a retired or current justice if the opposition members want to see even more oversight in the process that exists.

I can see why members opposite would be very concerned, as we are on this side of the House, about election rules and that they were followed because, Mr. Speaker, they're led by an individual who has some problems, has some difficulties when it comes to following election rules. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, are the subject of investigations.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, during question period twice today, the Premier has in his comments and replies to questions maligned the character of members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, when he was questioning whether or not members of the opposition were truthful. You know that is not acceptable language in this Assembly. And just seconds ago, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned and maligned the Leader of the Opposition by saying he was under . . . had been under investigation for something. That never happened, Mr. Speaker. Not true.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the facts of an investigation regarding the member of the official opposition is well known in the public. It's publicized in all of the media across the province. This is not a fact under dispute, Mr. Speaker. This is a well-known fact in the province, and the member of the House on the opposite side's point is not well taken, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I have listened to the point of order presented by the Opposition House Leader and listened to the arguments from the Government House Leader, and I will review *Hansard* to see the context in which the comments may or may not have . . . [inaudible].

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Before we get to ministerial statements . . . Order. Before we get to ministerial statements, I am prepared to make a statement on a point of order that was raised yesterday by the Opposition House Leader.

I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised yesterday with regards to the ministerial statement given by the Minister of Education.

First, I would like to remind members of my previous rulings relating to ministerial statements given on April 15th, 2008 and December 17th, 2007. At that time I stated that ministers should not comment on matters that have been previously announced. My rulings were based on previous Speakers' rulings and our practice that ministerial statements must refer to a new government policy or program or directive.

Members will appreciate the difficulty faced by the Speaker in determining the appropriateness of a ministerial statement as it is being delivered. Often it is only once a statement is well under way, or has been announced, that the Speaker may be able to discern whether the statement is in order. The Speaker does not monitor government announcements and does not always know if a statement relates to something previously announced. Compounding my difficulty in making an immediate ruling is the need to ensure fairness to the opposition by affording an equal opportunity to respond to the statement.

In reviewing the matter, including the information put forward by both House leaders, I find that the ministerial statement provided by the Minister of Education contained information that was announced by the government on the previous Thursday. Therefore on the basis of an established practice of this Assembly, I must find that the point of order is well taken.

For the guidance of members, I would like to clarify that a new announcement is one that is made at the earliest opportunity. I would also like to remind all members that the accepted guidelines for ministerial statements are that statements should be brief and not lengthy in nature, and equally the response should not exceed the time taken by the minister.

TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to submit the estimates and supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — I would ask the members of the Assembly and our guests to please rise for the message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2011, and supplementary estimates, March, of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2010, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. [Signed by] His Honour Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, today it is my honour as the Minister of Finance to present the 2010-11 budget to the

people of Saskatchewan. It is my pleasure to report to you, to the members of this House, and the people of Saskatchewan that today's budget is a balanced budget.

This budget was built on solid principles — caution on the revenue side, restraint on the spending side, and a firm commitment to government living within its means. These are the principles Saskatchewan families follow in managing their own money. These are the principles our government will follow in managing taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, before I continue, I would like to welcome the many guests who have joined us here today and throughout the province, especially my wife, Carole, and our daughters Laurie McKerracher from Calgary, Pattie Draude and her husband Tim from Melfort, and Bonnie Nayet from Regina. Thanks for coming, family. We love you a lot.

[14:30]

You know, Carole and I have been married a lot longer than I've been the Finance minister. And the principles I just outlined are the ones that we have followed throughout our family's finances for over 40 years of marriage — caution, keeping spending under control, living within our means. We know this worked for our family, and we know it works for Saskatchewan families, and we know it'll work for this budget.

Mr. Speaker, when I delivered the provincial budget last year, I began my address by saying that we in Saskatchewan are not immune to the turmoil that has shaken the world economy, and it was true. But while Saskatchewan certainly felt the effects of a global recession, our province fared much better than most, and our economy remained strong and steady.

Much has happened over the past year. We know how important it was that our government invested in projects specifically designed to keep our economy strong. We know how important it was that we paid down the province's debt by \$2.6 billion, saving Saskatchewan taxpayers \$650 million in net interest costs over five years.

This budget builds on that foundation. We want to build on the successes we have had and are rebuilding the province's infrastructure and sustaining our economic momentum through our historic tax reductions. Those decisions have supported the economic strength we continue to enjoy in Saskatchewan today.

We see it everywhere in our daily lives. The people of Saskatchewan are confident and optimistic about the future. Surveys conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business show that small-business owners in Saskatchewan are the most optimistic in the country and that five of the top business-friendly cities in the country are right here in Saskatchewan.

RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] describes our province as being off to a rip-roaring start in 2010. Recent headlines in our daily papers declared, "Saskatchewan job numbers surge" and "Saskatchewan economy expected to lead." There are tremendous optimism heading into 2010-11 and for pretty good reason. CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] recently announced that Saskatchewan will lead the country in economic

growth this year. In its most recent provincial outlook, RBC is predicting a 3.6 per cent growth rate for Saskatchewan this year, the second highest in the country. The outlook also predicts a 4.6 per cent growth rate for next year, the highest in Canada.

In 2009 the number of people working in Saskatchewan increased by nearly 8,000 — the only province to post significant job growth last year. In February of this year, the provincial unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 per cent, by far the lowest in Canada. Saskatchewan's population has hit an all-time high, breaking the record set back in 1987. Over the past two years, Saskatchewan has grown by nearly 30,000 people, the fastest rate of growth since the early 1950s.

So 2009 was a good year in terms of job creation and population growth. Next year promises to even be a better year for our province, our economy, and our people, but we're not taking anything for granted. Our government believes that a strong and growing economy is built on a firm foundation of balanced budgets and fiscal discipline. As we control government spending, our government will be guided by the principles of fairness and fiscal responsibility. We remain vigilant in balancing the need for restraint with the need to protect important services.

Saskatchewan families work hard and live within their means. They expect their government to do the same. Therefore this budget is about moving beyond the boom and bust cycle, as define Saskatchewan budgeting. Yes, our resource revenues will always fluctuate from one year to the next, but the new, confident Saskatchewan people do not fluctuate. It is unwavering. Everywhere I go Saskatchewan people are positive about our province's future. They want our government to reflect that confidence, this new positive attitude.

This budget moves Saskatchewan away from the notion of boom and bust, making the decisions that need to be made regardless of the current price of oil or potash. This budget prepares Saskatchewan for permanent, steady growth through innovation, through responsible spending, and through new ways of approaching important challenges like surgical wait times and improving efficiencies in the health system.

This budget sets the stage for a new approach to delivering government services, an approach that is based on innovation, on measuring performance, and on making government more efficient rather than simply measuring the amount of money being spent. This budget is balanced, forward-looking, and responsible.

With this budget our government intends to reduce the overall government footprint and strive for a more efficient delivery of public services. Over the last decade, the size of the public service in our province has grown much faster than the rate of growth of Saskatchewan's population. This must change.

This is not something unique to Saskatchewan of course. If you look across the country and around the globe, you'll find other jurisdictions faced with the same challenge. In Saskatchewan we're already ahead of the curve. Early in the last fiscal year we began a process to begin finding efficiencies throughout government, including a delay in hiring or simply not filling vacant positions. We went on to examine government programs

and services as we developed this budget. The result was that we were able to reduce the size of the public service by about 135 positions, with limited job loss. This year we'll begin a four-year plan to reduce the size of the public service, with a goal of reaching a 15 per cent reduction over four years. The goal for the first year is 4 per cent.

Many of those who retire or move on to other opportunities will not be replaced. We will control this by establishing a centralized review process to ensure that only critical positions will be staffed. In the years ahead, we will continue to improve the way we do business and deliver service.

We know that the public service must become smaller, more effective, and more efficient, and we know it will. This has already begun to happen through the budget process.

Last fall we asked all ministries to develop their budget submissions for this year at 90 per cent of last year's budget. Then we asked them to rank the remaining 10 per cent of their spending by priority. The result is that 14 ministries came in with real reductions in their budgets, mainly by eliminating programs that were not being well utilized or by making changes to provide improved efficiency.

As an example, our government reviewed approximately 350 government agencies, boards, and commissions and discovered that many had outlived their original purpose. This review process resulted in the elimination of 82 different governing bodies, saving a half a million dollars a year.

Our government has also cut the amount spent on government communications and advertising by almost half, from \$17 million in 2007-08 to about \$8.5 million in 2009-10. These were good first steps, but this budget needed to go further.

So this year we have seen other governments increase spending, resulting in multi-billion dollar deficits. Our government is choosing a different path. Our goal is not simply to slow the growth of government spending. Our goal was to reduce government spending, ensuring a balanced budget today and a spending trajectory that is sustainable tomorrow.

I am pleased to announce that we have achieved this goal. Compared to last year, today's budget reduces government spending by \$121.3 million or 1.2 per cent.

To get there, some difficult choices had to be made. As the Premier has announced, we will not be able to move forward on the second phase of municipal revenue sharing this year. Revenue sharing will be maintained at \$167.4 million, the same record-setting level as last year and 43 per cent higher than when our government took office. Our commitment to revenue sharing equalling 1 per cent of PST [provincial sales tax] will be met in the next fiscal year.

Education property tax rates will also remain at the same level as last year when our government delivered the largest property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history.

As ministries work to reduce their budget, they ask many important questions like: are programs delivering the desired result? For example we had a program in Advanced Education

called work-based training for the unemployed, but we found that it wasn't working very well. Very few participants were getting jobs. So we're winding it up as part of an effort to better match these training programs to the needs of employers in the labour market. A skilled labour force is critical for a growing economy, so we're redirecting these dollars into other training programs that work.

In government we have a tendency to do things the same way we've always done them. Our goal is to change, and we're using the creativity and common sense of our employees to help us. Nobody knows the frustrations and inefficiencies of complicated processes better than the people who deal with them every single day. So it shouldn't come as a surprise if we find better ways to get the job done with their help.

Our Health ministry is producing some promising results using what's called the lean method of process improvement. Here's an example. It used to take 13 different steps and 67 days to deal with an out-of-province medical claim. By revamping the process, the medical services branch in Health have eliminated a backlog of 2,200 claims and reduced the turnaround time to between 9 and 19 days. That is the kind of creative problem solving and innovation we are looking for. This is the kind of thing we want to see more across government. Part of saving money is innovation, and part of it is simply applying more rigour to the budgeting process.

We have worked diligently using this approach, and we looked in places where government hadn't looked before. For example regional health authorities appeared before Treasury Board this year, the first time this has ever happened. This exercise will lead savings and efficiencies in the delivery of health care in our province.

Health spending now makes up over 40 per cent of our provincial budget. Since we were elected in 2007, we've increased spending on health care by more than 8 per cent each year. We are covering more new drugs. We've made significant investments in capital projects and made great strides in recruiting and retaining health care professionals. But we know this rate of growth is not sustainable in the long run, and every effort must be made to be sure we are spending smarter, not just spending more. That's why we are holding the growth in health care spending this year to 3.1 per cent.

The regional health authorities have embraced this challenge and support the effort of the government to contain cost increases and target new spending to areas that improve service and enhance the health care experience for Saskatchewan families. That said, the RHAs [regional health authority] will still be getting \$123 million more than last year, a 5 per cent increase.

This budget also adds \$10 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and provides an extra \$30 million to cover increased use of medical services drug plan and extended benefit programs.

We're proud to say that this budget also provides \$10.5 million to begin our commitment to reduce surgical wait times to three months within four years.

This budget also adds another 12 new postgraduate residency seats in the College of Medicine. This brings the number of new seats since we were elected to 60 and the total number of seats to 120. We think this is a forward-looking move that will help the future doctor shortages. As well, funding of \$3.5 million will continue the implementation of the physician recruitment strategy and agency.

We're also moving to help those affected by autism. This budget provides \$2.5 million to establish a pilot project aimed at finding more effective treatments for autism. Mr. Speaker, it is not enough to only search for health cures, we also must look for preventative measures.

We know that smoking is very dangerous for our citizens. The financial cost is great; the human cost is greater. We also know there is a direct link between the cost of cigarettes and smoking rates, particularly among young people. That is why, effective midnight tonight, the tax on tobacco will go up by 2.7 cents per cigarette. That is why we have chosen to reduce the number of tax-free cigarettes for individual purposes on reserve from three cartons a week to one. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness in Canada. These measures will help build up our tobacco reduction strategy with the goal of reducing smoking.

[14:45]

Developing this year's Health budget meant balancing priorities. The difficult decision of de-insuring universal chiropractic services was made in this budget, saving the province \$10.4 million annually. Low-income people will continue to receive coverage for up to 12 treatments per year. This change is consistent with most other provinces which do not pay for chiropractic services or which limit the number of treatments covered.

Also with the concern to the future health of our people, we must also take steps to invest in post-secondary education and innovation to prepare our young people for the future. To that end, we have significantly increased the operating grant to our post-secondary institutions, including an extra \$16.3 million to help them keep tuition increases to a minimum. We are also enhancing the student support programs by \$1.8 million, including the lowering of the interest rate paid by students. Funding for the graduate retention program will increase by \$4.3 million for total funding of 23 million as our government continues to encourage post-secondary graduates to start their careers and build their lives in Saskatchewan.

On the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] side, last week we were pleased to announce funding for six schools and upgrades to seven existing schools. This year we're investing \$17.2 million in new capital funding. This brings the total new school capital funding since 2007-08 to more than \$328 million over three years. The overall operating funding for school divisions will increase by \$33 million this year including property tax revenue. One-time transitional funding of \$12 million is also available from education property tax revenues due to the delay in reducing mill rates this year.

Our government sees innovation and trade as key elements of our growth agenda. The innovation agenda cuts across a

number of areas where we have high hopes for the future, including agricultural biotechnology, value-added development in the nuclear industry, and carbon capture technology.

This budget commits \$11.8 million in new operating funding over four years to the synchrotron on the University of Saskatchewan campus. This money will support the facility's 13 beamlines in operation and commissioning stage and nine beamlines in development.

The Petroleum Technology Research Centre, or PTRC, located on the University of Regina campus will receive \$2.5 million for its research projects including CO₂ capture and enhanced oil recovery. A further 1.6 million in Go Green funding is also being provided to the PTRC for carbon capture research in developing solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

And this budget establishes Innovation Saskatchewan with a base budget of \$1.3 million; \$480,000 of this funding will go to TRILabs in Saskatoon to support the work they do in telecommunications research.

International trade has been a real success story in Saskatchewan and a big part of the reason our economy remained strong throughout the global recession. Saskatchewan companies are being introduced around the world. Our Premier has made several trips to the United States where he's personally made the case for Saskatchewan on Capitol Hill and beyond. Our Energy minister has carried the same message to China on more than one occasion.

We're encouraged that the first sale of Crown petroleum and national gas rights this year received bids from Chinese oil and gas companies. We will build on this momentum later this year when our Premier joins his Western counterparts on a trade mission to Asia in the spring.

We all know about the breakdown in potash sales to China in 2009. What people may not know is that while we struggle to sell potash to China, the Chinese were actually buying a lot more of our other products. In 2009, canola sales to China were up by 80 per cent to \$553 million. Sales of peas were up by 51 per cent to 105 million, and linseed sales were up a whopping 341 per cent to \$69.4 million.

Similar trends were evident in our trade with India. Last year Saskatchewan sold \$975 million worth of goods to India, which amounted to 45 per cent of all Canadian trade with that country. It's more than twice as much as Ontario.

And it's this success that have convinced us we need to do more. The Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, STEP, and its 400-member businesses have done a tremendous job expanding trade and developing new markets for Saskatchewan products. This budget increases funding to STEP by \$325,000, about 10 per cent, to assist in increasing access to new markets.

STEP's success in agriculture exports would not be possible without the hard work of Saskatchewan farm families. Our government is proud to say that we are fully funding farm income stabilization programs again this year, and we will devote \$234 million to pay our share on these important programs.

We're also devoting \$16 million to agriculture research and development. In recent weeks, our Agriculture minister has announced important changes and improvements to the crop insurance program, including more diversified crop coverage and improvements to wildlife damage compensation. We will continue to protect the best interests of agriculture and Saskatchewan family farms by constantly striving to improve ag programs as we did this year by moving administration of programs to right here in Saskatchewan.

Our government is committed to reducing the burden of government regulation and red tape for businesses across the province. In the Ministry of Finance, we've introduced a taxpayer service commitments and standards code to improve public service to taxpayers and vendors. Last week we announced one-stop shopping for businesses, a single point of access for business services provided by government, rather than having to deal with several different government ministries and agencies.

At the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, we have established a Canada-Saskatchewan rapid response team to help workers and businesses affected by layoffs to find the help they need more quickly. This program has provided support to about 4,400 people, including 1,200 who have avoided layoffs by taking advantage of the federal government's work sharing program.

We know too that a strong performance in our economy and our booming population growth in the last couple of years have put pressure on the housing market. The gap between the cost of renting and owning has grown, making it tougher for renters to move up to their own home. So in this budget, we are establishing a new head start on a home program to allow more people to own their own homes. It'll provide low-cost, fixed-rate mortgages to qualifying families so they can purchase a new home. In the weeks to come, the Minister of Social Services will provide more details on this exciting new program that'll provide the opportunity of home ownership to 1,000 Saskatchewan families. This program is just another example of the forward-looking plans of the government.

We're also moving to improve the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. We've asked the federal government to increase the annual contribution limit from \$600 to \$2,500 a year, which will help those with no company pension plans, including self-employed and those working for small businesses.

This budget will also provide needed support for those who need a hand up from government. This year we will provide a 4.8 per cent increase for social services. This not only maintains benefits for those who need the help, it provides new funding for a number of important initiatives. For example, there is \$5.4 million more to help operate 144 new child care welfare spaces built in 2009-10. There's a \$4.4 million increase for expanded foster care, more spaces for the intellectually disabled, and a \$9 million increase to provide more support and services for foster families.

This year we will also provide community-based organizations with a 1 per cent increase in their budgets. This brings their overall base operating increase to 13.3 per cent since our government was elected.

We think that's progress, and we've been ever mindful of the promises we made to Saskatchewan people. One of those promises was to hire 120 police officers over our four-year mandate. We will keep that promise, and we will be hiring another 30 officers later this year.

Over the past two years, our government has made an unprecedented commitment to addressing the infrastructure deficit in our province, investing \$2.3 billion in hospitals, schools, highways, municipal projects, and other much-needed initiatives. This year this government will make a further \$632 million investment in infrastructure, bringing the total capital investment to nearly \$3 billion over three years.

As part of our capital investment, we will spend 302 million on highway projects this year — the second largest highway capital program in the province's history. This will allow us to continue to work on important multi-year projects like the twinning of Highway No. 11, continually working on the Lewvan Drive interchange, building the Yorkton truck bypass, and moving ahead with 270 kilometres of highway construction under the rural highways strategy.

We're also continuing with a number of infrastructure projects through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. We've devoted \$61 million to federal-provincial projects that have to be completed by March of 2011 and another \$52 million for projects that will stretch over the next few years. Overall funding for federal-provincial municipal infrastructure and programs increases by \$48 million or 72 per cent over '09-10.

These are all important priorities for Saskatchewan that require additional funding. That is why we're introducing a series of modest changes to liquor markups while still maintaining competitive liquor prices in Saskatchewan.

I'll note that, thanks to historic income tax reductions introduced in 2008, Saskatchewan individuals and families still pay among the lowest provincial taxes in Canada. In fact a two-income family with \$50,000 family income will pay just \$1,270 in 2010, less than half of what would be the same families paying in BC [British Columbia], Manitoba or Quebec.

In recent years, governments of all stripes have followed the well-worn path of bigger government and increased spending. That path is not sustainable in the long run. That is why we have chosen a different path. We have chosen to make the right decisions today because we know what it means for our children tomorrow. The budget delivers the forecast \$20 million surplus in the General Revenue Fund and keeps debt from growing this year. This budget also leaves 511 million in the Growth and Financial Security Fund to provide the security we might need along the way.

This budget is balanced. This budget is balanced, forward-looking and responsible. Mr. Speaker, this path we have chosen is not the easy path, but it is the right path to ensure Saskatchewan's economic momentum continues. It is the right path for the new Saskatchewan — the growing, optimistic, self-assured Saskatchewan — where we are looking to the future with confidence and with hope, and where we know without a doubt that our best days are still ahead. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. If I could have the members' attention. First of all, I would just like to say to our guests how much we appreciate your presence here and your co-operation in observing the rules. The procedure in the Assembly now gives the opposition critic the opportunity to respond, and it would be appreciated if at all possible that members would remain . . . or guests would remain in their place, unless necessary to leave, to allow the member to respond without interference.

[15:00]

The Minister of Finance has moved, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I too want to welcome everyone here today and thank the Minister of Finance for delivering a tough budget, and one that after the record last year, I'm sure was bothersome because last year's budget was a budget of deception and deficit. And I must say that looking in a very early way at this budget, I have to say and advise that this is a budget that should not be trusted, delivered by a government that should not be trusted with the finances of this province.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I am pleased with in the budget, that I think the numbers on commodities might be closer than being off the 3 billion that the Minister of Energy advised us last year when it came to potash numbers. I think those numbers are better this year.

The problem is, the deception is in another area of this budget. And all you need to do is look at the change in the accounting procedures. Now what is the motive of a government or a company that changes the accounting mechanism in the middle of a term? What could that be? When they say they're forward-looking, I want to say this: that we saw this before and I was hoping we'd never see it again. It happened after a couple of years of deficits in the Devine administration back in the 1980s. And then after a couple of deficits, they came forward with a change in — what did they change? — the accounting system.

And what was the motive? It was to hide things like deficits. And we have today in their own documents, if the public would read the document, and it says right here the public debt, the debt of the province in 2009, 7.9 billion. In 2010, 8.4 billion. This year estimated to be \$9.1 billion. That's what it says in your own document. And the minister stands in this place and says there'll be no increase in the public debt.

Now that is as unbelievable as last year's budget. This is their document, not mine. When it comes to the debt in the consolidated fund, the summary, surplus or deficit — in brackets, meaning deficit — what is the number there for this year? \$622 million deficit. This is in their document. This is the second year of deficits that we've seen from this government.

Now the question is, when you get into this pickle that they're now in, how do you solve it? That's the question that many people in the province are asking. How do you get out of this predicament? They're saying we have to tighten our belts. The Premier has said that a number of times. The question is, where do you tighten the belt? Who do you ask to tighten the belt? Should it be the community groups in Regina and Saskatoon? Should it be the trappers in northern Saskatchewan? Should it be the students with ever-higher tuition fees probably likely this year, something in the area of 5 per cent, double of the inflation rate? Or would you expect it would be, and start, at the cabinet level with a reduction in the number of cabinet ministers or the reduction in salary or a reduction in the political staff?

I never heard any cuts there. Not one. I'll tell you, in the 1990s when we had to come here to clean up the mess left by Grant Devine . . . And I might advise that the Premier of this day was working with the government at the time that the mess was created. He was there. He was one of the political staff, and he watched and he saw how the government operated. And my fear is that's where he got his education in financing.

Now the problem with that is we're headed back in the same direction, and we are all going to suffer as a result. Every citizen of Saskatchewan, as the documents indicate, will have to be part of paying back this debt — almost getting close to \$10 billion; 9.1 billion is the public debt. And that's up considerably.

Yet I drive around the province and I see billboards where the Premier says that he's reduced the debt of the province by 40 per cent. It's not true. It's not true. It's not true. The problem is, the problem is, it's not true. The problem is, it's not true. But I tell you, Mr. Premier has to know that he will be exposed by the public of Saskatchewan when it comes to the debt of the province.

Now if this were in the private sector, and I just want to end on this point, if you were the CEO [chief executive officer] of a private sector company, and you went to the annual meeting and you said, look we're doing well; we're making lots of money. And then it was discovered that that was as a result of an accounting change, I can tell you, the analysts in New York and Toronto and the regulator and the members who held shares in your company, the shareholders, they would kick out that CEO.

And my bet is, when the next election comes, if this trend continues of putting the onus of paying for this bill that this government has put in place on the backs of the poorest people in the province, this government will be soundly defeated, as it well should be.

I've had only a few moments to look at the budget, but I want to say this: that we have many other comments to make on the budget, myself and the other members, and we'll be doing that

in the days to come. And I might add the weeks and months to come. And based on that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Resumption of Budget Debate

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That debate on the motion that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Thursday, March 25th, 2010.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Government House Leader has moved:

That debate on the motion that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Thursday, March 25th, 2010.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before I place the question, I just want to say again, thank you to our guests for recognizing the process and abiding by the rules of the Assembly. And once the Speaker is . . . First of all I would ask, following the adjournment motion, that you rise with the members and wait until the Speaker leaves the Chamber. And then you are invited to a tea to take place, as you exit the Chamber, to your right in room 255; to your left in room 218.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:08.]

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Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
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
Minister Responsible for Trade

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
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Hon. Donna Harpauer
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Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Nancy Heppner
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

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